

Monergism

THE SAINTS' EVERLASTING REST

RICHARD BAXTER



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by Richard Baxter

Table of Contents

[THE Dedication of the whole](#)

[A Premonition](#)

[THE FIRST PART](#)

[I. There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God](#)

[II. This rest defined](#)

[III. What this rest presupposeth](#)

[IV. What this rest containeth](#)

[V. The four great preparatives to our rest](#)

[VI. This rest most excellent, discovered by reason](#)

[VII. The excellencies of our rest](#)

[VIII. The people of God described](#)

[The conclusion](#)

THE SECOND PART: THE PROOFS OF THE TRUTH AND CERTAIN FUTURITY OF OUR REST; AND THAT THE SCRIPTURE PROMISING THAT REST TO US, IS THE PERFECT INFALLIBLE WORD AND LAW OF GOD

- I. The confirmation of this truth
- II. Motives to study and preach the divine authority of Scripture
- III. Necessary that we first distinguish
- IV. The first argument to prove Scripture to be the Word of God
- V. The second argument
- VI. The third argument
- VII. The fourth argument
- VIII. Rest for none but the people of God, proved
- IX. Reasons why this rest remains, and is not here enjoyed
- X. Whether the souls departed enjoy this rest before the resurrection

THE THIRD PART: SEVERAL USES OF THE FORMER DOCTRINE OF REST

- I. Use 1.—Showing the unconceivable misery of the ungodly in their loss of this rest
- II. The aggravation of the loss of heaven to the ungodly
- III. They shall lose all things that are comfortable, as well as heaven
- IV. The greatness of the torments of the damned discovered

V. Use 2.—Reprehending the general neglect of this rest, and exciting to diligence in seeking it

VI. An exhortation to seriousness in seeking rest

VII. Use 3.—Persuading all men to try their title to this rest; and directing them how to try, that they may know

VIII. Further causes of doubting among Christians

IX. Containing an exhortation, and motives to examine

X. Containing directions for examination, and some marks for trial

XI. A more exact inquiry into the number and use of marks; the nature of sincerity; with other things of great moment in the work of self-examination

XII. Use 4.—The reason of the saints' afflictions here

XIII. Use 5.—An exhortation to those that have got assurance of this rest, or title to it, that they would do all that they possibly can to help others to it also

XIV. An advice to some more specially to help others to this rest, pressed largely on ministers and parents

THE FOURTH PART: A DIRECTORY FOR THE GETTING AND KEEPING OF THE HEART IN HEAVEN

To the inhabitants of the town of Shrewsbury

The Introduction

I. Use 6.—Reproving our expectations of rest on earth

II. Use 7.—Reproving our unwillingness to die

III. Motives to a heavenly life

IV. Containing some hinderances of a heavenly life

V. Some general helps to a heavenly life

VI. Containing the description of the great duty of heavenly contemplation

VII. Containing the fittest time and place for this contemplation, and the preparation of the heart unto it

VIII. Of consideration, the instrument of this work; and what force it hath to move the soul

IX. What affections must be acted, and by what considerations and objects, and in what order

X. By what actings of the soul to proceed in this work of heavenly contemplation

XI. Some advantages and helps for raising and affecting the soul by this meditation

XII. How to manage and watch over the heart through the whole work

XIII. The abstract, or sum of all, for the use of the weak

THE CONCLUSION

Broughton in the conclusion of his 'Consent of Scripture,' concerning the New Jerusalem, and the everlasting Sabbatism, meant in my text, as begun here, and perfected in heaven

A Poem of Master G. Herbert, in his 'Temple'

An Addition to the Eleventh Chapter of the Third Part of the
Saint's Rest

To the Reader

**TO
MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS,
THE INHABITANTS OF THE
BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF KIDDERMINSTER,
BOTH MAGISTRATES AND PEOPLE.**

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IF either I or my labours have any thing of public use or worth, it is wholly, though not only, yours; and I am convinced, by Providence, that it is the will of God it should be so. This I clearly discerned in my first coming to you, in my former abode with you, and in the time of my forced absence from you. When I was separated by the miseries of the late unhappy war, I durst not fix in any other congregation; but lived in a military, displeasing state, lest I should forestall my return to you, for whom I took myself reserved. The offers of greater worldly accommodations, with five times the means which I receive with you, was no temptation to me once to question whether I should leave you: your free invitation of my return, your obedience to my doctrine, the strong affection which I have yet towards you above all people, and the general, hearty return of love which I find from you,

do all persuade me that I was sent into this world especially for the service of your souls. And that even when I am dead I might yet be a help to your salvation, the Lord hath forced me, quite beside my own resolution, to write this treatise, and leave it in your hands. It was far from my thoughts ever to have become thus public, and burthened the world with any writings of mine; therefore have I oft resisted the requests of my reverend brethren, and some superiors, who might else have commanded much more at my hands: but see how God over-ruleth and crosseth our resolutions.

Being in my quarters, far from home, cast into extreme languishing by the sudden loss of about a gallon of blood, after many years' foregoing weaknesses, and having no acquaintance about me, nor any books but my bible, and living in continual expectation of death, I bent my thoughts on my 'Everlasting Rest;' and because my memory, through extreme weakness, was imperfect, I took my pen and began to draw up my own funeral sermon, or some helps for my own meditations of heaven, to sweeten both the rest of my life and my death. In this condition God was pleased to continue me about five months, from home; where, being able for nothing else, I went on with this work, which so lengthened to this which here you see. It is no wonder, therefore, if I be too abrupt in the beginning, seeing I then intended but the length of a sermon or two; much less may you wonder if the whole be very imperfect, seeing it was written, as it were, with one foot in the grave, by a man that was betwixt living and dead, that wanted strength of nature to quicken invention or affection, and had no book but his bible while the chief part was finished, nor had any mind of human ornaments if he had been furnished. But O how sweet is this Providence now to my review, which so happily forced me to that work of meditation which I had formerly found so profitable to my soul, and showed me more mercy in depriving me of other helps than I was aware of, and hath caused my thoughts to feed on this heavenly subject, which hath more benefited me than all the studies of my life!

And now, dear friends, such as it is I here offer it you; and upon the bended knees of my soul I offer up my thanks to the merciful God who hath fetched up both me and it, as from the grave, for your service; who reversed the sentence of present death, which, by the ablest physicians, was passed upon me; who interrupted my public labours for a time, that he might force me to do you a more lasting service, which, else, I had never been like to have attempted: that God do I heartily bless and magnify, who hath rescued me from the many dangers of four years' war, and after so many tedious nights and days, and so many doleful sights and tidings, hath returned me, and many of yourselves, and reprieved us till now to serve him in peace; and though men be ungrateful, and my body ruined beyond hope of recovery, yet he hath made up all in the comforts I have in you. To the God of mercy do I here offer my most hearty thanks, and pay the vows of acknowledgment which I oft made in my distress, who hath not rejected my prayers, which in my dolor I put up, but hath, by a wonder, delivered me in the midst of my duties; and hath supported me this fourteen years in a languishing state, wherein I have scarcely had a waking hour free from pain; who hath, above twenty several times, delivered me when I was near to death: and though he hath made me spend my days in groans and tears, and in a constant expectation of my change, yet hath he not wholly disabled me to his service; and hereby hath more effectually subdued my pride, and made this world contemptible to me, and forced my dull heart to more importunate requests, and occasioned more rare discoveries of his mercy than ever I could have expected in a prosperous state. For ever blessed be the Lord, that hath not only honoured me to be a minister of his Gospel, but hath also set me over a people so willing to obey, and given me that success of my labours which he hath denied to many more able and faithful; who hath kept you in the zealous practice of godliness when so many grow negligent, or despise the ordinances of God; who hath kept you stable in his truth, and saved you from the spirit of giddiness, levity, and apostasy, of this age; who hath preserved you from those scandals, whereby others have so heinously wounded their profession, and hath given you to see the mischief of separation and

divisions, and made you eminent for unity and peace when almost all the land is in a flame of contention, and so many that we thought godly are busily demolishing the church, and striving in a zealous ignorance against the Lord. Beloved, though few of you are rich or great in the world, yet for this riches of mercy towards you, I must say, ye are my glory, my crown, and my joy; and for all these rare favours to myself and you, as I have oft promised to publish the praises of our Lord, so do I here set up this stone of remembrance, and write upon it, 'Glory to God in the highest: hitherto hath the Lord helped us: my flesh and my heart failed, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

But have all these deliverances brought us to our rest? No; we are as far yet from it as we are from heaven. You are yet under oppression and troubles, and I am yet under consuming sickness; and feeling that I am likely to be among you but a little while, and that my pained body is hastening to the dust, I shall here leave you my best advice for your immortal souls, and bequeath you this counsel as the legacy of a dying man, that you may here read it and practise it when I am taken from you; and, I beseech you, receive it as from one that you know doth unfeignedly love you, and that regardeth no honours or happiness in this world in comparison with the welfare and salvation of your souls; yea, receive it from me as if I offered it you upon my knees, beseeching you, for your souls' sake, that you would not reject it, and beseeching the Lord to bless it to you; yea, as one that hath received authority from Christ to command you, I charge you in his name, as ever you will answer it, when we shall meet at judgment, and as you would not have me there be a witness against you, nor all my labours be charged against you to your condemnation, and the Lord Jesus, your Judge, to sentence you as rebellious, that you faithfully and constantly practise these ten directions:

1. Labour to be men of knowledge and sound understandings. A sound judgment is a most precious mercy, and much conduceth to the soundness of heart and life. A weak judgment is easily corrupted;

and if it be once corrupt, the will and conversation will quickly follow. Your understandings are the inlet or entrance to the whole soul; and if you be weak there, your souls are like a garrison that hath open or ill-guarded gates; and if the enemy be once let in there, the whole city will quickly be his own. Ignorance is virtually every error, therefore let the bible be much in your hands and hearts: remember what I taught you on Deut. 6:6, 7. Read much the writings of our old, solid divines, such as Perkins, Bolton, Dodd, Sibbs, especially Doctor Preston. You may read an able divine when you cannot hear one: especially, be sure you learn well the principles of religion. Begin with the 'Assemblies' Lesser Catechism,' and then read the greater; and, next, Master Balls', with the 'Exposition,' and then Doctor Ames' 'Marrow of Divinity,' now Englished, or Usher's. If you see men fall on controversies before they understand these, never wonder if they are drowned in errors. I know your poverty and labours will not give you leave to read so much as others may do; but yet a willing mind will find some time, if it be when they should sleep, and, especially, it will spend the Lord's day wholly in these things. O be not ignorant of God in the midst of such light! as if the matters of your salvation were less worth your study than your trading in the world.

2. Do the utmost you can to get a faithful minister when I am taken from you, and be sure you acknowledge him your teacher, overseer, and ruler; (1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7, 17;) and learn of him, obey him, and submit to his doctrine, except he teach you any singular points, and then take the advice of other ministers in trying it. Expect not that he should humour you, and please your fancies, and say and do as you would have him; that is not the way of God, for the people to rule themselves and their rulers. If he be unable to teach and guide you, do not choose him at first; if he be able, be ruled by him, even in things that to you are doubtful, except it be clear that he would turn you from the truth; if you know more than he, become preachers yourselves; if you do not, then quarrel not when you should learn: especially, submit to his private over-sight, as well as public teaching. It is but the least part of a minister's work which is

done in the pulpit: Paul taught them, also, from house to house, day and night, with tears. (Acts 20:20, 31.) To go daily from one house to another, and see how you live, and examine how you profit, and direct you in the duties of your families, and in your preparations for death, is the great work. Had not weakness confined me, and public labours forbidden me, I should judge myself heinously guilty in neglecting this. In the primitive times, every church of so many souls as this parish had many ministers, whereof the ablest speakers did preach most in public, and the rest did the more of the less public work, which some mistake for mere ruling elders. But now, sacrilege and covetousness will scarcely leave maintenance for one in a church; which is it that hath brought us to a loss in the nature of government.

3. Let all your knowledge turn into affection and practice; keep open the passage between your heads and your hearts, that every truth may go to the quick. Spare not, for any pains, in working out your salvation; take heed of loitering, when your souls lie at the stake; favour not yourselves in any slothful distemper: laziness is the damnation of most that perish among us. God forbid you should be of the mad opinion of the world, that like not serving God so much, nor making so much ado to be saved: all these men will shortly be of another mind. Live now as you would wish you had done at death and judgment. Let no scorns dishearten you, no differences of opinion be an offence to you: God, and Scripture, and heaven, and the way thither, are still the same. It will do you no good to be of the right religion, if you be not zealous in the exercise of the duties of that religion. Read often the fifth and sixth chapters of the third part of this book.

4. Be sure you make conscience of the great duties that you are to perform in your families. Teach your children and servants the knowledge and fear of God; do it early and late, in season and out of season. Pray with them daily and fervently; remember Daniel's example, (Dan. 6.,) and the command. (1 Thess. 5:17.) Read the Scripture, and good books to them; restrain them from sin; keep not

a servant that will not learn, and be ruled. Neighbours, I charge you, as you will shortly answer the contrary before the Lord your Judge, that there be never a family among you that shall neglect these great duties. If you cannot do what you should, yet do what you can; especially, see that the Lord's day be wholly spent in these exercises. To spend it in idleness or sports, is to consecrate it to your flesh, and not to God, and far worse than to spend it in your trades.

5. Beware of extremes in the controverted points of religion. When you avoid one error, take heed you run not into another, especially if you be in the heat of disputation or passion. As I have showed you, I think, the true mean in the doctrine of justification and redemption, so I had intended to have writ a peculiar treatise with three columns, showing both extremes, and the truth in the middle, through the body of divinity, but God takes me off. Especially beware of these times: antinomianism comes from gross ignorance, and leads to gross wickedness. Socinians are scarce Christians: Arminianism is quite above your reach, and, therefore, not fit for your study in most points. The middle way which Camero, Ludov. Crocius, Martinus, Amyraldus, Davenant, with all the divines of Britain and Breme, in the synod of Dort, go, I think is nearest the truth of any that I know who have written on those points of redemption and universal grace. And for the points of predestination, and the nature of the divine influx on the will in the working of grace, which are most hotly agitated, and where the heart of the controversy seems to lie; I think I had never yet the happiness to read, or speak with the man that himself understood them: and those, least, that are usually most confident. As for separation, the mischief of it lies not in the bare error of judgment, but in the unchristian and church-dissolving division and alienation which thence followeth; contrary to that humility and love which is the visible character of Christians, and to that oneness which is still in Scripture ascribed to the visible church. Alas, that pride and ignorance should have such power among believers, that men cannot be of several judgments in lesser points, but they must needs be also of several churches! God will make us value peace and union a little more, before we shall taste of the

perfect everlasting peace and union: yea, before we shall see the blessing of union in the church. Wounding is a dividing; healing is a re-uniting. A building is of many stones or pieces orderly conjoined; a church is an aggregation of individuals; an association of believers. What then, is it to demolish, but to separate and disjoin? And what is it to dissolve churches, but to break their association; to reduce them to individuals; to cut them into shreds? As for the differences, in way of government between the moderate presbyterians, independents, episcopal, and crastian, I make no doubt but if men's spirits stood not at a greater distance than their principles, they would quickly be united. But of all the four sorts, there are some that run so high in their principles, that they run out of the hearing of peace or truth. Will God never put it into the hearts of rulers, to call together some of the most godly, learned, moderate, and peaceable of all four opinions (not too many), to agree upon a way of union and accommodation, and not to cease till they have brought it to this issue? To come as near together as they can possibly in their principles: and where they cannot, yet to unite as far as may be, in their practice, though on different principles; and where that cannot be, yet to agree on the most loving, peaceable course in the way of carrying on our different practices; that so, as Rup. Meldenius saith, we may have unity in things necessary, liberty in things unnecessary, and charity in all. The Lord persuade those who have power to this pacificatory enterprise without delay.

For anabaptism and antinomianism, I have written against them in two other books (and more shall do against the latter, if God will). But my guilty friends are offended with me for what I have done. I dare not, therefore, be silent, as being the officer and ambassador of Christ, and not of men; God spoke effectually against them by those wondrous monsters in New England. But wonders are overlooked where the heart is hardened, and God intends to get his justice a name. The fearful delusions that God hath formerly given them over to, and the horrid confusion which they have introduced where they have sprung, hath spoken fully against both these latter sects. The weeping eyes, the bleeding sides, the lacerated members, of these

churches; the reproached Gospel, the disappointed reformation, the hideous doctrines, and unheard-of wickedness that hath followed them; the contemned ordinances, the reproached, slandered, and ejected ministers; the weak that are scandalised, the professors apostatised, the wicked hardened, and the open enemies of the Gospel that now insult: all these do ascribe them more plainly to England than words can do, and cry loud in the ears of God and man. What will be the answer, time will show: but, from Rev. 2:14–16, 20–22, &c., we may probably conjecture.

6. Above all, see that you be followers of peace and unity, both in the church, and among yourselves. Remember what I taught you on Heb. 12:14. He that is not a son of peace, is not a son of God. All other sins destroy the church consequentially, but division and separation demolish it directly. Building the church is but an orderly joining of the materials; and what then is disjoining, but pulling down? Many doctrinal differences must be tolerated in a church. And why, but for unity and peace? Therefore, disunion and separation is utterly intolerable. Believe not those to be the churches' friends that would cure and reform her, by cutting her throat. Those that say, no truth must be concealed for peace, have usually as little of the one as the other. Study Gal. 2:2; Rom. 14:1, &c.; Acts 21:24, 26; 1 Tim. 1:4, and 6:4; Tit. 3:8, 9. I hope, sad experience speaks this lesson to your very hearts, if I should say nothing. Do not your hearts bleed to look upon the state of England; and to think how few towns or cities there be, where is any forwardness in religion, that are not cut into shreds, and crumbled as to dust, by separations and divisions? To think what a wound we have hereby given to the very christian name. How we have hardened the ignorant, confirmed the doubting; and are ourselves become the scorn of our enemies, and the grief of our friends; and how many of our dearest, best esteemed friends are fallen to notorious pride or impiety; yea, some to be worse than open infidels; these are pillars of salt, see that you remember them. You are yet eminent for your unity, steadfastness, and godliness; hold fast that you have, that no man take your crown from you; temptations are now come near your doors, yet many of you have gone through

greater, and, therefore, I hope, will escape through these. Yet, lest your temptation should grow stronger, let me warn you, that though of your own selves men should arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them; (Acts 20:30;) yea, though an angel from heaven should draw you to division, see that you follow him not. If there be erroneous practices in the church, keep yourselves innocent with moderation and peace; do your best to reform them, and rather remove your dwellings, if you cannot live innocently, than rend the church. It must be no small error that must force a separation. Justin, a holy, learned martyr, (in 'Dialog. cum Triphone,') who was converted within thirty-one years of John's death, and wrote his first Apology within fifty-one, (and therefore it is like he saw John's days,) professeth, that if a Jew should keep the ceremonial law, so he did not persuade the Gentiles to it as necessary, yet if he acknowledge Christ, he judgeth that he may be saved; and he would embrace him, and have communion with him, as a brother. And Paul would have him received that is weak in the faith, and not unchurch whole parishes of those that we know not, nor were ever brought to a just trial. You know I never conformed to the use of mystical, symbolical rites myself, but only to the determination of circumstantials necessary in genere: and yet, I ever loved a godly, peaceable conformist, better than a turbulent nonconformist. I yet differ from many in several things of considerable moment, &c. As my 'Aphorisms of Justification,' show (as is explained in my 'Confession'). And yet if I should zealously press my judgment on others, so as to disturb the peace of the church, and separate from my brethren, that are contrary minded, I should fear lest I should prove a firebrand in hell, for being a firebrand in the church; and for all the interest I have in your judgment and affections, I here charge you, that if God should give me up to any factious, church-rending course, against which I daily pray, that you forsake me, and follow me not a step.

And for peace with one another, follow it with all your might; If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men. (Rom. 12:18.) Mark this: when you feel any sparks of discontent in your

breast, take them as kindled by the devil from hell, and take heed you cherish them not. If the flames begin to break forth in censoriousness, reproaches, and hard speeches of others, be as speedy and busy in quenching it, as if it were fire in the thatch of your houses: for why should your houses be dearer to you than the church, which is the house of God? Or than your souls, which are the temples of the Holy Ghost? If any heart-burnings arise, do not keep strange, but go together and lovingly debate it, or pray together, that God would reconcile you; or refer the matter to your minister, or others; and let not the sun go down on your wrath; hath God spoken more against any sin than unpeaceableness? If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you, which made Ludovicus Crocius say, that this is the measure and essential property of the least degree of true faith. 'Syntag.' lib. iv. c. 16. If you love not each other, you are no disciples of Christ; nay, if you love not your enemies, and bless not them that curse you, and pray not for them that hurt and persecute you, you are no children of God. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, &c. (Jam. 3:17.) O remember that piercing example of Christ, who washed his disciples' feet, to teach us, that we must stoop as low to one another. Sure, God doth not jest with you in all these plain Scriptures. I charge you, in the name of Christ, if you cannot have peace otherwise, that you suffer wrongs and reproaches, that you go and beg peace of those that should beg it of you; yea, that you beg it on your knees of the poorest beggar, rather than lose it. And remember, Rom. 16:17, 18.

7. Above all, be sure you get down the pride of your hearts. Forget not all the sermons I preached to you against this sin. No sin more natural, more common, or more deadly. A proud man is his own idol; only from pride cometh contention. There is no living in peace with a proud person; every disrespect will cast them into a fever of discontent. If once you grow wise in your own eyes, and love to be valued and preferred, and love those best who think highest of you, and have secret heart-risings against any that disregard you, or have a low esteem of you, and cannot endure to be slighted, or spoke evil

of; never take yourselves for Christians, if this be your case. To be a true Christian without humility, is as hard, as to be a man without a soul. O, poor England, how low art thou brought by the pride of ignorant zealots! Dear friends, I can foretell you, without the gift of prophecy, that if any among you do fall from the truth, mark which is the proudest, that cannot endure to be contradicted, and that vilify others, and those will likely be they; and if ever you be broken in pieces, and ruined, pride will be the cause.

8. Be sure you keep the mastery over your flesh and senses. Few ever fall from God, but flesh-pleasing is the cause; many think that by "flesh" the Scripture means our in-dwelling sin, when, alas! it is the inordinate, sensitive appetite that it chargeth us to subdue. Nothing in the world damneth so many as flesh-pleasing, while men generally choose it as their happiness instead of God. O remember who hath said, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," and, "Make no provision for the flesh, to satisfy its desires." (Rom. 8:5–7, and 13:14.) Think of this when you are tempted to drunkenness, and gluttony, and lustfulness, and worldliness; and when you would fain have your dwellings and states more delightful. You little think what a sin it is, even to please your flesh, further than it tends to help you in the service of God.

9. Make conscience of the great duty of reproving and exhorting those about you: make not your souls guilty of the oaths, ignorance, and ungodliness, of others, by your silence. Admonish them lovingly and modestly, but be sure you do it, and that seriously. This is the first step in discipline. Expect not that your minister should put any from the sacrament, whom you have not thus admonished once and again. Punish not before due process.

10. Lastly: be sure to maintain a constant delight in God, and a seriousness and spirituality in all his worship. Think it not enough to delight in duties, if you delight not in God. Judge not of your duties by the bulk and number, but by the sweetness. You are never stable Christians till you reach this. Never forget all those sermons I

preached to you on Psalm 37:4. Give not way to a customary dulness in duty: do every duty with all thy might: especially, be not slight in secret prayer and meditation. Lay not out the chief of your zeal upon externals, and opinions, and the smaller things of religion. Let most of your daily work be upon your hearts: be still suspicious of them; understand their mortal wickedness, and deceitfulness, and trust them not too far. Practise that great duty of daily watching: pray earnestly that you be not led into temptation. Fear the beginnings and appearances of sin. Beware lest conscience once lose its tenderness. Make up every breach between God and your conscience betime. Learn how to live the life of faith, and keep fresh the sense of the love of Christ, and of your continued need of his blood, Spirit, and intercession; and how much you are beholden and engaged to him. Live in constant readiness and expectation of death, and be sure to get acquainted with this heavenly conversation which this book is written to direct you in; which I commend to your use, hoping you will be at the pains to read it, as for your sakes I have been to write it; and I shall beg for you of the Lord, while I live on this earth, that he would persuade your souls to this blessed work, and that when death comes, it may find you so employed, that I may see your faces with joy at the bar of Christ, and we may enter together into the everlasting rest. Amen.

Your most affectionate, though unworthy teacher,

RICHARD BAXTER.

Kidderminster, Jan. 15, 1649.

**TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
SIR THOMAS ROUS, BARONET,
WITH THE
LADY JANE ROUS, HIS WIFE**

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,

THIS first part of this treatise was written under your roof, and therefore I present it not to you as a gift, but as your own; not for your protection, but for your instruction and direction: for I never perceived you possessed with that evil spirit, which maketh men hear their teachers as their servants, to censure their doctrine, or be humoured by them rather than to learn. Nor do I intend this epistle for the publishing of your virtues: you know to whose judgment you stand or fall. It is a small thing to be judged by man's judgment: if you be sentenced as righteous at the bar of Christ, and called by him, the blessed of his Father, it matters not much by what name or title you are here called. All saints are low in their own esteem, and therefore thirst not to be highly esteemed by others. He that knows what pride hath done in the world, and is now doing, and how close that heinous sin doth cleave to all our natures, will scarcely take him for a friend who will bring fuel to the fire; nor that breath for amicable, which will blow the coal. Yet, he that took so kindly a woman's box of ointment, as to affix the history to his Gospel, that wherever it was read, that good work might be remembered, hath warranted me, by his example, to annex the mention of your favours to this treatise, which have many times far exceeded in cost, that which Judas thought too good for his Lord. And common ingenuity commandeth me thankfully to acknowledge, that when you heard I was suddenly east into extreme weakness, you sent into several counties to seek me in my quarters, and, missing of me, sent again to fetch me to your house, where for many months I found a hospital, a physician, a nurse, and real friends, and, which is more than all, daily and importunate prayers for my recovery: and since I went from you, your kindnesses still following me in abundance: and all this for a man that was a stranger to you, whom you had never seen before but to burden you; and for one that had no witty insinuations for the extracting your favours, nor impudence enough to return them in flatteries; yea, who had such obstructions between his heart and his tongue, that he could scarcely handsomely express the least part of his thankfulness, much less able to make you a requital. The best

return I can make of your love is, in commending this heavenly duty to your practice; wherein I must entreat you to be more diligent and unwearied, because as you may take more time for it than the poor can do, so have you far stronger temptations to divert you. It being extremely difficult for those that have fulness of all things here, to place their happiness really in another life, and so set their hearts there, as the place of their rest, which yet must be done by all that will be saved. Study Luke. 12:16–22, 16:19, 25; and Matt. 19:23. How little comfort do all things in this world afford to a departing soul! My constant prayer for you to God shall be, that all things below may be below him in your hearts, and that you may thoroughly master and mortify the desires of the flesh, and may live above in the Spirit, with the Father of spirits, till you arrive among the perfected spirits of the just.

Your much obliged servant,

RICHARD BAXTER.

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A PREMONITION

CONCERNING the alterations and additions in this second edition, I thought meet to give you this brief account, though I could have found in my heart to have supplied divers other defects through the book, especially in the beginning of the first and second part, where the effects of my weakness were most evident; yet, because the stationer persuaded me that it would be an offence to those that had bought the first edition, I forbear. Yet, because I knew no reason why any should deny me leave to correct or amend my own work, especially for once, I have made these necessary alterations and additions following. 1. I have corrected several passages (especially in the beginning of the first and second part) which I found to be most liable to exception, or misinterpretation: and more I had done, would

my friends have been entreated to have informed me of what they disliked. Also, some passages I have more cleared, that were offensive, by touching on the late public quarrels, which I could have gladly blotted out to avoid distaste, if conscience would have given me leave: but he that will cast off all books which contain any thing disagreeing from his judgment, shall read or profit by few in the world. 2. I have added one chapter, (the ninth,) in the second part; which, being promised in the beginning, in the method propounded, was forgotten. Also, I have added the eleventh chapter in the third part, containing a more exact inquiry into the nature of sincerity, and the use of marks; which I judged of necessity, as being of so great concernment both to men's comforts and to their safety: and I hope none will think it needless curiosity. Also a preface, I have added to the second part, both for defence and fuller explication of the doctrine therein contained; wherein, also, I expect to be free from the censure of needless curiosity, with all those that know how much the peace and welfare of our souls depend on the right apprehension of the verity of the Scriptures. Lastly, I have added many marginal quotations, especially of the ancients; which, though some may conceive to be useless, and others, to be merely for vain ostentation, yet I conceived useful, both for the sweetness of the matter, (concerning which I refer you to the perusal, to me it seemed so in the reading,) as also to free myself from the charge of singularity.

If any say, that I should have prevented this by all greater carefulness at the first, I answer, 1. That which is past cannot be recalled: it is well if it can be repented of and amended. 2. I wrote so much of it in so exceeding debility of body, that it was much wonder that my understanding was not utterly disabled. 3. And I was distant from home, where I had no book but my Bible, and therefore could not add the consent of authors. If you say, There was no such haste, but I might have stayed till I had been better able and furnished, I answer, 1. Little reason had I to expect to have survived till now, yea, or two months longer. 2. Who knows not how little we are masters of our own, that knows the interest of our friends, who are often importunate for that which others distaste; which, though it be a

poor excuse for doing evil, yet may sometimes partly excuse the unseasonable doing of good. 3. I repent not my haste, though I do my imperfections: for God hath been pleased to give the book such unexpected acceptance, that I have reason enough to hope, that the good it hath done this one year, already, is greater than the hurt which the imperfections have done. 4. And I am so conscious of my own imperfections, that I know they will appear in all that I do, and, therefore, I doubt not but there is still that which deserves correction, and would be, if I were to amend it a hundred times. If great Austin so frequently and passionately confess so much by himself, who am I, that I should hope of better? So much of this second edition.

Concerning the book itself, let me advertise you, that the first and last part were all that I intended when I begun it, which I fitted merely to my own use; and, therefore, if you find some strains of self-application, you may excuse them. And for the second part, it fell from my pen besides my first intention, but was occasioned partly by assaults that I had often suffered in that point, and partly by my apprehensions of the exceeding necessity of it, and that to the main end which I intended in this book. Who will set his heart on the goodness of a thing, that is not certain of the truth, or part with his present delights till he is sure he may have better? And, because I have only in brief given you these reasons which most prevailed with myself, having then no authors by me, I wish you would read Grotius, and the Lord Du Plessis "Of the Verity of Christian Religion," (especially chap. 25, 26, and last,) both which are translated into English. The third part I last added; the four first chapters, for the use of secure and sensual sinners, if any of them should happen to read this book: the three last, for the godly, to direct and comfort them in afflictions, and especially to persuade them to the great duty of helping to save their brethren's souls; the seven middle chapters, for the use both of the godly and the ungodly, as being of unspeakable concernment to all. So that all parts of this book are not fitted to the same persons.

Some, I hear, blame me for being so tedious, and say, All this might have been in a lesser room: such I would inform, that in thus doing, I have more crossed myself than them, having naturally such a style as, because of brevity, is accused of obscurity; and had much ado to bring myself to this which they blame; and did obey my reason in it, against my disposition. For, as I thought my views of this glory should not be short, nor my speeches too contracted, so I considered that I speak to plain, unlearned men, that cannot find our meaning in too narrow a room, and that use to overlook the fulness of significant words. As they must be long in thinking, so we must be long in speaking: or else our words fall short of the mark, and die before they can produce the desired effect, so great is the distance between these men's ears and their brains. Besides, I know I am to speak to men's affections, which yet lie deep, and far more remote. How guilty I am myself, let others judge; but surely I approve not tautologies, or a tedious style, or the heaping up of useless matter or words; nor can I choose but judge those Tostatuses impudently proud, who think the world should read nobody's works but theirs. Yet if the length of my discourse do but occasion the reader's longer thoughts on this so sweet and needful a subject, I shall scarcely repent of my reprehended tediousness. And I confess I never loved affectation, or too much industry about words, nor like the temper of them that do. May I speak pertinently, plainly, piercingly, and somewhat properly, I have enough. I judge, as judicious Dr. Stoughton, out of Seneca, that, "He is the best preacher that feels what he speaks, and then speaks what he feels." I confess, also, that I had made the first and fourth parts of this book much longer; but that upon my return home, (to my books,) I found in Mr. Burrough's 'Moses's Choice,' and others, the same things already abroad which I intended. And had I been at home, when I begun this, or read so much on the like subjects as I have since done, I think I should have left out all or most that I have written; yet do I not repent it; for God, that compelled me to it, knows how to make use of it. If this apology satisfy not, I offer the plaintiff these three motions to take his choice: 1. Either let it alone, and then it will do you no harm: 2. Or if you will needs read it, blame the author, and spare him not, so you will but

entertain the truth, and obey what you are convinced to be your duty:
3. Or set on the work and do it better, that God's church may yet have more help in so needful a business. But no more of this. Were not the success of my labour more desirable to me than the maintenance of my esteem, I should think three lines long enough for apology.

But the chief thing which I intend, in this premonition, is, to acquaint each reader with the main design of this book, and to beseech him, for his soul's sake, that he will use it accordingly. Though the right comforting of the soul is a matter of great moment in life and at death, and worth much more labour than I have here bestowed, yet the ends which I intended are of far greater weight. Though I have heard many pious men say, 'Let us study how to come to heaven, and let others study how great the joys are,' yet have I found, by reason and experience, as well as Scripture, that it is not our comfort only, but our stability, our liveliness in all duties, our enduring tribulation, our honouring of God, the vigour of our love, thankfulness, and all our graces; yea, the very being of our religion, and Christianity itself, dependeth on the believing, serious thoughts of our rest. The end directeth to, and in, the means. It is the first thing intended, to which all the actions of our lives must aim: mistake in this, and you are lost for ever, except you rectify your mistake in time. To know what is indeed your end and happiness, and heartily to take it so to be, is the very first stone in the foundation of religion: most souls that perish in the christian world, do perish for want of being sincere in this point. Men have learned in books, that God is the chief Good, and only the enjoyment of him in heaven will make us happy; but their hearts do not unfeignedly take him to be so. Most men take the present contentments of the flesh, consisting in pleasures, profits, and honours, to be their happiness indeed. This hath their very hearts, while God hath the tongue and knee; this is seriously sought after, while God is hypocritically complimented with; heaven is heartlessly commended, while the world is eagerly pursued; Christ is called. Master, while this flesh bears all the sway: only because they cannot choose but know that the world will shortly leave them in the grave, and this flesh, which is

so cherished, must lie rotting in the dust; therefore, they will allow God the leavings of the world, and Christ shall have all that the flesh can spare; so far they will be religious and godly, lest they should be thrust into hell; and they look for heaven as a reserve, when they can keep their worldly happiness no longer. This is the self-deluding religion of thousands.

Reader, I pray God bring this close to thy heart, that it may awake thee to a godly jealousy, to see that thy heart deceive thee not in this one point. O, how many professors of zeal in religion, of much knowledge, and excellent tongues, and blameless conversations in other things, do yet so eagerly mind the world and the flesh, and subtly evade every danger, and distinguish themselves out of every duty that is very dear, or inconsistent with their worldly happiness, that it is most evident they never cordially took God for their portion and happiness! When men lay not this foundation in sincerity, they may build all their lives to little purpose, and the fall will be great when this sand deceives them. When they take this first principle, but as a notion into the brain, and never lay it deep and close to the heart, all their lives after are spent in hypocrisy, and all their duties increase their delusion, except God call them back again to review their souls, and lay that foundation which before they had neglected. Therefore, is it said, that to be carnally minded is death, and if ye mind or live after the flesh, ye shall die; and that the carnal mind is enmity to God; and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; and it is so hard for rich men to enter heaven; and you can scarce find any saint in Scripture charged with covetousness, because it is as possible the devils should be saved, as the man that finally takes up his chief rest and happiness in any thing below God. And what is the cause of all this mischief, but that men do not seriously and frequently think, first, of the certain truth, and then, of the sweet, inconceivable excellencies that wait for them, if they will renounce the vanities of the world, and cleave heartily to God in Jesus Christ? Besides, if men do not apprehend the excellency of this 'Rest,' they cannot value Christ, or his blood that purchased it, and therefore they cannot indeed be Christians; nor is it once knowing

what heaven is that will serve the turn: if we have not a continual or frequent taste of it in our souls, we shall live in continual danger of being overcome. When temptations take you up into the mountain, and show you the kingdoms and glory of the world, and say, 'All this will I give thee;' if, then, you have not a greater and surer glory in your view, what danger are you in! O that the nefarious miscarriages of professors of piety in this age, did not witness it to our sorrow, and the shame of our profession! Not a day but the devil will be easting thee a bait; either sports, or mirth, or filthy lusts, or the pleasing of thy appetite in meats and drinks, or reputation, or rising in the world, or fears of men, or some such thing; and if thou have been newly in the consideration of thy rest with God, it will make thee trample upon them all; but if that be forgotten or undervalued, all is gone. Besides, what life and vigour will it maintain in all our duties? How earnestly will that man pray, that believingly and seriously apprehends what he prayeth for? How, also, will it fill the soul with love, when men do every day view the face of love itself, and warm their hearts in these heavenly contemplations? And if it were but to make our religion delightful to us, it would have greater use than the mere pleasure of that delight, as I have showed in the conclusion of the book: how cheerfully would men go on through labour and suffering, if once they had that delight in God which a heavenly life would afford. When life and joy, seriousness and sweetness, go together, it will make men profitable, victorious, and persevering Christians. In a word, you can neither live safely, profitably, piously, conscionably, or comfortably; nor die so, without believing serious considerations of your rest.

And now, reader, whatever thou art, young or old, rich or poor, I entreat thee, and charge thee, in the name of thy Lord, who will shortly call thee to a reckoning, and judge thee to thine everlasting, unchangeable state, that thou give not these things the reading only, and so dismiss them with a bare approval; but that thou set upon this work, and take God in Christ for thy only rest, and set thy heart upon him above all. Jest not with God: do not only talk of heaven, but mind it, and seek it with all thy might; what greater business hast

thou to do? Dally no longer, when thy salvation lies at the stake. O turn off the world before it turn thee off; forsake thy fleshly pleasures before they forsake thee; and thou find that God also hath forsaken thee. Wink at these withering beauties; and shut thy mouth against these pleasant poisons. Remember what they will all be to thee, when thy friends are weeping over thee, and looking for thy winding sheet; nay, when God shall say, Give account of thy stewardship, thou shalt be no longer steward: thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul; whose then shall these things be? Lord, how do men think so carelessly of that day, which they cannot choose but know is near, and will make so great a change with them! Surely (saith noble Du Plessis), if all the world were made for man, then man was made for more than the world. Hearken, all you worldlings and flesh-pleasers, the God of heaven chargeth you, upon your allegiance, to change your pleasures. He offereth you delights beseeming men; yea, the joys of angels; and commandeth you to renounce the pleasures of sin, and delights that only beseem a beast. Will you not take his offer? Take it now, lest he never offer it you more. He commandeth you, as ever you will see his face in glory to your comfort, that now you turn your thoughts seriously to him, and to that glory: dare you deny, or neglect to obey? If you will not part with your merriments and vanities for that which is infinitely better, be it now known to you, you shall shortly part with them for nothing; yea, for hell fire; and you shall leave them with groans and horror ere long, if you will not leave them for God and glory now. Spit out these venomous, fleshly pleasures, man; come near, and taste of the heavenly delights. What say you? will you resolve; will you covenant with God this day, and do it? Do I speak to a post, that cannot feel; or to a beast, that is incapable of heaven? Will you pass over my words, as if they concerned you not? The great God that put this doctrine into your bibles, and put this message into my mouth, and bid me speak it to thee in his name, will one day speak to thee so rousingly himself, as will make thine ears to tingle, and that rocky heart of thine to tremble, in despite of all thy security and stupidity. If thou have now sinned away thy fear and feeling, that thou takest a sermon but for words of course, believe it, God will shortly bring thy fear and thy

feeling again. It had need to be very precious liquor, which the drunkard shall then pay so dear for; and excellent content which the lustful must so smart for; and great honours and riches, for which thou must lose thy hopes of heaven. If thou hadst never heard or read of these things, there were the more excuse; but if, when thou knowest of it, thou will needs run into the fire, into the fire shalt thou go: but when thou feelest the pain, thou shalt bethink thee of thy folly; and when heaven is lost, remember thou mightest have had it, and that upon very reasonable, easy terms, if thou wouldest. Nothing but thy own wilfulness could have shut thee out. I have warned thee: let God do his will.

And for you that fear God, and have made him your portion, your end, and rest, and are the heirs of this kingdom, let me entreat you, more frequently to look homeward, and mind your inheritance. Should we not think oft of the state we must be in for ever? Do you not perceive that God tumbles you up and down the world, and crosseth your desires, to weary you out of it; that he setteth loose the winds to raise those storms, that may make you long for the harbour, and may toss you to his breast; that he makes your dearest friends afflict you, and those that you took sweet counsel with, and went up with to the house of God as companions, to be scorpions to you, that so you might not have here a resting place for the sole of your foot? O, learn God's gracious meaning, and look upwards! When others are roving after opinions, and running from sect to sect, and, with contentions and vain janglings, are firing the church of Christ, do you then retire yourselves from these vanities to your God; humbly converse with him; and think, believingly, of your everlasting converse with him; and thus fire your souls with his rays of love. For my own part, even when I am constrained (as teachers oft are more than the people) to study controversies, though they be necessary, and in themselves about precious truths, and though I prosper in my studies, yet do I find most sensibly that they discompose my spirit, and waste my zeal, my love, and delight in God, even by the interruption and diversion of my contemplations; so that I long to have done with them, that I may be more near to God. Disputings

often lead to envyings and heart-burnings, and those to hating our brethren, and that to open violence and bloodshed, even of the saints, to persecutions of ministers, and setting ourselves against Christ's apparent interest for our own; but heavenly meditations calm the spirit, and, by winning our souls to the love of God, do not only cause us to love our brethren, but to love them in God, which is the only right love. And thus all men shall know that you are Christ's true disciples, by your loving one another; for he that loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him. When they that hate their brethren are murderers; and we know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. The living God, who is the portion and rest of his saints, make these, our carnal minds, so spiritual, and our earthly hearts so heavenly, that loving him and delighting in him may be the work of our lives; and that neither I that write, nor you that read this book, may ever be turned from this path of life, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, we should come short of it through our own unbelief or negligence.f

May 17, 1651.

FIRST PART

CHAP. I

There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God. -
HEBREWS. 4:9.

SECT. 1. It was not only our interest in God, and actual fruition of him, which was lost in Adam's covenant-breaking fall, but all spiritual knowledge of him, and true disposition towards such a felicity. Man hath now a heart too suitable to his estate: a low state, and a low spirit. And (as some expound that of Luke 18:8) when the Son of God comes with recovering grace, and discoveries and tenders of a spiritual and eternal happiness and glory, he finds not faith in man to believe it. But as the poor man that would not believe that any one had such a sum as a hundred pounds, (it was so far above what he possessed,) so man will hardly now believe that there is such a happiness as once he had, much less as Christ hath now procured. When God would give the Israelites his Sabbaths of rest in a land of rest, he had more ado to make them believe it, than to overcome their enemies and procure it for them; and when they had it, only as a small intimation and earnest of a more incomparably glorious rest through Christ, they stuck there; and will yet believe no more than they do possess, but sit down and say, as the glutton at the feast, 'Sure there is no other heaven but this:' or if they do expect more by the Messiah, it is only the increase of their earthly felicity. The apostle bestows most of this epistle against this distemper; and clearly and largely proves unto them, that it is the end of all ceremonies and shadows to direct them to Jesus Christ, the Substance; and that the rest of Sabbaths and Canaan should teach them to look for a further rest, which indeed is their happiness. My text is his conclusion, after divers arguments to that end; a conclusion so useful to a believer, as containing the ground of all his

comforts, the end of all his duty and sufferings, the life and sum of all Gospel promises and christian privileges, that you may easily be satisfied why I have made it the subject of my present discourse. What more welcome to men, under personal afflictions, tiring duty, successions of sufferings, than rest? What more welcome news, to men under public calamities, displeasing employments, plunderings, losses, sad tidings, &c., which is the common case, than this of rest? Hearers, I pray God your attentions, intention of spirit, entertainment, and improvement of it, be but half answerable to the verity, necessity, and excellency of this subject, and then you will have cause to bless God, while you live, that ever you heard it, as I have, that ever I studied it.

Sect. 2. The text is, as you may see, the apostle's assertion in an entire proposition, with the concluding illative: the subject is rest; the predicate, it yet remains to the people of God. It is requisite we say somewhat briefly: 1. For explication of the terms; 2. Of the subject of them.

"Therefore," i.e., it clearly follows, from the former argument, "there remains:" 1. In order of speaking, as the consequence follows the antecedent, or the conclusion, the premises; so there remains a rest, or it remains that there is another rest. 2. But rather, in order of being, as the bargain remains after the earnest, the performance after the promise, the antitype after the type, and the ultimate end after all the means; so there remains a rest, "to the people of God." God hath a twofold people within the church: one his only, by a common vocation, by an external acceptation of Christ, and covenanting, sanctified by the blood of the covenant so far as to be separated from the open enemies of Christ, and all without the church, therefore not to be accounted common and unclean in the sense, as Jews and pagans are; but holy, and saints, in a larger sense; as the nation of the Jews, and all proselyted gentiles, were holy before Christ's coming. These are called branches in Christ, not bearing fruit, and shall be cut off, &c.; for they are in the church, and in him, by the aforesaid profession and external covenant, but no

further. There are, in his kingdom, things that offend, and men that work iniquity, which the angels, at the last day, shall gather out and cast into the lake of fire;f there are fishes, good and bad, in his net; and tares, with wheat, in his field. The son of perdition is one of those given to Christ by the Father, though not as the rest; these be not the people of God my text speaks of. 2. But God hath a peculiar people that are his by special vocation, cordial acceptance of Christ, internal, sincere covenanting, sanctified by the blood of the covenant and Spirit of grace, so far as not only to be separated from open infidels, but from all unregenerate Christians, being branches in Christ, bearing fruit; and for these remains the rest in my text.h

1. To be God's people, by a forced subjection, i.e., under his dominion, is common to all persons, even open enemies; yea, devils: this yields not comfort.

2. To be his by a verbal covenant and profession, and external call, is common to all in, and of, the visble church, even traitors and secret enemies; yet hath this many privileges, as the external seals, means of grace, common mercies, but no interest in this rest.

3. But to be his by election, union with Christ, and special interest, as before mentioned, is the peculiar properties of those that shall have this rest.

Sect. 3. Quest. But is it to a determinate number of persons, by name, or only to a people thus and thus qualified, viz., persevering believers, without determining by name who they are?

Answ. I purpose, in this discourse, to omit controversies; only, in a word, thus: 1. It is promised only to persevering believers, and not to any particular persons by name. 2. It is purposed, with all the conditions of it, and means to it, to a determinate number, called the elect, and known by name, which evidently followeth these plain propositions:

1. There is few will deny that God foreknows, from eternity, who these are, and shall be, numerically, personally, by name.
2. To purpose it only to such, and to know that only these will be such, is, in effect, to purpose it only to these.
3. Especially, if we know how little knowledge and purpose, in God, do differ.
4. However, we must not make his knowledge active, and his purpose idle, much less to contradict each other, as it must be, if, from eternity, he purposed salvation alike to all, and yet from eternity knew that only such and such should receive it.
5. To purpose all persevering believers to salvation, and not to purpose faith and perseverance absolutely to any particular persons, is to purpose salvation absolutely to none at all; yet I know much more is necessary to be said to make this plain, which I purpose not (at least here) to meddle with.

Sect. 4. I. Quest. Is it to the people of God, upon certainty, or only upon possibility?

Answ. If only possible, it cannot thus be called theirs.

1. While they are only elect, not called, it is certain to them, we speak of a certainty of the object, by divine purpose, for they are ordained to eternal life first, and therefore believe; and not first believe, and therefore elected.
2. When they are called according to his purpose, then it is certain to them by a certainty of promise also, as sure as if they were named in that promise; for the promise is, to believers, which they may, though but imperfectly, know themselves to be; and though it be yet upon condition of overcoming, and abiding in Christ, and enduring to the end, yet that condition being absolutely promised, it still remaineth absolutely certain upon promise: and, indeed, if glory be

ours only upon a condition, which condition depends chiefly on our own wills, it were cold comfort to those that know what man's will is, and how certainly we should play the prodigals with this, as we did with our first stock. But I have hitherto understood, that in the behalf of the elect, Christ is resolved, and hath undertaken, for the working and finishing of their faith, and the full effecting his people's salvation; and not only gives us a (feigned) sufficient grace, not effectual, leaving it to our wills to make it effectual, as some think; so that, though still the promise of our justification and salvation be conditional, yet God, having manifested his purpose of enabling us to fulfil those conditions, he doth thereby show us a certainty of our salvation, both in his promise and his purpose. Though God's eternal purpose gives us no right to the benefit whatsoever, (some lately say to the contrary,) it being the proper work of God's law or covenant, to confer right or due; yet the event or fruition of it is made certain by God's unchangeable decree, his eternal willing it, being the first and infallible cause, that, in time, it is accomplished or produced.

CHAP. II

This Rest defined.

SECT. 1. Now let us see, 1. What this rest is. 2. What these people, and why so called. 3. The truth of this, from other Scripture arguments. 4. Why this rest must yet remain. 5. Why only to this people of God. 6. What use to make of it.

1. And though the sense of the text includes in the word 'rest,' all that ease and safety, which a soul, wearied with the burden of sin and suffering, and pursued by law, wrath, and conscience, hath with Christ in this life, the rest of grace; yet, because it chiefly intends the rest of eternal glory, as the end and main part, I shall confine my discourse myself to this last.

Definition. Rest is the end and perfection of motion. The saint's rest, here in question, is the most happy estate of a Christian, having obtained the end of his course: or, it is the perfect, endless fruition of God, by the perfected saints, according to the measure of their capacity, to which their souls arrive at death; and both soul and body must fully, after the resurrection and final judgment.

Sect 2. I. I call it the estate of a Christian, though perfection consists in action, as the philosopher thinks, to note both the active and passive fruition, wherein a Christian's blessedness lies, and the established continuance of both. Our title will be perfect, and perfectly cleared; ourselves, and so our capacity, perfected; our possession and security for its perpetuity perfect; our reception from God perfect; our motion or action in and upon him perfect: and, therefore, our fruition of him, and consequently our happiness, will then be perfect. And this is the estate which we now briefly mention, and shall afterwards more fully describe and open to you, and which we hope, by Jesus Christ, very shortly to enter upon, and for ever to possess.

Sect. 3. II. I call it the most happy estate, to difference it, not only from all seeming happiness, which is to be found in the enjoyment of creatures, but also from all those beginnings, foretastes, earns, first fruits, and imperfect degrees, which we have here in this life, while we are but in the way. It is the chief good which the world hath so much disputed, yet mistaken or neglected, without which the greatest confluence of all other good leaves a man miserable; and with the enjoyment of which, all misery is inconsistent. The beginnings, in our present state of grace, as they are a real part of this, may also be called a state of happiness: but, if considered disjunctly by themselves, they deserve not that title, except in a comparative sense, as a Christian is compared to men out of Christ.

Sect. 4. III. I call it the estate of a Christian, where I mean only the sincere, regenerate, sanctified Christian, whose soul, having discovered that excellency in God through Christ, which is not in the

world to be found, thereupon closeth with him, and is cordially set upon him. I do not mean every one that, being born where Christianity is the religion of the country, takes it up as other fashions, and is become a Christian he scarcely knows how, or why; nor mean I those that profess Christ in words, but in works deny him. I shall describe this Christian to you more plainly afterwards. It is an estate to which many pretend, and that with much confidence; and because they know it is only the Christians, therefore they all call themselves Christians. But multitudes will at last know, to their eternal sorrow, that this is only the inheritance of the saints, and only those Christians shall possess it, who are not of the world: and, therefore, the world hates them who have forsaken all for Christ, and having taken up the cross, do follow him, with patient waiting, till they inherit the promised glory.

Sect. 5. IV. I add, that this happiness consists in obtaining the end, where I mean the ultimate and principal end, not any end, secundum quid, so called subordinate, or less principal. Not the end of conclusion, in regard of time; for so every man hath his end; but the end of intention, which sets the soul to work, and is its prime motive in all its actions. That the chief happiness is in the enjoyment of this end, I shall fully show through the whole discourse, and, therefore, here omit. Everlasting wo to that man who makes that his end here (to the death), which, if he could attain, would not make him happy. Oh, how much doth our everlasting state depend on our right judgment and estimation of our end!

Sect. 6. But it is a great doubt with many, whether the obtainment of this glory may be our end; nay, concluded, that it is mercenary; yea, that to make salvation the end of duty, is to be a legalist, and act under a covenant of works, whose tenour is, 'Do this and live.' And many that think it may be our end, yet think it may not be our ultimate end, for that should be only the glory of God. I shall answer these particularly and briefly.

1. It is properly called mercenary, when we expect it as wages for work done; and so we may not make it our end; otherwise it is only such a mercenariness as Christ commandeth. For, consider what this end is; it is the fruition of God in Christ: and, if seeking Christ be mercenary, I desire to be so mercenary.

2. It is not a note of a legalist neither: it hath been the ground of a multitude of late mistakes in divinity, to think that 'Do this and live,' is only the language of the covenant of works. It is true, in some sense it is; but in other, not. The law of works only saith, "Do this," that is, perfectly fulfil the whole law, "and live," that is, for so doing: but the law of grace saith, "Do this and live" too; that is, believe in Christ, seek him, obey him sincerely, as thy Lord and King; forsake all, suffer all things, and overcome; and by so doing, or in so doing, as the conditions which the Gospel propounds for salvation, you shall live. If you set up the abrogated duties of the law again, you are a legalist: if you set up the duties of the Gospel in Christ's stead, in whole or in part, you err still. Christ hath his place and work; duty hath its place and work too: set it but in its own place, and expect from it but its own part, and you go right; yea, more, how unsavoury soever the phrase may seem, you may, so far as this comes to, trust to your duty and works; that is, for their own part; and many miscarry in expecting no more from them, as to pray, and to expect nothing the more, that is, from Christ, in a way of duty: for if duty have no share, why may we not trust Christ, as well in a way of disobedience as duty? In a word, you must both use and trust duty in subordination to Christ, but neither use them nor trust them in coordination with him. So that this derogates nothing from Christ: for he hath done, and will do all his work perfectly, and enable his people to do theirs: yet he is not properly said to do it himself; he believes not, repents not, &c., but worketh these in them: that is, enableth and exciteth them to do it. No man must look for more from duty than God hath laid upon it; and so much we may and must.

Sect. 7. II. If I should quote all the scriptures that plainly prove this, I should transcribe a great part of the Bible: I will bring none out of

the Old Testament; for I know not whether their authority will here be acknowledged; but I desire the contrary minded, whose consciences are tender of abusing Scripture, and wresting it from the plain sense, to study what tolerable interpretation can be given of these following places, which will not prove that life and salvation may be, yea, must be the end of duty. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:39, 40.) "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. 11:12.) "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." (Matt. 7:13; Luke 13:24.) "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.) "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. Glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good," &c. (Rom. 2:7, 10.) "So run that you may obtain." (1 Cor. 9:24.) "A man is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." (2 Tim. 2:5.) "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. 6:12.) "That they do good works, lay up a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. 6:18, 19.) "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high-calling," &c. (Phil. 3:14.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in by the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14.) "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit, &c. For I was hungry, and ye," &c. (Matt. 25.) "Blessed are the pure in heart, &c. They that hunger and thirst, &c. Be glad and rejoice, for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. 9.) "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Luke 11:28.) Yea, the escaping of hell is a right end of duty to a believer. "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) "Fear him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, whatsoever others say, I say unto you, Fear him." (Luke 12:5.) "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (1 Cor. 9:27.) Multitudes of scriptures and Scripture arguments might be brought, but these may suffice to any that believe Scripture.

Sect. 8. III. For those that think this rest may be our end, but not our ultimate end, that must be God's glory only: I will not gainsay them. Only let them consider, what God hath joined, man must not separate. The glorifying himself, and the saving of his people, as I judge, are not two decrees with God, but one decree, to glorify his mercy in their salvation; though we must say, that one is the end of the other: so I think they should be with us together intended. We should aim at the glory of God, not alone considered, without our salvation, but in our salvation. Therefore, I know no warrant for putting such a question to ourselves, as some do, Whether we could be content to be damned, so God were glorified? Christ hath put no such question to us, nor bid us put such to ourselves. Christ had rather that men would inquire after their true willingness to be saved, than their willingness to be damned. Sure I am, Christ himself is offered to faith in terms for the most part respecting the welfare of the sinner, more than his own abstracted glory. He would be received as a Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer, Reconciler, Intercessor, &c. And all the precepts of Scripture, being backed with so many promises and threatenings, every one intended of God as a motive to us, do imply as much. If any think they should be distinguished as two several ends, and God's glory preferred; so they separate them not asunder, I contend not. But I had rather make that high pitch, which Gibieuf and many others insist on, to be the mark at which we should all aim, than the mark by which every weak Christian should try himself.

Sect. 9. IV. In the definition, I call a Christian's happiness, the end of his course, thereby meaning, as Paul, (2 Tim. 4:7,) the whole scope of his life. For as salvation may, and must be, our end, so not only the end of our faith, though that principally, but of all our actions; for as whatsoever we do, must be done to the glory of God, whether eating, drinking, &c., so must they all be done to our salvation. That we may believe for salvation, some will grant, who yet deny that we may do, or obey for it. I would it were well understood, for the clearing of many controversies, what the Scripture usually means by faith. Doubtless, the Gospel takes it not so strictly, as philosophers do; but,

in a larger sense, for our accepting Christ for our King and Saviour. To believe in his name, and to receive him, are all one: but we must receive him as King, as well as Saviour: therefore, believing doth not produce heart-subjection as a fruit, but contains it as an essential part: except we say, that faith receives Christ as a Saviour first, and so justifies before it take him for King, as some think; which is a maimed, unsound, and no Scripture faith. I doubt not but the soul more sensibly looks at salvation from Christ, than government by him, in the first work: yet, whatever precedaneous act there may be, it never conceives of Christ, and receives him to justification, nor knows him with the knowledge which is eternal life, till it conceive of him, and know him, and receive him for Lord and King. Therefore there is not such a wide difference between faith and Gospel obedience, or works, as some judge. Obedience to the Gospel is put for faith; and disobedience put for unbelief, oftentimes in the New Testament. But of this I have spoken more fully elsewhere.

V. Lastly: I make happiness to consist in this end obtained; for it is not the mere promise of it that immediately makes perfectly happy, nor Christ's mere purchase, nor our mere seeking, but the apprehending and obtaining, which sets the crown on the saint's head. When we can say of our work, as Christ of the price paid, "It is finished;" and as Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of salvation." (2 Tim. 4:7, 8.) O that we did all heartily and strongly believe, that we shall never be truly happy till then. Then should we not so dote upon a seeming happiness here.

CHAP. III

What this Rest presupposeth.

SECT. I. For the clearer understanding yet of the nature of this rest, you must know:

1. There are some things necessarily presupposed to it.

2. Some things really contained in it.

1. All these things are presupposed to this rest.

1. A person in motion, seeking rest. This is man here in the way; angels and glorified spirits have it already: and the devils and damned are past hope.

Sect. II. 2. An end toward which he moveth for rest: which end must be sufficient for his rest; else, when it is obtained, it deceiveth him. This can be only God, the chief good. He that taketh any thing else for his happiness, is out of the way the first step. The principal damning sin, is to make any thing besides God, our end or rest. And the first true saving act, is to choose God only for our end and happiness.

Sect. III. 3. A distance is presupposed from this end; else there can be no motion towards it. This sad distance is the woful case of all mankind since the fall: it was our God that we principally lost, and were shut out of his gracious presence. Though some talk of losing only a temporal, earthly felicity; sure I am, it was God that we fell from, and him we lost, and since are said to be without him in the world; and there would have been no death, but for sin; and to enjoy God without death, is neither an earthly, nor temporal enjoyment: nay, in all men at age, here is supposed, not only a distance from God, but also a contrary motion: for sin hath not overthrown our being, nor taken away our motion: but our well-being, and the rectitude of our motion. When Christ comes with regenerating, saving grace, he finds no man sitting still, but all posting to eternal ruin, and making haste towards hell; till, by conviction, he first brings them to a stand; and by conversion, turn first their hearts, and then their lives, sincerely to himself. Even those that are sanctified and justified from the womb, are yet first the children of Adam, and so of wrath: at least, in order of nature, if not in time.

Sect. IV. 4. Here is presupposed knowledge of the true ultimate end, and its excellency, and a serious intending it. For so the motion of the rational creature proceedeth: an unknown end is no end; it is a contradiction. We cannot make that our end, which we know not; nor that our chief end, which we know not, or judge not to be the chief good. An unknown good moves not to desire or endeavour: therefore, where it is not truly known that God is this end, and containeth all good in him; there is no obtaining rest in an ordinary, known way, whatsoever may be in ways that by God are kept secret.^a

Sect. V. 5. Here is presupposed, not only a distance from this rest, but also the true knowledge of this distance. If a man have lost his way, and know it not, he seeks not to return; if he lose his gold, and know it not, he seeks it not: therefore, they that never knew they were without God, never yet enjoyed him; and they that never knew they were naturally and actually in the way to hell, did never yet know the way to heaven. Nay, there will not only be a knowledge of this distance, and lost estate, but also affections answerable. Can a man be brought to find himself hard by the brink of hell, and not tremble? or, to find he hath lost his God and his soul, and not cry out, 'I am undone;' or can such a stupid soul be so recovered? This is the sad case of many thousands, and the reason why so few obtain this rest: they will not be convinced, or made sensible, that they are, in point of title, distant from it; and in point of practice, contrary to it. They have lost their God, their souls, their rest, and do not know it, nor will believe him that tells them so. Whoever travelled towards a place which he thought he was at already, or sought for that which he knew not he had lost? "The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." (Matt. 9:12.)

Sect. VI. 6. Here is also supposed, a superior, moving cause, and an influence therefrom, else should we all stand still, and not move a step forward towards our rest; any more than the inferior wheels in the watch would stir, if you take away the spring, or first mover. This *primum movens* is God. What hand God hath in evil actions, or whether he afford the like influence to their production, I will not

here trouble this discourse and the reader to dispute. The case is clear in good actions. If God move us not, we cannot move: therefore, it is a most necessary part of our christian wisdom, to keep our subordination to God, and dependance on him; to be still in the path where he walks, and in that way where his Spirit doth most usually move. Take heed of being estranged or separated from God, or of slacking your daily expectations of renewed help, or of growing insensible of the necessity of the continual influence and assistance of the Spirit. When you once begin to trust your stock of habitual grace, and to depend on your own understanding or resolution for duty and holy walking, you are then in a dangerous, declining state. In every duty remember Christ's words, "Without me ye can do nothing;" (John 15:5;) and, "not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to do any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. 3:5.)

Sect. VII. 7. Here is supposed an internal principle of life in the person. God moves not man like a stone, but by enduing him first with life, not to enable him to move without God, but thereby to qualify him to move himself, in subordination to God the first Mover. What the nature of this spiritual life is, is a question exceeding difficult. Whether, as some think, (but, as I judge, erroneously,) it be Christ himself in person or essence, or the Holy Ghost personally; or as some will distinguish, with what sense I know not, it is the person of the Holy Ghost, but not personally. Whether it be an accident or quality; or whether it be a spiritual substance, as the soul itself; whether it be only an act, or a disposition, or a habit, as it is generally taken; whether a habit infused, or acquired by frequent acts, to which the soul hath been morally persuaded; or whether it be somewhat distinct from a habit; i.e. a power; viz., *potentia proxima intelligendi, credendi, volendi, &c. in spiritualibus*; which some think the most probable. A multitude of such difficulties occur, which will be difficulties while the doctrine of spirits and spiritualities is so dark to us, and that will be while the dust of mortality and corruption is in our eyes. This is my comfort, that death will shortly blow out this dust, and then I shall be resolved of these and many more. In the

meantime, I am a sceptic, and know little in this whole doctrine of spirits and spiritual workings, further than Scripture clearly revealeth, and think we might do well to keep closer to its language.

Sect. VIII. Here is presupposed before rest, an actual motion: rest is the end of motion: no motion, no rest. Christianity is not a sedentary profession or employment, nor doth it consist in mere negatives. It is not for feeding, or clothing, &c., that Christ condemns. Not doing good, is not the least evil: sitting still will lose you heaven, as well as if you run from it. I know when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; and he cannot be a Christian, that relies upon the supposed merit of his works, in proper sense; but yet he that hides his talent, shall receive the wages of a slothful servant.

Sect. IX. 9. Here is presupposed, also, as motion, so such motion as is rightly ordered and directed toward the end; not all motion, labour, seeking, that brings to rest. Every way leads not to this end; but he whose goodness hath appointed the end, hath in his wisdom, and by his sovereign authority, appointed the way. Our own invented ways may seem to us more wise, comely, equal, pleasant; but that is the best key that will open the lock, which none but that of God's appointing will do. O the pains that sinners take, and worldlings take, but not for this rest! O the pains and cost that many an ignorant and superstitious soul is at for this rest, but all in vain! How many have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; who, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God: nor known, "that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:2-4.) Christ is the door; the only way to this rest. Some will allow nothing else to be called the way, lest it derogate from Christ. The truth is, Christ is the only way to the Father; yet faith is the way to Christ; and Gospel obedience, or faith and works, the way for those to walk in, that are in Christ. There be, as before, many ways requisite in subordination to Christ, but none in co-ordination with him; so then it is only God's way that will lead to this end and rest.

Sect. X. 10. There is supposed, also, as motion rightly ordered, so strong and constant motion, which may reach the end. If there be not strength put to the bow, the arrow will not reach the mark: the lazy world, that think all too much, will find this to their cost one day. They that think less ado might have served, do but reproach Christ for making us so much to do: they that have been most holy, watchful, painful, to get faith and assurance, do find, when they come to die, all too little. We see, daily, the best Christians, when dying, repent their negligence: I never knew any, then, repent his holiness and diligence. It would grieve a man's soul to see a multitude of mistaken sinners lay out their wit, and care, and pains, for a thing of nought, and think to have eternal salvation with a wish. If the way to heaven be not far harder than the world imagines, then Christ and his apostles knew not the way, or else have deceived us; for they have told us, "that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; that the gate is strait, and the way narrow; and we must strive, if we will enter; for many shall seek to enter, and not be able," which implies the faintness of their seeking, and that they put not strength to the work; and, "that the righteous themselves are scarcely saved." If ever souls obtain salvation in the world's common, careless, easy way, then I will say there is a nearer way found out than ever God, in Scripture, hath revealed to the sons of men. But when they have obtained life and rest in this way, let them boast of it; till then, let them give us leave, who would fain go upon sure grounds, in point of eternal salvation, to believe that God knows the way better than they, and that his word is a true and infallible discovery thereof.

I have seen this doctrine also thrown by with contempt by others, who say, 'What, do you set us a-working for heaven? Doth our duty do any thing? Hath not Christ done all? Is not this to make him a half Saviour, and to preach law?'

Answ. It is to preach the law of Christ: his subjects are not lawless. It is to preach duty to Christ: no more exact a requirer of duty, or hater of sin, than Christ. Christ hath done, and will do all his work, and therefore is a perfect Saviour; but yet leaves for us a work too. He

hath paid all the price, and left us none to pay; yet he never intended his purchase should put us into absolute, immediate, personal title to glory, in point of law, much less into immediate possession. What title, improperly so called, we may have from his own, and his Father's secret counsel, is nothing to the question: he hath purchased the crown to bestow only on condition of believing, denying all for him, suffering with him, persevering and overcoming. He hath purchased justification, to bestow only on condition of our believing; yea, repenting and believing.¹ That the first grace hath any such condition, I will not affirm; but following mercies have; though it is Christ that enableth also to perform the condition. It is not a Saviour offered, but received also, that must save: it is not the blood of Christ shed only, but applied also, that must fully deliver; nor is it applied to the justification or salvation of a sleepy soul; nor doth Christ carry us to heaven in a chair of security. Where he will pardon, he will make you pray, "Forgive us our trespasses;" and where he will give righteousness, he will give hungering and thirsting. It is not through any imperfection in Christ, that the righteous are scarcely saved; no, nor that the wicked perish, as they shall be convinced one day. In the same sense as the prayer of the faithful, if fervent, availeth for outward mercies, in the same sense it prevaileth for salvation also; for Christ hath purchased both. And as baptism is said to save us, so other duties too. Our righteousness, which the law of works requireth, and by which it is satisfied, is wholly in Christ, and not one grain in ourselves; nor must we dare to think of patching up a legal righteousness of Christ's and our own together: that is, that our doings can be the least part of satisfaction for our sins, or proper merit. But yet ourselves must personally fulfil the conditions of the new covenant, and so have a personal, evangelical righteousness, or never be saved by Christ's righteousness; therefore, say not it is not duty, but Christ; for it is Christ in a way of duty. As duty cannot do it without Christ, so Christ will not do it without duty: but of this, enough before.

And as this motion must be strong, so must it be constant; or it will fall short of rest. To begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh, will not

bring to the end of the saints. The certainty of the saints' perseverance doth not make admonition to constancy unuseful: men, as seemingly holy as the best of us, have fallen off. He that knew it impossible, in the foundation, to deceive the elect, yet saw it necessary to warn us, that he only that endureth to the end, shall be saved. Read but the promises, (Rev. 2 and 3.) "To him that overcometh." Christ's own disciples must be commanded to continue in his love, and that by keeping his commandments; and to abide in him, and his word in them, and he in them. It will seem strange to some, that Christ should command us, that "he abide in us." (See John 15:4–10, and 8:31; 1 John 2:4, 28.)

Sect. XI. 11. There is presupposed, also, to the obtaining of this rest, a strong desire after it. The soul's motion is not that which we call violent or constrained, (none can force it,) but free. As every thing inclines to its proper centre, so the rational creature is carried on in all its motion, with desires after its end. This end is the first thing intended, and chief desired, though last obtained. Observe it, and believe it, whoever thou art; there never was a soul that made Christ and glory the principal end, nor that obtained rest with God, whose desire was not set upon him, and that above all things else in the world whatsoever. Christ brings the heart to heaven first, and then the person. His own mouth spoke it, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21.) A sad conclusion to thousands of professed Christians. He that had truly rather have the enjoyment of God in Christ, than any thing in the world, shall have it; and he that had rather have any thing else, shall not have this, except God change him. It is true, the remainder of our old nature will much weaken and interrupt these desires, but never overcome them. The passionate motion of them is oft strongest towards inferior, sensible things; but the serious, deliberate will or choice, which is the rational desire, is most for God.

Sect. XII. 12. Lastly: here is presupposed painfulness and weariness in our motion. This ariseth not from any evil in the work or way, for Christ's yoke is easy, his burden light, and his commands not

grievous: but, 1. From the opposition we meet with; 2. The contrary principles still remaining in our nature, which will make us cry out, "O, wretched men!" (Rom. 7:24.) 3. From the weakness of our graces, and so of our motion. Great labour, where there is a suitable strength, is a pleasure; but to the weak, how painful! With what panting and weariness doth a feeble man ascend that hill which the sound man runs up with ease. We are all, even the best, but feeble. An easy, dull, profession of religion, that never encountereth with these difficulties and pains, is a sad sign of an unsound heart. Christ, indeed, hath freed us from the impossibilities of the covenant of works, and from the burden and yoke of legal ceremonies, but not from the difficulties and pains of Gospel duties. 4. Our continued distance from the end, will raise some grief also; for desire and hope, implying the absence of the thing desired and hoped for, do ever imply also some grief for that absence; which all vanish when we come to possession. All these twelve things are implied in a Christian's motion, and so presupposed to his rest. And he only that hath the pre-requisite qualifications, shall have the crown. Here, therefore, should Christians lay out their utmost care and industry. See to your part, and God will certainly see to his part. Look you to your hearts and duties, in which God is ready with assisting grace, and he will see that you lose not the reward. O, how most Christians wrong God and themselves, with being more solicitous about God's part of the work than their own, as if God's faithfulness were more to be suspected than their unfaithful, treacherous hearts! This rest is glorious, and God is faithful; Christ's death is sufficient, and the promise is universal, free, and true. You need not fear missing of heaven through the deficiency or fault of any of these. But yet, for all these, the falseness of your own hearts, if you look not to them, may undo you. If you doubt of this, believe the Holy Ghost. "Having a promise left us of entering into his rest, let us fear lest any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) The promise is true, but conditional. Never fear whether God will break promise, but fear lest you should not truly perform the condition, for nothing else can bereave you of the benefit.

CHAP. IV

What this Rest containeth.

BUT all this is only the outward court, or at least not the holiest of all. Now we have ascended the steps, may we look within the veil? May we show what this rest containeth, as well as what it presupposeth? But, alas! how little know I of that whereof I am about to speak. Shall I speak before I know? But if I stay till I clearly know, I shall not come again to speak. That glimpse which Paul saw, contained that which could not, or must not, be uttered, or both. And if Paul had had a tongue to have uttered it, it would have done no good, except his hearers had ears to hear it. If Paul had spoken the things of heaven in the language of heaven, and none understood that language, what the better? Therefore, I will speak while I may, that little, very little which I do know of it, rather than be wholly silent. The Lord reveal it to me, that I may reveal it to you; and the Lord open some light, and show both you and me his inheritance: not, as to Balaam only, whose eyes the vision of God opened, to see the goodness of Jacob's tents, and Israel's tabernacles, where he had no portion, but from whence must come his own destruction: nor as to Moses, who had only a discovery, instead of possession, and saw the land which he never entered. But as the pearl was revealed to the merchant in the Gospel, who rested not till he had sold all he had, and bought it: and as heaven was opened to blessed Stephen, which he was shortly to enter, and the glory showed him, which should be his own possession.

Sect. I. 1. There is contained in this rest, 1. A cessation from motion or action; not of all the action, but of that which hath the nature of a means, and implies the absence of the end. When we have obtained the haven, we have done sailing. When the workman hath his wages, it is implied he hath done his work. When we are at our journey's end, we have done with the way. All motion ends at the centre, and all means cease when we have the end. Therefore, prophesying

ceaseth, tongues fail, and knowledge shall be done away; that is, so far as it had the nature of a means, and was imperfect. And so faith may be said to cease: not all faith, for how shall we know all things past, which we saw not but by believing? How shall we know the last judgment, the resurrection of the body beforehand, but by believing? How shall we know the life everlasting, the eternity of the joys we possess, but by believing? But all that faith, which, as a means referred to the chief end, shall cease. There shall be no more prayer, because no more necessity, but the full enjoyment of what we prayed for. Whether the soul pray for the body's resurrection, for the last judgment, &c., or whether soul and body pray for the eternal continuance of their joys, is to me yet unknown; otherwise, we shall not need to pray for what we have, and we shall have all that is desirable. Neither shall we need to fast, and weep, and watch, any more, being out of the reach of sin and temptations. Nor will there be use for instructions and exhortations: preaching is done, the ministry of man ceaseth, sacraments useless, the labourers called in because the harvest is gathered, the tares burned, and the work done, the unregenerate past hope, the saints past fear for ever, much less shall there be any need of labouring for inferior ends, as here we do, seeing they will all devolve themselves into the ocean of the ultimate end, and the lesser good be wholly swallowed up of the greatest.

Sect. II. 2. This rest containeth a perfect freedom from all the evils that accompanied us through our course, and which necessarily follow our absence from the chief good. Besides our freedom from the eternal flames, and restless miseries, which the neglecters of Christ and grace, must remedilessly endure; an inheritance which, both by birth and actual merit, was due to us as well as to them. As God will not know the wicked so as to own them; so neither will heaven know iniquity to receive it: for there entereth nothing that defileth, or is unclean; all that remains without. And, doubtless, there is not such a thing as grief and sorrow known there: nor is there such a thing as a pale face, a languid body, feeble joints, unable infancy, decrepit age, peccant humours, dolorous sickness, griping fears, consuming cares, nor whatsoever deserves the name of evil.

Indeed, a gale of groans and sighs, a stream of tears, accompanied us to the very gates, and there bid us farewell for ever. We did weep and lament, when the world did rejoice; but our sorrow is turned into joy, and our joy shall no man take from us. God were not the chief and perfect good, if the full fruition of him did not free us from all evil. But we shall have occasion to speak more fully of this in that which follows.

Sect. III. 3. This rest containeth the highest degree of the saints' personal perfection, both of soul and body. This necessarily qualifies them to enjoy the glory, and thoroughly to partake of the sweetness of it. Were the glory ever so great, and themselves not made capable by a personal perfection suitable thereto, it would be little to them. There is necessary a right disposition of the recipient, to a right enjoying, and affecting. This is one thing that makes the saints' joys there so great. Here, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, what God hath laid up for them that wait for him." For this eye of flesh is not capable of seeing it, nor this ear of hearing it, nor this heart of understanding it; but there the eye, and ear, and heart, are made capable; else how do they enjoy it? The more perfect the sight is, the more delightful the beautiful object. The more perfect the appetite, the sweeter the food. The more musical the ear, the more pleasant the melody. The more perfect the soul, the more joyous those joys, and the more glorious to us is that glory. Nor is it only our sinful imperfection that is here to be removed; nor only that which is the fruit of sin, but that which adhered to us in our pure naturals. Adam's dressing the garden, was neither sin nor the fruit of sin: nor is either to be less glorious than the stars, or the sun in the firmament of our Father: yet is this the dignity to which the righteous shall be advanced.^b There is far more procured by Christ, than was lost by Adam. It is the misery of wicked men here, that all without them is mercy, excellent mercies, but within them a heart full of sin shuts the door against all, and makes them but the more miserable. When all is well within, then all is well indeed. The near good is the best, and the near evil and enemy the worst. Therefore

will God, as a special part of his saints' happiness, perfect themselves, as well as their condition.

Sect. IV. 4. This rest containeth, as the principal part, our nearest fruition of God, the chiefest good. And here, reader, wonder not if I be at a loss, and if my apprehensions receive but little of that which is in my expressions. If, to the beloved disciple that durst speak and inquire into Christ's secrets, and was filled with his revelations, and saw the New Jerusalem in her glory, and had seen Christ, Moses, and Elias, in part of theirs; if it did not appear to him what it shall be, but only in general, that when Christ appears we shall be like him, no wonder if I know little. When I know so little of God, I cannot know much what it is to enjoy him. When it is so little I know of my own soul, either its quiddity or quality, while it is here in this tabernacle, how little must I needs know of the infinite Majesty, or the state of this soul when it is advanced to that enjoyment! If I know so little of spirits and spirituals, how little of the Father of spirits! Nay, if I never saw that creature which contains not something unsearchable; nor the worm so small, which affordeth not matter for questions to puzzle the greatest philosopher I ever met with; no wonder, then, if mine eyes fail, when I would look at God, my tongue fail me in speaking of him, and my heart in conceiving. As long as the Athenian superscription doth so too well suit with my sacrifices, "To the unknown God," and while I cannot contain the smallest rivulet, it is little I can contain of this immense ocean. We shall never be capable of clearly knowing, till we are capable of fully enjoying; nay, nor till we do actually enjoy him. What strange conceivings hath a man, born blind, of the sun, and its light; or a man born deaf, of the nature of sounds and music! so do we yet want that sense by which God must be clearly known. I stand and look upon a heap of ants, and see them all, with one view, very busy to little purpose. They know not me, my being, nature, or thoughts, though I am their fellow-creature; how little, then, must we know of the great Creator, though he with one view continually beholds us all. Yet a knowledge we have, though imperfect, and such as must be done away. A glimpse the saints behold, though but in a glass, which makes us

capable of some poor, general, dark apprehensions of what we shall behold in glory. If I should tell a worldling but what the holiness and spiritual joys of the saints on earth are, he cannot know it; for grace cannot be clearly known without grace: how much less could he conceive it, should I tell him of this glory! But to the saints I may be somewhat more encouraged to speak; for grace giveth them a dark knowledge, and slight taste of the glory.

As all good whatsoever is comprised in God, and all in the creature are but drops of this ocean; so all the glory of the blessed is comprised in their enjoyment of God: and if there be any mediate joys there, they are but drops from this. If men and angels should study to speak the blessedness of that estate in one word, what can they say beyond this, 'That it is the nearest enjoyment of God?' Say, 'They have God;' and you say, 'They have all that is worth the having.' O the full joys offered to a believer in that one sentence of Christ's! I would not, for all the world, that one verse had been left out of the Bible: "Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." (John 17:24.) Every word is full of life and joy. If the Queen of Sheba had cause to say of Solomon's glory, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants that stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom," then, sure, they that stand continually before God, and see his glory, and the glory of the Lamb, are somewhat more than happy: to them will Christ "give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" and "to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2:7, 17.) Yea, "He will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go no more out: and he will write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and his own new name." (Rev. 3:12.) Yea, more, if more may be, "He will grant them to sit with him in his throne." (Rev. 3:21.) "These are they who come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them: and the Lamb

which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rev. 7:14, 15, 17.) And may we not now boast with the spouse, "This is my beloved, O daughters of Jerusalem!" And this is the glory of the saints! O blind, deceived world, can you show us such a glory? "This is the city of our God, where the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." "The glory of God shall enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. 21:3, 24.) "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. These sayings are faithful and true, and these are the things that must shortly be done." (Rev. 22:3, 4, 6.) And now we say, as Mephibosheth, 'Let the world take all besides, if we may but see the face of our Lord in peace.' If the Lord lift up the light of his countenance on us here, it puts more gladness in our hearts than the world's increase can do. (Psal. 4:6, 7.) How much more, when in his light we shall have light without darkness; and he shall make us full of joy with his countenance. "Rejoice, therefore, in the Lord, O ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright of heart;" and say with his servant David, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage: I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved: therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope: for he will not leave me in the grave, nor suffer me for ever to see corruption. He will show me the path of life, and bring me into his presence, where is fulness of joy; and at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore." (Psal. 16:5, 6, 8–11.) "Whom, therefore, have I in heaven but him, or in earth that I desire besides him? My flesh and my heart have failed, and will fail me; but God is the strength of my heart, and will be my portion for ever; he shall guide me with his counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory; and as they that are far from him shall perish, so it is good, the chief good, for us to be near to God." (Psal. 73:24–28.)

The advancement is exceeding high: what irreverent, damnable presumption would it have been, once to have thought or spoken of such a thing, if God had not spoken it before us! I durst not have thought of the saint's preferment in this life, as Scripture sets it forth, had it not been the express truth of God. What vile unmannerliness, to talk of "being sons of God," "speaking to him," "having fellowship and communion with him," "dwelling in him and he in us;" if this had not been God's own language! How much less durst we have once thought of "being brighter than the sun in glory;" of "being coheirs with Christ; of judging the world; of sitting on Christ's throne; of being one with him;" if we had not all this from the mouth, and under the hand of God! But hath he said it, and shall it not come to pass? Hath he spoken it, and will he not do it? Yes, as true as the Lord God is true, thus shall it be done to the man whom Christ delights to honour. "The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover them all the day long, and he shall dwell between their shoulders." (Deut. 33:27, 28.) "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their lives, and then they shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." (Psal. 23:6.) O Christians! believe and consider this. Is sun, and moon, and stars, and all creatures, called upon to praise the Lord? What then should his people do? Surely they are nearer him, and enjoy more of him than the brutes shall do. All his works praise him, but, above all, let his saints bless him. (Psal. 105:10.) O let them speak of the glory of his kingdom, and talk of his power: to make known to the sons of men, his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. (Ver. 11, 12.) "Let his praise be in the congregation of his saints; let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth; for the Lord taketh pleasure in his people, and will beautify the meek with salvation." (Psal. 149:1, 2, 4-6.) "This is the light that is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. (Psal. 97:11.) Yea, "this honour have all his saints." (Psal. 149:9.) If the estate of the devils, before their fall, were not much meaner than this, and

perhaps lower than some of their fellow-angels, surely their sin was most accursed and detestable. Could they aspire higher? And was there yet room for discontent? What is it, then, that would satisfy them? Indeed, the distance that we sinners and mortals are at from our God, leaves us some excuse for discontent with our estate. The poor soul out of the depth cries, and cries aloud, as if his Father were out of hearing: sometime he chides the interposing clouds, sometime he is angry at the vast gulf that is set between; sometime he would have the veil of mortality drawn aside, and thinks death hath forgot his business; he ever quarrels with this sin that separates, and longs till it be separated from the soul, that it may separate God and him no more: why, poor Christian, be of good cheer; the time is near, when God and thou shalt be near, and as near as thou canst well desire: thou shalt dwell in his family; is that enough? It is better to be a door-keeper in his house, than enjoy the portion of the wicked. Thou shalt ever stand before him, about his throne, in the room with him, in his presence chamber. Wouldst thou yet be nearer? Thou shalt be his child, and he thy father; thou shalt be an heir of his kingdom; yea, more, the spouse of his Son; and what more canst thou desire? Thou shalt be a member of the body of his Son, he shall be thy head; thou shalt be one with him, who is one with the Father. Read what he hath desired for thee of his Father. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John 17:2–23.) What can you desire yet more? Except you will, as some do, abuse Christ's expression of oneness, to conceive of such a union, as shall deify us; which were a sin one step beyond the aspiring arrogance of Adam; and, I think, beyond that of the devils. A real conjunction, improperly called union, we may expect; and a true union of affections. A moral union, improperly still called union, and a true relative union, such as is between the members of the same politic body and the head: yea, such as is between the husband and the wife, who are called one flesh. And a real communion, and

communication of real favours, flowing from that relative union. If there be any more, it is acknowledged unconceivable, and consequently un-expressible, and so not to be spoken of. If any one can conceive of a proper real union and identity, which shall neither be a unity of essence, nor of person with Christ, I shall not oppose it: but to think of such a union were high blasphemy. Nor must you think of a union, as some do, upon natural grounds, following the dark mistaken principles of Plato and Plotinus. If your thoughts be not guided and limited by Scripture in this, you are lost.l

Quest. But how is it we shall enjoy God?

Answ. That is the fifth and last we come to.

Sect. V. This rest containeth a sweet and constant action of all the powers of the soul and body in this fruition of God. It is not the rest of a stone, which ceaseth from all motion, when it attains the centre. The senses themselves, as I judge, are not only passive in receiving their object, but partly passive and partly active. Whether the external senses, such as now we have, shall be continued and employed in this work, is a great doubt. For some of them, it is usually acknowledged they shall cease, because their being importeth their use, and their use implieth our estate of imperfection: as there is no use for eating and drinking, so neither for the taste. But for other senses the question will be harder; for Job saith, "I shall see him with these eyes."

But do not all senses imply our imperfection? If Job did speak of more than a redemption from this present distress, as it is like he did, yet certainly these eyes will be made so spiritual, that whether the name of sense, in the same sense as now, shall befit them, is a question. This body shall be so changed, that it shall be no more flesh and blood, for "that cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" (1 Cor. 15:50;) but "a spiritual body. (ver. 44.) "That which we sow, we sow not that body that shall be; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." (1 Cor. 15:37, 38.) As the ore is

cast into the fire a stone, but comes forth so pure a metal, that it deserves another name, and so the difference betwixt it and the gold exceeding great: so far greater will the change of our bodies and senses be; even so great, as now we cannot conceive. If grace make a Christian differ so much from what he was, that the Christian could say to his companion, 'Ego non sum ego,' 'I am not the man I was;' how much more will glory make us differ? We may then say much more, 'This is not the body I had, and these are not the senses I had.' But because we have no other name for them, let us call them senses, call them eyes and ears, seeing and hearing: but thus conceive of the difference; that as much as a body spiritual, above the sun in glory, exceedeth these frail, noisome, diseased lumps of flesh or dirt that now we carry about us; so far shall our sense of seeing and hearing exceed these we now possess: for the change of the senses must be conceived proportionable to the change of the body. And, doubtless, as God advanceth our sense, and enlargeth our capacity; so will he advance the happiness of those senses, and fill up with himself all that capacity. And certainly the body should not be raised up and continued, if it should not share of the glory: for as it hath shared in the obedience and sufferings, so shall it also do in the blessedness: and as Christ bought the whole man, so shall the whole partake of the everlasting benefits of the purchase. The same difference is to be allowed for the tongue. For though, perhaps, that which we now call the tongue, the voice, the language, shall not then be: yet, with the forementioned, unconceivable change, it may continue. Certain it is, it shall be the everlasting work of those blessed saints, to stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, and to praise him for ever and ever. As their eyes and hearts shall be filled with his knowledge, with his glory, and with his love; so shall their mouths be filled with his praises. Go on, therefore, O ye saints, while you are on earth, in that divine duty. Learn, O learn, that saint-beseeming work: for in the mouths of his saints his praise is comely. Pray, but still praise: hear and read, but still praise: praise him in the presence of his people; for it shall be your eternal work: praise him, while his enemies deride and abuse you: you shall praise him, while they shall bewail it, and admire you. O blessed employment, to sound forth for

ever, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honour, glory, and power!" (Rev. 4:11.) And "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for he hath redeemed us to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hath made us unto out God, kings and priests." (Rev. 5:9, 10, 12.) "Allelujah, salvation, and honour, and glory, and power, unto the Lord our God: praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, small and great. Allelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. 19:1, 5, 6.) O Christians! this is the blessed rest; a rest without rest: for, "they rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. 4:8.) Sing forth his praises now, ye saints; it is a work our master Christ has taught us. And you shall for ever sing before him the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Rev. 15:3.)

Sect. VI. And if the body shall be thus employed, O how shall the soul be taken up! As its powers and capacities are greatest, so its actions strongest, and its enjoyments sweetest; as the bodily senses have their proper aptitude and action, whereby they receive and enjoy their objects, so doth the soul in its own action enjoy its own object, by knowing, by thinking, and remembering, by loving, and by delightful joying: this is the soul's enjoying. By these eyes it sees, and by these arms it embraceth. If it might be said of the disciples with Christ on earth, much more that behold him in his glory, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see, and the ears that hear the things that ye hear; for many princes and great ones have desired, and hoped, to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them," &c. (Matt. 13:16, 17.)

Knowledge of itself is very desirable, even the knowledge of some evil, though not the evil itself. As far as the rational soul exceeds the sensitive, so far the delights of a philosopher, in discovering the secrets of nature, and knowing the mystery of sciences, exceed the

delights of the glutton, the drunkard, the unclean, and of all voluptuous sensualists whatsoever; so excellent is all truth. What then is their delight, who know the God of truth? What would I not give, so that all the uncertain, questionable principles in logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, and medicine, were but certain in themselves, and to me; and that my dull, obscure notions of them were but quick and clear! O, what then should I not either perform or part with to enjoy a clear and true apprehension of the most true God! How noble a faculty of the soul is the understanding! It can compass the earth; it can measure the sun, moon, stars, and heaven; it can foreknow each eclipse to a minute, many years before: yea, but this is the top of all its excellency, it can know God, who is infinite, who made all these; a little here; and more, and much more hereafter. O the wisdom and goodness of our blessed Lord! He hath created the understanding with a natural bias and inclination to truth and its object; and to the prime truth, as its prime object: and lest we should turn aside to any creature, he hath kept this as his own divine prerogative, not communicable to any creature, viz., to be the prime truth. And though I think not, as some do, that there is so near a close between the understanding and truth, as may produce a proper union or identity; yet, doubtless, it is no such cold touch or disdainful embrace, as is between these gross, earthly heterogeneousals. The true, studious, contemplative man knows this to be true; who feels as sweet embraces between his intellect and truth, and far more than ever the quickest sense did in possessing its desired object. But the true, studious, contemplative Christian knows it much more; who sometime hath felt more sweet embraces between his soul and Jesus Christ than all inferior truth can afford. I know some Christians are kept short this way, especially the careless in their watch and walking; and those that are ignorant or negligent in the daily actings of faith, who look when God casts in joys, while they lie idle, and labour not to fetch them in by believing: but for others, I appeal to the most of them. Christian, dost thou not sometime, when after long gazing heavenward thou hast got a glimpse of Christ, dost thou not seem to have been with Paul in the third heaven, whether in the body or out, and to have seen what is unutterable; art thou not, with Peter,

almost beyond thyself, ready to say, "Master, it is good to be here?" O that I might ever see what I now see! Didst thou never look so long upon the Son of God, till thine eyes were dazzled with his astonishing glory; and did not the splendour of it make all things below seem black and dark to thee when thou lookedst down again, especially in thy day of suffering for Christ, when he usually appears most manifestly to his people? Didst thou never see one walking in the midst of the fiery furnace with thee, like to the Son of God? If thou do know him, value him as thy life, and follow on to know him, and thou shalt know incomparably more than this; or, if I do but renew thy grief to tell thee what thou once didst feel, but now hast lost, I counsel thee to remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, and be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain; and I dare promise thee, because God hath promised, thou shalt see and know that which here thine eye could not see, nor thy understanding conceive. Believe me, Christians, yea, believe God, you that have known most of God in Christ here, it is as nothing to that you shall know; it scarcely, in comparison of that, deserves to be called knowledge. The difference betwixt our knowledge now and our knowledge then, will be as great as that between our fleshly bodies now and our spiritual, glorified bodies then; for as these bodies, so that knowledge must cease, that a more perfect may succeed. Our silly, childish thoughts of God, which now is the highest we can reach to, must give place to a more manly knowledge. All this saith the apostle, "Knowledge shall vanish away; for we know in part, &c. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things; for now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known." (1 Cor. 13:8–12.)

Marvel not, therefore, Christian, at the sense of that place of John 17:3, how it can be life eternal to know God and his Son Jesus Christ: you must needs know, that to enjoy God and his Christ is eternal life, and the soul's enjoying is in knowing. They that savour only of earth,

and consult with flesh, and have no way to try and judge but by sense, and never were acquainted with this knowledge of God, nor tasted how gracious he is, these think it is a poor happiness to know God: let them have health and wealth, and worldly delights, and take you the other. Alas, poor men, they that have made trial of both do not grudge you your delights, nor envy your happiness, but pity your undoing folly, and wish O that you could come near, and taste and try as they have done, and then judge; then continue in your former mind if you can! For our parts, we say with that knowing apostle, though the speech may seem presumptuous, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness; and we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eternal Life." (1 John 5:19, 20.) Here one verse contains the sum of most that I have said. The Son of God is come to be our Head and Fountain of life, and so hath given us an understanding, that the soul may be personally qualified and made capable to know him (God) that is true, the prime Truth; and we are brought so near in this enjoyment that we are in him that is true, not properly by an essential or personal union, but we are in him by being in his Son Jesus Christ. This, that we have mentioned, is the only true God, and so the fittest object for our understanding, which chooseth truth; and this knowing of him, and being in him, in Christ, is eternal life.

Sect. VII. And, doubtless, the memory will not be idle or useless in this blessed work, if it be but by looking back to help the soul to value its employment. Our knowledge will be enlarged, not diminished; therefore, the knowledge of things past shall not be taken away: and what is that knowledge, but remembrance? Doubtless, from that height, the saint can look behind him and before him; and to compare past with present things, must needs raise, in the blessed soul, an inconceivable esteem and sense of its condition. To stand on that mount, whence we can see the wilderness and Canaan both at once; to stand in heaven, and look back on earth, and weigh them together in the balance of a comparing sense and judgment, how

must it needs transport the soul, and make it cry out, Is this the purchase that cost so dear as the blood of God? No wonder: O blessed price, and thrice blessed love, that invented and condescended! Is this the end of believing; is this the end of the Spirit's workings? Have the gales of grace blown me into such a harbour: is it hither that Christ hath enticed my soul? O blessed way, and thrice blessed end! Is this the glory which the Scriptures spoke of, and ministers preached of so much? Why, now I see the Gospel indeed is good tidings, even tidings of peace and good things; tidings of great joy to all nations. Is my mourning, my fasting, my sad humblings, my heavy walking, groanings, complainings, come to this; are all my afflictions, sickness, languishing, troublesome physic, fears of death, come to this; are all Satan's temptations, the world's scorns and jeers, come to this; and, now, if there be such a thing as indignation left, how will it here let fly! O vile nature, that resisted so much, and so long such a blessing: unworthy soul! Is this the place thou camest so unwillingly towards: was duty wearisome; was the world too good to lose? Didst thou stick at leaving all, denying all, and suffering any thing for this: wast thou loath to die to come to this? O false heart, that had almost betrayed me to eternal flames, and lost me this glory! O base flesh, that would needs have been pleased, though to the loss of this felicity! Didst thou make me to question the truth of this glory; didst thou show me improbabilities, and draw me to distrust the Lord; didst thou question the truth of that scripture which promised this? Why, my soul, art thou not now ashamed that ever thou didst question that love that hath brought thee hither; that thou wast jealous of the faithfulness of thy Lord; that thou suspectedst his love when thou shouldest only have suspected thyself; that thou didst not live continually transported with thy Saviour's love; and that, ever, thou quenchedst a motion of his Spirit? Art thou not ashamed of all thy hard thoughts of such a God; of all thy misinterpreting of, and grudging at, those providences, and repining at those ways that have such an end? Now, thou art sufficiently convinced that the ways thou calledst hard, and the cup thou calledst bitter, were necessary; that thy Lord hath sweeter ends, and meant thee better than thou wouldst believe; and

that thy Redeemer was saving thee, as well when he crossed thy desires as when he granted them, and as well when he broke thy heart as when he bound it up. O, no thanks to thee, unworthy self, but shame, for this received crown; but to Jehovah and the Lamb be glory for ever.

Thus, as the memory of the wicked will eternally promote their torment, to look back on the pleasures enjoyed, the sin committed, the grace refused, Christ neglected, and time lost; so will the memory of the saints for ever promote their joys. And as it is said to the wicked, "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;" so will it be said to the Christian, "Remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thine evils; but now thou art comforted, and they are tormented." And as here the remembrance of former good is the occasion of increasing our grief, "I remembered God, and was troubled; I called to remembrance my songs in the night;" (Psal. 77:3, 6;) so there the remembrance of our former sorrows adds life to our joys.

Sect. VIII. But O the full, the near, the sweet enjoyment is that of the affections, love, and joy; it is near! for love is of the essence of the soul, and love is the essence of God: "for God is love." How near, therefore, is this blessed closure! The Spirit's phrase is, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:8, 16.) The acting of this affection, wheresoever, carrieth much delight along with it, especially when the object appears deserving, and the affection is strong; but oh! what will it be when perfect affections shall have the strongest, perfect, incessant acting upon the most perfect object, the ever-blessed God! Now the poor soul complains, O that I could love Christ more! but I cannot: alas! I cannot; yea, but then thou canst not choose but love him: I had almost said, forbear if thou canst. Now, thou knowest little of his amiableness, and therefore lovest little; then thine eye will affect thy heart, and the continual viewing of that perfect beauty will keep thee in continual ravishments of love. Now thy salvation is not perfected, nor all the mercies purchased, yet given in; but when the top-stone is

set on, thou shalt, with shouting, cry 'Grace, grace!' Now thy sanctification is imperfect, and thy pardon and justification not so complete as then it shall be; now thou knowest not what thou enjoyest, and therefore lovest the less: but when thou knowest much is forgiven, and much bestowed, thou wilt love more. Doth David, after an imperfect deliverance, sing forth his love: "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and supplications?" (Psal. 116:1.) What think you will he do eternally; and how will he love the Lord, who hath lifted him up to that glory? Doth he cry out, "O how I love thy law!" (Psal. 119:97.) "My delight is in the saints on earth, and the excellent." (Psal. 16:3.) How will he say, then, 'O how I love the Lord, and the King of saints, in whom is all my delight!' Christians, doth it now stir up your love, to remember all the experiences of his love; to look back upon a life of mercies? doth not kindness melt you, and the sunshine of divine goodness warm your frozen hearts? What will it do, then, when you shall live in love, and have all in him, who is All? O the high delights of love, of this love; the content that the heart findeth in it; the satisfaction it brings along with it! Surely, love is both work and wages.

And if this were all, what a high favour, that God will give us leave to love him; that he will vouchsafe to be embraced by such arms, that have embraced lust and sin before him! but this is not all. He returneth love for love; nay, a thousand times more: as perfect as we shall be, we cannot reach his measure of love; Christian, thou wilt be then brimful of love; yet love as much as thou canst, thou shalt be ten thousand times more beloved. Dost thou think thou canst overlove him? What, love more than love itself! were the arms of the Son of God open upon the cross, and an open passage made to his heart by the spear, and will not arms and heart be open to thee in glory; did he begin to love before thou lovedst, and will not he continue now: did he love thee, an enemy; thee, a sinner; thee, who even loathedst thyself: and own thee when thou didst disclaim thyself; and will he not now immeasurably love thee, a son; thee, a perfect saint; thee, who returnest some love for love: thou wast wont injuriously to question his love; doubt of it now if thou canst. As the pains of hell

will convince the rebellious sinner of God's wrath, who would never before believe it; so the joys of heaven will convince thee thoroughly of that love which thou wouldst so hardly be persuaded of. He that in love wept over the old Jerusalem near her ruins; with what love will he rejoice over the New Jerusalem in her glory? O, methinks I see him groaning and weeping over dead Lazarus, till he forced the Jews that stood by to say, "Behold how he loved him!" Will he not then much more, by rejoicing over us, make all (even the damned if they see it) to say, Behold how he loveth them? Is his spouse, while black, yet comely: is she his love, his dove, his undefiled; doth she ravish his heart with one of her eyes; is her love better than wine? O, believing soul, study a little, and tell me, what is the harvest which these first-fruits foretell; and the love which these are but the earnest of? Here! O here is the heaven of heaven! this is the saint's fruition of God; in these sweet, mutual, constant actings and embracements of love, doth it consist. To love, and be beloved: "These are the everlasting arms that are underneath." (Deut. 33:27.) "His left hand is under their heads, and with his right hand doth he embrace them." (Cant. 2:6.) Reader, stop here, and think awhile what a state this is. Is it a small thing in thine eyes to be beloved of God; to be the son, the spouse, the love, the delight of the King of glory? Christian, believe this, and think on it; thou shalt be eternally embraced in the arms of that love, which was from everlasting, and will extend to everlasting: of that love, which brought the Son of God's love from heaven to earth, from earth to the cross, from the cross to the grave, from the grave to glory: that love, which was weary, hungry, tempted, scorned, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crucified, pierced; which did fast, pray, teach, heal, weep, sweat, bleed, die: that love will eternally embrace them. When perfect, created love, and most perfect, uncreated love meet together, O the blessed meeting! It will not be like Joseph and his brethren, who lay upon one another's necks weeping; it will break forth into a pure joy, and not such a mixture of joy and sorrow as their weeping argued; it will be loving and rejoicing, not loving and sorrowing: yet will it make Pharaoh's (Satan's) court to ring with the news, that Joseph's brethren are come; that the saints are arrived safe at the bosom of Christ, out of

the reach of hell for ever. Neither is there any such love as David's and Jonathan's; shutting-up in sorrows, and breathing out its last into sad lamentations for a forced separation: no, Christ is the powerful, attractive, the effectual Loadstone, who draws to it all like itself. "All that the Father hath given him, shall come unto him; even the lover, as well as the love, doth he draw; and they that come unto him, he will in nowise cast out." (John 6:37–39.) For know this, believer, to thy everlasting comfort, that if these arms have once embraced thee, neither sin nor hell can get thee thence for ever: the sanctuary is inviolable, and the rock impregnable, whither thou art fled, and thou art safely locked up to all eternity. Thou hast not now to deal with an inconstant creature, but with him, with whom is no varying nor shadow of change, even the immutable God. If thy happiness were in thine own hand, as Adam's, there were yet fear; but it is in the keeping of a faithful Creator. Christ hath not bought thee so dear, to trust thee with thyself any more. His love to thee will not be as thine was on earth to him, seldom and cold, up and down, mixed, (as agueish bodies,) with burning and quaking, with a good day and a bad: no, Christian, he that would not be discouraged by thine enmity, by thy loathsome, hateful nature, by all thy unwillingness, unkind neglects, and churlish resistances; he that would neither cease nor abate his love for all these, can he cease to love thee, when he hath made thee truly lovely? He that keepeth thee so constant in thy love to him, that thou canst challenge "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, to separate thy love from Christ if they can." (Rom. 8:35.) How much more will himself be constant! Indeed, he that produced these mutual, embracing affections, will also produce such a mutual constancy in both, that thou mayest confidently be persuaded, as Paul was before thee, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38, 39.) And now are we not left in the apostles' admiration? What shall we say to these things? Infinite love must needs be a mystery to a finite capacity. No wonder if angels desire to pry into this mystery: and if it

be the study of the saints here, to know the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, of this love, though it passeth knowledge: this is the saint's rest in the fruition of God by love.

Sect. X. Lastly: The affection of joy hath not the least share in this fruition. It is that which all the rest lead to, and conclude in; even the inconceivable complacency which the blessed feel in their seeing, knowing, loving, and being beloved of God. The delight of the senses here, cannot be known by expressions, as they are felt; how much less this joy! This is the "white stone, which none knoweth but he that receiveth;" and if there be any "joy which the stranger meddled not with," then surely this, above all, is it. All Christ's ways of mercy tend to and end in the saints' joys. He wept, sorrowed, suffered, that they might rejoice; he sendeth the Spirit to be their comforter; he multiplieth promises, he discovers their future happiness; that their "joy may be full:" he aboundeth to them in the mercies of all sorts; he maketh them lie down in green pastures, and leadeth them by the still waters; yea, openeth to them the fountain of living waters; that their joy may be full: that they may thirst no more; and that it may spring up in them to everlasting life. Yea, he causeth them to suffer, that he may cause them to rejoice; and chasteneth them, that he may give them rest; and maketh them, as he did himself, "to drink of the brook in the way, that they may lift up the head." (Psal. 110:7.) And lest, after all this, they should neglect their own comforts, he maketh it their duty, and presseth it on them, commanding them to "rejoice in him always, and again to rejoice." And he never brings them into so low a condition, wherein he leaves them not more cause of joy than of sorrow. And hath the Lord such a care of our comfort here; where, the Bridegroom being from us, we must mourn? Oh! what will that joy be, where the soul being perfectly prepared for joy, and joy prepared by Christ for the soul, it shall be our work, our business, eternally to rejoice! And it seems the saints' joy shall be greater than the damned's torment; for their torment is the torment of creatures, prepared for the devil and his angels: but our joy is the joy of our Lord; even our Lord's own joy shall we enter: "and the same glory which the Father giveth him, doth the Son give to them;" (John

17:22;) "and to sit with him in his throne, even as he is set down in his Father's throne." (Rev. 3:21.) What sayest thou to all this, O thou sad and drooping soul? Thou that now spendest thy days in sorrow, and thy breath in sighings, and turnest all thy voice into groanings: who knowest no garments but sackcloth, no food but the bread and water of affliction; who minglest thy bread with tears, and drinkest the tears which thou weapest; what sayest thou to this great change; from all sorrow to more than all joy? Thou poor soul, who prayest for joy, waitest for joy, complainest for want of joy, longest for joy; why, then, thou shalt have full joy, as much as thou canst hold, and more than ever thou thoughtest on, or thy heart desired. And, in the meantime, walk carefully, watch constantly, and then let God measure out thy times and degrees of joy. It may be he keeps them till thou have more need: thou mayest better lose thy comfort than thy safety; if thou shouldst die full of fears and sorrows, it will be but a moment, and they are all gone, and conclude in joy inconceivable. As the joy of the hypocrite, so the fears of the upright are but for a moment. And as their hopes are but golden dreams, which when death awakes, do then all perish, and their hopes die with them; so the saints' doubts and fears are but terrible dreams, which, when they die, do all vanish; and they awake in joyful glory. For "God's anger endureth but a moment, but in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, darkness and sadness go together, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psal. 30:5.) O blessed morning, thrice blessed morning! poor, humble, drooping soul, how would it fill thee with joy now, if a voice from heaven should tell thee of the love of God; of the pardon of thy sins; and should assure thee of thy part in these joys? O, what then will thy joys be, when thy actual possession shall convince thee of thy title, and thou shalt be in heaven before thou art well aware; when the angels shall bring thee to Christ, and when Christ shall, as it were, take thee by the hand, and lead thee into thy purchased possession, and bid thee welcome to thy rest, and present thee unspotted before his Father, and give thee thy place about his throne! Poor sinner, what sayest thou to such a day as this? wilt thou not be almost ready to draw back, and to say, What I, Lord, I, the unworthy neglecter of thy grace! I, the unworthy disesteemer of thy

blood, and slighter of thy love! must I have this glory? "Make me a hired servant, I am no more worthy to be called a son:" but love will have it so; therefore must thou enter into his joy.

Sect. XI. And it is not thy joy only; it is a mutual joy as well as a mutual love: is there such joy in heaven at thy conversion, and will there be none at thy glorification: will not the angels welcome thee thither, and congratulate thy safe arrival? yea, it is the joy of Jesus Christ; for now he hath the end of his undertaking, labour, suffering, dying, when we have our joys; when he is "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." We are his seed, and the fruit of his soul's travail, which, when he seeth, he will be satisfied. (Isa. 53:10, 11.) This is Christ's harvest, when he shall reap the fruit of his labours; and when he seeth it was not in vain, it will not repent him concerning his sufferings; but he will rejoice over his purchased inheritance, and his people shall rejoice in him.

Yea, the Father himself puts on joy, too, in our joy: as we grieve his Spirit, and weary him with our iniquities, so he is rejoiced in our good. O how quickly here he doth espy a returning prodigal, even afar off: how doth he run and meet him; and with what compassion falls he on his neck, and kisseth him; and puts on him the best robe, and a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and spares not to kill the fatted calf, that they may eat and be merry! this is indeed a happy meeting; but nothing to the embracements and the joy of that last and great meeting.

Yea, more yet; as God doth mutually love and joy, so he makes this his rest, as it is our rest. Did he appoint a Sabbath, because he rested from six days' work, and saw all good, and very good? What an eternal sabbatism, then, when the work of redemption, sanctification, preservation, glorification, are all finished, and his work more perfect than ever, and very good indeed! So the Lord is said to rejoice, and to take pleasure in his people. (Ps. 147:11, and 149:4.) O, Christians, write these words in letters of gold; "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee, is mighty: he will save: he will rejoice

over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. 3:17.) O, well may we then rejoice in our God with joy, and rest in our love, and joy in him with singing. (See Isa. 65:18, 19.)

And now look back upon all this; I say to thee, as the angel to John, "What hast thou seen?" or if yet thou perceive not, draw nearer, come up higher, come and see: dost thou fear thou hast been all this while in a dream? Why, these are the true sayings of God. Dost thou fear, as the disciples, that thou hast seen but a ghost, instead of Christ; a shadow instead of rest? Why, come near and feel: a shadow contains not those substantial blessings, nor rests upon the basis of such a foundation truth, and sure word of promise, as you have seen these do. Go thy way now, and tell the disciples, and tell the humble, drooping souls thou meetest with, that thou hast, in this glass, seen heaven; that the Lord indeed is risen, and hath here appeared to thee; and behold he is gone before us into rest; and that he is now preparing a place for them, and will come again, and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also. (John 14:3.) Yea, go thy ways, and tell the unbelieving world, and tell thy unbelieving heart, if they ask what is the hope thou boastest of, and what will be thy rest. Why, this is my beloved, and my friend, and this is my hope and my rest. Call them forth, and say, "Behold what love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be the sons of God;" (1 John 3:1;) and that we should enter into our Lord's own rest.

Sect. XII. But, alas! my fearful heart dare scarce proceed: methinks I hear the Almighty's voice saying to me, as to Elihu, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2.)

But pardon, O Lord, thy servant's sin: I have not pried into unrevealed things, nor, with audacious wits, curiously searched into thy counsels; but, indeed, I have dishonoured thy holiness, wronged thine excellency, disgraced thy saints' glory, by my own exceeding, disproportionable portraying. I will bewail, from my heart, that my conceivings fall so short, my apprehensions are so dull, my thoughts

so mean, my affections so stupid, and my expressions so low and unbeseeming such a glory. But I have only heard by the hearing of the ear: O let thy servant see thee, and possess these joys; and then I shall have more suitable conceivings, and shall give thee fuller glory, and abhor my present self, and disclaim and renounce all these imperfections. "I have now uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Yet I believed, and therefore spake." (Job 42:3.) Remember with whom thou hast to do: what canst thou expect from dust, but levity; or from corruption, but defilement? Our foul hands will leave, where they touch, the marks of their uncleanness; and most on those things that are most pure. "I know thou wilt be sanctified in them that come nigh thee, and before all the people thou wilt be glorified." (Lev. 10:2, 3; Numb. 20:12; Deut. 32:51.) And if thy jealousy excluded from that land of rest, thy servants, Moses and Aaron, because they sanctified thee not in the midst of Israel, what then may I expect? But, though the weakness and irreverence be the fruit of my own corruption, yet the fire is from thine altar, and the work of thy commanding. I looked not into thine ark, nor put forth my hand unto it without thee. O, therefore, wash away these stains also in the blood of the Lamb: and let not jealousy burn us up; lest thou affright the people away from thee, and make them, in their discouragement, to cry out, "How shall the ark of God come to us? Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? Who shall approach and dwell with the consuming fire?" (2 Sam. 6:9; 1 Sam. 6:20; Matt. 26:14.) Imperfect, or none, must be thy service here. Oh! take thy Son's excuse, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

CHAP. V

The four great Preparatives to our Rest.

SECT. I. Having thus opened you a window toward the temple, and showed you a small glimpse of the back parts of that resemblance of the saint's rest which I had seen in the Gospel-glass, it follows, that we proceed to view a little the adjuncts and blessed properties of this rest; but, alas! this little which I have seen makes me cry out, with the prophet Isaiah, (chap. 6:5–7,) "Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" Yet, if he will send and touch my lips with a coal from the altar of his Son, and say, Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged, I shall then speak boldly; and if he ask, Whom shall I send, I shall gladly answer, "Here am I, send me." (Ver. 8.) And why doth my trembling heart draw back? Surely, the Lord is not now so terrible and inaccessible, nor the passage of paradise so blocked up, as when the law and curse reigned. Wherefore, finding, beloved Christians, "that the new and living way is consecrated for us, through the veil, the flesh of Christ, by which we may with boldness enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, I shall draw near with the fuller assurance." (Heb. 10:20–22.) And finding the flaming sword removed, shall look again into the paradise of our God: and because I know that this is not forbidden fruit, and, withal, that it is good for food, and pleasant to the spiritual eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one truly wise and happy, (Gen. 3:6,) I shall take, through the assistance of the Spirit, and eat thereof myself, and give to you, according to my power, that you may eat. For you, Christians, is this food prepared, this wine broached, this fountain opened; and the message my Master sends you is this hearty welcome, which you shall have in his own words, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Can. 5:1.) And, surely, it is neither manners

nor wisdom for you or me, to draw back or to demur upon such an invitation.

And, first, let us consider of the eminent antecedents, the great preparations; that notable introduction to this rest; for the porch of this temple is exceeding glorious, and the gate of it is called beautiful: and here offer themselves to this distinct observation, these four things, as the four corners of this porch.

1. The most glorious coming and appearing of the Son of God.
2. His powerful and wonderful raising of our bodies from the dust, and uniting them again with the soul.
3. His public and solemn proceedings in their judgment, where they shall be justified and acquitted before all the world.
4. His solemn celebration of their coronation, and his enthronizing of them in their glory. Follow but this fourfold stream unto the head, and it will bring you just to the garden of Eden.

Sect. I. And well may the coming of Christ be reckoned into his people's glory, and enumerated with those ingredients that compound this precious antidote of rest: for to this end it is intended; and to this end it is of apparent necessity. For his people's sake he sanctified himself to his office: for their sake he came into the world, suffered, died, rose, ascended: and for their sake it is that he will return. Whether his own exaltation, or theirs, were his primary intention, is a question, though of seeming usefulness, yet, so unresolved, for aught I have found, in Scripture, that I dare not sear it, for fear of pressing into the divine secrets, and approaching too near the inaccessible light. I find Scripture mentioning both ends distinctly and conjunctly, but not comparatively. This is most clear, that to this end will Christ come again to receive his people to himself, "that where he is, they may be also." (John 14:3.) The Bridegroom's departure was not upon divorce; he did not leave us with a purpose to return no more: he hath left pledges enough to

assure us; we have his word in pawn, his many promises, his sacraments, which show forth his death till he come, and his Spirit to direct, sanctify, and comfort, till he return. We have frequent tokens of love from him, to show us he forgets not his purpose, nor us. We behold the forerunners of his coming, foretold by himself, daily come to pass. We see the fig-tree put forth her branches, and therefore know the summer is nigh. We see the fields white unto harvest: and though the riotous world say, "Our Lord will be long a-coming," yet let the saints lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh. Alas! fellow-Christians, what should we do, if our Lord should not return! What a case are we here left in! What! leave us among wolves, and in the lion's den, among a generation of serpents, and here forget us! Did he buy us so dear, and then cast us off so: to leave us sinning, suffering, groaning, dying daily, and come no more to us? It cannot be; never fear it: it cannot be. This is like our unkind dealing with Christ, who, when we feel ourselves warm in the world, care not for coming at him; but this is not like Christ's dealing with us. He that would come to suffer, will surely come to triumph; and he that would come to purchase, will surely come to possess. Alas! where else were all our hopes? What were become of our faith, our prayers, our tears, and our waiting? What were all the patience of the saints worth to them? Were we not left of all men most miserable? Christians, hath Christ made us forsake all the world, and be forsaken of all the world; to hate all, and to be hated of all; and all this for him, that we may have him instead of all? And will he, think you, after all this, forget us, and forsake us himself? Far be such a thought from our hearts. But why stayed he not with his people, while he was here? Why must not the Comforter be sent? Was not the work all on earth done? Must he not receive the recompense of reward, and enter into his glory? Must he not take possession in our behalf? Must he not go to prepare a place for us? Must he not intercede with the Father; and plead his sufferings, and be filled with the Spirit, to send it forth; and receive authority, to subdue his enemies? Our abode here is short; if he had stayed on earth, what would it have been to enjoy him for a few days, and then die? But he hath more in heaven to dwell among; even the spirits of the just of

many generations, there made perfect. Besides, he will have us live by faith, and not by sight. O fellow—Christians, what a day will that be, when we, who have been kept prisoners by sin, by sinners, by the grave, shall be fetched out by the Lord himself; when Christ shall come from heaven to plead with his enemies, and set his captives free! It will not be such a coming as his first was, in meanness, and poverty, and contempt: he will not come to be spit upon, and buffeted, and scorned, and crucified again: he will not come, O careless world, to be slighted and neglected by you any more. And yet that coming, which was necessarily in infirmity and reproach for our sakes, wanted not its glory. If the angels of heaven must be the messengers of that coming, as being "tidings of joy to all people:" and the heavenly host must go before, or accompany the celebration of his nativity, and must praise God with that solemnity, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" O, then, with what shoutings will angels and saints at that day proclaim, "Glory to God, and peace and good will towards men!" If the stars of heaven must lead men from remote parts of the world to come to worship a child in a manger; how will the glory of his next appearing constrain all the world to acknowledge his sovereignty? If the King of Israel, riding on an ass, made his entry into Jerusalem with hosannahs, "Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest;" O with what proclamations of blessings, peace, and glory, will he come toward the New Jerusalem! If, when he was in the form of a servant, they cry out, "What manner of man is this, that both wind and sea obey him?" what will they say when they shall see him coming in his glory, and the heavens and the earth obey him! "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." O Christians, it was comfortable to you to hear from him, to believe in him, and hope for him. What will it be to see him? The promise of his coming and our deliverance was comfortable. What will it be thus to see him, with all the glorious attendance of angels, come in person to deliver us?x "The mighty God, the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth from

the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he might judge his people. Gather my saints together to me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice; and the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is Judge himself." Selah. (Psalm. 50:1–6.) This coming of Christ is frequently mentioned in the prophets, as the great support of his people's spirits till then. And whenever the apostles would quicken to duty, or comfort, and encourage to patient waiting, they usually do it by mentioning Christ's coming. Why, then, do we not use more this cordial consideration, whenever we want support and comfort? To think and speak of that day with horror, doth well beseem the impenitent sinner, but ill the believing saint. Such may be the voice of a believer, but it is not the voice of faith. Christians, what do we believe, and hope, and wait for, but to see that day! This is Paul's encouragement to moderation, to "rejoicing in the Lord always; The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4:4, 5.) It is "to all them that love his appearing, that the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give the crown of righteousness at that day." (2 Tim. 4:8.) Dost thou so long to have him come into thy soul with comfort and life, and takest thyself but for a forlorn orphan, while he seemeth absent? And dost thou not much more long for that coming which shall perfect thy life, and joy, and glory? Dost thou so rejoice after some short and slender enjoyment of him in thy heart? Oh! how wilt thou then rejoice! How full of joy was that blessed martyr, Mr. Glover, with the discovery of Christ to his soul, after long doubting and waiting in sorrows! So that he cries out, 'He is come! he is come!' If thou have but a dear friend returned, that hath been far and long absent; how do all run out to meet him with joy! Oh! saith the child, 'My father is come!' saith the wife, 'My husband is come!' And shall not we, when we behold our Lord in his majesty returning, cry out, 'He is come! He is come!' Shall the wicked, with inconceivable horror, behold him, and cry out, Oh! yonder is he whose blood we neglected, whose grace we resisted, whose counsels we refused, whose government we cast off! And shall

not then the saints, with inconceivable gladness, cry out, 'Oh! yonder is he whose blood redeemed us, whose Spirit cleansed us, whose law did govern us! Yonder comes he in whom we trusted, and now we see he hath not deceived our trust; he for whom we long waited, and now we see we have not waited in vain! O cursed corruption, that would have had us turn to the world, and present things, and give up our hopes, and say, 'Why should we wait for the Lord any longer?' Now we see, that "blessed are all they that wait for him." Believe it, fellow-Christians, this day is not far off. "For yet a little while, and he that comes will come, and will not tarry." And though the unbelieving world, and the unbelief of thy heart, may say, as those atheistical scoffers, "Where is the promise of his coming? Do not all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" Yet, let us know, "the Lord is not slack of his promise, as some men count slackness: one day with him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4, 8, 9.) I have thought on it many a time, as a small emblem of that day, when I have seen a prevailing army drawing towards the towns and castles of the enemy. Oh! with what glad hearts do all the poor prisoners within, hear the news, and behold their approach! How do they run up to their prison windows, and thence behold their friends with joy! How glad are they at the roaring report of that cannon, which is the enemy's terror! How do they clap each other on the back, and cry, 'Deliverance, deliverance!' While, in the mean time, the late insulting, scorning, cruel enemies begin to speak them fair, and beg their favour; but all in vain, for they are not at the disposal of prisoners, but of the general. Their fair usage may make their conditions somewhat the more easy, but yet they are used as enemies still. (Matt. 24:27.) Oh! when the conquering lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear with all the hosts of heaven: when he shall surprise the careless world, as a thief in the night; when as the lightning, which appeareth in the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall they behold him coming: what a change will the sight of this appearance work, both with the world, and with the saints! Now, poor deluded world, where is your mirth and your jollity? Now, where is your wealth and your glory? Where is that profane and careless heart, that slighted Christ and his Spirit,

and with stood all the offers of grace? Now, where is that tongue that mocked the saints, and jeered the holy ways of God, and made merry with his people's imperfections, and their own slanders? What! was it not you? Deny it if you can. Your heart condemns you, and "God is greater than your heart, and will condemn you much more." (1 John 3:20, 21.) Even, when you say, "Peace and safety, then destruction cometh upon you, as travail upon a woman with child; and you shall not escape." (1 Thess. 5:3.) Perhaps, if you had known just the day and hour when the Son of Man would have come, then you would have been found praying, or the like; but you should have watched, and been ready, because you know not the hour. But for that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing; "O, blessed is that servant: verily I say unto you (for Christ hath said it), he shall make him ruler over all his goods." (Matt. 24:42-47.) "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. 5:4.) O, how should it then be the character of a Christian, "to wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come!" (1 Thess. 1:10.) And with all faithful diligence, to prepare to meet our Lord with joy. And seeing his coming is on purpose "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," (2 Thess. 1:10,) O, what thought should glad our hearts more than the thought of that day! A little while, indeed, we have not "seen him, but yet a little while, and we shall see him." (John 14:18.) For he hath said, "I will not leave you comfortless, but will come unto you." We were comfortless, should he not come. And while we daily gaze and look up to heaven after him, let us remember what the angel said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10.) While he is now out of sight, it is a sword to our souls, while they daily ask us, "Where is your God?" (Psal. 42.) But then we shall be able to answer our enemies; "See, O proud sinners, yonder is our Lord." O now, Christians, should we not put up that petition heartily, "Let thy kingdom come; for the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let every Christian that heareth and readeth, say,

Come," and our Lord himself saith, "Surely I come quickly, amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:17, 20.)

Sect. II. The second stream that leadeth to paradise, is that great work of Jesus Christ, in raising our bodies from the dust, uniting them again unto the soul. A wonderful effect of infinite power and love. Yea, wonderful indeed, saith unbelief, if it be true. What, saith the atheist and sadducee, shall all these scattered bones and dust become a man? A man drowned in the sea is eaten by fishes, and they by men again, and these men by worms; what is become of the body of that first man; shall it rise again? Thou fool (for so Paul calls thee), dost thou dispute against the power of the Almighty: wilt thou pose him with this sophistry: dost thou object difficulties to the infinite strength? Thou blind mole; thou silly worm; thou little piece of creeping, breathing clay; thou dust; thou nothing: knowest thou who it is, whose power thou dost question? If thou shouldst see him, thou wouldst presently die. If he should come and dispute his cause with thee, couldst thou bear it: or if thou shouldst hear his voice, couldst thou endure? But come thy way, let me take thee by the hand, and do thou a little follow me; and let me, with reverence, as Elihu, plead for God; and for that power whereby I hope to arise. Seest thou this great, massy body of the earth: what beareth it, and upon what foundation doth it stand? Seest thou this vast ocean of waters: what limits them, and why do they not overflow and drown the earth: whence is that constant ebbing and flowing of her tides: wilt thou say from the moon, or other planets: and whence have they that power of effective influence; must thou not come to a cause of causes, that can do all things? And doth not reason require thee, to conceive of that cause as a perfect intelligence, and voluntary agent, and not such a blind worker and empty notion as that nothing is, which thou callest nature? Look upward; seest thou that glorious body of light, the sun: how many times bigger it is than all the earth; and yet how many thousand miles doth it run in one minute of an hour, and that without weariness, or failing a moment? What thinkest thou; is not that power able to effect thy resurrection, which doth all this: dost thou not see as great works as a resurrection every

day before thine eyes, but that the commonness makes thee not admire them? Read but Job. 37 to 41, and take heed of disputing against God again, or ever. Knowest thou not, that with him all things are possible; can he make a camel go through the eye of a needle; can he make such a blind sinner as thou to see, and such a proud heart as thine to stoop, and such an earthly mind as thine, heavenly; and subdue all that thy fleshly, foolish wisdom? And is not this as great a work, as to raise thee from the dust. wast thou any more unlikely to be, when thou wast nothing, than thou shalt be when thou art dust: is it not as easy to raise the dead, as to make heaven and earth, and all of nothing? But if thou be unpersuadable, all I say to thee more is, as the prophet to the prince of Samaria (2 Kings 7:20), "Thou shalt see that day with thine eyes," but little to thy comfort; for that which is the day of relief to the saints, shall be a day of revenge on thee: there is a rest prepared, but thou canst not "enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3:19.) But for thee, O believing soul, never think to comprehend, in the narrow capacity of thy shallow brain, the counsels and ways of thy Maker; any more than thou canst contain in thy fist the vast ocean. He never intended thee such a capacity, when he made thee, and gave thee that measure thou hast, any more than he intended to enable that worm, or this post, or stone, fully to know thee. Therefore, when he speaks, dispute not, but believe, as Abraham, who considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was also able to perform. And so, "against hope, believed in hope." (Rom. 4:18–21.) So look thou not on the dead bones, and dust, and difficulties, but at the promise. (Isa. 26:20, 21.) Martha knew her brother should rise again at the resurrection: but if Christ say, he shall rise before, it must be believed. Come, then, fellow-Christians, let us contentedly commit these careasses to the dust: that prison shall not long contain them. Let us lie down in peace, and take our rest, it will not be an everlasting night, or endless sleep. What if we go out of the troubles and stirs of the world, and enter into those chambers of dust, and the

doors be shut upon us, and we hide ourselves, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be over-past? Yet, behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: and then the earth shall disclose us, and the dust shall hide us no more. As sure as we awake in the morning, when we have slept out the night, so sure shall we then awake. And what if, in the meantime, we must be loathsome lumps, cast out of the sight of men, as not fit to be endured among the living: what, if our carcasses become as vile as those of the beasts that perish: what, if our bones be dug up, and scattered about the pit brink, and worms consume our flesh. Yet we know that our Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at last on earth, and we shall see him with these eyes. And withal it is but this flesh that suffers all this; and what is this comely piece of flesh, which thou art loath should come to so base a state? Is it not a hundred years since it was either nothing, or an invisible something. And is it not most of it for the present, if not an appearing nothing, seeming something to an imperfect sense; yet, at best, a condensation of invisibles, which, that they may become sensible, are become more gross, and so more vile. Where is all that fair mass of flesh and blood which thou hadst, before sickness consumed thee? annihilated, it is not; only resolved into its principles; show it me if thou canst. Into how small a handful of dust or ashes will that whole mass, if buried or burnt, return: and into how much smaller can a chemist reduce that little, and leave all the rest invisible. What, if God prick the bladder, and let out the wind that puffs thee up to such a substance, and resolve thee into thy principles? Doth not the seed thou sowest die before it spring; and what cause have we to be tender of this body; oh, what care, what labour, what grief and sorrow hath it cost us; how many a weary, painful, tedious hour! O my soul, grudge not that God should disburden thee of all this: fear not, lest he should free thee from thy fetters: be not so loath that he should break down thy prison, and let thee go: what, though some terrible earthquake go before; it is but that the foundations of the prison may be shaken, and so the doors fly open; the terror will be to thy jailor, but to thee deliverance. O, therefore, at what hour of the night soever thy Lord come, let him find thee, though with thy feet in these stocks,

yet singing praises to him, and not fearing the time of thy deliverance. If unclothing be the thing thou fearest, why it is that thou mayest have better clothing put on. If to be turned out of doors be the thing thou fearest, why remember, then, when this earthly house of thy tabernacle is dissolved, thou hast "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." How willingly do our soldiers burn their huts, when the siege is ended, being glad their work is done, that they may go home and dwell in houses. Lay down, then, cheerfully this bag of loathsome filth, this lump of corruption; thou shalt undoubtedly receive it again in incorruption. Lay down freely this terrestrial, this natural body; believe it, thou shalt receive it again a celestial, a spiritual body. And though thou lay it down into the dirt with great dishonour, thou shalt receive it into glory with honour: and though thou art separated from it through weakness, it shall be raised again, and joined to thee in mighty power. When the trumpet of God shall sound the call, "Come away, arise ye dead;" (1 Cor. 15:42-45;) who shall then stay behind? Who can resist the powerful command of our Lord; when he shall call to the earth and sea, "O earth, give up thy dead! O sea, give up thy dead?" Then shall our Sampson break for us the bonds of death. And as the ungodly shall, like toads from their holes, be drawn forth whether they will or no; so shall the godly, as prisoners of hope, awake out of sleep, and come with joy to meet their Lord. The first that shall be called, are the saints that sleep; and then the saints that are then alive shall be changed. For Paul hath told us, by the word of the Lord, "That they which are alive, and remain till the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then they which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, O Christians, comfort one another with these words." This is one of the Gospel mysteries: "That we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible

must put on incorruption; and this mortal, immortality. Then is death swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:51–57.) Triumph now, O Christian, in these promises; thou shalt shortly triumph in their performance. For this is the day that the Lord will make; "we shall be glad and rejoice therein." (Ps. 118.) The grave that could not keep our Lord, cannot keep us: he arose for us, and by the same power will cause us to arise. "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again; even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." (1 Thess. 4:14.) Can the head live, and the body and members remain dead? O, write those sweet words upon thy heart, Christian, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:19.) As sure as Christ lives, ye shall live: and as sure as he is risen, we shall rise. Else the dead perish. Else what is our hope; what advantageth all our duty or suffering? Else the sensual epicure were one of the wisest men; and what better are we than our beasts? Surely our knowledge, more than theirs, would but increase our sorrows; and our dominion over them is no great felicity. The servant hath oftentimes a better life than his master, because he hath few of his master's eares. And our dead careasses are no more comely, nor yield a sweeter savour, than theirs. But we have a sure ground of hope. And besides this life, we have "a life that is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:3, 4.) O let not us be as the purblind world, that cannot see afar off; let us never look at the grave, but let us see the resurrection beyond it. Faith is quick-sighted, and can see as far as that is; yea, as far as eternity. Therefore let our hearts be glad, and our glory rejoice, and our flesh also shall rest in hope; for he will not leave us in the grave, nor suffer us still to see corruption. Yea, "Therefore, let us be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know our labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.)

God made not death, but Christ overcame it, when sin had introduced it. Death is from ourselves, but life from the Author and Lord of life. The devil had the power of death till he was overcome by

death; (Heb. 2:14, 15;) but he that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, hath now the keys of death and hell. (Rev. 1:18.) That the very damned live, is to be ascribed to him; that they live in misery, is long of themselves. Not that it is more desirable to them to live miserably, as there they must do, than not to live; but as God's glory is his chief, if not only end, in all his works, so was it the Mediator's chief end in the world's reparation. They shall, therefore, live, whether they will or no, for God's glory, though they live not to their own comfort, because they would not.

But whatsoever is the cause of the wicked's resurrection, this sufficeth to the saint's comfort, that resurrection to glory is only the fruit of Christ's death: and this fruit they shall certainly partake of. The promise is sure: "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth." (John 5:28.) "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Christ, that of all which he hath given him he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day;" (John 6:39;) "and that every one that believeth on the Son may have everlasting life, and he will raise him up at the last day." (Ver. 40.) If the prayers of the prophet could raise the Shunamite's dead child, and if the dead soldier revived at the touch of the prophet's bones, how certainly shall the will of Christ, and the power of his death, raise us. The voice that said to Jairus' daughter, "Arise;" and to Lazarus, "Arise, and come forth," can do the like for us. If his death immediately raised the dead bodies of many saints in Jerusalem; if he gave power to his apostles to raise the dead; then what doubt of our resurrection? And thus, Christian, thou seest that Christ, having sanctified the grave by his burial, and conquered death, and broke the ice for us, a dead body and a grave is not now so horrid a spectacle to a believing eye; but as our Lord was nearest his resurrection and glory when he was in the grave, even so are we: and he that hath promised to make our bed in sickness, will make the dust as a bed of roses. Death shall not dissolve the union betwixt him and us, nor turn away his affections from us; but in the morning of eternity he will send his angels, yea, come himself, and roll away the stone, and unseal our grave, and reach us his hand, and deliver us alive to our Father. Why, then, doth

the approach of death so cast thee down, O my soul; and why art thou thus disquieted within me? The grave is not hell: if it were, yet there is thy Lord present; and thence should his merit and mercy fetch thee out. Thy sickness is not unto death, though I die, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. Say not, then, he lifted me up to cast me down, and hath raised me high that my fall may be the lower; but he casts me down that he may lift me up, and layeth me low that I may rise the higher. A hundred experiences have sealed this truth unto thee, that the greatest dejections are intended but for advantages to thy greatest dignity, and the Redeemer's glory.

Sect. III. The third part of this Prologue to the Saint's Rest, is the public and solemn process at their judgment, where they shall first, themselves, be acquitted and justified; and then, with Christ, judge the world. Public I may well call it, for all the world must there appear: young and old, of all estates and nations, that ever were from the creation to that day, must here come and receive their doom. The judgment shall be set, and the books opened, and the book of life produced; "and the dead shall be judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works, and whosoever is not found written in the book of life, is cast into the lake of fire." (Rom. 2:16, and 14:10; Rev. 20:12–15.) O, terrible! O, joyful day! Terrible to those that have let their lamps go out, and have not watched, but forgot the coming of their Lord: joyful to the saints, whose waiting and hope was to see this day. Then shall the world behold the goodness and severity of the Lord: on them who perish, severity; but to his chosen, goodness: when every one must give account of his stewardship, and every talent of time, health, wit, mercies, afflictions, means, warnings, must be reckoned for; (Matt. 24, and 25:5–7; Rom. 1:22;) when the sins of youth, and those which they had forgotten, and their secret sins, shall all be laid open before angels and men; when they shall see all their friends, wealth, old delights, all their confidence and false hopes of heaven, to forsake them; when they shall see the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they neglected, whose word they disobeyed, whose ministers they abused,

whose servants they hated, now sitting to judge them; when their own consciences shall cry out against them, and call to their remembrance all their misdoings. Remember at such a time, such or such a sin; at such a time Christ sued hard for thy conversion; the minister pressed it home to thy heart, thou wast touched to the quick with the word; thou didst purpose and promise returning, and yet thou cast off all. When a hundred sermons, sabbaths, mercies, shall each step up and say, I am witness against the prisoner; Lord, I was abused, and I was neglected; O, which way will the wretched sinner look! O, who can conceive the terrible thoughts of his heart! Now the world cannot help him; his old companions cannot help him; the saints neither can nor will; only the Lord Jesus can: but, oh! there is the soul-killing misery, he will not; nay, without violating the truth of his word, he cannot; though otherwise, in regard of his absolute power, he might. The time was, sinner, when Christ would, and you would not; and now, oh! fain would you, and he will not. Then he followed thee, in vain, with entreaties; O, poor sinner, what doest thou; will thou sell thy soul and Saviour for a lust: look to me, and be saved; return, why wilt thou die? But thy ear and heart were shut up against all. Why, now thou shalt cry, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall say, "Depart, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. 7:22, 23.) Now, mercy, mercy, Lord; O, but it was mercy you so long set light by, and now your day of mercy is over. What then remains, but to cry out to the mountains, Fall upon us; and the hills, O cover us from the presence of him that sits upon the throne! But all in vain; for thou hast the Lord of mountains and hills for thine enemy, whose voice they will obey, and not thine. Sinner, make not light of this; for, as thou livest, except a thorough change and coming in to Christ prevent it, which God grant, thou shalt shortly, to thy inconceivable horror, see that day. O, wretch, will thy cups then be wine or gall; will they be sweet or bitter; will it comfort thee to think of thy merry days, and how pleasantly thy time slipped away; will it do thee good to think how rich thou wast, and how honourable thou wast; or will it not rather wound thy very soul to remember thy folly, and make thee, with anguish of heart, and rage against thyself, to cry out, O wretch, where was mine understanding! Didst thou make so light of

that sin that now makes thee tremble: how couldst thou hear so lightly of the redeeming blood of the Son of God; how couldst thou quench so many motions of his Spirit, and stifle so many quickening thoughts as were cast into thy soul? What took up all that life's time which thou hadst given thee to make sure work against this day; what took up all thy heart, thy love, and delight, which should have been laid out on the Lord Jesus? Hadst thou room in thy heart for the world, thy friend, thy flesh, thy lusts, and none for Christ? O, wretch, whom hadst thou to love, but him; what hadst thou to do, but to seek him, and cleave to him, and enjoy him! Oh! wast thou not told of this dreadful day a thousand times, till the commonness of that doctrine made thee weary; how couldst thou slight such warnings, and rage against the minister, and say he preached damnation: had it not been better to have heard and prevented it, than now to endure it? O, now, for one offer of Christ, for one sermon, for one day of grace more; but too late; alas! too late. Poor, careless sinner, I did not think here to have said so much to thee; for my business is to refresh the saints; but if these lines do fall into thy hands, and thou vouchsafe the reading of them, I here charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; (2 Tim. 4:1;) that thou make haste and get alone, and set thyself sadly to ponder on these things: ask thy heart, Is this true, or is it not; is there such a day, and must I see it? O, what do I then; why trifle I; is it not time, full time, that I had made sure of Christ and comfort long ago; should I sit still another day, who have lost so many; had I not rather be found one of the holy, faithful, watchful Christians, than a worldling, a good fellow, or a man of honour: why should I not, then, choose it now; will it be best then, and is it not best now? O, think of these things! A few sad hours spent in serious fore-thoughts is a cheap prevention; it is worth this, or it is worth nothing. Friend, I profess to thee, from the word of the Lord, that of all thy sweet sins, there will then be nothing left, but the sting in thy conscience, which will never out through all eternity; except the blood of Christ, believed in, and valued above all the world, do now, in this day of grace, get it out. Thy sin is like a beautiful harlot: while she is young and fresh, she

hath many followers; but when old and withered, every one would shut their hands of her: she is only their shame; none would know her. So will it be with thee: now thou wilt venture on it, whatever it cost thee; but then, when men's rebellious ways are charged on their souls to death, O that thou couldst rid thy hands of it; O that thou couldst say, Lord, it was not I. Then, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, naked, imprisoned: how fain would they put it off. Then sin will be sin indeed, and grace will be grace indeed; then, say the foolish virgins, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are out. O, for some of your faith and holiness, which we were wont to mock at; but what is the answer, "Go buy for yourselves; we have little enough; would we had rather much more." Then they will be glad of any thing like grace; and if they can but produce any external familiarity with Christ, or common gifts, how glad are they! Lord, we have eat and drunk in thy presence, prophesied in thy name, cast out devils, done many wonderful works; we have been baptised, heard sermons, professed Christianity: but, alas! this will not serve the turn. He will profess to them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. O, dead-hearted sinner, is all this nothing to thee! As sure as Christ is true, this is true; take it in his own words: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left." (Matt. 25:31.) And so on, as you may read in the text.

But why tremblest thou, O humble, gracious soul? Cannot the enemies and slights of Christ be foretold their doom, but thou must quake: do I make sad the soul that God would not have sad? (Ezek. 13:22.) Doth not thy Lord know his own sheep, "who have heard his voice, and followed him?" (John 10:27.) He that would not lose the family of one Noah in a common deluge, when him only he had found faithful in all the earth; (Gen. 7:1–3, and 19:22;) he that would not overlook one Lot in Sodom; nay, that could do nothing till he went forth: will he forget thee at that day? "Thy Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust to the

day of judgment to be punished;" (2 Pet. 2:9;) he knoweth how to make the same day the greatest for terror to his foes, and yet the greatest for joy to his people. He ever intended it for the great distinguishing and separating day; wherein both love and fury should be manifested to the highest. (Matt. 13.) O, then, "Let the heavens rejoice, the sea, the earth, the floods, the hills; for the Lord cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." (Psal. 96:11–13.) But, especially, "Let Sion hear, and be glad, and her children rejoice;" (Psal. 98:7–9;) for, "when God ariseth to judgment, it is to save the meek of the earth." (Psal. 97:8.) They have judged and condemned themselves many a day in heart-breaking confessions, and therefore shall not be judged to condemnation by the Lord; "for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (1 Cor. 11:31.) And, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:1, 33.) Shall the law? Why, "Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; but we are not under the law, but under grace: for the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 3:19, 5:1, 6:14, and 8:2.) Or shall conscience? Why, we were, long ago, "justified by faith, and so have peace with God, and have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." (Heb. 10:22.) "It is God that justifieth; who shall condemn?" (Rom. 8:16.) If our Judge condemn us not, who shall? He that said to the adulterous woman, "Hath no man condemned thee? neither do I condemn thee;" (John 8:11;) He will say to us, more faithfully than Peter to him, "Though all men deny thee, or condemn thee, I will not." (Mark 14:31.) "Thou hast confessed me before men, and I will confess thee before my Father, and the angels of heaven." (Matt. 10:32.) He, whose first coming was not "to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved;" (John 3:17;) I am sure, intends not his second coming to condemn his people, but that they, through him, might be saved. He hath given us eternal life in charter and title already, yea, and partly in possession; and will he after that condemn us? When he gave us

the knowledge of his Father and himself, he gave us eternal life; and he hath verily told us, "that he that heareth his word, and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life." (John 5:24, and 17:8.) Indeed, if our Judge were our enemy, as he is to the world, then we might well fear. If the devil were our judge, or the ungodly were our judge, then we should be condemned as hypocrites, as heretics, as schismatics, as proud, or covetous, or what not? But our Judge is Christ, who died; yea, rather, who is risen again, and maketh request for us: for, "all power is given him in heaven and in earth, and all things delivered into his hands; and the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." For, though God judge the world, yet the Father, immediately, without his Vicegerent, Christ, judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. Oh what inexpressible joy may this afford to a believer, that our dear Lord, who loveth our souls, and whom our souls love, shall be our Judge! Will a man fear to be judged by his dearest friend, by a brother, by a father, or a wife by her own husband? Christian, did he come down, and suffer, and weep, and bleed, and die for thee, and will he now condemn thee; was he judged, and condemned, and executed in thy stead, and now will he condemn thee himself; did he make a bath of his blood for thy sins, and a garment of his own righteousness for thy nakedness, and will he now open them to thy shame; is he the undertaker for thy salvation, and will he be against thee; hath it cost him so dear to save thee, and will he now himself destroy thee; hath he done the most of the work already, in redeeming, regenerating, and sanctifying, justifying, preserving, and perfecting thee, and will he now undo all again: nay, hath he begun, and will he not finish; hath he interceded so long for thee to the Father, and will he cast thee away himself? If all these be likely, then fear, and then rejoice not. Oh what an unreasonable sin is unbelief, that will charge our Lord with such unmercifulness and absurdities! Well, then, fellow-Christians, let the terror of that day be ever so great, surely our Lord can mean no ill to us in all: let it make the devils tremble, and the wicked tremble; but

it shall make us to leap for joy: let Satan accuse us, we have our answer at hand; our surety hath discharged the debt. If he have not fulfilled the law, then let us be charged as breakers of it: if he have not suffered, then let us suffer; but if he have, we are free: nay, our Lord will make answer for us himself. "These are mine, and shall be made up with my jewels: for their transgressions was I stricken, and cut off from the earth; for them was I bruised and put to grief: my soul was made an offering for their sin, and I bore their transgressions. They are my seed, and the travail of my soul: I have healed them by my stripes; I have justified them by my knowledge." (Isa. 53:5, 8, 10, 11.) "They are my sheep: who shall take them out of my hands?" (John 10:28.) Yea, though the humble soul be ready to speak against itself, "Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee," &c., yet will not Christ do so. This is the day of the believer's full justification. They were, before, made just, and esteemed just, and by faith justified in law; and this, to some, evidenced to their consciences. But now they shall both, by apology, be maintained just; and, by sentence, pronounced just actually, by the lively voice of the Judge himself; which is the most perfect justification. Their justification by faith, is a giving them title in law, to that apology and absolving sentence which at that day they shall actually receive from the mouth of Christ; by which sentence, their sin, which before was pardoned in the sense of the law, is now perfectly pardoned, or blotted out by this ultimate judgment. (Acts 3:19.) Therefore, well may it be called the time of refreshing, as being to the saints, the perfecting of all their former refreshments. He who was vexed with a quarrelling conscience, an accusing world, a cursing law, is solemnly pronounced righteous by the Lord, the Judge. Though he cannot plead Not guilty, in regard of fact, yet, being pardoned, he shall be acquitted by the proclamation of Christ: and that is not all; but he that was accused as deserving hell, is pronounced a member of Christ, a son of God, and so adjudged to eternal glory. The sentence of pardon, passed by the Spirit and conscience within us, was wont to be exceeding sweet; but this will fully and finally resolve the question, and leave no room for doubting again for ever. We shall more rejoice that our names are found written in the book of life,

than if men or devils were subjected to us; and it must needs affect us deeply with the sense of our mercy and happiness, to behold the contrary condition of others; to see most of the world tremble with terror, while we triumph with joy; to hear them doomed to everlasting flames, and see them thrust into hell, when we are proclaimed heirs of the kingdom; to see our neighbours, that lived in the same towns, came to the same congregations, sat in the same seats, dwelt in the same houses, and were esteemed more honourable in the world than ourselves; to see them now so differenced from us, and by the Searcher of hearts, eternally separated. Thus, with the great magnificence and dreadfulness of the day, doth the apostle pathetically express: "It is righteous with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," &c. (2 Thess. 1:6–10.) And, now, is not here enough to make that day a welcome day, and the thoughts of it delightful to us? but yet there is more. We shall be so far from the dread of that judgment, that ourselves shall become the judges. Christ will take his people, as it were, into commission with him; and they shall sit and approve his righteous judgment. Oh fear not now the reproaches, scorns, and censures, of those that must then be judged by us: did you think, O wretched worldlings, that those poor, despised men, whom you made your daily derision, should be your judges; did you believe this, when you made them stand as offenders before the bar of your judgment? No more than Pilate, when he was judging Christ, did believe that he was condemning his Judge; or the Jews, when they were whipping, imprisoning, killing the apostles, did think to see them sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Do you not know," saith Paul, "that the saints shall judge the world: nay, know you not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3.) Surely, were it not the word of Christ that speaks it, this advancement would seem incredible, and the language arrogant; yet even Enoch, the seventh from Adam,

prophesied of this, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14.) Thus shall the saints be honoured, and the "righteous have dominion in the morning." (Psal. 9:14.) O, that the careless world were "but wise to consider this, and that they would remember their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29.) That they would be now of the same mind as they will be when they shall see the "heavens pass away with a noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, to be burnt up." (2 Pet. 3:10.) When all shall be on fire about their ears, and all earthly glory consumed; "for the heavens, and the earth, which are now, are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:7.) But, alas! when all is said, "the wicked will do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10.) Rejoice, therefore, O ye saints, yet watch; and what you have, hold fast till your Lord come; (Rev. 2:25;) and study that use of this doctrine which the apostle propounds. "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness: looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God; wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat." (2 Pet. 3:11, 12.) But go your way, keep close with God, and wait till your change come, and till this end be; "for you shall rest, and stand in the lot at the end of the days." (Dan. 12:13.)

The fourth antecedent, and highest step to the saints' advancement, is their solemn coronation, enthronizing, and receiving into the kingdom. For, as Christ, their Head, is anointed both King and Priest, so under him are his people made unto God both kings and priests; (Rev. 1:5;) (for prophecy, that ceaseth) "to reign and to offer praises for ever." (Rev. 5:10.) "The crown of righteousness, which was laid up for them, shall by the Lord the righteous Judge be given them at that day." (2 Tim. 4:8.) "They have been faithful to the death,

and therefore shall receive the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) And according to the improvement of their talents here, so shall their rule and dignity be enlarged, (Matt. 25:21, 23,) so that they are not dignified with empty titles, but real dominions: for Christ "will take them and set them down with himself on his own throne; (Rev. 3:21;) and will give them power over the nations, even as he received of his Father; (Rev. 2:26–28;) and will give them the morning star. The Lord himself will give them possession with these applauding expressions: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25:21, 23.) And with this solemn and blessed proclamation shall he enthrone them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Every word full of life and joy. "Come;" this is the holding forth of the golden sceptre, to warrant our approach unto this glory. Come now as near as you will: fear not the Bethshemite's judgment, for the enmity is utterly taken away. This is not such a "come" as we were wont to hear. "Come, take up your cross and follow me:" though that was sweet, yet this much more. "Ye blessed;" blessed indeed, when that mouth shall so pronounce us. For though the world hath accounted us accursed, and we have been ready to account ourselves so, yet certainly, those that he blesseth are blessed, and those whom he curseth, only are cursed; and his blessing shall not be revoked: but he hath blessed us, and we shall be blessed. "Of my Father;" blessed in the Father's love as well as the Son's, for they are one. The Father hath testified his love in their election, donation to Christ, sending of Christ, accepting his ransom, &c., as the Son hath also testified his. "Inherit;" no longer bondmen, nor servants only, nor children under age, who differ not in possession, but only in title from servants; (Gal. 4:1, 5–7;) but now we are heirs of the kingdom, (Jam. 2:5,) coheirs with Christ. "The kingdom;" no less than the kingdom. Indeed, to be a King of kings, and Lord of lords, is our Lord's own proper title; but to be kings and reign with him, is ours. The fruition of this kingdom, is as the fruition of the light of the sun, each have the whole, and the rest nevertheless. "Prepared for you;" God is the alpha as well as the

omega of our blessedness. Eternal love hath laid the foundation. He prepared the kingdom for us, and then prepared us for the kingdom. This is the preparation of his counsel and decree, for the execution whereof Christ was yet to make a further preparation. "For you;" not for believers only in general, who without individual persons are nobody; nor only for you, upon condition of your believing, but for you personally and determinately, for all the conditions were also prepared for you. "From the foundation of the world;" not only from the promise after Adam's fall, as some, but, as the phrase usually signifieth though not always, from eternity. These were the eternal thoughts of God's love towards us, and this is it he purposed for us. (Matt. 25:20, 21, 34, 35; Rev. 2 and 3.)

But a greater difficulty ariseth in our way. In what sense is our improvement of our talent, our well-doing, our overcoming, our harbouring, visiting, feeding, &c., Christ, in his little ones, alleged as a reason of our coronation and glory? Is not it the purchased possession and mere fruit of Christ's blood? If every man must be judged according to his works, and receive according to what they have done in the flesh, whether good or evil; and God "will render to every man according to his deeds;" (Rom. 2:6, 7;) and give eternal life to all men, if they patiently continue in well-doing, and give right to the tree of life, (Rev. 22:14,) and entrance into the city, to the doers of his commandments: and if the last absolving sentence be the completing of our justification, and so "the doers of the law be justified;" (Rom. 2:13;) why, then, what is become of free grace; or justification by faith only; of the sole righteousness of Christ to make us accepted? Then, the papists say rightly, That we are righteous by our personal righteousness; and good works concur to justification.

Answ. I did not think to have said so much upon controversy; but because the difficulty is very great, and the matter very weighty, as being near the foundation, I have in another book added to what I said before, certain brief positions, containing my thoughts on this subject; which may tend to the clearing of these and many other difficulties hereabouts, to which I refer you.

But that the plain, constant language of Scripture may not be perverted or disregarded, I only premise these advertisements by way of caution, till thou come to read the fuller answer.

1. Let not the names of men draw thee one way or other, nor make thee partial in searching for truth; dislike the men for their unsound doctrine; but call not doctrine unsound, because it is theirs; nor sound, because of the repute of the writer.

2. Know this, that as an unhumbled soul is far apter to give too much to duty and personal righteousness, than to Christ; so an humble, self-denying Christian is as likely to err on the other hand, in giving less to duty than Christ hath given, and laying all the work from himself on Christ, for fear of robbing Christ of the honour; and so much to look at Christ without him, and think he should look at nothing in himself: that he forgets Christ within him. As Luther said of Melanethon's self-denying humility, "*Soli Deo omnia deberi tam obstinate asserit, ut mihi plane videatur saltem in hoc errare, quod Christum ipse fingat longius abesse cordi suo quam sit revera—Certe nimis nullus in hoc est Philippus.*" He so constantly ascribes all to God, that to me he seems directly to err, at least in this, that he feigneth or imagineth Christ to be further off from his own heart than indeed he is. Certainly he is too much nothing in this.

3. Our giving to Christ more of the work than Scripture doth, or rather our ascribing it to him out of the Scripture way and sense, doth but dishonour, and not honour him; and depress, but not exalt his free grace; while we deny the inward, sanctifying work of his Spirit, and extol his free justification, which are equal fruits of his merit, we make him an imperfect Saviour.

4. But to arrogate to ourselves any part of Christ's prerogative, is most desperate of all, and no doctrine more directly overthrows the Gospel, almost, than that of justification by the merits of our own, or by works of the law.

And thus we have, by the line and plummet of Scripture, fathomed this fourfold stream, and seen the Christian safely landed in paradise; and, in this four-wheeled fiery chariot, conveyed honourably to his rest. Now, let us a little further view those mansions, consider his privileges, and see whether there be any glory like unto this glory; read and judge, but not by outward appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

CHAP. VI

This Rest most excellent, discovered by Reason.

THE next thing to be handled is, the excellent properties of this rest, and admirable attributes, which, as so many jewels, shall adorn the crown of the saints. And first, before we speak of them particularly, let us try this happiness by the rules of the philosophers, and see whether they will not approve it the most transcendently good: not as if they were a sufficient touchstone, but that both the worldling and the saint may see, when any thing stands up in competition with this glory for the pre-eminence, reason itself will conclude against it. Now, in order of good, the philosopher will tell you, that by these rules you may know which is best.

Sect. I. 1. That which is desired and sought for itself, is better than that which is desired for something else: or the end, as such, is better than all the means. This concludeth for heaven's pre-eminence. All things are but means to that end. If any thing here be excellent, it is because it is a step to that; and the more conducive thereto, the more excellent. The salvation of our souls is the end of our faith, our hope, our diligence, of all mercies, of all ordinances, as before is proved. It is not for themselves, but for this rest, that all these are desired and used. (1 Pet. 5:9; 1 Thess. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:10.) Praying is not the end of praying, nor preaching the end of preaching, nor believing the end of believing. These are but the way to him, who is the way to this rest. Indeed, Christ himself is both the way and the

rest, the means and the end, singularly desirable as the way, but yet more as the end. (John 14:6.) If any thing that ever you saw or enjoyed, appear lovely and desirable, then must its end be so much more.

Sect. II. 2. In order of good, the last is still the best; for all good tends to perfection. The end is still the last enjoyed, though first intended. Now, this rest is the saints' last estate. Their beginning was as a grain of mustard-seed, but their perfection will be an estate high and flourishing. They were taken with David from the sheep-fold, to reign as kings for ever. Their first day was a day of small things, but their last will be an everlasting perfection. They sowed in tears, but they reap in joy. If their prosperity here, their *res secundæ*, were desirable, much more their *res ultimæ*, their final blessedness. (Psal. 126:5.) Rondeletius saw a priest at Rome, who would fall down in an ecstasy whenever he heard those words of Christ, *Consummatum est*, "It is finished;" but observing him careful in his fall ever to lay his head in a soft place, he, suspecting the dissimulation, by the threats of a cudgel quickly recovered him. But, methinks, the forethought of that consummation and last estate we spake of, should bring a considering Christian into such an unfeigned ecstasy, that he should even forget the things of the flesh, and no care or fear should raise him out of it. Surely, that is well which ends well, and that is good which is good at last; and, therefore, heaven must needs be good.

Sect. III. 3. Another rule is this: That whose absence or loss is the worst or the greatest evil, must needs itself be best, or the greatest good: and is there a greater loss than to lose this rest? If you could ask the restless souls that are shut out of it, they would tell you more sensibly than I can; for as none know the sweetness like those who enjoy it, so none know the loss like those who are deprived of it. Wicked men are here senseless of the loss, because they know not what they lose, and have the delights of flesh and sense to make them up, and make them forget it: but when they shall know it to their torment, as the saints do to their joy, and when they shall see men, from the east and west, sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in

the kingdom of God, and themselves shut out; (Luke 13:29;) when they shall know both what they have lost, and for what, and why they lost it, surely there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He that loses riches may have more, and he that loseth honour may repair it; or if not, yet he is not undone. He that loseth life may save it; but what becomes of him that loseth God; and who, or what, shall repair his loss? (Mark 8:35.) We can bear the loss of any thing below: if we have it not, we can either live without it, or die, and live eternally without it: but can we do so without God in Christ? (Matt. 6:33.) As God gives us outward things as auctaries, as over-plus, or above measure, into our bargain, so when he takes them from us he takes away our superfluities, rather than our necessities, and pareth but our nails, and toucheth not the quick. But can we so spare our part in glory? You know whose question it is, "What shall it profit a man to win all the world, and lose his own soul?" Will it prove a saving match? Or, "What shall a man give for the ransom of his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.) Christians, compare but all your losses with that loss, and all your sufferings with that suffering; and I hope you will lay your hand upon your mouth, and cease your repining thoughts for ever.

Sect. IV. 4. Another rule is this: That which cannot be given by man, or taken away by man, is ever better than that which can; and then I hope heaven will carry it; for, who hath the key of the everlasting treasures, and who is the disposer of the dignities of the saints? Who saith, "Come ye blessed, and go ye cursed?" Is it the voice of God, or of mere man? If "every good and perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of lights," (James 1:17,) whence, then, cometh the gift of eternal light with the Father? Whose privilege soever it is to be key-keepers of the visible churches here below; surely no mere man, but the man of sin, will challenge the keys of that kingdom, and undertake to shut out, or take in, or to dispose of that treasure of the church. We may be beholden to men, as God's instruments, for our faith, but no further; for "who is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom we believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. 3:4.) Surely, every step to that glory, every gracious gift

and act, every deliverance and mercy to the church, shall be so clearly from God, that his very name shall be written in the forehead of it, and his excellent attributes stamped upon it, that he who runs may read it was the work of God; and the question may easily be answered, whether it be from heaven, or of men; much more evidently that glory is the gift of the God of glory. What, can man give God, or earth and dust give heaven! Surely, no: and as much is it beyond them to deprive us of it. Tyrants and persecutors may take away our goods, but not our chief good; our liberties here, but not that state of freedom; our heads, but not our crown. You can shut us up in prisons, and shut us out of your church and kingdom, but shut us out of heaven if you can. Try in lower attempts. Can you deny us the light of the sun, and cause it to forbear its shining? Can you stop the influences of the planets, or deny us the dew of heaven, or command the clouds to shut up their womb, or stay the course of the flowing streams, or seal up the passages of the deep? How much less can you deprive us of our God, or deny us the light of his countenance, or stop the influences of his Spirit, or forbid the dew of his grace to fall, or stay the streams of his love, and shut up his overflowing, everflowing springs, or seal up the bottomless depth of his bounty? You can kill our bodies, if he permit you; but try whether you can reach our souls. Nay, it is not in the saints' own power to give to, or take away from themselves this glory: so that, according to this rule, there is no state like the saints' rest; for no man can give this rest to us, and none can take our joy from us. (John 16:22.)

Sect. V. 5. Another rule is this: That is ever better or best which ever maketh the owner or possessor himself better or best: and surely, according to this rule, there is no state like heaven. Riches, honour, and pleasure, make a man neither better nor best: grace here makes us better, but not best; that is reserved as the prerogative of glory. That is our good which doth us good, and that doth us good which makes us good; else it may be good in itself, but not good to us. External good is at too great a distance to be our happiness. It is not bread on our tables, but in our stomachs, that must nourish; nor blood on our clothes or skin, but in the liver, heart, and veins, which

is our life. Nay, the things of the world are so far from making the owners good, that they prove not the least impediments thereto, and snares to the best of men. Riches and honour do seldom help to humility; but of pride they occasionally become most frequent fomenters. The difficulty is so great of conjoining graciousness with greatness, that it is next to an impossibility: and their conditions so rare, that they are next to inconsistent. To have a heart taken up with Christ and heaven, when we have health and abundance in the world, is neither easy nor ordinary. Though soul and body compose but one man, yet they seldom prosper both together. Therefore, that is our chief good which will do us good at the heart; and that is our true glory which makes us all glorious within; and that the blessed day which will make us holy and blessed men; which will not only beautify our house, but cleanse our hearts; not only give us new habitations, and new relations, but also new souls and new bodies. The true knowing, living Christian complains more frequently and more bitterly of the wants and woes within him, than without him. If you overhear his prayers, or see him in his tears, and ask him what aileth him, he will cry out more, 'Oh! my dark understanding! oh! my hard, my unbelieving heart!' rather than, 'Oh! my dishonour!' or 'Oh! my poverty!' Therefore, it is his desired place and state, which affords a relief suitable to his necessities and complaints. And surely that is only this rest.

Sect. VI. 6. Another rule is, that the difficulty of obtaining shows the excellency: and, surely, if you consider but what it cost Christ to purchase it; what it costs the Spirit to bring men's hearts to it; what it costs ministers to persuade to it; what it costs Christians, after all this, to obtain it; and what it costs many a half-Christian that, after all, goes without it: you will say, that here is difficulty, and therefore excellency. Trifles may be had at a trivial rate, and men may have damnation far more easily. It is but to lie still, and sleep out our days in careless laziness. It is but to take our pleasure, and mind the world, and cast away the thoughts of sin, and grace, and Christ, and heaven, and hell, out of our minds; and do as the most do, and never trouble ourselves about these high things, but venture our souls upon

our presumptuous conceits and hopes, and let the vessel swim which way it will; and then stream, and wind, and tide, will all help us apace to the gulf of perdition. You may burn a hundred houses easier than build one; and kill a thousand men, than make one alive. The descent is easy, the ascent not so. To bring diseases is but to cherish sloth, please the appetite, and take what most delights us; but to cure them, will cost bitter pills, loathsome potions, tedious gripings, abstemious, accurate living; and perhaps all fall short too. He that made the way, and knows the way better than we, hath told us "it is narrow and strait," and requires striving; and they that have placed it more truly and observantly than we, do tell us it lies through many tribulations, and is with much ado passed through. Conclude, then it is surely somewhat worth that must cost all this.

Sect. VII. 7. Another rule is this: That is best, which not only supplieth necessity, but affordeth abundance. By necessity is meant here, that which we cannot live without; and, by abundance, is meant a more perfect supply, a comfortable, not a useless abundance. Indeed, it is suitable to a christian state and use, to be scanted here, and to have only from hand to mouth; and that, not only in his corporeal, but in his spiritual comforts. Here we must not be filled full, that so our emptiness may cause hungering, and our hungering cause seeking and craving, and our craving testify our dependance, and occasion receiving, and our receiving occasion thanks returning, and all advance the glory of the Giver. But when we shall be brought to the well-head, and united close to the overflowing fountain, we shall then thirst no more, because we shall be empty no more. Surely, if those blessed souls did not abound in their blessedness, they would never so abound in praises. Such blessing, and honour, and glory, and praise to God, would never accompany common mercies. All those Allelujahs are not, surely, the language of needy men. Now, we are poor, we speak supplications, and our beggar's tone discovers our low condition; almost all our language is complaining and craving, our breath sighing, and our life a labouring. (Prov. 18:23.) But, surely, where all this is turned into eternal praising and rejoicing, the case must needs be altered, and all wants supplied and forgotten. I

think their hearts full of joy, and their mouths full of thanks, proves their state abounding full of blessedness.

Sect. VIII. 8. Reason concludes that for the best, which is so in the judgment of the best and wisest men. Though it is true the judgment of imperfect man can be no perfect rule of truth or goodness; yet God revealeth this good to all on whom he will bestow it, and hides not from his people the end they should aim at and attain. If the holiest men are the best and wisest, then their lives tell you their judgments; and their unwearied labour and sufferings for this rest, show you they take it for the perfection of their happiness. If men of the greatest experience be the wisest men, and they that have tried both estates, then, surely it is vanity and vexation that is found below, and solid happiness and rest above. If dying men are wiser than others, who, by the world's forsaking them, and by the approach of eternity, begin to be undeceived; then, surely, happiness is hereafter, and not here: for though the deluded world, in their flourishing prosperity, can bless themselves in their fool's paradise, and merrily jest at the simplicity of the saints, yet scarce one of many, even of the worst of them, but are ready at last to cry out with Balaam, "O, that I might die the death of the righteous, and my last end might be like his!" Never take heed, therefore, what they think or say now; for as sure as they shall die, they will one of these days think and say clean contrary. As we regard not what a drunken man says, because it is not he, but the drink; and when he hath slept he will awake in another mind; so why should we regard what wicked men say now, who are drunk with security and fleshly delights, when we know beforehand, for certain, that when they have slept the sleep of death, at the furthest, they will awake in another mind. Only pity the perverted understandings of these poor men, who are beside themselves; knowing that one of these days, when too late experience brings them to their right minds, they will be of a far different judgment. They ask us, 'What are you wiser than your forefathers; than all the town besides; than such and such great men, and learned men?' And do you think, in good sadness, we may not, with better reason, ask you, 'What are you wiser than Enoch, and Noah; than

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel; than David and Solomon; than Moses and the prophets; than Peter, Paul, all the apostles, and all the sons of God, in all ages and nations, that ever went to heaven; yea, than Jesus Christ himself? Men may be deceived; but we appeal to the unerring judgment of wisdom itself, even the wise, all-knowing God, whether "a day in his courts be not better than a thousand elsewhere;" and whether "it be not better to be doorkeepers there, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness?" (Psal. 58:10.) Nay, whether the very "reproaches of Christ (even the scorns we have from you, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's,) be not greater riches than all the treasures of the world?" (Heb. 11:25, 26.) If wisdom, then, may pass the sentence, you see which way the cause will go; and "wisdom is justified of her children." (Matt. 11:19.)

Sect. IX. Lastly: another rule in reason is this: That good which containeth all other good in it, must needs itself be best. And where do you think, in reason, that all the streams of goodness do finally empty themselves? Is it not in God, from whom, by secret springs, they finally proceed? Where, else, do all the lines of goodness centre? Are not all the sparks contained in this fire; and all the drops in this ocean? Surely, the time was when there was nothing besides God, and then all good was only in him. And even now the creature's essence and existence are secondary, derived, contingent, improper, in comparison of his, "who is, and was, and is to come;" whose name alone is called, "I am." What do thine eyes see, or thine heart conceive desirable, which is not there to be had? Sin, indeed, there is none; but durst thou call that good? Worldly delights there are none; for they are good but for the present necessity, and please but the brutish senses. Brethren, do you fear losing or parting with any thing you now enjoy? What! Do you fear you shall want when you come to heaven? Shall you want the drops when you have the ocean; or the light of the candle, when you have the sun: or the shallow creature, when you have the perfect Creator? "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days thou shalt find it." (Eccles. 11:1.) Lay abroad thy tears, thy prayers, pains, boldly, and unweariedly: as God is true, thou dost but set them to usury, and

shalt receive a hundredfold. (Matt. 19:29.) Spare not, man, for state, for honour, for labour. If heaven do not make amends for all, God hath deceived us; which who dare once imagine. Cast away friends, houses, lands, life, if he bid thee: leap into the sea, as Peter, (Matt.14:29,) if he command thee: lose thy life, and thou shalt save it everlastingly; when those that saved theirs, shall lose them everlastingly. Venture all, man, upon God's word and promise. There is a day of rest coming which will fully pay for all. All the pence and the farthings thou expendest for him, are contained, with infinite advantage, in the massy gold and jewels of thy crown. When Alexander had given away his treasure, and they asked him where it was, he pointed to the poor, and said, "In scriniis," In my chests. And when he went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answers, "Spem majorum et meliorum," The hope of greater and better things. How much more boldly may we lay out all, and point to heaven, and say, it is in scriniis, in our everlasting treasure; and take that hope of greater and better things, instead of all. Nay, lose thyself for God, and renounce thyself, and thou shalt at that day find thyself again in him. Give him thyself, and he will receive thee upon the same terms as Socrates did his scholar, Æsehines; who gave himself to his master, because he had nothing else, "Accipio, sed ea lege ut te tibi meliorem reddam quam accepi:" that he may return thee to thyself better than he received thee. So, then, this rest is the good which containeth all other good in it. And thus you see, according to the rules of reason, the transcendent excellency of the saints' glory in the general. We shall next mention the particular excellencies.

CHAP. VII

The Excellencies of our Rest.

YET let us draw a little nearer, and see more immediately from the pure fountain of the Scriptures, what further excellencies this rest affordeth. And the Lord hide us in the clefts of the rock, and cover us

with the hands of indulgent grace, while we approach to take this view. And the Lord grant we may put off from our feet the shoes of irreverence and fleshly conceivings, while we stand upon this holy ground.

Sect. I. And first, it is a most singular honour and ornament, in the style of the saint's rest, to be called the purchased possession; that it is the fruit of the blood of the Son of God; yea, the chief fruit; yea, the end and perfection of all the fruits and efficacy of that blood. Surely, love is the most precious ingredient in the whole composition; and of all the flowers that grew in the garden of love, can there be brought one more sweet and beautiful to the garland, than this blood? Greater love than this there is not; to lay down the life of the lover. And to have this our Redeemer ever before our eyes, and the liveliest sense and freshest remembrance of that dying, bleeding love still upon our souls! O, how will it fill our souls with perpetual ravishments, to think, that in the streams of this blood we have swum through the violence of the world, the snares of Satan, the seducements of flesh, the curse of the law, the wrath of an offended God, the accusations of a guilty conscience, and the vexing doubts and fears of an unbelieving heart, and are passed through all, and are arrived safely at the breast of God! Now we are stupified with vile and senseless hearts, that can hear all the story of this bloody love, and read all the dolours and sufferings of love, and hear all his sad complaints, and all with dulness, and unaffected. He cries to us, "Behold and see; is it nothing to you, O, all ye that pass by? Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" (Lam. 1:12.) And we will scarce hear or regard the dolorous voice, nor scarce turn aside to view the wounds of him who turned aside, and took us up to heal our wounds at this so dear a rate. But, oh! then our perfected souls will feel as well as hear, and, with feeling apprehensions, flame again in love for love. Now we set his picture, wounded and dying, before our eyes, but can get it no nearer our hearts than if we believed nothing of what we read; but, then, when the obstructions between the eye and the understanding are taken away, and the passage opened between the head and the heart, surely our eyes will everlastingly affect our

heart. And while we view, with one eye, our slain, revived Lord, and with the other eye, our lost, recovered souls, and transcendent glory, these views will eternally pierce us, and warm our very souls. And those eyes, through which folly and lust have so often stolen into our hearts, shall now be the casements to let in the love of our dearest Lord for ever. Now, though we should, as some do, travel to Jerusalem, and view the Mount of Olives, where he prayed and wept, and see that dolorous way by which he bare his cross, and entered the temple of the holy grave; yea, if we should, with Peter, have stooped down and seen the place where he lay, and beheld his relicts; yet these bolted doors of sin and flesh would have kept out the feeling of all that love. But, oh! that is the joy! We shall then leave these hearts of stone and rock behind us, and the sin that here so close besets us, and the sottish unkindness that followed us so long, shall not be able to follow us into that glory. But we shall behold, as it were, the wounds of love with eyes and hearts of love for ever. Suppose, a little to help our apprehensions, that a saint, who had partaken of the joys of heaven, hath been translated from as long an abode in hell, and after the experience of such a change, should have stood with Mary and the rest, by the cross of Christ, and have seen the blood, and heard the groans of his Redeemer. What, think you, would love have stirred in his breast or no? Would the voice of his dying Lord have melted his heart or no? O, that I were sensible of what I speak! With what astonishing apprehensions, then, will redeemed saints everlastingly behold their blessed Redeemer! I will not meddle with their vain, audacious question, who must needs know, whether the glorified body of Christ do yet retain either the wounds or scars. But this is most certain, that the memory of it will be as fresh, and the impressions of love as deep, and its working as strong, as if his wounds were still in our eyes, and his complaints still in our ears, and his blood still streaming afresh. Now his heart is open to us, and ours shut to him: but when his heart shall be open, and our hearts open, oh! the blessed congress that there will then be! What a passionate meeting was there between our new-risen Lord and the first sinful, silly woman that he appears to! How doth love struggle for expressions, and the straitened fire, shut up in the

breast, strive to break forth! (John 20:16; Matt. 28:9.) "Mary!" saith Christ: "Master!" saith Mary: and presently she clasps about his feet, having her heart as near to his heart as her hands were to his feet. What a meeting of love then, there will be, between the new glorified saint and the glorious Redeemer! But I am here at a loss, my apprehensions fail me, and fall too short; only this, I know, it will be the singular praise of our inheritance, that it was bought with the price of that blood; and the singular joy of the saints, to behold the purchaser and the price together with the possession. Neither will the views of the wounds of love renew our wounds of sorrow: he whose first words, after his resurrection, were to a great sinner: "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John 20:13;) knows how to raise love and joy by all those views, without raising any cloud of sorrow, or storm of tears at all. (2 Sam. 23:16, 17.) He that made the sacramental commemoration of his death to be his church's feast, will surely make the real enjoyment of its blessed purchase to be marrow and fatness. And if it afforded joy to hear from his mouth, "This is my body which is given for you," and "This is my blood which was shed for you;" what joy will it afford to hear, "This glory is the fruit of my body and my blood!" And what a merry feast will it be, when we shall drink of the fruit of the vine new with him in the kingdom of his Father, as the fruit of his own blood! David would not drink of the waters which he longed for, because they were the blood of those men who jeoparded their lives for them, and thought them fitter to offer to God, than to please him. But we shall value these waters more highly, and yet drink them the more sweetly, because they are the blood of Christ, not jeoparded only but shed for them. They will be the more sweet and dear to us, because they were so bitter and dear to him. If the buyer be judicious, we estimate things by the price they cost. If any thing we enjoy were purchased with the life of our dearest friend, how highly should we value it! nay, if a dying friend deliver but a token of his love, how carefully do we preserve it, and still remember him when we behold it, as if his own name were written on it! And will not then the death and blood of our Lord everlastingly sweeten our possessed glory? Methinks they should value the plenty of the Gospel with their peace and freedom at

a higher rate, who may remember what it hath cost; how much precious blood; how many of the lives of God's worthies and witnesses, besides all other costs! Methinks, when I am preaching, or hearing, or reading, I see them as before mine eyes, whose blood was shed to seal the truth, and look the more respectfully on them yet living, who suffered to assert it. O, then, when we are rejoicing in glory, how shall we think of the blood that revived our souls, and how shall we look upon him whose sufferings did put that joy into our heart! How carefully preserve we those prizes which with greatest hazard we gained from the enemy! Goliah's sword must be kept as a trophy, and laid up behind the ephod: and in a time of need, David says, "There is none to that." (1 Sam. 20:9.) Surely, when we do divide the spoil, and partake of the prize which our Lord so dearly won, we shall say indeed, "There is none to that." How dear was Jonathan's love to David, which was testified by stripping himself of the robe that was upon him, and giving it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle; and also by saving him from his father's wrath! How dear for ever will the love of Christ be then to us, who stripped himself, as it were, of his majesty and glory, and put our mean garment of flesh upon him, that he might put the robes of his own righteousness and glory upon us; and saved us, not from cruel injustice, but from his Father's deserved wrath! Well, then, Christians, as you used to do in your books, and on your goods, to write down the price they cost; so do you on your righteousness and on your glory, write down the price, "The precious blood of Christ."

Yet understand this rightly: not this highest glory was in strictest proper sense purchased, so as that it was the most immediate effect of Christ's death. We must take heed that we conceive not of God as a tyrant, who so delighteth in cruelty, as to exchange mercies for stripes, or to give a crown on condition he may torment men. God was never so pleased with the sufferings of the innocent, much less, of his Son, as to sell his mercy properly for their sufferings: fury dwelleth not in him, nor doth he willingly correct the sons of men, nor take pleasure in the death of him that dieth. But the sufferings of

Christ were primarily and immediately to satisfy justice that required blood, and to bear what was due to the sinner, and to receive the blow that should have fallen upon him, and so to restore him to the life he lost, and the happiness he fell from; but this dignity, which surpasseth the first, is, as it were, from the redundancy of his merit, or a secondary fruit of his death. The work of his redemption so well pleased the Father, that he gave him power to advance his chosen to a higher dignity than they fell from, and to give them the glory which was given to himself; and all this according to his counsel, and the good pleasure of his own will.

Sect. II. The second pearl in the saint's diadem, is, that it is free. This seemeth, as Pharaoh's second kine, to devour the former; and, as the angel to Balaam, to meet it with a drawn sword of a full opposition. But the seeming discord is but a pleasing diversity, composed into that harmony which constitutes the melody. These two attributes, purchased and free, are the two chains of gold, which by their pleasant twisting, do make up the wreath for the heads of the pillars in the temple of God. (1 Kings 7:17.) It was dear to Christ, but free to us. When Christ was to buy, silver and gold were nothing worth, prayers and tears could not suffice, nor any thing below his blood; but when we come to buy, the price is fallen to just nothing: our buying is but receiving, we have it freely, without money, and without price. Nor do the Gospel conditions make it the less free, or the covenant tenor before mentioned contradict any of this. If the Gospel conditions had been such as are the laws, or payment of the debt required at our hands, the freeness then were more questionable; yea, if God had said to us, 'Sinners, if you will satisfy my justice but for one of your sins, I will forgive you all the rest;' it would have been a hard condition on our part, and the grace of the covenant not so free, as our disability doth necessarily require. But if all the condition be our cordial acceptation, surely we deserve not the name of purchasers: thankful accepting of a free acquittance is no paying of a debt. If life be offered to a condemned man, upon condition that he shall not refuse the offer, I think the favour is nevertheless free; nay, though the condition were, that he should

beg, and wait before he have his pardon, and take him for his Lord who hath thus redeemed him: and this is no satisfying of the justice of the law; especially when the condition is also given, as it is by God to all his chosen; surely, then, here is all free, if the Father freely forgive the Son, and the Son freely pay the debt; and if God do freely accept that way of payment, when he might have required it of the principal, and if both Father and Son do freely offer us the purchased life upon those fair conditions, and if they also freely send the Spirit to enable us to perform those conditions, then what is here that is not free? Is not every stone that builds this temple free stone? O, the everlasting admiration that must needs surprise the saints to think of this freeness! What did the Lord see in me that he should judge me meet for such a state? That I, who was but a poor, diseased, despised wretch, should be clad in the brightness of this glory! That I, a silly, creeping, breathing worm, should be advanced to this high dignity! That I, who was but lately groaning, weeping, dying, should now be as full of joy as my heart can hold; yea, should be taken from the grave, where I was rotting and stinking, and from the dust and darkness where I seemed forgotten, and here set before his throne! That I should be taken with Mordecai from captivity, to be set next unto the King; and with Daniel from the den, to be made ruler of princes and provinces: and with Saul from seeking asses, to be advanced to a kingdom! O, who can fathom unmeasurable love? Indeed, if the proud-hearted, self-ignorant, self-admiring sinners should be thus advanced, who think none so fit for preferment as themselves, perhaps instead of admiring free love, they would, with those unhappy angels, be discontented yet with their estate. But when the self-denying, self-accusing, humble soul, who thought himself unworthy the ground he trod on, and the air he breathed in, unworthy to eat, drink, or live, when he shall be taken up into this glory! he who dare scarce come among, or speak to the imperfect saints on earth, because he was unworthy; he who dare scarce hear, or scarce read the Scripture, or scarce pray and call God Father, or scarcely receive the sacraments of his covenant, and all because he was unworthy, for this soul to find itself wrapt up into heaven, and closed in the arms of Christ even in a moment! do but think with

yourselves, what the transporting, astonishing admiration of such a soul will be! He that durst not lift up his eyes to heaven, but stood afar off, smiting on his breast, and crying, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;" now to be lift up to heaven himself! He who was wont to write his name in Bradford's style, "The unthankful, the hard-hearted, the unworthy sinner," and was wont to admire, that patience could bear so long, and justice suffer him to live; surely he will admire at this alteration, when he shall find by experience, that unworthiness could not hinder his salvation, which he thought would have bereaved him of every mercy! Ah, Christian, there is no talk of our worthiness or unworthiness; if worthiness were our condition for admittance, we might sit down with St. John and weep, "because none in heaven or earth is found worthy; but the Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy and hath prevailed;" and by that title must we hold the inheritance: we shall offer there the offering that David refused, even praise for that which cost us nothing. Here our commission runs, "Freely ye have received, freely give:" but Christ hath dearly received, yet freely gives. The Master heals us of our leprosy freely; but Gehazi, who had no finger in the cure, will surely run after us, and take something of us, and falsely pretend, it is his master's pleasure. The pope, and his servants, will be paid for their pardons and indulgences, but Christ will take nothing for his. The fees of their prelates' courts are large, and commutation of penance must cost men's purses dear, or else they must be cast out of the synagogue, and soul and body delivered up to the devil: but none are shut out of that church for want of money, nor is poverty any eyesore to Christ. An empty heart may bar them out, but an empty purse cannot: his kingdom of grace hath ever been more consistent with despised poverty than wealth and honour, and riches occasion the difficulty of entrance far more than want can do, "for that which is highly esteemed among men, is despised with God:" and so it is also; "the poor of the world, rich in faith, whom God hath chosen to be heirs of that kingdom, which he hath prepared for them that love him." I know the true "labourer is worthy of his hire:" and, "they that serve at the altar, should live upon the altar:" and, "it is not fit to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn:" (James 2:5; 1 Cor. 6:4–13.) and I

know, it is either hellish malice, or penurious baseness, or ignorance of the weight of their work and burden, that makes their maintenance so generally incompetent, and their very livelihood and subsistence so envied and grudged at; and that it is a mere plot of the prince of darkness, for the diversion of their thoughts, that they must be studying how to get bread for their own and children's mouths, when they should be preparing the bread of life for their people's souls; but yet let me desire the right-aiming ministers of Christ, to consider what is expedient as well as what is lawful, and that the saving of one soul is better than a thousand pounds a year, and our gain, though due, is a cursed gain, which is a stumbling-block to our people's souls: let us make the free Gospel as little burdensome and chargeable as is possible. I had rather never take their tithes while I live, than by them to destroy the souls for whom Christ died; (1 Cor. 9:18, 19;) and though God hath ordained, that "they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," yet I had rather suffer all things than hinder the Gospel; (Rom. 14:13, 15, 20, 21;) and it were better for me to die than that any man should make this my glorying void. (Rom. 15:1, 2; 1 Cor. 9:12–15.) Though the well-leading elders be worthy of double honour, especially the laborious in the word and doctrine, yet if the necessity of souls and the promoting of the Gospel require it, I had rather preach the Gospel in hunger and rags, than rigidly contend for what is my due; and if I should do so, yet have I not whereof to glory, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe be to me if I preach not the Gospel, though I never received any thing from men. (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Cor. 4:10–12; 9:16.) How unbecoming the messengers of his free grace and kingdom is it, rather to lose the hearts and souls of their people, than to lose a groat of their due; and rather to exasperate them against the message of God, than to forbear somewhat of their right, and to contend with them at law for the wages of the Gospel, and to make the glad tidings to their yet carnal hearts seem to be sad tidings because of this burden! this is not the way of Christ and his apostles, nor according to the self-denying, yielding, suffering doctrine which they taught. Away with all those actions that are against the main end of our studies and calling, which is to win souls; and woe be upon that gain which hinders the

gaining of men to Christ. I know, flesh will here object necessities, and distrust will not want arguments; but we who have enough to answer to the diffidence of our people, let us take home some of our answers to ourselves, and teach ourselves first before we teach them. How many have you known that God suffered to starve in his vineyard?

But this is our exceeding consolation, that though we may pay for our Bibles, and books, and sermons, and, it may be, paid for our freedom too, to enjoy and use them; yet as we paid nothing for God's eternal love, and nothing for the Son of his love, and nothing for his Spirit, and our grace and faith, and nothing for our pardon, so shall we pay nothing for our eternal rest. We may pay for the bread and wine, but we shall not pay for the body and blood, nor for the great things of the covenant which it seals unto us; and, indeed, we have a valuable price to give for those, but for these we have none at all: yet this is not all: if it were only for nothing, and without our merit, the wonder were great; but it is, moreover, against our merit, and against our long endeavouring of our own ruin. O, the broken heart that hath known the desert of sin, doth both understand and feel what I say! What an astonishing thought it will be to think of the unmeasurable difference between our deservings and our receivings; between the state we should have been in, and the state we are in; to look down upon hell, and see the vast difference that free grace hath made betwixt us and them; to see the inheritance there, which we were born to, so different from that which we are adopted to! O, what pangs of love will it cause within us, to think, Yonder was my native right, my deserved portion; those should have been my hideous cries, my doleful groans, my easeless pains, my endless torment; those unquenchable flames I should have lain in; that never-dying worm should have fed upon me; yonder was the place that sin would have brought me to, but this is it that Christ hath brought me to; yonder death was the wages of my sin, but this eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ my Lord. Did not I neglect grace, and make light of the offers of life, and slight my Redeemer's blood a long time, as well as yonder suffering souls? Did I not let pass my time, and

forget my God and soul, as well as they; and was not I born in sin and wrath as well as they? O, who made me to differ? Was my heart naturally any readier for Christ than theirs, or any whit better affected to the Spirit's persuasions? Should I ever have begun to love, if God had not begun to me; or ever be willing, if he had not made me willing; or ever differed, if he had not made me to differ? Had I not now been in those flames, if I had had mine own way, and been let alone to mine own will? Did I not resist as powerful means, and lose as fair advantages, as they? And should I not have lingered in Sodom till the flames had seized on me, if God had not in mercy carried me out? O, how free was all this love; and how free is this enjoyed glory! Doubtless this will be our everlasting admiration, that so rich a crown should fit the head of so vile a sinner; that such high advancement, and such long unfruitfulness and unkindness can be the state of the same persons; and that such vile rebellions can conclude in such most precious joys: but no thanks to us, nor to any of our duties and labours, much less to our neglects and laziness: we know to whom the praise is due, and must be given for ever; and, indeed, to this very end it was, that infinite wisdom did cast the whole design of man's salvation into the mould of purchase and freeness, that the love and joy of man might be perfected, and the honour of grace most highly advanced, that the thought of merit might neither cloud the one nor obstruct the other, and that on these two hinges the gates of heaven might turn. So then, let "Deserved" be written on the door of hell, but on the door of heaven and life, "The free gift."

Sect. III. Thirdly, The third comfortable attribute of this rest is, that it is the saint's proper and peculiar possession. It belongs to no other of all the sons of men; not that it would have detracted from the greatness or freeness of the gift, if God had so pleased, that all the world should have enjoyed it: but when God hath resolved otherwise, that it must be enjoyed but by few, to find our names among that number must needs make us the more to value our enjoyment. If all Egypt had been light, the Israelites should not have had the less; but yet to enjoy that light alone, while their neighbours live in thick

darkness, must make them more sensible of their privilege. Distinguishing, separating mercy affecteth more than any mercy. If it should rain on our grounds alone, or the sun shine alone upon our habitations, or the blessing of heaven divide between our flocks and other men's, as between Jacob's and Laban's, we should more feelingly acknowledge mercy than now, while we possess the same in common. Ordinarieness dulleth our sense; and if miracles were common they would be slighted. If Pharaoh had passed as safely as Israel, the Red Sea would have been less remembered; if the first-born of Egypt had not been slain, the first-born of Israel had not been the Lord's peculiar; if the rest of the world had not been drowned, and the rest of Sodom and Gomorrah burned, the saving of Noah had been no wonder, nor Lot's deliverance so much talked of. The lower the weighty end of the balance descends, the higher is the other lifted up; and the falling of one of the sails of the windmill, is the occasion of the rising of the other. It would be no extenuation of the mercies of the saints here, if all the world were as holy as they; and the communication of their happiness is their greatest desire; yet it might perhaps dull their thankfulness, and differencing grace would not be known. But when one should be enlightened, and another left in darkness; one reformed, and another by his lusts enslaved; it makes them cry out, with the disciples, "Lord, how is it, that thou wilt reveal thyself to us, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22.) When the prophet shall be sent to one widow only of all that were in Samaria, and to cleanse one Naaman of all the lepers, the mercy is more observable. (Luke 4:24–27.) Oh! that will surely be a day of passionate sense on both sides; when two shall be in a bed, and two in the field; the one taken, and the other forsaken. For a Christian, who is conscious of his own undeserving and ill-deserving, to see his companion in sin perish, his neighbour, kinsman, father, mother, wife, child, for ever in hell, while he is preferred among the blessed; to see other men's sins eternally plagued, while his are all pardoned; to see those that were wont to sit with us in the same seat, and eat with us at the table, and join with us in the same duties, now to lie tormented in those flames, while we are triumphing in divine praises; that Lot must leave his sons-in-law in the flames of Sodom,

and the wife of his bosom as a monument of divine vengeance, and escape with his two daughters alone; here is choosing, distinguishing mercy! Therefore, the Scripture seems to affirm, that as the damned souls shall, from hell, see the saint's happiness, to increase their own torments, so shall the blessed, from heaven, behold the wicked's misery to the increase of their own joy; and as they looked on the dead bodies of Christ's two witnesses, slain in the streets, and they that dwelt on the earth rejoiced over them and made merry, (Rev. 11:10,) and as the wicked here behold the calamities of God's people with gladness, so shall the saints look down upon them in the burning lake, and in the sense of their own happiness, and in the approbation of God's just proceedings, they shall rejoice and sing, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast thus judged; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy. Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power to our God; for true and righteous are his judgments." (Rev. 16:5, 6.) And as the command is over Babylon, so will it be over all the condemned souls, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." (Rev. 18:20, and 19:7, 8.) By this time the impenitent world will see a reason for the saints' singularity while they were on earth, and will be able to answer their own demands, Why must you be more holy than your neighbours? even because they would fain be more happy than their neighbours: and why cannot you do as others, and live as the world about you? even because they are full loth to speed as those others, or to be damned with the world about them. Sincere singularity in holiness, is, by this time, known to be neither hypocrisy nor folly. If to be singular in that glory be so desirable, surely to be singular in godly living is not contemptible. As every one of them knows his own sore, and his own grief, so shall every one of them feel his own joy: and if they can now call Christ their own, and call God their own God, how much more then upon their full possession of him! for as he takes his people for his inheritance, so will he himself be the inheritance of his people for ever. (2 Chron. 6:29; Psal. 16:5, 33:12, 67:6, and 78:71.)

Sect. IV. A fourth comfortable adjunct of this rest is, that it is the fellowship of the blessed saints and angels of God. Not so singular will the Christian be, as to be solitary. Though it be proper to the saints only, yet is it common to all the saints; for what is it but an association of blessed spirits in God; a corporation of perfected saints, whereof Christ is the head; the communion of saints completed? Nor doth this make those joys to be therefore mediate, derived by creatures to us, as here; for all the lines may be drawn from the centre, and not from each other, and yet their collocation make them more comely than one alone could be. Though the strings receive not their sound and sweetness from each other, yet their concurrence causeth that harmony which could not be by one alone; for those that have prayed, and fasted, and wept, and watched, and waited together, now to joy, and enjoy, and praise together, methinks should much advance their pleasure. Whatsoever it will be upon the great change, that will be in our natures perfected; sure I am, according to the present temperature of the most sanctified human affections, it would affect accordingly: and he who mentioneth the qualifications of our happiness on purpose that our joy may be full, and maketh so oft mention of our consociation and conjunction in his praises, sure doth hereby intimate to us that this will be some advantage to our joys. Certain I am of this, fellow-Christians, that as we have been together in the labour, duty, danger, and distress, so shall we be in the great recompense and deliverance; and as we have been scorned and despised, so shall we be crowned and honoured together; and we who have gone through the day of sadness, shall enjoy together that day of gladness; and those who have been with us in persecution and prison, shall be with us also in that palace of consolation. Can the wilful world say, If our forefathers and friends be all in hell, we will venture there too? And may not the Christian say, on better grounds, Seeing my faithful friends are gone before me to heaven, I am much the more willing to be there too? Oh! the blessed day, dear friends, when we that were wont to enquire together, and hear of heaven, and talk of heaven together, shall then live in heaven together; when we who were wont to complain to one another, and open our doubts to one another, and our fears, whether

ever we should come there or no, shall then rejoice with one another, and triumph over those doubts and fears; when we who were wont formerly, in private, to meet together for mutual edification, shall now, most publicly, be conjoined in the same consolation. Those same disciples, who were wont to meet in a private house for fear of the Jews, are now met in the celestial habitation without fear; and as their fear then did cause them to shut the door against their enemies, so will God's justice shut it now. Oh! when I look in the faces of the precious people of God, and believingly think of this day, what a refreshing thought is it! Shall we not there remember, think you, the pikes which we passed through here; our fellowship in duty and in sufferings; how oft our groans made, as it were, one sound, our conjunct tears but one stream, and our conjunct desires but one prayer? and now all our praises shall make up one melody, and all our churches one church, and all ourselves but one body; for we shall be one in Christ, even as he and the Father are one. It is true we must be very careful in this case, that, in our thoughts, we look not for that in the saints which is alone in Christ, and that we give them not his own prerogative, nor expect too great a part of our comfort in the fruition of them: we are prone enough to this kind of idolatry. But, yet, he who commands us so to love them now, will give us leave, in the same subordination to himself, to love them then, when himself hath made them much more lovely: and if we may love them, we shall surely rejoice in them; for love and enjoyment cannot stand without an answerable joy. If the forethought of sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, may be our lawful joy, then how much more that real sight and actual possession! It cannot choose but be comfortable to me to think of that day, when I shall join with Moses in his song, with David in his psalms of praise, and with all the redeemed in the song of the Lamb for ever; when we shall see Enoch walking with God, Noah enjoying the end of his singularity, Joseph of his integrity, Job of his patience, Hezekiah of his uprightness, and all the saints the end of their faith. Will it be nothing conducive to the completing of our comforts, to live eternally with Peter, Paul, Austin, Chrysostom, Jerome, Wickliffe, Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Zanchius,

Paræus, Piscator, Camero; with Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Glover, Saunders, Philpot, with Reighnolds, Whitaker, Cartwright, Brightman, Bayne, Bradshaw, Bolton, Ball, Hildersham, Pemble, Twisse, Ames, Preston, Sibbs? "O *foelicem diem* (said holy Grynæus) *quam ad illud animarum concilium proficiscar, et ex hac turba colluvione discedam!*" O happy day, when I shall depart out of this crowd and sink, and go to that same council of souls! I know that Christ is all in all; and that it is the presence of God that maketh heaven to be heaven. But, yet, it much sweeteneth the thoughts of that place to me, to remember that there are such a multitude of my most dear and precious friends in Christ; with whom I took sweet counsel, and with whom I went up to the house of God; who walked with me in the fear of God, and integrity of their hearts: in the face of whose conversations there was written the name of Christ; whose sweet and sensible mention of his excellencies hath made my heart to burn within me. To think such a friend, that died at such a time, and such a one at another time; Oh! what a number of them could I name; and that all these are entered into rest; and we shall surely go to them, but they shall not return to us. It is a question with some, whether we shall know each other in heaven or no. Surely, there shall no knowledge cease which now we have, but only that which implieth our imperfection; and what imperfection can this imply? Nay, our present knowledge shall be increased beyond belief. (2 Cor. 5:16.) It shall indeed be done away, but as the light of candles and stars is done away, by the rising of the sun; which is more properly a doing away of our ignorance than of our knowledge: indeed, we shall not know each other after the flesh; nor by stature, voice, colour, complexion, visage, or outward shape. If we had so known Christ, we should know him no more; nor by parts and gifts of learning, nor titles of honour and worldly dignity; nor by terms of affinity and consanguinity, nor benefits, nor such relations; nor by youth or age; nor, I think, by sex: but by the image of Christ, and spiritual relation, and former faithfulness in improving our talents, beyond doubt, we shall know and be known. Nor is it only our old acquaintance, but all the saints of all ages, whose faces in the flesh we never saw, whom we shall there both know and comfortably enjoy. Luther, in his last

sickness, being asked his judgment, whether we shall know one another in heaven, answered thus, "Quid accidit Adamo? Nunquam ille viderat Evam," &c., i.e. How was it with Adam? He had never seen Eve: yet he asketh not, who she was, or whence she came; but saith, 'She is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone.' And how knew he that? Why, being full of the Holy Ghost, and indued with the true knowledge of God, he so pronounced. After the same sort shall we be renewed by Christ in another life, and we shall know our parents, wives, children, &c. much more perfectly than Adam did then know Eve; yea, and angels as well as saints, will be our blessed acquaintance and sweet associates. We have every one now our own angels, then beholding our Father's face; and those who now are willingly ministering spirits for our good, will willingly then be our companions in joy for the perfecting of our good; and they who had such joy in heaven for our conversion, will gladly rejoice with us in our glorification. I think, Christian, this will be a more honourable assembly than ever you beheld; and a more happy society than you were ever of before. Then we shall truly say, as David, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee: when we are come to Mount Sion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." (Acts 12:15; Matt. 18:10; Luke 15:10, and 16:22; Heb. 1:7, &c., and 12:22–24; Psal. 119:16.) We are come thither already in respect of title, and of earnest and first-fruits; but we shall then come into the full possession. O beloved, if it be a happiness to live with the saints in their imperfection, when they have sin to imberber, as well as holiness to sweeten their society, what will it be to live with them in their perfection, where saints are wholly and only saints; if it be a delight to hear them pray or preach, what will it be to hear them praise; if we thought ourselves in the suburbs of heaven when we heard them set forth the beauty of our Lord, and speak of the excellencies of his kingdom, what a day will it be when we shall join with them in praises to our Lord in and for that kingdom! Now we

have corruption, and they have corruption; and we are more apt to set a work each other's corruption than our graces; and so lose the benefit of their company while we do enjoy it, because we know not how to make use of a saint: but then it will not be so. Now we spend many an hour which might be profitable, in a dull, silent looking on each other, or else in vain and common conference; but then it will not be so. Now the best do know but in part, and therefore can instruct and help us but in part; but then we shall, with them, make up one perfect man. So then, I conclude, this is one singular excellency of the rest of heaven, that we are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19.)

Sect. V. Fifthly, Another excellent property of our rest will be, that the joys of it are immediately from God. Nor doth this contradict the former, as I have before made plain. Whether Christ, who is God as well as man, shall be the conveyer of all from the divine nature to us; and whether the giving up the kingdom to the Father do imply the ceasing of the Mediator's office; or whether he shall be Mediator fructificationis, as well as acquisitionis; are questions which I will not now attempt to handle. But this is sure: we shall see God face to face, and stand continually in his presence, and consequently derive our life and comfort immediately from him. Whether God will make use of any creatures for our service then; or, if any, of what creatures, and what use, is more than I yet know. It seems that the creature shall have a day of deliverance, and that into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: (Rom. 8:21:) but whether this before, or at the great and full deliverance, or whether to endure to eternity, or to what particular employment they shall be continued, are questions yet too hard for me. When God speaks them plainer, and mine understanding is made clearer, then I may know these: but it is certain that at least our most and great joys will be immediate, if not all. Now, we have nothing at all immediately, but at the second, or third, or fourth, or fifth hand, or how many, who knows? From the earth, from man, from sun and moon, from the influence of the planets, from the ministration of angels, and from the Spirit and Christ; and, doubtless, the further the stream runs from the fountain,

the more impure it is. It gathers some defilement from every unclean channel it passeth through. Though it savours not, in the hand of angels, of the imperfection of sinners, yet it doth of the imperfection of creatures; and as it comes from man it savours of both. How quick and piercing is the word in itself! yet many times it never enters, being managed by a feeble arm. Oh! what weight and worth is there in every passage of the blessed Gospel! enough, one would think, to enter and force the dullest soul, and wholly possess its thoughts and affections: and yet how oft doth it fall as water upon a stone; and how easily can our hearts sleep out a sermon time; and much because these words of life do die in the delivery, and the fruit of our conception is almost still-born! Our people's spirits remain congealed, while we who are intrusted with the word that should melt them, do suffer it to freeze between our lips. We speak, indeed, of soul-concerning truths, and set before them life and death; but it is with such self-seeking affectation, and in such a lazy, formal, customary strain, like the pace the Spaniard rides, that the people little think we are in good sadness, or that our hearts do mean as our tongues do speak. I have heard of some tongues that can lick a coal of fire till it be cold. I fear these tongues are in most of our mouths, and that the breath that is given us to blow up this fire, till it flame in our people's souls, is rather used to blow it out. Such preaching is it that hath brought the most to hear sermons, as they say their creed and pater-nosters, even as a few good words of course. How many a cold and mean sermon that yet contains most precious truths! The things of God which we handle are divine; but our manner of handling too human: and there is little or none that ever we touch, but will leave the print of our fingers behind us; but if God should speak this word himself, it would be a piercing, melting word indeed. How full of comfort are the Gospel promises! yet do we oft so heartlessly declare them, that the broken, bleeding-hearted saints, are much debarred of their joys. Christ is indeed a precious pearl, but oft held forth in leprous hands: and thus do we disgrace the riches of the Gospel, when it is the work of our calling to make it honourable in the eyes of men; and we dim the glory of that jewel by our dull and low expressions, and dunghill conversations, whose lustre we do pretend

to discover, while the hearers judge of it by our expressions, and not its genuine proper worth. The truth is, the best of men do but apprehend but little of what God, in his word, expresseth, and what they do apprehend they are unable to utter. Human language is not so copious as the heart's conceivings are; and what we possibly might declare, yet through our own unbelief, stupidity, laziness, and other corruptions, we usually fail in; and what we do declare, yet the darkness of our people's understandings, and the sad senselessness of their hearts, do usually shut out and make void. So that as all the works of God are perfect in their season, as he is perfect; so are all the works of man, as himself, imperfect: and those which God performeth by the hand of man, will too much savour of the instrument. If an angel from heaven should preach the Gospel, yet could he not deliver it according to its glory; much less we, who never saw what they have seen, and keep this treasure in earthen vessels. The comforts that flow through sermons, through sacraments, through reading, and company, and conference, and creatures, are but half comforts; and the life that comes by these is but half a life, in comparison of those which the Almighty shall speak with his own mouth, and reach forth to us with his own hand. The Christian knows by experience, now, that his most immediate joys are his sweetest joys: those which have least of man, and are most directly from the Spirit. That is one reason, as I conceive, why Christians who are much in secret prayer, and in meditation and contemplation, rather than they who are more in hearing, reading, and conference, are men of greatest life and joy, because they are nearer the well-head, and have all more immediately from God himself: and that I conceive the reason also, why we are more indisposed to those secret duties, and can more easily bring our hearts to hear, and read, and confer, than to secret prayer, self-examination, and meditation, because in the former is more of man; and in these we approach the Lord alone, and our natures draw back from the most spiritual and fruitful duties: not that we should therefore cast off the other, and neglect any ordinance of God. To live above them, while we use them, is the way of a Christian: but to live above ordinances, as to live without them, is to live without the

compass of the Gospel lines, and so without the government of Christ. Let such beware, lest while they would be higher than Christians, they prove in the end lower than men. We are not yet come to the time and state where we shall have all from God's immediate hand. As God hath made all creatures, and instituted all ordinances for us, so will he continue our need of all. We must yet be contented with love-tokens from him, till we come to receive our all in him. We must be thankful if Joseph sustain our lives, by relieving us in our famine with his provisions, till we come to see his own face. There is joy in these remote receivings, but the fulness is in his own presence. O, Christians! you will then know the difference betwixt the creature and the Creator, and the content that each of them affords. We shall then have light without a candle, and a perpetual day without the sun; "for the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof:" (Rev. 21:23:) nay, there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 22:5.) We shall then have rest without sleep, and be kept from cold without our clothing, and need no fig-leaves to hide our shame: for God will be our rest, and Christ our clothing, and shame and sin will cease together. We shall then have health without physic, and strength without the use of food; for the Lord God will be our strength, and the light of his countenance will be health to our souls, and marrow to our bones. We shall then, and never till then, have enlightened understandings without Scripture, and be governed without a written law: for the Lord will perfect his law in our hearts, and we shall be all perfectly taught of God. His own will shall be our law, and his own face shall be our light for ever. Then shall we have joy, which we drew not from the promises, nor was fetched us home by faith or hope. Beholding and possessing will exclude the most of these. We shall then have communion without sacraments, when Christ shall drink with us of the fruit of the vine new, that is, refresh us with the comforting wine of immediate fruition, in the kingdom of his Father. To have necessities and no supply, is the case of them in hell; to have necessity supplied by the means of creatures, is the case of us on

earth; to have necessity supplied immediately from God, is the case of the saints in heaven; to have no necessity at all, is the prerogative of God himself. The more of God is seen and received with, and by the means, and creature here, the nearer is our state like that in glory. In a word, we have now our mercies, as Benjamin had Joseph's cup; (Gen. 44:12;) we find them at a distance from God, and scarcely know from whence they come, and understand not the good-will intended in them, but are oft ready to fear they come in wrath, and think they will but work our ruin. But when we shall feed at Joseph's own house, yea, receive our portion from his own hand; when he shall fully unbowel his love unto us, and take us to dwell in Goshen by him; when we shall live in our Father's house and presence, and "God shall be all and in all;" then we are, indeed, at home in rest.

Sect. VI. Sixthly, Again, a further excellency is this: it will be unto us a seasonable rest. He that expecteth the fruit of this vineyard in season, and maketh his people as trees planted by the waters, fruitful in their season, he will also give them the crown in season. He that will have the words of joy spoken to the weary in season, will sure cause that time of joy to appear in the meetest season. And they who knew the season of grace, and did repent and believe in season, shall also, if they faint not, reap in season. (Mark 12:1; Luke 20:10; Psal. 1:3; Isa. 50:4; Gal. 6:9.) If God will not miss the season of common mercies, even to his enemies, but "will give both the former and the latter rain in their season, and the appointed weeks of the harvest in its season," (Jer. 5:24, and 33:20,) and by an inviolable covenant hath established day and night in their seasons; then, sure, the harvest of the saints and their day of gladness shall not miss its season. Doubtless, he that would not stay a day longer than his promise, but brought Israel out of Egypt that self-same day that the four hundred and thirty years were expired; neither will he fail of one day or hour of the fittest season for his people's glory. (Exod. 12:40, 41; Jer. 8:7.) And as Christ failed not to come in the fulness of time, even then when Daniel and others had foretold his coming; so in the fulness and fitness of time will his second coming be. He that hath given the stork, the crane, the swallow, to know their appointed time,

will surely keep his time appointed. When we have had in this world a long night of sad darkness, will not the day breaking and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness be then seasonable? When we have endured a hard winter in this cold climate, will not the reviving spring be then seasonable? When we have (as St. Paul, Acts 27:7, 9) sailed slowly many days, and much time spent, and sailing now grown more dangerous; and when neither sun, nor stars, in many days appear, and no small tempest lieth on us, and all hope that we shall be saved is almost taken away, do you think that the haven of rest is not then seasonable? When we have passed a long and tedious journey, and that through no small dangers, is not home then seasonable? When we have had a long and perilous war, and have lived in the midst of furious enemies, and have been forced to stand on a perpetual watch, and received from them many a wound, would not a peace with victory, be now seasonable? When we have been captivated in many years' imprisonment, and insulted over by scornful foes, and suffered many pinching wants, and hardly enjoyed bare necessaries, would not a full deliverance to a most plentiful state, even from this prison to a throne, be now seasonable? Surely, a man would think, who looks upon the face of the world, that rest should to all men seem seasonable. Some of us are languishing under continual weakness, and groaning under most grievous pains, crying, in the morning, 'Would God it were evening!' and, in the evening, 'Would God it were morning!' weary of going, weary of sitting, weary of standing, weary of lying, weary of eating, of speaking, of walking, weary of our very friends, weary of ourselves. Oh! how oft hath this been mine own case; and is not rest yet seasonable? Some are complaining under the pressure of the times; weary of their taxes, weary of their quartering, weary of plunderings, weary of their fears and dangers, weary of their poverty and wants, and is not rest yet seasonable? Whither can you go, or into what company can you come, where the voice of complaining doth not show, that men live in a continual weariness, but especially the saints, who are most weary of that which the world cannot feel? What godly society almost can you fall into, but you shall hear by their moans that somewhat aileth them? Some weary of a blind mind, doubting concerning the way

they walk in, unsettled in almost all their thoughts; some weary of a hard heart, some of a proud, some of a passionate, and some of all these, and much more: some weary of their daily doubtings, and fear concerning their spiritual estate; and some of the want of spiritual joys, and some of the sense of God's wrath; and is not rest now seasonable? When a poor Christian hath desired, and prayed, and waited for deliverance many a year, is it not then seasonable? When he is ready almost to give up, and saith, 'I am afraid I shall not reach the end, and that my faith and patience will scarce hold out; is not this a fit season for rest? If it were to Joseph a seasonable message, which called him from the prison to Pharaoh's court; or if the return of his Benjamin, the tidings that Joseph was yet alive, and the sight of the chariots which should convey him to Egypt, were seasonable for the reviving of Jacob's spirits; then, methinks, the message for a release from the flesh, and our convoy to Christ, should be a seasonable and welcome message. If the voice of the king were seasonable to Daniel, (Dan. 6:19, &c.,) early in the morning calling him from his den, that he might advance him to more than former dignity, then methinks that morning voice of Christ our King, calling us from our terrors among lions, to possess his rest among his saints, should be to us a very seasonable voice. Will not Canaan be seasonable after so many years' travel, and that through a hazardous and grievous wilderness? Indeed, to the world it is never in season. They are already at their own home, and have what they most desire. They are not weary of their present state. The saints' sorrow is their joy, and the saints' weariness is their rest: their weary day is coming, where there is no more expectation of rest, but for the thirsty soul to enjoy the fountain, and the hungry to be filled with the bread of life, and the naked to be clothed from above, for the children to come to their Father's house, and the disjoined member to be conjoined with their Head. Methinks this should be seldom unseasonable. When the atheistical world began to insult, and question the truth of Scripture promises, and ask us, 'Where is now your God? Where is your long-looked-for glory? Where is the promise of your Lord's coming?' O, how seasonable, then, to convince these unbelievers, to silence these scoffers, to comfort the dejected, waiting believer, will the appearing

of our Lord be! We are oft grudging now that we have not a greater share of comforts; that our deliverances are not more speedy and eminent; that the world prospers more than we; that our prayers are not presently answered, not considering that our portion is kept to a fitter season; that these are not always winter fruits, but when summer comes we shall have our harvest. We grudge that we do not find a Canaan in the wilderness, or cities of rest in Noah's ark, and the songs of Sion in a strange land; that we have not a harbour in the main ocean, or find not our home in the middle way, and are not crowned in the midst of the fight, and have not our rest in the heat of the day, and have not our inheritance before we are at age, and have not heaven before we leave the earth; and would not all this be very unseasonable?

I confess, in regard of the church's service, the removing of the saints may sometimes appear to us unseasonable; therefore, doth God use it as a judgment, and therefore the church had ever prayed hard before they would part with them, and greatly laid to heart their loss; therefore are the great mournings at the saints' departures, and the sad hearts that accompany them to their graves; but this is not especially for the departed, but for themselves and their children, as Christ bid the weeping woman; therefore, also, it is, that the saints, in danger of death, have often begged for their lives, with that argument, "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?" (Psal. 30:9.) "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave; or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" (Psal. 88:10.) "For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Psal. 6:5.) And this it was that brought Paul to a strait, because he knew it was better for the church that he should remain here. I must confess, it is one of my saddest thoughts, to reckon up the useful instruments, whom God hath lately called out of his vineyard, when the loiterers are many, and the harvest great, and very many congregations desolate, and the people as sheep without shepherds; and yet the labourers called from

their work, especially when a door of liberty and opportunity is open; we cannot but lament so sore a judgment, and think the removal, in regard of the church, unseasonable. I know I speak but your own thoughts; and you are too ready to overrun me in application. I fear you are too sensible of what I speak, and, therefore, am loath to stir you in your sore. I perceive you are in the posture of the Ephesian elders, and had rather abate the violence of your passions; our applications are quicker about our sufferings, than our sins: and we will more quickly say, this loss is mine, than, this fault is mine. But, O consider my dear friends, hath God any need of such a worm as I? Cannot he a thousand ways supply your wants? You know when your case was worse, and yet he provided; hath he work to do, and will he not find instruments? And though you see not for the present where they should be had, they are never the further off for that. Where was the world before the creation; and where was the promised seed, when Isaac lay on the altar? Where was the land of promise, when Israel's burden was increased; or, when all the old stock, save two, were consumed in the wilderness? Where was David's kingdom when he was hunted in the wilderness; or, the glory of Christ's kingdom, when he was in the grave; or, when he first sent his twelve apostles? How suddenly did the number of labourers increase immediately upon the reformation by Luther; and how soon were the rooms of those filled up, whom the rage of the papists had sacrificed in the flames! Have you not lately seen so many difficulties overcome, and so many improbable works accomplished, that might silence unbelief, one would think, for ever? But if all this do not quiet you, for sorrow and discontent are unruly passions, yet at least remember this; suppose the worst you fear should happen, yet shall it be well with all the saints; your own turns will shortly come; and we shall be housed with Christ together, where you will want your ministers and friends no more. And, for the poor world, which is left behind, whose unregenerate state causeth your grief; why, consider, shall man pretend to be more merciful than God? Hath not he more interest than we, both in the church and in the world; and more bowels of compassion to commiserate their distress? There is a season for judgment as well as for mercy; and if he will have the most of men to

perish for their sins, and to suffer the eternal tormenting flames, must we question his goodness, or manifest our dislike of the severity of his judgment? I confess we cannot but bleed over our desolate congregations; and that it ill beseems us to make light of God's indignation; but yet we should, as Aaron when his sons were slain, (Lev. 10:3,) hold our peace, and be silent, because it is the Lord's doing; and say, as David, "If I (and his people) shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me them, and his habitations; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do with me as seemeth good unto him." (Psal. 39:9; 2 Sam. 15:25, 26.) I conclude, then, that whatsoever it is to those that are left behind; yet the saints' departure, to themselves, is usually seasonable. I say usually, because I know a very saint may have a death in some respect unseasonable, though it do translate him into this rest. He may die in judgment, as good Josiah; (2 Chron. 35:24;) he may die for his sin. For the abuse of the sacrament many were weak and sickly, and many fallen asleep, even of those who were thus judged and chastened by God, that they might not be condemned with the world. He may die by the hand of public justice; or die in a way of public scandal. He may die in a weak degree of grace, and consequently have less degree of glory. (Luke 19:17–19.) He may die in smaller improvements of his talents, and so be ruler of but few cities. The best wheat may be cut down before it is ripe; therefore it is promised to the righteous, as a blessing, "that they shall be brought as a shock of corn into the barn in season." (Job 5:26.) Nay, it is possible he may die by his own hands; though some divines think such doctrine not fit to be taught, lest it encourage the tempted to commit the same sin; but God hath left preservatives enough against sin, without our devising more of our own; neither hath he need of our lie to his glory. He hath fixed that principle so deep in nature, that all should endeavour their own preservation, that I never knew any whose understanding was not crazed or lost, much subject to that sin; even most of the melancholy are more fearful to die than other men. And this terror is preservative enough of that kind; that such committing of a heinous known sin, is a sad sign, where there is the free use of

reason; that, therefore, they make their salvation more questionable; that they die most woful scandals to the church: that, however, the sin itself should make the godly to abhor it, were there no such danger or scandal attending it, &c. But to exclude from salvation all those poor creatures, who in fevers, frenzies, madness, melancholy, &c., shall commit this sin, is a way of prevention, which Scripture teacheth not, and too uncomfortable to the friends of the deceased. The common argument which they urge, drawn from the necessity of a particular repentance, for every particular known sin; as it is not universally true, so were it granted, it would exclude from salvation all men breathing; for there was never any man, save Christ, who died not in some particular sin, either of commission or omission, great or small, which he hath no more time to repent of, than the sinner in question: but yet, this may well be called untimely death: but in the ordinary course of God's dealing, you may easily observe, that he purposely maketh his people's last hour in this life, to be of all other to the flesh most bitter, and to the spirit most sweet; and that they who feared death through the most of their lives, yet at last are more willing of it than ever, and all to make their rest more seasonable. Bread and drink are always good; but at such a time as Samaria's siege, to have plenty of food instead of doves' dung, in one night's space; or in such a thirst, as Ishmael's or Sampson's, to have a supply of water by miracle in a moment, these are seasonable. So this rest is always good to the saints, and usually also is most seasonable rest.

Sect. VII. Seventhly: A further excellency of this rest is this; as it will be seasonable, so a suitable rest: suited, 1. To the natures. 2. To the desires. 3. To the necessity of the saints.

1. To their natures. If suitableness concur not with excellency, the best things may be bad to us; for it is not that which makes things good in themselves, to be good to us. In our choice of friends, we often pass by the more excellent, to choose the more suitable. Every good agrees not with every nature. To live in a free and open air, under the warming rays of the sun, is excellent to man, because

suitable: but the fish, which is of another nature, doth rather choose another element; and that which is to us so excellent, would quickly be to it destructive. The choicest dainties which we feed upon ourselves, would be to our beasts, as an unpleasing, so an insufficient sustenance. The iron which the ostrich well digests, would be but hard food for man; even among men, contrary appetites delight in contrary objects. You know the proverb, "One man's meat, is another man's poison." Now, here is suitableness and excellency conjoined. The new nature of saints doth suit their spirits to this rest; and indeed their holiness is nothing else but a spark taken from this element, and by the spirit of Christ kindled in their hearts, the flame whereof, as mindful of his own divine original, doth ever mount the soul aloft, and tend to the place from whence it comes. It worketh towards its own centre, and makes us restless, till there we rest. Gold and earthly glory, temporal crowns and kingdoms, could not make a rest for saints. As they were not redeemed with so low a price, so neither are they endued with so low a nature. These might be a portion for lower spirits, and fit those whose nature they suit with; but so they cannot a saint-like nature. (1 Pet. 1:18, 23.) As God will have from them a spiritual worship, suitable to his own spiritual being, so will he provide them a spiritual rest, suitable to his people's spiritual nature. As spirits have not fleshly substances, so neither delight they in fleshly pleasures: these are too gross and vile for them. When carnal persons think of heaven, their conceivings of it are also carnal; and their notions answerable to their own natures. And were it possible for such to enjoy it, it would surely be their trouble, and not their rest, because so contrary to their dispositions. A heaven of good fellowship, of wine and wantonness, of gluttony and all voluptuousness, would far better please them, as being most agreeing to their natures. But a heaven of the knowledge of God, and his Christ; and a delightful complacency in that mutual love, and everlasting rejoicing in the fruition of our God, a perpetual singing of his high praises: this is a heaven for a saint, a spiritual rest, suitable to a spiritual nature. Then, dear friends, we shall live in our element. We are now as the fish in some small vessel of water, that hath only so much as will keep him alive; but what is that to the full ocean? We

have a little air let in to us, to afford us breathing; but what is that to the sweet and fresh gales upon Mount Sion? We have a beam of the sun to lighten our darkness, and a warm ray to keep us from freezing; but then we shall live in its light, and be revived by its heat for ever. Oh! blessed be that hand which fetched a coal, and kindled a fire in our dead hearts, from that same altar, where we must offer our sacrifice everlastingly. To be locked up in gold, and in pearl, would be but a wealthy starving; to have our tables with plate and ornaments richly furnished without meat, is but to be richly famished; to be lifted up with human applause, is but a very airy felicity; to be advanced to the sovereignty of all the earth, would be but to wear a crown of thorns; to be filled with the knowledge of arts and sciences, would be but to further the conviction of our unhappiness; but to have a nature like God's very image, holy as he is holy; and to have God himself to be our happiness, how well do these agree? Whether that in 2 Pet. 1:4 be meant, as is commonly understood, of our own inherent renewed nature, figuratively called divine, or rather of Christ's divine nature without us, properly so called, whereof we are also relatively made partakers, I know not; but certainly were not our own in some sort divine, the enjoyment of the true divine nature could not be to us a suitable rest.

2. It is suitable also to the desires of the saints: for, such as their nature, such be their desires; and such as their desires, such will be their rest. Indeed, we have now a mixed nature; and from contrary principles, do arise contrary desires: as they are flesh, they have desires of flesh; and as they are sinful, so they have sinful desires. Perhaps they could be too willing, whilst these are stirring, to have delights, and riches, and honour, and sin itself. But these are not prevailing desires, nor such as in their deliberate choice they will stand to; therefore is it not they, but sin and flesh. These are not the desires that this rest is suited to, for they will not accompany them to their rest. To provide contents to satisfy these, were to provide food for them that are dead. "For they that are in Christ, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof." (Gal. 5:25.) But it is the desires of our renewed natures, and those which the Christian will

ordinarily own, which this rest is suited to. Whilst our desires remain corrupted and misguided, it is a far greater mercy to deny them, yea, to destroy them, than to satisfy them; but those which are spiritual, are of his own planting, and he will surely water them, and give the increase. Is it so great a work to raise them in us; and shall they after all this vanish and fail? To send the word and Spirit, mercies and judgments, to raise the sinner's desires from the creature to God, and then to suffer them so raised, all to perish without success; this were to multiply the creature's misery; and then were the work of sanctification, a designed preparative to our torment and tantalizing, but no way conducive to our happy rest. He quickened our hungering and thirst for righteousness, that he might make us happy in a full satisfaction. Christian, this is a rest after thy own heart; it containeth all that thy heart can wish; that which thou longest for, prayest for, labourest for, there thou shalt find it all. Thou hadst rather have God in Christ, than all the world; why there thou shalt have him. Oh! what wouldst thou not give for assurance of his love? Why, there thou shalt have assurance beyond suspicion: nay, thy desires cannot now extend to the height of what thou shalt there obtain. Was it not a high favour of God to Solomon, to promise to give him whatsoever he would ask? Why, every Christian hath such a promise. Desire what thou canst, and ask what thou wilt as a Christian, and it shall be given thee; not only to half of the kingdom, but to the enjoyment both of kingdom and king. This is a life of desire and prayer; but that is a life of satisfaction and enjoyment. Oh! therefore, that we were but so wise, as to limit those which we know should not be satisfied; and those which we know not whether or no they will be satisfied; and especially those which we know should not be satisfied; and to keep up continually in heart and life, those desires which we are sure shall have full satisfaction. And, oh! that sinners would also consider, that seeing God will not give them a felicity suitable to their sensual desires, it is, therefore, their wisdom to endeavour for desires suitable to the true felicity, and to direct their ship to the right harbour, seeing they cannot bring the harbour to their ship.

3. This rest is very suitable to the saints' necessities also, as well as to their natures and desires. It contains whatsoever they truly wanted; not supplying them with the gross-created comforts which now they are forced to make use of, which, like Saul's armour on David, are more burden than benefit. But they shall there have the benefit without the burden; and the pure spirits extracted, as it were, shall make up their cordial, without the mixture of any drossy or earthly substance. It was Christ, and perfected holiness, which they most needed, and with these shall they here be principally supplied: their other necessities are far better removed than supplied in the present carnal way. It is better to have no need of meat, and drink, and clothing, and creatures, than to have both the need and the creature continued: their plaster will be fitted to the quality of their sore. The rain which Elias's prayer procured was not more seasonable, after the three years' drought, than this rest will be to this thirsty soul. It will be with us as with the diseased man, who had lain at the waters, and continued diseased thirty-eight years, when Christ did fully cure him in a moment; or with the woman, who, having had the issue of blood, and spent all she had upon physicians, and suffered the space of twelve years, was healed by one touch of Christ. (Luke 8:43; Mark 5:25.) So, when we have lain at ordinances, and duties, and creatures, all our lifetime, and spent all, and suffered much, we shall have all done by Christ in a moment: but we shall see more of this under the next head.

Sect. VIII. Eighthly: Another excellency of our rest will be this, that it will be absolutely perfect and complete; and this both in the sincerity and universality of it. We shall then have joy without sorrow, and rest without weariness: as there is no mixture of our corruption with our graces, so no mixture of sufferings with our solace. There are none of those waves in that harbour, which now so toss us up and down: we are now sometimes at the gates of heaven, and presently almost as low as hell; we wonder at those changes of Providence towards us, being scarcely two days together in a like condition. To-day we are well, and conclude the bitterness of death is past; to-morrow sick, and conclude we shall shortly perish by our distempers;

to-day in esteem, to-morrow in disgrace; to-day we have friends, to-morrow none; to-day in gladness, to-morrow in sadness: nay, we have wine and vinegar in the same cup, and our pleasantest food hath a taste of the gall. If revelations should raise us to the third heaven, (1 Cor. 12:7,) the messenger of Satan must presently buffet us, and the prick in the flesh will fetch us down; but there is none of this inconstancy, nor mixtures, in heaven. If perfect love cast out fear, then perfect joy must needs cast out sorrow; (1 John 4:18;) and perfect happiness exclude all the relics of misery. There will be a universal perfecting of all our parts and powers, and a universal removal of all our evils: and though the positive part be the sweetest, and that which draws the other after it, even as the rising of the sun excludes the darkness; yet is not the negative part to be slighted, even our freedom, from so many and great calamities. Let us, therefore, look over these more punctually, and see what it is that we shall there rest from. In general, it is from all evil. Particularly, first, from the evil of sin; secondly, and of suffering.

First: It excludeth nothing more directly than sin; whether original, and of nature; or actual, and of conversation: for there entereth nothing that defileth, nor that worketh abomination, nor that maketh a lie. (Rev. 21:27.) When they are there, the saints are saints indeed. He that will wash them with his heart-blood, rather than suffer them to enter unclean, will now perfectly see to that; he who hath undertaken to present them to his Father, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but perfectly holy, and without blemish, will now most certainly perform his undertaking." (Ephes. 5:27.) What need Christ at all to have died, if heaven could have contained imperfect souls? "For to this end came he into the world, that he might put away the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8.) His blood and Spirit have not done all this, to leave us, after all, defiled. "For what communion hath light with darkness; and what fellowship hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. 6:14.) He that hath prepared for sin the torments of hell, will never admit it into the blessedness of heaven; therefore, Christian, never fear this: if thou be once in heaven, thou shalt sin no more. Is not this glad news to thee, who hast prayed, and

watched, and laboured against it so long. I know if it were offered to thy choice, thou wouldst rather choose to be freed from sin than to be made heir of all the world. Why, wait till then, and thou shalt have thy desire: that hard heart, those vile thoughts, which did lie down and rise with thee, which did accompany thee to every duty, which thou couldst no more leave behind thee than leave thyself behind thee, shall be now left behind for ever. They might accompany thee to death, but they cannot proceed a step further. Thy understanding shall never more be troubled with darkness: ignorance and error are inconsistent with this light. Now thou walkest like a man in the twilight, ever afraid of being out of the way; thou seest so many religions in the world, that thou fearest thy own cannot be only the right among all these; thou seest the Scripture so exceeding difficult, and every one pleading for his own cause, and bringing such specious arguments for so contrary opinions, that it entangleth thee in a labyrinth of perplexities; thou seest so many godly men on this side, and so many on that, and each zealous for his own way, that thou art amazed, not knowing which way to take: and thus do doubtings and fears accompany darkness, and we are ready to stumble at every thing in our way; but then will all this darkness be dispelled, and our blind understandings fully opened, and we shall have no more doubts of our way. We shall know which was the right side, and which the wrong; which was the truth, and which the error. Oh! what would we give to know, clearly, all the profound mysteries in the doctrine of decree, of redemption, of justification, of the nature of grace, of the covenants, of the divine attributes, &c.; what would we not give to see all dark scriptures made plain, to see all seeming contradictions reconciled! Why, when glory hath taken the veil from our eyes, all this will be known in a moment; we shall then see clearly into all the controversies about doctrine or discipline that now perplex us. The poorest Christian is presently there a more perfect divine than any is here. We are now, through our ignorance, subject to such mutability, that, in points not fundamental, we change as the moon; that is cast as a just reproach upon us, that we possess our religion with reserves, and resolvedly settle upon almost nothing; that we are to-day of one opinion, and within this week, or month, or

year, of another; and yet, alas! we cannot help it. The reproach may fall upon all mankind, as long as we have need of daily growth. Would they have us believe before we understand; or say, 'We believe,' when indeed we do not? Shall we profess ourselves resolved before we ever thoroughly studied; or say, 'We are certain' when we are conscious that we are not? But when once our ignorance is perfectly healed, then shall we be settled, resolved men; then shall our reproach be taken from us, and we shall never change our judgments more; then shall we be clear and certain in all, and cease to be sceptics any more. Our ignorance now doth lead us into error, to the grief of our more knowing brethren, to the disturbing of the church's quiet, and interrupting her desirable, harmonious consent; to the scandalizing of others, and weakening ourselves. How many a humble and faithful soul is seduced into error, and little knows it! Loth they are to err, God knows, and therefore read, and pray, and confer, and yet err still, and confirmed in it more and more: and in lesser and more difficult points how should it be otherwise? He that is acquainted amongst men, and knows the quality of professors in England, must needs know the generality of them are no great scholars, nor have much read or studied controversies, nor are men of the most profound natural parts; nor have the ministers of England much preached controversies to them, but were glad if their hearers were brought to Christ, and got so much knowledge as might help to salvation, as knowing that to be their great work. And can it be expected that men, void of learning, and strength of parts, unstudied and untaught, should, at the first onset, know those truths, which they are almost incapable of knowing at all; y when the greatest divines, of clearest judgment, acknowledge so much difficulty that they could almost find in their hearts sometimes to profess them quite beyond their reach? Except we will allow them to lay aside their divine faith, and take up a human, and see with other men's eyes the weight and weakness of arguments, and not with their own, it cannot be thought that the most of Christians, no, nor the most of divines, should be free from erring in those difficult points, where we know they have not headpieces able to reach. Indeed, if it were the way of the Spirit to teach us miraculously, as the apostles

were taught the knowledge of tongues, without the intervening use of reason; or if the Spirit infused the acts of knowledge, as he doth the immediate knowing power, then he that had most of the Spirit would not only know best, but also know most: but we have enough to convince us of the contrary to this. But, oh! that happy, approaching day, when error shall vanish away for ever; when our understanding shall be filled with God himself, whose light will leave no darkness in us! His face shall be the Scripture, where we shall read the truth; and himself, instead of teachers and counsels, to perfect our understandings, and acquaint us with himself, who is the perfect truth. No more error, no more scandal to others, no more disquiet to our own spirits, no more mistaking zeal for falsehood; because our understandings have no more sin. Many a godly man hath here, in his mistaking zeal, been a means to deceive and pervert his brethren, and when he sees his own error, cannot again tell how to undeceive them; but there we shall all conspire in one truth, as being one in him who is that truth.

And as we shall rest from all the sin of our understandings, so of our wills, affection, and conversation. We shall no more retain this rebelling principle, which is still withdrawing us from God, and addicting us to backsliding. Doubtless, we shall no more be oppressed with the power of our corruptions, nor vexed with their presence; no pride, passion, slothfulness, senselessness, shall enter with us; no strangeness to God, and the things of God; no coldness of affections, nor imperfection in our love; no uneven walking, nor grieving of the Spirit; no scandalous action, or unholy conversation: we shall rest from all these for ever: then shall our understandings receive their light from the face of God, as the full moon from the open sun, where there is no earth to interpose betwixt them; then shall our wills correspond to the divine will, as face answers to face in a glass; and the same, his will, shall be our law and rule, from which we shall never swerve again. Now our corruptions, as the Anakims, dismay us; and, as the Canaanites, in Israel, they are left for pricks in our sides, and thorns in our eyes; (Josh. 23:13;) and as the bondwoman and her son in Abraham's house, (Gen. 21:9,) they do

but abuse us, and make our lives a burden to us; but then shall the bondwoman and her son be cast out, and shall not be heirs with us in our rest. As Moses said to Israel, "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every one whatsoever is right in his own eyes, for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. (Deut. 12:8, 9.) I conclude, therefore, with the words next to my text; "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (Heb. 4:10.) So that there is a perfect rest from sin.

Sect. IX. 2. It is a perfect rest from suffering: when the cause is gone the effect ceaseth. Our sufferings were but the consequents of our sinning, and here they both shall cease together. I will show particularly ten kinds of suffering, which we shall there rest from.

1. We shall rest from all our perplexing doubts and fears; it shall no more be said that doubts are like the thistle, a bad weed, but growing in good ground; they shall now be weeded out, and trouble the gracious soul no more. No more need of so many sermons, books, and marks, and signs, to resolve the poor doubting soul: the full fruition of love itself hath now resolved his doubts for ever. We shall hear that kind of language no more: What shall I do to know my state? How shall I know that God is my Father, that my heart is upright, that conversion is true, that faith is sincere? Oh! I am afraid my sins are unpardoned; oh! I fear that all is but hypocrisy; I fear that God will reject me from his presence; I doubt he doth not hear my prayers; how can he accept so vile a wretch, so hard-hearted, unkind a sinner, such an undervaluer of Christ as I am! All this kind of language is there turned into another tune; even into the praises of him who hath forgiven, who hath converted, who hath accepted, yea, who hath glorified a wretch so unworthy; so that it will now be as impossible to doubt and fear, as to doubt of the food which is in our bellies, or to fear it is night when we see the sun shine. If Thomas could doubt with his finger in the wounds of Christ, yet in heaven I am sure he cannot; if we could doubt of what we see, or hear, or taste, or feel, yet I am sure we cannot of what we there possess.

Surely, this will be comfort to the sad and drooping souls, whose life was nothing but a doubting distress, and their language nothing but a constant complaining. If God would speak peace, it would ease them, but when he shall possess them of this peace, they shall rest from all their doubts and fears for ever.

Sect. X. 2. We shall rest from all that sense of God's displeasure, which was our greatest torment, whether manifested mediately or immediately; "for he will cause his fury towards us to rest, and his jealousy to cease, and he will be angry with us no more." (Ezek. 16:42.) Surely, hell shall not be mixed with heaven. There is the place for the glorifying of justice, prepared of purpose to manifest wrath, but heaven is only for mercy and love. Job doth not now use his own language, "Thou writest bitter things against me, and takest me for thine enemy, and settest me up as a mark to shoot at," &c. (Job 3; 13:26; 16:12–14; and 7:10.) O, how contrary now to all this! David doth not now complain, "that the arrows of the Almighty stick in him: that his wounds stink and are corrupt; that his sore runs and ceaseth not; that his moisture is as the drought of summer; that there is no soundness in his flesh, because of God's displeasure, nor rest in his bones because of sin; that he is weary of crying, his throat is dried, his eyes fail in waiting for God;" (Psal. 38;) "that he remembers God, and is troubled; that in complaining his spirit is overwhelmed; that his soul refuseth to be comforted; that God's wrath lieth hard upon him, and that he afflicteth him with all his waves. (Psal. 66:3.) O, how contrary now are David's songs! Now he saith: "I spake in my haste, and this was my infirmity." (Psal. 77:2, 3.) Here the Christian is often complaining, Oh! if it were the wrath of man, I could bear it; (Psal. 88:7;) but the wrath of the Almighty, who can bear? Oh! that all the world were mine enemies, so that I were assured that he were my friend! If it were a stranger, it were nothing; but that my dearest friend, my own father, should be so provoked against me, this wounds my very soul! If it were a creature, I would contemn it, but if God be angry who may endure? If he be against me, who can be for me? And if he will cast me down, who can raise me up? But, oh! that blessed day when all these dolorous

complaints will be turned into admiring thankfulness; and all sense of God's displeasing swallowed up in that ocean of infinite love; when sense shall convince us that fury dwelleth not in God: and though for a little moment he hide his face, yet with everlasting compassion will he receive and embrace us; when he shall say to Sion, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (Isa. 60:2.)

Sect. XI. 3. We shall rest from all the temptations of Satan, whereby he continually disturbs our peace. What a grief is it to a Christian, though he yield not to the temptation, yet to be still solicited to deny his Lord: that such a thought should be cast into his heart: that he can set about nothing that is good, but Satan is still dissuading him from it, distracting him in it, or discouraging him after it! What a torment, as well as a temptation is it, to have such horrid motions made to his soul, such blasphemous ideas presented to his fantasy! Sometimes cruel thoughts of God, sometimes undervaluing thoughts of Christ, sometimes unbelieving thoughts of Scripture, sometimes injurious thoughts of Providence; to be tempted sometimes to turn to present things, sometimes to play with the baits of sin, sometimes to venture on the delights of the flesh, and sometimes to flat atheism itself; especially when we know the treachery of our own hearts that they are as tinder or gunpowder, ready to take fire, as soon as one of these sparks shall fall upon them. Oh! how the poor Christian lives in continual disquietness, to feel these motions: but more, that his heart should be the soil for this seed, and the too-fruitful mother of such an offspring; and, most of all, through fear, lest they will at last prevail, and these cursed motions should procure his consent. But here is our comfort; as we now stand not by our own strength, and shall not be charged with any of this; so when the day of our deliverance comes, we shall fully rest from these temptations: Satan is then bound up, the time of tempting is then done: the time of torment to himself, and his conquered captives, those deluded souls, is then come, and the victorious saints shall have triumph for temptation. Now we do walk among his snares, and are in danger to be circumvented with his methods and wiles; but then we are quite

above his snares, and out of the hearing of his enticing charms. He hath power here to tempt us in the wilderness, but he entereth not the holy city. He may set us on the pinnacle of the temple in the earthly Jerusalem; but the new Jerusalem he may not approach. Perhaps he may bring us to an exceeding high mountain, but the Mount Sion and city of the living God he cannot ascend: or, if he should, yet all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, will be but a poor despised bait to the soul which is possessed with the kingdom of our Lord and the glory of it. No, no, here is no more work for Satan now. Hopes he might have of deceiving poor creatures on earth, who lived out of sight, and only heard and read of a kingdom which they never beheld, and had only faith to live upon, and were encompassed with flesh, and drawn aside by sense. But when once they see the glory they read of, and taste the joys they heard of, and possess that kingdom which they then believed and hoped for, and have laid aside their fleshly sense, it is time, then, for Satan to have done: it is in vain to offer a temptation more. What! draw them from that glory; draw them from the arms of Jesus Christ; draw them from the sweet praises of God; draw them from the blessed society of saints and angels? draw them from the bosom of the Father's love, and that to a place of torment among the damned, which their eyes behold! Why, what charms, what persuasions, can do it? To entice them from an unknown joy, and unknown God, were somewhat hopeful; but now they have both seen and enjoyed, there is no hope. Surely, it must be a very strong temptation that must draw a blessed saint from that rest. We shall have no more need to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," nor "to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation;" (Matt. 6:13, and 26:41;) nor shall we serve the Lord as Paul did, in "many tears and temptations;" (Acts 20:19;) no: but now they who continued with Christ in temptation, shall by him be appointed to a kingdom, even as his Father appointed to him, (Rev. 3:10,) that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. (Luke 22:28–30.) "Blessed, therefore, are they that endure temptation; for when they are tried, they shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him:" (James 1:12:) and then they shall be saved from the hour of temptation. Then the malignant

planet Saturn shall be below us, and lose all its influence, which is now above us exercising its enmity: and Satan must be suffering, who would have drawn us into suffering, as Bucholtzer wittily, "Ubi Saturnus non supra nos, sed infra nos conspicietur luens pœnas, pro sua in nos sævitia et malitia."

Sect. XII. 4. We shall rest also from all our temptations which we now undergo from the world and the flesh, as well as Satan; and that is a number inexpressible, and a weight, were it not that we are beholding to supporting grace, utterly intolerable. Oh! the hourly dangers that we poor sinners here below walk in! Every sense is a snare; every member a snare; every creature a snare; every mercy a snare; and every duty a snare to us. We can scarcely open our eyes, but we are in danger. If we behold them above us, we are in danger of envy. If we see sumptuous buildings, pleasant habitations, honour and riches, we are in danger to be drawn away with covetous desires: if the rags and beggary of others, we are in danger of self-applauding thoughts and unmercifulness. If we see beauty, it is a bait to lust; if deformity, loathing and disdain. We can scarcely hear a word spoken, but contains to us matter of temptation. How soon do slanderous reports, vain jests, wanton speeches, by that passage, creep into the heart! How strong and prevalent a temptation is our appetite, and how constant and strong a watch doth it require! Have we comeliness and beauty? what fuel for pride! Are we deformed? what an occasion of repining! Have we strength of reason, and gifts of learning? oh! how hard it is not to be puffed up! (2 Cor. 11:3, and 1:12, &c.) To seek ourselves; to hunt after applause; to despise our brethren; to dislike the simplicity that is in Christ, both in the matter and manner of Scripture, in doctrine, discipline, in worship, and in the saints; to affect a pompous, specious, fleshly, service of God, and to exalt reason above faith. Are we unlearned, and of shallow heads and slender parts? how apt, then, to despise what we have not, and to undervalue that which we do not know; and to err with confidence, because of our ignorance: and if conceitedness and pride do but strike in, to become a zealous enemy to truth, and a leading troubler of the church's peace, under pretences of truth and

holiness! Are we men of eminency, and in place of authority? how strong is our temptation to slight our brethren, to abuse our trust, to seek ourselves, to stand upon our honour and privileges; to forget ourselves, our poor brethren, and the public good: how hard to devote our power to his glory from whom we have received it: how prone to make our wills our law, and to cut out all the enjoyments of others, both religious and civil, by the cursed rules and model of our own interest and policy! Are we inferiors and subject? how prone to judge at others' pre-eminence, and to take liberty to bring all their actions to the bar of our incompetent judgment; and to censure and slander them, and murmur at their proceedings! Are we rich and not too much exalted? Are we poor and not discontented, and make our worldly necessities a pretence for the robbing God of all his service? If we be sick, oh! how impatient: if in health, how few and stupid are our thoughts of eternity! If death be near, we are distracted with the fears of it: if we think it far off, how careless is our preparation! Do we set upon duty? why there are snares too: either we are stupid and lazy, or rest on them, and turn from Christ; or we are customary and notional only. In a word, not one word that falls from the mouth of a minister and Christian, but is a snare; nor a place we come into; not a word that our own tongue speaks; not any mercy we possess; nor a bit we put into our mouths, but they are snares; not that God hath made them so, but through our own corruption they become so to us: so that what a sad case are we poor Christians in, and especially they that discern them not! for it is almost impossible they should escape them. It was not for nothing that our Lord cries out, "What I say to one, I say to all, Watch." We are like the lepers at Samaria; if we go into the city, there is nothing but famine; if we sit still, we perish. (Deut. 12:30, and 7:25; Hos. 9:8; Psal. 69:22; Prov. 20:25, 22:25, and 29:6, 25; 1 Tim. 6:9; Job 8:8, 10.

But for ever blessed be omnipotent love, which saves us out of all these, and makes our straits but the advantages of the glory of his saving grace. And "blessed be the Lord, who hath not given our souls for a prey; our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we are escaped." (Psal. 124:6, 7.) No, our

houses, our clothes, our sleep, our food, our physic, our father, mother, wife, children, friends, goods, lands, are all so many temptations; and ourselves, the greatest snares to ourselves. But in heaven, the danger and trouble are over; there is nothing but what will advance our joy. Now every old companion, and every loose fellow, is putting up the finger, and beckoning us to sin, and we can scarcely tell how to say them nay. 'What,' say they, 'will not you take a cup? Will you not do as your neighbours? Must you be so precise? Do you think none shall be saved but puritans? What needs all this strictness, this reading, and praying, and preaching? Will you make yourself the scorn of all men? Come, do as we do, take your cups, and drink away sorrow.' Oh! how many a poor Christian hath been haunted and vexed with these temptations: and it may be father, or mother, or nearest friends will strike in, and give a poor Christian no rest: and, alas! how many, to their eternal undoing, have hearkened to their seducements! But this is our comfort, dear friends, our rest will free us from all these. As Satan hath no entrance there, so neither any thing to serve his malice; but all things shall there, with us, conspire the praises of our great Deliverer.

Sect. XIII. 5. And as we rest from the temptations, so also from all abuses and persecutions which we suffer at the hands of wicked men. We shall be scorned, derided, imprisoned, banished, butchered, by them no more; the prayers of the souls under the altar, will then be answered, and "God will avenge their blood on these that dwell on the earth." (Rev. 6:2, 10; 2 Tim. 3:12.) This is the time for crowning with thorns, buffeting, spitting on; that is the time for crowning with glory: (Rom. 8:17:) now the law is decreed on, That whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; then they that suffered with him, shall be glorified with him. Now we must be hated of all men for Christ's name-sake, and the Gospel; then will Christ be admired in his saints that were thus hated. Now, because we are not of the world, but Christ hath taken us out of the world, therefore doth the world hate us; then, because we are not of the world, but taken out of their calamity, therefore will the world admire us. Now, as they hated Christ, they will also hate us; then, as they will honour

Christ, so will they also honour us. We are here as the scorn and offscouring of all things; as men set up for a gazing-stock to angels and men, even for signs and wonders amongst professing Christians; they put us out of their synagogues, and cast out our name as evil, and separate us from their company: but we shall then be as much gazed at for our glory, and they will be shut out of the church of the saints, and separated from us, whether they will or no. They now think it strange that we run not with them "to all excess of riot, speaking evil of us;" (1 Pet. 4:4;) they will then think it more strange, that they ran not with us in the despised ways of God, and speak evil of themselves; and more vehemently befool themselves for their carelessness, than ever they did us for our heavenliness. A poor Christian can scarcely go along the streets now, but every one is pointing the finger in scorn, but then they would be glad of the crumbs of his happiness. The rich man would scarcely have believed him that would have told him, that he should beg for water from the tip of Lazarus's finger. Here is a great change! We can scarcely now pray in our families, or sing praises to God, but our voice is a vexation to them. How must it needs torment them then, to see us praising and rejoicing, while they are howling and lamenting! How full have their prisons often been, and how bitter their rage! How have they scattered their carcasses on the earth, and delighted themselves in the blood of saints! How glad would they have been, if they could have brought them to ruin, and blotted out their name from under heaven! How have they prepared, like Haman, their gallows! And if God had not gainsaid it, the execution would have been answerable; "But he that sitteth in heaven did laugh them to scorn, the Lord had them in derision." Oh! how full were their hearts of blood, and their hands of cruelty; so that the next generations, that knew them not, will scarcely believe the fury of their predecessors' rage. Blessed be the Guardian of the saints, who hath not suffered the prevalency of that wrath, which would have over-done the gunpowder treason, the Turkish slavery, the Spanish inquisition, and the French massacres. But the Lord of hosts hath often brought them down, and his power and justice have abated their fury, and raised to his name everlasting trophies, and set up many a monument for

remembrance, which God forbid should ever be forgotten, "So let all thine incurable enemies perish, O Lord." (Judg. 5:23.) "When the Lord maketh inquisition for blood, he will remember the precious blood which they have shed; and the earth shall not cover it any more." (Psal. 9:12.) They shall pursue, but as Pharaoh, to their own destruction: and where they fall, there we shall pass over safely, and escape them for ever. For our Lord hath told them, "that whither he goes they cannot come." (John 7:34, 36, and 8:21, 22; Rev. 12:16; Heb. 11; Matt. 27:29, 30.) When their flood of persecution is dried up, and the church called out of the wilderness, and the New Jerusalem come down from heaven, and mercy and justice are fully glorified, then shall we feel their fury no more. There is no cruel mockings and scourgings; no bonds, or imprisonments; no stoning, or sawing asunder; tempting, or slaying with the sword; wandering in sheep-skins, or goat-skins, in deserts and mountains, dens or caves of the earth; no more being destitute, afflicted, tormented. We leave all this behind us, when once we enter the city of our rest; the names of Lollards, Hugonots, &c., are not there used; the inquisition of Spain is there condemned; the statute of the six articles is there repealed; and the law de hæreticis comburendis more justly executed; the date of the interim is there expired; no censures to loss of members, perpetual imprisonment, or banishment. Christ is not there clothed in a gorgeous robe, and blindfolded; nor do they smite him, and say, 'Read who struck thee:' nor is truth clothed in the robes of error, and smitten for that which it most directly contradicteth; nor a schismatic wounded, and a saint found bleeding; nor our friends smite us, whilst they mistake us for their enemies: there is none of this blind mad work there. Dear brethren, you that now can attempt no work of God without resistance, and find you must either lose the love of the world, and your outward comforts, or else the love of God and your eternal salvation; consider, you shall in heaven have no discouraging company, nor any but who will further your work, and gladly join heart and voice with you in your everlasting joy and praises. Till then, possess your souls in patience; bind all reproaches as a crown to your heads; esteem them greater riches than the world's treasures; account it matter of joy, when you

fall into tribulation. You have seen that our God is able to deliver us; but this is nothing to our final deliverance: he will recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with Christ. Only see to this, brethren, that none of you suffer as an evil-doer, as a busy-body in other men's matters, as a resister of the commands of lawful authority, as ungrateful to those that have been instruments of our good, as evil-speakers against dignities, as opposers of the discipline and ordinances of Christ, as scornful revilers of your christian brethren, as reproachers of a laborious, judicious, conscientious ministry, &c. "But if any of you suffer for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you." And if any of you begin to shrink, and draw back because of opposition, and are ashamed either of your work, or your Master, let such a one know to his face, that he is but a base-spirited, cowardly wretch, and cursedly undervalueth the saint's rest, and most foolishly overvalueth the things below; and he must learn to forsake all these, or else he can never be Christ's disciple; and that Christ will renounce him, and be ashamed of him, before his Father and the angels of heaven. But for those that have held fast their integrity, and gone through good report, and evil report, and undergone the violence of unreasonable men, "let them hear the word of the Lord; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name-sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; (they had good words, and goodly pretences;) but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (Isa. 66:5.) "Your Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name. He shall thoroughly plead your cause, that he may give rest to his people, and disquietness to their enemies." (Jer. 50:34.)

6. We shall then also rest from all our sad divisions, and unchristianlike quarrels with one another. As he said, who saw the carcasses lie together, as if they had embraced each other, who had been slain by each other in a duel, "*Quanta se invicem amplectuntur amicitia, qui mutua implacabili inimicitia periere!*" "How lovingly do they embrace one another, being dead, who perished through their mutual, implacable enmity!" So how lovingly do thousands live together in heaven, who lived in divisions and quarrels on earth; or,

as he said, who beheld how quietly and peaceably the bones and dust of mortal enemies did lie together, "Non tanta vivi pace essetis conjuncti;" "You did not live together so peaceably; so we may say of multitudes in heaven now all of one mind, one heart, and one employment, You lived not on earth in so sweet familiarity. There is no contention, because none of this pride, ignorance, or other corruption; Paul and Barnabas are now fully reconciled. There they are, not every man conceited of his own understanding, and in love with the issue of his own brain, but all admiring the divine perfection, and in love with God, and one another. As old Gryneus wrote to his friend, "Si te non amplius in his terris videam, ibi tamen conveniemus ubi Lutherus cum Zuinglio optime jam convenit;" "If I see you no more on earth, yet we shall there meet, where Luther and Zuinglius are now well agreed." There is a full reconciliation between sacramentarians and ubiquitarians, Calvinists and Lutherans; remonstrants and contra-remonstrants; non-conformists and anti-disciplinarians, conformists and non-conformists, are terms there not known. There is no discipline erected by state-policy, nor any disordered popular rule; no government but that of Christ; no bitter invectives, nor voluminous reproaches; the language of Martin is there a stranger; and the sound of his echo is not heard. No recording our brethren's infirmities; nor raking into the sores which Christ died to heal. How many sermons zealously preached, how many books studiously compiled, will then by the authors be all disclaimed! How many backbiting, slanderous speeches! How many secret dividing contrivances, must then be laid upon the score of Christ, against whom and his saints they were committed! The zealous authors dare not own them; they would, then, with the Ephesians, burn their books, (Acts 19:19,) and rather lose their labour than stand to it. There is no plotting to strengthen our party; nor deep designing against our brethren. And is it not shame and pity, that our course is now so contrary? Surely, if there be sorrow or shame in heaven, we shall then be both sorry and ashamed to look one another there in the face; and to remember all this carriage on earth; even as the brethren of Joseph were to behold him, when they remembered their former unkind usage. Is it not enough that all the

world is against us, but we must also be against one another? Did I ever think to have heard Christians so to reproach and scorn Christians; and men professing the fear of God, to make so little conscience of censuring, vilifying, slandering and disgracing one another? Alas! if the judgment be once perverted, and error hath possessed the supreme faculty, whither will men go, and what will they do? Nay, what will they not do? Oh! what a potent instrument for Satan is a misguided conscience! It will make a man kill his dearest friend, yea, father or mother, yea, the holiest saints, and think he doth God service by it; and to facilitate the work, it will first blot out the reputation of their holiness, and make them take a saint for a devil, that so they may vilify or destroy him without remorse. Oh! what hellish things are ignorance and pride, that can bring men's souls to such a case as this! Paul knew what he said, when he commanded that a novice should not be a teacher, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1 Tim. 3:6.) He discerned that such young Christians that have got but a little smattering knowledge in religion, do lie in greatest danger of this pride and condemnation. Who but a Paul could have foreseen, that among the very teachers and governors of so choice a church as Ephesus, that came to see and hear him, that pray and weep with him, there were some that afterwards should be notorious sect-masters? "that of their own selves men should arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them?" (Acts 20:30.) Who then can expect better from any society now, how knowing and holy soever? To-day they may be orthodox, unanimous, and joined in love; and perhaps, within a few weeks be divided, and at bitter enmity, through their doting about questions that tend not to edify. Who that had seen how lovingly the godly of England did live together, would have believed that ever they would have been so bitter against one another; that we should fall upon one another for the very same duties; and that professors of religion should oppose and deride almost all that worship God out of conscience, which others did before them through profaneness? Did I not think, that of all other, the scorning at the worshippers of Christ, had been a sure sign of a wicked wretch? But I see now we must distinguish between

scorners and scorners, or else I fear we shall exclude almost all. I read, indeed, in pagan writers, that the Christians were as cruel as bears and tigers against one another: Ammianus Marcellinus gives it as the reason of Julian's policy, in proclaiming liberty for every party to profess and preach their own opinions, because he knew that cruel Christians would then most fiercely fall upon one another; and so by liberty of conscience, and by keeping their children from the schools of learning, he thought to have rooted out Christianity from the earth. But I had hoped this accusation had come from the malice of the pagan writer; little did I think to have seen it so far verified! Lord, what devils are we unsanctified, when there is yet such a nature remaining in the sanctified! Such a nature hath God in these days suffered to discover itself in the very godly, that if he did not graciously and powerfully restrain, they would shed the blood of one another; and no thanks to us, if it be not done. But I hope his design is but to humble and shame us by the discovery, and then to prevent the breaking forth.

Object. But, is it possible such should be truly godly? Then, what sin will denominate a man ungodly?

Answ. Or else I must believe the doctrine of the saints' apostacy, or believe there are scarcely any godly in the world. Oh! what a wound of dishonour hath this given not only to the stricter profession of holiness, but even to the very christian name; were there a possibility of hiding it, I durst not thus mention it. O Christian, if thou who readest this be guilty, I charge thee before the living God, that thou sadly consider how far is this unlike the copy! Suppose thou hadst seen the Lord Jesus, girded to the service, stooping on the earth, washing his disciples' dirty feet, and wiping them, and saying to them, "This I have done to give you an example, that if your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's;" would not this make thee ashamed, and tremble? Shall the Lord wipe the feet, and the fellow-servant be ready to cut the throat? Would not thy proud heart scorn to stoop to thy Master's work? Look to thyself; it is not the name of a professor, nor the zeal

for thy opinions, that will prove thee a Christian, or secure thee from the heat of the consuming fire. If thou love not thine enemy, much more thy christian friend, thou canst not be Christ's disciple. It is the common mark, whereby his disciples are known to all men, "that they love one another." Is it not his last great legacy, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." (Matt. 5:44; John 13:35, and 14:17.) Mark the expressions of that command, "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men." (Rom. 12:8.) "Follow peace with all men, and holiness." (Heb. 12:14.) O the deceitfulness of the heart of man! that those same men, who lately in their self-examination, could find nothing of Christ so clear within them as their love to their brethren, and were confident of this, when they could scarcely discover any other grace, should now look so strangely upon them, and be filled with so much bitterness against them! That the same men, who would have travelled through reproaches many miles, to hear an able faithful minister, and not think the labour ill-bestowed, should now become their bitterest enemies, and the most powerful hinderers of the success of their labours, and travel as far to cry them down! It makes me almost ready to say, O sweet, O happy days of persecution, which drove us together in a closure of love! who being now dried at the fire of liberty and prosperity, are crumbled all into dust by our contentions. But it makes me seriously, both to say, and to think, O sweet, O happy day of the rest of the saints in glory! when as there is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, so we shall have one judgment, one heart, one church, one employment for ever! When there shall be no more circumcision and uncircumcision, Jew and gentile, anabaptist, pædobaptist, Brownist, separatist, independent, presbyterian, episcopal: but Christ is All in All. We shall not there scruple our communion, nor any of the ordinances of divine worship; there will not be one for singing, and another against it; but even those who have jarred in discord, shall all conjoin in blessed concord, and make one melodious quire. I could wish they were of the martyr's mind, who rejoiced that she might have her foot in the same hole of the stocks in which Master Philpot's had been before her. But, however, I am sure they will joyfully live in the same heaven, and gladly

participate in the same rest. Those whom one house could not hold, nor one church hold them, no nor one kingdom either; yet one heaven and one God may hold. a One house; one kingdom could not hold Joseph and his brethren; but they must together again, whether they will or not; and then how is the case altered! then every man must straight withdraw, while they weep over, and kiss each other. O how canst thou now find in thy heart, if thou bear the heart or face of a Christian, to be bitter or injurious against thy brethren, when thou dost but once think of that time and place, where thou hopest in the nearest and sweetest familiarity to live and rejoice with them for ever? I confess their infirmities are not to be loved, nor sin to be tolerated, because it is theirs. But be sure it be sin which thou opposest in them; and do it with a spirit of meekness and compassion, that the world may see thy love to the person, while thou opposest the offence. Alas! that Turks and Pagans can agree together in wickedness, better than Christians in the truth! That bears and lions, wolves and tigers, can agree together, but Christians cannot! That a legion of devils can accord in one body, and not the tenth part of so many Christians in one church! (Matt. 5:9; Luke 8:30.) Well, the fault may be mine, and it may be theirs; or more likely both mine and theirs: but this rejoiceth me, that my old friends who now look strangely at me, will joyfully triumph with me in our common rest.

Sect. XV. 7. We shall then rest from all our dolorous hours, and sad thoughts which we now undergo, by participating with our brethren in their calamities. Alas! if we had nothing on ourselves to trouble us, yet what heart could lay aside sorrows, that live in the sound of the church's sufferings? If Job had nothing upon his body to disquiet him, yet the message of his children's overthrow, must needs grieve the most patient soul. Except we are turned into steel or stone, and have lost both christian and human affection, there needs no more than the miseries of our brethren, to fill our hearts with successions of sorrows, and make our lives a continued lamentation. The church on earth is a mere hospital; which way ever we go, we hear complaining; and into what corner soever we cast our eyes, we

behold objects of pity and grief: some groaning under a dark understanding, some under a senseless heart, some languishing under unfruitful weakness, and some bleeding for miscarriages and wilfulness; and some in such a lethargy that they are past complaining; some crying out of their pining poverty; some groaning under pains and infirmities; and some bewailing a whole catalogue of calamities, especially in days of common sufferings, when nothing appears to our sight but ruin; families ruined; congregations ruined; sumptuous structures ruined; cities ruined; country ruined; court ruined; kingdoms ruined. Who weeps not, when all these bleed? As now our friends' distresses are our distresses, so then our friends' deliverance will be part of our own deliverance. How much more joyous now to join with them in their days of thanksgiving and gladness, than in the days of humiliation in sackcloth and ashes! How much then more joyous will it be to join with them in their perpetual praises and triumphs, than to hear them now bewailing their wretchedness, their want of light, their want of life, of joy, of assurance, of grace, of Christ, of all things! How much more comfortable to see them perfected, than now to see them wounded, weak, sick, and afflicted? To stand by the bed of their languishing as silly comforters, being overwhelmed and silenced with the greatness of their griefs, conscious of our own disability to relieve them, scarce having a word of comfort to refresh them; or if we have, alas, they be but words, which are a poor relief, when their sufferings are real; fain we would ease or help them, but cannot: all we can do, is to sorrow with them, which alas, doth rather increase their sorrows. Our day of rest will free both us and them from all this. Now we may enter many a poor Christian's cottage, and there see their children ragged, their purse empty, their cupboard empty, their belly empty, and poverty possessing and filling all. How much better is that day, when we shall see them filled with Christ, clothed with glory, and equalised with the richest and greatest princes! O the sad and heart-piercing spectacles that our eyes have seen in four years' space! In this fight a dear friend is slain; scarce a month, scarce a week, without the sight or noise of blood; surely there is none of this in heaven. Our eyes shall then be filled no more, nor our hearts pierced with such dreadful sights, &c.

Our eyes shall never more behold the earth covered with the carcasses of the slain. Our mourning attire will then be turned into the white robes and garments of gladness. Oh! how hardly can our hearts now hold, when we think of such, and such, and such a dear christian friend slain or departed! O how glad must the same hearts be when we see them all alive and glorified! But a far greater grief it is to our spirits, to see the spiritual miseries of our brethren; to see such a one with whom we took sweet counsel, and who zealously joined with us in God's worship, to be now fallen off to sensuality, turned drunkard, worldling, or a persecutor of the saints! and these trying times have given us too large occasion for such sorrows; to see our dearest and most intimate friends to be turned aside from the truth of Christ, and that either in or near the foundation, and to be raging confident in the grossest errors; to see many near us in the flesh, continue their neglect of Christ and their souls, and nothing will waken them out of their security; to look an ungodly father or mother, brother or sister, in the face; to look on a carnal wife, or husband, or child, or friend, and to think how certainly they shall be in hell for ever, if they die in their present unregenerate estate! Oh! what continual dolours do all these sad sights and thoughts fill our hearts with from day to day; and will it not be a blessed day when we shall rest from all these? What Christian now is not in Paul's case, and cannot speak in his language? "Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches; who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. 11:28, 29.) What heart is not wounded to think on Germany's long desolations? Oh! the learned universities; the flourishing churches there that now are left desolate! Look on England's four years' blood, a flourishing land almost made ruinate; hear but the common voice in most cities, towns, and countries through the land, and judge whether here be no cause of sorrow; especially, look but to the sad effects, and men's spirits grown more out of order: and is this not cause of astonishing sorrows? Look to Scotland, look to Ireland; look almost every where, and tell me what you see. Blessed be that approaching day, when our eyes shall behold no more such sights, nor our ears hear any more such tidings! How

many hundred pamphlets are printed, full of almost nothing but the common calamities! so that it is become a gainful trade to divulge the news of our brethren's sufferings; and the fears for the future that possessed our hearts, were worse than all that we saw and suffered: nay, have not many died with the fears of that which, if they had lived, they had neither suffered nor seen? It is said of Melancthon, that the miseries of the church made him almost neglect the death of his beloved children; to think of the Gospel departing, the glory taken from Israel, our sun setting at noon-day, poor souls left willingly dark and destitute, and with great pains and hazard blowing out the light that should guide them to salvation! What sad thoughts must these be! To think of Christ removing his family; taking away both worship and worshippers, and to leave the land to the rage of the merciless: these were sad thoughts. Who could then have the harp in hand, or sing the pleasant songs of Sion? (Isa. 60:11–14.) But blessed be the Lord, who hath frustrated our fears, and who will hasten that rejoicing day, when Sion shall be exalted above the mountains, and her gates shall be open day and night, and the glory of the Gentiles be brought into it, and the nation and kingdom that will not serve her shall perish: when the sons of them that afflicted her shall come bending unto her, and all they that despised her "shall bow themselves at the soles of her feet; and they shall call her the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel;" (Isa. 60:21, 22;) when her people also shall be all righteous, even the work of God's hands, the branch of his planting, who shall inherit the land for ever, that he may be glorified. When that voice shall sound forth, "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that love her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." (Isa. 66:10, 12.) Thus shall we rest from our participation of our brethren's sufferings.

Sect. XVI. 8. We shall rest also from all our own personal sufferings, whether natural and ordinary, or extraordinary, from the afflicting hand of God. And though this may seem a small thing to those that live in continual ease, and abound in all kind of prosperity, yet,

methinks, to the daily afflicted soul, it should make the fore-thoughts of heaven delightful; and I think I shall meet with few of the saints but will say, that this is their own case. O the dying life that we now live! as full of sufferings, as of days and hours! We are the carcasses that all calamities prey upon: as various as they are, each one will have a snatch at us, and be sure to devour a morsel of our comfort. When we bait our bulls and bears, we do but represent our own condition; whose lives are consumed under such assaults, and spent in succession of fresh encounters. All creatures have an enmity against us, ever since we made the Lord of all our enemy; and though we are reconciled by the blood of the covenant, and the price is paid for our full deliverance, yet our Redeemer sees it fit to leave this measure of misery upon us, to make us know for what we are beholden, to mind us of what we would else forget, to be serviceable to his wise and gracious designs, and advantageous to our full and final recovery. He hath sent us as lambs among wolves; and sure there is little rest to be expected. As all our senses are the inlets of sin, so they are become the inlets of our sorrow. Grief creeps in at our eyes, at our ears, and almost every where: it seizeth upon our heads, our hearts, our flesh, our spirits; and what part doth escape it? Fears do devour us, and darken our delights, as the frosts do nip the tender buds; cares do consume us, and feed upon our spirits, as the scorching sun doth wither the delicate flowers: or, if any saint or stoic have fortified his inwards against these, yet he is naked still without; and if he be wiser than to create his own sorrows, yet shall he be sure to feel his share; he shall produce them as the meritorious, if not as the efficient cause. What tender pieces are these dusty bodies! What brittle glasses do we bear about us; and how many thousand dangers are they hurried through; and how hardly cured, if once cracked! O the multitudes of slender veins, of tender membranes, nerves, fibres, muscles, arteries, and all subject to obstructions, exhesions, tensions, contractions, resolutions, ruptures, or one thing or other, to cause their grief; every one a fit subject for pain, and fit to communicate that pain to the whole! What nobler part is there that suffereth its pain or ruin alone? whatever it is to the sound and healthful, methinks to such as myself this rest

should be acceptable, who in ten or twelve years' time, have scarce had a whole day free from some dolour. Oh! the weary nights and days; oh! the unserviceable, languishing weakness; oh! the restless, working vapours; oh! the tedious, nauseous medicines, besides the daily expectations of worse! And will it not be desirable to rest from all these? There will be then no crying out, Oh! my head, oh! my stomach, oh! my sides, or oh! my bowels: no, no, sin, and flesh, and dust, and pain, will all be left behind together. Oh! what would we not give now for a little ease, much more for a perfect cure! How, then, should we value that perfect freedom! If we have some mixed comforts here, they are scarce enough to sweeten our crosses; or if we have some short and smiling intermissions, it is scarce time enough to breathe us in, and to prepare our tacklings for the next storm. If one wave pass by, another succeeds; and if the night be over, and the day come, yet will it soon be night again. Some men's fevers are continual, and some intermittent; some have tertians, and some quartans; but, more or less, all have their fits. O the blessed tranquillity of that region, where there is nothing but sweet continued peace! No succession of joy there, because no intermission. Our lives will be but one joy, as our time will be changed into one eternity. O healthful place, where none are sick! O fortunate land, where all are kings! O place most holy, where all are priests! How free a state, where none are servants, save to their supreme Monarch! For it shall come to pass, that in that day the Lord shall give us rest from our sorrow, and our fear, and from the hard bondage wherein we served. (Isa. 14:3.) The poor man shall no more be tired with his incessant labours; no more use of plough, or flail, or scythe, or sickle; no stooping of the servant to the master, or the tenant to the landlord; no hunger, or thirst, or cold, or nakedness; no pinching frosts, nor scorching heats. Our very beasts who suffered with us, shall also be freed from their bondage; ourselves, therefore, much more: our faces shall no more be pale or sad; our groans and sighs will be done away; and God will wipe away all tears from our eyes. (Rom. 8:19–22; Rev. 7:15–17. 21:3, 4.) No more parting of friends asunder, nor voice of lamentation heard in our dwellings. No more breaches, nor disproportion, will be in our

friendship, nor any trouble accompanying our relations; no more care of master for servants, or parents for children, or magistrates over subjects, or ministers over people; no more sadness for our study lost, our preaching lost, our entreaties lost, the tenders of Christ's blood lost, and our dear people's souls lost; no more marrying, nor giving in marriage, but we shall be as the angels of God. O what room can there be for any evil, where the whole is perfectly filled with God! Then shall the "ransomed of the Lord return and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10.) Hold out then a little longer, O my soul; bear with the infirmities of thy earthly tabernacle; endure that share of sorrows that the love of thy Father shall impose; submit to his indignation also, because thou hast sinned against him; it will be thus but a little while; the sound of thy Redeemer's feet are even at the door; and thine own deliverance nearer than many others. And thou who hast often cried, in the language of the divine poet, Herbert,

"Sorrow was all my soul; I scarce believed,

Till grief did tell me roundly, that I lived,"

shalt then feel, that God and joy is all thy soul; the fruition of whom, with thy freedom from all these sorrows, will, more sweetly, and more feelingly, make thee know, and to his eternal praise acknowledge, that thou livest.

And thus we shall rest from all afflictions.

Sect. XVII. 9. We shall rest also from all the trouble and pain of duty. The conscientious magistrate now cries out, Oh! the burden that lieth upon me! The conscientious parents, that know the preciousness of their children's souls, and the constant pains required to their godly education, cry out, Oh! the burden! The conscientious minister above all, when he reads his charge, (2 Tim. 4:1,) and views his pattern;

(Mark 3:20, 21, &c.; Acts 20:18, 31;) when he hath tried awhile what it is to study, and pray, and preach, according to the weight and excellency of the work; to go from house to house, and from neighbour to neighbour, and to beseech them night and day with tears, and, after all, to be hated and persecuted for so doing, no wonder if he cry out, O the burden! and be ready to turn away with Jonas; and, with Jeremy, to say, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name; for his word is a reproach to us, and a derision daily; but that he hath made his word as a fire shut up in our bones and heart, that we are weary of forbearing, and cannot stay." (Jer. 20:8, 9.) How long may we study and labour before one soul is brought clear over to Christ! and when it is done, how soon do the snares of sensuality or error entangle them! How many receive the doctrine of delusion before they have time to be built up in the truth; and when heresies must of necessity arise, how few of them do appear approved! The first new, strange apparition of light doth so amaze them, they think they are in the third heaven, when they are but newly passed from the suburbs of hell, and are presently as confident as if they knew all things, when they have not half light enough to acquaint them with their ignorance; but, after ten or twenty years' study, they become usually of the same judgment with those they despised. And seldom doth a minister live to see the ripeness of his people; but one soweth and planteth, another watereth, and a third reapeth and receiveth the increase. Yet were all this duty delightful, had we but a true proportion of strength. But, to inform the old ignorant sinner, to convince the stubborn and worldly wise, to persuade a wilful resolved wretch, to prick a stony heart to the quick, to make a rock to weep and tremble, to set forth Christ according to our necessity and his excellency, to comfort the soul whom God dejected, to clear up dark and difficult truths, to oppose with convincing arguments all gainsayers, to credit the Gospel with exemplary conversations, when multitudes do but watch for our halting; Oh! who is sufficient for these things? So that every relation, state, age, hath variety of duty: every conscientious Christian cries out, O the burden! or, O my weakness that makes it so burdensome! But our remaining rest will ease us of the burden. Then will that be

sound doctrine, which now is false, that the law hath no more to do with us; that it becomes not a Christian to beg for pardon, seeing all his sins are perfectly pardoned already; that we need not fast, nor mourn, nor weep, nor repent; and that a sorrowful countenance beseems not a Christian: then will all these become truths.

Sect. XVIII. 10. And, lastly, we shall rest from all those sad affections which necessarily accompany our absence from God; the trouble that is mixed in our desires and hopes, our longings and waitings, shall then cease. We shall no more look into our cabinet, and miss our treasure; look into our hearts, and miss our Christ; nor no more seek him from ordinance to ordinance, and inquire for our God of those we meet; our heart will not lie in our knee, nor our souls be breathed out in our requests; but all conclude in a most full and blessed fruition. But because this, with the former, are touched before, I will say no more of them now; so you have seen what we shall rest from.

Sect. XIX. The ninth and last jewel in our crown, and blessed attribute of this rest, is, that it is an eternal rest. This is the crown of our crown; without which, all were comparatively little or nothing. The very thought of once leaving it, would else embitter all our joys: and the more would it pierce us, because of the singular excellencies which we must forsake. It would be a hell in heaven to think of once losing heaven: as it would be a kind of heaven to the damned, had they but hopes of once escaping. Mortality is the disgrace of all sublunary delights. It makes our present life of little value (were it not for the reference it hath to God and eternity), to think that we must shortly lay it down. How can we take delight in any thing, when we remember how short that delight would be; that the sweetness of our cups and morsels is dead as soon as they are but once past our taste! Indeed, if man were as the beast, that knows not his suffering or death till he felt it, and little thinks when the knife is whetting, that it is making ready to cut his throat, then might we be merry till death forbid us, and enjoy our delights till they shall forsake us; but, alas! we know both good and evil; and evil foreknown, is in part endured; and thus our knowledge increaseth our sorrows. (Eccles.

1:18.) How can it choose but spoil our pleasure, while we see it dying in our hands! How can I be as merry as the jovial world, who have mine eye fixed upon eternity! When methinks I foresee my dying hour, my friends waiting for my last gasp, and closing my eyes, while tears forbid to close their own; methinks I hear them say, He is dead. Methinks I see my coffin made, my grave in digging, and my friends there leaving me in the dust: and where, now, is that we took delight in? O but methinks I see, at the same view, that grave opening, and my dead, revived body rising; methinks I hear that blessed voice, 'Arise and live, and die no more.' Surely, were it not for eternity, I should think man a silly piece; and all this life and honour but contemptible: I shall call him, with David, a vain shadow; and with the prophet, nothing, and less than nothing, and altogether lighter than vanity itself. It utterly disgraceth the greatest glory in mine eyes, if you can but truly call it mortal. I can value nothing that shall have an end, except as it leads to that which hath no end; or as it comes from that love which hath neither beginning nor end. I speak this of my deliberate thoughts; and if some ignorant or forgetful soul have no such sad thoughts to disturb his pleasure, I confess he may be merrier for the present; but where is his mirth when he lieth a-dying? alas! it is a poor happiness that consists only in the ignorance or forgetfulness of approaching misery; but, O blessed eternity! where our lives are perplexed with no such thoughts, nor our joys interrupted with any such fears; where we shall be "pillars in God's temple," (Rev. 3:12,) and go out no more. O, what do I say when I talk of eternity! Can my shallow thoughts conceive at all what the highest expression doth contain? To be eternally blessed, and so blessed! Why, surely this, if any thing, is the resemblance of God: eternity is a piece of infiniteness. Then, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Days, and nights, and years, time, and end, and death, are words which there have no signification; nor are used, except perhaps to extol eternity, as the mention of hell, to extol heaven. No more use of our calendars or chronology: all the years of our Lord, and the years of our lives, are swallowed up and lost in this eternity. While we were servants, we held by lease; and that but for the term of transitory life; but the son abideth in the house for ever.

(Gal. 6:8.) Our first and earthly paradise in Eden had a way out, but none that ever we could find in again; but this eternal paradise hath a way in (a milky way to us, but a bloody way to Christ), but no way out again; "for they that would pass from hence to you," saith Abraham, "cannot." (Luke 16:24.) A strange phrase! Would any pass from such a place if they might? Could they endure to be absent from God again one hour! No, but upon supposal that they would; yet they could not. O then, my soul, let go thy dreams of present pleasures; and loose thy hold of earth and flesh. Fear not to enter that estate, where thou shalt ever after cease thy fears. Sit down, and sadly, once a day, bethink thyself of this eternity: among all the arithmetical numbers, study the value of this infinite cipher, which, though it stand for nothing in the vulgar account, doth yet contain all our millions, as much less than a simple unit. Lay by the perplexed and contradicting chronological tables, and fix thine eye on this eternity; and the lines which remote thou couldst not follow, thou shalt see all together here centred. Study less those tedious volumes of history, which contain but the silent narration of dreams, and are but the pictures of the actions of shadows; and, instead of all, study frequently, study thoroughly this one word, 'eternity,' and when thou hast learned thoroughly that one word, thou wilt never look on books again. What! live, and never die? Rejoice, and ever rejoice! O, what sweet words are these, 'never and ever!' O, happy souls in hell, should you but escape after millions of ages! and if the Origenist doctrine were but true! O miserable saints in heaven, should you be dispossessed after the age of a million of worlds! But, O this word, 'everlasting,' contains the accomplished perfection of their torment and our glory. O that the wicked sinner would but soundly study this word 'everlasting,' methinks it should startle him out of his dearest sleep! O that the gracious soul would believingly study this word 'everlasting,' methinks it should revive him in the deepest agony! And must I, Lord, thus live for ever? Then will I also love for ever. Must my joys be immortal; and shall not my thanks be also immortal? Surely, if I shall never loose my glory, I will also never cease thy praises. Shouldst thou but renew my lease of these first-fruits, would I not renew thy fine and rent? But if thou wilt both

perfect and perpetuate me and my glory, as I shall be thine, and not mine own, so shall my glory be thy glory; and as all did take their spring from thee, so all shall devolve into thee again; and as thy glory was thine ultimate end in my glory, so shall it also be mine end, when thou hast crowned me with that glory which hath no end. And "to thee, O King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, shall be the honour and glory, for ever and ever: amen." (2 Tim. 1:17.)

And thus I have endeavoured to show you a glimpse of the approaching glory: but, O, how short are my expressions of its excellency! Reader, if thou be an humble, sincere believer, and waitest with longing and labouring for this rest, thou wilt shortly see and feel the truth of all this; then wilt thou have so high an apprehension of this blessed state that will make thee pity the ignorance and distance of mortals; and will tell thee then all that is here said is spoken but in the dark, and falls short of the truth a thousand fold. In the mean time, let this much kindle thy desires, and quicken thine endeavours. Up, and be doing; run, and strive, and fight, and hold on, for thou hast a certain, glorious prize before thee. God will not mock thee: do not mock thyself, nor betray thy soul, by delaying or dallying, and all is thine own. What kind of men dost thou think Christians would be in their lives and duties, if they had still this glory fresh in their thoughts? What frame would their spirits be in, if their thoughts of heaven were lively and believing? Would their hearts be so heavy, and their countenance so sad? Or would they have need to take up their comforts from below? Would they be so loth to suffer, and afraid to die? or would they not think every day a year, till they did enjoy it? The Lord heal our carnal hearts, lest we enter not into his rest, because of our unbelief.

CHAP. VIII

The People of God described.

SECT. I. Having thus performed my first task of describing and explicating the saint's rest, it remains that now I proceed unto the second, and show you what these "people of God" are, and why so called, for whom this blessed rest remaineth; and I shall suit my speech unto the quality of the subject. While I was in the mount, I felt it was good being there, and therefore tarried there the longer; and were there not an extreme disproportion between my conceivings and that subject, yet much longer had I been. And could my capacity have contained what was there to be seen, I could have been contented to have built me a tabernacle there. Can a prospect of that happy land be tedious, or a discourse of eternity be too long, except it should detain us from actual possession, and our absence move us to impatience? But now I am descended from heaven to earth, from God to man, and must discourse of a worm not six feet long, whose life is but a span, and his years as a post that hasteth by; my discourse also shall be but a span, and in a brief touch I will pass it over. Having read of such a high and unspeakable glory, a stranger would wonder for what rare creature this mighty preparation should be, and expect some illustrious sun should now break forth; but, behold, only a shell full of dust, animated with an invisible rational soul, and that rectified with as unseen a restored power of grace; and this is the creature that must possess such glory. You would think it must needs be some deserving piece, or one that brings a valuable price. But, behold, one that hath nothing, and can deserve nothing, and confesseth this, yet cannot, of himself, confess it neither, yea, that deserveth the contrary misery, and would, if he might, proceed in that deserving; but being apprehended by love, he is brought to him that is all, and hath done and deserved all, and suffered for all that we deserved; and most affectionately receiving him, and resting on him, he doth, in and through him, receive all this. But let us see more particularly yet, what these "people of God" are.

They are a small part of lost mankind, whom God hath from eternity predestinated to this rest, for the glory of his mercy, and given to his Son, to be by him in a special manner redeemed, and fully recovered from their lost estate, and advanced to this higher glory: all which

Christ doth, in due time, accomplish accordingly by himself for them, and by his Spirit upon them. To open all the parts of this half-description to the full, will take up more time and room than are allowed me. Therefore briefly thus:

1. I meddle only with mankind, not with angels; nor will I curiously inquire whether there were any other world of men created and destroyed before this had being; nor whether there shall be any other when this is ended. All this is quite above us, and so nothing to us: nor say I the sons of Adam only, because Adam himself is one of them.

2. And as it is no more excellent a creature than man that must have this possession, so is it that man, who once was lost, and had scarcely left himself so much as man. The heirs of this kingdom were taken, even from the tree of execution, and rescued by the strong hand of love from the power of the prince of darkness, who having taken them in his snares, did lead them captive at his will: they were once within a step of hell, who must now be advanced as high as heaven. And though I mention their lost condition before their predestination, yet I thereby intend not to signify any precedency it hath, either in itself, or in the divine consideration. That question I dare not touch, as being very suspicious that it is high arrogancy in us to dispute of precedency in the divine consideration; and that we no more know what we talk of than this paper knows what I write of: when we confess, that all these acts in God are truly one, and that there is no difference of time with him: it is dangerous to dispute of priority or posterity in nature; at least of the decree of the means, which is but one.

3. That they are but a small part of this lost generation, is too apparent in Scripture and experience. "It is the little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom." If the sanctified are few, the saved must needs be few: fewer they are than the world imagines; yet not so few as some drooping spirits deem, who are doubtful that God would cast off them, who would not reject them

for all the world; and are suspicious that God is unwilling to be their God; when yet they know themselves willing to be his people.

4. It is the design of God's eternal decree to glorify his mercy and grace to the highest in this their salvation; and, therefore, needs must it be a great salvation. Every step of mercy to it was great; how much more this end of all those mercies, which stands next to God's ultimate end, his glory! God cannot make any low or mean work to be the great business of an eternal purpose.

5. God hath given all things to his Son, but not as he hath given his chosen to him; the difference is clearly expressed by the apostle. He hath made him "Head over all things to his church." (Ephes. 1:22.) And though Christ is, in some sense, a ransom for all, yet not in that special manner as for his people. He hath, according to the tenor of his covenant, procured salvation for all, if they will believe; but he hath procured for his chosen even this condition of believing.p

6. Nor is the redeeming of them by death his whole task; but also the effecting of their full recovery: he may send his Spirit to persuade others; but he intends absolutely his prevailing only with his chosen. And as truly as he hath accomplished his part on the cross for them, so truly will he accomplish his part in heaven for them, and his part by his Spirit also on them. And of all that the Father hath thus given him, he will lose nothing.

But this is but a piece of their description, containing God's work for them, and on them; let us see what they are also in regard of the working of their own souls towards God, and their Redeemer, again. [These people of God then, are the (1) part of the (2) externally called, (3) who being by the (4) Spirit of Christ (5) thoroughly, though (6) imperfectly regenerate, are hereupon (7) convinced, and (8) sensible of that (9) evil in sin, (10) that misery in themselves, that (11) vanity in the creature, and that (12) necessity, (13) sufficiency, and (14) excellency of Jesus Christ, that they (15) abhor that evil, (16) bewail that misery, and (17) turn their hearts from that vanity, and

(18) accepting of Christ for their (19) Saviour and (20) Lord, to bring them unto (21) God the chief good, and present them (22) perfectly just before him, do accordingly enter into a (23) cordial covenant with him, and so (24) deliver up themselves unto him, and herein (25) persevere to their lives' end.]

I shall briefly explain to you the branches of this part of the description also.

1. I say, they are a part of "the externally called," because the Scripture hath yet showed us no other way to the internal call, but by the external. "For how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" All divulging of the substance of the Gospel, whether by solemn sermons, by writing, printing, reading, conference, or any other means that have a rational sufficiency, for information and conviction, are this preaching; though not alike clear and excellent. The knowledge of Christ is none of nature's principles: the book of the creatures is no means alone, much less a sufficient means to teach the knowledge of Christ. It may discover mercy, but gives not the least hint of the way of that mercy: it speaks nothing of God incarnate; or two natures in one person; of Jesus the son of Mary; of Christ's suretyship, and suffering for us, rising, ascending, mediating, returning; of two covenants, and their several conditions, and the reward of keeping them, and penalty of breaking them, &c. It is utterly silent in these things. And to affirm that the Spirit calls or teacheth men where the word is not, and where the creature or nature speaks not, is, I think, a groundless fiction. There is the light of the eye, and the light of the sun, or some other substitute external light necessary to our seeing any object. The Scripture and certain revelations from heaven, when and where such are, is the sun of external light: the understanding is our eye, or internal light; this eye is become blind, and this internal light in the best is imperfect; but the external light of Scripture is now perfected: therefore the work of the Spirit now is, not to perfect Scripture, or to add any thing to its discovery, or to be instead of a Scripture where it is wanting, much

less where the Scripture is: but to remove the darkness from our understanding, that we may see clearly what the Scripture speaks clearly: before the Scripture was perfect, the Spirit did enlighten the prophets and penmen of Scripture both ways: but now I know no teaching of the Spirit, save only by its illuminating or sanctifying work; teaching men no new lesson, nor the old without book; but to read with understanding, what Scripture, nature, creatures, and providences, teach. The asserting of any more, is proper to the enthusiasts. If the Spirit's teaching did without Scripture or tradition reveal Christ, surely some of those millions of poor blind pagans would have before this believed, and the christian faith have been propagated among them.

2. That these people of God are but a part of those that are thus externally called, is too evident in Scripture and experience. "Many are called, but few chosen:" but the internally, effectually called, are all chosen: "for whom he called, them he justified; and whom he justified, them he glorified." (Rom. 8:30.) The bare invitation of the Gospel, and men's hearing the word, is so far from giving title to, or being an evidence of Christianity and its privileges, that where it prevails not to a thorough conversion, it sinks deeper, and casts under a double damnation.

3. The first differencing work I affirm to be regeneration by the Spirit of Christ; taking it for granted, that this regeneration is the same with effectual vocation, with conversion, with sanctification; understanding conversion, and sanctification, of the first infusion of the principle of spiritual life into the soul, and not for the addition of degrees, or the sanctifying of the conversation, in which last sense it is most frequently taken in Scripture.

This spiritual regeneration then, is the first and great qualification of these people of God; which, though habits are more for their acts than themselves, and are only perceived in their acts, yet by its causes and effects we should chiefly inquire after. To be the people of God without regeneration, is as impossible as to be the natural

children of men without generation; seeing we are born God's enemies, we must be new-born his sons, or else remain his enemies still. O that the unregenerate world did know or believe this! in whose ears the new birth sounds as a paradox, and the great change which God works upon the soul, is a strange thing: who, because they never felt any such supernatural work upon themselves, do therefore believe that there is no such thing, but that it is the conceit and fantasy of idle brains; who make the terms of regeneration, sanctification, holiness, and conversion, a matter of common reproach and scorn, though they are the words of the Spirit of God himself; and Christ hath spoken it with his mouth, "that except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The greatest reformation of life that can be attained to, without this new life wrought in the soul, may procure their further delusion, but never their salvation.

This regeneration I call thorough, to distinguish it from those slight tinctures, and superficial changes, which other men may partake of; and yet "imperfect," to distinguish our present from our future condition in glory; and that the Christian may know, that it is sincerity, not perfection, which he must inquire after in his soul.

Sect. III. Thus far the soul is passive. Let us next see by what acts this new life doth discover itself, and this divine spark doth break forth; and how the soul, touched with this loadstone of the Spirit, doth presently move toward God. The first work I call "conviction," which comprehends knowledge, and assent. It comprehends the knowledge of what the Scripture speaks against sin and sinners; and that this Scripture which so speaks, is the word of God himself. Whosoever knows not both these, is not yet thus convinced. It comprehends a sincere assent to the verity of the Scripture; as also some knowledge of ourselves, and our own guilt, and an acknowledgment of the verity of those consequences, which, from the premises of sin in us, and threats in Scripture, do conclude us miserable. It hath been a great question, and disputed in whole volumes, which grace is the first in the soul; where faith and repentance are usually the only

competitors. In regard of the principle, the power, or habit, which soever it be that is infused, they are all at once; being indeed all one; and called several graces from the diversity of their objects and subjects, as residing in the several faculties of the soul; the life and rectitude of which several faculties and affections, are in the same sense several graces; as the German, French, British seas are several seas. And for the acts, it is most apparent, that neither repentance, nor faith, in the ordinary strict sense, is first, but knowledge. There is no act of the rational soul about any object preceding knowledge. Their evasion is too gross, who tell us, that knowledge is no grace, or but a common act; when a dead soul is by the Spirit enlivened, its first act is to know; and why should it not exert a sincere act of knowing, as well as believing, and the sincerity of knowledge be requisite as well as of faith; especially when faith in the Gospel-sense, is sometimes taken largely, containing many acts, whereof knowledge is one; in which large sense, indeed, faith is the first grace. This conviction implieth also the subduing and silencing, in some measure, of all their carnal reasonings, which were wont to prevail against the truth, and a discovery of the fallacies of all their former argumentations.

2. As there must be conviction, so also sensibility: God works on the heart, as well as the head; both were corrupted, and out of order. The principal of new life doth quicken both. All true spiritual knowledge doth pass into affections. That religion which is merely traditional, doth indeed swim loose in the brain; and the devotion which is kindled but by men and means, is hot in the mouth, and cold in the stomach. The work that had no higher rise than education, example, custom, reading, or hearing, doth never kindly pass down to the affections. The understanding which did receive but mere notions, cannot deliver them to the affections, as realities. The bare help of doctrine upon an unrenewed soul, produceth in the understanding but a superficial apprehension, and half assent, and therefore can produce in the heart but small sensibility. As hypocrites may know many things, yea, as many as the best Christian, but nothing with the clear apprehensions of an experienced man; so may they with as

many things be slightly affected, but they give deep rooting to none. To read and hear of the worth of meat and drink, may raise some esteem of them, but not such as the hungry and thirsty feel; for by feeling they know the worth thereof. To view in the map of the Gospel, the precious things of Christ and his kingdom, may slightly affect; but to thirst for, and drink of, the living waters; and to travel, to live in, to be heir of that kingdom, must needs work another kind of sensibility. It is Christ's own differencing mark, and I had rather have one from him than from any, that the good ground gives the good seed deep rooting; but some others entertain it but into the surface of the soil, and cannot afford it depth of earth. The great things of sin, of grace, and Christ, and eternity, which are of weight, one would think to move a rock, yet shake not the heart of the carnal professor, nor pierce his soul unto the quick; though he should have them all ready in his brain, and be a constant preacher of them to others, yet do they little affect himself: when he is pressing them upon the hearts of others most earnestly, and crying out on the senselessness of his dull hearers, you would little think how insensible is his own soul, and the great difference between his tongue and his heart. His study and invention procure him zealous and moving expressions, but they cannot procure him answerable affections. It is true, some soft and passionate natures may have tears at command, when one that is truly gracious hath none; yet is this Christian, with dry eyes, more solidly apprehensive and deeply affected, than the other is in the midst of his tears; and the weeping hypocrite will be drawn to his sin again with a trifle, which the groaning Christian would not be hired to commit with crowns and kingdoms.

The things that the soul is convinced and sensible of, are especially these in the description mentioned.

1. The evil of sin. The sinner is made to know and feel that the sin which was his delight, his sport, the support of his credit and estate, is indeed a more loathsome thing than toads or serpents, and a greater evil than plague or famine, or any other calamities; it being a

breach of the righteous law of the Most High God, dishonourable to him, and destructive to the sinner. Now the sinner reads and hears no more the reproofs of sin, as words of course, as if the minister wanted something to say to fill up his sermon; but when you mention his sin, and stir in his wounds, he feels you speak at his very heart, and yet is contented you should show him the worst, and set it home, though he bear the smart. He was wont to marvel what made men keep such a stir against sin; what harm it was for a man to take a little forbidden pleasure: he saw no such heinousness in it, that Christ must needs die for it, and most of the world be eternally tormented in hell. He thought this was somewhat hard measure, and greater punishment than could possibly be deserved by a little fleshly liberty, or worldly delight, neglect of Christ, his word, or worship; yea, by a wanton thought, a vain word, a dull duty, or cold affection. But now the case is altered: God hath opened his eyes to see that inexpressible vileness in sin, which satisfies him of the reason of all this.

2. The soul in this great work is convinced and sensible, as of the evil of sin, so of its own misery by reason of sin. They who before read the threats of God's law, as men do the whole stories of foreign wars, or as they behold the wounds and the blood in a picture, or piece of arras, which never makes them smart or fear: now they find it is their own story, and they perceive they read their own doom, as if they found their names written in the curse, or heard the law say, as Nathan, "Thou art the man." The wrath of God seemed to him but as a storm to a man in a dry house, or as the pains of the sick to the healthful stander-by, or as the torments of hell to a child that sees the story of Dives and Lazarus upon the wall; but now he finds the disease is his own, and feels the pain in his own bowels, and the smart of the wounds in his own soul. In a word, he finds himself a condemned man, and that he is dead and damned in point of law, and that nothing was wanting but mere execution to make him most absolutely and irrecoverably miserable. Whether you will call this a work of the law or Gospel, as in several senses it is of both; the law expressing, and the Gospel intimating and implying, our former

condemnation; sure I am, it is a work of the Spirit wrought, in some measure, in all the regenerate: and though some do judge it unnecessary bondage, yet it is beyond my conceiving how he should come to Christ for pardon who first found not himself guilty and condemned, or for life who never found himself dead. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Yet I deny not, but the discovery of the remedy as soon as the misery, must needs prevent a great part of the trouble, and make the distinct effect on the soul, to be with much more difficulty discerned. Nay, the actings of the soul are so quick, and oft so confused, that the distinct order of these workings may not be apprehended or remembered at all; and perhaps the joyful apprehensions of mercy may make the sense of misery the sooner forgotten.

3. So doth the Spirit also convince the soul of the creature's vanity and insufficiency. Every man naturally is a flat idolater; our hearts turned from God in our first fall, and ever since the creature hath been our god. This is the grand sin of nature. When we set up to ourselves a wrong end, we must needs err in all the means. The creature is to every unregenerate man his God and his Christ. He ascribeth to it the divine prerogatives, and alloweth it the highest room in his soul: or if ever he come to be convinced of misery, he fleeth to it as his saviour and supply. Indeed, God and his Christ hath usually the name, and shall be still called both Lord and Saviour; but the real expectation is from the creature, and the work of God is laid upon it. How well it will perform that work the sinner must know hereafter. It is his pleasure, his profit, and his honour, that is the natural man's trinity, and his carnal self that is these in unity. Indeed, it is that flesh that is the principal idol: the other three are deified in their relation to ourselves. It was our first sin to aspire to be as gods; and it is the greatest sin that runs in our blood, and is propagated in our nature from generation to generation. When God should guide us, we guide ourselves; when he should be our sovereign, we rule ourselves. The laws which he gives us, we would correct and find fault with; and if we had had the making of them, we would have made them otherwise. When he should take care of us,

and must, or we perish, we will care for ourselves: when we should depend on him in daily receivings, we had rather keep our stock ourselves, and have our portion in our own hands: when we should stand at his disposal, we would be at our own; and when we should submit to his providence, we usually quarrel at it; as if we knew better what is good or fit for us than he; or how to dispose of all things more wisely: if we had the disposal of the events of wars, and the ordering of the affairs of churches and states, or the choice of our own outward condition, it would be far otherwise than now it is; and we think we could make a better disposal, order, and choice, than God hath made. This is the language of a carnal heart, though it doth not always speak out. When we should study God, we study ourselves; when we should mind God, we mind ourselves; when we should love God, we love our carnal selves; when we should trust God, we trust ourselves; when we should honour God, we honour ourselves; and when we should ascribe to God, and admire him, we ascribe to and admire ourselves: and, instead of God, we would have all men's eyes and dependance on us, and all men's thanks returned to us, and would gladly be the only men on earth extolled and admired by all. And thus we are naturally our own idols: but down falls this Dagon, when God doth once renew the soul. It is the great business of that great work, to bring the heart back to God himself. He convinceth the sinner: 1. That the creature, of himself, can neither be his god, to make him happy; 2. Nor yet his Christ, to recover him from his misery, and restore him to God, who is his happiness. This God doth, not only by preaching, but by providence also; because words seem but wind, and will hardly take off the raging senses, therefore doth God make his rod to speak, and continue speaking, till the sinner hear, and hath learned by it this great lesson. This is the great reason why affliction doth so ordinarily concur in the work of conversion; these real arguments, which speak to the quick, will force a hearing, when the most convincing and powerful words are slighted. When a sinner made his credit his god, and God shall cast him into lowest disgrace; or bring him that idolized his riches into a condition wherein they cannot help him, or cause them to take wing and fly away; or the rust to corrupt, and the

thief to steal his adored god in a night, or an hour; what a help is here to this work of conviction! When a man that made his pleasure his god, whether ease, or sports, or mirth, or company, or gluttony, or drunkenness, or clothing, or buildings; or whatsoever a ranging eye, a curious ear, a raging appetite, or a lustful heart, could desire, and God shall take these from him, or give him their sting and curse with them, and turn them all into gall and wormwood; what a help is here to this conviction! When God shall cast a man into a languishing sickness, and inflict wounds and anguish on his heart, and stir up against him his own conscience, and then, as it were, take the sinner by the hand, and lead him to credit, to riches, to pleasure, to company, to sports, or whatsoever was dearest to him, and say, 'Now, try if these can help you; can these heal thy wounded conscience? Can they now support thy tottering cottage? Can they keep thy departing soul in thy body, or save thee from mine everlasting wrath? Will they prove to thee eternal pleasures, or redeem thy soul from the eternal flames? Cry aloud to them, and see now whether these will be instead of God and his Christ unto thee.' O, how this works now with the sinner; when sense itself acknowledgeth the truth, and even the flesh is convinced of the creature's vanity, and our very deceiver is undeceived! Now he despiseth his former idols, and calleth them all but silly comforters, wooden, earthly, dirty gods, of a few days old, and quickly perishing; he speaketh as contemptuously of them as Baruk of the pagan idols, or our martyrs of the papists' god of bread, which was yesterday in the oven, and is to-morrow on the dunghill; he chideth himself for his former folly, and pitieth those that have no higher happiness. O poor Cræsus, Cæsar, Alexander, thinks he, how small, how short, was your happiness! Ah, poor wretches! Base honours; woful pleasures; sad mirth; ignorant learning; defiled dunghill; counterfeit righteousness! Poor stuff to make a god of: simple things to save souls! Wo to them that have no better a portion, no surer saviours, nor greater comforts, than these can yield, in their last and great distress and need! In their own place they are sweet and lovely; but in the place of God, how contemptible and abominable! They that are accounted excellent and admirable within the bounds of their own calling,

should they step into the throne, and usurp sovereignty, would soon, in the eyes of all, be vile and insufferable.

4. The fourth thing that the soul is convinced and sensible of, is, the absolute necessity, the full sufficiency, and perfect excellency, of Jesus Christ. It is a great question, whether all the forementioned works are not common, and only preparations unto this? They are preparatives, and yet not common; every lesser work is a preparative to the greater; and all the first works of grace, to those that follow: so faith is a preparative to our continual living in Christ, to our justification and glory. There are, indeed, common convictions, and so there is also a common believing; but this, as in the former terms explained, is both a sanctifying and saving work: I mean a saving act of a sanctifying soul, excited by the Spirit's special grace. That it precedes justification, contradicts not this; for so doth faith itself too: nor that it precedes faith, is any thing against it; for I have showed before, that it is a part of faith in the large sense: and in the strict sense taken, faith is not the first gracious act, much less that act of fiducial recumbency, which is commonly taken for the justifying act; though, indeed, it is no one single act, but many, that are the condition of justification.

This conviction is not by mere argumentation, as a man is convinced of the verity of some inconcerning consequence by dispute; but also by the sense of our desperate misery, as a man in famine, of the necessity of food; or a man that had read or heard his sentence of condemnation, is convinced of the absolute necessity of pardon; or as a man that lies in prison for debt, is convinced of the necessity of a surety to discharge it. Now the sinner finds himself in another case than ever he was aware of; he feels an insupportable burden upon him, and sees there is none but Christ can take it off. He perceives that he is under the wrath of God, and that the laws proclaim him a rebel and an outlaw, and none but Christ alone can make his peace: he is a man pursued by a lion, that must perish, if he find not present sanctuary. He feels the curse doth lie upon him, and upon all he hath for his sake, and Christ alone can make him blessed: he is now

brought to this dilemma, either he must have Christ to justify him, or be eternally condemned; or he must have Christ to save him, or burn in hell for ever; he must have Christ to bring him again to God, or be shut out of his presence everlastingly; and now no wonder if he cry as the martyr, Lambert, "None but Christ, none but Christ!" It is not gold, but bread, that will satisfy the hungry; nor any thing but pardon that will comfort the condemned. "All things are now but dross and dung;" (Phil. 3:7–9;) and what we counted gain, is now but loss in comparison of Christ: for, as the sinner seeth his utter misery, and the disability of himself, and all things to relieve him, so he doth perceive that there is no saving mercy out of Christ: the truth of the threatening, and tenor of both covenants, do put him out of all such hopes. There is none found in heaven or earth that can open the sealed book, save the Lamb: without his blood, there is no remission; and without remission, there is no salvation. (Rev. 5:3–6; Heb. 9:22, and 13:12.) Could the sinner now make any shift without Christ, or could any thing else supply his wants and save his soul, then might Christ be disregarded; but now he is convinced that there is no other name, and the necessity is absolute. (Acts 4:12.)

2. And as the soul is thus convinced of the necessity of Christ, so also of his full sufficiency. He sees, though the creature cannot, and himself cannot, yet Christ can. Though the fig-leaves of our own unrighteous righteousness are too short to cover our nakedness, yet the righteousness of Christ is large enough: ours is disproportionable to the justice of the law, but Christ's doth extend to every tittle. If he intercede, there is no denial; such is the dignity of his person, and the value of his merits, that the Father granteth all he desireth: he tells us himself, "that the Father heareth him always." (John 11:14.) His sufferings being a perfect satisfaction to the law, and all power in heaven and earth being given to him, he is now able to supply every of our wants, and to save to the uttermost all that come to him. (Heb. 7:25.)

Quest. How can I know his death is sufficient for me, if not for all; and how is it sufficient for all, if not suffered for all?

Answ. Because I will not interrupt my present discourse with controversy, I will say something to this question by itself in another tract, if God enable me.

3. The soul is also convinced of the perfect excellency of Jesus Christ, both as he is considered in himself, and as considered in relation to us; both as he is the only way to the Father, and as he is the End, being one with the Father. Before, he knew Christ's excellency as a blind man knows the light of the sun; but now, as one that beholdeth his glory.

And thus doth the Spirit convince the soul.

Sect. IV. 3. After this sensible conviction the will discovereth also its change, and that in regard of all the four forementioned objects.

1. The sin which the understanding pronounceth evil, the will doth accordingly turn from with abhorrency. Not that the sensitive appetite is changed, or any way made to abhor its object; but when it would prevail against the conclusions of reason, and carry us to sin against God, when Scripture should be the rule, and reason the master, and sense the servant: this disorder and evil the will abhorreth.

2. The misery also which sin hath procured, as he discerneth, so he bewaileth. It is impossible that the soul now living, should look either on its trespass against God, or yet on its own self-procured calamity, without some compunction and contrition. He that truly discerneth that he hath killed Christ, and killed himself, will surely, in some measure, be pricked to the heart. If he cannot weep, he can heartily groan; and his heart feels what his understanding sees.

3. The creature he now renounceth as vain, and turneth it out of his heart with disdain. Not that he undervalueth it, or disclaimeth its use; but its idolatrous abuse, and its unjust usurpation.

There is a twofold sin: one against God himself, as well as his laws, when he is cast out of the heart, and something else doth take his place. This is that I intend in this place. The other is when a man doth take the Lord for his God, but yet swerveth in some things from his commands: of this before. It is a vain distinction that some make, that the soul must be turned first from sin: secondly, from the creature to God: for the sin that is thus set up against God, is the choice of something below in his stead; and no creature in itself is evil, but the abuse of it is the sin; therefore, to turn from the creature, is only to turn from that sinful abuse.

Yet hath the creature a twofold consideration: first, as it is vain and insufficient to perform what the idolater expecteth, and so I handle it here; secondly, as it is the object of such sinful abuse, and the occasion of sin; and so it falls under the former branch of our turning from sin, and in this sense their division may be granted. But this is only a various respect; for, indeed, it is still only our sinful abuse of the creature, in our vain admirations, undue estimations, too strong affections, and false expectations, which we turn from.

There is a twofold error very common in the description of the work of conversion: the one, of those who only mention the sinner's turning from sin to God, without mentioning any receiving of Christ by faith; the other, of those who, on the contrary, only mention a sinner's believing, and then think they have said all: nay, they blame them as legalists, who make any thing but the bare believing of the love of God in Christ to us, to be part of the work, and would persuade poor souls to question all their former comforts, and conclude the work to have been only legal and unsound, because they have made their changes of heart, and turning from sin and creatures, part of it, and have taken up part of their comfort from the reviewing of these as evidences of right work. Indeed, should they take up here without Christ, or take such a change instead of Christ, in whole or in part, the reprehension were just, and the danger great; but can Christ be the way where the creature is the end? Is he not the only way to the Father; and must not a right end be intended before

right means? Can we seek to Christ to reconcile us to God, while in our hearts we prefer the creature before him; or doth God dispossess the creature, and sincerely turn the heart therefrom, when he will not bring the soul to Christ? Is it a work that is ever wrought in an unrenewed soul? You will say, "that without faith it is impossible to please God."x True; but what faith doth the apostle there speak of? "He that cometh to God, must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The belief of the Godhead must needs precede the belief of the mediatorship; and the taking of the Lord for our God, must, in order, precede the taking of Christ for our Saviour, though our peace with God do follow this: therefore, Paul, when he was to deal with the Athenian idolaters, teacheth them the knowledge of the Godhead first, and the Mediator afterwards. But, you will say, 'May not an unregenerate man believe that there is a God?' True, and so may he also believe that there is a Christ; but he cannot more cordially accept of the Lord for his God than he can accept of Christ for his Saviour. In the soul of every unregenerate man, the creature possesseth both places, and is both God and Christ. Can Christ be believed in, where our own righteousness or any other thing is trusted as our Saviour; or doth God ever thoroughly discover sin and misery, and clearly take the heart from all creatures, and self-righteousness, and yet leave the soul unrenewed? The truth is, where the work is sincere, there it is entire; and all these parts are truly wrought: and as turning from the creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning; so believing in Christ, while the creature hath our hearts, is no true believing. And therefore in the work of self-examination, whoever would find in himself a thorough sincere work, must find an entire work; even the one of these as well as the other. In the review of which entire work, there is no doubt but his soul may take comfort. And it is not to be made so light of as most do, nor put by with a wet finger, that Scripture doth so ordinarily put repentance before faith, and make them, jointly, conditions of the Gospel; which repentance contains those acts of the will's aversion from sin and creatures before expressed. It is true, if we take faith in the largest sense of all, a then

it contains repentance in it; but if we take it strictly, no doubt there are some acts of it go before repentance, and some follow after.

Yet it is not of much moment which of the acts before-mentioned we shall judge to precede, whether our aversion from sin, and renouncing our idols, or our right receiving Christ, seeing it all composeth but one work, which God doth ever perfect where he beginneth but one step, and layeth but one stone in sincerity; and the moments of time can be but few that interpose between the several acts.

If any object, 'That every grace is received from Christ, and therefore must follow our receiving him by faith,' I answer, There be receivings from Christ before believing, and before our receiving of Christ himself. Such is all that work of the Spirit, that brings the soul to Christ; and there is a passive receiving of grace before the active. Both power and act of faith are, in order of nature, before Christ, actually received; and the power of all other gracious acts is as soon as that of faith. Though Christ give pardon and salvation upon condition of believing, yet he gives not, in the first degree, a new heart, a soft heart, and faith itself, nor the first true repentance on that condition; any more than he gives the preaching of the Gospel, the Spirit's motion to believe, &c., upon a pre-requisite condition of believing.

Sect. V. 4. And as the will is thus averted from the fore-mentioned objects, so, at the same time, doth it cleave to God the Father, and to Christ. Its first acting in order of nature, is toward the whole divine essence; and it consists, especially, in intending and desiring God for his portion and chief good: having before been convinced that nothing else can be his happiness, he now finds it is in God, and therefore looks towards it. But it is yet rather with desire than hope; for, alas! the sinner hath already found himself to be a stranger and enemy to God, under the guilt of sin and curse of his law, and knows there is no coming to him in peace till his case be altered; and, therefore, having before been convinced, also, that only Christ is able

and willing to do this, and having heard his mercy in the Gospel freely offered, his next act is, secondly, to accept of Christ for Saviour and Lord. I put the former before this, because the ultimate end is necessarily the first intended, and the divine essence is principally that ultimate end; (John 14:6;) yet not excluding the human nature in the second person: but Christ, as Mediator, is the way to that end; and, throughout the Gospel, is offered to us in such terms as import his being the means of making us happy in God. And though that former act of the soul toward the Godhead, be not said to justify as this last doth, yet is it, I think, as proper to the people of God as this; nor can any man, unregenerate, truly choose God for his Lord, his portion, and chief good; therefore do they both mistake: they who only mention our turning to Christ, and they who only mention our turning to God, in this work of conversion, as is touched before. Paul's preaching was "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21, 5:31, 11:18, and 26:20.) And life eternal consists, first, in knowing the only true God, and then Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. (John 17:3.) The former is the natural part of the covenant, to take the Lord only for our God; the latter is the supernatural part, to take Christ only for our Redeemer. The former is first necessary, and implied in the latter.

Though repentance and good works, &c., are required to our full justification, at judgment, as subservient to, or concurrent with, faith; yet is the nature of this justifying faith itself contained in assent, and in this accepting of Christ for Saviour and Lord: and I think it necessarily contains all this in it; some place it in the assenting act only, some in a fiducial adherence, or recumbency; I call it accepting, it being principally an act of the will; but yet also of the whole soul. cThis accepting being that which the Gospel presseth to, and calleth the receiving or accepting Christ: I call it an affectionate accepting, though love seem another act quite distinct from faith, and if you take faith for assent only, so it is; yet I take it as essential to that faith which justifies. To accept Christ without love, is not justifying faith. Nor doth love follow as a fruit, but immediately concur; nor concur as a mere concomitant, but essential to a true

accepting. For this faith is the receiving of Christ, either with the whole soul, or with part; not with part only, for that is but a partial receiving: and most clearly, divines of late conclude, that justifying faith resides both in the understanding and the will; therefore, in the whole soul; and so cannot be one single act. I add, it is the most affectionate accepting of Christ; because he that loves father, mother, or any thing more than him, is not worthy of him, nor can be his disciple; (Luke 14:26;) and consequently not justified by him. And the truth of this affection is not to be judged so much by feeling the pulse of it, as by comparing it with our affection for other things. He that loveth nothing so much as Christ, doth love him truly, though he find cause still to bewail the coldness of his affections. I make Christ himself the object of his accepting, it being not any theological axiom concerning himself, but himself in person. I call it an accepting him for Saviour and Lord. For in both relations will he be received, or not at all. It is not only to acknowledge his sufferings, and accept of pardon and glory, but to acknowledge his sovereignty, and submit to his government, and way of saving; and I take all this to be contained in justifying faith. The vilest sinner among us will accept of Christ to justify and save him, if that only would serve the turn to his justification.

The work (which Christ thus accepted of, is to perform) is, to bring the sinners to God, that they may be happy in him: and this both really by his Spirit, and relatively in reconciling them, and making them sons; and to present them perfect before him at last, and to possess them of the kingdom. This will Christ perform: and the obtaining of these, are the sinner's lawful ends, in receiving Christ; and to these uses doth he offer himself unto us.

5. To this end doth the sinner now enter into a cordial covenant with Christ. As the preceptive part is called the covenant, so he might be under the covenant before, as also under the offers of a covenant on God's part. But he was never strictly nor comfortably in covenant with Christ till now. He is sure by the free offers, that Christ doth

consent, and now doth he cordially consent, himself; and so the agreement is fully made; and it was never a match indeed till now.

6. With this covenant concurs a mutual delivery; Christ delivereth himself in all comfortable relations to the sinner, and the sinner delivereth up himself to be saved and ruled by Christ. This which I call the delivering of Christ, is his act in and by the Gospel; without any change in himself. The change is only in the sinner to whom the conditional promises become equivalent to absolute, when they perform the conditions. Now doth the soul resolvedly conclude, I have been blindly led by the flesh and lust, and the world, and the devil, too long already, almost to my utter destruction; I will now be wholly at the disposal of my Lord, who hath bought me with his blood, and will bring me to his glory. And thus the complete work of saving faith consisteth in this covenanting, or mystical marriage, of the sinner to Christ.

7. And lastly, I add, that the believer doth herein persevere to the end; though he may commit sins, he never disclaimeth his Lord, renounceth his allegiance, nor recalleth, nor repenteth of his covenant, nor can be properly said to break that covenant, while that faith continues, which is the condition of it. Indeed, those that have verbally covenanted, and not cordially, may yet tread under foot the blood of the covenant, as an unholy thing, (Heb. 10:29; Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:26, 27, and 3:11, 12; John 15:4–6, 9, and 8:31; Col. 1:23; Rom. 12:22,) wherewith they were sanctified by separation from those without the church; but the elect cannot be so deceived. Though this perseverance be certain to true believers; yet it is made a condition of their salvation, yea, of their continued life and fruitfulness, and of the continuance of their justification, though not of their first justification itself. But eternally blessed be that hand of love, which hath drawn the free promise, and subscribed and sealed to that which ascertains us, both of the grace which is the condition, and the kingdom on that condition offered.

Sect. VI. And thus you have a naked enumeration of the essentials of this people of God: not a full portraiture of them in their excellencies, nor all the notes whereby they be discerned; both which were beyond my present purpose. And though it will be part of the following application, to put you upon trial; yet because the description is now before your eyes, and these evidencing works are fresh in your memory, it will not be unseasonable, nor unprofitable for you, to take an account of your own estates, and to view yourselves exactly in this glass, before you pass on any further. And I beseech thee, reader, as thou hast the hope of a Christian, yea, or the reason of a man, to deal thoroughly, and search carefully, and judge thyself as one that must shortly be judged by the righteous God; and faithfully answer to these few questions which I shall here propound.

I will not inquire, whether thou remember the time or the order of these workings of the Spirit: there may be much uncertainty and mistake in that; but I desire thee to look into thy soul, and see whether thou find such works wrought within thee; and then, if thou be sure they are there, the matter is not so great, though thou know not when or how thou camest by them.

And first, hast thou been thoroughly convinced of an universal depravation, through thy whole soul; and an universal wickedness through thy whole life; and how vile a thing this sin is; and that by the tenor of that covenant which thou hast transgressed, the least sin deserves eternal death? Dost thou consent to this law, that it is true and righteous? Hast thou perceived thyself sentenced to this death by it, and been convinced of thy natural, undone condition? Hast thou further seen the utter insufficiency of every creature, either to be itself thy happiness, or the means of curing this thy misery, and making thee happy again in God? Hast thou been convinced, that thy happiness is only in God as the end; and only in Christ as the way to him, and the end also as he is one with the Father; and perceived that thou must be brought to God by Christ, or perish eternally? Hast thou seen hereupon an absolute necessity of the enjoying Christ; and the full sufficiency that is in him, to do for thee whatsoever thy case

requireth, by reason of the fulness of his satisfaction, the greatness of his power, and dignity of his person, and the freeness and indefiniteness of his promises? Hast thou discovered the excellency of this pearl, to be worth thy selling all to buy it? Hath all this been joined with some sensibility; as the convictions of a man that thirsteth, of the worth of drink; and not been only a change in opinion, produced by reading or education, as a bare notion in the understanding? Hath it proceeded to an abhorring that sin; I mean in the bent and prevailing inclination of thy will, though the flesh do attempt to reconcile thee to it; have both thy sin and misery been a burden to thy soul; and if thou couldst not weep, yet couldest thou heartily groan under the insupportable weight of both? Hast thou renounced all thine own righteousness? Hast thou turned thy idols out of thy heart; so that the creature hath no more the sovereignty, but is now a servant to God and to Christ? Dost thou accept of Christ as thy only Saviour, and expect thy justification, recovery, and glory, from him alone? Dost thou take him also for Lord and King? And are his laws the most powerful commanders of thy life and soul? Do they ordinarily prevail against the commands of the flesh, of Satan, of the greatest on earth that shall countermand; and against the greatest interest of thy credit, profit, pleasure, or life; so that thy conscience is directly subject to Christ alone? Hath he the highest room in thy heart and affections; so that though thou canst not love him as thou wouldst, yet nothing else is loved so much? Hast thou made a hearty covenant to this end with him; and delivered up thyself accordingly to him; and takest thyself for his and not thine own? Is it thy utmost care and watchful endeavour, that thou mayest be found faithful in this covenant; and though thou fall into sin, yet wouldest not renounce thy bargain, nor change thy Lord, nor give up thyself to any other government for all the world? If this be truly thy case, thou art one of these people of God which my text speaks of: and as sure as the promise of God is true, this blessed rest remains for thee. Only see thou abide in Christ, and continue to the end; for if any draw back, his soul will have no pleasure in them.

But if all this be contrary with thee, or if no such work be found within thee, but thy soul be a stranger to all this, and thy conscience tell thee, it is none of thy case; the Lord have mercy on thy soul, and open thine eyes, and do this great work upon thee, and by his mighty power overcome thy resistance: for in the case thou art in, there is no hope. Whatever thy deceiving heart may think, or how strong soever thy false hopes be, or though now a little while thou flatter thy soul in confidence and security; yet wilt thou shortly find to thy cost, except thy thorough conversion do prevent it, that thou art none of these people of God, and the rest of the saints belongs not to thee. Thy dying hour draws near apace, and so doth that great day of separation, when God will make an everlasting difference between his people and his enemies: then wo, and for ever wo to thee, if thou be found in the state that thou art now in. (Deut. 32:25.) Thy own tongue will then proclaim thy wo, with a thousand times more dolour and vehemence, than mine can possibly do it now. O that thou wert wise to consider this, and that thou wouldest remember thy latter end! That yet while thy soul is in thy body, and a price in thy hand, and day-light, and opportunity, and hope, before thee, thine ears might be open to instruction, and thy heart might yield to the persuasions of God; and thou mightest bend all the powers of thy soul about this great work; that so thou mightest rest among his people, and enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light! And thus I have shown you who these people of God are.

Sect. VII. And why are they called the people of God? You may easily from what is said discern the reasons.

1. They are the people whom he hath chosen to himself from eternity.
2. And whom Christ hath redeemed with an absolute intent of saving them; which cannot be said of any other.
3. Whom he hath also renewed by the power of his grace, and made them in some sort like to himself, stamping his own image on them, and making them holy, as he is holy.

4. They are those whom he embraceth with a peculiar love, and do again love him above all.
5. They are entered into a strict and mutual covenant, where in it is agreed for the Lord to be their God, and they to be his people.
6. They are brought into near relation to him, even to be his servants, his sons, and the members and spouse of his Son.
7. And lastly, they must live with him for ever, and be perfectly blessed in enjoying his love, and beholding his glory. And I think these are reasons sufficient, why they peculiarly should be called his people.

THE CONCLUSION

And thus I have explained to you the subject of my text; and showed you darkly, and in part, what this rest is; and briefly who are this people of God. O that the Lord would now open your eyes, and your hearts, to discern, and be affected with the glory revealed! That he would take off your hearts from these dunghill delights, and ravish them with the views of these everlasting pleasures! That he would bring you into the state of this holy and heavenly people, for whom alone this rest remaineth! That you would exactly try yourselves by the foregoing description! That no soul of you might be so damnably deluded, as to take your natural or acquired parts, for the characters of a saint! O happy and thrice happy you, if these sermons might have such success with your souls, that so you might die the death of the righteous, and your last end might be like his! For this blessed issue, as I here gladly wait upon you in preaching, so will I also wait upon the Lord in praying.

THE SECOND PART

CONTAINING

**THE PROOFS OF THE TRUTH AND CERTAIN FUTURITY
OF OUR REST; AND THAT THE SCRIPTURE PROMISING
THAT REST TO US, IS THE PERFECT INFALLIBLE WORD
AND LAW OF GOD.**

TO MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS,

THE INHABITANTS OF BRIDGNORTH,

BOTH MAGISTRATES AND PEOPLE,

RICHARD BAXTER devoteth this part of this Treatise, in testimony of his unfeigned love to them, who were the first to whom he was sent, as fixed, to publish the Gospel: and in thankfulness to Divine Majesty, who there privileged and protected him:

HUMBLY beseeching the God of mercy, both to save them from that spirit of pride, separation, and levity, which hath long been working among them; and also to awake them thoroughly from their negligence and security, by his late heavy judgments on them: and that as the flames have consumed their houses, so the Spirit of God may consume the sin that was the cause; and by those flames they may be effectually warned to prevent the everlasting flames; and that their new-built houses may have new-born inhabitants; and that the next time God shall search and try them, he may not find one house among them, where his word is not daily studied and obeyed, and where they do not fervently call upon his name.

THE PREFACE

DIRECTED

I. TO UNBELIEVERS AND ANTI-SCRIPTURISTS;

II. TO PAPISTS;

III. AND TO THE ORTHODOX.

BECAUSE it is a point of such high concernment, to be assured of the divine authority of the Scriptures; and all men are not of one mind in the way of proving it; and because I have not handled this so fully as the difficulty and weight of the subject doth require, as intending only a few arguments by way of digression, for the strengthening of weaker and less exercised Christians: I have thought meet, therefore, a little more fully to express my mind in this preface, being loth to stand to enlarge the book any further. And that which I have to say, is to three sorts of persons distinctly.

The first is, to all those that believe not the truth of the Scriptures. Open pagans live not among us: but pagans professing Christianity, are of late too common, under the name of libertines, familists, seekers, and anti-scripturists. Had I not known it by experience, and had conference with such, I should not speak it. And there is a remnant of paganism and infidelity in the best of Christians. The chief causes which pervert the understanding of men in this point, in my observation, are these two: 1. When men have deeply wounded their consciences by sinning against knowledge, and given the victory to their fleshly lusts; so that they must either deeply accuse and condemn themselves, or deny the Scriptures; they choose that which seemeth the more tolerable and desirable to them, and so rather condemn the Scripture than themselves. And what malefactor would not do the like, and except against the law which doth condemn him, if that would serve his turn? And when men that are engaged in a sinful course, do see that the word of God doth speak so terribly

against it, they dare not live in that sin while they believe the Scripture, because it is still awaking and galling their guilty consciences; but when they have cast away their belief of the Scripture, then conscience will let them sin with more quietness. These men believe not the Scriptures, principally, because they would not have them to be true, rather than because they do indeed seem untrue; for their fleshly concupiscence having mastered their wills, their wills have also mastered their understandings; and so, as in a well-ordered, gracious soul, all goes straight forward; in these men all is perverted, and moves backward. These men refuse their physic, because it is unpleasant, and not because it is unwholesome: yet at last their appetite so mastereth their reason, that they will not believe any thing can be wholesome which goes so much against their stomachs. At least this makes them the readier to pick a quarrel with it, and they are glad to hear of any argument against it. Ahab believed not the message of Micaiah, not because he spoke falsely, but because he spoke not good of him but evil: men will easily be drawn to believe that to be true, which they would fain have to be true; and that to be false, which they desire should be false. But, alas, how short and silly a cure is this for a guilty soul; and how soon will it leave them in incurable misery!

2. Another reason of those men's unbelief, is the seeming contradictions that they find in the Scriptures, and the seeming impossibilities in the doctrines of them, which so far transcend the capacity of man. To the former, let me say this much: 1. It is merely through our ignorance, that scriptures seem contradictory. I thought myself once that some places were hardly reconcilable, which now I see do very plainly agree: plainly, I say, to them that understand the true meaning of the words. There are no human writings, but lie open to such exceptions of the ignorant. It is rather a wonder that the Scriptures seem not to you more self contradicting, if you consider, but 1. That they are written in another language, and must needs lose much in the translation, there being few words to be found in any language, which have not divers significations. 2. That it being the language also of another country, to men that know not the customs,

the situation of places, the proverbial speeches, and phrases of that country, it is impossible but many words should seem dark or contradictory. 3. Also, that the Scriptures are of so exceeding antiquity, as no books else in the world are like them. Now, who knows not that in all countries in the world, customs alter, and proverbial speeches and phrases alter; which must needs make words seem dark, even to men of the same country and language that live so long after. We have many English proverbs, which if in after ages they should cease to be proverbs, and men finding them in our writings, shall construe them as plain speeches, they would seem to be either false, or ridiculous nonsense. The like may be said of alteration of phrases. He that reads but Chaucer, much more elder writers, will see that English is scarce the same thing now, as it was then. Though the sacred languages have had no such great alterations, yet by this it may appear, that it is no wonder, if to the ignorant they seem contrary or difficult. Do not the mathematics, and all sciences, seem full of contradictions and impossibilities to the ignorant; which are all resolved and cleared to those that understand them? It is a very foolish, audacious thing, that every novice, or young student in divinity, should expect to have all difficulties resolved presently, or else they will censure the Scriptures, and speak evil of the things they know not, instead of censuring themselves; when yet these men know, that in the easiest science, yea, or basest manufacture, they must have time to learn the reasons of them. It is usual with raw scholars in all kinds of studies, to say as Nicodemus did at first of regeneration, 'How can these things be?' Methinks such frail and shallow creatures, as all men are, should rather be so sensible of their own incapacity and ignorance, as to be readier to take the blame to themselves, than to quarrel with the truth. It is too large a work for me here to answer all the particular objections of these men against the several passages of Scripture: but if they would be at the pains to inquire of their teachers, or study what is written to that end, they might find that the matter is not so difficult as they imagine. Besides, what Althamar, Cumeranus, Sharpus, and others have purposely written for reconciling the seeming contradictions in Scripture, they may find much in ordinary expositors. Junius

answereth two-and-twenty cavils, which Simplicius the pagan raised, and after him the antinomians used against Moses's 'History of the Creation.' And he was fit for the work, having for a year's time continued in the desperate error of atheism himself. But the fullest confutation of these blasphemous conceits, are in the primitive fathers, as Origen against Celsus, Tertul. Athanas. &c.; where they shall find that the worst of pagans brought forth these monsters, and by what weapons they were destroyed.

2. And what, if you could not see how to reconcile the seeming contradictions of Scripture? When you see arguments sufficient to prove them to be the word of God (which I doubt not but you may see, if you will search impartially and humbly), methinks common reason might then conclude, that all that God speaks must needs be true, though our blindness hinders us from a distinct discerning of it.

2. The like I say of the seeming impossibilities in Scripture: is any thing too hard for Omnipotency itself? The atheist derides it, when he hears of the opening of the Red Sea, of the standing still of the sun, &c. But, dost thou believe that there is a God? If thou dost, thou must needs know that he is almighty: if not, thou hast put out the eye of reason; for most pagans in the world have acknowledged a God. Canst thou think that all things thou seest are made and preserved without a first cause? Do the heavens keep their courses, and the earth produce that variety of beautiful creatures, and the death of one cause the life of the other, and all kept in that order of superiority and inferiority, and all this without a first cause? If thou say that nature is the cause, I would fain know what it is that thou callest nature; either a reasonable being and cause, or an unreasonable. If unreasonable, it could not produce the reasonable spirits, as are angels, and the souls of men; for these would be more noble than itself: if reasonable, is it not then God himself which thou dost call by the name of nature? To be the first reason, being, and cause of all, is to be God. And then let me ask thee, dost thou not see as great works as these miracles every day and hour before thine eyes? Is it not as great a work for the sun to move, as to stand still: to move 10,388,442 miles an hour, being 166 times bigger than all the

earth? Is it not as hard a matter for the sea to move, and keep his times in ebbing and flowing, as for it to open and stand still? Is it not only the rarity and strangeness that makes us think one impossible, when we see the other daily come to pass? If it were but usual for the sun to stand still, every man would think it a far more incredible thing that it should move, and so move. Why, then, cannot God do the lesser, who daily doth the greater? The like I might say of all the rest, but that it were too long to insist on them; and for the truth of the history, it is proved afterwards.

2. I would further ask these men: Must not a soul that is capable of immortal happiness, have some guide in the way thereto? If they say no, then they either think God unfaithful or unskilful, who having appointed man an end, hath not given him direction thereto in the means. If they doubt whether man's soul be immortal, and whether there be a life of happiness to some, and misery to others, to be expected after this, I have said enough against that doubt in this book following; and further let me ask them, How comes it to be the common judgment of all nations, even the most ignorant Indians, that there is a life after this, where the good and the bad shall be differently recompensed? This the ancient barbarians believed, as Herodotus testifieth of the Getæ, (lib. iv. ;) and of the Egyptians, Diodorus Siculus, (lib. i. Biblioth. numb. 93.) The very inhabitants of Guinea, Virginia, Guiana, Peru, China, Mexico, &c., do believe this, as you may see, 'Descrip. Reg. Africæ, Guianæ,' (cap. 21, 24. ;) Acost. (lib. v. c. 7, 8;) Hugh Luisot. (part. i. cap. 25;) Joannes Lerijs, (cap. 16;) Sir Walter Raleigh, &c. What poets speak not de Tartaro, campis Elysijs, Manibus? and so do philosophers of best note, except Galen, Epicurus, Plinius, &c. As for Pythagoras, and his master, Pherecides, the Druids, the Indian Brahmins, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, they all acknowledge it. Lege Marcilium Ficinum 'de Immort. Anim. ;' yea, Aristotle himself saw this, as appeareth 'De Anima,' (lib. i. context. 65, 66, lib. ii. context. 21, lib. iii. context. 4, 6, 7, 19, 20.) Sure then the light of nature discerneth it.

Yet, if these men say that there must be a guide and law for souls in their way to happiness, and yet deny that the Scripture is it, I would fain know of them which is it, and where it is to be found. Hath God any other word or law in the world above this? Sure, neither Plato nor Aristotle did ever call their books the word of God; and Mahomet's 'Alcoran' is far more unlike to be it than theirs. If they say that reason is the only guide and law, I reply, 1. Reason is but the eye by which we see our directory and law, and not the directory and law itself: 2. Look on those countries through the world that have no Scripture-guides, but follow their reason, and see how they are guided, and what difference there is between them and Christians, as bad as we are; and if you think of this well, you will be ashamed of your error. Indians have reason, as well as we; nay, look into the wise Romans, and the great learned philosophers, who had advanced their reason so high, and see how lamentably they were befooled in spirituals; how they worshipped multitudes of idols, even taking them for their gods, whom they acknowledged to be lecherous, adulterous, perfidious, bloody, and wicked. Read but Justin's 'Apolog.' Athenagoras, Tertullian's 'Apolog.,' &c., Origen's 'Cont. Cels.' Arnobius, Lactantius, Clemens Alexand. Protreptic. Minutius Felix, Athanas., &c., fully of this. Most certainly, either the Scriptures are God's word and law, or else there is none in the known world; and if there be none, how doth the just, true, and righteous God govern the rational creature, so as to lead him to the happiness prepared for him? But of this in the fourth argument following.

3. I would entreat these men, but soberly, to consider this: what if there were no full, absolute certainty of the truth of Scripture or christian religion, but it were only probable, which no considerate man can deny, were it not the wisest way to receive it? What, if it should prove true that there is a hell for the wicked, what a case are you in then! You know your worldly happiness is a very dream and a shadow, and a brutish delight, which is mixed with misery, and quieteth not the soul, and perisheth in the using. If you do lose it, you lose but a toy, a thing of nothing, which you must shortly lose whether you will or no; but if you lose heaven, and fall into endless

misery, it is another kind of loss. Methinks, then, that common reason should persuade men to venture all, though it were at uncertainty, upon that religion which tells us but of a possibility of a heaven and a hell, rather than to venture on a possibility of everlasting misery, for a little bestial pleasure, which is gone while we are enjoying it; yea, and when even in this life these sensual men have not near so much content as the Christian. Verily, if I doubted of the truth of the christian religion, I durst not be of any other; but should judge it the wisest course, to venture all I had in this world upon the hopes that it propoundeth; yea, mere madness to do otherwise. If men that are at a lottery will venture a small sum for a possibility of a great one, though they know there is but one of twenty that shall get it, how much more would any wise man leave a little vanity, in hope of everlasting glory, and to avoid everlasting misery, though it were uncertain: but, most of all, when we have that full certainty of it as we have!

4. Lastly: I would have these men consider, that though we doubt not but to prove that Scripture is God's full and infallible law, yet, if it were so that this could not be proved, this would not overthrow the christian religion. If the Scriptures were but the writings of honest men, that were subject to mistakes and contradictions, in the manner and circumstances, yet they might afford us a full certainty of the substance of Christianity, and of the miracles wrought to confirm the doctrine. Tacitus, Suetonius, Livy, Florus, Lucan, &c., were all heathens, and very fallible; and yet their history affords us a certainty of the great substantial passages of the Roman affairs which they treat of, though not of all the smaller passages and circumstances. He that doubteth whether there was such a man as Julius Cæsar, or that he fought with Pompey and overcame him, &c. is scarce reasonable, if he knew the histories; so, though Matthew Paris, Malmsbury, Hoveden, Speed, Cambden, and our own parliaments that enacted our laws, were all fallible men, and mistaken in divers smaller things, yet they afford us a full certainty that there was such a man as William the Conqueror, William Rufus, &c.; that there were such parliaments, such lords, such fights and

victories, &c. He that would not venture all that he hath on the truth of these, especially to gain a kingdom by the venture, were no better in this than mad. Now, if Scripture were but such common writings as these, especially joined with the uncontrolled tradition that hath since conveyed it to us, may it not yet give us a full certainty that Christ was in the flesh, and that he preached this doctrine for the substance, and wrought these miracles to confirm it, and enabled his followers to work the like, which will afford us an invincible argument for our Christianity? Therefore, Grotius, &c., and so the old fathers, when they disputed with the heathens, did first prove the truth of christian religion before they came to prove the divine authority of the Scriptures; not that we are at any such uncertainty, or that any Christian should take up here, as if the Scriptures were not infallible and divine; but being now speaking to another sort of men according to their capacity, I say, if it were otherwise, yet might we have certainty of our religion. I shall say somewhat more to these men in speaking to the rest.

The second sort that I shall speak to, are the papists. I find the chief thing that turns them from the reformed churches, and confirms them against us, is, because they think they cannot otherwise maintain their Christianity, but by deriving it from their church. The first question, therefore, that papists will dispute on with us, is, 'How know you the Scriptures to be the word of God?' For they fondly suppose, that because it cannot be known without the help of tradition, or human testimony, that, therefore, this must be only the testimony of the true church, and that must be some visible church, and that church must be presently in being, and must be judge in the case, and must be infallible in the judging; and all this can agree to no other church; and, therefore, that theirs is the only true church. And thus the particular church of Rome will prove herself the only or universal church. To stand here to confute these vain, ungrounded conclusions, would be to digress too far, and make this preface too long. Yet something I wrote against their pretended papal infallibility, and of the uncertainty of their faith; but, being persuaded by others to insert no more controversy here, I reserve it

for a fitter place. Only I would desire briefly any papist to show, whether their doctrine do not leave the whole christian faith at utter uncertainty, and consequently destroy it, as much as in them lies? For seeing they build all upon the supposed infallibility of the church and that church is the present church, and that is the Roman church only; and that is only the pope, as the Jesuits and most papists say; or a general council, as the French: see what a case they bring Christianity to with their followers! Every man that will believe the Scripture, yea, or the christian faith, must, 1. Believe or know that Rome is the true church. 2. That it hath authority to judge of God's word, and of the christian faith, which is truly it, and which not. 3. That this authority was given by God's word (this must be known, before men can know that God hath a word, or what it is). 4. That they are infallible in their judgment. 5. That Peter was at Rome, and was their bishop, and conferred this sovereignty on them as his successors.

6. That each particular pope is a true pope, and lawfully called; which all the world must know, that know neither him, nor when, nor how, he was called. 7. That the pope determines it as a matter of faith; otherwise, they confess he may err, and be an heretic. 8. And they must know where is the proper subject of infallibility, whether in the pope or council, or they know not which to build on, which yet they are far from agreeing on themselves. 9. When two or three popes sit together, which is no new thing, the world must know which is the right, for all the rest may err. 10. Or, if they join a council in the infallibility, they must be certain that Christ hath given councils this infallibility. 11. And that this is only to a council of Romanists. 12. And so that the Roman church is the universal church, and not only a part, as other churches are. 13. And that they are free from error in council, and not out of it. 14. That the council be general and lawful, else they confess it may err. 15. Therefore, all men must be certain that it be summoned by the pope. 16. And that the bishops that constitute it, are lawfully called. 17. And that the pope doth ratify the acts of this council, as well as call the councils; else they conclude that they are unlawful, or may be fallible. He that knows not all

these, cannot be certain that Scripture is God's word, no, nor of the truth of the christian faith, according to the papists' grounds. And can all the world be certain of them; or, are all their laicks certain; yea, or their clergy; yea, or any man? Adrian VI. tells us, 'that the pope is fallible:' and shall we not believe the pope himself, confessing his own ignorance? though councils have decreed against councils, and popes against popes, over and over. Yet we must needs believe them infallible, or forfeit our Christianity according to their doctrine: that is, we must either renounce both experience, sense, and reason, or our faith. Is not this the way to drive the world again to heathenism? And whether all the world lose not the certainty of their Christianity, when there is an interregnum upon the death of a pope, let them further study. I am fully certain, that the christian world in Peter's days, did never pretend to hold their faith upon his mere infallibility. Nor did Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, or any of the ancientest that ever I met with, hold their belief of Christ or Scripture on the infallibility of the bishop of Rome. The contrary I shall manifest in a more convenient place. I will only add this question: 'How doth the pope and his council know the Scripture to be God's word?' If they believe it on their own authority, that is, because themselves say so, then they are self-idolizers. And what makes them affirm it to be so; or what reason have they for their belief? If they believe by any convincing reason, proving Scripture to be a divine testimony, then why may not the clergy, out of council, and others also, believe on the same grounds? Else the faith of the pope and his council will not have the same grounds with the faith of the people or church besides; and then it is another faith; and so either the people or the pope are heretics. And why are we blamed for not believing on the authority of the pope and council, when the pope and council themselves believe not on that, that is, their own authority? I hope they will not turn enthusiasts, and pretend to private extraordinary revelations of the Spirit. If they say, they receive the Scripture by tradition of the ancient church, and so on their credit; why may we not know, as well as they, what the ancients say in the point? And is it not the honestest way, if they knew more herein than we, to produce it, and show us what and where the

ancients speak? If they have it merely upon verbal tradition, have not other men as good ears as the pope and his council; and, therefore, being as honest, to be as well credited in such reports? And if it be their office to keep traditions, have they been so careless as to lose all the rest of the things which Jesus did, which John saith will fill so many volumes; and also the traditions which themselves suppose Paul to have delivered unwritten to the Thessalonians and others? Shall we believe them infallible, that have already so deceived us?

And for those that think it of absolute necessity, that the church have some judge for final decision of controversies about the sense of Scripture; and that judge it so absurd a thing for every man to be judge; and, therefore, they think we must needs come to Rome for a judge. 1. I would know whether they speak of fundamentals, and such other points as are plain in Scripture, or smaller points that are dark: for the former, what need is there of a judge? No Christian denieth fundamentals, and heathens will not stand to the papal infallibility. A teacher, indeed, is necessary for the ignorant, but not a judge. It is the vilest doctrine that almost ever Rome did forge, that fundamentals themselves are such to us, because they determine them; and that we cannot know them but on their authority: yea, the church (that is the pope) may by his determination make new fundamentals. If they were not impudent, this abomination would never have found so many patrons. They ask us, how we know fundamentals; and which be they? I answer, Those things which God hath made the conditions of salvation. And what if we take in both them and more, that so we may be sure not to miss of them, so we go but to plain and weighty truths, what danger is that? 2. Seeing all Christians in the world do hold the fundamentals (else they are not truly Christians), why are they not fit deciders or judges of them, as well as the pope? 3. And for lesser and darker points, by what means is the pope and his council able to determine them, and to decide the controversy? If by any rational means, what are they? and why may not as rational men decide it as truly? 4. Will it not be as hard a question, who shall judge of the meaning of the pope's decretals or canons, where they are doubtful? and so in infinitum. I see not but

the council of Trent speaks as darkly as the Scripture, and is as hard to be understood. 5. If God leave a point dark and doubtful, will it not remain so, whatsoever confident men may determine? 6. If God have left a certain means, and infallible judge, for determining all controversies, and expounding scriptures, why then is it not done, but the church left still in such uncertainties and contentions? As some anabaptists among us do boast of a power to work miracles, and yet we can get none of them to show their power in one; just so doth the church of Rome boast of an infallibility in deciding of controversies, yet they will not infallibly decide them. If they should grow modest, and say, they do not determine what is certain in itself, but what we are to rest in; I answer, so Christ thought them not all fit to be decided, and therefore hath left many in doubtfulness; and is it not as fit that we should rest in Christ's decision, and his judgment concerning points, fit to be cleared and decided, as in man's? The palpable mistake of that one text, 2 Pet. 1:20, that no scripture is of private interpretation, hath misled many men in this point; for they think it speaks of the quality of the interpreter, as if private men must not interpret it; when the text plainly speaks of the quality of the subject. The true paraphrase is evidently this, q. d. Besides the voice from heaven, giving testimony to Christ, we have also in the Old Scriptures a sure word of prophecy testifying of him (for to him give all the prophets witness), whereunto ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, &c. But then you must understand this, that no prophecy of Christ in the Old Testament is of private interpretation; that is, it is not to be interpreted as speaking only of those private persons who were but types of Christ, of whom indeed it literally and first speaks. For though it might seem as if the prophets spoke of themselves, or of the type only, who was a private person, yet indeed it is Christ that the Spirit that spake by them intended: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man that spoke them, and therefore is not to be interpreted privately of themselves, or what they might seem to intend; but holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: and therefore his meaning must be looked to, and he intended Christ the antitype. For example, David said, "Yet will I set my King on my holy hill of Zion." (Psal. 2.)

You must not interpret this of David only, a private person and but a type; but of Christ the public person, and antitype.

But I must spend no more words here on this kind of manner.

Let me adventure on a few words to the ministers of the Gospel; not of advice (for that was judged presumptuous in my last, though but to the younger) but of apology. Though the acceptance of this treatise be far beyond what I expected; yet some have signified to me their dislike of some things in this second part, of which I think it my duty to tender them satisfaction.

1. Some say it is a digression. Answ. And what hurt is that to any man? I confess it was fitted at first to my own use (as all the rest was), and why may it not be useful to somebody else? My business was not to open a text; but to help Christians to enjoy the solid comforts which their religion doth afford; the greatest hinderance whereof in my observation, is a weak or unsound belief of the truth of it. And, therefore, I still think that the very main work lieth in strengthening their belief. So that I am sure I digressed not from the way that led to my intended end.

2. Others have told me that I should not have mixed controversy with such practical matter. Answ. And some, as wise, tell me they had rather all were omitted than this. For the truth must be known before the goodness will be desired or delighted in. It seems to me the ordinary cause of backsliding, when men either begin at the affections, or bestow most of their labour there, before they have laid a good foundation in the understanding. And they are scarce likely to be the longest winded Christians, nor to die for their religion, that scarce know why they are Christians. Methinks it is preposterous for men to bestow ten or twenty years in studying the meaning of God's word, before they well know or can prove that it is God's word. As the Italians mentioned by Melancthon, that disputed earnestly, that Christ was really in the bread, when they did not well believe that he was in heaven. If fundamentals be controverted, it concerns us to be

well seen in such controversies. However, if this be unuseful to any man, if he will but let it alone, it will do him no harm.

3. Some blame me for making so much use of the argument from miracles; and, withal, they think it invalid, except it be apparent truth which they are brought to confirm. Answ. 1. If it be first known to be truth, there need no miracles to prove it. 2. Do not all our divines use this argument from miracles? 3. And I do not by using this, hinder any man from producing or using as many more as he can. I nowhere say, that this is the only argument. 4. If these men were as wise as they should be, they would take heed of shaking the christian cause, and striking at the very root of it, for the maintaining of their conceits. 5. If they take down the chief arguments which confirm it, what do they less? 6. Search the Scripture, and see, whether this were not the chief argument, 1. Which succeeded then for bringing men to believe; 2. And which Christ himself laid the greatest weight on, and expected most from, Nathaniel believing upon Christ's telling him of his conference at a distance. (John 1:48, 49.) Upon his beginning of miracles at Cana, in Galilee, he manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him. (John 2:11.) The Jews, therefore, inquired for signs, as that which must confirm any new revelation to be of God. (John 2:18, and 6:30; 1 Cor. 1:22.) And though Christ blame them for their unreasonable, unsatisfied expectations herein, and would not humour them in each particular, that they would saucily prescribe him; yet still he continued to give them miracles, as great as they required. Though he would not come down from the cross to convince them (for then how should he have suffered for sin?) yet he would rise again from the dead, which was far greater. They that saw the miracle of the loaves, said, "This is of a truth the prophet that should come into the world," (John 6:14.) "John," say they, "did no miracle; but all that John spake of this man was true: and many believed on him there." (John 10:41.) "Many believed when they saw the miracles which he did." (John 2:23. See also Acts 4:16; John 6:2, 7:31, 11:47; Acts 6:8, and 8:6, 13; Gal. 3:5; Acts 2:43; 4:30, 5:12; 7:36, 14:3; Heb. 2:4.) And Christ himself saith, "If I had not done the works that no man else

could do, ye had had no sin in not believing." (John 15:24.) And therefore he promiseth the Holy Ghost to his disciples, to enable them to do the like to convince the world. (Mark 16:17, 18.) Yea, to do greater works than he has done. (John 14:12.) And he upbraideth, and most terribly threateneth the unbelievers that had seen his mighty works. (Matt. 11:20, 21, 23; Luke 10:13.) Yea, the blaspheming of the power by which he wrought them, and his disciples afterwards were to work them, and ascribing them to the devil, he maketh the unpardonable sin. (Matt. 12:31, 32) See also Matt. 11:2-4, 13:54, and 14:2; Mark 6:2, 14; John 5:19, 20, and 7:3.) He tells them, "The works that I do, bear witness of me." (John 5:36, and 10, 25.) "Believe not me, believe the works that I do." (John 10:37, 38.) "Believe me for the very works' sake." (John 14:11.) And how did the apostles preach to convince the world; but partly by telling them of Christ's resurrection, the greatest of all his miracles, and his other works; and partly, by doing miracles themselves? They tell them, he was approved of God by signs and wonders. (Acts 2:22, and 7:36.) They declared also what miracles and wonders were wrought by the apostles. (Acts 15:12.) And Paul vindicated the credit of his own apostleship, and so the truth of his testimony, to the Corinthians thus: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Cor. 12:12.) The way of bringing men to believe in those days, is thus expressed, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him?" (Heb. 2:3, 4.) There is sense to the first receivers, and then tradition to the next. "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." And who dare question this witness of God? And fear fell on them all, and the name of Jesus was magnified, and men converted by the special miracles that Paul did. (Acts 19:11, 12, 16-19.) I will say no more to the opposers of the sufficiency of this argument, but wish them to answer or learn of that blind man, (John 9:16;) Can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? We know that God heareth not sinners. Or, hear Nicodemus, We know thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these

miracles, except God be with him; John 3:2. Natural reason shows us, that God being the true and merciful Governor of the world, the course of nature cannot be altered, but by his special appointment, and that he will never set the seal of his omnipotency to a lie; nor suffer the last and greatest inducement of belief, to be used to draw men to falsehood: for then how deplorable were the condition of mankind!

Object. But you will say, False prophets may arise and show signs. And antichrist shall come with lying wonders. Answ. These are all lying wonders, indeed; seeming to be miracles, when they are not. Object. But the great question is, how we shall know which are miracles indeed, when poor mortals may be so easily deceived by superior powers? Answ. For the difference between true miracles and false, Camero, Prideaux, and most divines that write of this argument, have handled it; to whom I refer you. I will only say this more, that we need not be curious in this inquiry. For if any doubt, whether miracles may not be wrought to delude, I would add these qualifications to that medium, and thus form the major proposition, that doctrine, or those books, which were attested by apparent, frequent, and uncontrolled miracles, must needs be of God. But such is this, &c.; a wonder wrought once or twice, may easier deceive, than that which is done one hundred times. A wonder in a corner may be blazed falsely to be a miracle; but Christ had so many thousand witnesses, as of the miracle and the loaves; and five hundred at once that saw him after his resurrection, and the apostles appealed to whole churches, even when they had secret adversaries, who might easily have disproved them, if it had not been true; and they spake with tongues before people of many nations; and it was not one, nor one hundred, but the multitudes of Christians that had one gift or other of this sort, either miracles especially so called, or healing, or prophesying, or tongues, &c. (See 1 Cor. 12 from ver. 1 to 12, and Mark 16:17.)

But especially no uncontrolled miracles shall ever be used to deceive the world. Two ways doth God control even the seeming miracles of

deceivers. 1. By doing greater in opposition to them, and so disgracing and confounding them, and the authors, and the cause. So God did by the magicians in Egypt; by the exorcist, in Acts 19; and by Simon Magus, as church history tells us. In this case, it is no disparagement to God's mercy or faithfulness, to let men work false wonders; for he doth but make them the occasion of his triumph, that the victory of truth may be more eminent, and men's faith more confirmed. 2. Also, by some clear and undoubted truth, either known to common reason, or by former scriptures, doth God often control deceiving wonders. For if they are used to attest an undoubted falsehood, then the former established truth contradicting them, is sufficient controlment. So that, as God will never set his own proper seal of a true miracle to an untruth, so neither will he suffer a seeming miracle to go uncontrolled when it may endanger the faith and safety of mankind. Nor can it be shown that ever he did otherwise; whereas, the miracles of Christ and his disciples were uncontrolled, frequent, numerous, apparent, prevalent, and triumphant.

Object. Then if miracles be wrought now, they will infer a new Scripture.

Answ. No such matter; they will prove the testimony to be divine, where it is certain that they are wrought to confirm any testimony; but no more. God may work them without man, to stir up men's hearts, and rouse them to repentance, and not to confirm any new testimony; or he may enable men to work them for attestation of formerly-revealed truth.

Object. But wicked men may do miracles.

Answ. But not when they please, nor for what they please, but as God pleases. Wicked men may be witnesses of the truth of God.

I conclude with the argument, That which was the great argument used by Christ and his apostles to win the world to believe, should be

the great argument now for every man to use to that end with himself and others; but that was this from miracles; therefore, &c.

4. The same men that make this exception are offended, that I overpass some other arguments, which are taken to be the chiefest; as scripture efficacy, and the witness of the Holy Ghost to the consciences of believers.

Answ. 1. Why should I be tied to do that which so many have done already? 2. I never intended the full handling of the point, but two or three arguments to strengthen the weak. And may I not choose which I thought fittest, as long as I hinder no man to use what other he please? 3. The efficacy is either on the understanding, or on the will and affections. If on the understanding, then it is the belief of scripture-truth which is thus effected: and so the argument should run thus: Whatsoever is so effectual as to persuade men of its truth or divinity, that is true or divine; but the Scripture is such, &c. I need not speak of the major. Or if the efficacy be on the will and affections, then it presupposeth, that it is first believed to be true. For nothing works on the will, but by means of the understanding. But I neither dare, nor need to show the weakness of such arguments; the papists have done too much in it, as their writings generally will show you. See Vane, Cressy, Richworth's 'Dialogues,' Martin, Stapleton; and most run that way.

4. And for the testimony of the Spirit, it consisteth, 1. In its testimony by the miracles which it enabled the apostles to effect for the sealing of their doctrine. 2. And in the sanctifying illumination of our understandings to see that which is objectively revealed. So that this testimony is the efficient and not objective cause of our belief in this latter sense. If men should judge of the canon of Scripture by the immediate testimony of the Spirit, as if this were some exterior revealer of what is divinely inspired, we should then have as great variety of canons almost as of persons. Men talk of this in mere disputes, but I know not the man that would undertake to determine

of the canon by retiring into his heart, and consulting merely with the Spirit within him.

5. Another great exception of the same men is, that I seek to satisfy reason so much of the Scripture's authority: and the reasons which they urge against my reasoning, are these two. It is too near the Socinian way. Answ. Socinians will believe nothing without reason or evidence from the nature of the thing revealed: that is, they believe nothing at all as certain: for if the thing be evident, it is, as such, the object of knowledge, and not of belief. I will believe any thing in the world which I know certainly that God speaks or revealeth; though the thing in itself seem ever so unreasonable. For I have reason to believe, or rather to know, that all is true which God revealed, how improbable soever to flesh and blood. Is it not a shame that learned men should charge this very opinion in Chillingworth, Dr. Hammond, and others, as guilty of Socinianism? and there by, 1. Make the papists brag, that we cannot confute them, but on Socinian principles; 2. And make young scholars, through prejudice, turn off from the true ways of defending scripture authority; to the great wrong, (1.) Of their own souls. (2.) And of their people. (3.) And of the protestant. (4.) And christian cause. 3. And how could all the wits of the world do more to advance Socinianism than these men do, by making men believe that only the Socinians have reason for their religion? which if it were true, as nothing less, who would not turn to them? 4. And what more can be done to the disgrace and ruin of Christianity, than to make the world believe that we have no reason for it? nor are able to prove it true against an adversary? What would these men do if they lived among Christ's enemies, and were challenged to defend their religion, or prove it true? Would they say, as they say to me, 'I will believe and not dispute?' Christ's cause would then be little beholden to them. And how would they preach for the conversion of infidels, if they had not reason to give them, for what they persuade them to? How will they try the spirits, and try all things, and hold fast that which is good, but by discourse? But it seems, these men themselves have no more reason for their believing

in Christ, than in Mahomet or antichrist. They are good Christians and teachers that while!

But the great argument is this, They say, and great ones write so, that the divine authority of Scripture is, principium indemonstrabile, a principle not to be proved, but believed; for no science proves its principles.

To which I answer, 1. When our R. Baronius and others do affirm it to be principium indemonstrabile, it is not as if it were not at all demonstrable, but that it is not demonstrabile per aliam revelationem; but they acknowledge that it contains in it those characters of the divine authority, which by reason or discourse may be discerned. 2. It is therefore improper to say it is credendum, a thing to be believed first, and directly, that these books are God's word, seeing it is, by consequence, confessed that it is a point to be known by the aforesaid evidence; therefore, not first to be believed. 3. And, otherwise, they contradict themselves when they bestow whole volumes to prove that it is part of the formal object of faith, (which answers the *cur credis?*) and yet to affirm it to be principium primo credendum, which makes it the material object of faith; for in this sense it cannot be both, as I shall show. 4. How the divine authority of Scripture is the principium religionis Christianæ, and how not, would hold a long debate of itself. Our R. Baronius himself saith, that when we say all Christians should resolve their faith into the divine and canonical authority of Scripture, they do not mean that this is the only way of resolving faith, as if no other way were possible or available to salvation, but only that this way is the most convenient, profitable, and certain; yea, and is necessary, too, in those churches where the Scriptures are known, 'Apolog. advers. Turnebul.' (Tract. i. cap. 2, Observ. i. pag. 46,) which words show how far Scripture is a principium. 5. As theology, Christianity, and all religion, do presuppose reason, as all morality presupposeth naturalness, so it is evident that some of the principles of religion, or of Christianity, must be first proved by reason; and so we may compare it to those inferior sciences, whose principles must be proved by

superior sciences, though not by the same science. Though Scripture, in point of excellency, should not be said to be inferior to reason, yet in point of order it may, as still pre-requiring or pre-supposing reason: as the form is after the matter, and the habit after the faculty.

6. Those characters of divine authority which divines mention, may, at least some of them, be demonstrated to others, as prophecies fulfilled, and all to ourselves; therefore, the scripture authority is not an indemonstrable principle.

7. The very being of all belief lieth in this, that it be an assent to the truth of an enunciation on the credit of the testifier or revealer. Now, if we must first believe Scripture to be God's word, and not know it, then we must believe it on the credit of the revealer; and then it is by some other revelation, or by itself. If by some other, then how know I that other revelation to be of God? and so in infinitum; but if I believe it to be of God, because it revealeth itself to be so, as our divines say, then this self-revelation is, 1. Either by way of proper testimony, or, 2. By objective evidence, to be discerned by reason. If the former, which must be said, or it cannot be the material object of faith; then either I must believe every book that affirms itself to be divine, or else I must have some reason to believe this, so affirming of itself, more than others; and these reasons will be things known and not believed. But if the latter, by objective evidence, which is it that divines generally say, then why do they not observe that this is to unsay what they have said, and to say plainly, that it is a thing to be known, and not strictly believed, that this is God's revelation? Things evident, are the objects of knowledge; things testified, are the objects of faith, as testified.

8. Yet I confess, that when we first know this or that to be a divine testimony, we may, in a second place, believe it; for it is revealed in Scripture, "Thus saith the Lord," &c.: and so the same thing may be, and is, the object of knowledge, and of belief; but it must, in the rational order, be known first, and not believed first; for, else, as is said, I should believe every writing so affirming itself divine, or else believe the affirmation of this without evidence and reason.

9. And, indeed, what else can be the meaning of our divines, when they tell us that all faith is resolved into the credit or authority of the testifier

and revealer? as our Baronius, 'Apol. cont. Turnebul.' (Tract. iii. sect. 3, cap. iv. pag. 108,) saith, faith dependeth upon two principles, which must necessarily be foreknown, that a thing may be believed on one's authority, as Suarez rightly observeth, (Disp. ii.) 'De Fide,' (sect 4, 5, and Disp. iii. sect. 12, sect. 1.) One is, that the party doth speak this; the other is, that he is one worthy to be believed. Mark, he saith these two must be fore-known, and not fore-believed. Though I know what he and others say, to make it both the objectum formale et materiale in several respects; but that can be but secondarily, as I said. As for their similitude from the sun, which reveals itself and other things; besides that objects of sense and reason much differ in this, and similitudes prove nothing; in a sound sense, I grant the thing inferred by it: to wit, that Scripture revealeth particular truths to belief by way of divine testimony or affirmation; but it revealeth itself to be God's testimony, first, to knowledge, by its own characters or excellencies, seconded by the external testimony of miracles; and then, 2. By testification to belief. Learned Hooker, 'Eccles. Polit.' (lib. ii. and iii.) hath showed, that it is not first to be believed that Scripture is God's word, but to be proved by reason, which he affirmeth is not very difficult demonstratively to do. I dare stay no longer on this, (referring the more exact discussion to some fitter place;) only, if Scriptures cannot be proved to be God's word by reason, 1. Why do all our divines, in their common places, bring reasons to prove it? 2. How will they deal with pagans and enemies? Object. But they still tell you, the Spirit is only sufficient, when all reasons are brought. Answ. That is to remove the question; or, when the question is of the objective sufficiency, they answer, of the efficient, rectifying and elevating the faculty. 2. Who knows not that a man may believe or know the Scripture to be God's word, without any more than a common help of the Spirit? The devils and damned believe, or know it, and so doth many an ungodly man here; but a saving knowledge or belief doth indeed require a special grace of the Spirit.

In a word, if reason were of no more use here than some make it, as it were in vain to preach or write in this point for Christianity, so it

would follow, that he that is drunk or mad, or an infant, if not a brute, were the fittest to make a Christian, which is so vile an imagination, that I dare say he that hath the best and rightest reason, and by consideration makes the most use of it, is the best Christian, and doth God best service; and that all sin is on the contrary, for want of right reason, and the using of it by consideration. But methinks I should not need to plead for reason, till beasts can speak and plead against me! but, yet, I must tell you, if you heard the accusation, you would excuse my apology.

If none but the ignorant be an enemy to knowledge, sure none but the unreasonable is an enemy to reason.

6. But the greatest offence of all is, that I lay so much upon human testimony and tradition, which some think uncertain: some think that it would make our faith too human, and some think it is too like the papist's arguings.

To all which I answer, 1. See whether the best of our divines do not the like. I will name some of the choicest that ever the reformed church enjoyed. Rob. Baronius saith, 'Apol. con. Turnebul.' (Tract. ii. punct. 2, p. 686:) The testification of the present church is a condition necessarily requisite for our believing the Scripture authority, because faith comes by hearing. 2. From the consent of all the present church, or all Christians now living, the chiefest argument may be drawn to prove the authority of any canonical book. 3. From the perpetual and universal tradition and practice of the whole church from the apostles' time to ours, we may have a human persuasion, and that certain and infallible, of the divine and canonical authority of those books which were still undoubted, or which some call the protocanonical. Doctor Whitaker saith it belongs to the church: 1. To be a witness and keeper of the Scriptures; 2. To judge and discern between Scriptures which are true and genuine, and which are false, suppositious, and apocryphal; 3. To divulge them; 4. To expound them. 'De Sac. Script.;' (quæst. iii. cont. l, c. ii. p. 203, 204;) and in his 'Duplicat. Advers. Stapleton,' more fully, (p.

47.) Which of us knows not the necessity of the ministers of the church; and that it is safely and wisely appointed of God? so that to contemn the ministry and testimony of the church, is nothing else but to err from the faith, and rush into most certain destruction. See more, (p. 15, 58, 59, &c., 364, 60, 62, 69, 77, 78, 438, 119, 328.) Davenant alloweth of historical tradition, 'De Judice Controv.' (p. 11, sect. 3, 24, 27, 30, 31, 32.) The like might be showed out of Camer., Cham., Ames., and divers others, but that I must not enlarge.

2. I would have the contrary-minded tell me how they know, without human testimony or tradition, that these are the same books which the prophets and apostles wrote; and wholly the same: that they are not depraved and wilfully corrupted: that these are all: how know you that one of the Books of Esther is canonical and the other apocryphal? Where is the man that ever knew the canon from the apocryphal before it was told him, and without tradition? I confess, for my own part, I could never boast of any such testimony, or light of the Spirit, nor reason neither, which without human testimony or tradition would have made me believe that the Book of Canticles is canonical, and written by Solomon, and the Book of Wisdom apocryphal, and written by Philo, as some think; or that Paul's Epistle to the Laodiceans, which you may see in Bruno in 'Epist.,' Sixtus Senensis, and others, is apocryphal, and the second and third Epistles of John canonical. Nor could I have known all or any historical books, such as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c. to be written by divine inspiration, but by tradition; nor could I know all or any of those books to be God's word, which contain mere positive constitutions, as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, &c., were it not for the same tradition; nor could I know that any of those books were written by divine inspiration, which contain, besides such history and positives, nothing but the truths which are known by the light of nature, without further supernatural revelation, if it had not been for tradition; nor could I have known those books to be written by divine inspiration, which speak of mere supernatural things, (either historical, as Christ's incarnation, resurrection, &c. or doctrinal,) had not tradition or

human testimony assured me that these are the books which those holy men wrote, and that such undoubted, uncontrolled miracles were wrought for the confirmation of their doctrine. Further, I would know, How doth an illiterate man know but by human testimony: 1. Whether it be indeed a Bible that the minister reads? 2. Or when he reads true, and when false; and whether any of those words be in the Bible which men say are in it? 3. Or that it is truly translated out of the Hebrew and Greek? 4. Or that it was originally written in those languages? 5. Or that copies were authentic out of which they were translated? 6. Or how will they know many Jewish customs, or points in chronology, geography, &c., without which some scripture can never be understood? 7. Or how do the most learned critics know the true signification of any one word of the Hebrew or Greek in Scripture, or any other book, yea, Latin or English, or any language, but only by tradition and human faith?

Yea, there is no doubt but in some cases tradition may save without any Scripture: for, 1. Men were saved, from Adam to Moses, without Scripture that we know of: and, as Dr. Usher well observeth, one reason why they might be without it, was the facility and certainty of knowing by tradition; for Methuselah lived many hundred years with Adam, and Shem lived longer with Methuselah, and Isaac lived fifty years with Shem; so that three men saw from the beginning of the world till Isaac's fiftieth year. 2. And thousands were converted and saved by the doctrine of the apostles and primitive preachers, before it was committed to writing: so many Jews in the captivity had not the Scripture. 3. And if any among the Abassines, Armenians, or ignorant papists, do believe in Christ upon mere tradition, (no doubt they may,) who can question their salvation? for Christ saith, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish," which way soever he was brought to believe. Will you hear Irenæus in this, who lived before popery was born? "Quid enim et si quibus de aliqua modica quæstione disceptatio esset? Nonne oporteret in antiquissimas recurrere ecclesias?" (Mark, he saith not 'ad ecclesiam Romanam, vel ad unum principem.') "In quibus apostoli conversati sunt, et ab eis de præsentis quæstione sumere quod certum et re liquidum est? Quid

autem si neque apostoli quidem scripturas reliquissent nobis; nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant ecclesias? Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes barbarorum eorum qui in Christum credunt, sine caractere vel atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes, &c. Hanc fidem qui sine literis crediderunt, quantum ad sermonem nostrum barbari sunt; quantum autem ad sententiam et consuetudinem et conversationem, propter fidem per quam sapientissimi sunt, et placent Deo, &c. Sic per illam veterem apostolorum traditionem, ne in conceptionem quidem mentis admittunt quodcunque (hæreticorum) portentiloquium est." ('Adv. Hæres.' lib. 3. c. 4.)

As for those that think it favours the papists to argue thus for tradition, they are quite mistaken, as I have showed afterwards. The papists build on the authority of the church's decisive judgment; but I use only the church's testimony. The papists, by the church, mean, 1. The present church; 2. Only their own Romish church; 3. And in that only the pope, or council, as infallible judge. But I mean, 1. The universal church through the world; 2. Especially the ancient church next to the apostles; 3. And therein the godly writers and Christians generally. The papists ground all on the church only, and think that we must first know the true church, who is the judge, before we can know the Scripture. But I value, in some cases more, the testimony of heathens, Jews, and all hereties, an enemy's testimony being most valid against himself: and I use not their testimony only, as they are of the church, or as Christians, but also as men endued with sense and reason, and the common remnants of moral honesty. In one word, the papists receive the Scriptures on the authoritative, infallible judgment of their own church, that is, the pope: and I receive it as God's perfect law, delivered down from hand to hand to this present age, and know it to be the same book which was wrote by the prophets and apostles, by an infallible testimony of rational men, friends, and foes, in all ages. And for them that think that this lays all our faith on uncertainties, I answer, 1. Let them give us more certain grounds. 2. We have an undoubted, infallible certainty of the truth of

this tradition, as I have after showed. He is mad that doubts of the certainty of William the Conqueror's reigning in England, because he hath but human testimony. We are certain that the statutes of this land were made by the same parliaments and kings that are mentioned to be the authors; and that those statutes which we have now in our books are the same which they made; for there were many copies dispersed. Men's lands and estates were still held by them. There were multitudes of lawyers and judges, whose calling lay in the continual use of them; and no one lawyer could corrupt them, but his antagonist would soon tell him of it, and a thousand would find it out. So that I do not think any man doubteth of the certainty of these acts being the same they pretend to be. And in our case about the Scripture, we have much more certainty, as I have showed. These copies were dispersed all over the world, so that a combination to corrupt them in secret was impossible. Men judged their hopes of salvation to lie in them, and therefore would sure be careful to keep them from corruption, and to see that no other hand should do it. There were thousands of ministers, whose office and daily work it was to preach those Scriptures to the world, and therefore they must needs look to the preserving of them; and God was pleased to suffer such abundance of heretics to arise, perhaps of purpose for this end, among others, that no one could corrupt the Scriptures, but all his adversaries would soon have caught him in it: for all parties, of each opinion, still pleaded the same Scriptures against all the rest, even as lawyers plead the law of the land at the bar against their adversaries. So that it is impossible that in any main matter it should be depraved. What it may be in a letter or a word, by the negligence of transcribers, is of no great moment.

Indeed, the popish doctrine of traditions, such as you may find in 'Richworth's Dialogues,' leads directly to heathenism, and builds all our Christianity on such certain uncertainties, yea, palpable untruths, that it is a wonder that they who believe them renounce not their Christianity.

But the great objection is, that by arguing thus, our faith is finally resolved into human testimony, and so is but a human faith.

Answ. If I said that those that make this objection, show that they know not what faith is, nor what the resolving of it is which they mention, I should not wrong them; but because I would give them a satisfactory account of my belief in this great point, I will more particularly answer the several questions which use to be here raised.

Quest. Why do you believe the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, with all the rest of the articles or doctrines of your faith?

Answ. Because they are the word of God, or God hath testified or reported them, or hath revealed them to the world as true; so that I have no higher or further reason to believe them to be true, but only this, God hath spoken them.

Quest. How know you that God hath revealed or testified these things?

Answ. There are many questions comprehended in this one, or else it is very ambiguous. In regard of the object, it is one thing to ask how I know it to be revealed; and another, how I know it is God that revealed it? In regard of the act, the words "How know you?" are doubtful. You may either mean, in your inquiry, by what principal, efficient cause, or by what nearest efficient, or by what means or convincing arguments, or by what naturally requisite means, or by what instrument? all these must not be confounded.

Quest. How know you (that is, by what moving reasons) that these things are revealed?

Answ. I need not arguments; my senses of seeing and hearing tell me.

Quest. But how did the prophets and apostles know that they were revealed to them?

Answ. Some by internal sense, who had it by inspiration, and some by external sense, who heard it from God, or Christ, or angels, or read the tablet which he wrote.

Quest. How did the other believers in those times know that these things were revealed to the prophets or apostles?

Answ. By their own testimony.

Quest. How knew they that their testimony was true?

Answ. I have answered this at large in the fourth chapter, and third section. If it had not been revealed to them, they could not have revealed it to others.

Quest. But how do we in these times know that these things were revealed to the apostles?

Answ. Some few parts of the world knew it only by unwritten tradition; but most of the churches know it by the Scripture which those holy men wrote, containing those doctrines.

Quest. But how know you that these Scriptures were written by them?

Answ. By infallible tradition.

Quest. But how know you that they be not, in the substance, corrupted since?

Answ. By the same infallible tradition assuring my reason of it, even as I know that the statutes of the land were made by those kings in parliaments whose names they bear; and as I know that the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, &c. were made by them, and are not, in the substance, corrupted; yea, far greater certainty doth tradition afford us.

Quest. But though you are thus assured of the revelation, yet how know you it is divine, or that it was God, indeed, that did reveal it?

Answ. You must know, as presupposed, that themselves affirm that God revealeth this to them, both by their speech to those that heard them preach, and by this Scripture which affirms itself to be of divine inspiration.

Quest. But how did they know themselves that they were not mistaken?

Answ. 1. Those whom God inspired, or to whom he spake, knew certainly, by an inexpressible sense, that it was God himself, and no delusion. God never speaks so extraordinarily, but by the same act he both makes known the thing revealed, and himself to be the speaker. 2. Besides, they were fully certain it was no delusion, by the frequent, uncontrolled miracles which Christ did, and which he enabled them to do themselves. See more, chap. iv. sect. 3., where this is more fully answered.

Quest. But how shall we know that they delude us not, and that the Scripture saith true in affirming itself to be of divine inspiration; for we must not believe every person or book that so affirmeth?

Answ. I have answered this in the before-cited chapter and section.

To which I add: 1. There are such characters of verity and majesty in the Scriptures themselves, that may very strongly persuade us of the verity of them, at least as being exceeding probable. Especially the exceeding spirituality and purity of them, and the high, strange design of God manifested about the way of advancing his glory and saving mankind; which design, in all the parts of its excellency concatenated, was not laid open by one person only, nor in one only age; but was in doing many hundred years, and opened by many several persons at that distance, so that it is impossible that they should lay their heads together to contrive it. Also, the fulfilled prophecies show its verity. And if any one part have not these

characters so evident on it, yet it is certain, because it is attested by the rest, or some of them, that have them. 2. But that which fully persuades me, being thus prepared by the quality of the writings, is the many apparent uncontrolled miracles which the apostles themselves did work, who wrote those books. God would not have enabled them to confirm a false, deluding testimony, and that of such a moment, by miracles, and such miracles. 3. And when I have once thus believed, I am much confirmed, both by the experience I have of the power and sweet relish of the doctrine of the Scriptures on my own soul, and the efficacy of it on the souls of others; and also in that I find all the rational causes of doubting of the truth of Scripture to be removed.

Quest. But when you make miracles your great argument, how know you that those miracles were indeed wrought?

Answ. By infallible tradition, partly by the instrumentality of Scripture, and partly by other writings, and universal confession: as I know that Julius Cæsar conquered Pompey, and William the Norman won England.

Quest. But did you at first believe the Scripture on these grounds? Or can it be expected that unlearned people should understand the certainty of this tradition?

Answ. 1. I first believed that the Scripture was God's word, merely upon the common, uncontradicted affirmation of my teachers; and so do most others that I meet with: and so proceed to see the more certain arguments afterwards. 2. Yet if they were wisely and diligently taught them, the unlearned are capable of knowing the infallible certainty of that tradition; yea, and the certainty of the truth of the translation in the substance; and that you do read truly the Scripture to them, &c. For there is a human testimony which is certain; and so a human faith; yea, more certain than my own sense. Sense hath always greater evidence than belief; but not so great certainty sometimes. I will rather believe ten thousand sober,

impartial witnesses, that say, they see or hear such a thing, having no considerable contradiction, than I would believe mine own eyes or ears for the contrary.

Quest. But is that faith divine and saving, when men take the Scripture for God's word merely on report, or other weak arguments?

Answ. It is a faith that lies open to great danger by temptation, when the weakness of the grounds shall appear; and will have much weakness in the mean time: but yet it may be divine and saving. For still this man's faith is resolved into God's veracity or authority. Though on weak grounds he take the Scripture to be revealed by God, yet he believes it to be true only because God spoke or revealed it. So that the error not lying in the formal or material object of faith, but only in the arguments persuading that it is from God, this destroys not the soundness and truth of the belief.

Object. But how know we that the miracles were wrought to confirm the truth of these books?

Answ. They were wrought to confirm the testimony of the men, whether delivered by word or writing. And this by writing is that part of their testimony which the church now enjoyeth.

Object. But all that wrote the Scripture did not work miracles.

Answ. Their testimony is confirmed by those that did.

Quest. Into what, then, do you ultimately resolve your faith?

Answ. If you understand the phrase of "resolving faith" strictly and properly, so it is resolved only into the credit or veracity of the speaker, as being the cause of the verity of the proposition which I believe, even the principal, efficient cause; the knowledge of whose infallible verity doth, above all, and only in that kind, cause me to believe the things revealed to be true.

But if you take the phrase of "resolving faith" in the largest sense, as it containeth not only its resolution into its formal object, but into all its causes in their several kinds, so it is resolved thus: 1. As I have said, I resolve my faith into the prime truth, that is, into God's infallible veracity, as the only formal object, or full, proper, efficient of the verity of propositions believed, and the principal reason of my belief. 2. I resolve my belief into God's revelation or testimony, as the principium patefactionis, or the naturally necessary means of application of the former, which is the principium certitudinis (it is Rob. Baronius's own distinction. ('Apodix. Tract.' iii. c. 6. p. 123.) Yet I am forced to dissent from Baronius, in that he makes this revelation to be part of the formal object, though the veracity of God revealing, and not the truth of God without revelation, be the formal object of belief. Yet I conceive the said revelation to be no part of the formal object, but a natural means of the production of the material object by the formal object which is its efficient; and that not directly of the immediate material object, but of the remote only: for the immediate material object is the truth of propositions, and the remote is the proposition which is true. Now, the revelation is directly a production of the proposition, as such; but not of the verity of it directly. We, therefore, believe it to be true, because the true God spoke it; though, in a second place, the patefaction may be said to produce the verity of the thing. 3. I resolve my belief into the characters of divinity which are found in Scripture, and into the uncontrolled miracles by which it was attested, as the principal motive conjunct, by which I am persuaded that it was God, and no other, that was the author or revealer. 4. I resolve my belief into human testimony, or infallible tradition, rationally, not authoritatively infallible, as the means of discovering to me the matters of fact, viz., that the apostles did write: that this delivered to me is the writing; that it is all; that such miracles were wrought; that the Scriptures are not depraved in any material points, or out of design; which books are canonical, and which not. Had I been the person to whom God from heaven, or Christ on earth, did reveal these truths immediately, then this resolution of my faith should be into my senses (made use of rationally); I should have known, by

external sense, what Christ spoke, and what not; what miracles he did; and, by internal sense, that it was God, and no other, that inspired me; and, by both, that it was Christ, and no other, that spake and wrought miracles. But seeing I live at so great a distance, and God revealed not these things to me immediately, but to the apostles, and they to others, and they to others, and so down to this day: therefore tradition must do that for me which sense did to the first receivers; as I say what sense did for them, that human testimony doth for us, or must carry it between their senses and our senses, and so to our reason. 5. I resolve my belief into all truths revealed in Scripture, as into the material object, if it were not too improper to call that a resolving of it into that which answers the *quid credis*, and not *cur credis*, or the *cui*? 6. I resolve it into the books or writings, as the authentic instrument revealing God's mind: not into the words, as in this or that language, or as considered in themselves, but as considered in relation to the truths which they express, viz. as they are signifiers of all those enunciations which they contain. 7. I resolve my belief into reason or understanding, as the nearest vital, efficient cause. 8. I resolve it into the Holy Ghost's illumination or grace, as into the remote efficient, enabling and causing me to believe sincerely and savingly, but not into any internal testimony of the Spirit, as the object of my faith.

I know our Baronius opposeth Spalatensis for one of the points which I here assert, 'Apol. Tract.' ix. punct. 4, 5, p. 711–714, &c. Were it not that I have been too tedious already, I would answer those arguments of Baronius, which is very easy to do; but to the unprejudiced and considerate I think it will seem needless, or, at least, is fitter for another discourse.

And thus having catechised myself to give men an account of my belief, and help those that are weaker herein, I shall conclude all with two or three words of advice to the reader.

1. Beware that you exclude not, in your arguing, any cause or necessary medium of your faith, by quarrelling too eagerly with other

men's grounds: many men run upon this dangerous rock. Lest they should give too much to reason, or to tradition, or the church, or miracles, some further exclude them than will stand with the rationality, and safety, and honour of Christianity. Set not those things in opposition which may and must consist in co-ordination, or subordination to others.

The removal of one necessary cause may destroy the effect; or of one pillar, may pull down the house; or of one of the necessary parts, may kill the man; though all the rest be let alone, or more regarded than before. It is no whit derogatory to the law of the land, to say, I must read it with my eyes, and by the help of spectacles, and must receive it with my hands or ears, from a herald or other proclaimer, &c.

2. Take heed of denying the perfection of Scripture in deed, while you maintain it in words. Two sorts I would warn of this.

1. Those that plead for traditional doctrines. To these I have spoken elsewhere: 'Appendix to Treatise of Baptism.'

2. Those that are so eager as to tie all men to their expositions of Scripture, and censure all for heretical that differ from them therein. When we have disputed and contended ourselves a-weary, and wrangled the church into flames and ashes, yet that which God hath spoken obscurely, and so left difficult in itself, will remain obscure and difficult still; and that which is difficult through the weakness and incapacity of unlearned men, will be far better cleared by a rational explication than by a bare canon. O when will the Lord once persuade his churches to take his written word for the only canon of their faith; and that in its own naked simplicity and evidence, without the determinations and canons of men, which are no parts of our creed, but helps to our understandings, and bounds to our practice in matters circumstantial, which God hath left to man's determination! When will the Lord persuade us not to be wise above what is written; but to acknowledge that which is unrevealed in the word, to be beyond us; and that which is more darkly revealed, to be

more doubtful to us! Then the hot contentions of the church about the mysteries of God's decrees, and nature and order of his immanent acts; the nature and way of the workings of the Spirit on the soul, &c.; with a hundred quarrels about mere names and words, will be more lovingly and brotherly debated, without such alienation of affections and reproachful expressions.

Two things have set the church on fire, and been the plagues of it above one thousand years; 1. Enlarging our creed, and making more fundamentals than ever God made.

2. Composing, and so imposing, our creeds and confessions in our own words and phrases.

When men have learned more manners and humility than to accuse God's language as too general and obscure, as if they could mend it, and have more dread of God, and compassion on themselves, than to make those to be fundamentals or certainties which God never made so; and when they reduce their confessions, 1. To their due extent, and, 2. To scripture phrase, that dissenters may not scruple subscribing, then, and, I think, never till then, shall the church have peace about doctrinals. It seems to me no heinous Socinian motion which Chillingworth is blamed for, viz. Let all men believe the Scripture, and that only, and endeavour to believe it in the true sense, and promise this, and require no more of others; and they shall find this not only a better, but the only means to suppress heresy, and restore unity, &c.

If you say men may subscribe to Scripture, and yet misinterpret it, I answer, so they may do by human canons. If you say, they may preach against fundamentals, or evident truths, while yet they subscribe the Scripture misunderstood, I answer, 1. All such weighty truths are delivered expressly, or very plainly. 2. I hope God will once not only bring into use ministerial power, but also teach magistrates to rule for Christ to the restraining of such as shall so palpably offend, as openly to contradict what they subscribe.

But that was the third and last word of advice I here intended: viz. That seeing the Scripture is the sacred, perfect law of the most high God, that man would use it reverently, and that magistrates would restrain men that would bring God's Word into contempt, under pretence of preaching it; that every ignorant fellow, whose tongue has caught a lax, may not run into the pulpit to ease himself; nor any one have leave to disgorge himself in the holy assemblies, that hath got a surfeit of pride and self-conceit. Oh! if you knew the weakness of poor people, and how apt they are to be deceived, you would not give deceivers liberty to do their worst! You that will not give men leave to persuade your wives to adultery, your children to lewdness, your soldiers or subjects to rebellion or treachery, should surely be as regardful of men's souls, and the honour of Christ. And you that will not give every fool leave to go in your names on an embassage, who would but disgrace you, should not let men speak publicly, as in the name of Christ, that cannot speak sense, to the shame of our profession; nor should men turn preachers, as the river Nilus breeds frogs, saith Herodotus, when one half moveth before the other is made, and while it is yet but plain mud.

But I must make this preface no longer. I pray observe that in the margin, and see whether our times be not like Tertullian's.

Reader, as thou lovest thy comforts, thy faith, thy hope, thy safety, thy innocency, thy soul, thy Christ, thine everlasting rest; love, reverence, read, study, obey, and stick close to the Scripture. Farewell.

April 2, 1652.

CHAP. I

SECT. I. We are next to proceed to the confirmation of this truth, which, though it may seem needless in regard of its own clearness and certainty, yet in regard of our distance and infidelity nothing more necessary: but, you will say, to whom will this endeavour be useful? They who believe the Scriptures are convinced already; and for those who believe it not, how will you convince them? Answ. But sad experience tells, that those that believe, do believe but in part, and, therefore, have need of further confirmation; and, doubtless, God hath left us arguments sufficient to convince unbelievers themselves, or else how should we preach to pagans; or what should we say to the greatest part of the world, that acknowledge not the Scriptures? Doubtless the Gospel should be preached to them; and though we have not the gift of miracles to convince them of the truth, as the apostles had, yet we have arguments demonstrative and clear, or else our preaching would be in vain; we having nothing left but bare affirmations.

Though I have all along confirmed sufficiently by testimony of Scripture what I have said, yet I will here briefly add thus much more, that the Scripture doth clearly assert this truth in these six ways.

1. It affirms, that this rest is fore-ordained for the saints, and the saints also fore-ordained to it. "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. 11:16.) "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, what God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9.) Which I conceive must be meant of these preparations in heaven; for those on earth are both seen and conceived, or else how are they enjoyed? To sit on Christ's right and left hand in his kingdom, shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. (Matt. 20:23.) And themselves are called "vessels of mercy, before prepared unto glory." (Rom. 9:23.) And in Christ we have obtained the inheritance, "being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. 1:11.) "And whom he thus predestineth, them he glorifieth;" (Rom. 8:30;) "For he hath, from

the beginning, chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13.)

And though the intentions of the unwise and weak may be frustrated, and "without counsel purposes are disappointed," (Prov. 15:22,) "yet the thoughts of the Lord shall surely come to pass; and as he hath purposed, it shall stand. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations;" (Isa. 14:24;) therefore, "blessed are they whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." (Psal. 33:11, 12.) Who can bereave his people of that rest which is designed them by God's eternal purpose?

Sect. II. Secondly: The Scripture tells us that this rest is purchased, as well as purposed for them; or that they are redeemed to this rest. In what sense this may be said to be purchased by Christ, I have showed before, viz., not as the immediate work of his sufferings, which was the immediate payment of our debt, by satisfying the law, but as a more remote, though most excellent fruit; even the effect of that power, which by death he procured to himself. He himself, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory, yet did he not properly die for himself, nor was that the direct effect of his death. Some of those teachers who are gone forth of late, do tell us, as a piece of their new discoveries, that Christ never purchased life and salvation for us, but purchased us to life and salvation: but not understanding that they affirm and deny the same thing in several expressions. What difference is there betwixt buying liberty to the prisoner, and buying the prisoner to liberty? Betwixt buying life to a condemned malefactor, and buying him to life; or betwixt purchasing reconciliation to an enemy, and purchasing an enemy to reconciliation? but in this last they have found a difference, and tell us that God never was at enmity with man, but man at enmity with God, and therefore need not be reconciled: directly contrary to Scripture, which tells us that God hateth all the workers of iniquity, and that he is their enemy: (Exod. 23:22; Psal. 11:5, and 5:5; Isa. 63:10; Lament. 2:5:) and though there be no change in God, nor any

thing properly called hatred, yet it sufficeth that there is a change in the sinner's relation, and that there is something in God which cannot better be expressed or conceived than by these terms of enmity: and the enmity of the law against a sinner, may well be called the enmity of God. However, this differenceth betwixt enmity in God, and enmity in us; but not betwixt the sense of the fore-mentioned expressions: so that whether you will call it purchasing life for us, or purchasing us to life, the sense is the same, viz., by satisfying the law, and removing impediments, to procure us the title and possession of this life.

It is, then, by the "blood of Jesus that we have entrance into the holiest." (Heb. 10:19.) Even all our entrance to the fruition of God, both that by faith and prayer here, and that by full possession hereafter. Therefore do the saints sing forth his praises, "who hath redeemed them out of every nation by his blood, and made them kings and priests to God." (Rev. 5:10.)

Whether that εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, in Eph. 1:14, which is translated "the redemption of the purchased possession," do prove this or not; yet I see no appearance of truth in their exposition of it, who, because they deny that salvation is purchased by Christ, do affirm that it is Christ himself who is there called the purchased possession. Therefore did God give his Son, and the Son give his life, and therefore was Christ lifted up on the cross, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:15, 16.) So, then, I conclude either Christ must lose his blood and sufferings, and "never see the travail of his soul," (Isa. 53:11,) but all his pains and expectation be frustrated, or else there remaineth a rest to the people of God.

Sect. III. Thirdly: And as this rest is purchased for us, so is it also promised to us; as the firmament with the stars, so are the sacred pages bespangled with the frequent intermixture of these divine engagements. Christ hath told us that "it is his will, that those who

are given to him should be where he is, that they may behold the glory which is given him of the Father:" (John 17:24.) so also, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" (Luke 12:32;) q. d. fear not all your enemy's rage, fear not all your own unworthiness, doubt not of the certainty of the gift; for it is grounded upon the good pleasure of your Father. "I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." (Luke 22:29.) But because I will not be tedious in the needless confirming of an acknowledged truth, I refer you to the places here cited: 2 Thess. 1:7; Heb. 4:1, 3; Matt. 25:34, and 13:43; 2 Tim. 4:18; James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11; 2 Thess. 1:5; Acts 14:22; Luke 6:20, and 13:28, 29; 1 Thess. 2:12; Matt. 5:12; Mark 10:21, and 12:25; 1 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 10:34, and 12:23; Colos. 1:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:16; Eph. 1:20; 1 Cor. 15; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, &c.

Sect. IV. Fourthly: All the means of grace, and all the workings of the Spirit upon the soul, and all the gracious actions of the saints, are so many evident mediums to prove that there remaineth a rest to the people of God. If it be an undeniable maxim that God and nature do nothing in vain, then it is as true of God and his grace. All these means and motions imply some end to which they tend, or else they cannot be called means, nor are they the motions of wisdom or reasons: and no lower end than this "rest" can be imagined. God would never have commanded his people to repent and believe, to fast and pray, to knock and seek, and that continually, to read and study, to confer and meditate, to strive and labour, to run and fight, and all this to no purpose. Nor would the Spirit of God work them to this, and create in them a supernatural power, and enable them and excite them to a constant performance, were it not for this end whereto it leads us. Nor could the saints reasonably attempt such employments, nor yet undergo so heavy sufferings, were it not for this desirable end. But whatsoever the folly of man might do, certainly divine wisdom cannot be guilty of setting to work such fruitless motions. Therefore, whatever I read of duty required, whenever I find the grace bestowed, I take it as so many promises of

rest. The Spirit would never kindle in us such strong desires after heaven, nor such a love to Jesus Christ, if we should not receive that which we desire and love. He that sets our feet in the way of peace will, undoubtedly, bring us to the end of peace. (Luke 1:27.) How nearly are the means and end conjoined! (Matt. 11:12.) "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;" or, (as Luke 15:16,) every man presseth into it: so that the violent apprehends the kingdom. Those whom he causeth to follow him in the regeneration, he will surely provide them thrones of judgment. (Matt. 19:28.)

Sect. V. Fifthly: Scripture further assures us that the saints have the beginnings, foretastes, earnest, and seals of this rest here; and may not all this assure them of the full possession? The very kingdom of God is within them. (Luke 17:21.) They here, as is before said, take it by force, they have a beginning of that knowledge which Christ hath said is eternal life. (John 17:3.) I have fully manifested that before, that the rest and glory of the people of God doth consist in their knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praising; and all these are begun, though but begun here: therefore, doubtless, so much as we here know of God, so much as we love, rejoice, and praise, so much we have of heaven on earth, so much we enjoy of the rest of souls. And do you think that God will give the beginning where he never intends to give the end? Nay, God doth give his people oftentimes such foresights and foretastes of this same rest, that their spirits are even transported with it, and they could heartily wish they might be present there. Paul is taken up into the third heaven, and seeth things that must not be uttered. The saints are kept by the power of God through faith unto that salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein they can greatly rejoice, even in temptations: (1 Pet. 1:5, 6:) and therefore the apostle also tells us, that they who now see not Christ, nor ever saw him, yet love him, and believing do rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. (1 Pet. 1:8, 9.) Observe here, first, how God gives his people this foretasting joy: secondly, how this joy is said to be full of glory, and therefore must needs be a beginning of

the glory: thirdly, how immediately upon this there follows "receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of the soul." And Paul also brings in the justified "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:2.) And I doubt not, but as some poor Christians among us, who have little to boast of appearing without, have often these foretastes in their souls. And do you think that God will tantalize his people? Will he give them the first-fruits and not the crop? Doth he show them glory to set them longing, and then deny the actual fruition? Or doth he lift them up so near this rest, and give them such rejoicings in it, and yet never bestow it on them? It cannot be. Nay, doth he give them the "earnest of the inheritance;" (Eph. 1:14;) and "seal them with the Holy Spirit of promise;" (Eph. 1:13;) and yet will he deny the full possession? These absurdities may not be charged on an ordinary man, much less on the faithful and righteous God.

Sect. VI. Sixthly, and lastly: The Scripture mentioneth particularly and by name, those who entered into this rest, as Enoch, who was taken up to God. So Abraham, Lazarus, and the thief that was crucified with Christ, &c. And if there be a rest for these, surely there is a rest for all believers. But it is vain to heap up scripture-proof, seeing it is the very end of the Scripture, to be a guide to lead us to this blessed state, and to discover it to us, and persuade us to seek it in the prescribed way, and to acquaint us with the hinderances that would keep us from it, and to be the charter and grant by which we hold all our title to it. So that our rest, and thereby God's glory, is, to the Scripture, as the end is to the way, which is frequently expressed and implied through the whole. There is no one that doubts of the certainty of this promised glory, but only they that doubt of the truth of the Scripture, or else know not what it containeth. And because I find the most temptations are resolved into this, and that there is so much unbelief even in true believers, and that the truth and strength of our belief of Scripture hath an exceeding great influence into all our graces, I shall briefly say something for your confirmation in this.

CHAP. II

Motives to Study and Preach the Divine Authority of Scripture.

Sect. I. Thus much may suffice where the Scripture is believed, to confirm the truth of the point in hand, viz., the certain futurity of the saints' rest. And for pagans and infidels who believe not Scripture, it is besides the intention of this discourse to endeavour their conviction. I am endeavouring the consolation and edification of saints, and not the information and conversion of pagans. Yet do I acknowledge the subject exceeding necessary, even to the saints themselves: for Satan's assaults are oft made at the foundation; and if he can persuade them to question the verity of Scripture, they will soon cast away their hopes of heaven.

But if I should here enter upon that task, to prove that Scripture to be the infallible word of God, I should make too broad a digression, and set upon a work as large as that, for the sake whereof I should undertake it; neither am I insensible of how great a difficulty it would prove to manage it satisfactorily, and how much more than my ability is thereto requisite.

Yet, lest the tempted Christian should have no relief, nor any argument at hand against the temptation, I will here lay down some few, not intending it as a full resolution of that great question, but as a competent help to the weak, that have no time nor ability to read larger volumes. And I the rather am induced to it, because the success of all the rest that I have written depends upon this: no man will love, desire, study, labour for that which he believeth not to be attainable. And in such supernatural points, we must first apprehend the truth of the revelation, before we can well believe the truth of the thing revealed. And I desire the Lord to persuade the hearts of some of his choicest servants in these times, whom he hath best furnished for such a work, to undertake the complete handling of it; to persuade them to which, I will here annex, first, some considerations, which also are the reasons of this brief attempt of my own, and may also serve to persuade all ministers to bestow a little

more pains, in a seasonable grounding their hearers in this so great and needful a point, by a more frequent and clear discovery of the verity of the Scripture, though some, that know not what they say, may tell them that it is needless.

1. Of what exceeding great necessity is it to the salvation of ourselves and hearers, to be soundly persuaded of the truth of Scripture! As God's own veracity is the prime foundation of our faith, from which particular axioms receive their verity, so the Scripture is the principal foundation quoad patefactionem, revealing to us what is of God, without which revelation it is impossible to believe. And should not the foundation be both timely and soundly laid?

2. The learned divines of these latter times have, in most points of doctrine, done better than any, since the apostles, before them; and have much advantaged the church thereby, and advanced sacred knowledge. And should we not endeavour it in this point if possible above all, when yet the ancients were more frequent and full in it, for the most part, than we? I know there are many excellent treatises already extant on this subject, and such as I doubt not may convince gainsayers, and much strengthen the weak; but yet, doubtless, much more may be done for the clearing this weighty and needful point. Our great divines have said almost as much against papists in this, as need be said, especially Chamier, and our Robert Baronius, Whitaker, Reignoldus, &c. But is not most of their industry there bestowed, while they put off the atheist, the Jew, and other infidels, with a few pages or none? And so the great master-sin of infidelity in the souls of men, whereof the best Christians have too great a share, is much neglected, and the very greatest matter of all overlooked. Grotius, Morney, and Camero, above others, have done well; but if God would stir them up to this work, I doubt not but some, by the help of all foregoers, and especially improving antiquities, might do it more completely than any have yet done; which I think would be as acceptable a piece of service to the church as ever by human industry was performed.

3. And I fear the course that too many divines take this way, by resolving all into the testimony of the Spirit, in a mistaken sense, hath much wronged the Scripture and church of God, and much hardened pagans and atheists against the truth: I know that the illumination of the Spirit is necessary: a special illumination for the begetting of a special saving belief, and a common illumination for a common belief. But this is not so properly called the testimony of the Spirit; the use of this is to open our eyes to see that evidence of scripture verity which is already extant; and as to remove our blindness, so by farther sanctifying, to remove our natural enmity to the truth, and prejudice against it, which is no small hinderance to the believing of it; for all the hinderance lieth not in the bare intellect.

But it is another kind of testimony than this, which many great divines resolve their faith into: for when the question is of the objective cause of faith, how know you Scripture to be the word of God; or why do you believe it so to be? They finally conclude, by the testimony of the Spirit: but the Spirit's illumination being only the efficient cause of our discerning, and the question being only of the objective cause or evidence, they must needs mean some testimony besides illuminating, sanctifying grace, or else not understand themselves: and, therefore, even great Chamier calleth this testimony 'the word of God,' and likens it to the revelations made to the prophets and apostles, dangerously, I think. (Tom. iii. lib. 13. c. 17.) To imagine a necessity, first, either of an internal proper testimony, which is *argumentum inartificiale*, as if the Spirit, as another person, spoke this truth within me, 'The Scripture is God's word;' or, secondly, of the Spirit's propounding that objective evidence internally in the soul, which is necessary to persuade by an artificial argument, without propounding it first *ab extra*; thirdly, or for the Spirit to infuse or create in a man's mind an actual persuasion that Scripture is God's word, the person not knowing how he is so persuaded, nor why; or of any the like immediate injection of the intelligible species; I say, to affirm that the Scriptures cannot be known to be God's word, without such a testimony of the Spirit as

some of these, is, in my judgment, a justifying men in their infidelity, and a telling them that there is not yet extant any sufficient evidence of scripture truth, till the Spirit create it in ourselves, and, withal, to leave it impossible to produce any evidence for the conviction of an unbeliever, who cannot know the testimony of the Spirit in me: and, indeed, it is direct expectation of enthusiasm, and that is ordinary to every Christian. And it also infers that all men have the testimony of the Spirit, who believe the Scriptures to be God's word, which would delude many natural men, who feel that they do believe this, though some unsoundly tell us that an unregenerate man cannot believe it. I know that, savingly, he cannot; but undissemblingly, as the devil does, he may. But I leave this point, referring the reader that understands them, for full satisfaction about the nature of the Spirit's testimony, to learned Robert Baronius, 'Apol. con. Turnebullum,' p. 733; and also to judicious Amyraldus, 'Thes. de Testim. Spir. in Thes. Salmuriens.,' vol. i. p. 122: in both whom it is most solidly handled.

4. Doubtless, the first and chief work of preachers of the Gospel, is to endeavour the conversion of pagans and infidels, where men live within their reach, and have opportunity to do it. And we all believe that the Jews shall be brought in; and it must be by means. And how shall all this be done, if we cannot prove to them the divine authority of what we have to say to them, but naked affirmation? Or, how shall we maintain the credit of Christianity, if we be put to dispute the case with an infidel? I know somewhat may be done by tradition where Scripture is not; but that is a weaker, uncertain means: I know also that the first truths, and those that are known by the light of nature, may be evinced by natural demonstrations: and when we deal with pagans, there we must begin. But for all supernatural truth, how shall we prove that to them, but by proving first the certainty of the revelation? As Aquinas, ut in marg., to tell them that the Spirit testifieth it, is no means to convince them that have not the Spirit. And if they have the Spirit already, then what need we preach to convince them? If the word must be mixed with faith in them that hear it, before it profit them further to salvation; then we cannot expect to find the Spirit in infidels. He that thinks an unholy person

may not believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, doth not surely think that they may go so much further as our divines and the Scripture tell us they may do.

And to tell an infidel that it is principium indemonstrabile, that Scripture is God's word, and that it is to be believed, and not to be proved, as if the very revelation. Hoc esse testimonium divinum, and not only the thing testified, Hoc esse verum, were not objectum scientiæ, sed puræ fidei. This might sooner harden infidels, than convince them. Sure I am, that both Christ and his apostles used sufficient, in suo genere, convincing arguments to persuade men to believe, and dealt with men as rational creatures. Truly, saith Hooker, "It is not a thing impossible, nor greatly hard, even by such kind of proofs so to manifest and clear that point, that no man living shall be able to deny it, without denying some apparent principle, such as all men acknowledge to be true. And Scripture teacheth us that saving truth, which God hath discovered to the world by revelation; but it presumeth us taught otherwise, that itself is divine and sacred. And these things we believe, knowing by reason, that Scripture is the word of God." Again, saith he, "It is not required, nor can be exacted at our hands, that we should yield it any other assent, than such as doth answer the evidence." Again, how bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it comes to the trial, such as the evidence is, which the truth hath, such is the assent; nor can it be stronger, if grounded as it should be."

5. Is not faith a rational act of a rational creature? And so the understanding proceeds discursively in its production. And is not that the strongest faith which hath the strongest reasons to prove the testimony to be valid upon which it resteth, and the clearest apprehension and use of those reasons? And the truest faith which hath the truest reasons truly apprehended and used? And must not that, on the contrary, be weak or false faith which receives the verity and validity of the testimony from weak or false grounds, though the testimony, of itself, be the truest in the world? Our divines use to say, concerning love to Christ, that it is not to be measured by the degree

of fervour so much as by the grounds and motives; so that if a man should love Christ upon the same reason as the Turk loves Mahomet, it were no true love: if he love him upon false grounds, it must needs be false love; and, if upon common grounds, it can be but a common love. I will not conclude, that to believe in Jesus Christ upon the grounds that a Turk believes in Mahomet, or to believe Scripture upon the same reasons that the Turks believe the Alcoran, is no true faith, supposing that both have the like verity of their reasons; but at best, it must be more weak and doubtful.

6. Are the generality of Christians able to give any better than some such common reason, to prove the verity of Scripture: nay, are the more exercised, understanding sorts of Christians able by sound arguments to make it good, if an enemy or a temptation put them to it: nay, are the meaner sort of ministers in England able to do this? Let them that have tried, judge.

7. Can the superstructure be firm, where the foundation is sandy; and can our affections and actions be sound and strong, when our belief of Scripture is unsound or infirm? Surely this faith will have influence into all. For my own part, I take it to be the greatest cause of coldness in duty, weakness in grace, boldness in sinning, and unwillingness to die, &c., that our faith is either unsound or infirm in this point; few Christians among us, for aught I find, have any better than the popish implicit faith in this point, nor any better arguments than the papists have to prove Scripture the word of God. They have received it by tradition, godly ministers and Christians tell them so, it is impious to doubt of it, and therefore they believe it. And this worm, lying at the root, causeth the languishing and decay of the whole: yet it is usually undiscerned, for the root lieth secret under ground. But I am apt to judge, that though the most complain of their uncertainty of salvation, through want of assurance of their own interest, and of the weakness of the applying act of faith; yet the greater cause of all their sorrows, and that which shakes the whole building, is the weakness of their faith about the truth of Scripture; though, perhaps, the other be more perceived, and this taken notice

of by few. There may be great weakness and unsoundness of belief, where yet no doubtings are perceived to stir. Therefore though we could persuade people to believe ever so confidently, that Scripture is the very word of God, and yet teach them no more reason why they should believe this, than any other book to be that word; as it will prove in them no right way of believing, so is it in us no right way of teaching.

8. There is many a one who feels his faith shake here, who never discovers it: to doubt of our evidence, is taken for no great disgrace, and therefore men more freely profess such doubts; nay, and some, perhaps, who are not much troubled with them, because they would be thought to be humble Christians. But to question the truth of Scripture, is a reproachful blasphemy, and therefore all that are guilty here, speak not their doubts.

9. Is not the greatest battery by all sorts of enemies, especially made against this foundation? The first place that the papist assaults you in, is here; How know you the Scripture to be the word of God? The seekers will accost you with the like question; How know you that your Scripture and your ministry is of God? The familists and libertines do spit their venom here: and some Christians, by experience, are able to testify, that Satan's temptations are most violent here. Yea, and our own carnal, deluded reason, is most apt of all to stumble here.

They talk of a toleration of all religions, and some desire that the Jews may have free commerce amongst us: it will then be time for us, I think, to be well armed at this point. Let the ordinary professors of our time, who are of weak judgments, and fiery spirits, look to it, how they will stand in such assaults; lest, as now, when they cannot answer a separatist, they yield to him; and when they cannot answer an antinomian, they turn antinomians; so, then, when they can much less answer the subtle arguments of a Jew against Christ and the Gospel, they should as easily turn Jews, and deny Christ, and the verity of the Gospel.

The libertines among us think it necessary that we should have such a toleration to discover the unsound, who hold their faith upon tradition and custom. I am no more of their minds in this, than of his, who would have a fair virgin to lie with him, and try his chastity, and make its victory more honourable: but if we must needs have such a trial, it is time to look to the grounds of our belief, that we may be ready to give a reason of our hope.

10. However, though I were mistaken in all this, yet certain I am, that the strengthening of our faith in the verity of Scripture, would be an exceeding help to the joy of the saints, and would advance their confident hopes of rest. For myself, if my faith in this point had no imperfection, if I did as verily believe the glory to come, as I do believe that the sun will rise again when it is set; oh! how would it raise my desires and my joys; what haste should I make; how serious should I be; how should I trample on these earthly vanities, and even forget the things below; how restless should I be till my right were assured to this rest; and then, how restless, till I did possess it: how should I delight in the thought of death, and my heart leap at the tidings of its approach: how glad should I be of the body's decay; to feel my prison moulder to dust! Surely, this would be the fruit of a perfect belief of the truth of the promise of our eternal rest; which, though it cannot be here expected, yet should we use the most strengthening means, and press on till we have attained. "Truly," saith Mr. Pemble, (Vindic. Grat. p. 219.) "this loose and unsettled faith is one of the fiery darts, and forcible engines of Satan, whereby he assaults and overthrows the hope and comfort of many a dying man; who, having not strengthened himself on this point, by undoubted arguments and experiments, is there laid at where he lies open and unarmed, by such cunning cavils, shifts, and elusions against the authority of Scripture, that the poor man, not able to clear himself of them, falls into a doubting of all religion, and sinks into despair.

Sect. II. Thus much I have purposely spoken, as to stir up Christians to look to their faith, so especially to provoke some choice servants of

Christ, among the multitudes of books that are written, to bestow their labours on this most needful subject; and all ministers to preach it more frequently and clearly to their people. Some think it is faith's honour to be as credulous as may be, and the weaker are the rational grounds, the stronger is the faith; and therefore we must believe and not dispute. Indeed, when it is once known to be a divine testimony, then the most credulous soul is the best. But when the doubt is, whether it be the testimony of God, or no, a man may easily be over credulous; else, why are we bid, "believe not every spirit, but try them, whether they be of God, or not." And how should the false Christs, and false prophets be known, who would "deceive, were it possible, the very elect?" "To be given up of God to believe a lie," is one of the sorest of God's judgments.

Some think the only way to deal with such temptations to blasphemy, is to cast them away, and not to dispute them; and I think the direction is very good, so it be used with distinction and caution. The rule holds good against real blasphemy, known to be such; but if the person know it not, how shall he make use of this rule against it? Further, it is supposed, that he who knows it to be blasphemy, hath arguments whereby to prove it such; else, how doth he know it? Therefore, here lies the sin; when a man is, by sufficient evidence, convinced, or, at least, hath evidence sufficient for conviction, that it is a divine testimony, and yet is still cherishing doubts, or hearkening to temptations which may feed those doubts; when a man, like Balaam, will take no answer. But he who will, therefore, cast away all doubts before he hath any arguments sufficient against them, or could ever prove the thing in question, he doth indeed cast aside the temptation, but not overcome it, and may expect it should shortly return again; it is a methodical cure which prevents a relapse. Such a neglecter of temptations may be in the right, and may as well be in the wrong; however, it is not right to him, because not rightly believed. Faith always implies a knowledge, and the knowledge usually of the matter and author of that testimony; divine faith hath ever a divine testimony, and supposeth the knowledge of the matter, when the faith is particular, but always of the author of that

testimony. An implicit faith in God, that is, a believing that all is true which he testifieth, though we see no reason for it, from the evidence of the matter, this is necessary to every true believer: but to believe implicitly, that the testimony is divine, or that Scripture is the word of God, this is not to believe God, but to resolve our faith into some human testimony; even to lay our foundation upon the sand, where all will fall at the next assault.

It is strange to consider how we all abhor that piece of popery, as most injurious to God of all the rest, which resolves our faith into the authority of the church: and yet that we do; for the generality of professors content ourselves with the same kind of faith. Only with this difference: the papists believe Scripture to be the word of God, because their church saith so; and we, because our church, or our leaders say so. Yea, and many ministers never yet gave their people better grounds, but tell them, which is true, that it is damnable to deny it, but help them not to the necessary antecedents of faith.

If any think that these words tend to the shaking of men's faith, I answer, first, only of that which will fall of itself; secondly, and that it may, in time, be built again more strongly; thirdly, or at least that the sound may be surer settled. It is to be understood that many a thousand do profess Christianity, and zealously hate the enemies thereof upon the same grounds, to the same ends, and from the same inward, corrupt principles, as the Jews did hate and kill Christ. It is the religion of the country, where every man is reproached who believes otherwise; they were born and brought up in this belief, and it hath increased in them upon the like occasions. Had they been born and bred in the religion of Mahomet, they would have been as zealous for him. The difference betwixt him and a Mahometan is more, that he lives where better laws and religion dwell, than that he hath more knowledge or soundness of apprehension.

Yet would I not drive into causeless doubtings the soul of any true believers, or make them believe their faith is unsound, because it is not so strong as some others; therefore I add, some may, perhaps,

have ground for their belief, though they are not able to express it by argumentation; and may have arguments in their hearts to persuade themselves, though they have none in their mouths to persuade another; yea, and those arguments in themselves may be solid and convincing. Some may be strengthened by some one sound argument, and yet be ignorant of all the rest, without overthrowing the truth of their faith. Some, also, may have weaker apprehensions of the divine authority of Scripture than others; and as weaker grounds for their faith, so a less degree of assent; and yet that assent may be sincere and saving, so it have these two qualifications: 1. If the arguments which we have for believing the Scripture, be in themselves more sufficient to convince of its truth, than any arguments of the enemies of Scripture can be to persuade a man to the contrary; and do accordingly discover to us a high degree, at least, of probability. 2. And if being thus far convinced, it prevails with us to choose this as the only way of life, and to adventure our souls upon this way, denying all other, and adhering, though to the loss of estate and life, to the truth of Christ, thus weakly apprehended. This, I think, God will accept as true belief.

But though such a faith may serve to salvation, yet when the Christian should use it for his consolation he will find it much fail him, even as legs or arms of the weak or lame, which when a man should use them, do fail them according to the degrees of their weakness or lameness; so much doubting as there remains of the truth of the word, or so much weakness as there is in our believing, or so much darkness or uncertainty as there is in the evidence which persuades us to believe; so much will be wanting to our love, desires, labours, adventures, and, especially, to our joys.

Therefore I think it necessary to speak a little, and but a little, to fortify the believer against temptations, and to confirm his faith in the certain truth of that Scripture which contains the promises of this rest.

CHAP. III

SECT. I. And here it is necessary that we first distinguish betwixt, 1. The subject matter of Scripture, or the doctrine which it contains: 2. And the words or writings containing or expressing this doctrine. The one is as the blood, the other as the veins in which it runs. Secondly, we must distinguish betwixt, 1. The substantial and fundamental part of scripture doctrine, without which there is no salvation: and, 2. The circumstantial and the less necessary part, as genealogies, successions, chronology, &c.

Thirdly: Of the substantial, fundamental parts, 1. Some may be known and proved, even without Scripture, as being written in nature itself. 2. Some can be known only by the assent of faith to divine revelation.

Fourthly: Of this last sort, 1. Some things are above reason, as it is without divine revelation, both in respect of their probability, existence, and futurity; 2. Others may be known by mere reason, without divine testimony, in regard of their possibility and probability, but not in regard of their existence and futurity.

Fifthly: Again, matter of doctrine must be distinguished from matter of fact.

Sixthly: Matter of fact is either, 1. Such as God produceth in an ordinary, or, 2. Extraordinary and miraculous way.

Seventhly: History and prophecy must be distinguished.

Eighthly: We must distinguish also the books and writings themselves: 1. Between the main scope, and those parts which express the chief contents; and, 2. Particular words and phrases not expressing any substantials.

Ninthly: Also it is one question, 1. Whether there be a certain number of books which are canonical, or of divine authority? And, 2. Another question, what number there is of these, and which particular books they are?

Tenthly: The direct express sense must be distinguished from that which is only implied or consequential.

Eleventhly: We must distinguish revelation unwritten, from that which is written.

Twelfthly and lastly: We must distinguish that scripture which was spoken or written by God immediately, from that which was spoken or written immediately by man, and but mediately by God. And of this last sort, 1. Some of the instruments or penmen are known; 2. Some not known. Of those known, 1. Some that spoke much in Scripture were bad men; 2. Others were godly: and of these, some were, 1. More eminent and extraordinary, as prophets and apostles; 2. Others were persons more inferior and ordinary.

Again; As we must distinguish of scripture and divine testimony, so must we also distinguish the apprehension of faith by which we do receive it.

1. There is a divine faith, when we take the testimony to be God's own, and so believe the thing testified as upon God's words. Secondly, there is a human faith, when we believe it merely upon the credit of man.

2. Faith is either, first, implicit, when we believe the thing is true, though we understand not what it is; or, secondly, explicit, when we believe, and understand what we believe. Both these are, again, divine or human.

3. It is one thing to believe it as probable, another thing to believe it as certain.

4. It is one thing to believe it to be true conditionally, another to believe it absolutely.

5. We must distinguish betwixt the bare assent of the understanding, to the truth of an axiom, when it is only silenced by force of argument, which will be stronger or weaker as the argument seemeth more or less demonstrative. And, secondly, that deep apprehension and firm assent which proceedeth from a well-established, confirmed faith backed by experience.

6. It is one thing to assent to the truth of the axiom, another to taste and choose the good contained in it, which is the work of the will.

Sect. II. The use I shall make of these distinctions, is to open the way to these following positions, which will resolve the great questions on foot, how far the belief of the written word is of necessity to salvation, and whether it be the foundation of our faith, and whether this foundation hath been always the same?

Pos. 1. The object of belief, is the will of God revealed, or a divine testimony, where two things are absolutely necessary: first, the matter; secondly, the revelation.

2. All this revealed will is necessary to the completing of our faith;g and it is our duty to believe it. But it is only the substance and tenor of the covenants, and the things necessarily supposed to the knowing and keeping of the covenant of grace, which are of absolute necessity to the being of faith, and to salvation. A man may be saved, though he should not believe many things, which yet he is bound by God to believe. 3. Yet this must be only through ignorance of the matter, or of the divineness of the testimony. For a flat unbelief of the smallest truth, when we know the testimony to be of God, will not stand with the being of true faith, nor with salvation. For reason lays down this ground, That God can speak nothing but truth; and faith proceeds upon that supposition. 4. This doctrine, so absolutely necessary, hath not been ever from the beginning the same, but hath differed

according to the different covenants and administrations. That doctrine which is now so necessary, was not so before the fall; and that which is so necessary since the coming of Christ, was not so before his coming. Then they might be saved in believing in the Messiah to come of the seed of David: but now it is of necessity to believe, that this Jesus, the son of Mary, is He, and that we look not for another. I prove it thus: That which is not revealed, can be no object of our faith; much less so necessary: but Christ was not revealed before the fall; nor this Jesus revealed to be He, before his coming; therefore these were not of necessity to be believed, or, as some metaphorically speak, they were then no fundamental doctrines. Perhaps, also, some things will be found of absolute necessity to us, which are not so to Indians and Turks. 5. God hath made this substance of scripture doctrine to be thus necessary, primarily, and for itself. 6. That it be revealed, is also of absolute necessity: but, secondarily, and for the doctrine's sake, as a means without which believing is neither possible, nor a duty. And though where there is no revelation, faith is not necessary as a duty; yet it may be necessary, I think, as a means, that is, our natural misery may be such as can no other way be cured; but this concerns not us that have heard of Christ. 7. Nature, creatures, and Providence, are no sufficient revelation of this tenor of the covenants. 8. It is necessary not only that this doctrine be revealed, but also that it be revealed with grounds and arguments rationally sufficient to evince the verity of the doctrine, or the divineness of the testimony, that from it we may conclude the former. 9. The revelation of truth is to be considered in respect of the first immediate delivery from God: or, secondly, in respect of the way of its coming down to us, it is delivered by God immediately either by writing, as the two tables, or by informing angels, who may be his messengers, or by inspiring some choice, particular men; so that few in the world have received it from God at the first hand. 10. The only ways of revelations that, for aught I know, are now left, are Scripture and tradition. For though God hath not tied himself from revelations by the Spirit, yet he hath ceased them, and perfected his scripture revelations; so that the Spirit only reveals what is revealed already in the word, by

illuminating us to understand it. 11. The more immediate the revelation, *cæteris paribus*, the more sure; and the more succession of hands it passeth through, the more uncertain, especially in matter of doctrine. 12. When we receive from men, by tradition, the doctrine of God, as in the words of God, there is less danger of corruption, than when they deliver us that doctrine in their own words; because here taking liberty to vary the expressions, it will represent the truth more uncertainly, and in more various shapes. 13. Therefore hath God been pleased, when he ceased immediate revelation, to leave his will written in a form of words which should be his standing law and rule to try all other men's expressions by. 14. In all the fore-mentioned respects, therefore, the written word doth excel the unwritten tradition of the same doctrine. 15. Yet unwritten tradition, or any sure way of revealing this doctrine, may suffice to save him who thereby is brought to believe; as if there be any among the Abassines of Ethiopia, the Coptics of Egypt, or elsewhere, that have the substance of the covenants delivered them by unwritten tradition, or by other writings, if hereby they come to believe, they shall be saved. For so the promise of the Gospel runs, giving salvation to all that believe, by what means soever they were brought to it. The like may be said of true believers in those parts of the church of Rome, where the Scripture is wholly hid from the vulgar, if there be any such parts. 16. Yet where the written word is wanting, salvation must needs be more difficult and more rare, and faith more feeble, and men's conversations worse ordered, because they want that clearer revelation, that surer rule of faith and life, which might make the way of salvation more easy. 17. When tradition ariseth no higher, or cometh originally but from this written word, and not from the verbal testimonies of the apostles before the word was written, there that tradition is but the preaching of the word, and not a distinct way of revealing. 18. Such is most of the tradition, for aught I can learn, that is now on foot in the world, for matter of doctrine, but not for matter of fact. 19. Therefore the Scriptures are not only necessary to the well-being of the church, and to the strength of faith, but, ordinarily, to the very being of faith and churches. 20. Not that the present possession of Scripture is of absolute necessity to the

present being of a church; nor that it is so absolutely necessary to every man's salvation, that he read or know this Scripture himself; but that it either be at present, or have been formerly in the church: that some knowing it, may teach it to others, is of absolute necessity to most persons and churches, and necessary to the well-being of all.

21. Though negative unbelief of the authority of Scripture may stand with salvation, yet positive and universal, I think, cannot: or, though tradition may save where Scripture is not known, yet he that reads, or hears the Scripture, and will not believe it to be the testimony of God, I think, cannot be saved, because this is now the clearest and surest revelation; and he that will not believe it, will much less believe a revelation more uncertain and obscure.

22. Though all Scripture be of divine authority, yet he that believeth but some one book, which containeth the substance of the doctrine of salvation, may be saved; much more they that have doubted but of some particular books.

23. They that take the Scripture to be but the writings of godly, honest men, and so to be only a means of making known Christ, having a gradual precedency to the writings of other godly men, and do believe in Christ upon those strong grounds which are drawn from his doctrine, miracles, &c., rather than upon the testimony of the writing, as being purely infallible and divine, may yet have a divine and saving faith.

24. Much more, those that believe the whole writing to be of divine inspiration where it handleth the substance, but doubt whether God infallibly guide them in every circumstance.

25. And yet more, those that believe that the Spirit did guide the writers to truth, both in substance and circumstance, but doubt whether he guided them in orthography; or whether their pens were as perfectly guided as their minds.

26. And yet more, may those have saving faith, who only doubt whether Providence infallibly guided any transcribers, or printers, as to retain any copy that perfectly agrees with the autograph: yea, whether the most perfect copy now extant, may not have some inconsiderable literal or verbal errors, through the transcribers' or printers' oversight, is of no great moment, as long as it is certain, that the Scriptures are not de industria corrupted, nor any material doctrine, history, or prophecy thereby obscured or depraved. God hath not engaged himself to

direct every printer to the world's end, to do his work without any error. Yet it is unlikely that this should deprave all copies, or leave us uncertain wholly of the right reading, especially since copies were multiplied, because it is unlikely that all transcribers, or printers, will commit the very same error. We know the true copies of our statute books, though the printer be not guided by an unerring spirit. See Usher's 'Epistle to Lud. Capell.' 27. Yet do all, or most of these, in my judgment, cast away a singular prop to their faith, and lay it open to dangerous assaults, and doubt of that which is a certain truth. 28. As the translations are no further Scripture, than they agree with the copies in the original tongues; so neither are those copies further than they agree with the autographs, or original copies, or with some copies perused and approved by the apostles. 29. Yet is there not the like necessity of having the autographs to try the transcripts by, as there is of having the original transcripts to try the translations by. For there is an impossibility that any translation should perfectly express the sense of the original. But there is a possibility, probability, and facility, of true transcribing, and grounds to prove it true, de facto, as we shall touch anon. 30. That part which was written by the finger of God, as also the substance of doctrine through the whole Scriptures, are so purely divine, that they have not in them any thing human. 31. The next to these, are the words that were spoken by the mouth of Christ, and then those that were spoken by angels. 32. The circumstantials are many of them so divine, as yet they have in them something human, as the bringing of Paul's cloak and parchments, and, as it seems, his counsel about marriage, &c. 33. Much more is there something human, in the method and phrase, which is not so immediately divine as the doctrine. 34. Yet is there nothing sinfully human, and therefore nothing false in all. 35. But an innocent imperfection there is in the method and phrase, which if we deny, we must renounce most of our logic and rhetoric. 36. Yet was this imperfect way, at that time, all things considered, the fittest way to divulge the Gospel. That is the best language which is best suited to the hearers, and not that which is best simply in itself, and supposeth that understanding in the hearers which they have not. Therefore it was wisdom and mercy to fit the Scriptures to

the capacity of all. Yet will it not, therefore, follow, that all preachers at all times, should as much neglect definition, distinction, syllogism, &c., as Scripture doth. 37. Some doctrinal passages in Scripture are only historically related, and therefore the relating them is not asserting them for truth; and therefore those sentences may be false, and yet not the Scriptures false: yea, some falsehoods are written by way of reproofing them, as Gehazi's lie, Saul's excuse, &c. 38. Every doctrine that is thus related only historically, is therefore of doubtful credit, because it is not a divine assertion, except Christ himself were the speaker, and therefore it is to be tried by the rest of the Scripture. 39. Where ordinary men were the speakers, the credit of such doctrine is the more doubtful, and yet much more, when the speakers were wicked; of the former sort are the speeches of Job's friends, and divers others; of the latter sort are the speeches of the Pharisees, &c., and perhaps Gamaliel's counsels. (Acts 5:34.) 40. Yet where God doth testify his inspiration, or approbation, the doctrine is of divine authority, though the speaker be wicked, as in Balaam's prophecy. 41. The like may be said of matter of fact; for it is not either necessary or lawful, to speak such words or do such actions, merely because men in Scripture did so speak or do; no, not though they were the best saints; for their own speeches or actions are to be judged by the law, and therefore are no part of the law themselves. And as they are evil where they cross the law, as Joseph's swearing, the ancients' polygamy, &c., so are they doubtful where their congruence with the law is doubtful. 42. But here is one most observable exception, conducing much to resolve that great doubt, whether examples bind; where men are designed by God to such an office, and act by commission, and with a promise of direction, their doctrines are of divine authority, though we find not where God did dictate; and their actions done by that commission are current and exemplary, so far as they are intended or performed for example; and so example may be equivalent to a law, and the argument, *à facto ad jus*, may hold. So Moses being appointed to the forming of the old church and commonwealth of the Jews, to the building of the tabernacle, &c. His precepts and examples in these works, though we could not find his particular direction, are to be taken as divine. So

also the apostles, having commission to form and order the gospel-churches, their doctrine and examples therein, are by their general commission warranted; and their practices in establishing the Lord's day, in settling the offices and orders of churches, are to us as laws, still binding with those limitations as positives only, which give way to greater. 43. The ground of this position is, because it is inconsistent with the wisdom and faithfulness of God; to send men to a work, and promise to be with them, and yet to forsake them, and suffer them to err in the building of that house, which must endure till the end of the world. 44. Yet if any of the commissioners do err in their own particular conversations, or in matters without the extent of their commission, this may consist with the faithfulness of God; God hath not promised them infallibility and perfection; the disgrace is their own: but if they should miscarry in that wherein they are sent to be a rule to others, the church would then have an imperfect rule, and the dishonour would redound to God. 45. Yet I find not that ever God authorized any mere man to be a lawgiver to the church in substantials, but only to deliver the laws which he had given to interpret them, and to determine circumstantials not by him determined. 46. Where God owneth men's doctrines and examples by miracles, they are to be taken as infallibly divine; much more, when commission, promises, and miracles, do concur, which confirmeth the apostles' examples for current. 47. So that if any of the kings or prophets had given laws, and formed the church, as Moses, they had not been binding, because without the said commission; or if any other minister of the Gospel shall by word or action arrogate an apostolical privilege. 48. There is no verity about God, or the chief happiness of man written in nature, but it is to be found written in Scriptures,m 49. So that the same thing may, in these several respects, be the object both of knowledge and of faith. 50. The Scripture being so perfect a transcript of the law of nature or reason, is much more to be credited in its supernatural revelations. 51. The probability of most things, and the possibility of all things contained in the Scriptures, may well be discerned by reason itself, which makes their existence or futurity the more easy to be believed. 52. Yet before this existence or futurity of any thing beyond the reach

of reason can be soundly believed, the testimony must be known to be truly divine. 53. Yet a belief of scripture doctrine as probable, doth usually go before a belief of certainty, and is a good preparative thereto. 54. The direct, express sense, must be believed directly and absolutely as infallible, and the consequences where they may be clearly and certainly raised: but where there is danger of erring in raising consequences, the assent can be but weak and conditional. 55. A consequence raised from Scripture, being no part of the immediate sense, cannot be called any part of Scripture. 56. Where one of the premises is in nature, and the other only in Scripture, there the conclusion is mixed, partly known, and partly believed. That it is the consequence of those premises is known; but that it is a truth, is, as I said, apprehended by a mixed act. Such is a Christian's concluding himself to be justified and sanctified, &c. 57. Where, through weakness, we are unable to discern the consequences, there is enough in the express direct sense for salvation. 58. Where the sense is not understood, there the belief can be but implicit. 59. Where the sense is partly understood, but with some doubting, the belief can be but conditionally explicit; that is, we believe it, if it be the sense of the word. 60. Fundamentals must be believed explicitly and absolutely.

CHAP. IV

The First Argument to prove Scripture to be the Word of God.

SECT. I. Having thus showed you in what sense the Scriptures are the word of God, and how far to be believed, and what is the excellency, necessity, and authority of them, I shall now add three or four arguments to help your faith, which, I hope, will not only prove them to be a divine testimony to the substance of doctrine (though that be a useful work against unbelief), but also that they are the very written laws of God, and a perfect rule of faith and duty. (2 Tim. 3:16.) My arguments shall be but few, because I handle it but on the

by, and those such as I find little of in ordinary writings, lest I should waste time in doing what is done to my hands.

1. Those writings and that doctrine which were confirmed by many and real miracles, must needs be of God, and consequently of undoubted truth. But the books and doctrines of canonical Scripture were so confirmed: therefore, &c.

Against the major proposition nothing of any moment can be said; for it is a truth apparent enough to nature, that none but God can work real miracles, or, at least, none but those whom he doth especially enable thereto; and it is as manifest that the righteous and faithful God will not give this power for a seal to any falsehood or deceit.

The usual objections are these: first, antichrist shall come with lying wonders.

Answ. They are no true miracles: as they are τέρατα ψεύδους, (2 Thess. 2:9,) lying, in sealing to a lying doctrine: so also in being but seeming and counterfeit miracles. The like may be said to those of Pharaoh's magicians, and all other sorcerers and witches, and those that may be wrought by Satan himself. They may be wonders, but not miracles.

Object. 2. God may enable false prophets to work miracles to try the world, without any derogation to his faithfulness.

Answ. No: for divine power being properly the attendant of divine revelation, if it should be annexed to diabolical delusion, it would be a sufficient excuse to the world for their believing those delusions. And if miracles should not be a sufficient seal to prove the authority of the witness to be divine, then is there nothing in the world sufficient; and so our faith will be quite overthrown.

Object. But, however, miracles will no more prove Christ to be the Son of God, than they will prove Moses, Elias, or Elisha, to be the

sons of God, for they wrought miracles as well as Christ.

Answ. Miracles are God's seal, not to extol the person that is instrumental, nor for his glory; but to extol God, and for his own glory. God doth not intrust any creatures with his seal so absolutely, as that they may use it when, and in what case they please. If Moses, or Elias, had affirmed themselves to be the sons of God, they could never have confirmed that affirmation with a miracle; for God would not have sealed to a lie. Christ's power of working miracles did not immediately prove him to be the Christ, but it immediately proved his testimony to be divine, and that testimony spoke his nature and office: so that the power of miracles in the prophets and apostles was not to attest to their own greatness, but to the truth of their testimony concerning Christ. Whatsoever any man affirms to me, and works a real miracle to confirm it, I must needs take myself bound to believe him.

Object. But what if some one should work miracles to conform a doctrine contrary to Scripture, would you believe it? Doth not Paul say, "If an angel from heaven teach any other doctrine, let him be accursed?"

Answ. I am sure God will never give any false teacher the power of confirming his doctrine by miracles; else God should subscribe his name to contradictions. The appearance of an angel is no miracle, though a wonder.

Object. But every simple man knows not the true definition of a miracle, and consequently knows not the difference between a miracle and a wonder, and so knows not how to believe on this ground.

Answ. As God doth not use the testimony of miracles, but on very great and weighty causes, to wit, where natural and ordinary means of conviction are wanting, and usually for the delivering of some new law or truth to the world, or the like; so when he doth use it, he

sufficiently manifested the reality of the miracles. Satan's wonders are such as may be done by natural means; though, perhaps, through our ignorance, we see not the means. But God oft worketh that which no natural means can do, and Satan never performed. As the raising of the dead to life, the creating of sight to him that was born blind, the dividing of the sea, the standing still of the sun, with multitudes of the like.^x Again, though many of Christ's works may be done by natural means, as the healing of the deaf, the dumb, the lame, &c., yet Christ did them all by a word speaking, and so it is apparent that he made no use of natural means, secretly nor openly. Again, the wonders of Satan are most commonly juggling delusions, and therefore the great miracles that pagans and papists have boasted of, have been but some one or two strange things in an age, or usually before one or two, or some few, and that of the simple and more partial sort, that are easily deceived: but if upon the fame of these you go to look for more that may be a full and open testimony, you will fail of your expectation. But, contrarily, that there might be no room for doubting left, Christ wrought his miracles before multitudes; feeding many thousands at several times, with a small quantity; healing the sick, blind, lame, and raising the dead before many; the persons afterwards showing themselves to the world, and attesting it to his enemies: and this he did not once or twice, but most frequently; so that they that suspected deceit in one, or two, or ten, might be satisfied in twenty. Yea, which is the greatest convincing discovery of the reality, it was not himself only, but multitudes of his followers, whom he enabled, when he was gone from them, to do the like, to speak strange languages before multitudes, to heal the sick and lame, and raise the dead. And usually false wonders are done but among friends, that would have it so, and are ready to believe; but Christ wrought his in the midst of enemies that gnashed the teeth, and had nothing to say against it. And I am persuaded that it was one reason why God would have Christ and all his followers have so many and cruel enemies, that when they had nothing to say against it, who doubtless would pry narrowly into all, and make the worst of it, it might tend to the establishing of believers afterwards. Again, usually false miracles, as they crept out in the

dark, so they were not divulged till some after ages, and only a little muttered of at the present: but Christ and his apostles wrought and published them openly in the world. If the Gospel history had been false, how many thousand persons could have witnessed against it, seeing they appealed to thousands of witnesses then living, of several ranks and qualities, and countries? It is true, indeed, the magicians of Egypt did seem to go far. But consider whether they were mere delusions, or real wonders by secret, natural means; doubtless, they were no miracles directly so called. And lest any should say that God tempted them by such above their strength, you may observe that he doth not suffer Satan to do what he can do, without a sufficient counter testimony to undeceive men. When did God suffer the like deceit as those sorcerers used? Nor would he then have suffered it, but that Moses was at hand to overcome their delusions, and leave the beholders with full conviction, that so the enemies' strength might make the victory the more glorious. Balaam could not go beyond the word of the Lord. So that I desire all weak believers to observe this, That as God is the faithful Ruler of the world, so he will not let loose the enemy of mankind to tempt us by wonders, further than he himself shall give us a sufficient contradictory testimony. So that if we do not know the difference between a miracle and a wonder, yet God's faithfulness affords us a sufficient preservative, if we disregard it not. And if we should grant that Satan can work miracles; yet he being wholly at God's dispose, it is certain that God will not permit him to do it, without a full contradiction; and, therefore, such as Christ's miracles he shall never work. Else should the creature be remedilessly deluded by supernatural powers, while God looks on.

Secondly: But the main assault I know will be made against the minor proposition of the argument, and so the question will be, de facto, whether ever such miracles were wrought or not? I shall grant that we must not here argue circularly to prove the doctrine to be of God by the miracles, and then the miracles to have been wrought by the divine testimony of the doctrine, and so round. But yet, to use the

testimony of the history of Scripture, as a human testimony of the matter of fact, is no circular arguing.

Sect. II. Toward the confirmation of the minor, therefore, I shall first lay these grounds: 1. That there is so much certainty in some human testimony, that may exclude all doubting, or cause of doubting; or there is some testimony immediately human, which yet may truly be said to be divine: 2. That such testimony we have of thez miracles mentioned in Scripture. If these two be cleared, the minor will stand firm, and the main work here will be done.

First: I will therefore show you, that there is such a certainty in some human testimony. Both experience and reason will confirm this. First, I would desire any rational man to tell me, whether he that never was at London, at Paris, or at Rome, may not be certain, by a human faith, that there are such cities? for my own part, I think it as certain to me, nay, more certain, than that which I see: and I should sooner question my own sight alone, than the eyes and credit of so many thousands in such a case. And I think the sceptic arguments brought against the certainty of sense, to be as strong as any that can be brought against the certainty of such a testimony. Is it not somewhat more than probable, think you, to the multitudes that never saw either parliament or king, that yet there is such an assembly, and such a person: may we not be fully certain that there was such a person as King James, as Queen Elizabeth, as Queen Mary, &c., here in England; yea, that there was such a man as William the Conqueror: may we not be certain, also, that he conquered England; with many other of his actions? The like may be said of Julius Cæsar, of Alexander the Great, &c. Surely, those who charge all human testimony with uncertainty, do hold their lands then upon an uncertain tenure.

Secondly: It may be proved, also, by reason; for, 1. If the first testifiers may infallibly know it; and, 2. Also by an infallible means transmit it to posterity; and, 3. Have no intent to deceive; then their testimony may be an infallible testimony. But all these three may

easily be proved. I had thought to have laid down here the rules, by which a certain human testimony may be discerned from an uncertain; but you may easily gather then from what I shall lay down for the confirmation of these three positions.

For the first, I suppose none will question, whether the testifiers might infallibly know the truth of what they testify? If they should, let them consider: First, If it be not matter of doctrine, much less abstruse and difficult points, but only matter of fact, then it is beyond doubt it may be certainly known. Secondly, If it be those also who did see, and hear, and handle, who do testify it. Thirdly, If their senses were sound and perfect, within reach of the object, and having no deceiving medium. Fourthly, Which may be discerned, 1. If the witnesses be a multitude; for then it may be known they are not blind or deaf, except they had been culled out of some hospitals; especially when all present do both see and hear them: 2. When the thing is done openly, in the daylight: 3. When it is done frequently, and near at hand; for then there would be full opportunity to discover any deceit. So that in these cases it is doubtless, sense is infallible, and, consequently, those that see and hear, are most certain witnesses.

2. Next let us see, whether we may be certain that any testimony is sincere, without a purpose to deceive us. And I take that for undoubted in the following cases: 1. Where the party is ingenious and honest: 2. And it is apparent he drives on no design of his own, nor cannot expect any advantage in the world; 3. Nay, if his testimony will certainly undo him in the world, and prove the overthrow of his ease, honour, estate, and life. 4. And if it be a multitude that do thus testify, how can they do it with an intent to deceive? 5. And if their several testimonies do agree; 6. And if the very enemies deny not this matter of fact, but only refer it to other causes, then there is no possibility of deceit, as I shall further, anon, evince, when I apply it to the question: 7. And if no one of the witnesses in life, or at the hour of death, did ever repent of his testimony, and confess it a deceit; as certainly some one would have done for so great a sin, if it had been so.

Thirdly: We are to prove, that there are infallible means of transmitting such testimony down to posterity, without depraving any thing substantial. And then it will remain an undoubted truth, that there is a full certainty in some human testimony, and that to posterity at a remote distance.

Now, this tradition is infallible in these cases: 1. If it be (as before said) in matter of fact only, which the meanest understandings are capable of apprehending. 2. If it be also about the substance of actions, and not every small circumstance. 3. And also if those actions were famous in their times, and of great note and wonder in the world, and such as were the cause of public and eminent alterations. 4. If it be delivered down in writing, and not only by word of mouth, where the change of speech might alter the sense of the matter. 5. If the records be public, where the very enemies may see them; yea, published on purpose by heralds and ambassadors, that the world may take notice of them. 6. If they are men of greatest honesty in all ages, who have both kept and divulged these records. 7. And if there have been also a multitude of these. 8. And this multitude of several countries, where they could never so much as meet to agree upon any deceiving counsels: much less all accord in such a design; and, least of all, be able to manage it with secrecy. 9. If also the after-preservers and divulgers of these records could have no more self-advancing ends, than the first testifiers. 10. Nay, if their divulging and attesting these records, did utterly ruin their estates and lives, as well as it did the first testifiers. 11. If there be such a dispersing of the copies of these records all over the world, that the cancelling and abolishing them is a thing impossible. 12. If the very histories of the enemies never affirm any universal abolishing and consuming of them. 13. If all these dispersed copies through the world do perfectly agree in every thing material. 14. If it were a matter of such moment in the judgment of the preservers, neither to add nor diminish, that they thought their eternal salvation did lie upon it. 15. If the histories of their enemies do generally mention their attesting these records to the loss of their lives, and that successfully in every age. 16. If these records and attestations are yet

visible to the world, and that in such a form as none could counterfeit. 17. If the enemies that lived near, or in those times when the things were done, do, 1. Write nothing against them of any moment. 2. But oppose them with fire and sword, instead of argument. 3. Nay, if they acknowledge the fact, but deny the cause only. 18. And if all the enemies were incompetent witnesses. 1. Witnessing to the negative, of which they could have no certainty. 2. And carried on with apparent malice and prejudice. 3. And having all worldly advantages attending their cause. 4. And being generally men unconscionable and impious. 19. If all these enemies, having all these worldly advantages, could neither by arguments nor violence, hinder people from believing these famous and palpable matters of fact, in the very age wherein they were done, when the truth and falsehood might most easily be discovered, but that the generality of beholders were forced to assent. 20. If multitudes of the most ingenious and violent enemies, have in every age from the very acting of these things to this day, been forced to yield, and turned as zealous defenders of these records and their doctrine, as ever they were opposers of them before. 21. If all these converts do confess upon their coming in, that it was ignorance, or prejudice, or worldly respects, that made them oppose so much before. 22. If all the powers of the world, that can burn the bodies of the witnesses, that can overthrow kingdoms, and change their laws, could never yet reverse and abolish these records. 23. Nay, if some notable judgment in all ages, have befallen the most eminent opposers thereof. 24. And lastly, if successions of wonders (though not miracles as the first) have in all ages accompanied the attestation of these records. I say, if all these twenty-four particulars do concur, or most of these, I leave it to the judgment of any man of understanding, whether there be not an infallible way of transmitting matter of fact to posterity? And, consequently, whether there be not more than a probability, even a full certainty, in such a human testimony?

Sect. III. 2. The second thing which I am to manifest, is, that we have such a testimony of the miracles, which confirmed the doctrine and writings of the Bible.

And here I must run over the three foregoing particulars again; and show you, First, That the witnesses of scripture miracles could, and did infallibly know the truth which they testified: Secondly, That they had no intent to deceive the world: and, Thirdly, That it hath been brought down to posterity by a way so infallible, that there remains no doubt whether our records are authentic. For the first of these, I think it will be most easily acknowledged. Men are naturally so confident of the infallibility of their own senses, that surely they will not suspect the senses of others. But if they should, let them have recourse to what is said before, to put them out of doubt. First, It was matter of fact, which might be easily discerned. Secondly, The apostles and others who bore witness to it were present, yea, continual companions of Christ, and the multitude of Christians were eye-witnesses of the miracles of the apostles. Thirdly, These were men neither blind nor deaf, but of as sound and perfect senses as we. Fourthly, This is apparent; 1. Because they were great multitudes, even that were present, and therefore could not all be blind; if they had, how did they walk about? Fifthly, These miracles were not done by night, nor in a corner, but in the open light, in the midst of the people. Sixthly, They were not once or twice only performed, but very oft, of several kinds, by several persons, even prophets, and Christ himself and his apostles, in many generations; so that, if there had been any deceit, it might have been easily discovered. Seventhly, and lastly, It was in the midst of vigilant and subtle enemies, who were able and ready enough to have evinced the deceit.

So that it remains certain that the first eye-witnesses themselves were not deceived.

2. Let us next consider whether it be not, also, as certain that they never intended the deceiving of the world?

First: It is evident that they were neither fools nor knaves, but men of ingenuity, and extraordinary honesty; there needs no more to prove this, than their own writings, so full of enmity against all kind of vice, so full of conscientious zeal and heavenly affections. Yet is this their

honesty also attested by their enemies. Surely the very remnants of natural honesty are a divine offspring, and do produce also certain effects according to their strength and nature. God hath planted and continued them in man, for the use of societies, and common converse: for if all honesty were gone, one man could not believe another, and so could not converse together. But now supernatural, extraordinary honesty, will produce its effect more certainly; if three hundred, or three thousand honest, godly men should say, they saw such things with their eyes, he is very incredulous that would not believe it.

Secondly: It is apparent that neither prophets, apostles, nor disciples, in attesting these things, could drive on any designs of their own. Did they seek their honour, or ease, or profit, or worldly delights? Did their Master give them any hopes of these? Or did they see any probability of their attaining it? Or did they see any of their fellows attain it before them?

Thirdly: Nay, was it not a certain way to their ruin in the world? Did not their Master tell them, when he sent them out, that they should be persecuted of all for his sake and the Gospel's? Did they not find it true, and therefore expected the like themselves? Paul knew, that in every city, bonds and afflictions did abide him. And they lay it down as a granted rule, that he that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution. Now I would fain know, whether a man's self, his estate, his liberty, his life, be not naturally so near and dear to all, that they would be loath to throw it away, merely to deceive and cozen the world? All that I know can be objected is, that they may do it out of a desire to be admired in the world for their godliness, and their suffering.

Answ. 1. Go see where you can find thousands or millions of men that will cast away their lives to be talked of.

2. Did they not, on the contrary, renounce their own honour and esteem, and call themselves vile and miserable sinners, and speak

worse of themselves than the most impious wretch will do, and extol nothing but God and his Son Jesus?

3. Did not their Master foretell them, that they should be so far from getting credit by his service, that they should be hated of all men, and their names cast out as evil-doers? Did they not see him spit upon, and hanged on a cross among thieves before their eyes, some of them? Did they not find by experience, that their way was every where spoken against? And the reproach of the cross of Christ was the great stumbling-block to the world? And could men possibly choose such a way for vain-glory? I am persuaded it is one great reason why Christ would have the first witnesses of the Gospel to suffer so much to confirm their testimony to future ages, that the world might see that they intended not to deceive them.

Fourthly: Consider, also, what a multitude these witnesses were. How could so many thousands of several countries lay the plot to deceive the world? They were not only thousands that believed the Gospel, but thousands that saw the miracles of Christ, and many cities and countries that saw the miracles of the apostles.

Fifthly: And the testimony of all doth so punctually accord, that the seeming contradiction in some smaller circumstances, doth but show their simplicity and sincerity, and their agreement in the main.

Sixthly: And is it possible that no one of them would so much as at death, or in torments, have detected the deceit?

Seventhly and lastly: The very enemies acknowledge this matter of fact; only they ascribe it to other causes. They could not deny the miracles that were wrought: even to this day the Jews acknowledge much of the works of Christ, but slanderously father them upon the power of the devil, or upon the force of the name of God sewed in Christ's thigh, and such-like ridiculous stories they have: even the Turks confess much of the miracles of Christ, and believe him to be a

great Prophet, though they are professed enemies to the christian name.

So that I think by all this it is certain, that the first witnesses of the miracles of Christ and his apostles, as they were not deceived themselves, so neither had they any intent to deceive the world.

3. We are next to show you, that the way that this testimony hath come down to us, is a certain infallible way. For,

1. Consider, it is a matter of fact; (for the doctrine we are not now mentioning, except de facto, that this was the doctrine attested.)

2. They were the substances of the actions that they chiefly related, and that we are now inquiring after the certainty of. Though men may mistake in the circumstances of the fight at such a place, or such a place, yet that there were such fights we may certainly know. Or though they may mistake in smaller actions, circumstances, or qualifications, of Henry the Eighth, of William the Conqueror, &c.; yet that there were such men we may certainly know. Now the thing we inquire after is, whether such miracles were wrought, or not?

3. They were actions then famous through the world, and made great alterations in states: they turned the world upside down: cities were converted, countries and rulers were turned Christians. And may not the records in eminent actions be certain? We have certain records of battles, of sieges, of successions of princes among the heathens before the coming of Christ, and of the great alterations in our own state for a very long time.

4. It was a formal record in the very words of the first witnesses in writing, which hath been delivered to us, and not only any unwritten testimony; so that men's various conceivings or expressions could make no alteration.

5. These records, which we call the Scripture, have been kept publicly in all these ages; so that the most negligent enemy might have taken

notice of its depravation. Yea, God made it the office of his ministers to publish it, whatever came of it, to all the world, and pronounced a wo to them if they preach not this Gospel; which preaching was both the divulging of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, and all out of these authentic records. And how then is it possible there should be a universal depravation, and that even in the narration of the matters of fact, when all nations almost, in all these ages since the original of the history, have had these heralds who have proclaimed it to the death?

6. And it is most apparent that the keepers and publishers of these records, have been men of most eminent piety and honesty. The same testimony which I gave before to prove the honesty of the first witnesses, will prove theirs, though in a lower degree: a good man, but a Christian, was the character given them by their very foes.

7. They have been a multitude, almost innumerable.

8. And these of almost every country under heaven. And let any man tell me how all these, or the chief of them, could possibly meet, to consult about the depraving of the history of the Scripture? And whether it were possible, if such a multitude were so ridiculously dishonest, yet that they could carry on such a vain design with secrecy and success.

9. Also, the after-divulgers of the miracles of the Gospel, could have no more self-advancing ends for a long time than the first witnesses.

10. Nay, it ruined them in the world, as it did the first, so that let any man judge whether there be any possibility that so many millions of so many nations should ruin themselves, and give their bodies to be burned, merely to deprave those Scriptures which they do profess?

11. Consider, also, when this sacred history was so dispersed over the world, whether the cancelling and extirpation of it were not a thing impossible, especially by those means that were attempted?

12. Nay, there is no history of the enemies that doth mention any universal abolition or depravation of these records. When was the time, and where was the place, that all the Bibles in the world were gathered together, and consumed with fire, or corrupted with forgery? Indeed, Julian thought by prohibiting the schools of learning to the children of Christians, to have extirpated Christianity; but Christ did quickly first extirpate him.

13. All those copies of those sacred writings do yet accord, in all things material, which are found through the world. And consider them if they had been depraved, whether multitudes of copies, which had escaped that depravation, would not by their diversity, or contradiction, have bewrayed the rest?

14. It was a matter of such a heinous quality, both by the sentence of the law, and in the consciences of the preservers and divulgers of it, to add or diminish the least tittle, that they thought it deserved eternal damnation. And I refer it to any man of reason, whether so many thousands of men through the world, could possibly venture upon eternal torment, as well as upon temporal death; and all this to deceive others, by depraving the laws which they look to be judged by; or the history of those miracles which were the grounds of our faith? Is not the contrary somewhat more than probable?

15. Furthermore, the histories of the enemies do frequently mention that these Scriptures have been still maintained to the flames. Though they revile the Christians, yet they report this their attestation, which proves the constant succession thereof, and the faithful delivery of Christianity and its records to us. It would be but needless labour to heap up here the several reports of pagan historians, of the numbers of Christians, their obstinacy in their religion, their calamities and torments.

16. These records and their attestations are yet visible over the world, and that in such a form as cannot possibly be counterfeit. Is it not enough to put me out of doubt, whether Homer ever wrote his Iliads,

or Demosthenes his Orations, or Virgil and Ovid their several works, or Aristotle his volumes of so many of the sciences, when I see and read these books yet extant; and when I find them such, that I think can hardly now be counterfeited, no, nor imitated? But if they could, who would have been at the excessive pains, as to have spent his life in compiling such books, that he might deceive the world, and make men believe that they were the works of Aristotle, Ovid, &c.; would not any man rather have taken the honour to himself? so here the case is alike Yea, the Scriptures, though they have less of arts and sciences, yet are incomparably more difficult to have been counterfeited than the other; I mean before the first copies were drawn. I would here stay to show the utter impossibility of any man's forging these writings; but that I intend to make that a peculiar argument.

17. Whether any enemy hath, with weight of argument, confuted the christian cause; whether, when they have undertaken it, it hath not been only arguing the improbability, or assigning the miracles to other causes, or an opposing the doctrine delivered by the Christians, rather than these miraculous actions in question; I leave those to judge who have read their writings; yea, whether their common arguments have not been fire and sword.

18. It is an easy matter yet to prove, that the enemies of Scripture have been incompetent witnesses; 1. Being men that were not present, or had not the opportunity to be so well acquainted with the actions of Christ, of the prophets and apostles, as themselves or others, that do attest them. 2. Being men of apparent malice, and possessed with much prejudice against the persons and things which they oppose. This I might easily and fully prove, if I could stand upon it. 3. They had all worldly advantages attending their cause, which they were all to lose, with life itself, if they had appeared for Christ. 4. They were generally men of no great conscience, nor moral honesty; and most of them of most sensual and vicious conversation. This appears by their own writings, both doctrinal and historical. What sensual interpretations of the law did the very strict sect of the

pharisees make! What fleshly laws have the followers of Mahomet! What vices did the laws of the heathens tolerate! Yea, what foul errors are in the ethics of their most rigid moralists! And you may be sure that their lives were far worse than their laws; and, indeed, their own histories do acknowledge as much. To save me the labour of mentioning them, read Dr. Hackwell's apology on that subject. Surely such men are incompetent witnesses in any cause between man and man, and would be so judged at any impartial judicature. And, indeed, how is it possible that they should be much better, when they have no laws that teach them either what true happiness is, or what is the way and means to attain it? 5. Besides all this, their testimony was only of the negative, and that in such cases as it could not be valid.

19. Consider, also, that all the adversaries of these miracles and relations could not, with all their arguments or violence, hinder thousands from believing them, in the very time and country where they were done: but that they who did behold them, did generally assent at least to the matter of fact; so that we may say with Austin, either they were miracles or not: if they were, why do you not believe? if they were not, behold the greatest miracle of all, that so many thousands, even of the beholders, should be so blind, as to believe things that never were, especially in those very times when it was the easiest matter in the world to have disproved such falsehoods. If there should go a report now of a man at London, that should raise the dead, cure the blind, the deaf, the sick, the possessed, feed thousands with five loaves, &c.; and that a multitude of his followers should do the like, and that a great many times over and over, and that in the several parts of the land, in the presence of crowds, and thousands of people. I pray you, judge whether it were not the easiest matter in the world to disprove this, if it were false; and whether it were possible that whole countries and cities should believe it? Nay, whether the easiness and certainty of disproving it, would not bring them all into extreme contempt?

Two things will be here objected: first, that then the adversaries not believing, will be as strong against it, as the disciples believing is for it. Answ. Read what is said before of the adversary's incompetency, and it may satisfy as to this. Secondly, Consider, also, that the generality of the adversaries did believe the matter of fact, which is all that we are now inquiring after. The recital here of those multitudes of testimonies that might be produced from antiquity, is a work that my strait time doth prohibit, but is done by others far more able. Only that well-known passage in Josephus I will here set down: "In the time of Tiberius, there was one Jesus, a wise man, at least, if he was to be called a man, who was a worker of great miracles, and a teacher of such who love the truth, and had many, as well Jews as gentiles, who clave unto him. This was Christ. And when Pilate, upon his being accused by the men of our nation, had sentenced him to be crucified, yet did they not who had first loved him forsake him: for he appeared to them the third day alive again, according to what the prophets, divinely inspired, had foretold concerning him, as they had done an innumerable number of very strange things besides. And even to this day, both the name and sort of persons called Christians, so named from him, do remain." Thus far Josephus, a Jew by nation and religion, who wrote this about eighty-six years after Christ, and fourteen years before the death of St. John, himself being born about five or six years after Christ.

20. Consider, also, how that every age hath offered multitudes of witnesses, who before were most bitter and violent enemies, and divers of those men of note for learning and place in the world. How mad was Saul against the truth! Surely it could be no favour to the cause, nor overmuch credulity, that caused such men to witness to the death, the truth of that for which they had persecuted others to the death but a little before. Nor could childish fables, or common flying tales, have so mightily wrought with men of learning and understanding: for some such were Christians in all ages.

21. Nay, observe but the confessions of these adversaries, when they came to believe: how generally and ingenuously they acknowledge

their former ignorance and prejudice to have been the cause of their unbelief.

22. Consider, also, how unable all the enemies of the Gospel have been to abolish these sacred records. They could burn those witnesses by thousands, but yet they could never either hinder their succession, or extinguish their testimonies.

23. Nay, the most eminent adversaries have had the most eminent ruin: as Antiochus, Herod, Julian, with multitudes more. This stone having fallen upon them, hath ground them to powder.

24. It were not difficult here to collect from unquestioned authors, a constant succession of wonders, at least, to have in several ages accompanied the attestation of this truth; and notable judgments that have befallen the persecutors of it. And though the papists, by their fictions and fabulous legends, have done more wrong to the christian cause, than ever they are able to repair; yet unquestionable history doth afford us very many examples: and even many of those actions which they have deformed with their fabulous additions, might yet for the substance have much truth: and God might, even in the times of popery, work some of these wonders, though not to confirm their religion, as it was popish, yet to confirm it as it was christian; for, as he had then his church, and then his Scripture, so had he then his special providences to confirm his church in their belief, and to silence the several enemies of the faith. And therefore I advise those who, in their inconsiderate zeal, are apt to reject all these histories of Providence, merely because they were written by papists, or because some witnesses to the truth were a little leavened with some popish errors, that they would first view them, and consider of their probability of truth or falsehood, that so they may pick out the truth, and not reject all together in the lump; otherwise, in their zeal against popery, they should injure Christianity.

And now I leave any man to judge, whether we have not had an infallible way of receiving these records from the first witnesses?

Not that every of the particulars before mentioned, are necessary to the proving our certain receiving the authentic records without depravation; for you may perceive, that almost any two or three of them might suffice; and that divers of them are from abundance for fuller confirmation.

Sect. IV. And thus I have done with this first argument, drawn from the miracles which prove the doctrines and writings to be of God. But I must satisfy the scruples of some before I proceed. First, Some will question, whether this be not, 1. To resolve our faith into the testimony of man: 2. And so make it a human faith: and so, 3. To jump in this with the papists, who believe the Scripture for the authority of the church, and to argue circularly in this, as they. To this I answer:

First: I make in this argument the resolution of my faith into the miracles wrought, as testimonies divine to confirm the doctrine. If you ask, why I believe the doctrine to be of God? I answer, because it was confirmed by many undeniable miracles. If you ask, why I believe those miracles to be from God? I answer, because no created power can work a miracle: so that the testimony of man is not the reason of my believing, but only the means by which this matter of fact is brought down to my knowledge. Again, our faith cannot be said to be resolved into that which we give in answer to your last interrogation, except your question be only still of the proper grounds of faith. But if you change your question, from What is the ground of my faith? to What is the means of conveying down the history to me? then my faith is not resolved into this means. Yet this means, or some other equivalent, I acknowledge so necessary, that without it, I had never been like to have believed.^z 2. This shows you also that I argue not in the popish circle, nor take my faith on their common grounds. For, first, when you ask them, How know you the testimony of the church to be infallible? they prove it again by Scripture; and there is their circle. But as I trust not on the authority of the Romish church only, as they do; no, nor properly to the authority of any church; no, nor only to the testimony of the church,

but also to the testimony of the enemies themselves: so do I prove the validity of the testimony I bring from nature, and well-known principles in reason, and not from Scripture itself, as you may see before. 3. There is a human testimony, which is also divine; and so a human faith, which is also in some sort divine. Few of God's extraordinary revelations have been immediate; the best schoolmen think none at all; but either by angels, or by Jesus himself, who was man as well as God. You will acknowledge if God reveal it to an angel, and the angel to Moses, and Moses to Israel, this is a divine revelation to Israel. For that is called a divine revelation, which we are certain that God doth any way reveal. Now, I would fain know, why that which God doth naturally and certainly reveal to all men, may not as properly be called a divine revelation, as that which he reveals by the Spirit to a few. Is not this truth from God, that the senses' apprehension of their object, rightly stated, is certain, as well as this, "Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin?" &c. Though a saint or an angel be a fitter messenger to reveal the things of the Spirit, yet any man may be a messenger to reveal the things of the flesh. An ungodly man, if he have better eyes and ears, may be a better messenger or witness of that matter of fact which he seeth and heareth, than a more godly man that is blind or deaf, especially in cases wherein that ungodly man hath no provocation to speak falsely; and, most of all, if his testimony be against himself. I take that relation, whereby I know that there was a fight at York, &c., to be of God, though wicked men were the witnesses. For I take it for an undeniable maxim, that there is no truth but of God, only it is derived unto us by various means.

Sect. V. 2. And as I have evidently discovered the full certainty of this testimony of man, concerning the forementioned matter of fact; so I will show you why I choose this for my first and main argument; and also that no man can believe without the foresaid human testimony. First, then, I demand with myself, by what argument did Moses and Christ evince to the world the verity of their doctrine? and I find it was chiefly by this of miracles; and, surely, Christ knew the best argument to prove the divine authority to his doctrine; and that which was the best then, is the best still. If ourselves had lived in the

days of Christ, should we have believed a poor man to have been God, the Saviour, the Judge of the world, without miracles to prove this to us; nay, would it have been our duty to have believed? doth not Christ say, "If I had not done the works that no man else can do, ye had not had sin?" that is, your not believing me to be the Messias had been no sin: for no man is bound to believe that which was never convincingly revealed.

And I think that this is it which is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, when men will not be convinced by miracles, that Jesus is the Christ. That which some divines judge to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, and opposing the known truth only out of malice against it, it is a question whether human nature be capable of. And whether all human opposition to truth be not through ignorance, or prevalency of the sensual lusts: and so all malice against truth, is only against it as conceived to be falsehood, or else as it appeareth an enemy to our sensual desires: else, how doth man's understanding, as it is an understanding, naturally choose truth, either real or appearing, for its object? so that, I think, none can be guilty of malice against truth, as truth; and to be at enmity with truth for opposing our sensuality, is a sin that every man in the world hath been, in some measure, guilty of. And, indeed, our divines do so define the sin against the Holy Ghost, that I could never yet understand by their definition what it might be: some placing it in an act incompatible with the rational soul, and others making it but gradually to differ from other sins, which hath cast so many into terror of soul, because they could never find out that gradual difference.

The sense of the place, which the whole context, if you view it deliberately, will show, seems to me to be this: as if Christ had said, While you believed not the testimony of the prophets, yet there was hope; the testimony of John Baptist might have convinced you; yea, when you believed not John, yet you might have been convinced by my own doctrine: yea, though you did not believe my doctrine, yet there was hope you might have been convinced by my miracles. But when you accuse them to be the works of Beelzebub, and ascribe the

work of the divine Power, or Spirit, to the prince of devils, what more hope? I will, after my ascension, send the Holy Ghost upon my disciples, that they may work miracles to convince the world, that they who will believe no other testimony, may yet, through this, believe: but if you sin against this Holy Ghost, that is, if they will not believe for all these miracles, for the Scripture frequently calls faith by the name of obedience, and unbelief by the name of sin, there is no other more convincing testimony left, and so their sin of unbelief is incurable, and consequently unpardonable: and therefore he that speaketh against the Son of Man, that is, denieth his testimony of himself, it shall be forgiven him, if he yet believe this testimony of the Spirit, but they that continue unbelievers for all this, and so reproach the testimony that should convince them, as you do, shall never be forgiven, because they cannot perform the condition of forgiveness.

This I think to be the sense of the text; and the rather, when I consider, what sin it was that these pharisees committed; for surely that which is commonly judged to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, I nowhere find that Christ doth accuse them of; but the Scripture seemeth to speak on the contrary, "that through ignorance they did it;" (Acts 3:17;) "for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. 2:8.) And, indeed, it is a thing to me altogether incredible, that these pharisees should know Christ to be the Messiah, whom they so desirously expected, and to be the Son of God, and Judge of all men, and yet to crucify him through mere malice; charge them not with this, till you can show some scripture that charged them with it.

Object. Why, then, there is no sin against the Holy Ghost, now miracles are ceased?

Answ. Yes: though the miracles are ceased, yet their testimony doth still live; the death and resurrection of Christ are past, and yet men may sin against the death and resurrection. So that, I think, when men will not believe that Jesus is the Christ, though they are

convinced by undeniable arguments, of the miracles which both himself and his disciples wrought; this is now the sin against the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, take heed of slighting this argument.

Sect. VI. 2. And here would I have those men, who cannot endure this resting upon human testimony, to consider of what necessity it is for the producing of our faith. Something must be taken upon trust from man, whether they will or not: and yet no uncertainty in our faith neither. 1. The mere illiterate man must take it upon trust, that the book is a Bible which he hears read; for else, he knows not but it may be some other book: 2. That those words are in it, which the reader pronounceth: 3. That it is translated truly out of the original languages: 4. That the Hebrew and Greek copies, out of which it was translated, are true, authentic copies: 5. That it was originally written in these languages: 6. Yea, and the meaning of divers scripture passages, which cannot be understood without the knowledge of Jewish customs of chronology, of geography, &c., though the words were ever so exactly translated. All these, with many more, the vulgar must take upon the word of their teachers; and, indeed, a faith merely human, is a necessary preparative to a faith divine, in respect of some means, and *præcognita* necessary thereto. If a scholar will not take his master's word that such letters have such or such a power, or do spell so or so; or that such a Latin or Greek word hath such a signification; when will he learn, or how will he know? Nay how do the most learned linguists know the signification of words in any language, and so in the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures, but only upon the credit of their teachers and authors? and yet certain enough too in the main. Tradition is not so useless to the world or the church as some would have it. Though the papists do sinfully plead it against the sufficiency of Scripture, yet scripture sufficiency or perfection is only in suo genere, in its own kind, not in omni genere, not sufficient for every purpose. Scripture is a sufficient rule of faith and life; but not a sufficient means of conveying itself to all generations and persons. If human testimony had not been necessary, why should Christ have men to be witnesses in the beginning; and also still

instruments of persuading others, and attesting the verity of these sacred records to those that cannot otherwise come to know them?

And, doubtless, this is the chief use of ministers in the church,^l and the great end of God in the stating and continuing their function; that what men are incapable of believing, explicitly, with a faith properly divine, that they might receive implicitly, and upon the word of their teachers with a human faith. Every man should labour indeed to see with his own eyes, and to know all that God hath revealed, and to be wiser than his teachers: but every man cannot bestow that time and pains in the study of languages and sciences; without which that knowledge is not now attained. We may rather wish than hope, 'that all the Lord's people were prophets.' The church of Christ hath been long in a very doleful plight betwixt these two extremes, taking all things upon trust from our teachers, and taking nothing upon trust: and yet those very men who so disclaim taking upon trust, do themselves take as much upon trust as others.

Why else are ministers called the eyes and the hands of the body; stewards of the mysteries, and of the house of God; overseers, rulers, and governors of the church; and such as must give the children their meat in due season; fathers of their people? &c. Surely, they clearly know truth and duty must be received from any one, though but a child; and known error and iniquity must be received from none, though an angel from heaven. What, then, is that we are so often required to obey our teaching rulers in? Surely, it is not so much in the receiving of new-instituted ceremonies from them, which they call things indifferent: but, as in all professions, the scholar must take his master's word in learning, till he can grow up to know the things in their own evidence; and as men will take the words of any artificers in the matters that concern their own trade; and as every wise patient will trust the judgment of his physician, except he know as much himself; and the client will take the word of his lawyer: so also Christ hath ordered that the more strong and knowing should be teachers in his school, and the young and ignorant should believe them and obey them, till they can reach to understand the things

themselves. So that the matters which we must receive upon trust from our teachers, are those which we cannot reach to know ourselves, and therefore must either take them upon the word of others, or not receive them at all: so that, if these rulers and stewards do require us to believe, when we know not ourselves whether it be truth or not; or if they require us to obey, when we know not ourselves whether it be a duty commanded by God or not; here it is that we ought to obey them. For though we know not whether God hath revealed such a point, or commanded such an action, yet that he hath commanded us to obey them that rule over us, who preach to us the word of God, this we certainly know. (Heb. 13:7.) Yet I think we are not so strictly tied to the judgment of a weak minister of our own, as to take his word before another's, that is more judicious in a neighbour congregation. Nor do I think, if we see but an appearance of his erring, that we should carelessly go on in believing and obeying him without a diligent searching after the truth: even a likelihood of his mistake must quicken us to further inquiry, and may, during that inquiry, suspend our belief and obedience. For where we are able to reach to know probabilities in divine things, we may with diligence possibly reach to that degree of certainty which our teachers themselves have attained, or at least to understand the reason of their doctrine. But still remember what I said before, that fundamentals must be believed with a faith explicit, absolute, and divine.

And thus I have showed the flat necessity of taking much upon the testimony of man; and that some of these human testimonies are so certain, that they may well be called divine. I conclude all with this intimation: you may see by this, of what singular use are the monuments of antiquity, and the knowledge thereof, for the breeding and strengthening of the christian faith; especially the histories of those times. I would not persuade you to bestow so much time in the reading of the fathers, in reference to their judgment in matters of doctrine; nor follow them in all things, as some do. God's word is a sufficient rule; and latter times have afforded far better expositors. But in reference to matters of fact, for confirming the miracles

mentioned in Scripture, and relating the wonderful providences since, I would they were read an hundred times more: not only the writers of the church, but even the histories of the enemies, and all other antiquities. Little do most consider how useful these are to the christian faith. And therefore our learned antiquaries are highly to be honoured, and exceedingly useful instruments in the church.

If yet any man be so blind that he think it uncertain whether these be the same books which were written by the apostles; I would ask him by what assurance he holdeth his lands? 1. How knoweth he that his deeds, conveyances, or leases, are not counterfeit; or that they are the same that his forefathers made? They have nothing but men's words for it; and yet they think they are certain that their lands are their own. 2. And whereas they hold all they have by the law of the land, how know they that these laws are not counterfeit; and that they are the same laws which were made by such kings and parliaments so long ago, and not forged since? They have nothing but men's words for all this. And yet if this be uncertain, then any man, lord, or knight, or gentleman, may be turned out of all he hath, as if he had no certain tenure or assurance. And is it not evident that those laws which are so kept and practised through all the land, cannot possibly be counterfeit, but it would have been publicly known? And yet a word in the statute-book may be falsely printed. And much more certain it is that the Scriptures cannot be counterfeit, because it is not in one kingdom only, but in all the world that they have been used, and the copies dispersed; and ministers in office still to preach it, and publish it. So that it could not be generally and purposely corrupted, except all the world should have met and combined together for that end, which could not be done in secret, but all must know of it. And yet many Bibles may be here or there mis-printed or mis-written; but then there would be copies enough to correct it by. So that if it be uncertain whether these be the very books which the apostles wrote, then nothing in the world is certain but what we see. And why we may not as well question our eyesight, I do not know. I would believe a thousand other men's eyesight before mine own alone.

CHAP. V

The Second Argument.

SECT. I. I come now to my second argument, to prove Scripture to be the word of God: and it is this:

If the Scripture be neither the invention of devils nor of men, then it can be from none but God; but that it is neither of devils, nor merely of men, I shall now prove; for, I suppose, none will question that major proposition. First, Not from devils; for, First, They cannot work miracles to confirm them; Secondly, It would not stand with God's sovereignty over them, or with the goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness of governing the world, to suffer Satan to make laws, and confirm them with wonders, and obtrude them upon the world in the name of God, and all this without disclaiming them, or giving the world any notice of the forgery; Thirdly, Would Satan speak so much for God? So seek his glory as the Scripture doth? Would he so vilify and reproach himself, and make known himself to be the most hateful and miserable of all creatures? Would he so fully discover his own wiles, his temptations, his methods of deceiving, and give men such powerful warning to beware of his snares, and such excellent means to conquer himself? Would the devil lay such a design for men's salvation? Would he show them their danger, and direct them to escape it? Would he so mightily labour to promote all truth and goodness, and the happiness of mankind, as the Scripture doth? Let any man tell me what book or project in the world did ever so mightily overthrow the kingdom of Satan as this book, and this Gospel-design: and would Satan be such an enemy to his own kingdom? Fourthly, If Satan were the author, he would never be so unweariedly and subtilely industrious, to draw the world to unbelief, and to break the laws which this book containeth, as his constant temptations do sensibly tell many a poor soul that he is; would he be

so earnest to have his own words rejected, or his own laws broken? I think this is all clear to any man of reason.

Sect. II. Secondly: That no mere men were the inventors of Scripture, I prove thus: If men were the devisers of it, then it was either good men or bad; but it was neither good men nor bad; therefore, none.

Though goodness and badness have many degrees, yet under some of these degrees do all men fall. Now, I will show you that it could be neither of these; and, First, Good men they could not be; for you might better say that murderers, traitors, adulterers, parricides, sodomites, &c. were good men, rather than such. To devise laws, and father them upon God; to feign miracles, and father them upon the word of the Lord; to promise eternal salvation to those that obey them; to threaten damnation to those that obey them not; to draw the world into a curse so destructive to all their worldly happiness, upon a promise of happiness in another world, which they cannot give; to endeavour so egregiously to cozen all mankind: if all this, or any of this, be consistent with common honesty; nay, if it be not as horrible wickedness as can be committed, then I confess I have lost my reason. Much less, then, could such a number of good men in all ages, till Scriptures were finished, be guilty of such inexpressible crimes: neither will it here be any evasion to say, they were men of a middle temper; partly good, and partly bad: for these are not actions of a middle nature, nor such as will stand with any remnants of ingenuity or humanity. We have known wicked persons, too many, and too bad; yet where or when did we ever know any that attempted any so more than hellish an enterprise? False prophets have sent abroad indeed particular falsehoods; but who hath adventured upon such a system as this? Mahomet's example, indeed, comes nearest to such a villany; yet doth not he pretend to the hundredth part of so many miracles, nor so great as the Scripture relateth, nor doth pretend to be God, nor any more than a great prophet: trusting more to his sword for success, than to the authority or truth of his pretended revelations; not denying the truth of much of the Scripture; but adding his Alcoran, partly drawn from Scripture, and

partly fitted with fleshly liberties and promises to his own ends. And doth not every man among us take that act of Mahomet to be one of the vilest that the sun hath seen; and judge of the man himself accordingly? So that I think it beyond doubt, that no one good man, much less so great a number as were the penmen of Scripture, could devise it of their own brain, and thrust it on the world.

Secondly: And it is as certain that no bad men did devise the Scriptures. Could wicked deceivers so highly advance the glory of God, and labour so mightily to honour him in the world; would they have so vilified themselves, and acknowledged their faults; could such an admirable, undeniable spirit of holiness, righteousness, and self-denial, which runs through every vein of Scripture, have been inspired into it from the invention of the wicked? Would wicked men have been so wise, or so zealous for the suppression of wickedness; or so earnest to bring the world to reformation? Would they have been such bitter adversaries to their own ways; and such faithful friends to the ways they hate? Would they have vilified the ungodly, as the Scripture doth; and pronounced eternal damnation against them? Would they have extolled the godly, who are so contrary to them; and proclaimed them a people eternally blessed? Would they have framed such perfect and such spiritual laws; and would they have laid such a design against the flesh, and against all their worldly happiness, as the scope of the Scripture doth carry on? It is needless, surely, to mention any more particulars: I think every man, of the least ingenuity, that considers this, or deliberately vieweth over the frame of the Scriptures, will easily confess that it is more than probable that it was never devised by any deceiving sinner; much less, that all the penmen of it in several ages were such wicked deceivers.

So, then, if it was neither devised by good men nor by bad men, then surely by no men; and, consequently, must of necessity proceed from God.

Sect. III. Secondly, That it proceed not merely from man, I also prove thus: That which was done without the help of human learning, or any extraordinary endowments of nature, and yet the greatest philosophers could never reach near it, must needs be the effect of a power supernatural; but such is both the doctrine and the miracles in Scripture; therefore, &c.

It is only the antecedent that here requires proof; which consists of these two branches, both which I shall make clear.

First: That the doctrine of Scripture was compiled, and the miracles done without the help of much human learning, or any extraordinary natural endowments.

Secondly: That yet the most learned philosophers never could reach near the Gospel-mysteries, nor ever work the miracles that were then done.

But I shall say most to the doctrine. For the proof of the former, consider:

First: The whole world was, in the times of Moses and the prophets, comparatively unlearned. A kind of learning the Egyptians then had, and some few other, especially consisting in some small skill in astronomy; but it was all but barbarous ignorance, in comparison of the learning of Greece and Europe. Those writings of greatest antiquity, yet extant, do show this. See also Doctor Hackwell, as before.

2. As rare as learning then was, yet did God choose the unlearned of that unlearned time to be instruments and penmen of his choicest Scriptures. David, who was bred a shepherd, is the penman of those divine, unmatched psalms. Amos is taken from a herdsman, to be a prophet.

3. But especially in those latter ages, when the world was grown more wise and learned, did God purposely choose the weak, the

foolish, the unlearned, to confound them: a company of poor fishermen, tent-makers, and such-like, must write the laws of the kingdom of Christ; must dive into the spiritual mysteries of the kingdom; must silence the wise, and disputers of the world; must be the men that must bring in the world to believe. Doubtless, as God sending David, an unarmed boy, with a sling and a stone against an armed giant, was to make it appear that the victory was from himself; so his sending these unlearned men to preach the Gospel, and subdue the world, was to convince both the present and future generations that it was God, and not man, that did the work.

4. Also, the course they took in silencing the learned adversaries, doth show us how little use they made of these human helps. They disputed not with them by the precepts of logic: their arguments were to the Jews, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; and both to Jews and Gentiles, the miracles that were wrought: they argued more with deeds than with words. The blind, lame, the sick that were recovered, were their visible arguments. The languages which they spake, the prophecies which they uttered, and other such supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost upon them; these were the things that did convince the world: yet this is no precedent to us, to make as little use of learning as they, because we are not upon the same work, nor yet supplied with their supernatural furniture.

5. The reproaches of their enemies do fully testify this, who cast it still in their teeth, that they were ignorant and unlearned men; and, indeed, that was the great rub that their doctrine found in the world. It was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; and therefore it appeared to be the power of God, and not of man. This was it that they discouraged the people with: "Do any of the rulers or pharisees believe on him? But this people that know not the law are accursed." (John 6:48, 49.)

6. To conclude, the very frame and style of these sacred writings, do fully tell us, that they were none of the logicians, nor eloquent orators of the world, that did compose them. This is yet to this day,

one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the world, to hinder men from the reverencing and believing the Scriptures. They are still thinking, Surely if they were the very words of God, they would excel all other writings in every kind of excellency; when, indeed, it discovereth them the more certainly to be of God, because there is in them so little of man. They may as well say, If David had been sent against Goliah from God, he would surely have been the most complete soldier, and most completely armed. The words are but the dish to serve up the sense in; God is content that the words should not only have in them a savour of humanity, but of much infirmity, so that the work of convincing the world may be furthered thereby. And I verily think, that this is God's great design, in permitting these precious spirits of divine truth, to run in the veins of infirm language, that so men may be convinced, in all succeeding ages, that Scripture is no device of human policy. If the apostles had been learned and subtle men, we should sooner have suspected their finger in the contrivance. Yea, it is observable, that in such as Paul, that had some human learning, yet God would not have them make much use of it, lest the excellency of the cross of Christ should seem to lie in the enticing words of man's wisdom; and lest the success of the Gospel should seem to be more from the ability of the preacher, than from the arm of God.

Besides all this, it may much persuade us that the apostles never contrived the doctrine which they preached, by their sudden and not premeditated setting upon the work. They knew not whither they should go, nor what they should do, when he calls one from his fishing, another from his custom: they knew not what course Christ would take with himself, or them; no, not a little before he leaves them. Nay, they must not know their employment till he is taken from them. And even then is it revealed to them by parcels and degrees, and that without any study or invention of their own; even after the coming down of the Holy Ghost, Peter did not well understand that the Gentiles must be called. (Acts 10.) All which ignorance of his apostles, and suddenness of revelation, I think was

purposely contrived by Christ, to convince the world that they were not the contrivers of the doctrine which they preached.

Sect. IV. Let us next, then, consider, how far short the learned philosophers have come of this. They that have spent all their days in most painful studies, having the strongest natural endowments to enable them, and the learned teachers, the excellent libraries, the bountiful encouragement, and countenance of princes, to further them, and yet, after all this, are very novices in all spiritual things. They cannot tell what the happiness of the soul is, nor where that happiness shall be enjoyed; nor when, nor how long, nor what are the certain means to attain it; nor who they be that shall possess it. They know nothing how the world was made, nor how it shall end; nor know they the God who did create, and doth sustain it: but, for the most of them, they multiply feigned deities.

But I shall have occasion to open this more fully anon, under the last argument.

CHAP. VI

The Third Argument.

SECT. I. My third argument, whereby I prove the divine authority of the Scriptures, is this: "Those writings which have been owned and fulfilled in several ages by apparent extraordinary providences of God, must needs be of God: but God hath so owned and fulfilled the Scriptures: ergo, they are of God.

The major proposition will not surely be denied. The direct consequence is, that such writings are approved by God; and if approved by him, then must they needs be his own, because they affirm themselves to be his own. It is beyond all doubt, that God will not interpose his power, and work a succession of wonders in the

world, for the maintaining or countenancing of any forgery; especially such as should be a slander against himself.

All the work, therefore, will lie in confirming the minor: where I shall show you, First, By what wonders of providence God hath owned and fulfilled the Scriptures: and, Secondly, How it may appear that this was the end of providences.

1. The first sort of providences here to be considered, are those that have been exercised for the church universal. Where these three things present themselves especially to be observed: First, The propagating of the Gospel, and raising of the church: Secondly, The defence and continuance of that church: Thirdly, The improbable ways of accomplishing these.

And, First, Consider what an unlikely design, in the judgment of man, did Christ send his apostles upon. To bid a few ignorant mechanics, Go, preach, and make him disciples of all nations. To send his followers into all the world, to make men believe him to be the Saviour of the world, and to charge them to expect salvation no other way. Why, almost all the world might say, they had never seen him: and to tell them in Britain, &c. of one crucified among thieves at Jerusalem, and to charge them to take him for their eternal king: this was a design very unlikely to prevail. When they would have taken him by force, and made him a king, then he refused, and hid himself. But when the world thought they had fully conquered him, when they had seen him dead, and laid him in his sepulchre, then doth he arise and subdue the world. He that would have said, when Christ was on the cross, or in the grave 'that within so many weeks many thousands of his murderers should believe him to be their Saviour; or within so many years, so many countries and kingdoms should receive him for their Lord, and lay down their dignities, possessions, and lives at his feet;' would have hardly been believed by any that had heard him: and I am confident, they would most of them have acknowledged, that if such a wonder should come to pass, it must needs be from the finger of God alone. That the kingdoms of the

world should become the kingdoms of Christ, was then a matter exceeding improbable. But you may object that, First, It is but a small part of the world that believes. And, Secondly, Christ himself saith, that his flock is little. I answer, First, It is a very great part of the world that are believers at this day, if we consider besides Europe, all the Greek church, and all the believers that are dispersed in Egypt, Judea, and most of the 'Turks' dominions: and the vast empire of Prestor-John in Africa. Secondly, Most countries of the world have received the Gospel; but they had but their time: they have sinned away the light, and therefore are now given up to darkness. Thirdly, Though the flock of Christ's elect are small, that shall receive the kingdom; yet the called, that profess to believe his Gospel, are many.

2. Consider, also, as the wonderful raising of the kingdom of Christ in the world, so the wonderful preservation and continuance of it. He sends out his disciples as lambs among wolves, and yet promiseth them deliverance and success. His followers are everywhere hated through the world; their enemies are numerous as the sands of the sea: the greatest princes and potentates are commonly their greatest enemies, who, one would think, might command their extirpation, and procure their ruin with a word of their mouths. The learned men, and great wits of the world, are commonly their most keen and confident adversaries; who, one would think, by their wit, should easily over-reach them, and by their learning befool them, and by their policy contrive some course for their overthrow. Nay, which is more wonderful than all, the very common professors of the faith of Christ are as great haters of the sincere and zealous professors almost, if not altogether, as are the very Turks and pagans; and those that do acknowledge Christ for their Saviour, do yet so abhor the strictness and spirituality of his laws and ways, that his sincere subjects are in more danger of them, than of the most open enemies: whereas, in other religions, the forwardest in their religion are best esteemed. Besides the temptations of Satan, the unwillingness of the flesh, because of the worldly comforts which we must renounce, and the tedious, strict conversation which we must undertake, these are

greater opposers of the kingdom of Christ than all the rest; yet in despite of all these, is this kingdom maintained, the subjects increased, and these spiritual laws entertained and obeyed: and the church remains both firm and stedfast, as the rocks in the sea, while the waves that beat upon it do break themselves in pieces.

3. Consider, also, in what way Christ doth thus spread his Gospel, and preserve his church. First, Not by worldly might and power, nor by compelling men to profess him by the sword. Indeed, when men do profess themselves voluntarily to be his subjects, he has authorised the sword to see in part to the execution of his laws, and to punish those that break the laws which they have accepted. But to bring men in from the world into his church, from paganism, Turkism, or Judaism, to Christianity; he never gave the sword any such commission: he never levied an army to advance his dominion; nor sent forth his followers as so many commanders to subdue the nations to him by force; and spare none that will not become Christians; he will have none but those that voluntarily list themselves under him; he sent out ministers, and not magistrates or commanders, to bring in the world. Yea, though he be truly willing of men's happiness in receiving him, and therefore earnestly inviteth them thereto, yet he lets them know that he will be no loser by them; as their service cannot advantage him, their neglect cannot hurt him; he lets them know that he hath no need of them, and that his beseeching of them is for their own souls, and that he will be beholden to none of them for all their service; if they know where to have a better master, let them take their course; even the kings of the earth shall stoop to his terms, and be thankful too, or else they are no servants for him: his house is not so open, as to welcome all comers, but only those that will submit to his laws, and accept of him upon his own conditions; therefore hath he told men the worst, as well as the best, that if they will be discouraged or frighted from him, let them go; he tells them of poverty, of disgrace, of losing their lives, or else they cannot be his disciples. And is not this an unlikely way to win men to him; or to bring in so much of the world to worship him? He flatters none, he humoureth none; he hath not formed his laws

and ways to please them. Nay, which is yet more, he is as strict in turning some men out of his service, as other masters would be ready to take them in. Therefore he hath required all his followers to disclaim all such as are obstinate offenders, and not so much as to cat, or be familiar with them. How contrary to all this is the course of the great commanders of the world, when they would enlarge their dominions, or procure themselves followers! They have no course but to force men, or to flatter them. How contrary was Mahomet's course in propagating his kingdom! he levieth an army, and conquers some adjoining parties; and, as his success increaseth, so doth his presumption; he enticeth all sorts to come to his camp; he maketh laws that would please their fleshly lusts; he promiseth beautiful sights, and fair women, and such carnal delights in another world: in a word, as his kingdom was planted, so hath it been preserved by no other ways, but force and flattery. But Christ hath not one word for either of these: his compelling men to come in, is but rational persuading.

2. Nay, yet more than this, he makes his church to grow by sufferings; when others increase their dominions by the destroying of their enemies, he increaseth his by suffering them to kill his subjects; an unlikely way, one would think, to make the world either love or serve him. There have been few ages, since the first appearing of the Gospel in the world, wherein the earth hath not drunk in the blood of believers. In the beginning it was a rare case to be a faithful pastor, and not a martyr. Thirty-three Roman bishops successively are said to have been martyred; thousands, yea, ten thousands slaughtered at a time; insomuch that Gregory and Cyprian cry out, that the witnesses who had died for the truth of the Gospel, were to men innumerable, that the world was all over filled with their blood; and they that were left alive to behold it, were not so many as those that were slain; that no war did consume so many: and the histories of the enemies acknowledge almost as much.

Now, whether this be a likely course to gain disciples, and to subdue the world, you may easily judge. Yet did the church never thrive

better than by persecution; what they got not in number, yet they got in zeal and excellency of professors; and seldom hath it lost more than in prosperity: yea, when the vulgar professors have enjoyed prosperity, yet persecution hath almost ever been the lot of the zealous and sincere.

And thus I have showed you those wonders of Providence, which have been exercised for the church universal.

Sect. II. Secondly, Consider, next, what strange providences have been exercised to particular churches. I cannot stand to heap up particular examples; you may find them frequent in the histories of the church; what deliverances cities and countries have had, what victories those princes have had, who have been their defenders; as Constantine the Great, and many since: and what apparent manifestations of God's hand in all. Yea, he that reads but the histories of latter times, where wars have been managed for defence of the doctrine of this Scripture, and obedience thereto, against the corruptions and persecutions of Rome, may see more apparent discoveries of the hand of God; yea, even in those wars where the enemy hath at last prevailed, as in Bohemia, in Zisca's time, in France, at Merindol and Cabriers. The history of Belgia will show it clearly: so will the strange preservation of the poor city of Geneva. But all these are further from us; God hath brought such experiments home to our hand. If we should overlook the strange providences that produced the Reformation in the times of Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, and King James; yet even the strange passages of these years past, have been such that might silence an atheist, or an anti-scripturist: to see the various straits that God hath brought his people through; the unlikely means by which he still performed it; the unexpected events of most undertakings; the uncontrived and unthought-of ways which men have been led in; the strange managing of councils and actions; the plain appearance of an extraordinary providence, and the plain interposition of an almighty arm, which hath appeared in almost all our public affairs, in all which God hath not only manifested a special

providence, but also notably disowned men's sins, encouraged prayer, and fulfilled promises; though as to the particular exposition of some of his providences, we may hear him say to us, as sometimes to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know."

Sect. III. Thirdly: Consider, also, of the strange judgments which in all ages have overtaken the most eminent of the enemies of the Scriptures. Besides Antiochus, Herod, Pilate, the persecuting emperors, especially Julian; church-histories will acquaint you with multitudes more: Fox's Book of Martyrs will tell you of many undeniable remarkable judgments on those adversaries of pure religion, whose greatest wickedness is against these Scriptures, subjecting them to their church, denying them the people, and setting up their traditions as equal to them. Yea, our own times have afforded us most evident examples. Surely God hath forced many of his enemies to acknowledge in their anguish the truth of his threatenings, and cry out, as Julian, *Vicisti Galilæe*.

Sect. IV. Fourthly: Consider, also, the eminent judgments of God which have befallen the vile transgressors of most of his laws. Besides all the voluminous histories that make frequent mention of this, I refer you to Dr. Beard's 'Theatre of God's Judgments,' and the book intitled 'God's Judgments upon Sabbath Breakers:' and it is likely your own observations may add much.

Sect. V. Fifthly: Consider, further, of the eminent providences that have been exercised for the bodies and states of particular believers. The strange deliverance of many intended to martyrdom, as you have many instances in the 'Acts and Monuments;' besides those in Eusebius, and others, that mention the stories of the first persecutions. If it were convenient here to make particular mention of men's names, I could name you many, who, of late, have received such strange preservations, even against the common course of nature, that might convince an atheist of the finger of God therein. But this is so ordinary, that I am persuaded there is scarcely a godly-

experienced Christian that carefully observes and faithfully recordeth the providences of God toward him, but is able to bring forth some such experiment, and to show you some strange and unusual mercies, which may plainly discover an Almighty Disposer, making good the promises of this Scripture to his servants: some, in desperate diseases of body, some in other apparent dangers, delivered so suddenly, or so much against the common course of nature, when all the best remedies have failed, that no second cause could have any hand in their deliverance.

Sixthly, and lastly: Consider the strange and evident dealing of God with the souls and consciences both of believers and unbelievers. What pangs of hellish despair have many enemies of the truth been brought to! How doth God extend the spirits of his own people: bruising, breaking, killing them with terrors, and then healing, raising, and filling them with joys which they cannot utter! How variously doth he mould them! Sometimes they are brought to the gates of hell, sometimes they are ravished with the foretastes of heaven: the proudest spirits are made to stoop; the lowest are raised to an invincible courage. In a word, the workings of God upon the souls of his people, are so clear and strange, that you may trace a supernatural causality through them all. Besides the admirable efficacy of them in changing men's hearts, and making them to differ from what they were, and from all others, in all holiness, righteousness, and self-denial.

Sect. IV. Secondly: But though it be undeniable that all these are the extraordinary working of God; yet how do they confirm the authority of Scripture! How doth it appear that they have any such ends? Answer: that is it I come to show you next.

First: Some of these works do carry their end apparently with them, and manifest it in the event. The forementioned providences for raising and preserving the church, are such as show us their own ends.

Secondly: They are most usually wrought for the friends and followers of Scripture, and against the enemies and disobeyers of it.

Thirdly: They are the plain fulfilling of the predictions of Scripture. The judgments on the offenders are the plain fulfilling of its threatenings, and the mercies to believers are the plain fulfilling of its promises. As for example; as unlikely as it was, yet Christ foretold his apostles that when he was lifted up he would draw all men to him. He sent them upon an errand as unlikely to be so successful as any in the world; and yet he told them just what success they should find, how good to their message, and how hard to their persons. The promise was of old, to give Christ "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." (Psal. 2:2–5.) Christ promiseth to be with his messengers to the end of the world. Why now how punctually doth he accomplish all this! What particular prophecies of Scripture have been fulfilled, and when, and how, hath already been discovered by others, and therefore I shall overpass that.

Fourthly: These judgments have been usually executed on offenders, at the very time when they have been either opposing or violating Scripture: and these mercies bestowed chiefly upon believers at such a time, when they have been most engaged in defence of or obedience to the Scriptures.

Fifthly: They usually proceed in such effectual sort, that they force the enemies and ungodly to confess the cause: yea, and oftentimes the very standers-by; so do they force believers also to see, that God makes good his word in all their mercies.

Sixthly: They are performed in answer to the prayers of believers; while they urge God with the promises of Scripture, then doth he appear in these evident providences. This is a common and powerful argument, which most Christians may draw from their own experiences. Had we no other argument to prove Scripture to be the word of God, but only the strange success of the prayers of the saints,

while they trust upon, and plead the promises with fervency, I think it might much confirm experienced men. What wonders, yea what apparent miracles, did the prayers of former Christians procure! hence the christian soldiers, in their army, were called the thundering legion; they could do more by their prayers, than the rest by their arms. Hence Gregory was called Θαυματουργος, from his frequent miracles among the heathen. And Vincentius reporteth, that Sulpitius Bituricensis did expel the devils, heal the sick, and raise the dead, by praying to God for them. When Myconius, a godly divine, lay sick of that consumption, which is called phthisis, Luther prayed earnestly that he might be recovered, and that he might not die before himself. And so confident was he of the grant of his desire, that he writes boldly to Myconius, that he should not die now; but should remain yet longer upon this earth. Upon these prayers did Myconius presently revive, as from the dead, and live six years after, till Luther was dead: and himself hath largely written the story, and professed, that when he heard Luther's letters, he seemed to hear that voice of Christ, "Lazarus, come forth." Yea, so powerful and prevailing was Luther in prayer, that Justus Jonas writes of him, iste vir potuit quod voluit, that man could do what he would.

What was it less than a miracle in Baynam the martyr, who told his persecutors, 'Lo! here is a miracle; I feel no more pain in this fire than in a bed of down: it is as sweet to me as a bed of roses?' So Bishop Farrar, who could say before he went to the fire, 'If I stir in the fire, believe not my doctrine;' and accordingly remained unmoved. Theodorus the martyr, in the midst of his torment, had one in the shape of a young man, as he thought, came and wiped off his sweat, and eased him of his pain.

But what need I fetch examples so far off; or to recite the multitudes of them which church history doth afford us? Is there ever a praying Christian here who knoweth what it is importunately to strive with God, and to plead his promises with him believingly, that cannot give in his experiences of most remarkable answers? I know men's atheism and infidelity will never want somewhat to say against the

most eminent providences, though they were miracles themselves. That nature which is so ignorant of God, and at enmity with him, will not acknowledge him in his clear discoveries to the world, but will ascribe all to fortune or nature, or some such idol, which indeed is nothing. But when mercies are granted in the very time of prayer, and that when to reason there is no hope, and that without the help of any other means or creatures, yea, and perhaps many times over and over, is not this as plain as if God from heaven should say to us, 'I am fulfilling to thee the true word of my promises in Christ, my Son?' How many times have I known the prayer of faith to save the sick, when all physicians have given them up for dead? (James 5:13–16.) It hath been my own case more than once, or twice, or ten times: when means have all failed, and the highest art or reason has sentenced me hopeless, yet have I been relieved by the prevalency of fervent prayer, and that, as the physician saith, 'tuto, cito, et jucunde;' 'My flesh and my heart failed, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' And though he yet keep me under necessary weakness, and wholesome sickness, and certain expectation of further necessities and assaults, yet am I constrained by most convincing experiences, to set up this stone of remembrance, and publicly, to the praise of the Almighty, to acknowledge that certainly God is true to his promises, and that they are indeed his own infallible word, and that it is a most excellent privilege to have interest in God, and a spirit of supplication to be importunate with him. I doubt not but most Christians that observe the spirit and providences, are able to attest this prevalency of prayer by their own experiences.

Object. Perhaps you will say, If these rare examples were common, I would believe.

Answ. 1. If they were common, they would be slighted, as common wonders are.

Secondly: Importunate prayer is not common, though formal babbling be.

Thirdly: The evident returns of prayer are ordinary to the faithful.

Fourthly: If wonders were common, we should live by sense, and not by faith.

Fifthly: I answer, in the words of Augustin, God letteth not every saint partake of miracles, lest the weak should be deceived with this pernicious error, to prefer miracles as better than the works of righteousness, whereby eternal life is attained.

And let me now add, that if the Scriptures were not the word of God, undoubtedly there would have been as many wonders of Providence for the disgracing it, as have been for the defending it: and God would have destroyed the preachers of it, as the greatest abusers of him, and all the world, that should father such a thing on him. Can any man believe that God is the just and gracious Ruler of the world, (that is, thatt here is a God,) and yet that he would so long suffer such things to be published as his undoubted laws, and give no testimony against it, if it were not true? As Perkins saith, 'Cases of Cons.' (lib. ii. c. 3. p. 130. sect. 1.) If it had not been God's word, the falsehood had been detected long ago. For there hath been nothing falsely said of God at any time which he himself hath not, at some time or other, opened and revealed; as he did the false prophets.

CHAP. VII

The Fourth Argument.

SECT. I. My fourth and last argument, which I will now produce to prove the Scripture to be the word and perfect law of God, is this:

Either the Scriptures are the written word and law of God, or else there is no such extant in the world: but there is a written word and law of God in the world: ergo, this is it.

Here I have these two positions to prove; First, That God hath such a written word in the world. Secondly, That it can be no other but this.

That there is such a word, I prove thus: If it cannot stand with the welfare of mankind, and consequently with that honour which the wisdom and goodness of God hath by their welfare, that the world should be without a written law, then, certainly, there is such a written law. But that it cannot stand with the welfare of the creature, or that honour of God, appears thus: that there be a certain and sufficient revelation of the will of God to man, more than mere nature and creatures do teach, is necessary to the welfare of man, and the aforesaid honour of God. But there is now no such certain and sufficient revelation unwritten in the world: therefore, it is necessary that there be such a revelation written.

The proof of the major is the main task, which if it be well performed, will clearly carry the whole cause; for I believe all the rest will quickly be granted, if that be once plain. Therefore, I shall stand a little more largely to prove it, viz., that there is a necessity for the welfare of man, and the honour of God's wisdom and goodness, that there be some further revelation of God's will, than is in mere nature or creatures to be found. And first I prove it necessary to the welfare of man, and that thus: If man have a happiness or misery to partake of after this life, and no sufficient revelation of it in nature or creatures, then it is necessary that he have some other revelation of it, which is sufficient. But such a happiness or misery man must partake of hereafter, which nature and creatures do not sufficiently reveal, (either end or means,) therefore some other is necessary. I will stand the largelier on the first branch of the antecedent, because the chief weight lieth on it; and I scarce ever knew any doubt of Scripture, but they also doubted of the immortal state and recompense of souls; and that usually is their first and chiefest doubt.

I will, therefore, here prove these three things in order thus: 1. That there is such a state for man hereafter. 2. That it is necessary that he

know it, and the way to be so happy. 3. That nature and creatures do not sufficiently reveal it.

For the first, I take it for granted, that there is a God, because nature teacheth that; and I shall pass over those arguments drawn from his righteousness and just dispensation, to prove the variety of men's future conditions, because they are commonly known; and I shall now argue from sense itself, because that works best with sensual men: and that thus. If the devil be very diligent to deceive men of that happiness, and to bring them to that misery, then sure there is such a happiness and misery: but the former is true, ergo the latter. They that doubt of the major proposition, do most of them doubt, whether there be any devil, as well as whether he seek our eternal undoing. I prove both together. First, By his temptation; Secondly, Apparitions; Thirdly, Their possessions and dispossessions; Fourthly, His contracts with witches. I hope these are palpable discoveries.

1. The temptations of Satan are sometimes so unnatural, so violent, and so importunate, that the tempted person even feels something besides himself persuading and urging him: he cannot go about his calling, he cannot be alone, but he feels somewhat following him, with persuasions to sin, yea, to sins that he never found his nature much inclined to, and such as bring him no advantage in the world, and such as are quite against the temperature of his body. Doth it not plainly tell us, that there is a devil, labouring to deprive man of his happiness, when men are drawn to commit such monstrous sins? Such cruelty as the Romans used to the Jews at the taking of Jerusalem; so many thousand Christians so barbarously murdered; such bloody actions as those of Nero, Caligula, Sylla, Messala, Caracalla, the Roman gladiators, the French massacre, the gunpowder-plot, the Spanish inquisition, and their murdering fifty millions of Indians in forty two years, according to the testimony of Acosta, their Jesuit; men invading their own neighbours and brethren, with an unquenchable thirst after their blood, and merely because of their strictness in the common professed religion: I say,

How could these come to pass, but by the instigation of the devil? When we see men making a jest of such sins as these, making them their pleasure, impudently, and implacably against knowledge and conscience, proceeding in them, hating those ways that they know to be better, and all those persons that would help to save them; yea, choosing sin, though they believe it will damn them; despairing, and yet sinning still: doth not this tell men plainly, that there is a devil; their enemy? When men will commit the sin which they abhor in others, which reason is against; when men of otherwise a good nature, as Vespasian, &c., shall be so bloody murderers; when men will not be stirred from sin by any entreaty, though their dearest friends should beg, with tears, upon their knees; though preachers convince them, and beseech them in the name of the Lord; though wife and children, body and soul, be undone by it; nay, when men will be the same under the greatest judgment, and under the most wonderful convincing providences, as appears in England, yea, under miracles themselves.

Surely I think all this shows that there is a devil, and that he is diligent in working our own ruin. Why else should it be so hard a thing to persuade a man to that, which he is convinced to be good?

Sect. II. But yet if this be not evidence sufficient, the frequent apparitions of Satan in several shapes, drawing men, or frightening them into sin, is a discovery undeniable. I know many are very incredulous herein, and will hardly believe that there have been such apparitions. For my own part, though I am as suspicious as most in such reports, and do believe that most of them are conceits or delusions, yet having been very diligently inquisitive in all such cases, I have received undoubted testimony of the truth of such apparitions; some from the mouths of men of undoubted honesty and godliness, and some from the report of multitudes of persons, who heard or saw. Were it fit here to name the persons, I could send you to them yet living, by whom you would be as fully satisfied as I: houses that have been so frequently haunted with such terrors, that the inhabitants successively have been witnesses of it.

Learned godly Zanchius, in his tom. 3. lib. iv. cap. 10. 'De Potentia Dæmonum,' saith, "he wonders that any should deny that there are such spirits, as from the effects are called hags, or fairies, that is, such as exercise familiarity with men, and do, without hurting men's bodies, come to them, and trouble them, and, as it were, play with them. I could (saith he) bring many examples of persons yet alive, that have experience of these in themselves. But it is not necessary to name them, nor indeed convenient. But hence it appears that there are such spirits in the air: and that when God permits them, they exercise their power on our bodies, either to sport, or to hurt." So far Zanchy. And he makes this use of it: "Of this (saith he), besides the certainty of God's word, we have also men's daily experience. These devils, therefore, do serve to confirm our faith of God, of the good angels, of the kingdom of heaven, of the blessed souls, and of many things more which the Scripture delivereth. Many deny that the soul of man remaineth and liveth after death, because they see nothing go from him but his breath; and they come to that impiety, that they laugh at all that is said of another life. But we see not the devils; and yet it is clearer than the sun, that this air is full of devils; because, besides God's word, experience itself doth teach it." Thus Zanchy pleads undeniable experience, (lib. iv. c. 20. p. 212.)

Luther affirmed of himself that at Coburge, he oftentimes had an apparition of burning torches; the sight thereof did so affright him, that he was near swooning; also, in his own garden, the devil appeared to him in the likeness of a black boar, but then he made light of it. Sozomen, in his Ecclesiastical History, writes of Apelles, a smith, famous in Egypt for working miracles, who, in the night, while he was at work, was tempted to uncleanness by the devil, appearing in the shape of a beautiful woman. y The like he tells of a strange apparition in Antioch, the night before the sedition against Theodosius. Theodorus mentions a fearful sight that appeared to Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, and the threatening words which it uttered. The writings of Gregory, Ambrose, Austin, Chrysostom, Nicephorus, &c., make frequent mention of apparitions, and relate the several stories at large. You may read in Lavater de

Spectris, several other relations of apparitions out of Alexander ab Alexandro, Baptista Fulgosius, and others. Ludovicus Vives, (lib. i.) 'De Veritate Fidei,' saith, "that among the savages in America, nothing is more common than to hear and see spirits in such shapes both day and night." The like do other writers testify of those Indians: so saith Olaus Magnus of the islanders. Cardanus de Subtilit. hath many such stories. So Joh. Manlius in Loc. Commun. Collectan. (cap. 4,) de Malis Spiritibus, et de satisfactione. Yea, godly, sober Melancthon affirms, that he had seen some such sights or apparitions himself; and many credible persons of his acquaintance have told him, that they have not only seen them, but had much talk with spirits; among the rest he mentions one of his own aunts, who sitting sad at the fire after the death of her husband, there appeared unto her one in the likeness of her husband, and another like a Franciscan friar; the former told her that he was her husband, and came to tell her somewhat; which was, that she must hire some priests to say certain masses for him, which he earnestly besought her; then he took her by the hand, promising to do her no harm, yet his hand so burned her, that it remained black ever after, and so they vanished away. Thus writes Melancthon. Lavater also himself, who hath written a book wholly of apparitions, a learned godly protestant divine, tells us, that it was then an undeniable thing, confirmed by the testimonies of many honest and credible persons, both men and women, some alive, and some dead, that sometime by night, and sometime by day, have both seen and heard such things; some that going to bed had the clothes plucked off them; others had somewhat lying down in the bed with them; others heard it walking in the chamber by them, spitting, groaning; saying, they were the souls of such or such persons lately departed; that they were in grievous torments, and if so many masses were but said for them, or so many pilgrimages undertaken to the shrine of some saint, they should be delivered. These things, with many such more, saith Lavater, were then frequently and undoubtedly done, and, that where the doors were fast locked, and the room searched, that there could be no deceit.

So Sleidan relates the story of Crescentius, the pope's legate, frightened into a deadly sickness by a fearful apparition in his chamber. Most credible and godly writers tell us, that on June 20, 1484, at a town called Hamel, in Germany, the devil took away one hundred and thirty children, that were never seen again.

But I need to say no more of this; there is enough written already, not only by Cyeogna, Delrio, Paracelsus, &c., but also by godly and faithful writers, as Lavater, Georg. Agricola, Olaus Magnus, Zanchius, Pictorius, and many more.

Object. But you will say, 'Though this prove that there are devils, and that they are enemies to our happiness; yet how doth it prove that there is a future happiness or misery for man?'

Answ. Why, plainly thus. What need Satan by these apparitions to set up superstition to draw men to sin, if there were no difference between sinners and others hereafter? surely, in this life it would be no great displeasure to them; for usually the wicked have the most prosperous lives; therefore his delusions must needs have respect to another life; and that the end of his apparitions is either to drive men to despair, or to superstition, or some sin, is evident to all. Most of the papists' idolatry and will-worship, hath either been caused or confirmed by such apparitions: d for in former days of darkness they were more common than now. How the order of the Carthusian friars was founded by Bruno, upon the terrible speeches and cries of a dead man, you may read in the life of Bruno, before his 'Exposition on Paul's Epistles.' Such was the original of All Souls Day, and other holydays, as Trithemius, Petrus de Natalibus, (lib. x. cap. 1;) Polyd. Virg. de Inv. (lib. ix. cap. 9,) do declare. Also, praying for the dead, praying to saints, purgatory, merits of good works, sanctification, pilgrimages, masses, images, relies, monastical vows, auricular confession, and most of the popish ceremonies, have had their life and strength from these apparitions and delusions of the devil. But especially the cross hath been so magnified thereby, f that it is grown the commonest remedy to drive away devils of any in the world for

many hundred years; the churchyard must have one to keep the devils from the graves of the dead; and the church, and almost every pinnacle, window, and part of it, to keep him thence; the highways, also, must have them, that he molest not the traveller; yea, when morning and evening, and in times of danger, and in the beginning of any work of duty, men must sign themselves with the cross, to keep away devils: insomuch that the learned doctors do handle it among their profound questions, what makes the devil so afraid of the cross, that he shuns it above all things else? So that you may easily see what a great advantage the devil hath got over the souls of a great part of the world by these apparitions; and consequently, that, this being the very end of his endeavours, there is certainly a happiness which he would deprive us of, and a misery that he would bring us to, when this life is ended.

Sect. III. It is manifest also by the devil's possessing and tormenting the bodies of men; for if it were not more for the sake of the soul than the body, why should he not as much possess or torment a beast? Certainly, it is not chiefly the outward torment of the person that he regardeth, though he desires that too; for then he would not labour to settle his kingdom generally in peace and prosperity, and to make men choose iniquity for its worldly advantages: yet it may, perhaps, be the souls of others, more than the possessed persons themselves, that the devil may hope to get advantage on. So among the papists it hath brought their exorcisms into singular credit, by the frequent dispossessing the devils. I confess there hath been many counterfeits of this kind, as the boy at Bilson, by Wolverhampton, hired by some of the papists, and discovered by the vigilant care of Bishop Morton and divers others; but, yet, if any doubt whether there is any such thing at all, credible history and late experience may sufficiently satisfy him. The history of the dispossession of the devil out of many persons together in a room in Lancashire, at the prayer of some godly ministers, is very famous: read the book, and judge. Among the papists, possessions are common; though very many of them are the priests and Jesuits' delusions.

What possession is, and how the devils are confined to a body, or whether circumscribed there in whole or in part, are things beyond my reach to know; but that the strange effects which we have seen on some bodies, have been the products of the special power of the devil there, I doubt not. Though, for my own part, I believe that God's works in the world are usually by instruments, and not immediate; and as goodk angels are his instruments in conveying his mercies both to soul and body, and churches and states; so evil angels are instruments of inflicting his judgments, both corporal and spiritual. Hence God is said (Psal. 78:49,) to send evil angels among the Israelites. Hence Paul's phrase of delivering to Satan; hence Satan did execution on the children, cattle, and body of Job; and upon Jerusalem in that plague, and numbering the people. To satisfy you fully in this, and to silence your objections, and to teach you the true and spiritual use of this doctrine, I refer you to Mr. Lawrence's book, called 'Our Communion and War with Angels;' and, especially, Zanchius's (tome 3) book 'De Angelis;' and, now newly published, Mr. Ambrose's book, in which, in an epistle, I have confirmed and vindicated what I have here said.

So then, though I judge that Satan is the instrument in our ordinary diseases, yet doth he, more undeniably, appear in those whom we call the possessed. Luther thought that all phrenetic persons and idiots, and all bereaved of their understanding, had devils: notwithstanding, physicians might ease them by remedies. And, indeed, the presence of the devil may consist with the presence of a disease and evil humour, with the efficacy of means: Saul's melancholy devil would be gone when David played on the harp. Many divines, as Tertullian, Austin, Zanchius, Lavater, &c., think that he can work both upon the body and the mind, and that he maketh use to this end of melancholy humours; and, indeed, such strange things are oft said and done by the melancholy and mad, that many learned physicians think that the devil is frequently mixed with such distempers, and hath a main hand in many other symptoms: so Avicen, Rhasis, Arculanus, Aponensis, Jason, Patensis, Hercul. Saxon, &c. Who can give any natural cause for men's speaking

Hebrew or Greek, which they never learned or spake before; of their versifying; their telling persons that are present their secrets; discovering what is done at a distance, which they neither see nor hear? Fernelius mentioneth two that he saw; m whereof one was so tormented with convulsive pain, sometime in one arm, sometime in the other; sometime in one finger, &c., that four men could scarcely hold him, his head being still quiet and well. The physicians judged it a convulsion, from some malignant humour in the spina dorsi; till, having used all means in vain, at last the devil derided them, that they had almost destroyed the man with their medicines. The man spoke Greek and Latin, which he never learned; he told the physicians a great many of their secrets; and a great deal of talk with the devil, which they had, he there mentions. In conclusion, both this and the other were dispossessed by popish prayers, fasting, and exorcism. Forestus mentions a countryman that, being cast into melancholy, through discontent, at some injuries that he had received, the devil appeared to him in the likeness of a man, and persuaded him rather to make away himself than to bear such indignities; and, to that end, advised him to send for arsenic and poison himself. But the apothecary would not let him have it except he would bring one to promise that he should not abuse it, whereupon the devil went with him, as his voucher, and so he took a dram; but, though it tormented him, yet it did not presently kill him; whereupon the devil brought him, afterward, a rope, and after that a knife, to have destroyed himself: at which sight, the man, being affrighted, was recovered to his right mind again. You may read a multitude of such examples in Scribonius, Schenkus, Wierus, Chr. à Vega, Langius, Donatus (lib. ii. c. 1); 'De Med. Mir.' Cornel. Gemma, (lib. ii.); 'De Natur. Mirac.' (c. 4.) See also Valesius (c. 28); 'Sac. Philos.' Roderic. à Castro (2); 'De Morb. Mul.' (c. 3); Schol. Cælius Rhodiginus (lib. i.); (antiq. lect. c. 34.) Tertullian challengeth the heathen to bring any one possessed with the devil before their judgment-seat, or one that pretended to have the spirit of the gods; and if, at the command of a Christian, he do not confess himself to be a devil, let them take the Christian to be presumptuous, and put him immediately to death. But of Jesus, saith he, they say not so, nor that

he was a mere man; but the Power, the Wisdom, and the Word of God; and that they are devils, damned for their wickedness. The like doth Cyprian. ad Demetrian. sect. 2.

So that it seems it was then common for the devil in the possessed to confess Christ, or else Tertullian durst not have made such a challenge.

Some wonder that there were so many possessed with devils in Christ's time, and so few since: but they understood not that it was madmen whom they call possessed: and Christ confirmed their judgment; as Mr. Mead, on John 10:20, hath proved out of Scripture, and from Plautus, Justin Mart., Timotheus Alex., Balzamon, Zonaras, to whom I refer the reader for the fuller proof hereof.

Sect. IV. The fourth and last of these palpable arguments, to prove that man hath a future happiness or misery, is drawn from the devil's compacts with witches. It cannot be only his desire of hurting their bodies, that makes him enter into these contracts with them; for that he might procure by other means as likely. Besides, it is some kind of prosperity, or fulfilling their desires, which he conditioneth to give them. It is a childish thing to conceit, that the devil cares so much for a few drops of their blood. Is not the blood of a beast or other creature as sweet? Neither can it be only the acknowledgment of his power that he aims at, nor a mere desire of being honoured or worshipped in the world, as Porphyrius and other pagans have thought; for he is most truly served, where he is least discerned; and most abhorred when he most appears. His apparitions are so powerful a means to convince the atheist, who believes not that there is either God, or devil, or heaven, or hell, that I am persuaded he would far rather keep out of sight, and that for the most part he is constrained of God to appear against his will. Besides, if Satan sought his own honour, he would still speak in his own name: but, contrarily, his usual appearance is in the shape and name of some deceased person, affirming himself to be the soul of such a one; or else he pretends to be an angel of light: and when he makes his

compacts with witches, it is seldom so plainly and directly as that they understand it is indeed the devil that they deal with. So that it is apparent, Satan seeks something more than the honour of domineering, that is, the ruin of the party with whom he deals. And that it is not their bodily and temporal ruin only, appears further by this, that he will heal as well as hurt, and give power to his confederates to do the like; and this tends not to the ruin of men's bodies. Though there be a great deal of deceit among them, yet doubtless many have been cured by popish spells, and pilgrimages, and exorcisms. Carolus Piso mentions one of his patients who was incurably deaf a year together, and was suddenly cured in the midst of his devotion to the lady of Loretto. Fernelius mentions those that could stop any bleeding by repeating certain words. He saw an universal jaundice cured in one night, by the hanging of a piece of paper about the neck. A great deal more to the same purpose he hath, 'De abditis rer. causis,' (lib. ii. c. 16.) If any should doubt whether there be any such witches, who thus work by the power of the devil, or have any compact with him, he hath as good opportunity now to be easily resolved, as hath been known in most ages. Let him go but into Suffolk, or Essex, or Lancashire, &c., and he may quickly be informed. Surely it were strange, if in an age of so much knowledge and conscience, there should so many scores of poor creatures be put to death as witches, if it were not clearly manifest that they were such. We have too many examples lately among us, to leave any doubt of the truth of this.

So that by these attempts of Satan to deceive and destroy souls, it is evident, that there is an estate of happiness or misery for every man after this life.

All those arguments, which every common-place book and philosopher almost can afford you, to prove the immortality of the soul, will also serve to prove the point in hand. But many can apprehend these arguments from sense, who cannot yet reach, and will not be convinced by other demonstrations, as temptations, apparitions, possessions, dispossessions, and witches, are most

excellent means to convince a Sadducee, that there are angels and spirits; so, also, by clear consequence, that there is a resurrection and eternal life.

Sect. V. The second thing that I am to clear to you, is, that it is necessary for man to know this happiness, and the way to obtain it; and to know the misery and the way to escape it. This appears thus:

First: If he must go that way, and use those means, then he must needs first know both the end and the way: but he that will obtain the end, must use the means; therefore, he must necessarily know them. All this is so evident, that, I believe, few will deny it. That man must use means before he attain the end, is evident.

First: From the nature of the motion of the rational soul, which is to seek the attainment of its propounded end, by a voluntary use of means conducing thereto: for as it hath not, as its first infusion, that height of perfection, whereof it is capable, so, neither is it carried thereto by violence, or by blind instinct, for then it were not a rational motion.

Secondly: Yea, the very enjoyment of the end, and the seeking of it, are actions of the same nature: it is enjoyed by the knowing, loving, rejoicing, &c., and these actions are the means to attain it.

Thirdly: And if the means were not necessary to the end, the wicked were as capable of it as the godly; but that will not stand with the justice of God.

Fourthly: If knowledge of the end, and use of means, were not of necessity to the obtaining of that end, then a beast, or a block, were as fit a subject for that blessedness, as a man: but these cannot be.

And that man cannot seek a happiness, which he never knew; and shun a misery, which he was not aware of; nor use means thereto, which he never was acquainted with; I think would be lost and needless labour for me to prove.

Sect. VI. The third thing that I am to prove, is this: That mere nature and creatures, contain no sufficient revelation of the fore-mentioned end and means. This appears thus: First, Nature, by the help of creatures, though it tell us that there is a God, yet, how he will be worshipped, or how he came to be displeased with the world, or how he must be reconciled; of all this it tells us but little. Again, though it may possibly acquaint us with the immortal state, yet what the happiness there is, and what the misery, or how we are naturally deprived of that happiness, and how it must be recovered, and who they be that shall enjoy it; of all this it tells us little: much less of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave. So, also, though nature may possibly find itself depraved, yet how it came to be so, or how to be healed, or how to be pardoned, it cannot tell. Secondly: If nature, by the mere book of the creatures, could learn all things necessary, yet, First, It would be slow, and by so long study. Secondly, And so doubtfully and uncertainly. Thirdly, And so rarely, that it appears by this, the means of revelation is not sufficient. All this apparent by event and success. For what nature and creatures do sufficiently teach, that some of their scholars have certainly learned.

First, then, observe, how long did the most learned philosophers study before they could know those few imperfect notions, which some of them did attain to, concerning eternity? They were gray with age and study, before they could come to know that which a child of seven years old may now know by the benefit of Scripture. But all men live not to such an age, therefore this is no sufficient means.

Secondly, observe, also, how uncertain they were, when all was done; what they speak rightly concerning God, or the life to come, in one breath, they are ready to unsay it again in another, as if their speeches had fallen from them against their wills, or as Caiaphas's confession of Christ. They raise their conclusions from such uncertain premises, that the conclusions also must needs be uncertain.

Thirdly, observe, also, how rare that knowledge was among them. It may be in all the world, there may be a few hundreds of learned philosophers, and among those there is one part epicures, another peripatetics, &c., that acknowledge not a future happiness or misery. And of those few that do acknowledge it, none knows it truly, nor the way that leads to it. How few of them could tell what was man's chief good! And those few, how imperfectly; with what mixtures of falsehood! we have no certainty of any of them that did know so much, as that there was but one God. For though Socrates died for deriding the multitudes of gods, yet there is no certain record of his right belief of the unity of the godhead. Besides, what Plato and Plotinus did write of this that was sound, there is far greater probability that they had it from Scripture, than merely from nature and creatures. For that Platou had read the writings of Moses, is proved already by divers authors. The like may be said of Seneca, and many others. So that if this means had contained any sufficiency in it for salvation, yet it would have extended but to some few of all the learned philosophers: and what is this to an universal sufficiency to all mankind? nay, there is not one of all their exactest moralists, that have not mistaken vice for virtue; yea, most of them give the name of virtue to the foulest villanies, such as self-murder, in several cases, revenge, a proud and vain-glorious affectation of honour and applause, with other the like; so far have these few learned philosophers been from the true knowledge of things spiritual and divine, that they could never reach to know the principles of common honesty. Varro saith, that there were in his days, two hundred and eighty-eight sects or opinions among philosophers concerning the chief good: what, then, should the multitudes of the vulgar do, who have neither strength of wit to know, nor time, and books and means to study, that they might attain to the height of these learned men? so that I conclude with Aquinas,y that if possibly, nature and creatures might teach some few enough to salvation, yet were the Scriptures of flat necessity; both for the more enlarged: Secondly, And the more easy and speedy: Thirdly, And the more certain spreading of knowledge and salvation.

Sect. VII. But here are some objections to be answered, First, Were not the fathers till Moses, without Scripture? Answ. First, Yet they had a revelation of God's will, besides what nature or creatures taught them. Adam had the doctrine of the tree of knowledge, and the tree of life, and the tenor of the covenant made with him, by such revelation, and not by nature. So had the fathers the doctrine of sacrificing; for nature could teach them nothing of that, therefore, even the heathens had it from the church. Secondly, All other revelations are now ceased, therefore this way is more necessary. Thirdly, And there are many truths necessary now to be known, which then were not revealed, and so not necessary.

Object. 2. Doth not the apostle say, that which may be known of God, was manifest in them, &c.?

Answ. This, with many other objections, are fully scanned by many divines, to whom I refer you; particularly Dr. Willet, on Rom. 1:14, 20, &c. Only in general I answer, there is much difference between knowing that there is a God of eternal power, which may make the sinner inexcusable for his open sin against nature, (which the apostle there speaks of,) and knowledge which is sufficient to salvation. How God deals with the multitude that have not the Scripture, as to their eternal state, I leave as a thing beyond us, and so nothing to us: but if a possibility of the salvation of some of them be acknowledged, yet in the three respects above mentioned, there remains still a necessity of some further revelation than nature or creatures do contain. And thus I have manifested a necessity for the welfare of man. Now it would follow that I show it necessary for the honour of God; but this follows so evidently as a conseq. of the former, that I think I may spare that labour.

Object. But what if there be such a necessity, doth it follow that God must needs supply it? Answ. Yes, to some part of the world. For, First, It cannot be conceived how it can stand with his exceeding goodness, bounty, and mercy, to make a world, and not to save some. Secondly, Nor with his wisdom, to make so many capable of

salvation, and not reveal it to them, or bestow it on them. Thirdly, Or to prepare so many other helps to man's happiness, and to lose them all for want of such a sufficient revelation. Fourthly, Or to be the Governor of the world, and yet to give them no perfect law to acquaint men with their duty, and the reward of obedience, and penalty of disobedience.

Having thus proved that there is certainly some written word of God in the world, the last thing that I have to prove is, that there is no other writing in the world but this that can be it. And, First, There is no other book in the world, that ever I heard of, that doth so much as claim this prerogative and dignity. Mahomet calleth himself but a prophet, he acknowledgeth the truth of most of the Scripture, and his Alcoranc contradicteth the very light of nature. Aristotle, Plato, and other philosophers, acknowledge their writings to be merely of their own study and invention. What book saith, 'Thus saith the Lord,' and 'This is the word of the Lord,' but this? So that if it hath no competitor, there needs not so much to be said.

2. What other book doth reveal the mysteries of God, of the Trinity, of God and man in one person, of creation, of the fall, the covenants, their conditions, heaven, hell, angels, devils, temptations, regeneration, worship, &c., besides this one book, and those that profess to receive it from this, and profess their end to be but the confirming and explaining the doctrine of this? Indeed, upon those subjects which are below the Scripture, as logic, arithmetic, &c., other books may be more excellent than it; as a tailor may teach you to make a cloak better than all the statute books or records of parliament. But this is a lower excellency than the Scripture was intended to.

And thus I have done with this weighty subject, that the Scripture, which contains the promises of our rest, is the certain infallible word of God. The reason why I have thus digressed, and said so much of it, is, because I was very apprehensive of the great necessity of it, and the common neglect of being grounded in it; and withal, that this is

the very heart of my whole discourse; and that if this be doubted of, all the rest that I have said will be in vain. If men doubt of the truth, they will not regard the goodness. And the reason why I have said no more, but passed over the most common arguments, is, because they are handled in many books already; which I advise Christians to be better versed in. To the mere English reader I commend especially these: Sir Philip Morney, Lord du Plessis's 'Verity of Christian Religion;' Grotius 'Of the Truth of Christian Religion,' which is lately translated into English; and Mr. Perrin's 'Cases of Conscience,' (lib. ii. c. 3); Parson's 'Book of Resolution,' corrected by Bunny, (the second part.) Dr. Jackson on the Creed, and (come forth since I began this) Mr. White's, of Dorchester, 'Directions for Reading Scripture.' Mr. John Goodwin's 'Divine Authority of Scripture Asserted.' Also, read a book called, 'A Body of Divinity,' (first part,) written by our honest and faithful countryman, Colonel Edward Leigh. Also, Ursinus's Catechism on this question; and Ball's Catechism, with the exposition, which, to those that cannot get larger treatises, is very useful.

For the question, How it may be known which books are canonical? I here meddle not with it: I think human testimony, with the fore-mentioned qualifications, must do most in determining that. Yet we must carefully distinguish between those canonical books which have been questioned, and those which were unquestioned, but delivered by more infallible tradition; and also between those which contain most of the substance of our faith, and those which do not.

Prop. 1. No book in the canon was ever generally doubted of; but when one church doubted of it, others received it, from whom we have as much reason to receive them, as from the Roman church.

Prop. 2. Those books which have been generally received, are known to be canonical, by the same way, and testimony, and means, as the Scripture in general is known to be God's word.

Prop. 3. It is not a thing which one cannot be saved without, to believe every particular book to be canonical; if we believe all that were generally received, yea, or but one book which containeth the substance of christian doctrine, though we doubt of those, that some formerly doubted of, it would not exclude from salvation. The books are received for the doctrine's sake. It is vain cavilling, therefore, for the papists, when they put us to prove the canon, they stick only on the questioned books; especially when those were but few and short. Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul's writings, which are full, and contain the main body of christian doctrine, do, withal, contain the characters of their own canonical verity, which, seconded by the conveyance of universal, rational, infallible tradition, (not Romish authoritative tradition, or the judgment of the pope, or the present church,) may certainly be discerned; even with a saving certainty, by those that are specially illuminated by God's Spirit; and with an ordinary rational certainty, by those that have God's common help.

I conclude this as I began, with an earnest request to ministers that they would preach, and to people that they would study this subject more thoroughly; that while they firmly believe the truth of that word which promiseth them rest, and prescribes them the means thereto, they may believe, and hope, and love, and long, and obey, and labour, with the more seriousness, and liveliness, and patient constancy.

CHAP. VIII

Rest for none but the People of God, proved.

SECT. I. It may here be expected, that as I have proved, that this rest remaineth for the people of God; so I should now prove, that it remaineth only for them; and that the rest of the world shall have no part in it. But the Scripture is so full and plain in this, that I suppose it needless to those who believe Scripture. Christ hath resolved, that

those who make light of him, and the offers of his grace, shall never taste of his supper: "and that without holiness, none shall see God: and that, except a man be regenerate, and born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That he that believes not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him: that no unclean person, nor covetous, nor railer, nor drunkard, &c., shall enter into the kingdom of Christ, and of God." (Eph. 5:4, 5.) "That the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all they that forget God: that all they shall be damned that obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:12.) "That Christ will come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And Christ himself hath opened the very manner of their process in judgment, and the sentence of their condemnation to eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25.) So that here is no rest for any but the people of God, except you will call the intolerable everlasting flames of hell a rest.

And it were easy to manifest this also by reason. For, First, God's justice requires an inequality of men's state hereafter, as there was of their lives here. And, Secondly, They that walk not in the way of rest, and use not the means, are never likely to obtain the end: they would not follow Christ in the regeneration, nor accept of rest upon his conditions; they thought him to be too hard a master, and his way too narrow, and his laws too strict: they chose the pleasures of sin for a season, rather than to suffer affliction with the people of God: they would not suffer with Christ, that so they might reign with him. What they made choice of, that they did enjoy; they had their good things in this life; and what they did refuse, it is but reason they should want: how oft would Christ have gathered them to him, and they would not; and he useth to make men willing before he saves them, and not to save them against their wills.

Therefore will the mouth of the wicked be stopped for ever, and all the world shall acknowledge the justice of God. Had the ungodly but

returned before their life was expired, and been heartily willing to accept of Christ for their Saviour and their King, and to be saved by him in his way, and upon his most reasonable terms, they might have been saved.

Object. But may not God be better than his word, and save those that he doth not promise to save?

Answ. But not false of his word, in saving those whom he hath said he will not save. Men's souls are in a doleful case when they have no hope of happiness, except the word of God prove false. To venture a man's eternal salvation, upon hope that God will be better than his word, that is, in plain English, that the God of truth will prove a liar, is somewhat beyond stark madness, which hath no name bad enough to express it.

Yet do I believe, that the description of God's people in England, and in America, must not be the same; because, as God's revelations are not the same, so neither is the actual faith which is required in both the same; and as the written and positive laws in the church were never given them, so obedience to those mere positives is not required of them. Whether, then, the threats against unbelievers be meant of unbelief privative and positive only, and not negative (such as is all non-believing that which was never revealed); or, whether their believing that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him, will serve the turn there; or, whether God hath no people there? I acknowledge again is yet past my understanding.

So that in what is said, you may discern not only the truth, but also the reason and equity, that none but God's people shall enter into his rest. Though God's will is the first cause of all things, yet all the fault lies in sinners themselves. Their consciences shall one day tell them that they might have been saved, if they would; and that it was their own wilful refusal, which shut them out. God freely offered them life, and they would not accept it on his own easy and reasonable conditions. They perish, because they would not be saved in God's

way. The pleasures of the flesh seemed more desirable to them than the glory of the saints: Satan offered them the one, and God offered them the other, and they had free liberty to choose which they would; and they chose the pleasures of sin for a season, before the everlasting rest with Christ. And is it not a righteous thing, that they should be denied that which they denied to accept? Nay, when God pressed them so earnestly, and persuaded them so importunately, and even beseeched them by his messengers, and charged us to compel men by importunity, and taking no denial, to come in; and, yet, they would not; where should they be, but among the dogs without? Though man be so wicked, that he will not yield, till the mighty power of grace do prevail with him, yet, still we may truly say, that he may be saved, if he will, on God's terms. And his disability being moral, lying in wilful wickedness, is no more excuse to him, than it is to a common adulterer, that he cannot love his own wife; or to a malicious person, that he cannot choose but hate his brother: is he not so much the worse, and deserveth so much the sorer punishment? As, therefore, I would have all sinners believe this, so I would advise all ministers more to preach it. Pry not too much into the depths of God's decrees. Alas! how little know we of far lower things! lay all the blame on the wills of sinners; bend your speeches to persuade their wills. Is not that the business of our calling? Let me give you but one argument, which deserves to be considered. Sinners shall lay all the blame on their own wills in hell for ever. Hell is a rational torment by conscience, according to the nature of the rational subject. If sinners could but say, then, it was long of God, whose will did necessitate me, and not of me, it would quiet their consciences, and ease their torment, and make hell to be no hell to themselves. But to remember their wilfulness, will feed the fire, and cause the worm of conscience never to die.

CHAP. IX

Reasons why this Rest remains, and is not here enjoyed.

SECT. I. The next thing promised in the beginning, in my method, which in the first edition I forgot to perform, is to show you, why this rest must yet remain, and not be enjoyed till we come to another world. And I will speak but a little to this, because it may be gathered from what is said before; and because much is said to it in the first and second chapters of the fourth part.

And First, The main reason is the will of God, that it should be so. Who should dispose of the creatures, but he that made them; and order the times and changes of them, but their absolute Lord, who only also hath wisdom to order them for the best, and power to see his will accomplished? You may therefore as well ask, Why have we not the spring and harvest without winter? And why is the earth below, and the heavens above? And why is not all the world a sun, that it may be more glorious? &c.; as to ask, why we have not rest on earth?

2. Yet may you easily see satisfactory reason in the thing itself also. As first, God should subvert the established order in nature, if he should give us our rest on earth. All things must come to their perfection by degrees: nothing is perfect in its beginning, where the fall brought an imperfection. The strongest man must first be a child, and formed in the womb from small obscure principles. The greatest scholar must first be a schoolboy, and begin in his alphabet. In the best-ordered governments men must come to their dignity and authority by degrees, beginning at the lower, and rise as they deserve. The skilfullest artificer was first an ignorant learner. The tallest oak was once an acorn. This is the constant course of nature in the production of sublunary things; and I know none that deny it, but only some enthusiasts concerning the production of grace, who think they are taught of God fully in an instant; and think themselves perfect, as soon as they have learned the opinion of the perfectionists; when all knowing men about them discern their imperfections; yea, such horrid paganism and profaneness in some of them, as if they had almost renounced humanity and reason. Now,

this life is our infancy; and would we be perfect in the womb, or born at full stature; must God overturn the course of nature for us?

3. And it were an absurdity in morality, as well as a monster in nature, if our rest and full content were here. For, First, It would be injurious both to God and to ourselves.

First, To God; and that both in this life, and in the life to come. 1. In this life it would be injurious to God, both in regard of what he is here to do for us, and in regard of what he is to receive, as it were, from us. 1. If our rest were here, then most of God's providences must be useless, his great designs must be frustrated, and his gracious workings and mercies needless to us. Should God lose the glory of all his churches' deliverances, of the fall of his enemies, of his wonders and miracles wrought to this end, and that all men may have their happiness here? If the Israelites must have been kept from the brick-kilns, and from the danger of the Egyptians' pursuit, and of the Red Sea, then God must have lost the exercise of his great power, and justice, and mercy, and the mighty name that he got upon Pharaoh. If they had not felt their wilderness necessities, God should not have exercised his wilderness providences and mercies. If man had kept his first rest in paradise, God had not had opportunity to manifest that far greater love to the world in the giving of his Son. If man had not fallen into the depth of misery, Christ had not come down from the height of glory, nor died, nor risen, nor been believed on in the world. If we were all well, what need we the Physician. And if all were happy, and innocent, and perfect, what use were there for the glorious works of our sanctification, justification, preservation, and glorification: what use for his ministers, and word, sacraments, and afflictions, and deliverances?

2. And, as God should not have opportunity for the exercise of all his grace, but some only; so he would not have returns from us for all. We should never fear offending him, and depend on him so closely, and call upon him so earnestly, if we wanted nothing. Do we not now feel how ready our prayers are to freeze, and how sleepily we serve

him, and how easily we let slip, or run over a duty, if we be but in health, and credit, and prosperity, though still we are far from all content and rest? How little then should he hear from us, if we had what we would have! God delighteth in the soul that is humble and contrite, and trembleth at his word; but there would be little of this in us, if we had here our full desires. What glorious songs of praise had God from Moses, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness; from Deborah, and Hannah, and David, and Hezekiah; from all his churches, and from each particular gracious soul in every age! which he should never have had, if they had been the choosers of their own condition, and had nothing but rest. Have not thine own highest joys and praises to God, reader, been occasioned by thy dangers, or sorrows, or miseries? We think we could praise God best, if we wanted nothing; but experience tells us the contrary; we may have a carnal joy in congratulating our flesh's felicity, which may deceive an hypocrite; but not so sensible acknowledgments of God: indeed, in heaven, when we are fit for such a state, it will be far otherwise. The greatest glory and praise that God hath through the world, is for redemption, reconciliation, and salvation by Christ; and was not man's misery the occasion of that? Besides, as variety is part of the beauty of the creation, so it is of Providence also. If all the trees, or herbs, or fowls, or beasts, or fishes, were of one kind, and all the world were but like the sea, all water, or like one plain field, yea, or one sun, it were a diminution of its beauty. And, if God should exercise here but one kind of providence, and bestow but one kind of grace (delight), and receive thanks but for one, it would be a diminution of the beauty of Providence.

2. And it would be no small injury to ourselves, as well as to God, if we had our full contents and rest on earth: and that both now and for ever. 1. At the present it would be much our loss; where God loseth the opportunity of exercising his mercies, man must needs lose the happiness of enjoying them. And where God loseth his praises, man doth certainly his comforts. Oh! the sweet comforts that the saints have had in returns to their prayers; when they have lain long in sorrow, and importunate requests, and God hath lifted them up, and

spoken peace to their souls, and granted their desires, and said, as Christ, "Be of good cheer, son, thy sins are forgiven thee;" arise from thy bed of sickness, and walk, and live. How should we know what a tender-hearted Father we have, and how gladly he would meet us, and take us in his arms, if we had not, as the prodigal, been denied the husks of earthly pleasure and profit, which the worldly swine do feed upon? We should never have felt Christ's tender hand, binding up our wounds, and wiping the blood from them, and the tears from our eyes, if we had not fallen into the hands of thieves, and if we had not had tears to be wiped away. We should never have had those sweetest texts in our Bibles, "Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden," &c. and "To every one that is athirst, come and buy freely," &c. and "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" and "Thus saith the High and Lofty One, I dwell with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit," &c.; if we had not been weary, and heavy laden, and thirsty, and poor, and humble, and contrite. In a word, we should all lose our redemption-mercies, our sanctification, justification, and adoption-mercies; our sermon, sacrament, and prayer-mercies; our recoveries, deliverances, and thanksgiving-mercies, if we had not our miseries and sorrows to occasion them.

3. And it would be our loss for the future, as well as for the present. It is a delight to a soldier, or a traveller, to look back upon his adventures and escapes when they are over; and for a saint in heaven, to look back upon the state he was in on earth, and remember his sins, his sorrows, his fears, his tears, his enemies and dangers, his wants and calamities, must needs make his joys to be, rationally, more joyful. And, therefore, the blessed in their praising of the Lamb, do mention his redeeming them out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and so out of their misery and wants, and sins which redemption doth relate to, and making them kings and priests to God. When they are at the end, they look back upon the way. When the fight is done, and the danger over, and their sorrow gone, yet their rejoicing in the remembrance of it, is not done, nor the praises of their Redeemer yet over. But if we should have had nothing but content, and rest on earth, what room would there have

been for these rejoicings and praises hereafter? So that you see, 1. It would be our loss. 2. And then our incapacity forbids it, as well as our commodity. We are not capable of rest on earth; or we have both a natural incapacity, and a moral.

1. A natural incapacity, both in regard of the subject and the object; that is, both in regard of our personal unfitness, and the defect or absence of what might be our happiness.

1. Ourselves are now incapable subjects of happiness and rest: and that both in respect of soul and body. 1. Can a soul that is so weak in all grace, so prone to sin, so hampered with contradicting principles and desires, and so nearly joined to such a neighbour as this flesh, have full content and rest in such a case? What is rest, but the perfection of our graces in habit, and in act; to love God perfectly, and know him, and rejoice in him? How then can the Spirit be at rest, that finds so little of this knowledge, and love, and joy? What is the rest but our freedom from sin, and imperfections, and enemies? And can the soul have rest that is pestered with all these, and that continually? What makes the souls of sensible Christians so groan and complain, desiring to be delivered, and to cry out so oft in the language of Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" If they can be contented, and rest in such a state, what makes every Christian to press hard toward the mark, and run that they may obtain, and strive to enter in, if they are capable of rest in their present condition? Doubtless, therefore, doth God perfectly purge every soul at its removal from the body, before he receives it to his glory, not only because iniquity cannot dwell with him in the most holy, but, also, because themselves are incapable of the joy and glory, while they have imperfect, sinful souls. The right qualification of our own spirits, for reception and action, is of absolute necessity to our happiness and rest.

2. And our bodies are incapable as well as our souls. They are not now those sun-like bodies which they shall be, when this corruptible hath put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. They are our

prisons, and our burdens; so full of infirmities, and defects, that we are fain to spend the most of our time in repairing them, and supplying their continual wants, and lenifying their grievances. Is it possible that an immortal soul should have rest, in such a rotten, dirty, diseased, wayward, distempered, noisome habitation; when it must every day expect to be turned out, and leave its beloved companion to the worms? Surely these sickly, weary, loathsome bodies must be refined to a perfection suitable thereto, before they can be capable of enjoying rest.

Answ. 2. As we are unfit for rest on earth ourselves, so we want those objects that might afford us content and rest. For, First, Those we do enjoy are insufficient; and, Secondly, That which is sufficient is absent from us. 1. We enjoy the world and its labours, and what fruit they can afford; and, alas! what is in all this to give us rest? They that have the most of it, have the greatest burden, and the least rest of any others. They that set most by it, and rejoice most in it, do all cry out at last of its vanity and vexation. A contentation with our present estate, indeed, we must have; that is, a competent provision in our journey; but not as our portion, happiness, or rest. Men cry out upon one another in these times, for not understanding providences, which are but commentaries on Scripture, and not the text. But if men were not blind, they might easily see that the first lecture that God readeth to us in all our late changes, and which providence doth still most inculcate and insist on, is the very same that is the first and greatest lesson in the Scripture; that is, that 'There is no rest nor happiness for the soul, but in God.' Men's expectations are high raised upon every change, and inexperienced fools do promise themselves presently a heaven upon earth; but when they come to enjoy it, it flieth from them, and when they have run themselves out of breath in following this shadow, it is no nearer them than at the first setting out, and would have been as near them if they had sat still: as Solomon's dreamer, they feast in their sleep, but awake hungry. He that hath any regard to the works of the Lord, may easily see that the very end of them is to take down our idols, to weary us in the world, and force us to seek our rest in him. Where doth he cross

us most, but where we promise ourselves most content? If you have one child that you dote upon, it becomes your sorrow. If you have one friend that you trust in, and judge him unchangeable, and think yourself happy in, he is estranged from you, or becomes your scourge. Oh, what a number of these experiences have I had! Oh, what sweet idolising thoughts of our future estate had we in the time of wars! And even now where is the rest that I promised my soul? Even that is my greatest grief, from which I expected most content.

And for this, the greatest shame that ever befell our religion, and the greatest sorrow to every understanding Christian, God hath the solemn thanks of men, as if they begged that he would do so still; and they rejoice in it, and are heinously offended with those that dare not do so too, and run to God on all their errands. Instead of pure ordinances, we have a puddle of errors, and the ordinances themselves cried down and derided. Instead of the power and plenty of the Gospel, we have everywhere plenty of violent gainsayers and seducers. We have pulpits and pamphlets filled with the most hellish reproachings of the servants and messengers of the most high God; provoking the people to hate their teachers, slandering them with that venom and impudent falsehood, as if the devil in them were bidding defiance to Christ, and were now entered upon his last and greatest battle with the Lamb; as if they would justiy Rabshakeh, and have Lucian and Julian sainted for the modesty of their reproaches. If a conscionable minister be but in doubt (as knowing himself incapable of understanding state mysteries, and not called to judge of them), and so dare not go whine before God hypoeritically in pretended humiliation, nor rejoice and give thanks when men command him, and read their scriptures; that is, their orders, which ministers were to read on pain of deposition or ejection, as knowing that men are fallible; and if a man should upon mistake incur the guilt of so heinous inexpressible sin, it were a fearful thing: and, therefore, that to go to God doubtingly, or ignorantly, in an extraordinary duty, in a cause of such weight, is a desperate venture, far beyond venturing upon ceremonies, or popish transubstantiation, to say Christ is really present in the bread, for refusing of which the

martyrs suffered in the flames; I say, if he dare not do these, he must part from his dear people, whose souls are more precious to him than his life. Oh! how many congregations in England have been again forced to part with their teachers in sorrow, not to speak of the ejection of such numbers in our universities! And for our so-much-desired discipline and holy order, was there ever a people under heaven, who called themselves reformers, that opposed it more desperately, and that vilified it, and railed against it more scurrilously, as if it were but the device of ambitious presbyters, that traitorously sought domination over their superiors, and not the law and order established by Christ? as if these men had never read the Scriptures, (Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Thess. 5:10–12; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 4:1; Matt. 24:25–27; Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:1, 4–6, 4:11, 5:17–20,) or will tread in the dirt the laws of Christ, which must judge them. And for railing at the ministers of the Gospel, the pretenders of religion have so far outstripped the former profane ones, that it even woundeth my soul to think of their condition. Oh, where are the tender-hearted mourners that shall weep over England's sins and reproaches! Is this a place or state of rest? Hath not God met with our idolatrous setting up of creatures, and taught us that all are not saints that can talk of religion? much less are these pillars of our confidence, or the instruments to prepare us a rest upon earth. O that all this could warn us to set less by creatures, and at last to fetch our comforts and contentments from our God!

2. And as what we enjoy here is insufficient to be our rest, so God, who is sufficient, is little here enjoyed. It is not here that he hath prepared the presence-chamber of his glory; he hath drawn the curtain between us and him; we are far from him as creatures, and farther as frail mortals, and farthest as sinners. We hear now and then a word of comfort from him, and receive his love-tokens, to keep up our hearts and hopes; but, alas! this is not our full enjoyment. While we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord: even absent while he is present. For though he be not far from us, seeing we live, and move, and have our being in him, who is all in all, (not in all places, but all places in him,) yet have we not eyes now

capable of seeing him, for mortals cannot see God and live: even as we are present with stones and trees, but they neither see nor know us. And can any soul that hath made God his portion, and chosen him for his only happiness and rest, (as every one doth that shall be saved by him,) find rest in so vast a distance from him; and so seldom and so small enjoyment of him?

3. And lastly, as we are thus naturally incapable, so are we also morally. (Gen. 32:10.) There is a worthiness must go before our rest. It hath the nature of a reward; not a reward of debt, but a reward of grace. (Rom. 4:3, 4.) And so we have not a worthiness of debt, or proper merit; but a worthiness of grace and preparation. If the apostles must give their peace and Gospel to the worthy, (Matt. 10:10–13, 37, 38; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:11,) Christ will give the crown to none but the worthy; and those which, by preferring the world before him, do show themselves unworthy, shall not taste of his supper. (Matt. 22:8; Luke 14:24, 20:35, and 22:36; 2 Thess. 1:5; Acts 5:41.) Yea, it is a work of God's justice, to give the crown to those that overcome: not of his legal, but his evangelical justice, for Christ hath bought us to it, and God hath promised it, and, therefore, in his judiciary process, he will adjudge it them as their due. To those that have fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith, a crown of righteousness is laid up for them, which the Lord, as a righteous Judge, will give them at that day. (2 Tim. 4:7, 8.) And are we fit for the crown before we have overcome; or the prize, before we have run the race; or to receive our penny, before we have worked in the vineyard; or to be ruler of ten cities, before we have improved our ten talents; or to enter into the joy of our Lord, before we have well done as good and faithful servants; or to inherit the kingdom before we have testified our love to Christ above the world, if we have opportunity? Let men cry down works while they please, you shall find that these are the conditions of the crown; so that God will not alter the course of justice to give you rest, before you have laboured; nor the crown of glory, till you have overcome.

You see, then, reason enough why our rest should remain till the life to come. O take heed, then, christian reader, how thou darest to contrive and care for a rest on earth; or to murmur at God for thy trouble and toil, and wants in the flesh. Doth thy poverty weary thee? thy sickness weary thee? thy bitter enemies and unkind friends weary thee? why, it should be so here. Do thy seeing and hearing the abominations of the times, the ruins of the church, the sins of professors, the reproach of religion, the hardening of the wicked, all weary thee? why, it must be so while thou art absent from thy rest. Do thy sins, and thy naughty distempered heart weary thee? I would thou wast wearied with it more. But, under all this weariness, art thou willing to go to God, thy rest; and to have thy warfare accomplished; and thy race and labour ended? If not, O complain more of thy own heart, and get it more weary, till rest seem more desirable.

CHAP. X

Whether the Souls departed enjoy this Rest before the Resurrection.

SECT. I. I have but one thing more to clear, before I come to the use of this doctrine; and that is, whether this rest remains till the resurrection, before we shall enjoy it; or whether we shall have any possession of it before? The Socinians, and many others of late among us, think the soul separated from the body, is either nothing, or at least not capable of happiness or misery. Truly, if it should be so, it would be somewhat a sad uncomfortable doctrine to the godly at their death, to think of being deprived of their glory till the resurrection; and somewhat comfortable to the wicked to think of tarrying out of hell so long. But I am in strong hopes that this doctrine is false; yea, very confident that it is so. I do believe, that as the soul separated from the body, is not a perfect man, so it doth not enjoy the glory and happiness so fully and so perfectly, as it shall do after the resurrection, when they are again conjoined. What the

difference is, and what degree of glory souls in the mean time enjoy, are too high things for mortals particularly to discern. For the great question, what place the souls of those before Christ, of infants, and all others since Christ, do remain in, till the resurrection? I think it is a vain inquiry of what is yet beyond our reach. It is a great question what place is; but if it be only a circumstant body, and if to be in a place, be only to be in a circumstant body, or in the superficies of an ambient body, or in the concavity of that superficies, then it is doubtful whether spirits can be properly said to be in a place. We can have yet no clear conceivings of these things. But that separated souls of believers do enjoy inconceivable blessedness and glory, even while they remain thus separated from the body, I prove, as followeth. (Besides all those arguments, for the soul's immortality, which you may read in Alexander Ross's 'Philosophical Touchstone,' part last; and in abundance of writers, metaphysical and theological.)

1. Those words of Paul, (2 Cor. 5:8,) are so exceedingly plain, that I yet understand not what tolerable exception can be made against them. "Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." (Ver. 6–8.) What can be spoken more plainly. So also verses 1–4 of the same chapter.

2. As plain is that in Phil. 1:23. "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." What sense were in these words, if Paul had not expected to enjoy Christ till the resurrection? Why should he be in a strait, or desire to depart? Should he be with Christ ever the sooner for that? Nay, should he not have been loath to depart upon the very same grounds? For while he was in the flesh, he enjoyed something of Christ; but being departed, (according to the Socinians' doctrine,) he should enjoy nothing of Christ till the day of resurrection.

3. And plain enough is that of Christ to the thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The dislocation of the words "This day" is

but a gross evasion.

4. And surely if it be but a parable of the rich man in hell, and Lazarus; yet it seems unlikely to me, that Christ would teach them by such a parable, what seemed evidently to intimate and suppose the soul's happiness or misery presently after death, if there were no such thing.

5. Doth n othis argument against the Sadducees, for the resurrection run upon this supposition, that (God being not the God of the dead, but of the living, therefore) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were then living, i.e., in soul, and, consequently, should have their bodies raised at the resurrection?

6. Plain also is that in Rev. 14:13, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them;" i.e., close as the garments on a man's back follow him, and not at such a distance as the resurrection; for if the blessedness were only in resting in the grave, then a beast or a stone were as blessed; nay, it were evidently a curse, and not a blessing. For was not life a great mercy; was it not a greater mercy to enjoy all the comforts of life; to enjoy the fellowship of the saints, the comfort of the ordinances, and much of Christ in all; to be employed in the delightful work of God, and to edify his church? &c. Is it not a curse to be so deprived of all these; do not these yield a great deal more sweetness, than all the troubles of this life can yield us bitterness? Though I think not, as some, that it is better to be most miserable, even in hell, than not to be at all; yet it is undeniable, that it is better to enjoy life, and so much of the comforts of life, and so much of God in comforts and affliction as the saints do, though we have all this with persecution; than to lie rotting in the grave, if that were all we could expect. Therefore it is some further blessedness that is there promised.

7. How else is it said, "that we are come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of

angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect?" (Heb. 12:22, 23.) Surely, at the resurrection the body will be made perfect, as well as well as the spirit. To say (as Lushington doth) that they are said to be made perfect, because they are sure of it as if they had it, is an evasion so grossly contradicting the text, that by such commentaries he may as well deny any truth in Scripture; to make good which, he as much abuseth that of Phil. 3:12.

8. Doth not the Scripture tell us, that Enoch and Elias are taken up already: and shall we think that they possess that glory alone?

9. Did not Peter, and James, and John, see Moses also with Christ on the mount? yet the Scripture saith Moses died. And is it likely that Christ did delude their senses, in showing them Moses, if he should not partake of that glory till the resurrection?

10. And is not that of Stephen as plain as we can desire? "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Surely, if the Lord receive it, it is neither asleep, nor dead, nor annihilated; but it is where he is, and beholds his glory.

11. The like may be said of that, "The spirit shall return to God who gave it." (Eccles. 12:7.)

12. How else is it said, "that we have eternal life already?" (John 6:54.) And that "the knowledge of God (which is begun here) is eternal life?" (John 17:3.) So 1 John 5:13, "And he that believeth on Christ, hath everlasting life. He that eateth this bread shall not die. For he dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him. And as the Son liveth by the Father, so he that eateth him, shall live by him." (John 3:36; John 6:47, 50, 56, 57.) How is "the kingdom of God and of heaven (which is eternal) said to be in us?" (Luke 17:21; Rom. 14:17; Matt. 13.)

Surely, if there be so great an interruption of our life as till the resurrection, which with some will be many thousand years, this is

no eternal life, nor everlasting kingdom. Lushington's evasion is, "that because there is no time with dead men, but they so sleep that when they awake, it is all one to them as if it had been at first; therefore the Scripture speaks of them as if they were there already." It is true, indeed, if there were no joy till the resurrection, then that consideration would be comfortable; but when God hath thus plainly told us of it before, then this evasion contradicteth the text. Doubtless there is time also to the dead, though, in respect of their bodies, they perceive it not. He will not surely think it a happiness to be putrified or stupified, whilst others are enjoying the comforts of life: if he do, it were the best course to sleep out our lives.

13. In Jude 7, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are spoken of, as "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:" and if the wicked do already suffer eternal fire, then no doubt but the godly do enjoy eternal blessedness. I know some understand the place, of that fire which consumed their bodies, as being a type of the fire of hell: I will not be very confident against this exposition, but the text seemeth plainly to speak more.

14. It is also observable, that when John saw his glorious revelations, he is said to be "in the Spirit," (Rev. 1:10, and 21:10,) and to be "carried away in the Spirit." (Rev. 17:3, and 21:10.) And when Paul had his revelations, and saw things unutterable, he knew not whether it were in the body, or out of the body. All implying that spirits are capable of these glorious things, without the help of their bodies.

15. And though it be a prophetic, obscure book, yet it seems to me, that those words in the Revelation do imply this, where John saw the souls under the altar. (Rev. 6:9, &c.)

16. We are commanded by Christ, "not to fear them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Luke 12:4.) Doth not this plainly imply, that when wicked men have killed our bodies, that is, separated the souls from them, yet the souls are still alive?

17. The soul of Christ was alive when his body was dead, and therefore so shall ours too; for his created nature was like ours, except in sin. That Christ's human soul was alive, is a necessary consequent of its hypostatical union with the divine nature, as I judge. And by his words to the thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise:" so also by his voice on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46.) And whether that in 1 Pet. 3:18, 19, that he went and preached to the spirits in prison, &c., will prove it, I leave to others to judge. Read Illyricus's arguments in his 'Clavis Scripturæ' on this text. Many think that the opposition is not so irregular, as to put the dative σαρκὶ for ἐν σαρκί, as the subject recipient, and the dative πνεύματι for διὰ πνεύματος, as the efficient cause; but that it is plainly to be understood as a regular opposition, that Christ was mortified in the flesh, but vivified in the spirit, that is, in the spirit which is usually put in opposition to this flesh, which is the soul, by which spirit, &c. But I leave this as doubtful; there is enough besides.

18. Why is there mention of God's breathing into man the breath of life, and calling his soul a living soul? There is no mention of any such thing in the creating of other creatures, surely, therefore, this makes some difference between the life of our souls and theirs.

19. It appears in Saul's calling for Samuel to the witch, and in the Jews' expectation of the coming of Elias, that they took it for current, then, that Elias and Samuel's souls were living.

20. Lastly: If the spirits of those that were disobedient in the days of Noah, were in prison, (1 Pet. 3:19,) then certainly the separated spirits in the just, are in an opposite condition of happiness. If any say that the word "prison" signifieth not their full misery, but a reservation thereto, I grant it, yet it importeth a reservation in a living and suffering state, for were they nothing, they could not be in prison.

Though I have but briefly named these twenty arguments, and put them together in a narrow room, when some men cannot see the truth without a multitude of words; yet I doubt not but, if you will well consider them, you will discern the clear evidence of scripture verity. It is a lamentable case that the brutish opinion of the soul's mortality, should find so many patrons professing godliness, when there is so clear light of Scripture against them, and when the opinion tends to no other end than the emboldening of sin, the cherishing of security, and the great discomfort and discouragement of the saints, and when many pagans were wiser in this without the help of Scripture: surely, this error is an introduction to paganism itself. Yea more, the most of the nations in the world, even the barbarous Indians do, by the light of nature, acknowledge that, which these men deny, even that there is a happiness and misery which the souls go presently to, which are separated from their bodies. I know the silly, evading answers that are usually given to the forementioned scriptures, which being carried with confidence and subtle words, may soon shake the ordinary sort of Christians that are not able to deal with a sophister. And if they be thoroughly dealt with, they presently appear to be mere vanity or contradiction. Were there but that one text, 2 Cor. 5:8; or that, 1 Pet. 3:19; or that, Phil. 1:23; all the seducers in the world could not answer them.

Believe, therefore, steadfastly, O faithful souls, that whatever all the deceivers in the world shall say to the contrary, your souls shall no sooner leave their prisons of flesh, but angels will be their convoy, Christ will be their company, with all the perfected spirits of the just: heaven will be their residence, and God will be their happiness. And you may boldly and believingly, when you die, say, as Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and commend it, as Christ did, into a Father's hands.

THE THIRD PART
TO MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS
THE
INHABITANTS
OF
THE CITY OF COVENTRY,
BOTH MAGISTRATES AND PEOPLE,

RICHARD BAXTER devoteth this part of this Treatise, in thankful acknowledgment of their great affection toward him, and ready acceptance of his labours among them, which is the highest recompense, if joined with obedience, that a faithful minister can expect;

HUMBLY beseeching the Lord on their behalf, that he will save them from that spirit of pride, hypocrisy, dissension, and giddiness, which is of late years gone forth, and is now destroying and making havoc of the churches of Christ; and that he will teach them highly to esteem those faithful teachers whom the Lord hath made rulers over them, (1 Thes. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:7, 17,) and to know them so to be, and to obey them: and that he will keep them unspotted of the guilt of those sins, which in these days have been the shame of our religion, and have made us a scandal or scorn to the world.

CHAP. I

SECT. I. Whatsoever the soul of man doth entertain, must make its first entrance at the understanding; which must be satisfied, first of its truth, and, secondly, of its goodness, before it find any further admittance; if this porter be negligent, it will admit of any thing that bears but the face or name of truth and goodness; but if it be faithful, able, and diligent in its office, it will examine strictly, and search to the quick; what is found deceitful, it casteth out, that it go no further; but what is found to be sincere and current, it letteth in to the very heart, where the will and affections do with welcome entertain it, and by concoction, as it were, incorporate it into their own substance. Accordingly, I have been hitherto presenting to your understandings, first, the excellency of the rest of saints, in the first part of this book; and then the verity in the second part. I hope your understandings have now tasted this food, and tried what hath been expressed. Truth fears not the light. This perfect beauty abhorreth darkness; nothing but ignorance of its worth can disparage it. Therefore search, and spare not; read, and read again, and then judge. What think you; is it good, or is it not? nay, is it not the chiefest good? And is there any thing in goodness to be compared with it? And is it true, or is it not? Nay, is there any thing in the world more certain, than that there remaineth a rest to the people of God? Why, if your understandings are convinced of both these, I do here, in the behalf of God and his truth, and in the behalf of your own souls, and their life, require the further entertainment hereof; and that you take this blessed subject of rest, and commend it as you have found it to your wills and affections; let your hearts now cheerfully embrace it, and improve it, and I shall present it to you, in its respective uses.

And though the laws of method do otherwise direct me, yet because I conceive it most profitable, I will lay close together in the first place, all those uses that most concern the ungodly, that they may know where to find their lesson, and not to pick it up and down intermixed with uses of another strain. And then I shall lay down those uses that are more proper to the godly by themselves in the end.

USE 1.

Showing the unconceivable misery of the ungodly in their loss of this Rest.

Sect. II. And first, If this rest be for none but for the people of God, what doleful tidings is this to the ungodly world! That there is so much glory, but none for them; so great joys for the saints of God, while they must consume in perpetual sorrows! Such rest for them that have obeyed the Gospel; while they must be restless in the flames of hell! If thou who readest these words, art in thy soul a stranger to Christ, and to the holy nature and life of his people, and art not of them who are before described, and shalt live and die in the same condition that thou art now in; let me tell thee, I am a messenger of the saddest tidings to thee, that ever yet thy ears did hear: that thou shalt never partake of the joys of heaven, nor have the least taste of the saints' everlasting rest. I may say to thee, as Ehud to Eglon, 'I have a message to thee from God; but it is a mortal message, against the very life and hopes of thy soul, that, as true as the word of God is true, thou shalt never see the face of God with comfort.' This sentence I am commanded to pass upon thee, from the word: take it as thou wilt, and escape it if thou canst. I know thy humble and hearty subjection to Christ would procure thy escape; and if thy heart and life were thoroughly changed, thy relation to Christ and eternity, would be changed also; he would then acknowledge thee for one of his people, and justify thee from all things that could be charged upon thee, and give thee a portion in the inheritance of his chosen; and if this might be the happy success of my message, I should be so far from repining like Jonas, that the threatenings of God are not executed upon thee, that, on the contrary, I should bless the day that ever God made me so happy a messenger, and return him hearty thanks upon my knees, that ever he blessed his word in my mouth with such desired success. But if thou end thy days in thy present condition, whether thou be fully resolved never to change, or whether thou spend thy days in fruitless proposing to be better

hereafter, all is one for that; I say, if thou live and die in thy unregenerate estate, as sure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet; as sure as thou livest, and breathest in this air, so sure shalt thou be shut out of this rest of the saints, and receive thy portion in everlasting fire. I do here expect that thou shouldst, in the pride and scorn of thy heart, turn back upon me, and show thy teeth, and say, 'Who made you the doorkeeper of heaven? When were you there? and, when did God show you the book of life, or tell you who they are that shall be saved, and who shut out?'

I will not answer thee according to thy folly, but truly and plainly as I can discover this thy folly to thyself, that if there be yet any hope, thou mayest recover thy understanding, and yet return to God and live. First, I do not name thee, nor any other: I do not conclude of the persons individually, and say, 'This man shall be shut out of heaven, and that man shall be taken in.' I only conclude it of the unregenerate in general, and of thee conditionally, if thou be such a one. Secondly, I do not go about to determine who shall repent, and who shall not; much less that thou shalt never repent, and come in to Christ. These things are unknown to me; I had far rather show thee what hopes thou hast before thee, if thou wilt not sit still and lose them, and by thy wilful carelessness cast away thy hopes; and I would far rather persuade thee to hearken in time, while there is hope and opportunity and offers of grace, and before the door is shut against thee, that so thy soul may return and live, than to tell thee that there is no hope of thy repenting and returning. But if thou lie, hoping that thou shalt return, and never do it; if thou talk of repenting and believing, but still art the same; if thou live and die with the world, and thy credit or pleasure nearer thy heart than Jesus Christ; in a word, if the foregoing description of the people of God do not agree with the state of thy soul, it is then a hard question, whether thou shalt ever be saved. Even as hard a question as, whether God be true, or the Scripture be his word. Cannot I certainly tell, that thou shalt perish for ever, except I had seen the book of life? Why, the Bible is also the book of life, and it describeth plainly those that shall be saved, and those that shall be condemned. Though it do

not name them, yet it tells you all those signs and conditions by which they may be known. Do I need to ascend up into heaven, to know, "that without holiness none shall see God;" (Heb. 12:14;) or, "that it is the pure in heart who shall see God;" (Matt. 5:8;) or, "that except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" (John 3:3;) or, "that he that believeth not (that is, stoops not to Christ as his King and Saviour) is condemned already, and that he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" (John 3:18, 36;) "and that except you repent, (which includes reformation,) you shall all perish:" (Luke 13:3, 5;) with an hundred more such plain scripture expressions. Cannot these be known without searching into God's counsels? Why, thou ignorant, or wilful self-deluding sot! Hath thy Bible lain by thee in thy house so long, and didst thou never read such words as these; or hast thou read it, or heard it read so often, and yet dost thou not remember such passages as these? Nay, didst thou not find that the great drift of the Scripture is, to show men who they are that shall be saved, and who not; and let them see the condition of both estates? And yet dost thou ask me, 'How I know who shall be saved?' What need I go up to heaven to inquire that of Christ, which he came down to earth to tell us; and sent his Spirit in his prophets and apostles to tell us; and hath left upon record to all the world? And though I do not know the secrets of thy heart, and therefore cannot tell thee by name whether it be thy state, or no; yet, if thou art but willing or diligent, thou mayest know thyself, whether thou art an heir of heaven, or not. And that is the main thing that I desire, that if thou be yet miserable, thou mayest discern it, and escape it. But canst thou possibly escape, if thou neglect Christ and salvation? (Heb. 2:3.) Is it not resolved on, "that if thou love father, mother, wife, children, house, lands, or thine own life, better than Christ, thou canst not be his disciple?" (Matt. 10:31; Luke 14:20;) and consequently can never be saved by him. Is this the word of man, or of God? Is it not then an undoubted concluded case, that in the case thou art now in, thou hast not the least title to heaven? Shall I tell thee from the word of God, it is as impossible for thee to be saved, except thou be born again, and be made a new creature, as it is for the devils themselves to be saved? Nay, God hath more plainly

and frequently spoken it in the Scripture, that such sinners as thou shall never be saved, than he hath done, that the devils shall never be saved. And doth not this tidings go cold to thy heart? Methinks, but that there is yet life and hope before thee, and thou hast yet time and means to have thy soul recovered, else it should kill thy heart with terror; and the sight of thy doleful, discovered case, should even strike thee dead with amazement and horror. If old Eli fell from his seat and died, to hear that the ark of God was gone, which was but an outward sign of his presence; how then should thy heart be astonished with this tidings, that thou hast lost the Lord God himself, and all thy title to his eternal presence and delight! If Rachel wept for children, and would not be comforted, because they were not; how then shouldst thou now sit down, and weep for the happiness, and future life of the soul, because to thee it is not! When king Belshazzar saw but a piece of a hand sent from God, writing over against him on the wall, it made his countenance change, his thoughts trouble him, his loins loosen in the joints, and knees smite one against another. (Dan. 5:6.) Why, what trembling then should seize on thee, who hast the hand of God himself against thee; not in a sentence or two only, but in the very tenor and scope of the Scriptures; not threatening thee with the loss of a kingdom only, as he did Belshazzar, but with the loss of thy part in the everlasting kingdom! But because I would fain have thee, if it be possible, to lay it close to thy heart, I will here stay a little longer, and show thee, First, The greatness of thy loss; and, Secondly, The aggravations of thy unhappiness in this loss; Thirdly, And the positive miseries that thou mayest also endure, with their aggravations.

Sect. III. First: The ungodly, in their loss of heaven, do lose all that glorious, personal perfection which the people of God do there enjoy. They lose that shining lustre of the body, surpassing the brightness of the sun at noon-day; though perhaps even the bodies of the wicked will be raised more spiritual, incorruptible bodies, than they were on earth: yet that will be so far from being a happiness to them, that it only makes them capable of the more exquisite torments; their understandings being now more capable of apprehending the

greatness of their loss, and their senses more capable of feeling their sufferings. They would be glad, then, if every member were a dead member, that it might not feel the punishment inflicted on it; and if the whole body were a rotten carcass, or might again lie down in the dust and darkness. The devil himself hath an angelical and excellent nature, but that only honoureth his skilful Creator, but is no honour or comfort at all to himself; the glory, the beauty, the comfortable perfections, they are deprived of; much more do they want that moral perfection which the blessed do partake of: those holy dispositions and qualifications of mind; that blessed conformity to the holiness of God; that cheerful readiness to his will; that perfect rectitude of all their actions: instead of these, they have their old, ulcerous, deformed souls, that perverseness of will, that disorder in their faculties, that loathing of good, that love to evil, that violence of passion, which they had on earth. It is true, their understandings will be much cleared, both by the ceasing of their temptation and deluding objects which they had on earth, as also by the sad experience which they will have in hell, of the falsehood of their former conceits and delusions; but this proceeds not from the sanctifying of their natures; and perhaps their experience and too-late understandings may restrain much of the evil motions of their wills, which they had formerly here on earth; but the evil disposition is never the more changed; so also will the conversation of the damned in hell be void of many of those sins which they commit here on earth. They will be drunk no more, and whore no more, and be gluttonous no more, nor oppress the innocent, nor grind the poor, nor devour the houses and estates of their brethren, nor be revenged on their enemies, nor persecute and destroy the members of Christ: all these, and many more actual sins, will then be laid aside. But this is not from any renewing of their natures; they have the same dispositions still, and fain they would commit the same sins, if they could: they want but opportunity; they are now tied up. It is part of their torment to be denied these their pleasures: no thanks to them, that they sin not as much as ever; their hearts are as bad, though their actions are restrained; nay, it is a great question whether those remainders of good which were left in their natures on earth, as their

common honesty and moral virtues, be not all taken from them in hell, according to that, "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matt. 3:12; Luke 8:18.) This is the judgment of divines generally; but because it is questionable, and much may be said against it, I will let that pass. But certainly they shall have none of the glorious perfections of the saints, either in soul or body: there will be a greater difference between these wretches and the glorified Christian, than there is betwixt a toad under a sill and the sun in the firmament. The rich man's purple robes and delicious fare did not so exalt him above Lazarus at his door in scabs, nor make the difference between them so wide, as it is now made on the contrary in their vast separation.

Sect. IV. Secondly: But the great loss of the damned, will be their loss of God; they shall have no comfortable relation to him, nor any of the saints' communion with him. As they did not like to retain God in their mind, but said to him, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," so God will abhor to retain them in his household, or to give them entertainment in his fellowship and glory. He will never admit them to the inheritance of his saints, nor endure them to stand amongst them in his presence; but bid them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not." Now, these men dare belie the Lord, if not blaspheme, in calling him by the title of their father. How boldly and confidently do they daily approach him with their lips, and indeed reproach him in their formal prayers, with that appellation, "Our Father!" As if God would father the devil's children; or as if the slights of Christ, the pleasers of the flesh, the friends of the world, the haters of godliness, or any that trade in sin, and delight in iniquity, were the offspring of heaven! They are ready now, in the height of their presumption, to lay as confident claims to Christ and heaven, as if they were sincere believing saints. The swearer, the drunkard, the whoremaster, the worldling, can scornfully say to the people of God, 'What! is not God our father, as well as yours? Doth he not love us as well as you? Will he save none but a few holy precisians?' Oh! but when that time is come, when the case must be decided, and Christ will separate his followers from his

foes, and his faithful friends from his deceived flatterers, where then will be their presumptuous claim to Christ? Then they shall find that God is not their father, but their resolved foe, because they would not be his people, but were resolved in their negligence and wickedness. Then, though they had preached, or wrought miracles in his name, he will not know them: and though they were his brethren or sisters after the flesh, yet he will not own them, but reject them as his enemies. And even those that did eat and drink in his presence on earth, shall be cast out of his heavenly presence for ever; and those that in his name did cast out devils, shall yet at his command be cast out to those devils, and endure the torments prepared for them. And, as they would not consent that God should by his Spirit dwell in them, so shall not these evil doers dwell with him. The tabernacles of wickedness shall have no fellowship with him; nor the wicked inhabit the city of God: for without are the dogs, the sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie. For God knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to perishing. God is first enjoyed in part on earth, before he be fully enjoyed in heaven. It is only they that walked with him here, who shall live and be happy with him there. Oh, little doth the world now know what a loss that soul hath, who loseth God! What were the world but a dungeon, if it had lost the sun? What were the body but a loathsome carrion, if it had lost the soul? Yet all these are nothing to the loss of God; even the little taste of the fruition of God, which the saints enjoy in this life, is dearer to them than all the world. As the world, when they feed upon their forbidden pleasures, may cry out with the sons of the prophet, "There's death in the pot!" (2 Kings 4:40;) so when the saints do but taste of the favour of God, they cry out with David, "In his favour is life!" (Psal. 30:5.) Nay, though life be naturally most dear to all men, yet they that have tasted and tried, do say with David, "His loving-kindness is better than life!" (Ps. 63:3.) So that, as the enjoyment of God is the heaven of the saints, so the loss of God is the hell of the ungodly. And, as the enjoying of God is the enjoying of all, so the loss of God is the loss of all.

Sect. V. Thirdly: Moreover, as they lose God, so they lose all those spiritual, delightful affections and actions, by which the blessed do feed on God: that transporting knowledge; those ravishing views of his glorious face; the inconceivable pleasure of loving God; the apprehensions of his infinite love to us; the constant joys which his saints are taken up with, and the rivers of consolation wherewith he doth satisfy them. Is it nothing to lose all this? The employment of a king in ruling a kingdom doth not so far exceed the employment of the vilest seullion or slave, as this heavenly employment exceedeth his.

These wretches had no delight in praising God on earth, their recreations and pleasures were of another nature; and now, when the saints are singing his praises, and employed in magnifying the Lord of saints, then shall the ungodly be denied this happiness, and have an employment suitable to their natures and deserts. Their hearts were full of hell upon earth, instead of God, and his love, and fear, and graces; there was pride, and self-love, and lust, and unbelief: and, therefore, hell must now entertain those hearts which formerly entertained so much of it. Their houses on earth were the resemblance of hell; instead of worshipping God, and calling upon his name, there was scorning at his worship, and swearing by his name: and now hell must therefore be their habitation for ever, where they shall never be troubled with that worship and duty which they abhorred, but join with the rest of the damned in blaspheming that God who is avenging their former impieties and blasphemies. Can it probably be expected, that they who made themselves merry, while they lived on earth, in deriding the persons and families of the godly, for their frequent worshipping and praising God, should at last be admitted into the family of heaven, and join with those saints in those most perfect praises? Surely, without a sound change upon their hearts before they go hence, it is utterly impossible. It is too late then to say, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are out; let us now enter with you to the marriage feast; let us now join with you in the joyful heavenly melody." You should have joined in it on earth, if you would have joined in heaven. As your eyes must be taken up with

other kind of sights, so must your hearts be taken up with other kind of thoughts, and your voices turned to another tune. As the doors of heaven will be shut against you, so will that joyous employment be denied to you. There is no singing the songs of Sion in the land of your thralldom. Those that go down to the pit do not praise him. Who can rejoice in the place of sorrows; and who can be glad in the land of confusion? God suits men's employments to their natures. The bent of your spirits was another way; your hearts were never set upon God in your lives; you were never admirers of his attributes and works, nor ever thoroughly warmed with his love. You never longed after the enjoyment of him; you had no delight to speak or to hear of him; you were weary of a sermon or prayer an hour long; you had rather have continued on earth, if you had known how; you had rather yet have a place of earthly preferment, or lands and lordships, or a feast, or sports, or your cups, or whores, than to be interested in the glorious praises of God: and is it meet, then, that you should be members of the celestial quire? A swine is fitter for a lecture of philosophy, or an ass to build a city or govern a kingdom, or a dead corpse to feast at thy table, than thou art for this work of heavenly praise.

Sect. VI. Fourthly: They shall also be deprived of the blessed society of angels and glorified saints. Instead of being companions of those happy spirits, and numbered with those joyful and triumphing kings, they must now be members of the corporation of hell, where they shall have companions of a far different nature and quality. While they lived on earth, they loathed the saints; they imprisoned, banished them, and cast them out of their societies, or at least they would not be their companions in labour, and in sufferings; and, therefore, they shall not now be their companions in their glory; scorning them and abusing them, hating them, and rejoicing in their calamities, was not the way to obtain their blessedness. If you would have shined with them as stars in the firmament of their Father, you should have joined with them in their holiness, and faith, and painfulness, and patience. You should have first been ingrafted with them into Christ, the common stock, and then incorporated into the fraternity of the members, and walked with them in singleness of

heart, and watched with them with oil in your lamps, and joined with them in mutual exhortation, in faithful admonitions, in conscionable reformation, in prayer, and in praise. You should have travelled with them out of the Egypt of your natural estate, through the red sea and wilderness of humiliation and affliction, and have cheerfully taken up the cross of Christ, as well as the name and profession of Christians, and rejoiced with them in suffering persecution and tribulation. All this, if you had faithfully done, you might now have been triumphing with them in glory, and have possessed with them their Master's joy. But this you could not, you would not endure; your souls loathed it, your flesh was against it, and that flesh must be pleased, though you were told plainly and frequently what would come of it: and now you partake of the fruit of your folly, and endure but what you were foretold you must endure; and are shut out of that company, from which you first shut out yourselves; and are separated but from them whom you would not be joined with. You could not endure them in your houses, nor in your town, nor scarcely in the kingdom. You took them as Ahab did Elias, for the troublers of the land; (1 Kings 18:17;) and as the apostles were taken for men that turned the world upside down; (Acts 17:6;) if any thing fell out amiss, you thought all was long of them. When they were dead or banished, you were glad they were gone, and thought the country was well rid of them. They molested you with their faithful reprovings your sin. Their holy conversation did trouble your consciences, to see them so far excel yourselves, and to condemn your looseness by their strictness, and your profaneness by their conscionable lives, and your negligence by their unwearied diligence. You scarcely ever heard them pray or sing praises in their families, but it was a vexation to you; and you envied their liberty in the worshipping of God. And is it, then, any wonder if you be separated from them hereafter? The day is near when they will trouble you no more: betwixt them and you will be a great gulf set, that those that would pass from thence to you (if any had a desire to ease you with a drop of water) cannot; neither can they pass to them who would go from you, for if they could, there would none be left behind. (Luke 16:26.) Even in this life, while the saints were imperfect in their passions and

infirmities, clothed with the same frail flesh as other men, and were mocked, destitute, afflicted, and tormented, yet, in the judgment of the Holy Ghost, they were such, of whom the world was not worthy. (Heb. 11:36–38.) Much more unworthy are they of their fellowship in their glory.

CHAP. II

The Aggravation of the Loss of Heaven to the Ungodly.

SECT. I. I know many of the wicked will be ready to think, if this be all, they do not much care, they can bear it well enough: what care they for losing the perfections above? What care they for losing God, his favour, or his presence? They lived merrily without him on earth, and why should it be so grievous to be without him hereafter? And what care they for being deprived of that love, and joy, and praising of God? They never tasted sweetness in the things of that nature. Or what care they for being deprived of the fellowship of angels and saints? They could spare their company in this world well enough, and why may they not be without it in the world to come? To make these men, therefore, to understand the truth of their future condition, I will here annex these two things:

1. I will show you why this fore-mentioned loss will be intolerable, and will be most tormenting then, though it seem as nothing now.

2. I will show you what other losses will accompany these; which, though they are less in themselves, yet will now be more sensibly apprehended by these sensual men: and all this from reason, and the truth of Scripture:

1. Then, That this loss of Heaven will be then most tormenting, may appear by these considerations following:

First: The understandings of the ungodly will be then cleared, to know the worth of that which they have lost. Now, they lament not

their loss of God, because they never knew his excellency, nor the loss of that holy employment and society, for they were never sensible what they were worth. A man that hath lost a jewel, and took it but for a common stone, is never troubled at his loss; but when he comes to know what he lost, then he lamenteth it. Though the understandings of the damned will not then be sanctified (as I said before), yet will they be cleared from a multitude of errors which now possess them, and mislead them to their ruin. They think now that their honour with men, their estates, their pleasures, their health and life, are better worth their studies and labour than the things of another world which they never saw; but when these things, which had their hearts, have left them in misery, and given them the slip in their greatest need; when they come to know by experience the things which before they did but read and hear of, they will then be quite in another mind. They would not believe that water would drown, till they were in the sea; nor that the fire would burn, till they were cast into it; but when they feel it, they will easily believe. All that error of their mind, which made them set light by God, and abhor his worship, and vilify his people, will then be confuted and removed by experience; (Eccles. 1:18;) their knowledge shall be increased, that their sorrows may be increased; as Adam by his fall did come to the knowledge of good and evil, so shall all the damned have this increase of knowledge. As the knowledge of the excellency of that good which they do enjoy, and of that evil which they have escaped, is necessary to the glorified saints, that they may rationally and truly enjoy their glory; so the knowledge of the greatness of that good which they have lost, and of that evil which they have procured to themselves, is necessary to the tormenting of these wretched sinners: for as the joys of heaven are not so much enjoyed by the bodily senses, as by the intellect and affections; so it is by understanding their misery, and by affections answerable, that the wicked shall endure the most of their torments: for as it was the soul that was the chiefest in the guilt (whether it be positively, by leading to sin, or only privatively, in not keeping the authority of reason over sense, that the understanding is most usually guilty, I will not now dispute), so shall the soul be chiefest in the punishment; doubtless,

those poor souls would be comparatively happy, if their understandings were wholly taken from them, if they had no more knowledge than idiots or brute beasts; or if they knew no more in hell than they did upon earth, their loss and misery would then less trouble them. Though all knowledge be physically good, yet some may be neither morally good, nor good to the owner. Therefore, when the Scripture saith of the wicked, "that they shall not see life," (John 3:36,) nor "see God," (Heb. 12:14,) the meaning is, they shall not possess life, or see God, as the saints do, to enjoy him by that sight; they shall not see him with any comfort, nor as their own; but yet they shall see him, to their terror, as their enemy; and, I think, they shall have some kind of eternal knowledge or beholding of God and heaven, and the saints that are there happy, as a necessary ingredient to their unutterable calamity. The rich man shall see Abraham and Lazarus, but afar off: (Luke 16:23:) as God beholdeth them afar off, (Psal. 138:6,) so shall they behold God afar off. O, how happy men would they think themselves, if they did not know that there is such a place as heaven; or if they could but shut their eyes, and cease to behold it! Now, when their knowledge would help to prevent their misery, they will not know, or will not read and study that they may know; therefore, then when their knowledge will but feed their consuming fire, they shall know whether they will or not. As toads and serpents know not their own vile and venomous nature, nor the excellent nature of man, or other creatures, and therefore are neither troubled at their own, nor desirous of ours, so is it with the wicked here; but when their eyes at death shall be suddenly opened, then the case will be suddenly altered. They are now in a dead sleep, and they dream they are the happiest men in the world, and that the godly are but a company of precise fools, and that either heaven will be theirs, as sure as another's, or else they may make a shift without it as they have done here; but when death smites these men, and bids them awake, and arouses them out of their pleasant dreams, how will they stand up amazed and confounded; how will their judgments be changed in a moment; and they that would not see, shall then see, and be ashamed!

Sect. II. Another reason to prove that the loss of heaven will more torment them then, is this; because as the understanding will be cleared, so it will be more enlarged, and made more capacious to conceive of the worth of that glory which they have lost. The strength of their apprehensions, as well as the truth of them, will then be increased. What deep apprehensions of the wrath of God, or the madness of sinning, of the misery of sinners, have those souls that now endure this misery, in comparison of those on earth that do but hear of it! What sensible apprehensions of the worth of life hath the condemned man that is going to be executed, in comparison of what he was wont to have in the time of his prosperity; much more will the actual deprivation of eternal blessedness make the damned exceedingly apprehensive of the greatness of their loss; and as a large vessel will hold more water than a shell, so will their more enlarged understandings contain more matter to feed their torment, than now their shallow capacity can do.

Sect. III. And as the damned will have clearer and deeper apprehensions of the happiness which they have lost, so will they have a truer and closer application of this doctrine to themselves, which will exceedingly tend to increase their torment. It will then be no hard matter to them to say, 'This is my loss, and this is my everlasting remediless misery.' The want of this is the main cause why they are now so little troubled at their condition; they are hardly brought to believe that there is such a state of misery, but more hardly to believe that it is likely to be their own. This makes so many sermons to them to be lost and all threatenings and warnings to prove in vain. Let a minister of Christ show them their misery ever so plainly and faithfully, and they will not be persuaded that they are so miserable: let him tell them of the glory they must lose, and the sufferings they must feel, and they think it is not they whom he means; such a drunkard, or such a notorious sinner, they think may possibly come to such a doleful end, but they little think that they are so near it themselves. We find in all our preaching, by sad experience, that it is one of the hardest things in the world to bring a wicked man to know that he is wicked; and a man who is posting in

the way to hell, to know that he is in that way indeed; or to make a man see himself in a state of wrath and condemnation: yea, though the preacher do mark him out by such undoubted signs, which he cannot deny, yet he will not apply them, nor be brought to say, 'It is my case;' though we show them the chapter and verse where it is written, "that without regeneration and holiness, none shall see God;" and though they know no such work that was ever wrought upon themselves; nay, though they might easily find by their strangeness to the new birth, and by their very enmity to holiness, that they were never partakers of them, yet do they as verily expect to see God, and to be saved, as if they were the most sanctified persons in the world. It is a most difficult work to make a proud person know that he is proud, or a covetous man to know that he is covetous; or an ignorant, or erroneous heretical man to know himself to be such an one indeed; but to make any of these to confess the sin, and to apply the threatening, and to believe themselves the children of wrath, this is to human strength an impossibility. How seldom do you hear men, after the plainest discovery of their condemned estate, to cry out and say, 'I am the man;' or to acknowledge, that if they die in their present condition, they are undone for ever! and yet Christ hath told us in his word, that the most of the world are in that estate; yea, and the most of those that have the preaching of the Gospel; "for many are called, but few are chosen." So that it is no wonder that the worst of men are not now troubled at their loss of heaven, and at their eternal misery; because, if we should convince them by the most undeniable arguments, yet we cannot bring them to acknowledge it: if we should preach to them as long as we live, we cannot make them believe that their danger is so great; except a man rise from the dead, and tell them of that place of torments, and tell them that their merry, jovial friends, who did as verily think to be saved as they, are now in hell in those flames, they will not believe. Nay, more, though such a messenger from the dead should appear, and speak to them, and warn them that they come not to that place of torments, and tell them, that such and such of their dear, beloved, worshipful, or honourable friends are now there destitute of a drop of water, yet would they not be persuaded by all this; for Christ hath said so, "that

if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead." (Luke 16:31.)

There is no persuading them of their misery till they feel it, except the Spirit of the Almighty persuade them.

Oh! but when they find themselves suddenly in the land of darkness, perceive, by the execution of the sentence, that they were indeed condemned, and feel themselves in the scorching flames, and see that they are shut out of the presence of God for ever, it will then be no such difficult matter to convince them of their misery: this particular application of God's anger to themselves, will then be the easiest matter in the world; then they cannot choose, but know and apply it, whether they will or not. If you come to a man that hath lost a leg, or an arm, or a child, or goods, or house, or his health, is it a hard matter to bring this man to apply, and to acknowledge that the loss is his own? I think not. Why, it will be far more easy for the wicked in hell to apply their misery in the loss of heaven, because their loss is incomparably greater. Oh! this application, which now, if we should die, we cannot get them to, for prevention of their loss will then be part of their torment itself; O that they then could say, 'It is not my case!' but their dolorous voices will then roar out these forced confessions, 'Oh, my misery! oh, my folly! oh, my inconceivable, irrecoverable loss.'

Sect. IV. Again, as the understandings and consciences of sinners will be strengthened against them, so also will their affections be then more lively and enlarged than now they are; as judgment will be no longer blinded, nor conscience stifled and bribed as now it is, so the affections will be no longer so stupified and dead. A hard heart now makes heaven and hell to seem but trifles: and when we have showed them everlasting glory and misery, they are as men half asleep, they scarcely take notice what we say; our words are cast as stones against a hard wall, which fly back in the face of him that casteth them, but make no impression at all where they fall. We talk of terrible, astonishing things, but it is to dead men that cannot apprehend it.

We may rip up their wounds, and they never feel us; we speak to rocks, rather than to men; the earth will as soon tremble as they. Oh, but when these dead wretches are revived, what passionate sensibility; what working affections; what pangs of horror; what depth of sorrow will there then be! How violently will they fly in their own faces; how will they rage against their former madness! The lamentations of the most passionate wife for the loss of her husband, or of the tenderest mother for the loss of her children, will be nothing to theirs for the loss of heaven. Oh, the self-accusing and self-tormenting fury of those forlorn wretches! How they will even tear their own hearts, and be God's executioner upon themselves! I am persuaded, as it was none but themselves that committed the sin, and themselves that were the only meritorious cause of their sufferings, so themselves will be the chiefest executioners of those sufferings. God will have it for the clearing of his justice, and the aggravating of their distress; even Satan himself, as he was not so great a cause of their sinning as themselves, so will he not be so great an instrument as themselves of their torment. And let them not think here, that if they must torment themselves, they will do well enough, they shall have wit enough to ease and favour themselves, and resolution enough to command down this violence of their passions. Alas! poor souls, they little know what passions those will be, and how much beyond the power of their resolutions to suppress! Why have not lamenting, pining, self-consuming persons on earth, so much wit or power as this? Why do you not thus persuade despairing souls, who lie, as Spira, in a kind of hell upon earth, and dare not eat, nor drink, nor be merry, but torment themselves with continual terrors? Why do you not say to them, 'Sir, why will you be so mad as to be your own executioner? And to make your own life a continual misery, which otherwise might be as joyful as other men's? Cannot you turn your thoughts to other matters, and never think of heaven or hell?' Alas! how vain are all these persuasions to him; how little do they ease him! You may as well persuade him to remove a mountain, as to remove these hellish thoughts that feed upon his spirit; it is as easy to him to stop the stream of the rivers, or to bound the overflowing waves of the ocean, as to stop the stream of his violent

passions, or to restrain those sorrows that feed upon his soul. Oh, how much less, then, can those condemned souls, who see the glory before them which they have lost, restrain their heart-rending, self-tormenting passions! So some direct to cure the tooth-ache, 'Do not think of it, and it will not grieve you;' and so these men think to ease their pains in hell. Oh, but the loss and pain will make you think of it, whether you will or not. You were as stocks or stones under the threatenings, but you shall be most tenderly sensible under the execution. Oh, how happy would you think yourselves then, if you were turned into rocks, or any thing that had neither passion nor sense! Oh, now, how happy were you, if you could feel as lightly as you were wont to hear! And if you could sleep out the time of execution, as you did the time of the sermons that warned you of it! But your stupidity is gone, it will not be.

Sect. V. Moreover, it will much increase the torment of the damned, in that their memories will be as large and strong as their understandings and affections, which will cause those violent passions to be still working. Were their loss ever so great, and their sense of it ever so passionate, yet if they could but lose the use of their memory, those passions would die, and that loss being forgotten, would little trouble them. But as they cannot lay by their life and being, though then they would account annihilation a singular mercy; so neither can they lay aside any part of that being. Understanding, conscience, affections, memory, must all live to torment them, which should have helped to their happiness. And as by these they should have fed upon the love of God, and drawn forth perpetually the joys of his presence; so by these must they now feed upon the wrath of God, and draw forth continually the dolours of his absence: therefore never think, that when I say the hardness of their hearts, and their blindness, dulness, and forgetfulness, shall be removed, that, therefore, they are more holy or more happy than before: no, but morally more vile, and hereby far more miserable. Oh, how many hundred times did God by his messengers here call upon them, 'Sinners, consider whither you are a going!' Do but make a stand a while, and think where your way will end, what is the

offered glory that you so carelessly reject: will not this be bitterness in the end?

And yet these men would never be brought to consider; but in the latter days, (saith the Lord, Jer. 23:20,) they shall perfectly consider it; when they are ensnared in the work of their own hands, (Psal. 9:16,) when God hath arrested them, and judgment is passed upon them, and vengeance is poured out upon them to the full, then they cannot choose but consider it, whether they will or not. Now, they have no leisure to consider, nor any room in their memories for the things of another life. Ah! but then they shall have leisure enough, they shall be where they have nothing else to do but consider it; their memories shall have no other employment to hinder them, it shall even be engraven upon the tables of their hearts. (Deut. 6:9.) God would have had the doctrine of their eternal state to have been written on the posts of their doors, on their houses, on their hands, and on their hearts: he would have had them mind it, and mention it, as they rise and lie down, as they sit at home, and as they walk abroad, that so it might have gone well with them at their latter end. And seeing they rejected this counsel of the Lord, therefore shall it be written always before them in the place of their thralldom, that which way soever they look, they may still behold it.

Among others, I will briefly lay down here some of those considerations which will thus feed the anguish of these damned wretches.

Sect. VI. First: It will torment them to think of the greatness of the glory which they have lost. Oh, if it had been that which they could have spared, it had been a small matter; or if it had been a loss repairable with any thing else; if it had been health, or wealth, or friends, or life, it had been nothing; but to lose that exceeding, eternal weight of glory!

Sect. VII. Secondly: It will torment them also, to think of the possibility that once they were in of obtaining it. Though all things

considered, there was an impossibility of any other event than what did befall, yet the thing in itself was possible, and their will was left to act without constraint. Then they will remember, the time was, when I was in as fair a possibility of the kingdom as others; I was set upon the stage of the world, if I had played my part wisely and faithfully, now I might have had possession of the inheritance: I might have been amongst yonder blessed saints, who am now tormented with these damned fiends!m The Lord did set before me life and death, and having chosen death, I deserve to suffer it: the prize was once held out before me; if I had run well, I might have obtained it; if I had striven, I might have had the mastery; if I had fought valiantly, I had been crowned.

Sect. VIII. Thirdly: It will yet more torment them to remember, not only the possibility, but the great probability that once they were in, to obtain the crown, and prevent the misery. It will then wound them to think, Why, I had once the gales of the Spirit ready to have assisted me. I was fully purposed to have been another man, to have cleaved to Christ, and to have forsaken the world; I was almost resolved to have been wholly for God; I was once even turning from my base, seducing lusts; I was purposed never to take them up again, I had even east off my old companions, and was resolved to have associated myself with the godly; and yet I turned back, and lost my hold, and broke my promises, and slacked my purposes; almost God had persuaded me to be a real Christian, and yet I conquered those persuasions. What workings were in my heart, when a faithful minister pressed home the truth! O, how fair was I once for heaven! I had almost had it, and yet I have lost it; if I had but followed on to seek the Lord, and brought those beginnings to maturity, and blown up the spark of desires and purposes which were kindled in me, I had now been blessed among the saints.

Thus will it wound them, to remember what hopes they once had, and how a little more would have brought them over to Christ, and have set their feet in the way of peace.

Sect. IX. Fourthly: Furthermore, it will exceedingly torment them, to remember the fair opportunity that once they had, but now have lost; to look back upon an age spent in vanity, when his salvation lay at the stake; to think how many weeks, and months, and years, did I lose, which, if I had improved, I might now have been happy! Wretch that I was! Could I find no time to study the work, for which I had all my time? Had I no time among all my labours to labour for eternity? Had I time to eat, and drink, and sleep, and work, and none to seek the saving of my soul? Had I time for sports, and mirth, and vain discourse, and none for prayer, or meditation on the life to come? Could I take time to look to my estate in the world, and none to try my title to heaven, and to make sure of my spiritual and everlasting state? Oh, pernicious time, whither art thou fled? I had once time enough, and now I must have no more! I had so much, that I knew not what to do with it; I was fain to devise pastimes; and to talk it away, and trifle it away, and now it is gone, and cannot be recalled!p Oh, the golden hours that I did enjoy! Had I spent but one year of all those years, or but one month of all those months, in thorough examination, and unfeigned conversion, and earnest seeking God with my whole heart, it had been happy for me that ever I was born; but now it is past, my days are cut off, my glass is run, my sun is set, and will rise no more. God himself did hold me the candle, that I might do his work, and I loitered till it was burnt out; and now fain would I have more, but cannot: oh, that I had but one of these years to live over again! Oh, that it were possible to recall one day, one hour, of that time! Oh, that God would turn me into the world, and try me once again, with another lifetime! how speedily would I repent: how earnestly would I pray: and lie on my knees day and night: how diligently would I hear: how cheerfully would I examine my spiritual estate: how watchfully would I walk: how strictly would I live! but, it is now too late; alas! too late; I abused my time to vanity whilst I had it, and now must I suffer justly for that abuse.

Thus will the remembrance of the time which they lost on earth, be a continual torment to these condemned souls.

Sect. X. Fifthly: And yet more will it add to their calamity, to remember how often they were persuaded to return, both by the ministry in public, and in private, by all their godly, faithful friends; every request and exhortation of the minister, will now be as a fiery dart in his spirit; how fresh will every sermon come now into his mind! even those that he had forgotten, as soon as he heard them. He even seems to hear still the voice of the minister, and to see his tears; oh, how fain would he have had me to have escaped these torments! How earnestly did he entreat me! With what love and tender compassion did he beseech me! How did his bowels yearn after me! And yet I did but make a jest of it, and hardened my heart against all this. How oft did he convince me that all was not well with me! And yet I stifled all these convictions. How plainly did he rip up my sores, and open to me my very heart, and show me the unsoundness and deceitfulness of it! and yet I was loth to know the worst of myself, and therefore shut mine eyes, and would not see. Oh, how glad would he have been, after all his study, and prayers, and pains, if he could but have seen me cordially entertain the truth, and turn to Christ! He would have thought himself well recompensed for all his labours and sufferings in his work, to have seen me converted and made happy by it. And, did I withstand and make light of all this? Should any have been more willing of my happiness than myself? Had not I more cause to desire it than he? Did it not more nearly concern me? It was not he, but I, that was to suffer for my obstinacy. He would have laid his hands under my feet, to have done me good; he would have fallen down to me upon his knees to have begged my obedience to his message, if that would have prevailed with my hardened heart. O, how deservedly do I now suffer these flames, who was so forewarned of them, and so entreated to escape them: nay, my friends, my parents, my godly neighbours, did admonish and exhort me; they told me what would come of my wilfulness and negligence at last, but I did never believe them, nor regard them. Magistrates were fain to restrain me from sinning, by law and punishment. Was not the foresight of this misery sufficient to restrain me?

Thus will the remembrance of all the means that ever they enjoyed, be fuel to feed the flames in their consciences. Oh, that sinners would but think of this, when they sit under the plain instruction and pressing exhortations of a faithful ministry! How dear must they pay for all this, if it do not prevail with them! And how they will wish a thousand times, in the anguish of their souls, that they had either obeyed his doctrine, or had never heard him! The melting words of exhortation which they were wont to hear, will be hot burning words to their hearts upon this sad review. It cost the minister dear, even his daily study, his earnest prayers, his compassionate sorrows for their misery, his care, his sufferings, his spendings, weakening, killing pains; but, oh! how much dearer will it cost these rebellious sinners! His lost tears will cost them blood, his lost sighs will cost them eternal groans, and his lost exhortations will cause their eternal lamentations. For Christ hath said it, "that if any city or people receive not, or welcome not the Gospel, the very dust of the messenger's feet who lost his travel to bring them that glad tidings, shall witness against them; much more, his greater pains. And it shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 19:14–16.) That Sodom which was the shame of the world for unnatural wickedness, the disgrace of mankind, that would have committed wickedness with the angels from heaven, that were not ashamed to prosecute their villany in the open street; that proceeded in their rage against Lot's admonitions; yea, under the very miraculous judgment of God, and groped for the door, when they were stricken blind. That Sodom which was consumed with fire from heaven, and turned to that deadly sea of waters, and suffers the vengeance of eternal fire; (Jude v. 7;) even that Sodom shall escape better in the day of judgment, than the neglecters of this so great salvation. (Heb. 2:3.) It will somewhat abate the heat of their torment, that they had not those full and plain offers of grace, nor those constant sermons, nor pressing persuasions, nor clear convictions, as those under the sound of the Gospel have had. I beseech thee who readest these words, stay here awhile, and sadly think of what I say; I profess to thee from the Lord, it is easier thinking of it now than it will be then. What a doleful aggravation of

thy misery would this be, that the food of thy soul should prove thy bane. And that that should feed thy everlasting torment, which is sent to save thee, and prevent thy torments.

Sect. XI. Sixthly: Yet further, it will much add to the torment of the wretches, to remember that God himself did condescend to entreat them, that all the entreatings of the minister were the entreatings of God. How long he did wait, how freely he did offer, how lovingly he did invite, and how importunately he did solicit them! How the Spirit did continue striving with their hearts, as if he were loth to take a denial! How Christ stood knocking at the door of their hearts, sermon after sermon, and one Sabbath after another, crying out, "Open, sinner, open thy heart to the Saviour, and I will come in, and sup with thee, and thou with me." (Rev. 3:20.) Why, sinner, are thy lusts and carnal pleasures better than I? Are thy worldly commodities better than my everlasting kingdom? Why, then, dost thou resist me? Why dost thou thus delay? What dost thou mean, that thou dost not open to me? How long shall it be till thou attain to innocency? How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? Wo to thee, O unworthy sinner! Wilt thou not be made clean? Wilt thou not be pardoned and sanctified, and made happy? When shall it once be? Oh! that thou wouldst hearken to my word, and obey my Gospel!u Then should thy peace be as the river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea; though thy sins were as red as the crimson or scarlet, I would make them as white as the snow or wool. O that thou wert but wise to consider this; and that thou wouldst in time remember thy latter end, before the evil days come upon thee, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say of all thy vain delights, 'I have no pleasure in them!' Why, sinner, shall thy Maker thus bespeak thee in vain? Shall the God of all the world beseech thee to be happy, and beseech thee to have pity upon thine own soul, and wilt thou not regard him? Why did he make thy ears, but to hear his voice? Why did he make thy understanding, but to consider? Or thy heart, but to entertain the Son in obediential love? "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider thy ways." (Hag. 1:5.)

Oh, how all these passionate pleadings of Christ will passionately transport the damned with self-indignation, that they will be ready to tear out their own hearts! How fresh will the remembrance of them be still in their minds, lancing their souls with renewed torments! What self-condemning pangs will it raise within them, to remember how often Christ would have gathered them to himself, even as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not! (Matt. 27:37.) Then will they cry out against themselves, 'Oh, how justly is all this befallen me! Must I tire out the patience of Christ? Must I make the God of heaven to follow me in vain, from home to the assembly; from thence to my chamber; from alehouse to alehouse, till I had wearied him with crying to me, 'Repent, return!' Must the Lord of all the world thus wait upon me, and all in vain? Oh, how justly is that patience now turned into fury, which falls upon my soul with irresistible violence! When the Lord cried out to me, in his word, 'How long will it be before thou wilt be made clean and holy?' my heart, or at least my practice, answered, 'Never, I will never be so precise.' And now when I cry out, 'How long will it be till I be freed from this torment, and saved with the saint?' how justly do I receive the answer, 'Never, Never!' O sinner, I beseech thee for thy own sake; think of this for prevention while the voice of mercy soundeth in thine ears! Yet patience continueth waiting upon thee; canst thou think it will do so still? Yet the offers of Christ and life are made to thee in the Gospel, and the hand of God is stretched out to thee; but will it still be thus? The Spirit hath not yet done striving with thy heart, but dost thou know how soon he may turn away, and give thee over to a reprobate sense, and let thee perish in the stubbornness and hardness of thy heart? Thou hast yet life, and time, and strength, and means, but dost thou think this life will always last? "Oh! seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near." (Isa. 55:6, 7.) He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what Christ now speaketh to his soul. (Rev. 2. and 3.) And to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into his rest. (Heb. 3:8, 11, 15.) For ever blessed is he that hath a hearing heart and ear, while Christ hath a calling voice.

Sect. XII. Seventhly: Again, it will be a most cutting consideration to those damned sinners to remember on what easy terms they might have escaped their misery, and on what easy conditions the crown was tendered to them. If their work had been to remove mountains, to conquer kingdoms, to fulfil the law to the smallest tittle, then the impossibility would somewhat assuage the rage of their self-accusing conscience; if their conditions for heaven had been the satisfying of justice for all their transgressions, the suffering of all that the law did lay upon them, or bearing the burden which Christ was fain to bear, why this were nothing but to suffer hell to escape hell; but their conditions were of another nature: the yoke was light, and the burden was easy, which Jesus Christ would have laid upon them; his commandments were not grievous. (Matt. 11:28, 29; 1 John 5:3.) It was but to repent of their former transgressions, and cordially to accept him for their Saviour and their Lord; to study his will, and seek his face; to renounce all other happiness but that which he procureth us, and to take the Lord alone for our supreme Good; to renounce the government of the world and the flesh, and to submit to his meek and gracious government; to forsake the ways of our own devising, and to walk in his holy, delightful way; to engage ourselves to this by covenant with him, and to continue faithful in that covenant: these were the terms on which they might have enjoyed the kingdom; and was there any thing unreasonable in all this, or had they any thing to object against it? Was it a hard bargain to have heaven upon these conditions, when all the price that is required is only our accepting it in that way that the wisdom of our Lord thinks meet to bestow it? And for their want of ability to perform this, it consisteth chiefly in their want of will. If they were but willing, they should find that God would not be backward to assist them: if they be willing, Christ is much more willing.

Oh! when the poor tormented wretch shall look back upon these easy terms which he refused, and compare the labour of them with the pains and loss which he there sustaineth, it cannot be now conceived how it will rent his very heart. Ah! thinks he, how justly do I suffer all this, who would not be at so small a cost and pains to avoid it! Where

was my understanding when I neglected that gracious offer; when I called the Lord a hard master, and thought his pleasant service to be a bondage, and the service of the devil and my flesh to be the only delight and freedom! Was I not a thousand times worse than mad when I censured the holy way of God as needless preciseness, and cried out on it as an intolerable burden; when I thought the laws of Christ too strict, and all too much that I did for the life to come! Oh! what had all the trouble of duty been in comparison of the trouble that I now sustain; or all the sufferings for Christ and well-doing, in comparison of these sufferings that I must undergo for ever! What, if I had spent my days in the strictest life that ever did saint; what, if I had lived still upon my knees; what, if I had lost my credit with men, and been hated of all men for the sake of Christ, and borne the reproach and scorn of the foolish; what, if I had been imprisoned, or banished, or put to death; oh! what had all this been to the miseries that I now must suffer! Then had my sufferings now been all over, whereas they do but now begin, but will never end. Would not the heaven which I have lost, have recompensed all my losses; and should not all my sufferings have been there forgotten? What, if Christ had bid me do some great matter, as to live in continual tears and sorrow, to suffer death a hundred times over, which yet he did not, should I not have done it? How much more when he said, 'But believe and be saved; seek my face, and thy soul shall live; love me above all, walk in my sweet and holy way, take up thy cross and follow me, and I will save thee from the wrath of God, and I will give thee everlasting life?' Oh, gracious offer! Oh, easy terms! Oh, cursed wretch, that would not be persuaded to accept them!

Sect. XIII. Eighthly: Furthermore, this also will be a most tormenting consideration, to remember what they sold their eternal welfare for, and what it was that they had for heaven. When they compare the value of the pleasures of sin with the value of the recompense of reward, which they forsake for those pleasures, how will the vast disproportion astonish them! To think of a few merry hours, a few pleasant cups or sweet morsels, a little ease or low delight to the flesh, the applauding breath of the mouth of mortal men, or the

possession of so much gold on earth, and then to think of the everlasting glory; what a vast difference between them will then appear! To think this is all I had for my soul, my God, my hopes of blessedness, it cannot possibly be expressed how these thoughts will tear his very heart! Then will he exclaim against his folly, 'Oh! deservedly miserable wretch, did I set my soul to sale at so base a price; did I part with my God for a little dirt and dross,^b and sell my Saviour, as Judas, for a little silver! Oh, for how small a matter have I parted with my happiness! I had but a dream of delight for my hopes of heaven; and now I am awaked, it is all vanished! Where are now my honours and attendance? Who doth applaud me, or trumpet out my praises? Where is the cap and knee that was wont to do me reverence? My morsels are now turned to gall, and my cups to wormwood. They delighted me no longer than while they were passing down: when they were past my taste, the pleasure perished; and is this all that I have had for the inestimable treasure? Oh, what a mad exchange did I make! What, if I had gained all the world, and lost my soul, would it have been a saving match? But, alas! how small a part of the world was it for which I gave up my part in glory! Oh! that sinners would forethink of this when they are swimming in delights of flesh, and studying to be rich and honourable in the world; when they are desperately venturing upon known transgression, and sinning against the checks of conscience!

Sect. XIV. Ninthly: Yet much more will it add unto their torment, when they consider that all this was their own doings, and that they, most wilfully, did procure their own destruction. Had they been forced to sin whether they would or not, it would much abate the rage of their consciences; or if they were punished for another man's transgressions, or if any other had been the chiefest author of their rain; but to think that it was the choice of their own wills, and that God had set them in so free a condition that none in the world could have forced them to sin against their wills; this will be a griping thought to their hearts. What, thinks this wretched creature! Had I not enemies enough in the world, but I must be enemy to myself? God would neither give the devil nor the world so much power over

me as to force me to commit the least transgression. If I had not consented, their temptations had been in vain: they could but entice me; it was myself that yielded; and that did the evil: and must I needs lay hands upon my own soul, and imbrue my hands in my own blood? Who should pity me, who pitied not myself, and who brought all this upon mine own head? When the enemies of Christ did pull down his word and laws, his ministry and worship, the news of it did rejoice me; when they set up seducing or ungodly ministers, instead of the faithful preachers of the Gospel, I was glad to have it so; when the minister told me the evil of my ways, and the dangerous state that my soul was in, I took him for my enemy, and his preaching did stir up my hatred against him, and every sermon did cut me to the heart, and I was ready to gnash my teeth in indignation against him. Never was I willing of the means of mine own welfare; never had I so great an enemy as myself; never did God do me any good, or offer me any for the welfare of my soul, but I resisted him, and was utterly unwilling of it. He hath heaped mercy upon me, and renewed one deliverance after another, and all to entice my heart unto him, and yet was I never heartily willing to serve him: he hath gently chastised me, and made me groan under the fruit of my disobedience; and yet, though I promised largely in my affliction, I was never unfeignedly willing to obey him. Never did a good magistrate attempt a reformation, but I was against it; nor a good minister labour the saving of the flock, but I was ready to hinder as much as I could; nor a good Christian labour to save his soul, but I was ready to discourage and hinder him to my power; as if it were not enough to perish alone, but I must draw all others to the same destruction. Oh, what cause hath my wife, my children, my servants, my neighbours, to curse the day that ever they saw me! As if I had been made to resist God, and to destroy my own and other men's souls, so have I madly behaved myself! Thus will it gnaw upon the hearts of these wretches, to remember that they were the cause of their own undoing; and that they wilfully and obstinately persisted in their rebellion, and were mere volunteers in the service of the devil. They would venture; they would go on; they would not hear him that spoke against it: God calleth to them to hear and stay, but they would

not; men called, conscience called, and said to them, as Pilate's wife, (Matt. 17:19,) 'Have nothing to do with that hateful sin, for I have suffered many things because of it;' but they would not hear: their will was their law, their rule, and their ruin.

Sect. XV. Tenthly, and lastly: It will yet make the wound in their consciences much deeper, when they shall remember that it was not only their own doing, but that they were at so much cost and pains for their own damnation. What great undertakings did they engage in to effect their ruin; to resist God, to conquer the Spirit, to overcome the power of mercies, judgments, and the word itself, to silence conscience; all this they did take upon them, and perform. What a number of sins did they manage at once! What difficulties did they set upon! even the conquering the power of reason itself. What dangers did they adventure on! Though they walked in continual danger of the wrath of God, and knew he could lay them in the dust in a moment; though they knew they lived in danger of eternal perdition, yet would they run upon all this. What did they forsake for the service of Satan, and the pleasures of sin? They forsook their God, their conscience, their best friends, their eternal hopes of salvation, and all. They that could not tell how to forsake a lust, or a little honour or ease for Christ, yet can lose their souls; and all for sin! Oh, the labour that it costeth poor wretches to be damned! Sobriety they might have at a cheaper rate, and a great deal of health and ease to boot; and yet they will rather have gluttony and drunkenness, with poverty, and shame, and sickness, and belchings, and vomitings; with the outcries and lamentations of wife and children, and conscience itself. Contentedness they might have with ease and delight, yet will they rather have covetousness and ambition, though it cost them study, and care, and fears, and labour of body and mind, and a continual unquietness and distraction of spirit, and usually a shameful overthrow at the last. Though their anger be nothing but a tormenting themselves, and revenge and envy do consume their spirits, and keep them upon a continual rack of disquiet; though uncleanness destroy their bodies, and estates, and names;' and though they are foretold of the hazard of their eternal

happiness, yet will they do and suffer all this, rather than suffer their souls to be saved. How fast runs Gehazi for his leprosy! What cost and pains is Nimrod at, to purchase a universal confusion! How doth an amorous Ammon pine himself away for a self-destroying lust! How studiously and painfully doth Absalom seek a hanging! Ahitophel's reputation and his life must go together. Even when they are struck blind by a judgment of God, yet how painfully do the Sodomites grope and weary themselves to find the door! What cost and pains are the idolatrous papists at, for their multifarious will-worship! How unweariedly and unreservedly have the enemies of the Gospel put out the light that should guide them to heaven, and how earnestly do they still prosecute it to the last! How do the nations generally rage, and the people imagine a vain thing! The kings of the earth setting themselves, and the rulers taking counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Christ; that they may break the bonds of his laws asunder, and cast away the cords of his government from them, though he that sitteth in heaven do laugh them to scorn, though the Lord have them in derision; though he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure, and resolve that yet in despite of them all, 'He will set his King upon his holy hill of Sion,' yet will they spend and tire themselves out as long as they are able to stir against the Lord. O how the reviews of this will feed the flames in hell! With what rage will these damned wretches curse themselves, and say, 'Was damnation worth all my cost and pains; was it not enough that I perished through my negligence, and that I sit still while Satan played his game, but I must seek so diligently for my own perdition; might I not have been damned on free cost, but I must purchase it so dearly? I thought I could have been saved without so much ado; and could I not have been destroyed without so much ado? How well is all my care, and pains, and violence, now requited! Must I work out so laboriously my own damnation, when God commanded me to work out my salvation? Oh! If I had done as much for heaven as I did for hell, I had surely had it! I cried out of the tedious way of godliness, and of the painful course of duty and self-denial; and yet I could be at a great deal more pains for Satan, and for death. If I had loved Christ as strongly as I did my pleasures,

and profits, and honours, and thought on him as often, and sought him as painfully, O how happy had I now been! But justly do I suffer the flames of hell, who would rather buy them so dear, than have heaven on free-cost, when it was purchased to my hands.'

Thus I have showed you some of those thoughts which will aggravate the misery of these wretches for ever. O that God would persuade thee, who readest these words, to take up these thoughts now seasonably and soberly, for the preventing of that inconceivable calamity, that so thou mayst not be forced, in despite of thee, to take them up in hell as thy own tormentor.

It may be some of these hardened wretches will jest at all this, and say, 'How know you what thoughts the damned in hell will have?'

Answ. First: Why read but the 16th of Luke, and you shall there find some of their thoughts mentioned.

Secondly: I know their understanding will not be taken from them, nor their conscience, nor passions. As the joys of heaven are chiefly enjoyed by the rational soul, in its rational actions, so also must the pains of hell be suffered. As they will be men still, so will they act as men.

Thirdly: Besides, Scripture hath plainly foretold us as much, that their own thoughts shall accuse them, (Rom. 2:15,) and their hearts condemn them; (1 John 3:19–21;) and we see it begun in despairing persons here.

CHAP. III

They shall lose all things that are comfortable, as well as Heaven.

SECT. I. Having showed you those considerations which will then aggravate their misery, I am next to show you their additional losses

which will aggravate it. For as godliness hath the promise both of this life and that which is to come, and as God hath said, "that if we first seek his kingdom and righteousness, all things else shall be added to us;" so also are the ungodly threatened with the loss both of spiritual and of corporal blessings; and because they sought not first Christ's kingdom and righteousness, therefore shall they lose both it and that which they did seek, and there shall be taken from them even that little which they have. If they could but have kept their present enjoyments, they would not have much cared for the loss of heaven, let them take it that have more mind of it: but catching at the shadow, and losing the substance, they now find that they have lost both; and that when they rejected Christ, they rejected all things. If they had lost and forsaken all for Christ, they would have found all again in him; for he would have been all in all to them; but now they have forsaken Christ for other things, they shall lose Christ, and that also for which they did forsake him.

But I will particularly open to you some of their other losses.

Sect. II. First: They shall lose their present presumptuous conceit and belief of their interest in God, and of his favour towards them, and of their part in the merits and sufferings of Christ. This false belief doth now support their spirits, and defend them from the terrors that would else seize upon them, and fortify them against the fears of the wrath to come. Even as true faith doth afford the soul a true and grounded support and consolation, and enableth us to look to eternity with undaunted courage; so also a false ungrounded faith doth afford a false ungrounded comfort, and abates the trouble of the considerations of judgment and damnation. But, alas! this is but a palliate salve, a deceitful comfort; what will ease their trouble when this is gone? When they can believe no longer, they will be quieted in mind no longer, and rejoice no longer. If a man be near to the greatest mischief, and yet strongly conceit that he is in safety, his conceit may make him as cheerful as if all were well indeed, till his misery comes, and then both his conceit and comforts vanish. An ungrounded persuasion of happiness, is a poor cure for real misery.

When the mischief comes, it will cure the misbelief; but that belief can neither prevent nor cure the mischief. If there were no more to make a man happy, but to believe he is so, or shall be so, happiness would be far commoner than now it is likely to be. It is a wonder that any man who is not a stranger both to Gospel and reason, should be of the Antinomian faith in this; who tell us, that faith is but the believing that God loveth us, and that our sins are already pardoned through Christ; that this is the chief thing that ministers should preach; that our ministers preach not Christ, because they preach not this; that every man ought thus to believe, but no man to question this faith, whether he believe truly or not, &c. But if all men must believe that their sins are pardoned, then most of the world must believe a lie; and if no man ought not to question the truth of his faith, then most men shall rest deluded with an ungrounded belief. The Scripture commandeth us first to believe for a remission of sins, before we believe that our sins are remitted. If we believe in Christ, that is, accept him cordially for our Saviour, and our King, then we shall receive the pardon of sins. The truth is, we have more ado to preach down this Antinomian faith, than they have to preach it up; and to preach our people from such a believing, than they have to preach them to it. I see no need to persuade people to believe; the generality are strong and confident in such a belief already. Take a congregation of five thousand persons, and how few among them all will you find, that do not believe that their sins are pardoned, and that God loves them; especially of the vilest sinners, who have least cause to believe it! Indeed, as it is all the work of those men to persuade people to this belief, so it is the hardest task almost that we meet with, to convince men of the ungroundedness of this belief, and to break that peace which Satan maintaineth in their souls. Neither do I know a commoner cause of men's destruction, than such a misbelief. Who will seek for that which he believes he hath already? This is the great engine of hell, to make men go merrily to their own perdition. I know men cannot believe Christ, or believe in or upon Christ, either too soon or too much. But they may believe or judge that themselves are pardoned, adopted, and in favour with God, too soon, and too much: for a false judgment is always too much and too

soon. As true grounded faith is the master-grace in the regenerate, and of the greatest use in the kingdom of Christ; so is false ungrounded faith the master-vice in the unregenerate soul, and of greatest use in the kingdom of Satan. Why do such a multitude sit still, when they might have pardon for the seeking, but that they verily think they are pardoned already? Why do men live so contentedly in the power of the devil, and walk so carelessly in the certain way to hell; but that they think their way will have no such end, and that the devil hath nothing to do with them? They defy him, they spit at the mention of his name. If you could ask so many thousands as are now in hell, 'What madness could cause you to come hither voluntarily, or to follow Satan to this place of torment, when you might follow Christ to the land of rest?' they would most of them answer you, 'We believed that we had followed towards salvation; and that the way which we were in, would have brought us to heaven. We made sure account of being saved, till we found ourselves damned; and never feared hell, till we were suddenly in it; we would have renounced our sinful courses and companions, but that we thought we might have them and heaven too. We would have sought after Christ more heartily, but that we thought we had part in him already. We would have been more earnest seekers of regeneration, and the power of godliness, but that we verily thought we were Christians before. Oh! if we had known as much as now we know, what lives would we have led, what persons would we have been! But we have flattered ourselves into these insufferable torments. We were told of this before, from the word of God, but we would not believe it till we felt it; and now there is no remedy.' Reader, do but stop, and think here with thyself, how sad a case is this; that men should so resolutely cheat themselves of their everlasting rest. The Lord grant it never prove thy own case! I would be very loth to weaken the true faith of the meanest Christian, or to persuade any man that his faith is false, when it is true; God forbid that I should so disparage that precious grace which hath the stamp of the Spirit; or so trouble the soul, that Christ would have to be comforted! But I must needs in faithfulness tell thee, that the confident belief of their good estate, and of the pardon of their sins,

which the careless, unholy, unhumiliated multitude among us do so commonly boast of, will prove, in the end, but a soul-damning delusion. It hath made me ready to tremble many a time, to hear a drunken, ungodly, unfaithful minister, as confidently in his formal prayers in the pulpit, give God thanks for vocation, justification, sanctification, and assured hope of glorification, as if he had been a most assured saint; when, it may be, his sermon was intended to reproach the saint, and to jeer at sanctification! Methought I even heard the Pharisee say, I thank thee that I am not as other men; (Luke 18:11;) or Corah, Are not all the people holy, every one? (Num. 16:3, 5.) How commonly do men thank God for these, which they never received, nor ever shall do! How many have thanked God for pardon of sin, who are now tormented for it; and for sanctification, and assured hope of glory, who are now shut out of that inheritance of the sanctified! I warrant you, there is none of this believing in hell; nor any persuasions of pardon or happiness, nor any boasting of their honesty, nor justifying of themselves. This was but Satan's stratagem, that being blindfold they might follow him the more boldly; but then he will uncover their eyes, and they shall see where they are.

Sect. III. Secondly: Another addition to the misery of the damned will be this: that with the loss of heaven, they shall lose also all their hopes. In this life, though they were threatened with the wrath of God, yet their hope of escaping it did bear up their hearts. And when they were wounded with the terrors of the word, they licked all whole again with their groundless hopes; but then they shall part with their hopes and heaven together. We can now scarcely speak with the vilest drunkard, or swearer, or covetous worldling, or scorner at godliness, but he hopes to be saved for all this. If you should go to all the congregation, or town, or country, and ask them one by one, whether they hope to be saved, how few shall you meet with that will not say yea, or that make any great question of it! But, oh! happy world, if salvation were as common as this hope; even those whose hellish nature is written in the face of their conversation, that he that runs may read it, whose tongues plead the cause of the devil, and

speaking the language of hell, and whose delight is in nothing but the works of the flesh; yet, these do strongly hope for heaven, though the God of heaven hath told them over and over again in his word, that no such as they shall ever come there. Though most of the world shall eternally perish; and the Judge of the world himself hath told us, that of the many that are called, yet but few are chosen, yet almost all do hope for it, and cannot endure any man that doth but question their hopes. Let but their minister preach against their false hopes, or their best friend come to them and say, 'I am afraid your present hopes of heaven will deceive you; I see you mind not your soul, your heart is not set upon Christ and heaven, you do not so much as pray to God, and worship him in your family; and the Scripture gives you not the least hope of being saved in such a condition as this is;' how ill would they take such an admonition as this, and bid the admonisher look to himself, and let them alone, he should not answer for them; they hope to be saved, as soon as these precisers men, that pray and talk of heaven so much; nay, so strong are these men's hopes, that they will dispute the cause with Christ himself at judgment, and plead their eating and drinking in his presence, their preaching in his name, and casting out devils, (and these are more probable arguments than our baptism, and common profession, and name of Christians); they will stiffly deny that ever they neglected Christ in hunger, nakedness, prison, &c. (and if they did, yet that is less than stripping, imprisoning, banishing, or killing Christ in his members,) till Christ confute them with the sentence of their condemnation! Though the heart of their hopes will be broken at their death, and particular judgment, yet it seems they would fain plead for such hope at the general judgment. But, oh! the sad state of these men, when they must bid farewell to all their hopes; when their hopes shall all perish with them! Reader, if thou wilt not believe this, it is because thou wilt not believe the Scriptures. The Holy Ghost hath spoken it as plain as can be spoken, "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth." (Prov. 11:17.) "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked shall perish." (Prov. 10:28.) "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh

away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?" (Isa. 28:15, 18; Job 27:8, 9.) "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in its greenness, not cut down, it withereth before any other herb; so are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish, whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web; he shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." (Job 8:12–14.) "But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." (Job 11:20.) The giving up of the ghost is a fit but terrible resemblance of a wicked man's giving up of his hopes. For, First, As the soul departeth not from the body without the greatest terror and pain, so also doth the hope of the wicked depart. Oh, the direful gripes and pangs of horror that seize upon the soul of the sinner at death and judgment, when he is parting with all his former hopes! Secondly, The soul departeth from the body suddenly, in a moment, which hath there delightfully continued so many years, just so doth the hope of the wicked depart. Thirdly, The soul which then departeth, will never return to live with the body in this world any more; and the hope of the wicked when it departeth, taketh an everlasting farewell of his soul. A miracle of resurrection shall again conjoin the soul and body, but there shall be no such miraculous resurrection of the damned's hope. Methinks it is the most doleful spectacle that this world affords, to see an ungodly person dying, and to think of his soul and hopes departing together; and with what a sad change he presently appears in another world. Then, if a man could but speak with that hopeless soul, and ask it; 'What, are you now as confident of salvation as you were wont to be; do you now hope to be saved as soon as the most godly?' Oh, what a sad answer would he return! They are just like Korah, Dathan, and their companions: while they are confident in their rebellion against the Lord, and cry out, "Are not all the people holy?" They are suddenly swallowed up, and their hopes with them: or like Ahab, who hating and imprisoning the prophet for foretelling his danger, while he is in confident hopes to return in peace, is suddenly smitten with that mortal arrow, which let out those hopes, together with his

soul; or, like a thief upon the gallows, who hath a strong conceit that he shall receive a pardon, and so hopes and hopes, till the ladder is turned; or, like the unbelieving sinners of the world before the flood, who would not believe the threatening of Noah, but perhaps derided him for preparing his ark so many years together, when no danger appeared, till suddenly the flood came and swept them all away. If a man had asked these men, when they were climbing up into the tops of trees and mountains; 'Where is now your hope of escaping, or your merry deriding at the painful preventing preparations of godly Noah; or your contemptuous unbelief of the warnings of God?' what do you think these men would then say, when the waters still pursued them from place to place, till it devoured their hopes and them together? Or if one had asked Ahab, when he had received his wound, and turned out of the battle to die; 'What think you now of the prophecy of Micaiah; will you release him out of prison; do you now hope to return in peace?' Why, such a sudden overthrow of their hopes will every unregenerate sinner receive. While they were upon earth, they frustrated the expectations, as I may say, of God and man; God sent his messengers to tell them plainly of their danger, and said, It may be they will hear and return and escape; but they stiffened their necks and hardened their hearts: the minister studied, and instructed, and persuaded them in hope: and when one sermon prevailed not, he laboured to speak more plainly and piercingly in the next, in hope that at last they would be persuaded and return; till their hopes were frustrate, and their labour lost, and they were fain to turn their exhortation to lamentation, and to sit down in sorrow for men's wilful misery; and take up the sad exclamation of the prophet, "Who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1:) so did godly parents also instruct their children in hope, and watch over them, and pray for them, hoping that at last their hearts would turn to Christ; and is it not meet that God should frustrate all their hopes, who have frustrated the hopes of all that desired their welfare? Oh! that careless sinners would be awaked to think of this in time! If thou be one of them, who art reading these lines, I do here as a friend advise thee, from the word of the Lord, that, as thou wouldst not have all thy hopes deceive

thee, when thou hast most need of them, thou presently try them, whether they will prove current at the touchstone of the Scripture; and if thou find them unsound, let them go, whatsoever sorrow they cost thee. Rest not till thou canst give a reason of all thy hopes; (1 Pet. 3:15;) till thou canst prove that they are the hopes which grace and not nature only hath wrought; that they are grounded upon scripture promises and sound evidences; that they purify thy heart; that they quicken, and not cool thy endeavours in godliness; that the more thou hopest, the less thou sinnest, and the more painful thou art in following on the work, and not grown more loose and careless by the increasing of thy hopes; and they make thee set lighter by all things on earth, because thou hast such hopes of higher possessions; that thou art willing to have them tried, and fearful of being deceived; that they stir up thy desires of enjoying what thou hopest for, and the deferring thereof is the trouble of thy heart. (Prov. 13:12.) If thou be sure that thy hopes be such as these, God forbid that I should speak a word against them, or discourage thee from proceeding to hope thus to the end. No, I rather persuade thee to go on in the strength of the Lord; and whatever men or devils, or thy own unbelieving heart, shall say against it, go on, and hold fast thy hope, and be sure it will never make thee ashamed. But if thy hope be not of this spiritual nature, and if thou art able to give no better reason why thou hopest, than the worst in the world may give, that God is merciful; and thou must speed as well as thou canst, or the like; and hast not one sound evidence of a saving work of grace upon thy soul, to show for thy hopes; but only hopest that thou shalt be saved, because thou wouldst have it so, and because it is a terrible thing to despair: if this be thy case, delay not an hour; but presently cast away those hopes, that thou mayst get into a capacity of having better in their stead. But it may be thou wilt think this strange doctrine, and say, 'What, would you persuade me directly to despair?' Answ. Sinner, I would be loth to have thy soul destroyed by wilful self-delusion. The truth is, there is a hope, such as I have before showed thee, which is a singular grace and duty: and there is a hope which is a notorious, dangerous sin. So, consequently, there is a despair which is a grievous sin; and there is a despair which is

absolutely necessary to thy salvation. I would not have thee despair of the sufficiency of the blood of Christ to save thee, if thou believe, and heartily obey him; nor of the willingness of God to pardon and save thee, if thou be such an one; nor yet absolutely of thy own salvation; because, while there is life and time, there is some hope of thy conversion, and so of thy salvation; nor would I draw thee to despair of finding Christ, if thou do but heartily seek him: or of God's acceptance of any sincere endeavours, nor of thy success against Satan, or any corruption which thou shalt heartily oppose, nor of any thing whatsoever God hath promised to do, either to all men in general, or to such as thou art. I would not have thee doubt of any of these in the least measure, much less despair. But this is the despair that I would persuade thee to, as thou lovest thy soul: that thou despair of ever being saved, except thou be born again; or of seeing God, without holiness; or of escaping perishing, except thou soundly repent: or of ever having part in Christ, or salvation by him, or ever being one of his true disciples, except thou love him above father, mother, or thy own life: or of ever having a treasure in heaven, except thy very heart be there: or of ever escaping eternal death, if thou walk after the flesh, and dost not by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh; or of ever truly loving God, or being his servant, while thou lovest the world, and servest it. These things I would have thee despair of, and whatever else God hath told thee shall never come to pass. And when thou hast sadly searched into thy own heart, and findest thyself in any of these cases, I would have thee despair of thyself of ever being saved in that state thou art in. Never stick at the sadness of the conclusion, man, but acknowledge plainly, If I die before I get out of this estate, I am lost for ever. It is as good deal truly with thyself as not; God will not flatter thee, he will deal plainly whether thou do or not. The very truth is, this kind of despair is one of the first steps to heaven. Consider, if a man be quite out of his way, what must be the first means to bring him in again? Why, a despair of ever coming to his journey's end in the way that he is in. If his home be eastward, and he be going westward, as long as he hopes he is in the right, he will go on; and as long as he so goes on hoping, he goes further amiss: therefore, when he meets with somebody that

assures him that he is clean out of his way, and brings him to despair of coming home, except he turn back again; then he will return, and then he may hope and spare not. Why, sinner, just so is it with thy soul: thou art born out of the way to heaven; and in that way thou hast proceeded many a year; yet thou goest on quietly, and hopest to be saved, because thou art not so bad as many others. Why, I tell thee, except thou be brought to throw away those hopes, and see that thou hast all this while been quite out of the way to heaven; and hast been a child of wrath, and a servant of Satan, unpardoned, unsanctified, and if thou hadst died in this state, hadst been certainly damned: I say, till thou be brought to this, thou wilt never return and be saved. Who will turn out of his way while he hopes he is right? And let me once again tell thee, that if ever God mean good to thy soul, and intend to save thee, this is one of the first things that he will work upon thee: remember what I say, till thou feel God convincing thee, that the way which thou hast lived in, will not serve the turn, and so break down thy former hopes, there is yet no saving-work wrought upon thee, how well soever thou mayst hope of thyself. Yea, thus much more, if any thing keep thy soul out of heaven, which God forbid, there is nothing in the world liker to do it, than thy false hopes of being saved, while thou art out of the way to salvation. Why else is it that God cries down such hopes in his word? Why is it that every faithful, skilful minister doth bend all his strength against the false faith and hope of sinners, as if he were to fight against neither small nor great, but this prince of iniquity? Why, alas! they know that these are the main pillars of Satan's kingdom; bring down but them too, and the house will fall. They know also the deceit and vanity of such hopes; that they are directly contrary to the truth of God; and what a sad case that soul is in, who hath no other hope, but that God's word will prove false; when the truth of God is the only ground of true hope; alas! it is no pleasure to a minister to speak to people upon such an unwelcome subject, any more than it is to a pitiful physician to tell his patient, I do despair of your life, except you let blood; or there is no hope of the cure, except the gangrened member be cut off: if it be true, and of flat necessity, though it be displeasing, there is no remedy. Why, I beseech you, think on it reasonably

without prejudice or passion, and tell me, where doth God give any hope of your salvation, till you are new creatures? (Gal. 6:15.) Nay, I have showed you where he flatly overthroweth all such hope. (Gal. 5:18–24; 2 Cor. 5:7.) And will it do you any good for a minister to give you hope, where God gives you none; or, would you desire him to do so? Why, what would you think of such a minister, when those hopes forsake you; or what thanks will you give him, when you find yourself in hell? would you not there lie and curse him for a deceiver for ever? I know this to be true, and therefore I had rather you were displeased with me here, than curse me there. For my own part, if I had but one sermon to preach while I lived, I think this should be it: to persuade down all your ungrounded hopes of heaven, not to leave you there in despair, but that you may hope upon better grounds which will never deceive you. God hath told us what he shall say: "Say to the righteous, It shall be well with him; and to the wicked, It shall be ill with him." (Isa. 3:10, 11.) And if I shall say, it will be well with thee, when God hath said, it shall be ill with thee, what the better wert thou for this? Whose word would stand, think you, God's or mine? Oh, little do carnal ministers know what they do, who strengthen the hopes of ungodly men! They work as hard as they can against God, while they stand there to speak in the name of God, who layeth his battery against these false hopes, as knowing that they must now down, or the sinner must perish: and these teachers build up what God is pulling down. I know not what they can do worse to destroy men's souls: they are false teachers in regard of application, though they are true in regard of doctrine: this is partly through their flattering, men-pleasing temper; partly because they are guilty themselves, and so should destroy their own hopes, as well as others; and partly because being graceless, they want that experience which should help them to discern betwixt hope and hope. The same may be said of carnal friends: if they see a poor sinner but doubting whether all be well with him, and but troubled for fear lest he be out of the way; what pains do they take to keep up his old hopes? 'What,' say they, 'if you should not be saved, God help a great many: you have lived honestly, &c.: never doubt, man, God is merciful!' Alas, silly creatures, you think you perform an office of friendship, and do

him much good! even as much as to give cold water to a man in a fever; you may ease him at the present, but it afterwards inflames him. What thanks will he give you hereafter, if you settle him upon his former hopes again? Did you never read, "He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him?" (Prov. 24:24.) If you were faithful friends indeed, you should rather say thus to him; Friend, if you perceive the soundness of your hopes for heaven to be doubtful, oh! do not smother those doubts, but go and open them to your minister, or some able friend; and try them thoroughly in time, and hold no more of them now, than will hold good at judgment: it is better they break while they may be built more surely, than when the discovery will be your torment, but not your remedy. This were friendly and faithful counsel indeed. The proverb is, "If it were not for hope, the heart would break:" and Scripture tells us, that the heart must break that Christ will save. How can it be bound up till it be broken first? so that the hope which keeps their hearts from breaking, doth keep them also from healing and saving.

Well, if these unwise men (who are, as we say, penny wise, and pound foolish, who are wise to keep off the smart of a short, conditional, necessary, curable despair, but not wise to prevent an eternal, absolute, tormenting, incurable despair) do not change their condition speedily, those hopes will leave them which they would not leave; and then they that were fully resolved to hold fast their hopes, let all the preachers in the world say what they would, shall let them go whether they will or no. Then let them hope for heaven if they can.

So that, you see, it will aggravate the misery of the damned, that with the loss of heaven, they shall lose all that hope of it which now supporteth them.

Sect. IV. Thirdly: Another additional loss will be this, They will lose all the false peace of conscience which maketh their present life so easy. The loss of this must necessarily follow the loss of the former. When presumption and hope are gone, peace cannot tarry. Who

would think, now, that sees how quietly the multitude of the ungodly live, that they must very shortly lie roaring in everlasting flames? They lie down, and rise, and sleep as quietly; they eat and drink as quietly; they go about their work as cheerfully; they talk as pleasantly as if nothing ailed them, or as if they were as far out of danger as an obedient believer; like a man that hath the falling sickness, you would little think, while he is labouring as strong, and talking as heartily as another man, how he will presently fall down, lie gasping and foaming, and beating his breast in torment: so it is with these men. They are as free from the fears of hell as others, as free from any vexing sorrows, not so much as troubled with any cares of the state of their souls, nor with any sad or serious thoughts of what shall become of them in another world; yea, and for the most part, they have less doubts and disquiet of mind, than those who shall be saved. Oh, happy men, if it would be always thus; and if this peace would prove a lasting peace! But, alas! there's the misery, it will not. They are now in their own element, as the fish in the water; but little knows that silly creature when he is most fearlessly and delightfully swallowing down the bait, how suddenly he shall be snatched out, and lie dead upon the bank! And as little think these careless sinners, what a change they are near. The sheep or the ox is driven quietly to the slaughter, because he knows not whither he goes; if he knew it were to his death, you could not drive him so easily. How contented is the swine, when the butcher's knife is shaving his throat, little thinking that it is to prepare for his death! Why, it is even so with these sensual careless men. They fear the mischief least, when they are nearest to it, because they fear it not, or see it not with their eyes. "As in the days of Noah (saith Christ) they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came, and took them all away;" (Matt. 24:37–39;) so will the coming of Christ be, and so will the coming of their particular judgment be. "For (saith the apostle) when they say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. 5:3.) Oh, cruel peace, which ends in such a war! Reader, if this be thy own case; if thou hast no other peace in thy conscience

than this ungrounded, self-created peace, I could heartily wish, for thy own sake, that thou wouldest cast it off. As I would not have any humble, gracious souls to vex their own consciences needlessly, nor to disquiet and discompose their spirits by troubles of their own making, nor to unfit themselves for duty, nor to interrupt their comfortable communion with God, nor to weaken their bodies, or cast themselves into melancholy distempers to the scandal of religion; so would I not have a miserable wretch, who lives in a daily and hourly danger of dropping into hell, to be as merry and as quiet as if all were well with him: it is both unseemly and unsafe; more unseemly than to see a man go laughing to the gallows; and more unsafe than to favour the gangrened member, which must be cut off, or to be making merry when the enemy is entering our habitations. Men's first peace is usually a false peace; it is a second peace, which is brought into the soul upon the casting out of the first, which will stand good, and yet not always that neither; for, where the change is by the halves, the second or third peace may be unsound, as well as the first; as many a man that casteth away the peace of his profaneness, doth take up the peace of mere civility and morality; or if he yet discover the unsoundness of that, and is cast into trouble, then he healeth all with outward righteousness, or with a half Christianity, and there he taketh up with peace. This is but driving Satan out of one room into another; but till he be cast out of possession, the peace is unsound. Hear what Christ saith: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Luke 11:21, 22.) The soul of every man, by nature, is Satan's garrison; all is at peace in such a man, till Christ comes; when Christ storms this heart, he breaks the peace; he giveth it most terrible alarms of judgment and hell, he battereth it with the ordnance of his threatenings and terrors; he sets all in a combustion of fear and sorrow, till he have forced it to yield to his mere mercy, and take him for the governor, and Satan is cast out; and then doth he establish a firm and lasting peace. If, therefore, thou art yet but in that first peace, and thy heart was never yet either taken by storm, or

delivered up freely to Jesus Christ, never think that thy peace will endure. Can the soul have peace which is at enmity with Christ, or stands out against him, or thinks his government too severe, and his conditions hard; can he have peace against whom God proclaimeth war. I may say to thee, as Jehu to Joram, when he asked, "Is it peace? What peace, while the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel remain?" So thou art desirous to hear nothing from the mouth of a minister but peace; but what peace can there be, till thou hast cast away thy wickedness and thy first peace, and make thy peace with God through Christ: wilt thou believe God himself in this case? why, read then what he saith twice over, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 48:22, and 57:21.) And hath he said it; and shall it not stand? Sinner, though thou mayst now har den and fortify thy heart against fear, and grief, and trouble, yet as true as God is true, they will batter down thy proud and fortified spirit, and seize upon it, and drive thee to amazement: this will be done either here or hereafter. My counsel therefore to thee, is that thou presently examine the grounds of thy peace, and say, 'I am now at case and quiet in my mind; but is it grounded, and will it be lasting; is the danger of eternal judgment over; am I sure my sins are pardoned, and my soul shall be saved? if not, alas! what cause of peace? I may be in hell before the next day, for aught I know.' Certainly, a man that stands upon the pinnacle of a steeple, or that sleeps on the top of the main-mast, or that is in the heat of the most bloody fight, hath more cause of peace and carelessness than thou. Why, thou livest under the wrath of God continually, thou art already sentenced to eternal death, and mayst every hour expect the execution, till thou have sued out a pardon through Christ. I can show thee a hundred threatenings in Scripture which are yet in force against thee; but canst thou show me one promise for thy safety an hour? What assurance hast thou when thou goest forth of thy doors that thou shalt ever come in again? I should wonder, but that I know the desperate hardness of the heart of man, how a man that is not sure of his peace with God, could eat, or drink, or sleep, or live in peace! That thou art not afraid when thou liest down, lest thou shouldst awake in hell; or, when thou risest up, lest thou shouldst be in hell

before night; or, when thou sittest in thy house, that thou still fearest not the approach of death, or some fearful judgment seizing upon thee, and that the threats and sentence are not always sounding in thy ears. Well, if thou wert the nearest friend that I have in the world, in this case that thou art in, I could wish thee no greater good, than that God would break in upon thy careless heart, and shake thee out of thy false peace, and cast thee into trouble, that when thou feelest thy heart at ease, thou wouldst remember thy misery; that when thou art pleasing thyself with thy estate, or business, or labours, thou wouldst still remember the approaching woe; that thou wouldst cry out in the midst of thy pleasant discourse and merry company, 'Oh, how near is the great and dreadful change!' that whatever thou art doing, God would make thee read thy sentence, as if it were still written before thine eyes; and which way soever thou goest, he would still meet thee full in the face with the sense of his wrath, as the angel did Balaam with a drawn sword, till he had made thee cast away thy groundless peace, and lie down at the feet of Christ, whom thou hast resisted, and say, 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' and so receive from him a surer and better peace, which will never be quite broken, but will be the beginning of thy everlasting peace, and not perish in thy perishing, as the groundless peace of the world will do.

Sect. V. Fourthly: Another additional loss, aggravating their loss of heaven, is this, They shall lose all their carnal mirth. Their merry vein will then be opened and empty; they will say themselves, as Solomon doth, of their laughter, "Thou art mad," and of their mirth, "What didst thou?" (Eccles. 2:2.) Their witty jests and pleasant conceits are then ended, and their merry tales are all told. "Their mirth was but as the crackling of thorns under a pot;" (Eccles. 7:6;) it made a great blaze and unseemly noise for a little while, but it was presently gone, and will return no more. They scorned to entertain any saddening thoughts: the talk of death and judgment was irksome to them, because it damped their mirth: they could not endure to think of their sin or danger, because these thoughts did sad their spirits. They knew not what it was to weep for sin, or to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. They could laugh away

sorrow, and sing away cares, and drive away these melancholy thoughts. They thought, if they should live so austerely, and meditate, and pray, and mourn, as the godly do, their lives would be a continual misery, and it were enough to make them run mad. Alas, poor souls! what a misery then will that life be, where you shall have nothing but sorrow; intense, heart-piercing, multiplied sorrow; when you shall have neither the joys of the saints, nor your own former joys! Do you think there is one merry heart in hell; or one joyful countenance, or jesting tongue? You cry now, A little mirth is worth a great deal of sorrow; but surely a little godly sorrow, which would have ended in eternal joy, had been more worth than a great deal of your foolish mirth, which will end in sorrow. Can men of gravity run laughing and playing in the streets as little children do; or wise men laugh at a mischief as fools and madmen; or men, that are sound in their brain, fall a dancing, as they will do in a viti saltus, till they fall down dead with it? No more pleasure have wise men in your pitiful mirth: for the end of such mirth is sorrow.

Sect. VI. Fifthly: Another additional loss will be this, They shall lose all their sensual contentments and delights. That which they esteemed their chiefest good, their heaven, their God, that must they lose, as well as heaven and God himself. They shall then, in despite of them, fulfil that command, which here they would not be persuaded to obey, of "making no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. 13:14.) Oh, what a fall will the proud, ambitious man have from the top of his honours! As his dust and bones will not be known from the dust and bones of the poorest beggars, so neither will his soul be honoured or favoured any more than theirs. What a number of the great, noble, and learned, are now shut out of the presence of Christ! If you say, 'How can I tell that?' why, I answer, because their Judge hath told me so. Hath he not said by his apostle, "that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called?" (1 Cor. 1:26.) And if they be not called, they be not predestinate, or justified, or glorified. (Rom. 8:30.) Surely that rich man (Luke 16.) hath now no humble obeisance done him, nor titles of honour put upon him; nor do the poor now wait at his gates to

receive of his scraps. They must be shut out of their well-contrived houses, and sumptuous buildings, their comely chambers, with costly hangings; their soft beds, and easy couches. They shall not find their gallant walks, their curious gardens, with a variety of beauteous, odoriferous fruits and flowers; their rich pastures, and pleasant meadows, and plenteous harvest, and flocks and herds. Their tables will not be so spread and furnished, nor they so punctually attended and observed. They have not there variety of dainty fare, nor several courses, nor tempting dishes prepared to please their appetites to the full. The rich man there fareth not deliciously every day, neither shall he wear there his purple and fine linen. The jetting, gorgeous, well-dressed gallant, that must not have a pin amiss, that stands as a picture set to sale, that take themselves more beholden to the tailor or sempster for their comeliness, than to God; they shall then be quite in a different garb. There is no powdering or curling of their hair, nor eyeing of themselves, nor desirous expecting the admiration of beholders. Surely, our voluptuous youths must leave their cards and dice behind them, as also their hawks, and hounds, and bowls, and all their former pleasant sports: they shall then spend their time in a more sad employment, and not in such pastimes as these. Where will then be your May-games, and your morrice-dancers; your stageplays, and your shows: what mirth will you have in remembering all the games, and sports, and dancings, which you had on the Lord's-days, when you should have been delighting yourselves in God and his work? Oh, what an alteration will our jovial, roaring swaggerers then find: what bitter draughts will they have instead of their wine and ale! If there were any drinking of healths, the rich man would not have begged so hard for a drop of water: the heat of their lust will be then abated; they shall not spend their time in courting their mistresses, in lascivious discourse, in amorous songs, in wanton dalliance, in their lustful embracements, or brutish defilements; yet they are likely enough to have each other's company there: but they will have no more comfort in that company, than Zimri and Cosbi in dying together; or than lewd companions have, in being hanged together on the same gallows. Oh, the doleful meeting that these lustful

wantons will have there! how it will even cut them to the heart, to look each other in the face, and to remember that beastly pleasure, for which they now must pay so dear! so will it be with the fellowship of drunkards, and all others that were playfellows together in sin, who got not their pardon in the time of their lives. What direful greeting will there then be, cursing the day that ever they saw the faces of one another; remembering and ripping up all their lewdness, to the aggravation of their torment! Oh, that sinners would remember this in the midst of their pleasure and jollity, and say to one another, 'We must shortly reckon for this before the jealous God.' Will the remembrance of it then be comfortable or terrible; will these delights accompany us to another world: how shall we look each other in the face, if we meet in hell together for these things; will not the memorial of them be then our torment: shall we then take these for friendly actions, or rather wish we had spent this time in praying together, or admonishing one another? Oh, why should we sell such a lasting, incomprehensible joy, for one taste of seeming pleasure! Come, as we have sinned together, let us pray together before we stir, that God would pardon us; and let us enter into a promise to one another, that we will do thus no more, but will meet together with the godly in the worship of God, and help one another towards heaven, as often as we have met for our sinful merriments, in helping to deceive and destroy each other.' This would be the way to prevent this sorrow, and a course that would comfort you, when you look back upon it hereafter. Who would spend so many days, and years, and thoughts, and cares, and be at so much cost and pains, and all to please this flesh for a moment, which must shortly be most loathsome, stinking rottenness; and in the meantime neglect our precious souls, and that state which we must trust to for ever and ever? To be at such pains for that pleasure which dies in the enjoying, and is almost as soon gone as come; and when we have most need of comfort, will be so far from following us as our happiness, that it will be perpetual fuel to the flames which shall torment us! Oh, that men knew but what they desire, when they would so fain have all things suited to the desires of the flesh! They would have buildings, walks, lands, clothes, diet, and all so fitted as

may be most pleasing and delightful. Why, this is but to desire their temptations to be increased, and their snare strengthened: their joys will be more carnal; and how great an enemy carnal joy is to spiritual, experienced men can quickly tell you. If we took the flesh so much for our enemy as we do profess, we could not so earnestly desire and contrive to accommodate it, and so congratulate all its contentments as we do.

CHAP. IV

The Greatness of the Torments of the Damned Discovered.

SECT. I. Having thus showed you how great their loss is, who are shut out of rest, and how it will be aggravated by those additional losses which will accompany it, I should next here show you the greatness of those positive sufferings which will accompany this loss. But because I am to treat of rest, rather than of torment, I will not meddle with the explication of the quality of those sufferings, but only show their greatness in some few brief discoveries, lest the careless sinner, while he hears of no other punishment but that of loss before mentioned, should think he can bear that well enough by his own resolvedness, and so flatter himself in hope of a tolerable hell. That there are, besides the loss of happiness, such actual, sensible torments for the damned, is a matter beyond all doubt to him that doth not doubt the truth of the Scriptures; and that they will be exceeding great, may appear by these arguments following.

First: From the principal Author of them, which is God himself: as it was no less than God whom the sinner had offended, so it is no less than God that will punish them for their offences. He hath prepared those torments for his enemies. His continued anger will still be devouring them. His breath of indignation will kindle the flames. His wrath will be an intolerable burden to their souls. Oh, if it were but a

creature that they had to do with, they might bear it, for the penalty would be answerable to the infirmity of him that should inflict it. A child can give but an easy stroke, but the strokes of a giant will be answerable to his strength. Wo to him that falls under the stroke of the Almighty! They shall feel to their sorrow, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It were nothing in comparison to this, if all the world were against them, or if the strength of all creatures were united in one to inflict their penalty. They had now rather venture upon the displeasure of God, than to displease a landlord, a master, a friend, a neighbour, or their own flesh: but then they will wish a thousand times in vain, that they had lost the favour of all the world, and had been hated of all men, so they had not lost the favour of God; for, as there is no life like his favour, so is there no death like his displeasure. Oh, what a consuming fire is his wrath! If it be kindled here, and that but a little, how do we wither before it, as the grass that is cut down before the sun! How soon doth our strength decay, and turn to weakness, and our beauty to deformity! Churches are rooted up, commonwealths are overthrown, kingdoms depopulated, armies destroyed, and who can stand before his wrath? Even the heavens and earth will melt at his presence; and when he speaks the word at his great day of account, they will be burnt up before him as a scroll in the fire. The flames do not so easily run through the dry stubble, or consume the houses where its violence hath prevailed, as the wrath of God will feed upon these wretches. Oh, they that could not bear a prison, or a gibbet, or fire, for Christ, no, nor scarcely a few scorns from the mouths of the ignorant, how will they now bear the devouring fire!

Sect. II. 2. The place or state of torment, is purposely ordained for the glorifying of the attribute of God's justice. As all the works of God are great and wonderful, so those above all, which are specially intended for the eminent advancing of some of his attributes. When he will glorify his power, he makes the worlds by his wisdom. The comely order of all and singular creatures, declares his wisdom. His providence is shown, in sustaining all things, and maintaining order, and attaining his excellent ends, amongst the confused, perverse,

tumultuous agitations of a world of wicked, foolish, self-destroying miscreants. When a spark of his wrath doth kindle upon the earth, the whole world, save only eight persons, are drowned. Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, are burned with fire from heaven, to ashes. The sea shuts her mouth upon some. The earth doth open and swallow others. The pestilence destroyeth them up by thousands. The present deplorable state of the Jews, may fully testify this to the world. And yet the glorifying of the two great attributes of mercy and justice, is intended most eminently for the life to come. As, therefore, when God will purposely then glorify his merey, he will do it in a way and degree that is now incredible, and beyond the comprehension of the saints that must enjoy it; so that the blood of his Son, and the enjoyment of himself immediately in glory, shall not be thought too high an honour for them. So also, when the time comes that he will purposely manifest his justice, it shall appear to be indeed the justice of God. The everlasting flames of hell will not be thought too hot for the rebellious; and when they have there burnt through millions of ages, he will not repent him of the evil which is befallen them. Oh! wo to the soul that is thus set up for a butt, for the wrath of the Almighty to shoot at; and for a bush, that must burn in the flames of his jealousy, and never be consumed!

Sect. III. 3. The torments of the damned must needs be extreme, because they are the effect of divine revenge. Wrath is terrible, but revenge is implacable. When the great God shall say, 'I will now be righted for all the wrongs that I have borne from rebellious creatures; I will let out my wrath, and it shall be stayed no more, you shall now pay for all the abuse of my patience! Remember, now, how I waited your leisure in vain, how I stooped to persuade you; how I, as it were, kneeled to entreat you. Did you think I would always be slighted by such miscreants as you?' Oh, who can look up when God shall thus plead with them in the heat of revenge! Then will he be revenged for every mercy abused, for his creatures consumed in luxury and excess, for every hour's time misspent, for the neglect of his word, for the vilifying of his messengers, for the hating of his people, for the profanation of his ordinances, and neglect of his

worship, for the breaking of his Sabbaths, and the grieving of his Spirit, for the taking of his name in vain, for unmerciful neglect of his servants in distress. Oh! the numberless bill that will be brought in! And the charge that will overcharge the soul of the sinner! And how hotly revenge will pursue them all to the highest! How God will stand over them with the rod in his hand, (not the rod of fatherly chastisement, but that iron rod wherewith he bruise the rebellious,) and lay it on for all their neglects of Christ and grace. Oh, that men would foresee this, and not put themselves under the hammer of revenging fury, when they may have the treasure of happiness at so easy rates, and please God better in preventing their wo!

Sect. IV. 4. Consider, also, how this justice and revenge will be the delight of the Almighty. Though he had rather men would stoop to Christ, and accept of his merey, yet when they persist in rebellion, he will take pleasure in their execution. Though he desire not the death of him that dieth, but rather that he repent and live; yet, when he will not repent and live, God doth desire and delight in the execution of justice conditionally; so that men will repent, he desires not their death, but their life. (Ezek. 33:11.) Yet, if they repent not, in the same place he uttereth his resolution for their death. (Ver. 8, 13.) He tells us, "that fury is not in him;" yet he addeth in the next words, "Who would set the briars and thorns together in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together." (Isai. 27:4.) What a doleful case is the wretched creature in, when he shall thus set the heart of his Creator against him! "And he that made him, will not save him; and he that formed him, will not have mercy upon him." (Isai. 27:11.) How heavy a threatening is that, "As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought." (Deut. 28:63.) Wo to the soul which God rejoiceth to punish. Yea, he tells the simple ones that love simplicity, and the scorers that delight in scorning, and the fools that hate knowledge, "that because he called, and they refused, he stretched out his hand, and no man regarded, but set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproof; therefore he will also

laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh: when their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon them, then shall they call upon him, but he will not answer; they shall seek him early, but shall not find him; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." (Prov. 1:22–29.) I could entreat thee, who readest them, if thou be one of that sort of men, that thou wilt but view over seriously that part of the chapter (Prov. 1) from the 20th verse to the end, and believe them to be the true words of Christ by his Spirit in Solomon. Is it not a terrible thing to a wretched soul, when it shall lie roaring perpetually in the flames of hell, and the God of mercy himself shall laugh at them; when they shall cry out for mercy, yea, for one drop of water, and God shall mock them instead of relieving them; when none in heaven or earth can help them but God, and he shall rejoice over them in their calamity? Why, you see these are the very words of God himself in Scripture. And most just is it, that they who laughed at the sermon, and mocked at the preacher, and derided the people that obeyed the Gospel, should be laughed at, and derided by God. Ah! poor ignorant fools (for so this text calls them), they will then have mocking enough, till their hearts ache with it. I dare warrant them for ever making a jest at godliness more, or making themselves merry with their own slanderous reports. It is themselves, then, that must be the woful objects of derision, and that of God himself, who would have crowned them with glory. I know when the Scripture speaks of God's laughing and mocking, it is not to be understood literally, but after the manner of men: but this may suffice us, that it will be such an act of God to the tormenting of the sinner, which he cannot more fitly conceive or express under any other notion or name, than these.

Sect. V. 5. Consider who shall be God's executioners of their torment; and that is, First, Satan; Secondly, Themselves. First, He that was here so successful in drawing them from Christ, will then be the instrument of their punishment, for yielding to his temptations. It was a pitiful sight to see the man possessed, that was bound with chains, and lived among the tombs: and that other that would be cast

into the fire and into the water; but, alas! that was nothing to the torment that Satan puts them to in hell: that is the reward he will give them for all their service; for their rejecting the commands of God, and forsaking Christ, and neglecting their souls at his persuasion. Ah, if they had served Christ as faithfully as they did Satan, and had forsaken all for the love of him, he would have given them a better reward. 2. And it is most just, also, that they should there be their own tormentors, that they may see that their whole destruction is of themselves; and they who were wilfully the meritorious cause, should also be the efficient in their own sufferings: and then who can they complain of but themselves? And they will be no more able to cease their self-tormenting, than men that we see in a deep melancholy, that will by no arguments be taken off from their sorrows.

Sect. VI. 6. Consider, also, how that their torment will be universal, not upon one part alone, while the rest are free; but as all have joined in the sin, so must they all partake of the torment. The soul, as it was the chief in sinning, shall be the chief in suffering; and as it is of a more spiritual and excellent nature than bodies are, so will its torments as far exceed our present bodily sufferings. And as the joys of the soul do far surpass all sensual pleasures, and corporal contentments; so do the pains of the soul surpass those corporal pains; and as the martyrs did triumph in the very flames, because their souls were full of joy, though their bodies were in pain; so, though these damned creatures could enjoy all their bodily pleasures, yet the soul's sufferings would take away the sweetness of them all.

And it is not only a soul, but a sinful soul that must suffer; the guilt which still remains upon it, will make it fit for the wrath of God to work upon; as fire will not burn, except the fuel be combustible: but if the wood be dry, or it light upon straw, how fiercely will it burn then! Why, the guilt of their former sins will be as tinder to gunpowder, to the damned soul, to make the flames of hell to take hold upon them with fury.

And as the soul, so also the body must bear its part. That body that must needs be pleased, whatsoever become of its eternal safety, shall now be paid for all its unlawful pleasures; that body which was so carefully looked to, so tenderly cherished, so curiously dressed; that body which could not endure heat or cold, or an ill smell, or a loathsome sight: oh, what must it now endure! how are its haughty looks now taken down! how little will those flames regard its comeliness and beauty! But as death did not regard it, nor the worms regard it, but as freely feed upon the face of the proud and lustful dames, and the heart of the most ambitious lords or princes, as if they had been but beggars or brutes; so will their tormentors then as little pity their tenderness, or reverence their lordliness, when they shall be raised from their graves to their eternal doom. Those eyes which were wont to be delighted with curious sights, and to feed themselves upon beauteous and comely objects, must then see nothing but what shall amaze and terrify them; an angry, sin-revenging God above them, and those saints whom they scorned, enjoying the glory which they have lost; and about them will be only devils and damned souls; ah, then, how sadly will they look back and say, 'Are all the merry meetings, our feasts, our plays, our wanton toys, our games and revels, come to this?' Then those ears which were wont to be delighted with music, shall hear the shrieks and cries of their damned companions; children crying out against their parents, that gave them encouragement and example in evil, but did not teach them the fear of the Lord; husbands crying out upon their wives, and wives upon their husbands; masters and servants cursing each other; ministers and people, magistrates and subjects, charging their misery upon one another, for discouraging in duty, conniving in sin, and being silent or formal, when they should have plainly told one another of their misery, and forewarned them of this danger. Thus will soul and body be companions in calamity.

Sect. VII. 7. And the greater by far will their torments be, because they shall have no comfort left to help to mitigate them. In this life, when a minister foretold them of hell, or conscience began to trouble their peace, they had comforts enough at hand to relieve them: their

carnal friends were all ready to speak comfort to them, and promise them that all should be well with them; but now they have not a word of comfort either for others or themselves. Formerly they had their business, their company, their mirth, to drive away their fears; they could think away their sorrows, or play them away, or sleep them away, or at least, time did wear them away; but now all these remedies are vanished. They had a hard, a presumptuous and unbelieving heart, which was a wall to defend them against troubles of mind; but now their experience hath banished these, and left them naked to the fury of those flames. Yea, formerly Satan himself was their comforter, and would unsay all that the minister had said against them, as he did to our first mother: 'Hath God said, Ye shall not eat? ye shall not surely die.' So doth he now; 'Doth God tell you, that you shall lie in hell? It is no such matter; God is more merciful; he doth but tell you so, to fright you from sinning: who would lose his present pleasures, for the fear of that which he never saw? Or, if there be a hell, what need you to fear it? Are not you Christians, and shall you not be saved by Christ? Was not his blood shed for you? Ministers may tell you what they please; they delight to fright men, that they may be masters of their consciences, and therefore would make them believe that they shall all be damned, except they will fit themselves to their precise humour.' Thus, as the Spirit of Christ is the comforter of the saints, so Satan is the comforter of the wicked; for he knows if he should now disquiet them, they would no longer serve him; or if fears or doubts should begin to trouble them, they would bethink themselves of their danger, and so escape it. Never was a thief more careful lest he should awake the people, when he is robbing the house, than Satan is careful not to awaken a sinner. And as a cut-purse will look you in the face, and hold you in a tale, that you may never suspect him, while he is picking your pockets; so will Satan labour to keep men from all doubts or jealousies, or sorrowful thoughts. But when the sinner is dead, and he hath his prey, and his stratagem hath had success, then he hath done flattering and comforting them. While the sight of sin and misery might have helped to save them, he took all the pains he could to hide it from their eyes; but when it is too late, and there is no hope left, he will

make them see and feel to the utmost. Oh! which way will the forlorn sinner then look for comfort? They that drew him into the snare, and promised him safety, do now forsake him, and are forsaken themselves. His ancient comforts are taken from him, and the righteous God, whose forewarnings he made light of, will now made good his word against him to the least tittle.

Sect. VIII. 8. But the great aggravation of this misery will be its eternity. That when a thousand millions of ages are past, their torments are as fresh to begin as at the first day. If there were any hope of an end, it would case them to foresee it; but when it must be for ever so, that thought is intolerable: much more will the misery itself be. They were never weary of sinning, nor ever would have been, if they had lived eternally upon earth, and now God will not be weary of plaguing them. They never heartily repented of their sin, and God will never repent him of their suffering. They broke the laws of the eternal God, and therefore shall suffer eternal punishment. They knew it was an everlasting kingdom which they refused when it was offered them, and therefore what wonder if they be everlastingly shut out of it; it was their immortal souls that were guilty of the trespass, and therefore must immortally suffer the pains. Oh, now, what happy men would they think themselves, if they might have lain still in their graves, or continued dust, or suffered no worse than the gnawing of those worms! Oh! that they might but there lie down again; what a mercy now would it be to die; and how will they call and cry out for it, 'O death, whither art thou now gone? Now come and cut off this doleful life! Oh! that these pains would break my heart, and end my being! Oh! that I might once die at last! Oh! that I never had a being!' These groans will the thoughts of eternity wring from their hearts. They were wont to think the sermon long, and prayer long; how long then will they think these endless torments? What difference is there betwixt the length of their pleasures and of their pains? The one continued but a moment, but the other endureth through all eternity. Oh! that sinners would lay this thought to heart! Remember how time is almost gone. Thou art standing all this while at the door of eternity; and death is waiting to

open the door, and put thee in. Go sleep out but a few more nights, and stir up and down on earth a few more days, and then thy nights and days shall end; thy thoughts and cares, and displeasures, and all shall be devoured by eternity; thou must enter upon the state which shall never be changed. As the joys of heaven are beyond our conceiving, so also are the pains of hell. Everlasting torment is inconceivable torment.

Sect. IX. Object. But I know if it be a sensual unbeliever that readeth all this, he will cast it by with disdain, and say, 'I will never believe that God will thus torment his creatures. What, to delight in their torture! And that for everlasting! and all this for the faults of a short time; it is incredible. How can this stand with the infiniteness of his mercy? I would not thus torment the worst enemy that I have in the world, and yet my mercifulness is nothing to God's. These are but threats to awe men; I will not believe them.

Answ. Wilt thou not believe? I do not wonder if thou be loth to believe so terrible tidings to thy soul, as these are; which if they were believed and apprehended, indeed, according to their weight, would set thee a trembling and roaring in the anguish of horror day and night. And I do as little wonder that the devil who ruleth thee, should be loth, if he can hinder it, to suffer thee to believe it. For if thou didst believe it, thou wouldst spare no cost or pains to escape it. But go to: If thou wilt read on, either thou shalt believe it before thou stirrest, or prove thyself an infidel or pagan. Tell me then, dost thou believe Scripture to be the word of God? If thou do not, thou art no more a Christian than thy horse is, or than a Turk is. For what ground have we besides Scripture to believe that Jesus Christ did come into the world, or die for man? If thou believe not these, I have nothing here to do with thee, but refer thee to the second part of this book, where I have proved Scripture to be the word of God. But if thou do believe this to be so, and yet dost not believe that the same Scripture is true, thou art far worse than either infidel or pagan. For the vilest pagan durst hardly charge their idol-gods to be liars: and darest thou give the lie to the God of heaven; and accuse him of

speaking that which shall not come to pass; and that in such absolute threats, and plain expressions? But if thou darest not stand to this, but dost believe Scripture both to be the word of God, and to be true, then I shall presently convince thee of the truth of these eternal torments; wilt thou believe if a prophet should tell it thee? Why read it then in the greatest prophets, Moses, David, and Isaiah. (Deut. 32:22; Psal. 11:6, and 9:17; Isai. 30:33.) Or wilt thou believe one that was more than a prophet? Why, hear then what John Baptist saith, (Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:17.) Or wilt thou believe if an apostle should tell thee? Why, hear what one saith, where he calls it the "vengeance of eternal fire; and the blackness of darkness for ever." (Jude 7, 13.) Or what if thou have it from an apostle that had been wrapt up in revelations into the third heaven, and seen things unutterable, wilt thou believe then? Why take it then from Paul, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. 1:7–9.) And "that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:12.) So Rom. 2:5–7. Or wilt thou believe it from the beloved apostle, who was so taken up in revelations, and saw it, as it were, in his visions? Why see then Rev. 20:10, 15. They are said there to be "cast into the lake of fire, and tormented day and night for ever." So Rev. 21:8; so 2 Pet. 2:17. Or wilt thou believe it from the mouth of Christ himself the Judge? Why read it then: As therefore the tares are gathered, and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world: the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, &c. (Matt. 7:10, and 13:40–42, 49, 50.) So Matt. 18:8, 9: so Mark 9:43, 44, 46, 48: where he repeateth it three times over, "Where their worm never dieth, and their fire is not quenched." And "Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was, &c.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:41, 46.)

What sayest thou now to all this; wilt thou not believe? If thou wilt not believe Christ, I know not whom thou wilt believe: and therefore it is in vain to persuade thee any further: only let me tell thee, the time is at hand when thou wilt easily believe, and that without any preaching or arguing; when thou seest the great and terrible day, and hearest the condemning sentence passed, and art thyself thrust down to hell, (as Luke 10:11,) then thou shalt believe, and never doubt again: and do not say but thou wast told so much. Surely, he that so much dissuades thee from believing, doth yet believe and tremble himself. (Jam. 2:10.)

And whereas thou thinkest that God is more merciful, why, surely, he knows best his own mercifulness. His mercy will not cross his truth. Cannot God be infinite in mercy, except he save the wilful and rebellious? Is a judge unmerciful for condemning malefactors? Mercy and justice have their several objects. Thousands of humble, believing, obedient souls shall know to their eternal comfort, that God is merciful, though the refusers of his grace shall lie under justice. God will then force thy conscience to confess it in hell, that God who condemned thee was yet merciful to thee. Was it not mercy to be made a reasonable creature; and to have patience to endure thy many years' provocations, and waiting upon thee from sermon to sermon; desiring and entreating thy repentance and return? Was it not mercy to have the Son of God, with all his blood and merits, freely offered thee, if thou wouldst but have accepted him to govern and to save thee? Nay, when thou hadst neglected and refused Christ once, or twice, yea, a hundred times, that God should yet follow thee with invitations from day to day? And shalt thou wilfully refuse mercy to the last hour, and then cry out that God will not be so unmerciful as to condemn thee? Thy conscience will smite thee for thy madness, and tell thee, that God was merciful in all this, though such as thou do perish for thy wilfulness. Yea, the sense of the greatness of his mercy, will then be a great part of thy torment.

And whereas thou thinkest the pain to be greater than the offence, that is because thou art not a competent judge. Thou knowest what pain is, but thou knowest not the thousandth part of the evil of sin. Shall not the righteous Judge of the world do justly? Nay, it is no more than thou didst choose thyself. Did not God set before thee life and death, and tell thee, if thou wouldst accept of the government of Christ, and renounce thy lusts, that then thou shouldst have eternal life? And if thou wouldst not have Christ, but the world or flesh to rule over thee, thou shouldst then endure eternal torments? Did not he offer thee thy choice, and bid thee take which of these thou wouldst; yea, and entreat thee to choose aright? And dost thou now cry out of severity, when thou hast but the consequence of thy wilful choice? But it is not thy accusing God of cruelty that shall serve thy turn; instead of procuring thy escape, or the mitigation of thy torments, it will but make thy burden the more heavy.

And whereas thou sayst that thou wouldst not so torment thy own enemy; I answer, There is no reason that thou shouldst: for is it all one to offend a crawling worm of the earth, and to offend the eternal glorious God? Thou hast no absolute dominion over thine enemy, and there may be some fault in thyself as well as in him; but with God and us the case is contrary. Yet thou makest nothing of killing a flea if it do but bite thee; yea, an hundred of them, if they did not touch thee, and yet never accusest thyself of cruelty. Yea, thou wilt torment thy ox all his life-time with toilsome labour, and kill him at last, though he never deserved ill of thee, nor disobeyed thee, and though thou hast over him but the borrowed authority of a superior fellow-creature, and not the sovereign power of the absolute Creator. Yea, how commonly dost thou take away the lives of birds, and beasts, and fishes! Many times a great many of lives must be taken away to make for thee but one meal. How many deaths, then, have been suffered in obedience to thy will, from thy first age to thy last hour; and all this without any desert of the creature! And must it yet seem cruelty, that the sovereign Creator, who is ten thousand times more above thee than thou art above a flea or a toad, should execute

his justice upon such a contemner of his authority? But I have given you some reasons of this before.

Sect. X. But methinks I perceive the obstinate sinner desperately resolving, If I must be damned, there is no remedy; rather than I will live so precisely as the Scripture requireth, I will put it to the venture; I shall escape as well as the rest of my neighbours, and as the most of the world, and we will even bear it as well as we can. Answ. Alas, poor creature! I wish thou didst but know what it is that thou dost so boldly venture on; I dare say thou wouldst sleep this night but very unquietly. Wilt thou leave thyself no room for hope? Art thou such a malicious, implacable enemy to Christ and thy own soul? And dost thou think, indeed, that thou canst bear the wrath of God, and go a way so easily with these eternal torments! Yet let me beg this of thee, that before thou dost so flatly resolve, thou wouldst lend me thine attention to these few questions which I shall put to thee, and weigh them with the reason of a man; and if then thou canst bear these pains, I shall give thee over and say no more.

First: Who art thou that thou shouldst bear the wrath of God? Art thou a God, or art thou a man? What is thy strength to undergo so much? Is it not as the strength of wax or stubble to resist the fire; or as chaff to the wind; or as the dust before the fierce whirlwind? Was he not as stout a man as thyself, who cried to God, "Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro; and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?" (Job 13:25;) and he that confesseth, "I am a worm and no man." (Phil. 2:26.) If thy strength were as iron, and thy bones as brass, thou couldst not bear. If thy foundation were as the earth, and thy power as the heavens, yet shouldst thou perish at the breath of his indignation. How much more when thou art but a little piece of a worm, creeping, breathing clay, kept a few days from stinking, and from being eaten with worms by the mere support and favour of him whom thou thus resistest.

Secondly: If thou art able to wrestle with the indignation of the Almighty; why then dost thou tremble at the signs of his power, or

wrath? Do not the terrible thunder-claps sometimes affright thee; or the lightning-flashes, or that unseen power which goes with it, in rending in pieces mighty oaks, and tearing down the strongest buildings? If thou hadst been in the church of Withicombe, in Devonshire, when the lightning broke in, and scorched and burnt the people, and left the brains and hair upon the pillars, would it not have made thee afraid? If thou be put in a place where the plague doth rage, so that it comes to so many thousand a week, doth it not astonish thee, to see men that were well within a few days to be thrown into the graves by heaps and multitudes? If thou hadst stood by, when Pharaoh and his people were so strangely plagued, and at last drowned together in the sea; or when the earth swallowed up Dathan, Abiram, and their companies, and the people fled away at the cry, lest the earth should swallow them up also; or when Elias brought fire from heaven to consume the captains and their companies: would not any of these sights have daunted thy spirit? Why, how then canst thou bear the hellish plagues?

Thirdly: Tell me also, if thou be so strong, and thy heart so stout, why do those small sufferings so dismay thee which befall thee here? If thou have but a toothache, or a fit of the gout, or stone, what groans dost thou utter; what moans dost thou make! The house is filled with thy constant complaints: thy friends about thee are grieved at thy pains, and stand over thee condoling thy miserable state. If thou shouldst but lose a leg or an arm, thou wouldst make a greater matter of it. If thou lose but a friend; if thou lose thine estate, and fall into poverty, and beggary, and disgrace; how heavily wouldst thou bear any one of these. And yet all these laid together will be one day accounted a happy state, in comparison of that which is suffered in hell. Let me see thee shake off the most painful sickness, and make as light of convulsive, epileptic, arthritic, nephritic pains, or such-like diseases, when they seize upon thee, and then the strength of thy spirit will appear. Alas, how many such boasters as thyself have I seen made stoop and eat their words! And when God hath but let out a little of his wrath, that Pharaoh who before asked, 'Who is the Lord,

that I should let all go for him?' hath turned his tune, and cried, 'I have sinned.'

Fourthly: If thy stout spirit do make so light of hell, why then doth the approach of death so much affright thee? Didst thou never find the sober thoughts of death to raise a kind of dread in thy mind? Wast thou never in a fever, or consumption, or any disease wherein thou didst receive the sentence of death? If thou wast not, thou wilt be before long; and then when the physician hath plainly told thee that there is no hopes, oh, how cold it strikes to thy heart! Why is death to men the king of terrors else? and the stoutest champions then do abate their courage. Oh! but the grave would be accounted a palace or a paradise, in comparison of that place of torment which thou desperately slightest.

Fifthly: If all this be nothing, go try thy strength by some corporeal torment; as Bilney, before he went to the stake, would first try his finger in the candle; so do thou. Hold thy finger awhile in the fire, and feel there whether thou canst endure the fire of hell. Austin mentioneth a chaste christian woman, who being tempted to uncleanness by a lewd ruffian, she desired him for her sake to hold his finger one hour in the fire; he answereth, 'It is an unreasonable request;' 'How much more unreasonable is it,' said she, 'that I should burn in hell for the satisfying your lust?' So say I to thee: If it be an intolerable thing to suffer the heat of the fire for a year, or a day, or an hour, what will it be to suffer ten thousand times more for ever? What, if thou wert to suffer Lawrence's death, to be roasted upon a gridiron; or to be scraped or pricked to death as other martyrs were; or if thou wert to feed upon toads for a year together. If thou couldst not endure such things as these, how wilt thou endure the eternal flames?

Sixthly: Tell me yet again, If hell be so small a matter, why canst thou not endure so much as the thoughts, or the mention of it? If thou be alone, thou darest scarcely think of hell, for fear of raising disquietness in thy spirit. If thou be in company, thou canst not

endure to have any serious speech of it, lest it spoil the sport, and mar the mirth, and make thee tremble, as Felix did when Paul was discoursing of the judgment to come. Thou canst not endure to hear a minister preach of hell, but thou gnashest thy teeth, and disdainest him, and reproachest his sermon, as enough to drive men to desperation, or make them mad. And canst thou endure the torments, when thou canst not endure so much as to hear of them? Alas! man, to hear thy judgment from the mouth of Christ, and to feel the execution, will be another kind of matter, than to hear it from a minister.

Seventhly: Furthermore, What is the matter that the rich man in hell, mentioned in Luke 16, could not make as light of it as thou dost? Was not he as likely a man to bear it as thyself? Why doth he so cry out that he is tormented in the flames; and stoop so low, as to beg a drop of water of a beggar that he had but a little before despised at his gates; and to be beholden to him, that had been beholden to the dogs to lick his sores?

Also, what aileth thy companions, who were as resolute as thyself, that when they lie a dying, their courage is so cooled, and their haughty expressions are so greatly changed? They who had the same spirits and language as thou hast now, and made as light of all the threats of the word; yet when they see they are going into another world, how pale do they look; how faintly do they speak; how dolefully do they complain and groan! They send for the minister then, whom they despised before, and desire to be prayed for, and would be glad to die in the state of those whom they would not be persuaded to imitate in their lives; except it be here and there a desperate wretch, who is given over to a more than hellish hardness of heart. Why cannot these make as light of it as thou?

Eighthly: Yet further, If thou be so fearless of that eternal misery, why is the least foretaste of it so terrible? Didst thou never feel such a thing as a tormenting conscience? If thou hast not, thou shalt do. Didst thou never see and speak with a man that lived in desperation,

or in some degree of those wounds of spirit that were near despair? How uncomfortable was their conference! How burdensome their lives! Nothing doth them good which they possess; the sight of friends, or house, or goods, which refresh others, is a trouble to them; they feel no sweetness in meat or drink; they are weary of life, and fearful of death. What is the matter with these men? If the misery of the damned itself can be endured, why cannot they more easily endure these little sparks?

Ninthly: Again, tell me faithfully, what if thou shouldst but see the devil appear to thee in some terrible shape, would it not daunt thee? What, if thou shouldst meet him in thy way home, or he should show himself to thee at night in thy bed-chamber, would not thy heart fail thee, and thy hair stand on end? I could name thee those that have been as confident as thyself, who, by such a sight, have been so appalled, that they were in danger of being driven out of their wits. Or, what, if some damned soul, of thy former acquaintance, should appear to thee in some bodily likeness, would not this amaze thee? What fears do people live in, whose houses or persons have been but haunted with spirits, though they have only heard some noises, and seen some sights, but never felt any hurt upon their bodies? Alas! what is this to the torments of hell? Canst thou not endure a shadow to appear before thee? Oh, how wilt thou endure to live with them for ever, where thou shalt have no other company but devils and the damned; and shalt not only see them, but be tormented with them, and by them! And as incredible a matter as this seems to thee, if thy thorough conversion prevent it not, thou knowest not how very few months thou shalt be out of this estate.

Tenthly and lastly: Let me ask thee one more question, if the wrath of God be to be made so light of as thou dost, why did the Son of God himself make so great a matter of it? when he, who was perfectly innocent himself, had taken upon him the payment of our debt, and stood in our room, and bore that punishment that we had deserved, it makes him sweat forth water and blood; it makes the Lord of life cry, "My soul is heavy, even to the death." It makes him cry out upon

the cross, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Surely, if any one could have borne these sufferings easily, it would have been Jesus Christ. He had another measure of strength to bear it than thou hast.

And let me tell thee one thing, which every one understandeth not; thou wilt have sins of a more heinous nature and degree to suffer for, than ever were laid upon Jesus Christ. For Christ suffered only for the breaches of the covenant of works, and not for the violation of the covenant of grace (properly so called, that is, not for the final non-performance of the conditions of this covenant). There was no man's final prevailing unbelief, impenitency, or rejecting of Christ, that did lie upon Christ. Howsoever the aggravation of all men's sins might aggravate his burden, yet the punishment due to those sins particularly was not like the punishment which is due to thine. For as the first covenant gave not so great a reward, so neither did it threaten so great a penalty as the latter doth. And the penalty which the new covenant threateneth, Christ never underwent. So that the punishment which thou must suffer, is that which the Apostle speaks of, "Of how much sorer punishment," &c. (Heb. 10:29,) and that fearful looking for of judgment and fire, which devoureth the adversaries. (Heb. 6:8.) Wo to poor sinners for their mad security! Do they think to find it tolerable to them, which was so heavy to Christ? Nay, the Son of God is cast into a bitter agony, and bloody sweat, and dolorous complaints, under the curse of the law alone; and yet the feeble, foolish creature makes nothing to bear also the curse of the Gospel. The good Lord bring these men to their right minds by repentance, lest they buy their wit at too dear a rate.

Sect. XI. And thus I have showed you somewhat of their misery, who miss of this rest prepared for the saints. And now, reader, I demand thy resolution, what use thou wilt make of all this: shall it all be lost to thee; or, wilt thou, as thou art alone, consider of it in good earnest? Thou hast cast by many a warning of God, wilt thou do so by this also? Take heed what thou dost, and how thou so resolvest. God will not always stand warning and threatening. The hand of revenge

is lifted up, the blow is coming, and wo to him, whoever he be, on whom it lighteth. Little thinkest thou how near thou standest to thy eternal state, and how near the pit thou art dancing in thy greatest jollity. If thy eyes were but opened, as they will be shortly, thou wouldst see all this that I have spoken before thine eyes, without stirring from the place, I think, in which thou standest. Dost thou throw by the book, and say, 'It speaks of nothing but hell and damnation?' Thus thou usest also to complain of the minister; but wouldst thou not have us tell thee of these things? Should we be guilty of the blood of thy soul, by keeping silent that which God hath charged us upon pain of death to make known? Wouldst thou perish in ease and silence, and also have us to perish with thee, rather than to awake thee, or displease thee, by speaking the truth? If thou wilt be guilty of such inhuman cruelty, yet God forbid we should be guilty of such most sottish folly! there are few preachers so simple, but they know that this kind of preaching is the ready way to be hated of their hearers. And the desire of applause, and the favour of men, is so natural to all men, that I think there are few that delight in such a displeasing way. Our temptations to flattery and man-pleasing are too strong for that. But I beseech thee, consider, are these things true, or are they not? If they were not true, I would heartily join with thee against any minister that should offer to preach them, and to affright poor people when there is no cause; and, I should think, such preachers did deserve death or banishment. But if every word of these threatenings be the words of God, and if they be as true as thou livest and readest this, what a wretch art thou that wouldst not hear it, or consider it! Why, what is the matter? If thou be sure that thou art one of the people of God, this doctrine will be a comfort to thee, and not a terror: but if thou be yet carnal and unregenerate, methinks thou shouldst be as afraid to hear of heaven as of hell, except the bare name of heaven or salvation be sufficient. Sure, there is no doctrine concerning heaven in all the Scripture that can give thee any comfort, but upon the supposal of thy conversion; what comfort is it to thee, to hear that there is a rest remaining to the people of God, except thou be one of them? Nay, what more terrible, than to read of Christ and salvation for others, when thou must be

shut out? Therefore, except thou wouldst have a minister to preach a lie, it is all one to thee for any comfort thou hast in it, whether he preach of heaven or hell to thee. His preaching heaven and mercy to thee, can be nothing else but to entreat thee to seek them, and not neglect or reject them; but he can make thee no promise of it, but upon the condition of thy obeying the Gospel; and his preaching hell, is but to persuade thee to avoid it. And is not this doctrine fit for thee to hear? Indeed, if thou wert quite past hope of escaping it, then it were in vain to tell thee of hell, but rather let thee take a few merry hours whilst thou mayst; but, as long as thou art alive, there is some hope of thy recovery, and therefore all means must be used to awake thee from thy lethargy. Oh, that some Jonas had this point in hand to cry in your ears, "Yet a few days, and the rebellious shall be destroyed;" till you were brought down on your knees in sackcloth and in ashes! Oh, if some John Baptist might cry it abroad, "Now is the axe laid to the root of the tree; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." Oh, that some son of thunder, who could speak as Paul, till the hearers tremble, were now to preach this doctrine to thee! Alas! as terribly as you think I speak, yet is it not the thousandth part of what must be felt; for what heart can now possibly conceive, or what tongue can express the dolours of those souls that are under the wrath of God? Ah, that ever blind sinners should wilfully bring themselves to such unspeakable misery! You will then be crying to Jesus Christ, 'Oh, mercy! oh, pity, pity, on a poor soul!' Why, I do now in the name of the Lord Jesus cry to thee, Oh, have mercy, have pity, man, upon thine own soul! shall God pity thee, who wilt not be entreated to pity thyself? If thy horse see but a pit before him, thou canst scarcely force him in. Balaam's ass would not be driven upon the drawn sword; and wilt thou so obstinately cast thyself into hell, when the danger is foretold thee? "Oh, who can stand before the Lord, and who can abide the fierceness of his anger?" (Nahum 1:6.) Methinks thou shouldst need no more words, but presently cast away thy soul-damning sins, and wholly deliver up thyself to Christ. Resolve on it immediately, man, and let it be done, that I may see thy face in rest among the saints. The Lord persuade thy heart to strike this covenant without any longer delay: but if thou

be hardened unto death, and there be no remedy, yet do not say another day, but that thou wast faithfully warned, and that thou hast a friend that would fain have prevented thy damnation.

CHAP. V

The second Use, reprehending the general Neglect of this Rest, and exciting to Diligence in seeking it.

SECT. I. I come now to the second use which I shall raise from this doctrine of rest. If there be so certain and glorious rest for the saints, why is there no more industrious seeking after it in the world? One would think that a man that did but once hear of such unspeakable glory to be obtained, and did believe what he heareth to be true, should be transported with the vehemency of his desires after it, and should almost forget to eat or drink, and should mind and care for nothing else, and speak of and inquire after nothing else, but how to get assurance and possession of this treasure! And yet people who hear it daily, and profess to believe it undoubted, as a fundamental article of their faith, do as little mind it, or care, or labour for it, and as much forget and disregard it, as if they had never heard of any such thing, or did not believe one word that they hear. And as a man that comes into America, and sees the natives regard more a piece of glass, or an old knife, than a piece of gold, may think, Surely these people never heard of the worth of gold, or else they would not exchange it for toys; so a man that looked only upon the lives of most men, and did not hear their contrary confessions, would think either these men never heard of heaven, or else they never heard of its excellency and glory: when, alas! they hear of it till they are weary of hearing; and it is offered to them so commonly, that they are tired with the tidings, and cry out as the Israelites, "Our soul is dried away, because there is nothing but this manna before our eyes." (Numb. 11:6.) And as the Indians, who live among the golden mines, do little regard it, but are weary of the daily toil of getting it, when other nations will compass the world, and venture their lives, and sail

through storms and waves to get it: so we that live where the Gospel groweth, where heaven is urged upon us at our doors, and the manna falls upon our tents, do little regard it, and wish these mines of gold were further from us, that we might not be put upon the toil of getting it, when some that want it, would be glad of it upon harder terms. Surely, though the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting, be the last article in their creed, it is not the least, nor therefore put last, that it should be last in their desires and endeavours.

Sect. II. I shall apply this reproof more particularly yet to four several sorts of men. First, To the carnal, worldly-minded man, who is so taken up in seeking the things below, that he hath neither heart nor time to seek this rest.

May I not well say to these men, as Paul to the Galatians, in another case, "Foolish sinners! who hath bewitched you?" It is not for nothing that divines use to call the world a witch; for, as in witchcraft men's lives, senses, goods, or cattle, are destroyed by a strange, secret, unseen power of the devil, of which a man can give no natural reason; so here, men will destroy their own souls in a way quite against their own knowledge; and as witches will make a man dance naked, or do the most unseemly, unreasonable actions; so the world doth bewitch men into brute beasts, and draw them some degrees beyond madness. Would not any man wonder, that is in his right wit, and hath but the spiritual use of reason, to see what riding and running, what scrambling and catching, there is for a thing of nought, while eternal rest lies by neglected! What contriving and caring, what fighting and bloodshed, to get a step higher in the world than their brethren, while they neglect the kingly dignity of the saints! What insatiable pursuit of fleshly pleasures, whilst they look upon the praises of God, which is the joy of angels, as a tiring burden! What unwearied diligence is there in raising their posterity, in enlarging their possessions, in gathering a little silver or gold; yea, perhaps for a poor living from hand to mouth, while, in the meantime, their judgment is drawing near; and yet how it shall go

with them then, or how they shall live eternally, did never put them to the trouble of one hour's sober consideration. What rising early, and sitting up late, and labouring and caring, year after year, to maintain themselves and their children in credit till they die; but what shall follow after, that they never think on, as if it were only their work to provide for their bodies, and only God's work to provide for their souls; whereas, God hath promised more to provide for their bodies, without their care, than for their souls, though indeed they must painfully serve his providence for both; and yet these men cry to us, 'May not a man be saved without so much ado?' And may we not say, with more reason to them, 'May not a man have a little air on earth, a little credit or wealth, without so much ado?' or, at least, 'May not a man have enough to bring him to his grave without so much ado?' How early do they rouse up their servants to their labour! 'Up, come away to work, we have this to do, and that to do;' but how seldom do they call them, 'Up, you have your souls to look to, you have everlasting life to provide for; up to prayer, to the reading of the Scripture.' Alas, how rare is this language! what a gadding up and down the world is here, like a company of ants upon a hillock, taking incessant pains to gather a treasure, which death, as the next passenger that comes by, will spurn abroad, as if it were such an excellent thing to die in the midst of wealth and honours! or, as if it would be such a comfort to a man at death, or in another world, to think that he was a lord, or a knight, or a gentleman, or a rich man on earth! For my part, whatever these men may profess or say to the contrary, I cannot but strongly suspect that, in heart, they are flat pagans, and do not believe that there is an eternal glory or misery, nor what the Scripture speaks of the way of obtaining it; or, at least, that they do but a little believe it, by the halves, and therefore think to make sure of earth, lest there be no such thing as heaven to be had; and to hold fast that which they have in hand, lest if they let go that, in hope of better in another world, they should play the fools, and lose all. I fear, though the christian faith be in their mouths, lest that this be the faith which is next their hearts; or else the lust of their senses doth overcome and suspend their reason, and prevail with their wills against the last practical conclusion of

their understanding. What is the excellency of this earth, that it hath so many suitors and admirers: what hath this world done for its lovers and friends, that it is so eagerly followed, and painfully sought after, while Christ and heaven stand by, and few regard them; or, what will the world do for them for the time to come? The common entrance into it, is through anguish and sorrow. The passage through it, is with continual care, and labour, and grief. The passage out of it, is with the greatest sharpness and sadness of all. What, then, doth cause men so much to follow and affect it? O sinful, unreasonable, bewitched men! will mirth and pleasure stick close to you; will gold and worldly glory prove fast friends to you in the time of your greatest need; will they hear your cries in the day of your calamity? If a man should say to you at the hour of your death, as Elias did to Baal's priests, "Cry aloud," &c. Oh, riches, or honour, now help us! will they either answer, or relieve you; will they go along with you to another world, and bribe the Judge, and bring you off clear; or purchase you a room among the blessed? Why then did so rich a man want a drop of water for his tongue; or are the sweet morsels of present delight and honour, of more worth than the eternal rest: and will they recompense the loss of that enduring treasure; can there be the least hope of any of these: why, what then is the matter; is it only a room for our dead bodies, that we are so much beholden to the world for? why, this is the last and longest courtesy that we shall receive from it. But we shall have this, whether we serve it or not; and even that homely, dusty dwelling, it will not afford us always neither: it shall possess our dust, but till the great resurrection day. Why, how then doth the world deserve so well at men's hands, that they should part with Christ and their salvation to be its followers? Ah, vile, deceitful world! how oft have we heard thy most faithful servants at last complaining, 'Oh, the world hath deceived me, and undone me! it flattered me in my prosperity, but now it turns me off at death in my necessity! Ah, if I had as faithfully served Christ, as I have served it, he would not thus have cast me off, nor have left me thus comfortless and hopeless in the depth of misery! Thus do the dearest friends and favourites of the world complain at last of its deceit, or rather of their own self-deluding folly, and yet succeeding

sinner will take no warning. So this is the first sort of neglecters of heaven which fall under this reproof.

Sect. III. 2. The second sort here to be reprov'd are, the profane, ungodly, presumptuous multitude, who will not be persuaded to be at so much pains for salvation as to perform the common, outward duties of religion: yea, though they are convinc'd that these duties are commanded by God, and see it before their eyes in the Scripture, yet will they not be brought to the constant practice of them. If they have the Gospel preached in the town where they dwell, it may be they will give the hearing to it one part of the day, and stay at home the other; or if the minister come to the congregation, yet part of his family must stay at home. If they want the plain and powerful preaching of the Gospel, how few are they in a whole town that will either be at cost or pains to procure a minister, or travel a mile or two to hear abroad, though they will go many miles to the market for provisions for their bodies! The Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and condemn them; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon doth, by his messengers, preach to them. The king of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with them, and shall condemn them, for he repented at the preaching of Jonas; but when Jesus Christ sendeth his ambassadors to these men, they will scarcely go to hear them. (Matt. 12:41, 42.) And though they know that the Scripture is the very law of God, by which they must live, and by which they must be acquitted or condemned in judgment; and that it is the property of every blessed man to delight in this law, and to meditate in it day and night; (Psal. 1:2;) yet will they not be at the pains to read a chapter once in a day, nor to acquaint their families with this doctrine of salvation. But if they carry a Bible to church, and let it lie by them all the week, this is the most use they make of it: and though they are commanded to pray without ceasing; (1 Thes. 5:17;) and to pray always, and not to wax faint; (Luke 18:1-3, &c. ;) to continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; (Col. 4:2;) yet will they not be brought to pray constantly with their families, or in secret. Though Daniel would rather be cast to the lions

than he would forbear for a while praying openly in his house, where his enemies might hear him three times a day; yet these men will rather venture to be an eternal prey to that roaring lion that seeks to devour them, than they will be at the pains thus to seek their safety. You may hear, in their houses, two oaths for one prayer; or if they do any thing this way, it is usually but a running over a few formal words which they have got on their tongue's end, as if they came on purpose to make a jest of prayer, and to mock God and their own souls. If they be in distress, or want any thing for their bodies, they want no words to make known their mind; but to a physician when they are sick, to a griping landlord when they are oppressed, to a wealthy friend when they are in want, they can lay open their case in sad complaints, and have words at will to press home their requests; yea, every beggar at their door can crave relief, and make it their daily practice; and hold on with importunity, and take no denial: necessity filleth their mouths with words, and teacheth them the most natural, prevailing rhetoric. These beggars will rise up in judgment against them, and condemn them. Doubtless, if they felt but the misery and necessities of their souls, they would be as forward to beg relief of God, and as frequent, as fervent, as importunate, and as constant, till they were past their straits; but, alas! he that only reads in a book that he is miserable, and what his soul stands in need of, but never felt himself miserable, nor felt particularly his several wants, no wonder if he must also fetch his prayer from his book only, or, at furthest, from the strength of his invention or memory. Solomon's request to God was, that what prayer or supplication soever should be made by any man, or by all the people, when every man shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands before God, that God would then hear and forgive, &c. (2 Chron. 6:29, 30.) If these men did thus know and feel every one the sore and the grief of his own soul, we should neither need so much to urge them to prayer, nor to teach them how to perform it, and what to say: whereas now they do invite God to be backward in giving, by their backwardness in asking, and to be weary of relieving them by their own being weary of begging, and to be seldom and short in his favours as they are in their prayers,

and to give them but common and outward favours, as they put up but common and outside requests. Yea, their cold and heartless prayers do invite God to a flat denial: for among men it is taken for granted, that he who asks but slightly and seldom, cares not much for what he asks. Do not these men judge themselves unworthy of heaven, who think it not worth their more constant and earnest requests? If it be not worth asking for, it is worth nothing; and yet if one should go from house to house, through town and parish, and inquire at every house as you go, whether they do morning and evening call their family together, and earnestly and reverently seek the Lord in prayer, how few would you find that constantly and conscionably practise this duty? If every door were marked where they do not thus call upon the name of God, that his wrath might be poured out upon that family, our towns would be as places overthrown by the plague, the people being dead within, and the mark of judgment on the door without. I fear, where one house would escape, there are ten would be marked out for death; and then they might teach their doors to pray, 'Lord, have mercy upon us!' because the people would not pray themselves. But especially if you could see what men do in their secret chambers, how few should you find in a whole town that spend one quarter of an hour, morning and night, in earnest supplication to God for their souls! Oh! how little do these men set by this eternal rest! Thus do they slothfully neglect all endeavours for their own welfare, except some public duty in the congregations, which custom or credit doth engage them to. Persuade them to read good books, and they will not be at so much pains. Persuade them to learn the grounds of religion in some catechism, and they think it a toilsome slavery, fitter for schoolboys, or little children, than for them. Persuade them to sanctify the Lord's-day in holy exercise, and to spend it wholly in hearing the word, and repeating it with their families, and prayer and meditation, &c.; and to forbear all their worldly thoughts and speeches; and what a tedious life do they take this to be! and how long may you preach to them before they will be brought to it, as if they thought that heaven were not worth all this ado! Christ hath been pleading with England these fourscore years and more, by the

word of his Gospel, for his worship and his sabbaths, and yet the inhabitants are not persuaded; nay, he hath been pleading, these six years, by threatenings, and fire, and sword, and yet can prevail but with very few. And though these bloody arguments have been spread abroad, and brought home to people from parish to parish, almost as far as the word hath gone, so that there is scarce a parish in many counties where blood hath not been shed, and the bodies of the slain have not been left, yet multitudes in England are no more persuaded than they were the first day of their warning; and they have not heard the voice of the rod, which hath cried up and down their streets: 'Yet, O England, will ye not sanctify my sabbaths, nor call upon my name, nor regard my word, nor turn from your worldliness and wickedness!' God hath given them a lash and a reproof, a wound and warning; he hath, as it were, stood in their blood, and with the sword in his hand, and among the heaps of the slain hath he pleaded with the living, and said, 'What say you? Will you yet worship me, and fear me, and take me for your Lord?' And yet they will not: alas! yet to this day, England will not! Let me here write it, and leave it upon record, that God may be justified, and England may be ashamed; and posterity may know, if God do spare us, how ill we deserved it; or, if he yet destroy us, how wilfully we procured it. And if they that pass by shall ask, 'Why has God done thus to a flourishing and prosperous land?' you may give them this true though doleful answer, 'They would not hear, they would not regard.' He smote them down, he wounded them, he hewed them as wood, and then he beseeched the remainder to consider and return, but they never would do it. They were weary of his ways; they polluted his sabbaths; they cast his word and worship out of their families; they would not be at the pains to learn and obey his will; nay, they abhorred his ministers, and servants, and holy paths, and all this to the last breath. When he had slain five thousand, or eight thousand at a fight, the rest did no more reform, than if they had never heard of it. Nay, such a spirit of slumber has fallen upon them, that if God should proceed, and kill them all save one man, and ask that one man, 'Wilt thou yet seek me with all thy heart?' he would rather slight it. Lord, have mercy upon us! What is done with men's understanding and

sense? Have they renounced reason as well as faith? Are they dead naturally as well as spiritually? Can they not hear nor feel, though they cannot believe? That sad judgment is fallen upon them, mentioned in Isaiah. 42:24, 25, "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel" (England) "to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his laws. Therefore, he hath poured upon them the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set them on fire round about, yet they knew it not; it burnt them, yet they laid it not to heart." Yea, this much more let us leave upon record against England: they have been so far from reforming, and taking up the worship of God with delight, after all this, that multitudes have contrarily abhorred it at the very heart; and to root out the sincere worshippers, and worship of God, is their continued endeavour: and still, they that succeed them do the like. Lord, how hast thou deserved so much ill at these men's hands! What harm hath praying, and reading, and preaching painfully, and sanctifying the sabbath, and fearing to offend, done to England? Have they suffered for these, or for their enmity to these? What evil do these wretches discern in the everlasting kingdom, that they do not only refuse to labour for it, but do detest and resist the holy way that leads to it? It is well for them that they live in Gospel times, when the patience of God doth wait on sinners; and not in those severe days, when fire from heaven destroyed the captains and their companies, that were commanded by the king, to bring but one prophet before him; or, when the lions destroyed forty-two children, for calling a prophet of God "bald-head:" or rather, it had been better for these men to have lived in those times, that though their temporal judgments had been greater, yet their eternal plagues might have been the less. Yet this much more let me leave upon record to the shame of many, that all this is not merely through idleness, because they will not be at the pains to serve God, but it is out of a bitter enmity to his word and ways; for they will be at more pains than this in any way that is evil, or in any worship truly so called, of man's devising. They are as zealous for these, as if eternal life consisted in them: and where God forbids them, there they are as forward as if they could never do enough; and

where God commands them, they are as backward to it, yea, as much against it, as if they were the commands of the devil himself. The Lord grant that this hardened, wilful, malicious people, fall not under that heavy doom, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me." (Luke 19:27.)

Sect. IV. The third sort that fall under this reproof, are those self-cozening, formal, lazy professors of religion, who will be brought to any outward duty, and take up the easier part of Christianity, but to the inward work, and more difficult part, they will never be persuaded. They will preach, or hear, or read, or talk of heaven, or pray customarily and constantly in their families, and take part with the persons and causes that are good, and desire to be esteemed among the godly, but you can never bring them to the more spiritual and difficult duties, as to be constant and fervent in secret prayer, to be conscionable in the duty of self-examination, to be constant in that excellent duty of meditation, to be heavenly-minded, to watch constantly over his heart, words, and ways, to deny his bodily senses their delights, to mortify the flesh, and not make provision for it, to fulfil its lusts, to love and heartily forgive an enemy, to prefer his brethren heartily before himself, and to think meanly of his own gifts and worth, and to take it well of others that think so too, and to love them that have low thoughts of him, as well as those that have high, to bear easily the injuries, or undervaluing words of others against him, to lay all that he hath at the feet of Christ, and to prefer his service and favour before all; to prepare to die, and willingly to leave all, to come to Christ, &c. The outside hypocrites will never be persuaded to any of these. Above all other, two notable sorts there are of these hypocrites. First, The superficial, opinionative hypocrite. Secondly, The worldly hypocrite. First, The former entertaineth the doctrine of the Gospel with joy, (Matt. 13:29,) but it is only into the surface of his soul, he never gives the seed any depth of earth. He changeth his opinion, and he thereupon engageth for religion as the right way, and sides with it as a party in a faction, but it never melted and new-moulded his heart, nor set up Christ there in full power and

authority; but as his religion lies most in his opinion, so he usually runs from opinion to opinion, and is carried up and down with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; and as a child is tossed to and fro: (Eph. 4:14:) for as his religion is but opinion, so is his study, and conference, and chief business all about opinion. He is usually an ignorant, proud, bold, irreverent inquirer and babbler about controversies, rather than an humble embracer of the known truth, with love and subjection; you may conjecture by his bold and forward tongue, and groundless conceitedness in his own opinions, and slighting of the judgments and persons of others, and seldom talking of the great things of Christ with seriousness and humility, that his religion dwelleth in the brain, and not in his heart; where the wind of temptation assaults him, he easily yieldeth, and it carrieth him away as a feather, because his heart is empty, and not balanced and established with Christ and grace. If the temptation of the times do assault men's understandings, and the sign be in the head, though the little religion that he hath lies there, yet a hundred to one but he turneth heretic, or catcheth the vertigo of some lesser errors, according to the nature and strength of the seducement. If the wind do better serve for a vicious conversation, a hundred to one but he turns a purveyor for the flesh, and then he can be a tippler, and yet religious, a gamester, a wanton, a neglecter of duties, and yet religious. If this man's judgment lead him in the ceremonious way, then doth he employ his chiefest zeal for ceremonies, as if his religion lay in them. If his judgment be against ceremonies, a then his strongest zeal is employed against them, studying, talking, disputing against them, censuring the users of them, and perhaps fall into a contrary extreme, placing his chief religion in anabaptism, church combinations, and forms of polity, &c. For not having his soul taken up with the essentials of Christianity, he hath only the mint and cummin, the smaller matters of the law, to lay out his zeal upon. You shall never hear in private conference any humble and hearty bewailings of his soul's imperfections, or any heart-bleeding acknowledgments of his unkindnesses to Christ, of any pantings and longings after him, from this man, but that he is of such a judgment,

or such a religion, or party, or society, or a member of such a church. Hence doth he gather his greatest comforts; but the inward and spiritual labours of a Christian, he will not be brought to.

Secondly: The like may be said of the worldly hypocrite, who choketh the doctrine of the Gospel with the thorns of worldly cares and desires. His judgment is convinced that he must be religious, or he cannot be saved; and therefore he reads, and hears, and prays, and forsakes his former company and courses; but because his belief of the gospel doctrine is but wavering and shallow, he resolves to keep his hold of present things, lest the promise of rest should fail him; and yet to be religious, that so he may have heaven, when he can keep the world no longer, thinking it wisdom to have two strings to his bow, lest one should break. This man's judgment may say, 'God is the chief Good,' but his heart and affections never said so, but look upon God as a kind of strange and disproportionate happiness, to be tolerated rather than the flames of hell, but not desired before the felicity on earth. In a word, the world hath more of his affections than God, and therefore is his god, and his covetousness idolatry. This he might easily know and feel if he would judge impartially, and were but faithful to himself. And though this man do not gad after opinions and novelties in his religion, as the former, yet will he set his sails to the wind of worldly advantage, and be of that opinion which will best serve his turn. And as a man whose spirits are seized on by some pestilential malignity, is feeble and faint and heartless in all that he does; so this man's spirits being possessed by the plague of this malignant worldly disposition, oh, how faint is he in secret prayer! oh, how superficial in examination and meditation! how feeble in heart-watchings, and humbling, mortifying endeavours! how nothing at all in loving and walking with God, rejoicing in him, or desiring after him! So that both these, and many other sorts of lazy hypocrites there are, who, though they will trudge on with you in the easy outside of religion, yet will never be at the pains of inward and spiritual duties.

Sect. V. 4. And even the godly themselves deserve this reproof, for being too lazy seekers of their everlasting rest. Alas! what a disproportion is there betwixt our light and our heat; our professions and prosecution! Who makes that haste, as if it were for heaven? How still we stand! How idly we work! How we talk, and jest, and trifle away our time! How deceitfully we do the work of God! How we hear, as if we heard not; and pray as if we prayed not; and confer, and examine, and meditate, and reprove sin, as if we did it not; and use the ordinances, as if we used them not; and enjoy Christ, as if we enjoyed him not: as if we had learned to use the things of heaven as the apostle teacheth us to use the world! (1 Cor. 7:29–31.) Who would think, that stood by us and heard us pray in private or public, that we were praying for no less than everlasting glory? Should heaven be sought no more earnestly than thus? Methinks we are none of us all in good sadness for our souls. We do but dally with the work of God, and play with Christ; as children, we play with our meat when we should eat it, and we play with our clothes, and look upon them, when we should put them on, and wear them; we hang upon ordinances from day to day, but we stir not ourselves to seek the Lord. I see a great many very constant in hearing and praying, and give us some hopes that their hearts are honest, but they do not hear and pray as if it were for their lives. Oh, what a frozen stupidity hath benumbed us! The judgment of Pharaoh is amongst us; we are turned into stones and rocks, that can neither feel nor stir. The plague of Lot's wife is upon us, as if we were changed into lifeless and immoveable pillars: we are dying, and we know it, and yet we stir not; we are at the door of eternal happiness or misery, and yet we perceive it not; death knocks, and we hear it not; Christ calls and knocks, and we hear not: God cries to us, "To-day if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts. Work while it is day, for the night cometh when none shall work." Now ply your business, now labour for your lives, now lay out all your strength and time, now do it, now or never; and yet we stir no more than if we were half asleep. What haste doth death and judgment make! How fast do they come on! They are almost at us, and yet what little haste make we! What haste makes the sword to devour, from one part of the land to another!

What haste doth plague and famine make! and all because we will not make haste. The spur of God is in our side; we bleed, we groan, and yet we do not mend our pace: the rod is on our backs, it speaks to the quick: our lashes are heard through the christian world, and yet we stir no faster than before. Lord, what a senseless, sottish, earthly, hellish thing is a hard heart! That we will not go roundly and cheerfully toward heaven without all this ado; no, nor with it neither. Where is the man that is serious in his Christianity? Methinks men do everywhere make but a trifle of their eternal state. They look after it but a little upon the by; they do not make it the task and business of their lives. To be plain with you, I think nothing undoes men so much as complimenting and jesting in religion. Oh, if I were not sick myself of the same disease, with what tears should I mix this ink; and with what groans should I express these sad complaints; and with what heart's grief should I mourn over this universal deadness! Do the magistrates among us seriously perform their portion of the work? Are they zealous for God; do they build up his house; and are they tender of his honour; do they second the word; and encourage the godly; and relieve the oppressed; and compassionate the distressed; and let fly at the face of sin and sinners, as being the disturbers of our peace, and the only cause of all our miseries? Do they study how to do the utmost that they can for God; to improve their power, and parts, and wealth, and honour, and all their interests, for the greatest advantage to the kingdom of Christ, as men that must shortly give an account of their stewardship? Or do they build their own houses, and seek their advancements, and stand upon, and contest for, their own honours; and do no more for Christ than needs they must, or than lies in their way, or than is put by others into their hands, or than stands with the pleasing of their friends, or with their worldly interest? Which of these two courses do they take? And how thin are those ministers that are serious in their work! Nay, how mightily do the very best fail in this above all things! Do we cry out of men's disobedience to the Gospel, in the evidence and power of the Spirit, and deal with sin as that which is the fire in our towns and houses, and by force pull men out of this fire? Do we persuade our people, as those that know the terrors of the Lord

should do? Do we press Christ, and regeneration, and faith, and holiness, as men that believe indeed that without these they shall never have life? Do our bowels yearn over the ignorant, and the careless, and the obstinate multitude, and men that believe their own doctrine? That our dear people must be eternally damned, if they be not timely recovered? When we look them in the faces, do our hearts melt over them, lest we should never see their faces in rest? Do we, as Paul, tell them, weeping, of their fleshly and earthly disposition; (Phil. 3:18, 19;) and teach them publicly, and from house to house, night and day with tears; (Acts 10:20, 21;) and do we entreat them, as if it were indeed for their lives and salvation; that when we speak of the joys and miseries of another world, our people may see us affected accordingly, and perceive that we do indeed mean as we speak? Or rather do we not study words, and neat expressions, that we may approve ourselves able men in the judgment of critical hearers; and speak so formally and heartlessly of eternity, that our people can scarcely think that we believe ourselves; or put our tongues into some affected pace, and our language into some forced oratorical strain, as if a minister's business were of no more weight, but to tell them a smooth tale of an hour long, and so look no more after them till the next sermon? Seldom do we fit our sermons, either for matter or manner, to the great end, our people's salvation; but we sacrifice our studies to our own credit, or our people's content, or some such base, inferior end. Carnal discretion doth control our fervency; it maketh our sermons like beautiful pictures, which have much pains and cost bestowed upon them to make them comely and desirable to the eye; but life, or heat, or motion, there is none. Surely, as such a conversation is an hypocritical conversation, so such a sermon is as truly an hypocritical sermon. Oh, the formal, frozen, lifeless sermons which we daily hear preached upon the most weighty, piercing subjects in the world! How gently do we handle those sins which will handle so cruelly our people's souls; and how tenderly do we deal with their careless hearts, not speaking to them as to men that must be wakened or damned! We tell them of heaven and hell in such a sleepy tone, and flighty way, as if we were but acting a part in a play; so that we usually preach our people asleep

with those subjects, which one would think should rather endanger the driving of some beside themselves, if they were faithfully delivered. Not that I commend or excuse that real indiscretion, and unseemly language, and nauseous repetitions, and ridiculous gestures, whereby many do disgrace the word of God, and bring his ordinances into contempt with the people; nor think it fit that he should be an ambassador from God on so weighty a business, that is not able to speak sense or reason. But, in a word, our want of seriousness about the things of heaven, doth charm the souls of men into formality, and hath brought them to this customary careless hearing, which undoes them. The Lord pardon the great sin of the ministry in this thing, and, in particular, my own!

And are the people any more serious than magistrates and ministers? How can it be expected? Reader, look but to thyself, and resolve the question. Ask conscience, and suffer it to tell thee truly. Hast thou set thine eternal rest before thine eyes, as the great business which thou hast to do in this world? Hast thou studied and cared, watched and laboured, and laid about thee with all thy might, lest any should take thy crown from thee? Hast thou made haste, lest thou shouldst come too late, and die before the work be done? Hath thy heart been set upon it, and thy desires and thoughts run out this way? Hast thou pressed on through crowds of opposition towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, still reaching forth unto those things which are before? (Mark 6:21; Phil. 3:13, 14; Eccles. 9:10.) When you have set your hand to the work of God, have you done it with all your might? Can conscience witness your secret cries, and groans, and tears? Can your families witness that you have taught them the fear of the Lord, and warned them all with earnestness and unweariedness to remember God and their souls, and to provide for everlasting life? Or that you have done but as much for them, as that damned glutton would have had Lazarus do for his brethren on earth, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment? Can your ministers witness that they have heard you cry out, 'What shall we do to be saved?' And that you have followed them with complaints against your corruptions, and with

earnest inquiries after the Lord? Can your neighbours about you witness, that you are still learning of them that are able to instruct you? And that you plainly and roundly reprove the ungodly, and take pains for the saving of your brethren's souls? Let all these witnesses judge this day between God and you, whether you are in good earnest about the affairs of eternal rest. But if yet you cannot discern your neglects; look but to yourselves, within you, without you, to the work you have done: you can tell by his work, whether your servant hath loitered, though you did not see him; so you may by yourselves: is your love to Christ, your faith, your zeal, and other graces, strong or weak? What are your joys; what is your assurance? Is all right and strong, and in order within you? Are you ready to die, if this should be the day? Do the souls among whom you have conversed, bless you? Why, judge by this, and it will quickly appear whether you have been labourers or loiterers.

O blessed rest; how unworthily art thou neglected! O glorious kingdom; how art thou undervalued! Little know the careless sons of men, what a state they set so light by! If they once knew it, they would surely be of another mind.

CHAP. VI

An Exhortation to Seriousness in seeking Rest.

I HOPE, reader, by this time thou art somewhat sensible, what a desperate thing it is to trifle about our eternal rest; and how deeply thou hast been guilty of this thyself. And I hope, also, that thou darest not now suffer this conviction to die; but art resolved to be another man for the time to come: what sayst thou, is this thy resolution? If thou wert sick of some desperate disease, and the physician should tell thee, 'If you will observe but one thing, I doubt not to cure you,' wouldst thou not observe it? Why, if thou wilt observe but this one thing for thy soul, I make no doubt of thy salvation; if thou wilt now but shake off thy sloth, and put to all thy

strength, and ply the work of God unweariedly, and be a downright Christian; I know not what can hinder thy happiness. As far as thou art gone from God, if thou wouldst but now return and seek him with all thy heart, no doubt but thou shalt find him. As unkindly as thou hast dealt with Jesus Christ, if thou didst but feel thyself sick and dead, and seek him heartily, and apply thyself in good earnest to the obedience of his laws, thy salvation were as sure as if thou hadst it already; but as full as the satisfaction of Christ is, as free as the promise is, as large as the mercy of God is, yet if thou do but look on these, and talk of them, when thou shouldst greedily entertain them, thou wilt be never the better for them; and if thou loiter when thou shouldst labour, thou wilt lose the crown. Oh, fall to work then speedily and seriously, and bless God that thou hast yet time to do it; and though that which is past cannot be recalled, yet redeem the time now by doubling thy diligence. And because thou shalt see I urge thee not without cause, I will here adjoin a multitude of considerations to move thee; yet do I not here desire thee to take them by number, but by weight; their intent and use is, to drive thee from delaying, and from loitering in seeking rest: and to all men do I propound them, both godly and ungodly; whoever thou art, therefore, I entreat thee to rouse up thy spirit, and read them deliberately, and give me a little while thy attention, as to a message from God; and as Moses said to the people, "Set thy heart to all the words that I testify to thee this day; for it is not a vain thing, but it is for thy life." (Deut. 32:46.) Weigh what I here write with the judgment of a man; and if I speak not reason, throw it back in my face; but if I do, see thou entertain and obey it accordingly; and the Lord open thy heart, and fasten his counsel effectually upon thee.

Sect. II. 1. Consider, Our affections and actions should be somewhat answerable to the greatness of the ends to which they are intended. Now the ends of a Christian's desires and endeavours are so great, that no human understanding on earth can comprehend them; whether you respect their proper excellency, their exceeding importance, or their absolute necessity.

These ends are, the glorifying of God, the salvation of our own and other men's souls, in our escaping the torments of hell, and possessing the glory of heaven. And can a man be too much affected with things of such moment? Can he desire them too earnestly, or love them too violently, or labour for them too diligently? When we know that if our prayers prevail not, and our labour succeeds not, we are undone for ever, I think it concerns us to seek and labour to the purpose. When it is put to the question, Whether we shall live for ever in heaven or in hell? and the question must be resolved upon our obeying the Gospel, or our disobeying it, upon the painfulness or the slothfulness of our present endeavours; I think it is time for us to bestir ourselves, and to leave our trifling and complimenting with God.

Sect. III. 2. Consider, Our diligence should be somewhat answerable to the greatness of the work which we have to do, as well as to the ends of it. Now the works of a Christian here, are very many, and very great: the soul must be renewed; many and great corruptions must be mortified; custom, and temptations, and worldly interests, must be conquered; flesh must be mastered; self must be denied; life, and friends, and credit, and all must be slighted; conscience must be upon good grounds quieted; assurance of pardon and salvation must be attained. And though it is God that must give us these, and that freely, without our own merit; yet will he not give them so freely, as without our earnest seeking and labour. Besides, there is a deal of knowledge to be got, for the guiding ourselves, for the defending of the truth, for the direction of others, and a deal of skill for the right managing of our parts: many ordinances are to be used, and duties performed, ordinary and extraordinary; every age, and year, and day, doth require fresh succession of duty; every place we come in, every person that we have to deal with, every change of our condition, doth still require the renewing of our labour, and bringeth duty along with it; wives, children, servants, neighbours, friends, enemies, all of them call for duty from us; and all this of great importance too; so that for the most of it, if we miscarry in it, it would prove our undoing.

Judge, then, yourselves, whether men that have so much business lying upon their hands, should not bestir them; and whether it be their wisdom either to delay, or to loiter?

Sect. IV. 3. Consider, Our diligence should be somewhat quickened, because of the shortness and uncertainty of the time allotted us for the performing of all this work, and the many and great impediments which we meet with. Yet a few days, and we shall be here no more. Time passeth on: many hundred diseases are ready to assault us: we that now are preaching, and hearing, and talking, and walking, must very shortly be carried on men's shoulders, and laid in the dust, and there left to the worms in darkness and corruption; we are almost there already; it is but a few days, or months, or years, and what is that when once they are past? We know not whether we shall have another sermon, or sabbath, or hour. How then should those men bestir them for their everlasting rest, who know they have so short a space for so great a work! Besides, every step in the way hath its difficulties; the gate is strait, and the way narrow; the righteous themselves are scarcely saved; scandals and discouragements will be still cast before us: and can all these be overcome by slothful endeavours?

Sect. V. 4. Moreover, our diligence should be somewhat answerable to the diligence of our enemies in seeking our destruction. For if we sit still while they are plotting and labouring; or if we be lazy in our defence, while they are diligent in assaulting us; you may easily conceive how we are likely to speed. How diligent is Satan in all kinds of temptations! therefore, "Be sober and vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith." (1 Pet. 5:8.) How diligent are the ministers of Satan; false teachers, scorners at godliness, malicious persecutors, all unwearied; and our inward corruption the most busy and diligent of all; whatever we are about, it is still resisting us; depraving our duties, perverting our thoughts, dulling our affections to good, exciting them to evil; and will a feeble

resistance then serve our turn? Should not we be more active for our own preservation, than our enemies for our ruin?

Sect. VI. 5. Our affections and endeavours should bear some proportion to the talents which we have received, and means which we have enjoyed. It may well be expected that a horseman shall go faster than a footman; and he that hath a swift horse, faster than he that hath a slow one: more work will be expected from a sound man, than from the sick; and from a man at age, than from a child: and to whom men commit much, from them they will expect the more. (Luke 12:48.) Now the talents which we have received are many and great: the means which we have enjoyed are very much, and very precious. What people breathing on earth, have had plainer instructions, or more forcible persuasions, or constant admonitions, in season and out of season: sermons, till we have been weary of them; and sabbaths, till we profaned them: excellent books in such plenty, that we knew not which to read; but loathing them through abundance, have thrown by all. What people have had God so near them, as we have had; or have seen Christ, as it were, crucified before their eyes, as we have done? What people have had heaven and hell, as it were, opened unto them, as we? scarcely a day wherein we have not had some spur to put us on. What speed then should such a people make for heaven; and how should they fly that are thus winged: and how swiftly should they sail that have wind and tide to help them! Believe it, brethren, God looks for more from England, than from most nations in the world; and for more from you that enjoy these helps, than from the dark, untaught congregations of the land. A small measure of grace beseems not such a people; nor will an ordinary diligence in the work of God excuse them.

Sect. VII. 6. The vigour of our affections and actions should be somewhat answerable to the great cost bestowed upon us, and to the deep engaging mercies which we have received from God. Surely, we owe more service to our master from whom we have our maintenance, than we do to a stranger to whom we were never beholden. Oh, the cost that God hath been at for our sakes; the riches

of sea and land, of heaven and earth, hath he poured out upon us! All our lives have been filled up with mercies: we cannot look back upon one hour of it, or one passage in it, but we may behold mercy. We feed upon mercy, we wear mercy on our backs, we tread upon mercy; mercy within us, common and special; mercy without us, for this life, and for that to come; oh, the rare deliverances that we have partaked of, both national and personal! How oft, how seasonably, how fully have our prayers been heard, and our fears removed; what large catalogues of particular mercies can every Christian draw forth and rehearse! To offer to number them, would be an endless task, as to number the stars, or the sands of the shore. If there be any difference betwixt hell, where we should have been, and earth, where we now are, yea, or heaven, which is offered us, then certainly we have received mercy. Yea, if the blood of the Son of God be mercy, then are we engaged to God by mercy; for so much did it cost him to recover us to himself. And should a people of such deep engagements be lazy in their returns: shall God think nothing too much nor too good for us; and shall we think all too much that we do for him? Thou that art an observing, sensible man, who knowest how much thou art beholden to God; I appeal to thee, is not a loitering performance of a few heartless duties, an unworthy requital of such admirable kindness? For my own part, when I compare my slow and unprofitable life, with the frequent and wonderful mercies received, it shames me, it silenceth me, and leaves me inexcusable.

Sect. VIII. 7. Again, consider, All the relations which we stand in toward God, whether common or special, do call upon us for our utmost diligence. Should not the pot be wholly at the service of the potter, and the creature at the service of his great Creator: are we his children, and do we not owe him our most tender affections, and dutiful obedience: are we the spouse of Christ, and do we not owe him our observance, and our love? "If he be our Father, where is his honour; and if he be our Master, where is his fear?" (Mal. 1:6.) "We call him Lord and Master, and we do well;" (John 13:13;) but if our industry be not answerable to our assumed relations, we condemn ourselves, in saying we are his children, or his servants. How will the

hard labour and daily toil that servants undergo to please their masters, judge and condemn those men who will not labour so hard for their great Master! Surely, there is none have a better or more honourable master than we, nor can any expect such fruit of their labours. (1 Cor. 15 ult.)

Sect. IX. 8. Consider, What haste should they make who have such rods at their backs, as be at ours; and how painfully should they work, who are still driven on by such sharp afflictions: if either we wander out of the way, or loiter in it, how surely do we prepare for our own smart! Every creature is ready to be God's rod to reduce us, or to put us on: our sweetest mercies will become our sorrows: or, rather than he will want a rod, the Lord will make us a scourge to ourselves: our diseased bodies shall make us groan; our perplexed minds shall make us restless; our conscience shall be as a scorpion in our bosom. And is it not easier to endure the labour than the spur: had we rather be still thus afflicted, than to be up and going? Alas! how like are we to tired horses, that will lie down and groan, or stand still, and let you lay on them as long as you will, rather than they will freely travel on their journey! And thus we make our own lives miserable, and necessitate God, if he love us, to chastise us. It is true, those who do most, do meet with afflictions also: but surely, according to the measure of their peace of conscience, and faithfulness to Christ, so is the bitterness of their cup, for the most part, abated.

Sect. X. 9. How close should they ply their work, who have such great preparations attending them as we have! All the world are our servants, that we may be the servants of God. The sun, and moon, and stars, attend us with their light and influence; the earth, with all its furniture, is at our service. How many thousand plants, and flowers, and fruits, and birds, and beasts, do all attend us! The sea, with its inhabitants; the air, the wind, the frost and snow, the heat and fire, the clouds and rain, all wait upon us while we do our work; yea, the angels are ministering spirits for the service of the elect: and is it not an intolerable crime for us to trifle, while all these are

employed to assist us? Nay more, the patience and goodness of God do wait upon us; the Lord Jesus waiteth in the offers of his blood; the Holy Ghost waiteth in striving with our backward hearts; besides, all his servants, the ministers of his Gospel, who study and wait, and preach and wait, and pray and wait, upon careless sinners: and shall angels and men, yea, the Lord himself, stand by and look on; and, as it were, hold the candle while thou dost nothing? O Christians, I beseech you, whenever you are upon your knees in prayer, or reproving the transgressors, or exhorting the obstinate, or upon any duty, do but remember what attendants you have for this work; and then judge how it behoves you to perform it.

Sect. XI. 10. Should not our affections and endeavours be answerable to the acknowledged principles of our christian profession? Sure, if we are Christians indeed, and mean as we speak, when we profess the faith of Christ, we shall show it in affections and actions, as well as expressions. Why, the very fundamental doctrines of our religion are: That God is the chief Good, and all our happiness consists in his love; and therefore, it should be valued and sought above all things: that he is our Lord, and therefore, chiefly to be served; that we must love him with all our heart, and soul, and strength; that the very business that men have in the world, and the only errand that God sent them about, is to glorify God, and to obtain salvation, &c. And do men's duties and conversation second this profession? Are these doctrines seen in the painfulness of men's practice; or rather, do not their works deny what their words do confess? One would think, by men's actions, that they did not believe a word of the Gospel to be true. Oh, sad day, when men's own tongues and professions shall be brought in against them, and condemn them!

Sect. XII. 11. How forward and painful should we be in that work, where we are sure we can never do enough! If there were any danger in over-doing, then it might well cause men to moderate their endeavours; but we know, that if we could do all, we were but unprofitable servants; (Luke 17:10;) much more when we are sure to fail in all. It is true, a man may possibly pray too much, or preach too

much, or hear or reprove too much, though I have known few that ever did so; but yet no man can obey or serve God too much: for one duty may be said to be too long, when it shuts out another, and then it ceaseth, indeed, to be a duty. So that, though all superstition, or worship of our devising, may be called righteousness overmuch; yet, as long as you keep your service to the rule of the word, that so it might have the true nature of obedience, you never need to fear being righteous too much; for else, we should reproach the Lord and Lawgiver of the church, as if he commanded us to do too much. Ah, if the world were not mad with malice, they could never be so blind in this point as they are: to think, that faithful diligence in serving Christ, is folly and singularity; and that they who set themselves wholly to seek eternal life, are but precise puritans! The time is near, when they will easily confess that God could not be loved or served too much, and that no man can be too busy to save his soul: for the world, you may easily do too much, but here, in God's way, you cannot.

Sect. XIII. 12. It is the nature of every grace to put on the soul to diligence and speed. If you loved God, you would make haste, and not delay or trifle; you would think nothing too much that you could possibly do; you would be ambitious to serve him, and please him still more: love is quick and impatient, it is active and observant. If you loved Christ, you would keep his commandments, and not accuse them of too much strictness. (John 1:4, 15:23.) So also, if you had faith, it would quicken and encourage you; if you had the hope of glory, it would, as the spring in the watch, set all the wheels of your souls a going; if you had the fear of God, it would rouse you out of your slothfulness; if you had zeal, it would inflame you, and eat you up. God hath put all his graces in the soul, on purpose to be oil to the wheels, to be life to the dead, to mind men of their duty, and dispose them to it, and to carry them to himself; so that, in what degree soever thou art sanctified, in the same degree thou wilt be serious and laborious in the work of God.

Sect. XIV. 13. Consider, They that trifle in the way to heaven, do but lose all their labour, when serious endeavours do obtain their end. The proverb is, "As good never a whit, as never the better." If two be running a race, he that runs slowest had as good never run at all; for, now, he loseth the prize and his labour both. (Acts 26:28.) Many, who like Agrippa, are but almost Christians, will find, in the end, they shall be but almost saved. God hath set the rate at which the pearl must be bought; if you bid a penny less than that rate, you had as good bid nothing. As a man that is lifting at some weighty thing, if he put to almost strength enough, but yet not sufficient, it is as good he put to none at all; for he doth but use all his labour. Oh, how many professors of Christianity will find this true, to their sorrow, who have had a mind to the ways of God, and have kept up a dull task of duty, and plodded on in a formal, lifeless profession, but never came to serious Christianity? How many a duty have they lost, for want of doing them thoroughly, and to the purpose! Perhaps their place in hell may be the easier, and so their labour is not lost; but as to the obtaining of salvation, it is all lost. "Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able," (Luke 13:24.) who, if they had striven, might have been able. Oh! therefore, put to a little more diligence and strength, that all be not in vain that you have done already.

Sect. XV. 14. Furthermore, We have lost a great deal of precious time already, and therefore it is reason that we labour so much the harder. If a traveller do sleep or trifle out the most of the day, he must travel so much the faster in the evening, or else he is likely to fall short of his journey's end. With some of us, our childhood and youth is gone; with some also their middle age is past; and the time before us is very uncertain and short. What a deal of time have we slept away, and talked away, and played away; what a deal have we spent in worldly thoughts and labours, or in mere idleness! Though in likelihood the most of our time is spent, yet how little of our work is done! and is it not time now to bestir ourselves in the evening of our days? The time which we have lost can never be recalled: should we not then redeem it by improving the little which remaineth? You may receive, indeed, an equal recompense with those that have borne the burden and heat

of the day, though you came not in till the last hour; but then you must be sure to labour soundly that hour. It is surely enough that we have lost so much of our lives; let us not now be so foolish as to lose the rest. (1 Pet. 4:2–4).

Sect. XVI. 15. Consider, The greater are your layings out, the greater will be your comings in. Though you may seem to lose your labour at the present, yet the hour cometh when you shall find it with advantage. The seed which is buried and dead, will bring forth a plentiful increase at the harvest. Whatever you do, and whatever you suffer, this everlasting rest will pay for all. There is no repenting of labours and sufferings in heaven; none says, 'Would I had spared my pains, and prayed less, or been less strict and precise, and did as the rest of my neighbours did!' There is never such a thought in heaven as this. But, on the contrary, it will be their joy to look back upon their labours and tribulations, and to consider how the mighty power of God did bring them through all. Whoever complained that he came to heaven at too dear a rate, or that his salvation cost him more labour than it was worth? We may say of all our labours, as Paul of his sufferings, "For I reckon that the sufferings (and labours) of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18.) We labour but for a moment, but we shall rest for ever. Who would not put forth all his strength for one hour, when he may be a prince while he lives for that hour's work? Oh! what is the duty and suffering of a short frail life, which is almost at an end as soon as it begins, in respect of the endless joys with God? Will not all our tears then be wiped away, and all the sorrows of our duties forgotten? but yet the Lord will not forget them; "for he is not unjust to forget our work and labour of love." (Heb. 6:10.)

Sect. XVII. 16. Consider, Violence and laborious striving for salvation, is the way that the wisdom of God hath directed us to as best, as his sovereign authority hath appointed us as necessary. Who knows the way to heaven better than the God of heaven? When men tell us that we are too strict and precise, whom do they accuse, God or us? If we do no more than what we are commanded, nor so much

neither, (Luke 17:19,) they may as well say, God hath made laws which are too strict and precise. Surely, if it were a fault, it would lie in him that commands it, and not in us who are bound to obey. And dare these men think that they are wiser than God? Do they know better than he, what men must do to be saved? These are the men that ask us whether we are wiser than all the world besides, and yet they will pretend to be wiser than God. What do they less, when God bids us take the most diligent course, and they tell us it is more ado than needs? Mark well the language of the laws of God, and see how you can reconcile it with the language of the world, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. 11:12.) Or, as it is in Luke 16:16, "Every one presseth into it." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24.) So "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." (Matt. 7:13, 14; Eccles. 9:10.) "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain." (1 Cor. 9:24.) "If a man strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned except he strive lawfully," (2 Tim. 2:5,) that is, powerfully and prevailingly. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.) "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." (2 Pet. 1:10.) "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18.) So Phil. 1:27, and 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:12, 18, 19; Deut. 6:5, &c. This is the constant language of Christ; and which shall I follow, God or men; yea, and that the worst and most wicked men? Shall I think that every ignorant, worldly sot, that can only call a man 'puritan,' knows more than Christ, and can teach him to make laws for his church, or can tell God how to mend the Scriptures? Let them bring all the seeming reasons that they can against the holy, violent striving of the saints, and this sufficeth me to confute them all, that God is of another mind, and he hath commanded me to do much more than I do; and though I could see no reason for it, yet his will is reason enough to me. I am sure God is worthy to govern us, if we were better than we are. Who should make laws for us, but he that made us? And who should line out the way to heaven, but he

that must bring us thither? And who should determine on what conditions we shall be saved, but he that bestows the gift of salvation? So that let world, or flesh, or devil, speak against a holy, laborious course, this is my answer, 'God hath commanded it.'

Sect. XVIII. 17. Moreover, It is a course that all men in the world either do, or will approve of. There is not a man that ever was, or is, or shall be, but shall one day justify the diligence of the saints, and give his verdict in the approbation of their wisdom. And who would not go that way which every man shall applaud? It is true, it is now a way every where spoken against, and hated: but let me tell you, 1. Most that speak against it, do in their judgments approve of it; only because the practice of godliness is against the pleasures of the flesh, therefore do they against their own judgments resist it. They have not one word of reason against it, but reproaches and railing are their best arguments. 2. Those that now are against it, whether in judgment or passion, will shortly be, every man, of another mind. If they come to heaven, their mind must be changed before they come there. If they go to hell, their judgment will then be altered, whether they will or not. If you could speak with every soul that suffereth those torments, and ask their judgments, whether it be possible to be too diligent and serious in seeking salvation, you may easily conjecture what answer they would return. Take the most bitter derider or persecutor of godliness, even those that will venture their lives to overthrow it, if those men do not shortly eat their own words, and wish a thousand times that they had been the most holy, diligent, Christians on earth, then let me bear the shame of a false prophet for ever. Remember this, you that will be of the opinion and way that most are of. Why then will you not be of the opinion that all will be shortly of? Why will you be of a judgment which you are sure you shall all shortly change? O that you were but as wise in this, as those in hell!

Sect. XIX. 18. Consider, They that have been the most serious, painful Christians, when they come to die, do exceedingly lament their negligence. Those that have wholly addicted themselves to the

work of God, and have made it the main business of their lives, and have slighted the world and mortified the flesh, and have been the wonders of the world for their heavenly conversations, yet when conscience is let loose upon them, and God withdraws the sense of his love, how do their failings wound them and disquiet them! What terrors do the souls of men undergo, who are generally admired for their godliness and innocency; even those that are hated and derided by the world for being so strict, and are thought to be almost besides themselves for their extraordinary diligence, yet commonly when they lie a dying, do wish, O that they had been a thousand times more holy, more heavenly, more laborious for their souls! What a case then will the negligent world be in, when their consciences are awaked, when they lie dying, and look behind them upon a lazy, negligent life, and look before them upon a severe and terrible judgment; what an esteem will they have of a holy life! For my own part, I may say, as Erasmus, "Accusant quod nimium fecerim; verum conscientia mea me accusat quod minus fecerim, quodque lentior fuerim," "They accuse me for doing too much, but my own conscience accuseth me for doing too little, and being too slow:" and it is far easier bearing the scorns of the world than the scourges of conscience. The world speaks at a distance without me, so that though I hear their words, I can choose whether I will feel them; but my conscience speaks within me at the very heart, so that every check doth pierce me to the quick. Conscience, when it is reprehended justly, is the messenger of God; but ungodly revilers are but the voice of the devil. I had rather be reproached by the devil for seeking salvation, than to be reprov'd of God for neglecting it: I had rather the world should call me puritan in the devil's name, than conscience should call me loiterer in God's name. As God and conscience are more useful friends than Satan and the world, so are they more dreadful, irresistible enemies.

Sect. XX. 19. Consider, How far many a man goes, and what a deal of pains he takes for heaven, and yet misseth it for want of more. When every man that striveth is not crowned; (2 Tim. 2:5;) and many shall seek to enter in, and not be able; (Luke 23:24;) and the very children

of the kingdom shall be shut out; (Matt. 13:41;) and they that have heard the word, and received it with joy; (Matt. 13:20;) and have heard the preacher gladly, and done many things after him, shall yet perish; (Mark 6:20;) it is time for us to look about us, and take heed of loitering. When they that seek God daily, and delight to know his ways, and ask of him the ordinances of justice, and take delight in approaching to God, and that in fasting and afflicting their souls, (Isa. 56:2, 3,) are yet shut out with hypocrites and unbelievers; when they that have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, may yet fall away beyond recovery, and crucify to themselves the Son of God. (Heb. 6:4–6). When they that have received the knowledge of the truth, and were sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may yet sin wilfully, and tread underfoot the Son of God, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, till there is nothing left them but the fearful expectation of judgment, and fire that shall devour the adversaries, (Heb. 10:26–29,) should not this rouse us out of our laziness and security? How far hath many a man followed Christ, and yet forsaken him when it comes to the selling of all, to bearing the cross, to burning at the stake, or to the renouncing of all his worldly interests and hopes! What a deal of pains hath many a man taken for heaven, that never did obtain it! How many prayers, sermons, fasts, alms, good desires, confessions, sorrow and tears for sin, &c. have all been lost, and fallen short of the kingdom! Methinks this should affright us out of our sluggishness, and make us strive to outstrip the highest formalist.

Sect. XXI. 20. Consider, God hath resolved that heaven shall not be had on easier terms. He hath not only commanded it as a duty, but hath tied our salvation to the performance of it. Rest must always follow labour. He that hath ordained in his church on earth, 'that he that will not labour, shall not eat,' hath also decreed concerning the everlasting inheritance, 'that he that strives not, shall not enter.' They must now lay up a treasure in heaven, if they will find it there. (Matt. 19:20.) They must seek first the kingdom of God and his

righteousness. (Matt. 6:33.) They must not labour for the food that perisheth, but for that food which endureth to everlasting life. (John 6:27.) Some think that it is good to be holy, but yet not of such absolute necessity but that a man may be saved without it; but God hath determined on the contrary, that without it, no man shall see his face. (Heb. 12:14.) Seriousness is the very thing wherein consisteth our sincerity. If thou art not serious, thou art not a Christian. It is not only a high degree in Christianity, but of the very life and essence of it. As fencers upon a stage, who have all the skill at their weapons, and do eminently and industriously act their parts, but do not seriously intend the death of each other, do differ from soldiers or combatants, who fight in good sadness for their lives, just so do hypocrites differ from serious Christians. If men could be saved without this serious diligence, they would never regard it; all the excellencies of God's ways would never entice them. But when God hath resolved, that if you will have your ease here, you shall have none hereafter, is it not wisdom, then, to bestir ourselves to the utmost?

Sect. XXII. 21. And thus, reader, I dare confidently say, I have showed thee sufficient reason against thy slothfulness and negligence, if thou be not a man resolved to shut thine eyes, and to destroy thyself wilfully, in despite of reason. Yet, lest all this should not prevail, I will add somewhat more, if it be possible, to persuade thee to be serious in thy endeavours for heaven.

1. Consider, God is in good earnest with you, and why then should not you be so with him? In his commands, he means as he speaks, and will verily require your real obedience. In his threatenings he is serious, and will make them all good against the rebellious. In his promises, he is serious, and will fulfil them to the obedient, even to the least tittle. In his judgments he is serious, as he will make his enemies know to their terror. Was not God in good earnest when he drowned the world, when he consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, when he scattered the Jews? Hath he not been in good sadness with us lately in England, and Ireland, and Germany? And very shortly will

he lay hold on his enemies, particularly man by man, and make them know that he is in good earnest: especially when it comes to the great reckoning day. And is it time, then, for us to dally with God?

2. Jesus Christ was serious in purchasing our redemption. He was serious in teaching, when he neglected his meat and drink. (John 4:32.) He was serious in praying, when he continued all night at it. (Luke 6:12.) He was serious in doing good, when his kindred came and laid hands on him, thinking he had been beside himself. (Mark 3:20, 21.) He was serious in suffering, when he fasted forty days, was tempted, betrayed, spit on, buffeted, crowned with thorns, sweat water and blood; was crucified, pierced, and died. There was no jesting in all this, and should not we be serious in seeking our own salvation?

3. The Holy Ghost is serious in soliciting us for our happiness; his motions are frequent, and pressing, and importunate: he striveth with our hearts. (Gen. 6:3.) He is grieved when we resist him; (Ephes. 4:30;) and should not we then be serious in obeying his motions, and yielding to his suit?

4. God is serious in hearing our prayers, and delivering us from our dangers, and removing our troubles, and bestowing his mercies. When we are afflicted, he is afflicted with us. (Isa. 13:9.) He regardeth every groan and sigh, he putteth every tear into his bottle; he condoleth their misery, when he is forced to chastise them; "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?" saith the Lord, "how shall I make thee as Admah, and as Zeboim? my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." (Hos. 11:8.) He heareth even the rebellious oftentimes, when they call upon him in their misery; "when they cry to him in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress." (Ps. 78:37, 38, and 107:10–13, 19, 28.) Yea, the next time thou art in trouble, thou wilt beg for a serious regard of thy prayers, and grant of thy desires. And shall we be so slight in the work of God, when we expect he should be so regardful of us? Shall we have real

mercies down weight; and shall we return such superficial and frothy service?

5. Consider, The ministers of Christ are serious in instructing and exhorting you, and why should not you be as serious in obeying their instructions? They are serious in study; serious in prayer; serious in persuading your souls to the obedience of Christ; they beg of God, they beg of you, they hope, they wait, they long more for the conversion and salvation of your souls, than they do for any worldly good: "you are their boasting, their crown and joy." (1 Thess. 2:19, 20.) "Your steadfastness in Christ they value as their lives." (1 Thess. 3:8.) They are content to "be offered up in the service of your faith." (Phil. 2:17.) If they kill themselves with study and preaching, or if they suffer martyrdom for preaching the Gospel; they think their lives are well bestowed, if their preaching do but prevail for saving of your souls. And shall other men be so painful and careful for our salvation, and should you be so careless and negligent of your own? Is it not a serious charge that is given to ministers in 2 Tim. 4:1? And a serious pattern that is given them in Acts 20:30, 31? Surely no man can be bound to be more serious and painful for the welfare of another, than he is bound to be for himself.

6. How serious and diligent are all the creatures in their service to thee! What haste makes the sun to compass the world; and how truly doth it return at its appointed hour! So do the moon and other planets. The springs are always flowing for thy use; the rivers still running; the spring and harvest keep their times. How hard doth thy ox labour for thee from day to day; how painfully and speedily doth thy horse bear thee in travel! And shall all these be laborious, and thou only negligent? Shall they all be so serious in serving thee, and yet thou be so slight in thy service to God?

7. Consider, The servants of the world and the devil are serious and diligent; they ply their work continually with unweariedness and delight, as if they could never do enough; they make haste, and march furiously, as if they were afraid of coming to hell too late. They

bear down ministers, and sermons, and counsel, and all before them. And shall they do more for the devil, than thou wilt do for God; or be more diligent for damnation, than thou wilt be for salvation? Hast not thou a better master, and sweeter employment, and greater encouragement, and a better reward?

8. The time was when thou wast serious thyself in thy service to Satan and the flesh, if it be not so still; dost thou not remember how eagerly thou didst follow thy sports; or how violently thou wast addicted to customs, or evil company, or sinful delights; or how earnestly thou wast bent after thy profits, or rising in the world? And wilt thou not now be more earnest and violent for God? "What profit hadst thou then in those things whereof thou art now ashamed? For the end of those things is death; but now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Rom. 6:21, 22.)

9. You are yet to this day in good earnest about the matters of this life; if you are sick, what serious groans and complaints do you utter! All the town shall quickly know it, if your pain be great. If you are poor, how hard do you labour for your living, lest your wife and children should starve or famish! If one fall down in a swoon in the house, or street, or in the congregation, how seriously will you run to relieve and recover them! And is not the business of our salvation of far greater moment? Are you not poor; and should you not then be labourers? Are you not in fight for your lives; and is it time to sleep? Are you not in a race; and is not the prize the crown of glory? and should you then sit still or take your ease?

10. There is no jesting in heaven, nor in hell. The saints have a real happiness, and the damned a real misery; the saints are serious and high in their joy and praise, and the damned are serious and deep in their sorrow and complaints. There are no remiss or sleepy praises in heaven, nor any remiss or sleepy lamentations in hell; all men there are in good earnest, and should we not then be serious now? Reader, I dare promise thee, the thoughts of these things will shortly be

serious thoughts with thyself. When thou comest to death or judgment, O what deep heart-piercing thoughts wilt thou have of eternity! methinks I foresee thee already astonished, to think how thou couldst possibly make so light of these things! methinks I even hear thee crying out of thy stupidity and madness!

Sect. XXIII. 23. And now, reader, having laid thee down these undeniable arguments, I do here, in the name of God, demand thy resolution: what sayest thou; wilt thou yield obedience or not? I am confident thy conscience is convinced of thy duty. Darest thou now go on in thy common careless course, against the plain evidence of reason and commands of God, and against the light of thy own conscience? Darest thou live as loosely, and sin as boldly, and pray as seldom and as coldly, as before? Darest thou now as carnally spend the sabbath, and slubber over the service of God as slightly, and think of thine everlasting state, as carelessly as before? or, dost thou not rather resolve to gird up the loins of thy mind, and to set thyself wholly about the work of thy salvation; and to do it with all thy strength and might; and to break over all the oppositions of the world, and to slight all their scorns and persecutions; "to cast off the weight that hangeth on thee, and the sin that doth so easily beset thee; and to run with patience and speed the race that is set before thee?" (1 Pet. 1:13; Heb. 12:1, 2.) I hope these are thy full resolutions: if thou be well in thy wits, I am sure they are.

Yet because I know the strange obstinacy and rockiness of the heart of man, and because I would fain drive this nail to the head, and leave these persuasions fastened in thy heart, that so if it be possible thou mightest be awakened to thy duty, and thy soul might live, I shall therefore proceed with thee yet a little further; and I once more entreat thee to stir up thy attention, and go along with me in the free and sober use of thy reason, while I propound to thee these following questions: and I command thee from God, that thou stifle not thy conscience, and resist not conviction, but answer them faithfully, and obey accordingly.

Quest. 1. If you could grow rich by religion, or get lands and lordships by being diligent in godliness; or if you could get honour or preferment by it in the world; or could be recovered from sickness by it, or could live for ever in prosperity on earth; what kind of lives would you then lead, and what pains would you take in the service of God? And is not the rest of the saints a more excellent happiness than all this?

Quest. 2. If the law of the land did punish every breach of the sabbath, or every omission of family duties, or secret duties, or every cold and heartless prayer, with death: if it were felony or treason to be ungodly and negligent in worship, and loose in your lives, what manner of persons would you then be, and what lives would you lead! And is not eternal death more terrible than temporal?

Quest. 3. If it were God's ordinary course to punish every sin with some present judgment, so that every time a man swears, or is drunk, or speaks a lie, or backbiteth his neighbour, he should be struck dead, or blind, or lame in the place. If God did punish every cold prayer, or neglect of duty, with some remarkable plague; what manner of persons would you then be? If you should suddenly fall down dead like Ananias and Sapphira, with the sin in your hands, or the plague of God should seize upon you as upon the Israelites, while their sweet morsels were yet in their mouths. (Psal. 78:30.) If but a mark should be set in the forehead of every one that neglected a duty, or committed a sin; what kind of lives would you then lead! And is not eternal wrath more terrible than all this? Give but reason leave to speak.

Quest. 4. If one of your old acquaintance and companions in sin should come from the dead, and tell you, that he suffered the torments of hell for those sins that you are guilty of, and for neglecting those duties which you neglect, and for living such a careless, worldly, ungodly life, as you now live, and should therefore advise you to take another course: if you should meet such a one in your chamber when you are going to bed, and he should say to you,

'Oh, take heed of this carnal, unholy life! set yourself to seek the Lord with all your might; neglect not your soul; prepare for eternity, that you come not to the place of torment that I am in;' how would this take with you; and what manner of persons would you afterwards be? It is written in the life of Bruno, that a doctor of great note for learning and godliness being dead, and being brought to the church to be buried, while they were in their popish devotions, and came to the words *Responde mihi*, the corpse arose in the bier, and with a terrible voice cried out, "*Justo Dei judicio accusatus sum*," "I am accused at the just judgment of God;" at which voice the people ran all out of the church affrighted. On the morrow when they came again to perform the obsequies, to the same words as before, the corpse arose again, and cried with a hideous voice, "*Justo Dei judicio judicatus sum*," "I am judged at the righteous judgment of God;" whereupon the people ran away again amazed. The third day almost all the city came together, and when they came to the same words as before, the corpse rose again, and cried with a more doleful voice than before, "*Justo Dei judicio condemnatus sum*," "I am condemned at the just judgment of God." The consideration whereof, that a man reputed so upright, should yet by his own confession be damned, caused Bruno, and the rest of his companions, to enter into the strict order of the Carthusians. If the voice of the dead man could affright them into superstition, should not the warnings of God affright thee into true devotion?

Quest. 5. If you knew that this were the last day you had to live in the world, how would you spend this day? If you were sure when you go to bed, that you should never rise again, would not your thoughts of another life be more serious that night? If you knew when you were praying, that you should never pray more, would you not be more earnest and importunate in that prayer? Or if you knew when you are preaching, or hearing, or exhorting your sinful acquaintance, that this were the last opportunity you should have, would you not ply it more closely than usually you do? Why, you do not know but it may be the last: and you are sure your last is near at hand.

Quest. 6. If you had seen the general dissolution of the world, and all the pomp and glory of it consumed to ashes: if you saw all on a fire about you, sumptuous buildings, cities, kingdoms, land, water, earth, heaven, all flaming about your ears: if you had seen all that men laboured for, and sold their souls for, gone; friends gone; the place of your former abode gone; the history ended, and all come down; what would such a sight as this persuade you to do? Why, such a sight thou shalt certainly see. I put my question to thee in the words of the apostle. "Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat!" (2 Pet. 3:12.) As if he should say, 'We cannot possibly conceive or express what manner of persons we should be in all holiness and godliness, when we do but think of the sudden, and certain, and terrible dissolution of all things below.'

Quest. 7. What, if you had seen the process of the judgment of the great day: if you had seen the judgment-seat, and the books opened, and the most stand trembling on the left hand of the Judge, and Christ himself accusing them of their rebellions and neglects, and remembering them of all their former slightings of his grace, and at last condemning them to perpetual perdition: if you had seen the godly standing on the right hand, and Jesus Christ acknowledging their faithful obedience, and adjudging them to the possession of the joy of their Lord: what manner of persons would you have been after such a sight as this? Why, this sight thou shalt one day see, as sure as thou livest. And why then should not the foreknowledge of such a day awake thee to thy duty?

Quest. 8 What, if you had once seen hell open, and all the damned there in their easeless torments, and had heard them crying out of their slothfulness in the day of their visitation, and wishing that they had but another life to live, and that God would but try them once again: one crying out of his neglect of duty, and another of his loitering and trifling, when he should have been labouring for his

life: what manner of persons would you have been after such a sight as this? What, if you had seen heaven opened, as Stephen did, and all the saints there triumphing in glory, and enjoying the end of their labours and sufferings, what a life would you lead after such a sight as this! Why, you will see this with your eyes before it be long.

Quest. 9. What, if you had lain in hell but one year, or one day, or hour, and there felt all those torments that now you do but hear of, and God should turn you into the world again, and try you with another life-time, and say, 'I will see whether thou wilt be yet any better, what manner of persons would you be?' If you were to live a thousand years, would you not gladly live as strictly as the precisest saints, and spend all those years in prayer and duty, so you might but escape the torment which you suffered? How seriously then would you speak of hell, and pray against it, and hear, and read, and watch, and obey! How earnestly would you admonish the careless to take heed, and look about them to prevent their ruin! And will not you take God's word for the truth of this, except you feel it? Is it not your wisdom to do as much now to prevent it, as you would do to remove it when it is too late? Is it not more wisdom to spend this life in labouring for heaven, while ye have it, than to lie in torment, wishing for more time in vain?

Quest. 10. What, if you had been possessed but one year of the glory of heaven, and there joined with the saints and angels in the beholding of God, and singing his praise, and afterwards should be turned into the world again, what a life would you lead; what pains would you take rather than to be deprived of such incomparable glory! Would you think any cost too great, or diligence too much? If one of those that are now in heaven, should come to live on the earth again, what persons would they be; what a stir would they make; how seriously would they drive on the business of their salvation! The country would ring of their exceeding holy and strict conversations. They would as far excel the holiest persons on earth, as they excel the careless world. Before they would lose that blessed estate, they would

follow God with cries both day and night, and throw away all, and suffer every day a death. And should not we do as much to obtain it?

Sect. XXV. And thus I have said enough, if not to stir up the lazy sinner to a serious working out his salvation, yet at least to silence him, and leave him inexcusable at the judgment of God. If thou canst, after the reading of all this, go on in the same neglect of God and thy soul, and draw out the rest of thy life in the same dull and careless course, as thou hast hitherto done; and if thou hast so far conquered and stupified thy conscience, that it will quietly suffer thee to forget all this, and to trifle out the rest of thy time in the business of the world, when in the mean while thy salvation is in danger, and the Judge is at the door, I have then no more to say to thee: it is as good to speak to a post or a rock. Only as we do by our friends when they are dead and our words and actions can do them no good, yet to testify our affections we weep and mourn for them; so will I also do for these deplorable souls. It makes my heart sad, and even tremble to think, how they will stand, sad and trembling, before the Lord! and how confounded and speechless they will be, when Christ shall reason with them concerning their negligence and sloth! when he shall say, as the Lord doth in Jer. 2:5, 9, 11, 15, "What iniquity have your fathers (or you) found in me, that ye are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity?" &c. Did I ever wrong you, or do you any harm, or ever discourage you from following my service: was my way so bad that you could not endure it; or my service so base that you could not stoop to it: did I stoop to the fulfilling of the law for you, and could not you stoop to the fulfilling of the easy conditions of my Gospel: was the world or Satan a better friend to you than I; or have they done for you more than I have? Try now whether they will save you, or whether they will recompense you for the loss of heaven, or whether they will be as good to you as I would have been; O, what will the wretched sinner answer to any of this! But though man will not hear, yet we may have hope in speaking to God. Lord, smite these rocks till they gush forth waters: though these ears are deaf, say to them, 'Ephatha,' Be opened: though these sinners be dead, let that power speak, which sometime said,

"Lazarus, arise!" We know they will be awakened at the last resurrection: Oh! but then it will be only to their sorrow. O, thou that didst weep and groan in spirit over a dead Lazarus, pity these sad and senseless souls till they are able to weep, and groan for, and pity themselves. As thou hast bid thy servants speak, so speak now thyself; they will hear thy voice speaking to their hearts, that will not hear mine speaking to their ears. Long hast thou knocked at these hearts in vain, now break the doors, and enter in, and pass by all their long resistance.

Sect. XXVI. Yet I will add a few more words to the godly in special, to show them why they, above all men, should be laborious for heaven; and that there is a great deal of reason, that though all the world besides do sit still, and be careless, yet they should abhor that laziness and negligence, and should lay out all their strength on the work of God. To this end, I desire them also to answer soberly to these few interrogatories.

Quest. 1. What manner of persons should those be, whom God hath chosen out to be vessels of mercy, and hath given them the very cream and quintessence of his blessings, when the rest of the world are passed by, and put off with common, and temporal, and left-hand mercies? They who have the blood of Christ given them, and the Spirit for sanctification, consolation, and preservation, and the pardon of sins, and adoption to sonship, and the guard of angels, and the mediation of the Son of God, and the special love of the Father, and the promise and seal of everlasting rest! Do but tell me in good sadness, what kind of lives these men should live?

Quest. 2. What manner of persons should those be, who have felt the smart of their negligence so much as the godly have done? In the new birth, in their several wounds and trouble of conscience, in their doubts and fears, in their sharp afflictions on body and state: they that have groaned and cried out so oft, under the sense and effects of their negligence, and are likely enough to feel it again, if they do not reform it, surely, one would think they should be slothful no more.

Quest. 3. What manner of persons should those be in holy diligence, who have been so long convinced of the evil of laziness; and have confessed it on their knees, a hundred and a hundred times, both in public and in private; and have told God in prayer how inexcusably they have therein offended; should they thus confess their sin, and yet commit it, as if they told God what they would do, as well as what they have done?

Quest. 4. What manner of persons should those be in painful godliness, who have bound themselves to God by so many covenants as we have done, and in special have covenanted so oft to be more painful and faithful in his service at every sacrament; on many days of humiliation and thanksgiving; in most of our deep distresses and dangerous sicknesses? We are still ready to bewail our neglects, and to engage ourselves, if God will but try us and trust once again, how diligent and laborious we will be, and how we will improve our time, and reprove offenders, and watch over ourselves, and ply our work; and do him more service in a day than we did in a month. The Lord pardon our perfidious covenant-breaking; and grant that our engagements may not condemn us.

Quest. 5. What manner of persons should they be, who are so near to God as we, who are his children, in his family, still under his eye; the objects of his greatest jealousy, as well as love? Nadab and Abihu can tell you, that the flames of jealousy are hottest about his altar: (Lev. 10:1, 2:) and Uzza, and the "fifty thousand and seventy Bethshemites, (1 Sam. 6:19,) though dead, do yet tell you, that justice, as well as mercy, is most active about the ark. And Ananias and his wife can tell you, that profession is no cover for transgression. (Acts 5:4, 5. &c.) Judgment beginneth at the house of God: (1 Pet. 4:17:) and the destroying angel doth begin at the sanctuary. (Ezek. 9:5, 6.)

Quest. 6. What manner of men should they be in duty, who have received so much encouragement, as we have done by our success? Who have tasted such sweetness in diligent obedience, as doth much more than countervail all the pains; who have so often had

experience of the wide difference between lazy and laborious duty, by their different issues; who have found all our lazy duties unfruitful, and all our strivings and wrestlings with God successful, so that we were never importunate with God in vain. We who have had so many admirable national and personal deliverances upon urgent seeking; and have received almost all our solid comforts in a way of close and constant duty: how should we, above all men, ply our work!

Quest. 7. What manner of men should they be, who are yet at such great uncertainties, whether they are sanctified or justified, or whether they are the children of God or not; or what shall everlastingly become of their souls, as most of the godly that I meet with are? They that have discovered the excellency of the kingdom, and yet have not discovered their interest in it, but discern a danger of perishing or losing all, and have need of that advice, Heb. 4:1, and have so many doubts to wrestle with daily as we have: how should such men bestir themselves in time!

Quest. 8. What manner of persons should they be in holiness, who have so much of the great work yet undone as we have; so many sins in so great a strength; graces weak, sanctification imperfect, corruption still working our ruin, and taking advantage of all our omissions? When we are as a boatman on the water, let him row ever so hard a month together, yet if he do but slack his hand, and think to ease himself, his boat goes faster down the stream than before it went up; so do our souls, when we think to ease ourselves by abating our pains in duty. Our time is short: our enemies mighty: our hinderances many: God seems yet at a distance from many of us: our thoughts of him are dull, and strange, and unbelieving: our acquaintance and communion with Christ are small; and our desires to be with him are as small. And should men in our case stand still?

Quest. 9. What manner of men should they be in their diligence, whose lives and duties are of so great concernment to the saving or destroying of a multitude of souls? when, if we slip, so many are ready to stumble; and if we stumble, so many are ready to fall. If we

pray hard for them, and admonish them daily, and faithfully, and plainly, and exhort them with bowels of pity and love, and go before them in a holy, inoffensive conversation, it is twenty to one but we may be instruments of saving many of them from everlasting perdition, and bringing them to the possession of the inheritance with us: on the contrary, if we silently neglect them, or sinfully offend them, we may be occasions of their perpetual torment: and what a sad thought is that to an honest and merciful heart, that we may not destroy the souls for whom Christ died! That we may not rob them of their everlasting happiness, and God of the praises that in heaven they would give him, what manner of persons should we be in our duties and examples!

Quest. 10. Lastly: What manner of persons should they be, on whom the glory of the great God doth so much depend? Men will judge of the father by the children, and of the master by the servants. We bear his image; and therefore men will measure him by his representation. He is nowhere in the world so lively represented as in his saints: and shall they set him forth as a patron of viciousness or idleness! All the world is not capable of honouring or dishonouring God so much as we: and the least of this honour is of more worth than all our lives. I have harped all this while upon the apostle's string; (2 Pet. 3:11;) and now let me give it the last touch. Seeing, then, that all these things forementioned are so, I charge thee, that art a Christian, in my Master's name, to consider and resolve the question, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? And let thy life answer the question as well as thy tongue.

Sect. XXVII. I have been larger upon this use than at first I intended; partly because of the general neglect of heaven, that all sorts are guilty of; partly because men's salvation depends upon their present striving and seeking; partly because the doctrine of free grace, misunderstood, is lately so abused to the cherishing of sloth and security; partly because many eminent men of late do judge, that to work or labour for life and salvation, is mercenary, legal, and

dangerous; which doctrine, as I have said before, were it by the owners reduced into practice, would undoubtedly damn them; because they that seek not shall not find, and they that strive not to enter shall be shut out, and they that labour not shall not be crowned; and partly because it is grown the custom of this distracted age, instead of striving for the kingdom and contending for the faith, to strive with each other about uncertain controversies, and to contend about the circumstantial of the faith, wherein the kingdom of God doth no more consist than in meats or drinks, or questions about the law, or genealogies. Sirs, shall we, who are brethren, fall out by the way home, and spend so much of our time about the smaller matters which thousands have been saved without, but never any one saved by them, while Christ and our eternal rest are almost forgotten? The Lord pardon and heal the folly of his people.

CHAP. VII

The Third Use: persuading all Men to try their Title to this Rest; and directing them how to try, that they may know.

SECT. I. I now proceed to the third use which we shall raise hence; and because it is of very great importance to thy soul, I entreat thee to read it the more diligently, and weigh it the more seriously.

Is there such a glorious rest so near at hand; and shall none enjoy it but the people of God? What mean the most of the world, then, to live so contentedly without assurance of their interest in this rest, and to neglect the trying of their title to it, when the Lord hath so fully opened the blessedness of that kingdom, which none but a little flock of obedient believers shall possess, and so fully expressed those torments which all the rest of the world must eternally suffer? A man would think now, that they that believe this to be certainly true, should never be at any quiet in themselves till they knew which of these must be their own state, and were fully assured that they were heirs of the kingdom. Most men that I meet with, say, they believe this word of God to be true; how then can they sit still in such an utter uncertainty? One would think they should run up and down from minister to minister, inquiring, 'How shall I know whether I shall live in heaven or in hell?' And that they should even think themselves half in hell, till they were sure to escape it, and to be possessed of rest. Lord, what a wonderful, strange madness is this, that men, who look daily when sickness summons them, and death calls them away, and know they must presently enter upon unchangeable joy or pain, should yet live as uncertain what should be their doom, as if they had never heard of any such state: yea, and live as quietly and as merrily in this uncertainty as if all were made sure, and nothing ailed them, and there were no danger! Are these men alive or dead? Are they waking, or are they asleep? What do they think on? Where are their hearts? If they have but a weighty suit at

law, how careful are they to know whether it will go for them or against them! If they were to be tried for their lives at an earthly judicature, how careful would they be to know whether they should be saved or condemned, especially if their care might surely save them! If they be dangerously sick, they will inquire of the physician, 'What think you, sir; shall I escape, or no?' But for the business of their salvation, they are content to be uncertain. If you ask most men a reason of their hopes to be saved, they will say, 'It is because God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners; and the like general reasons, which any man in the world may give as well as they: but put them to prove their special interest in Christ, and the special saving mercy of God, and they can say nothing to the purpose at all; or, at least, nothing out of their hearts and experience, but only out of their reading or invention. Men are desirous to know all things, save God and themselves: they will travel over sea and land to know the situation of countries, and customs of the world: they will go to schools and universities, and turn over multitudes of books, and read and study from year to year, to know the creatures, and to be expert in the sciences: they will go apprentice seven years to learn a trade, which they may live by here; and yet they never read the book of conscience, nor study the state of their own souls, that they may make sure of living for ever. If God should ask them for their souls, as he did Cain for his brother Abel, they could return but such an answer as he did. If God or man should say to them, 'What case is thy soul in, man? Is it regenerate, and sanctified, and pardoned, or not? Is it in a state of life, or a state of death?' He would be ready to say, 'I know not; am I my soul's keeper? I hope well, I trust God with my soul, and trouble not myself with any such thoughts; I shall speed as well as other men do, and so I will put it to the venture; I thank God I never made any doubt of my salvation.' Answ. Thou hast the more cause to doubt a great deal, because thou never didst doubt; and yet more because thou hast been so careless in thy confidence. What do these expressions discover, but a wilful neglect of thy own salvation? As a shipmaster that should let his vessel alone, and mind other matters, and say 'I will venture it among the rocks, and sands, and gulfs, and waves, and winds; I will never trouble myself to know

whether it shall come safe to the harbour; I will trust God with it; it will speed as well as other men's vessels do.' Indeed, as well as other men's that are as careless and idle, but not so well as other men's that are diligent and watchful. What horrible abuse of God is this, for men to pretend that they trust God with their souls only to cloak their own wilful negligence! If thou didst truly trust God, thou wouldst also be ruled by him, and trust him in that way which he hath appointed thee, and upon those terms on which he hath promised thee help. He requires thee to give all diligence, to make thy calling and election sure, and so to trust him. (2 Pet. 1:10.) He hath lined thee out a way in Scripture, by which thou mayest come to be sure; and charged thee to search and try thyself, till thou certainly know. Were he not a foolish traveller that would hold on his way when he doth not know whether it be right or wrong, and say, 'I hope I am right; I will not doubt of it; I will go on, and trust God?' Art not thou guilty of this folly in thy travels to eternity? Not considering that a little serious inquiry and trial, whether thy way be right, might save thee a great deal of labour which thou bestowest in vain, and must undo again, or else thou wilt miss of salvation, and undo thyself. If thou shouldst see a man in despair, or that were certain to be damned for ever when he is dead, wouldst thou not look upon such a man as a pitiful object? Why, thou that livest in wilful uncertainty, and dost not know whether thou shalt be saved or not, art in the next condition to such a person; for aught thou knowest to the contrary, thy case hereafter may be as bad as his. I know not what thou thinkest of thy own state: but, for my part, did I not know what a desperate, blind, dead piece a carnal heart is, I should wonder how thou doest to forget thy misery, and to keep off continual terrors from thy heart; and especially in these cases following:

1. I wonder how thou canst either think or speak of the dreadful God, without exceeding terror and astonishment, as long as thou art uncertain whether he be thy father or thy enemy, and knowest not but all his attributes may be employed against thee. If his saints must rejoice before him with trembling, and serve him in fear; if they that are sure to receive the immoveable kingdom, must yet serve God

"with reverence and godly fear, because "he is a consuming fire;" how then should the remembrance of him be terrible to them that know not but this fire may for ever consume them!

2. How dost thou think, without trembling, upon Jesus Christ, when thou knowest not whether his blood hath purged thy soul, or not; and whether he will condemn thee, or acquit thee in judgment; nor whether he be set for thy rising, or for thy fall; (Luke 2:34;) nor whether he be the corner stone and foundation of thy happiness, or a stone of stumbling to break thee, and grind thee to powder? (Matt. 21:24.) Methinks thou shouldst still be in that tune, as Job 31:23, "Destruction from God is a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I cannot endure."

3. How canst thou open the Bible, and read a chapter, or hear a chapter read, but it should terrify thee? Methinks every leaf should be to thee as Belshazzar's writing upon the wall, except only that which draws thee to try and reform. (Dan. 5:5, 6.) If thou read the promises, thou knowest not whether ever they shall be fulfilled to thee, because thou art uncertain of thy performance of the condition. If thou read the threatenings, for any thing thou knowest, thou dost read thy own sentence. I do not wonder if thou art an enemy to plain preaching; and if thou say of it, and of the minister and Scripture itself, as Ahab of the prophet, "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." (1 Kings 22:8.)

4. I wonder how thou canst, without terror, approach God in prayer, or any duty. When thou callest him thy father, thou knowest not whether thou speak true or false. When thou needest him in thy sickness, or other extremity, thou knowest not whether thou hast a friend to go to, or an enemy. When thou receivest the sacrament, thou knowest not whether thou takest thy blessing or thy bane. And who would wilfully live such a life as this?

5. What comfort canst thou find in any thing which thou possessest? Methinks, friends, and honours, and houses, and lands, should do

thee little good, till thou know that thou hast the love of God withal, and shalt have rest with him when thou leavest these. Offer to a prisoner, before he know his sentence, either music, or clothes, or lands, or preferment, and what cares he for any of these, till he know how he shall escape for his life? and then he will look after these comforts of life, and not before: for he knows if he must die the next day it will be small comfort to die rich or honourable. Methinks it should be so with thee, till thou know thine eternal state. Dost not thou, as Ezek. 12:18, "eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy drink with trembling and carefulness;" and say, 'Alas! though I have these to refresh my body now, yet I know not what I shall have hereafter?' Even when thou liest down to take thy rest, methinks the uncertainty of thy salvation should keep thee waking, or amaze thee in thy dreams, and trouble thy sleep; and thou shouldst say, as Job in a smaller distress than thine, "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions." (Job 7:13, 14.)

6. Doth it not grieve thee to see the people of God so comfortable, when thou hast none thyself; and to think of the glory which they shall inherit, when thou hast no assurance thyself of ever enjoying it?

7. What shift dost thou make to think of thy dying hour? Thou knowest it is near, and there is no avoiding it, nor any medicine found out that can prevent it. Thou knowest it is the "king of terrors," (Job 18:14,) and the very inlet to thine unchangeable state. The godly that have some assurance of their future welfare, have yet much ado to submit to it willingly, and find that to die comfortably is a very difficult work. How then canst thou think of it without astonishment, who hast got no assurance of the rest to come? If thou shouldst die this day, and "who knows what a day may bring forth," (Prov. 27:1,) thou dost not know whether thou shalt go straight to heaven or to hell: and canst thou be merry till thou art got out of this dangerous state? Methinks that in Deut. 28:25–27 should be the looking-glass of thy heart.

8. What shift dost thou make to preserve thy heart from horror, when thou rememberest the great judgment day, and the everlasting flames? Dost thou not tremble as Felix, when thou hearest of it; (Acts 24:25;) and as the elders of the town trembled when Samuel came in, saying, "Comest thou peaceably?" (1 Sam. 16:4.) So methinks thou shouldst do when the minister comes into the pulpit; and thy heart, whenever thou meditatest of that day, should meditate terror, (Isa. 33:18,) and thou shouldst even be a terror to thyself, and all thy friends. (Jer. 20:4.) If the keepers trembled and became as dead men, when they did but see the angels, (Matt. 28:3, 4,) how canst thou think of living in hell with devils till thou hast got some sound assurance that thou shalt escape it? Or, if thou seldom think of these things, the wonder is as great, what shift thou makest to keep those thoughts from thy heart, and to live so quietly in so doleful a state? Thy bed is very soft, or thy heart is very hard, if thou canst sleep soundly in this uncertain case.

I have showed thee the danger, let me next proceed to show thee the remedy.

If this general uncertainty of the world about their salvation, were constrained or remediless, then must it be borne as other unavoidable miseries, and it were unmeet either to reprove them for it, or dissuade them from it; but, alas! the common cause is wilfulness and negligence. Men will not be persuaded to use the remedy, though it be easy, and at hand, prescribed to them by God himself, and all necessary helps thereunto provided for them. The great means to conquer this uncertainty, is self-examination, or the serious and diligent trying of a man's heart and state, by the rule of Scripture. The Scripture tells us plainly who shall be saved, and who shall not: so that if men would but first search the word, to find out who are these men that shall have rest, and what are their properties by which they may be known; and then next search carefully their own hearts, till they find whether they are those men or not, how could they choose but to come to some certainty? But, alas! either men understand not the nature and use of this duty, or else they will

not be at the pains to try. Go through a congregation of a thousand men, and how few of them shall you meet with, that ever bestowed one hour in all their lives in a close examination of their title to heaven! Ask thy own conscience, reader, when was the time, and where was the place, that ever thou solemnly tookest thy heart to task, as in the sight of God, and examinedst it by scripture interrogatories, whether it be born again and renewed, or not; whether it be holy, or not; whether it be set most on God, or on creatures; on heaven, or on earth; and didst follow on this examination till thou hadst discovered thy condition, and so passed sentence on thyself accordingly.

But because this is a work of so high concernment, and so commonly neglected, and men's souls do so much languish everywhere under this neglect, I will, therefore, though it be digressive, 1. Show you that it is possible, by trying, to come to a certainty; 2. Show the hinderances that keep men from trying, and from assurance; 3. I will lay down some motives to persuade you to it; 4. I will give you some directions how you should perform it; 5. And lastly, I will lay you down some marks out of Scripture, by which you may try, and so come to an infallible certainty, whether you are the people of God, for whom this rest remaineth, or not. And to prepare the way to these, I will, a little, first open to you, what examination is, and what that certainty is, which we may expect to attain to.

Sect. II. This self-examination is, an inquiry into the course of our lives, but more especially, into the inward acts of our souls, and trying of their sincerity by the word of God, and accordingly judging of our real and relative estate.

So that examination containeth several acts: 1. There must be the trial of the physical truth, or sincerity of our acts; that is, an inquiry after the very being of them; as whether there be such an act as belief, or desire, or love to God within us or not: this must be discovered by conscience, and the internal sense of the soul; whereby

it is able to feel and perceive its own acts, and to know whether they be real or counterfeit.

2. The next is, the trial of the moral truth, or sincerity of acts; whether they are such as agree with the rule and the nature of their objects. This is a discursive work of reason, comparing our acts with the rule; it implieth the former knowledge of the being of our acts, and it implieth the knowledge of Scripture in the point in question, and also the belief of the truth of Scripture. This moral, spiritual truth of our acts, is another thing, far different from the natural or physical truth; as far as a man's being differeth from his honesty. One man loveth his wife under the notion of a harlot, or only to satisfy his lust; another loveth his wife with a true, conjugal affection: the former is true, physical love, or true in point of being; but the latter only is true, moral love. The like may be said in regard of all the acts of the soul. There is a believing, loving, trusting, fearing, rejoicing, all true in point of being, and not counterfeit; which yet are all false in point of morality and right being, and so no gracious acts at all.

3. The third thing being contained in the work of self-examination, is the judging or concluding of our real estate; that is, of the habitual temper or disposition of our hearts, by the quality of their acts; whether they are such acts as prove a habit of holiness, or only some slight disposition; or whether they are only, by some accident, enticed or enforced, and prove neither habit nor disposition. The, like, also of our evil acts. Now, the acts which prove a habit must be, 1. Free and cheerful; not constrained, or such as we had rather not do if we could help it. 2. Frequent; if there be opportunity. 3. Thorough and serious: where note also, that the trial of the soul's disposition by those acts, which make after the end, as desire, love, &c., to God, Christ, heaven, is always more necessary and more certain, than the trial of its disposition to the means only.

4. The last act in this examination, is to conclude or judge of our relative estate, from the former judgment of our acts and habits. As if

we find sincere acts, we may conclude that we have the habits; so from both, we may conclude of our relation. So that our relations, or habits, are neither of them felt or known immediately, but must be gathered from the knowledge of our acts, which may be felt; as for example: 1. I inquire, whether I believe in Christ, or love God? 2. If I find that I do, then I inquire next, whether I do it sincerely, according to the rule and the nature of the object? 3. If I find that I do so, then I conclude that I am regenerate or sanctified. 4. And from both these, I conclude that I am pardoned, reconciled, justified, and adopted into sonship, and title to the inheritance. All this is done in a way of reasoning, thus:

1. He that believes in spiritual sincerity, or he that loves God in spiritual sincerity, is a regenerate man: but I do so believe and love; therefore, I am regenerate.

2. He that believes in sincerity, or he that is regenerate, for the conclusion will follow upon either, is also pardoned, justified, and adopted: but I do so believe, or I am regenerate; therefore, I am justified, &c.

Sect. III. Thus you see what examination is. Now let us see what this certainty or assurance is; and indeed it is nothing else but the knowledge of the fore-mentioned conclusions, that we are sanctified, justified, shall be glorified, as they arise from the premises in the work of examination.

So that here you may observe, how immediately this assurance followeth the conclusion in examination, and so, how necessary examination is to the obtaining of assurance, and how conducive thereunto.

Also, that we are not speaking of the certainty of the object, or of the thing itself considered, but of the certainty of the subject, or of the thing to our knowledge.

Also you may observe, that before we can come to this certainty of the conclusion, That we are justified, and shall be glorified, there must be a certainty of the premises. And in respect of the major proposition, He that believeth sincerely, shall be justified and saved; there is requisite in us, 1. A certainty of knowledge; that such a proposition is written in Scripture. 2. A certainty of assent or faith; that this Scripture is the word of God, and true. Also, in respect of the minor proposition, But I do sincerely believe, or love, &c., there is requisite, 1. A certainty of the truth of our faith in point of being; 2. And a certainty of its truth in point of morality, or congruence with the rule, or its right being. And then followeth the assurance, which is the certainty that the conclusion, Therefore I am justified, &c. followeth necessarily upon the former premises.

Here also you must carefully distinguish betwixt the several degrees of assurance. All assurance is not of the highest degree. It differs in strength, according to the different degrees of apprehension, in all the fore-mentioned points of certainty which are necessary thereunto. He that can truly raise the foresaid conclusion, that he is justified, &c., from the premises, hath some degree of assurance, though he do it with much weakness, and staggering, and doubting. The weakness of our assurance in any one point of the premises, will accordingly weaken our assurance in the conclusion.

Some, when they speak of certainty of salvation, do mean only such a certainty as excludeth all doubting, and think nothing else can be called certainty, but this high degree. Perhaps some papists mean this, when they deny a certainty. Some also maintain, that Saint Paul's plerophory, or full assurance, is the highest degree of assurance, and that some Christians do in this life attain to it. But Paul calls it full assurance, in comparison of lower degrees, and not because it is perfect. For if assurance be perfect, then all our certainty of knowledge, faith and sense in the premises, must be perfect: and if some grace be perfect, why not all? And so we turn Novatians, Catharists, Perfectionists. Perhaps in some, their certainty may be so great that it may overcome all sensible doubting,

or sensible stirrings of unbelief, by reason of the sweet and powerful acts and effects of that certainty: and yet it doth not overcome all unbelief and uncertainty, so as to expel or nullify them; but a certain measure of them remaineth still. Even, as when you would heat cold water by the mixture of hot, you may pour in the hot so long till no coldness is felt, and yet the water may be far from the highest degree of heat. So faith may suppress the sensible stirrings of unbelief, and certainty prevail against all the trouble of uncertainty, and yet be far from the highest degree.

So that by this which is said, you may answer the question, What certainty is to be attained in this life; and what certainty it is that we press men to labour for and expect?

Furthermore; you must be sure to distinguish betwixt assurance itself, and the joy, and strength, and other sweet effects which follow assurance, or which immediately accompany it.

It is possible that there may be assurance, and yet no comfort, or little. There are many unskilful, but self-conceited disputers of late, better to manage a club than an argument, who tell us, 'that it must be the Spirit that must assure us of salvation, and not our marks and evidences of grace; that our comfort must not be taken from any thing in ourselves; that our justification must be immediately believed, and not proved by our signs of sanctification, &c. Of these in order. 1. It is as wise a question to ask, 'Whether our assurance come from the Spirit, or our evidence, or our faith,' &c., as to ask, 'Whether it be our meat, or our stomach, our teeth, or our hands, that feed us; or whether it be our eye-sight, or the sun-light, by which we see things?' They are distinct causes, all necessary to the producing of the same effect.

So that, by what hath been said, you may discern that the Spirit, and knowledge, and faith, and Scripture, and inward holiness and reason, and inward sense of conscience, have all several parts, and necessary uses in producing our assurance; which I will show you distinctly.

1. To the Spirit belong these particulars. 1. He hath indicted those Scriptures which contain the promise of our pardon and salvation. 2. He giveth us the habit or power of believing. 3. He helpeth us also to believe actually, that the word is true, and to receive Christ and the privileges offered in the promise. 4. He worketh in us those graces, and exciteth those gracious acts with us, which are the evidences or marks of our interest to pardon and life: he helpeth us to perform those acts which God hath made to be the condition of pardon and glory. 5. He helpeth us to feel and discover these acts in ourselves. 6. He helpeth us to compare them with the rule, and finding out their qualifications, to judge of their sincerity and acceptation with God. 7. He helpeth our reason to conclude rightly of our state from our acts. He enliveneth and heighteneth our apprehension in these particulars, that our assurance may accordingly be strong and lively. 8. He exciteth our joy, and filleth with comfort (when he pleaseth) upon this assurance. None of all these could we perform well of ourselves.

2. The part which the Scripture hath in this work, is, 1. It affordeth us the major proposition, that whosoever believeth sincerely shall be saved." 2. It is the rule by which our acts must be tried, that we may judge of their moral truth.

3. The part that knowledge hath in it, is to know that the foresaid proposition is written in Scripture.

4. The work of faith is to believe the truth of that Scripture, and to be the matter of one of our chief evidences.

5. Our holiness, and true faith, as they are marks and evidences, are the very medium of our argument, from which we conclude.

6. Our conscience and internal sense do acquaint us with both the being and qualifications of our inward acts, which are this medium, and which are called marks.

7. Our reason, or discourse, is necessary to form the argument, and raise the conclusion from the premises; and to compare our acts with the rule, and judge of the sincerity, &c.

So that you see our assurance is not an effect of any one single cause alone. And so neither merely of faith, by signs, nor by the Spirit.

From all this you may gather, 1. What the seal of the Spirit is, to wit, the works or fruits of the Spirit in us. 2. What the testimony of the Spirit is, (for if it be not some of the fore-mentioned acts, I yet know it not). 3. What the testimony of conscience is.

And, if I be not mistaken, the testimony of the Spirit, and the testimony of conscience, are two concurrent testimonies, or causes, to produce one and the same effect, and to afford the premises to the same conclusion, and then to raise our joy thereupon; so that they may well be said to witness together. Not one laying down the entire conclusion of itself, "that we are the children of God;" and then the other attesting the same entirely again of itself: but as concurrent causes to the same numerical conclusion.

But this with submission to better judgments and further search.

By this also you may see, that the common distinction of certainty of adherence, and certainty of evidence, must be taken with a grain or two of salt. For there is no certainty without evidence, any more than there is a conclusion without a medium. A small degree of certainty hath some small glimpse of evidence. Indeed, 1. The assent to the truth of a promise: 2. And the acceptation of Christ offered with his benefits, are both before and without any sight or consideration of evidence, and are themselves our best evidence, being that faith which is the condition of our justification; but before any man can, in the least assurance, conclude that he is the child of God, and justified, he must have some assurance of that mark or evidence. For who can conclude absolutely that he will receive the thing contained in a conditional promise, till he know that he hath performed the

condition? For those that say, 'There is no condition of the new covenant,' I think them not worthy a word of confutation.

And for their assertion, "that we are bound immediately to believe that we are justified, and in special favour with God;" it is such as no man of competent knowledge in the Scripture, and belief of its truth, can once imagine. For if every man must believe this, then most must believe a lie, for they shall never be justified, yea, all must at first believe a lie; for they are not justified till they believe; and the believing that they are justified, is not the faith that justifieth them. If only some men must believe this, how should it be known who they be? The truth is, that we are justified, is not properly to be believed at all; for nothing is to be believed which is not written: but it is nowhere written that you or I am justified: only one of these premises is written, from whence we may draw the conclusion, that we are justified, if so be that our own hearts do afford us the other of the premises. So that our actual justification is not a matter of mere faith, but a conclusion from faith and conscience together. If God have nowhere promised to any man justification immediately, without condition, then no man can believe it: but God hath nowhere promised it absolutely; therefore, &c. Nor hath he declared to any man, that is not first a believer, that he loveth him with any more than a common love; therefore, no more can be believed but a common love to any such. For the eternal love and election are manifest to no man before he is a believer.

Sect. IV. 2. Having thus showed you what examination is, and what assurance is, I come to the second thing promised, to show you, that such an infallible certainty of salvation may be attained, and ought to be laboured for, though a perfect certainty cannot here be attained: and that examination is the means to attain it. In which I shall be the briefer, because many writers against the papists on this point, have said enough already. Yet somewhat I will say: 1. Because it is the common conceit of the ignorant vulgar, that an infallible certainty cannot be attained. 2. And many have taught and printed that it is only the testimony of the Spirit that can assure us; and that this

proving our justification by our sanctification, and searching after marks and signs in ourselves for the procuring of assurance, is a dangerous and deceitful way. Thus we have the papists, the antinomians, and the ignorant vulgar, conspiring against this doctrine of assurance and examination. Which I maintain against them by these arguments.

1. Scripture tells us we may know, and that the saints before us have known their justification, and future salvation. (2 Cor. 5:1; Rom. 8:36; John 21:15; 1 John 5:19, 4:14, 3:14–24, and 2:3–5; Rom. 8:14, 19, 36; Eph. 3:12.) I refer you to the places for brevity.

2. If we may be certain of the premises, then may we also be certain of the undeniable conclusion of them. But here we may be certain of both the premises. For, 1. "That whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life," is the voice of the Gospel; and therefore that we may be sure of; that we are such believers, may be known by conscience and internal sense. I know all the question is this, whether the moral truth, or sincerity of our faith, and other graces, can be known thus or not? And that it may, I prove thus:

1. From the natural use of this conscience, and internal sense, which is to acquaint us not only with the being, but the qualifications of the acts of our souls. All voluntary motions are sensible, and though the heart is so deceitful, that no man can certainly know the heart of another, and with much difficulty clearly know his own; yet, by diligent observation and examination, known they may be; for though our inward sense and conscience may be depraved, yet not extirpated, or quite extinguished.

2. The commands of believing, repenting, &c., were in vain, especially as the condition of the covenant, if we could not know whether we perform them or not.

3. The Scripture would never make such a wide difference between the godly and the wicked, the children of God and the children of the

devil, and set forth the happiness of the one and the misery of the other so largely, and make this difference to run through all the veins of its doctrine, if a man cannot know which of these two estates he is in.

4. Much less would the Holy Ghost bid us "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, if it could not be done." (2 Pet. 1:10.) And that this is not meant of objective certainty, but of the subjective, appeareth in this; that the apostle mentioneth not salvation, or any thing to come, but calling and election, which to believers were objectively certain before, as being both past.

5. And to what purpose should we be so earnestly urged to examine, and prove, and try ourselves, whether we be in the faith, and whether Christ be in us, or we be reprobates? (1 Cor. 11:28, and 2 Cor. 13:5.) Why should we search for that which cannot be found?

6. How can we obey those precepts which require us to rejoice always? (1 Thess. 5:16:) To call God our Father: (Luke 11:2:) To live in his praises: (Ps. 49:1–5:) And to long for Christ's coming: (Rev. 22:17, 20; 1 Thess. 1:10:) and to comfort ourselves with the mention of it: (1 Thess. 4:18): which are all the consequents of assurance. Who can do any of these heartily, that is not in some measure sure that he is the child of God?

7. There are some duties that either the saints only, or chiefly, are commanded to perform; and how shall that be done, if we cannot know that we are saints? (Ps. 144:5, 132:9, 30:4, 31:23, &c.)

Thus I have proved that a certainty may be attained; an infallible, though not a perfect certainty: such as excludeth deceit, though it excludeth not all degrees of doubting. If Bellarmine, by his conjectural certainty, do mean this infallible though imperfect certainty, (as I doubt he doth not,) then I would not much contend with him: and I acknowledge that it is not properly a certainty of mere faith, but mixed.

Sect. V. 3. The third thing that I promised, is, to show you what are the hinderances which keep men from examination and assurance. I shall, 1. Show what hinders them from trying. And, 2. What hindereth them from knowing, when they do try, that so when you see the impediments, you may avoid them.

And, 1. We cannot doubt but Satan will do his part, to hinder us from such a necessary duty as this: if all the power he hath can do it, or all the means and instruments which he can raise up, he will be sure above all duties to keep you off from this. He is loth the godly should have that joy, and assurance, and advantage, against corruption, which the faithful performance of self-examination would procure them. And for the ungodly, he knows, if they should once fall close to this examining task, they would find out his deceits, and their own danger, and so be very likely to escape him; if they did but faithfully perform this duty, he were likely to lose most of the subjects of his kingdom. How could he get so many millions to hell willingly, if they knew they went thither? And how could they choose but know, if they did thoroughly try, having such a clear light, and sure rule in the Scripture, to discover it? If the beast did know that he is going to the slaughter, he would not be driven so easily to it, but would strive for his life before he comes to die, as well as he doth at the time of his death. If Balaam had seen as much of the danger as his ass, instead of his driving on so furiously, he would have been as loth to proceed as he. If the Syrians had known whither they were going, as well as Elisha did, they would have stopped before they found themselves in the hands of their enemies. (2 Kings 6:19, 20.) So, if sinners did but know whither they were hasting, they would stop before they are engulfed in damnation. If every swearer, drunkard, whoremonger, lover of the world, or unregenerate person whatsoever, did certainly know that the way he is in, will never bring him to heaven, and that if he die in it, he shall undoubtedly perish, Satan could never get him to proceed so resolvedly. Alas! he would then think every day a year till he were out of the danger; and whether he were eating, drinking, working, or whatever he were doing, the thoughts of his danger would be still in his mind, and this voice would be still in his ears,

"Except thou repent and be converted, thou shalt surely perish." The devil knows well enough, that if he cannot keep men from trying their states, and knowing their misery, he shall hardly be able to keep them from repentance and salvation. And, therefore, he deals with them as Jael with Sisera; she gives him fair words, and food, and layeth him to sleep, and covereth his face, and then she comes upon him softly, and strikes the nail into his temples. (Judges 4:19.) And as the Philistines with Sampson, who first put out his eyes, and then made him grind in their mills. (Judges 16:21.) If the pit be not covered, who but the blind will fall into it? If the snare be not hid, the bird will escape it: Satan knows how to angle for souls better than to show them the hook or line, and to fright them away with a noise, or with his own appearance.

Therefore, he labours to keep them from a searching ministry; or to keep the minister from helping them to search; or to take off the edge of the word, that it may not pierce and divide; or to turn away their thoughts, or to possess them with prejudice. Satan is acquainted with all the preparations and studies of the minister; he knows when he hath provided a searching sermon, fitted to the state and necessity of a hearer; and therefore he will keep him away that day, if it be possible, above all, or else cast him asleep, or steal away the word by the cares and talk of the world, or some way prevent its operation, and the sinner's obedience.

This is the first hinderance.

Sect. VI. Wicked men also are great impediments to poor sinners when they should examine and discover their estates. 1. Their examples hinder much. When an ignorant sinner seeth all his friends and neighbours do as he doth, and live quietly in the same state with himself; yea, the rich and learned as well as others, this is an exceeding great temptation to him to proceed in his security. 2. Also, the merry company, and pleasant discourse of these men, doth take away the thoughts of his spiritual state, and doth make the understanding drunk with their sensual delight: so that if the Spirit

had before put into them any jealousy of themselves, or any purpose to try themselves, this jovial company doth soon quench them all. 3. Also, their continual discourse of nothing but matters of the world, doth damp all these purposes for self-trying, and make them forgotten. 4. Their railings also, and scorning at godly persons, is a very great impediment to multitudes of souls, and possesseth them with such a prejudice and dislike of the way to heaven, that they settle resolvedly in the way that they are in. 5. Also, their constant persuasions, allurements, threats, &c., hinder much. God doth scarcely ever open the eyes of a poor sinner, to see that all is nought with him, and his way is wrong, but presently there is a multitude of Satan's apostles ready to flatter him, and daub, and deceive, and settle him again in the quiet possession of his former master. 'What,' say they, 'do you make a doubt of your salvation, who have lived so well, and done nobody harm, and been beloved of all? God is merciful: and if such as you shall not be saved, God help a great many: what do you think is become of all your forefathers: and what will become of all your friends and neighbours that live as you do: will they all be damned; shall none be saved, think you, but a few strict precisians? Come, come, if ye hearken to these books or preachers, they will drive you to despair shortly, or drive you out of your wits: they must have something to say: they would have all like themselves: are not all men sinners; and did not Christ die to save sinners? Never trouble your head with these thoughts, but believe and you shall do well.' Thus do they follow the soul that is escaping from Satan, with restless cries, till they have brought him back: oh, how many thousands have such charms kept asleep in deceit and security, till death and hell have awakened and better informed them! The Lord calls to the sinner, and tells him, "The gate is strait, the way is narrow, and few find it: try and examine whether thou be in the faith or no: give all diligence to make sure in time." (Luke 13:24; 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Pet. 1:10.) And the world cries out clean contrary, never doubt, never trouble yourselves with these thoughts: I entreat the sinner that is in this strait, to consider, that it is Christ, and not their fathers, or mothers, or neighbours, or friends, that must judge them at last; and if Christ condemn them, these cannot

save them: and therefore common reason may tell them, that it is not from the words of ignorant men, but from the word of God, that they must fetch their comforts and hopes of salvation. When Ahab would inquire among the multitudes of flattering prophets, it was his death. They can flatter men into the snare, but they cannot tell how to bring them out. Oh, take the counsel of the Holy Ghost, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience: be not ye therefore partakers with them;" (Ephes. 5:6, 7;) and, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts 2:40.)

3. But the greatest hinderances are in men's own hearts.

Sect. VII. 1. Some are so ignorant that they know not what self-examination is, nor what a minister means when he persuadeth them to try themselves; or they know not that there is any necessity of it; but think every man is bound to believe that God is his Father, and that his sins are pardoned, whether it be true or false; and that it were a great fault to make any question of it; or, they do not think that assurance can be attained; or, that there is any such great difference betwixt one man and another; but that we are all Christians, and therefore need not to trouble ourselves any further; or, at least, they know not wherein the difference lies, nor how to set upon the searching of their hearts, nor to find out its secret motions, and to judge accordingly. They have as gross conceits of that regeneration, which they must search for, as Nicodemus had. (John 3:5.) And when they should try whether the Spirit be in them, they are like those that "knew not whether there were a Holy Ghost to be received or no." (Acts 19:2.)

2. Some are such infidels that they will not believe that ever God will make such a difference betwixt men in the life to come, and therefore will not search themselves whether they differ here: though judgment and resurrection be in their creed, yet they are not in their faith.

3. Some are so dead-hearted, that they perceive not how nearly it doth concern them; let us say what we can to them, they lay it not to heart, but give us the hearing, and there is an end.

4. Some are so possessed with self-love and pride, that they will not so much as suspect any such danger to themselves. Like a proud tradesman, who scorns the motion when his friends desire him to cast up his books, because they are afraid he will break. As some fond parents, that have an over-weening conceit of their own children, and therefore will not believe or hear any evil of them. Such a fond self-love doth hinder men from suspecting and trying their states.

5. Some are so guilty that they dare not try. They are so fearful that they shall find their states unsound, that they dare not search into them: and yet they dare venture them to a more dreadful trial.

6. Some are far in love with their sin, and so far in dislike with the way of God, that they dare not fall on the trial of their ways, lest they be forced from the course which they love to that which they loathe.

7. Some are so resolved already never to change their present state, that they neglect examination as a useless thing. Before they will turn so precise, and seek a new way, when they have lived so long, and gone so far, they will put their eternal state to the venture, come of it what will. And when a man is fully resolved to hold on his way, and not to turn back, be it right or wrong, to what end should he inquire whether he be right or not?

8. Most men are so taken up with their worldly affairs, and are so busy in driving the trade of providing for the flesh, that they cannot set themselves to the trying of their title to heaven. They have another kind of happiness in their eye, which they are pursuing, which will not suffer them to make sure of heaven.

9. Most men are so clogged with a laziness and slothfulness of spirit, that they will not be persuaded to be at the pains of an hour's examination of their own hearts. It requireth some labour and

diligence to accomplish it thoroughly, and they will rather venture all than set about it.

10. But the common and dangerous impediment is that false faith and hope, commonly called presumption, which bears up the hearts of the most of the world, and so keeps them from suspecting their danger.

Thus you see what abundance of difficulties must be overcome before a man can closely set upon the examining of his heart. I do but name them for brevity sake.

And if a man do break through all these impediments, and set upon the duty, yet assurance is not presently attained. Of those few who do inquire after marks and means of assurance, and bestow some pains to learn the difference between the sound Christian and the unsound, and look often into their own hearts; yet divers are deceived, and do miscarry, especially through these following causes:

1. There is such a confusion and darkness in the soul of man, especially of an unregenerate man, that he can scarcely tell what he doeth, or what is in him. As one can hardly find any thing in an house where nothing keeps his place, but all is cast on a heap together: so is it in the heart where all things are in disorder, especially when darkness is added to this disorder: so that the heart is like an obscure cave or dungeon, where there is but a little crevice of light, and a man must rather grope than see. No wonder if men mistake in searching such a heart, and so miscarry in judging of their estate.

2. And the rather, because most men do accustom themselves to be strangers at home, and are little taken up with observing the temper and motions of their own hearts. All their studies are employed without them, and they are nowhere less acquainted than in their own breasts.

3. Besides, many come to the work with forestalling conclusions: they are resolved what to judge before they try: they use the duty but to strengthen their present conceits of themselves, and not to find out the truth of their condition, like a bribed judge, who examines each party as if he would judge uprightly, when he is resolved which way the cause shall go beforehand. Or, as perverse disputers, who argue only to maintain their present opinions rather than to try those opinions whether they are right or wrong. Just so do men examine their hearts.

4. Also, men are partial in their own cause. They are ready to think their great sins small, and their small sins to be none; their gifts of nature to be the work of grace, and their gifts of common grace to be the special grace of the saints. They are straightway ready to say, "All these have I kept from my youth; and I am rich and increased," &c. (Matt. 19:20; Rev. 3:17.) The first common excellency that they meet with in themselves, doth so dazzle their eyes, that they are presently satisfied that all is well, and look no further.

5. Besides, most men do search but by the halves. If it will not easily and quickly be done, they are discouraged, and leave off. Few set to it, and follow it, as beseems them in a work of such moment. He must give all diligence that means to make sure.

6. Also, men try themselves by false marks and rules, not knowing wherein the truth of Christianity doth consist; some looking beyond, and some short of the scripture standard.

7. Moreover, there is so great likeness between the lowest degree of special grace, and the highest degree of common grace, that it is no wonder if the unskilful be mistaken. It is a great question, whether the main difference between special grace and common be not rather gradual than specific. If it should be so, as some think, then the discovery will be much more difficult. However, to discern by what principle our affections are moved, and to what ends, and with what sincerity, is not very easy; there being so many wrong ends and

motives, which may excite the like acts. Every grace in the saints hath its counterfeit in the hypocrite.

8. Also, men try themselves by unsafe marks; either looking for a high degree of grace, instead of a lower degree in sincerity, as many doubting Christians do: or else inquiring only into their outward actions, or into their inward affections, without their ends, motives, and other qualifications; the sure evidences are, faith, love, &c., which are essential parts of our Christianity, and that lie nearest to the heart.

9. Lastly: Men frequently miscarry in this working, by setting on it in their own strength. As some expect the Spirit should do it without them, so others attempt it themselves, without seeking or expecting the help of the Spirit. Both these will certainly miscarry in their assurance. How far the Spirit's assistance is necessary, is showed before, and the several acts which it must perform for us.

CHAP. VIII

Further Causes of Doubting among Christians.

SECT. I. Because the comfort of a Christian's life doth so much consist in his assurance of God's special love, and because the right way of obtaining it is so much controverted of late, I will here proceed a little further in opening to you some other hinderances which keep true Christians from comfortable certainty, besides the fore-mentioned errors in the work of examination: though I would still have you remember and be sensible, that the neglect or slighty performance of that great duty, and not following on the search with seriousness and constancy, is the most common hinderance for aught I have yet found.

I shall now add these ten more, which I find very ordinary impediments, and therefore desire Christians more carefully to

consider and beware of them.

1. One common and great cause of doubting and uncertainty is, the weakness and small measure of our grace. A little grace is next to none: small things are hardly discerned. He that will see a small needle, a hair, a mote, or atom, must have clear light and good eyes; but houses, and towns, and mountains, are easily discerned. Most Christians content themselves with a small measure of grace, and do not follow on to spiritual strength and manhood. They believe so weakly, and love God so little, that they can scarce find whether they believe and love at all; like a man in a swoon, whose pulse and breathing is so weak and obscure that it can hardly be perceived whether they move at all, and consequently whether the man be alive or dead.

The chief remedy for such, would be to follow on their duty, till their graces be increased. Ply your work; wait upon God in the use of his prescribed means, and he will undoubtedly bless you with increase and strength. Oh! that Christians would bestow most of that time in getting grace, which they bestow in anxious doubtings whether they have any or none; and that they would lay out those serious affections in praying, and seeking to Christ for more grace, which they bestow in fruitless complaints of their supposed gracelessness! I beseech thee, Christian, take this advice as from God; and then, when thou believest strongly, and lovest fervently, thou canst not doubt whether thou do believe and love or not, any more than a man that is burning hot can doubt whether he be warm; or a man that is strong and lusty can doubt whether he be alive. Strong affections will make you feel them. Who loveth his friends, or wife, or child, or any thing strongly, and doth not know it? A great measure of grace is seldom doubted of; or, if it be, you may quickly find when you seek and try.

Sect. II. Another cause of uncomfortable living is, that Christians look more at their present cause of comfort or discomfort, than they do at their future happiness, and the way to attain it. They look after

signs which may tell them what they are, more than they do at precepts which tell them what they should do. They are very desirous to know whether they are justified and beloved, or not; but they do not think what course they should take to be justified, if they be not; as if their present case must needs be their everlasting case, and if they be now unpardoned, there were no remedy. Why, I beseech thee, consider this, O doubting soul! What, if all were as bad as thou dost fear, and none of thy sins were yet pardoned; is not the remedy at hand? May not all this be done in a moment? Dost thou not know that thou mayest have Christ and pardon whenever thou wilt? Call not this a loose or strange doctrine. Christ is willing if thou be willing. He offereth himself and all his benefits to thee: he presseth them on thee, and urgeth thee to accept them. He will condemn thee, and destroy thee, if thou wilt not accept them. Why dost thou, therefore, stand whining and complaining that thou art not pardoned and adopted, when thou shouldst take them, being offered thee? Were he not mad that would lie weeping, and wringing his hands, because he is not pardoned, when his prince stands by all the while offering him a pardon, and entreating, and threatening, and persuading, and correcting him, and all to make him take it? What would you say to such a man; would you not chide him for his folly, and say, 'If thou wouldst have pardon and life, why dost thou not take it?' Why, then, do you not say the like to yourselves? Know ye not that pardon and adoption are offered you only on the condition of your believing? And this believing is nothing else but the accepting of Christ for thy Lord and Saviour, as he is offered to thee with his benefits in the Gospel: and this accepting is principally, if not only, the act of thy will. So that if thou be willing to have Christ upon his own terms, that is, to save and rule thee, then thou art a believer: thy willingness is thy faith; and if thou have faith, thou hast the surest of all evidences. Justifying faith is not thy persuasion of God's special love to thee, or of thy justification, but thy accepting Christ to make thee just and lovely. It may be, thou wilt say, 'I cannot believe; it is not so easy a matter to believe as you make it.' Answ. Indeed, to those that are not willing, it is not easy, God only can make them willing. But to him that is willing to have Christ for King and Saviour,

I will not say, believing is easy: but it is already performed; for this is believing. Let me, therefore, put this question to every doubting, complaining soul, What is it that thou art complaining and mourning for? What makes thee walk so sadly as thou dost? Because thou hast not Christ and his benefits? Why, art thou willing to have them on the fore-mentioned condition, or art thou not? If thou be willing, thou hast him: thy accepting is thy believing: "To as many as receive him, (that is, accept him,) to them he gives power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12.) But if thou art not willing, why dost thou complain? Methinks the tongue should follow the bent of the heart or will, and they that would not have Christ should be speaking against him, at least, against his laws and ways, and not complaining because they do not enjoy him. Dost thou groan, and make such moan for want of that which thou wouldst not have? If, indeed, thou wouldst not have Christ for thy King and Saviour, then have I nothing to say but to persuade thee to be willing. Is it not madness, then, to lie complaining that we have not Christ, when we may have him if we will? If thou have him not, take him, and cease thy complaints. Thou canst not be so forward and willing as he is: and if he be willing, and thou be willing, who shall break the match? I will not say, as Mr. Saltmarsh most horribly doth, that we ought no more to question our faith, which is our first and foundation grace, than we ought to question Christ the foundation of our faith. But this, I say, that it were a more wise and direct course to accept Christ offered, which is believing, than to spend so much time in doubting whether we have Christ and faith, or no.

Sect. III. Another cause of many Christians' trouble, is their mistaking assurance for the joy that sometime accompanieth it; or, at least, confounding them together. Therefore, when they want the joy of assurance, they are as much cast down as if they wanted assurance itself. Dr. Sibbs saith well, that as we cannot have grace but by the work of the Spirit, so must there be a further act to make us know that we have that grace: and when we know we have grace, yet must there be a further act of the Spirit to give us comfort in that

knowledge. Some knowledge or assurance of our regenerate and justified state the Spirit gives more ordinarily, but that sensible joy is more seldom and extraordinary. We have cause enough to keep off doubtings and distress of Spirit, upon the bare sight of our evidences, though we do not feel any further joys. These complaining souls understand not: and therefore, though they cannot deny their willingness to have Christ, nor many other the like graces, which are infallible signs of their justification and adoption; yet, because they do not feel their spirits replenished with comforts, they throw away all, as if they had nothing. As if a child should no longer take himself for a son than he sees the smiles of his father's face, or heareth the comfortable expressions of his mouth; and as if the father did cease to be a father whenever he ceaseth those smiles and speeches.

Sect. IV. 4. And yet, further, is the trouble of these poor souls increased, in that they know not the ordinary way of God's conveying these expected comforts. When they hear that they are the free gifts of the Spirit, they presently conceive themselves to be merely passive therein, and that they have nothing to do but to wait when God will bestow them; not understanding that though these comforts are spiritual, yet are they rational; raised upon the understanding's apprehension of the excellency of God our happiness, and of our interest in him; and by the rolling of this blessed object in our frequent meditations. The Spirit doth advance, and not destroy our reason; it doth rectify it, and then use it as its ordinary instrument for the conveyance of things to our affections, and exciting them accordingly, and not lay it aside and affect us without it; therefore, our joys are raised discursively, and the Spirit first revealeth our cause of joy, and then helpeth us to rejoice upon those revealed grounds; so that he who rejoiceth groundedly, knoweth why he rejoiceth ordinarily. Now these mistaken Christians lie waiting when the Spirit doth cast in these comforts into their hearts, while they sit still and labour not to excite their own affections; nay, while they reason against the comforts which they wait for. These men must be taught to know, that the matter of their comfort is in the promises; and thence they must fetch it as oft as they expect it; and that if they

set themselves daily and diligently to meditate of the truth of those promises, and of the real excellency contained in them, and of their own title thereto: in this way they may expect the Spirit's assistance for the raising of holy comfort in their souls. But if they lie still, bewailing their want of joy, while the full and free promises lie by them, and never take them, and consider, and look into them, and apply them to their hearts by serious meditation, they may complain for want of comfort long enough before they have it, in God's ordinary way of conveyance. God worketh upon men as men, as reasonable creatures; the joy of the promises, and the joy of the Holy Ghost, are one joy.

And those seducers, who, in their ignorance, misguide poor souls in this point, do exceedingly wrong them while they persuade them so to expect their comforts from the Spirit, as not to be any authors of them themselves, not to raise up their own hearts by argumentative means; telling them that such comforts are but hammered by themselves, and not the genuine comforts of the Spirit. How contrary is this to the doctrine of Christ!

Sect. V. 5. Another cause of the trouble of their souls is, their expecting a greater measure of assurance than God doth usually bestow upon his people. Most think, as long as they have any doubting they have no assurance; they consider not that there are many degrees of infallible certainty below a perfect or an undoubting certainty. They must know, that while they are here they shall know but in part; they shall be imperfect in the knowledge of Scripture, which is their rule in trying; and imperfect in the knowledge of their own obscure, deceitful hearts; some strangeness to God and themselves there will still remain; some darkness will overspread the face of their souls; some unbelief will be making head against their faith; and some of their grievings of the Spirit, will be grievous to themselves, and make a breach in their peace and joy. Yet, as long as their faith is prevailing, and their assurance doth tread down and subdue their doubtings, though not quite expel them, they may walk in comfort and maintain their peace; but as long as they are resolved

to lie down in sorrow till their assurance be perfect, their days on earth must then be days of sorrow.

Sect. VI. 6. Again, many a soul lies long in trouble, by taking up his comforts in the beginning upon unsound or uncertain grounds. This may be the case of a gracious soul, who hath better grounds and doth not see them; and then when they grow to more ripeness of understanding, and come to find out the insufficiency of their former grounds of comfort, they cast away their comfort wholly, when they should only cast away their rotten props of it, and search for better to support it with. As if their comfort and their safety were both of a nature, and both built on the same foundation, they conclude against their safety, because they have discovered the mistake of their former comfort. And there are many much-applauded books and teachers of late, who further the delusion of poor souls in this point, and make them believe that because their former comforts were too legal, and their persuasions of their good state were ill grounded, therefore themselves were under the covenant of works only, and their spiritual condition as unsound as their comforts. These men observe not, that while they deny us the use of marks to know our own state, yet they make use of them themselves, to know the states of others; yea, and of false and insufficient marks too: for to argue from the motive of our persuasion of a good state, to the goodness or badness of that state, is no sound arguing. It followeth not that a man is unregenerate because he judged himself regenerate upon wrong grounds: for perhaps he might have better grounds, and not know it; or else, not know which were good and which bad. Safety and comfort stand not always on the same bottom. Bad grounds do prove the assurance bad which was built upon them, but not always the state bad. These teachers do but toss poor souls up and down as the waves of the sea, making them believe that their state is altered as oft as their conceits of it alter. Alas! few Christians do come to know either what are solid grounds of comfort, or whether they have any such grounds themselves, in the infancy of Christianity. But as an infant hath life before he knoweth it; and as he hath misapprehensions of himself, and most other things, for certain

years together, and yet it will not follow, that therefore he hath no life or reason; so it is in the case in hand. Yet this should persuade both ministers and believers themselves, to lay right grounds for their comfort, in the beginning, as far as may be; for else, usually when they find the flaw in their comforts and assurance, they will judge it to be a flaw in their safety and real states. Just, as I observe, most persons do, who turn to errors or heresies; they took up the truth in the beginning, upon either false or doubtful grounds, and then, when their grounds are overthrown or shaken, they think the doctrine is also overthrown; and so they let go both together, as if none had solid arguments because they had not; or none could manage them better than they. Even so when they perceive that their arguments for their good state were unsound, they think that their state must needs be as unsound.

Sect. VII. 7. Moreover, many a soul lieth long under doubting, through the great imperfection of their very reason, and exceeding weakness of their natural parts. Grace doth usually rather turn our parts to their most necessary use, and employ our faculties on better objects, than add to the degree of their natural strength. Many honest hearts have such weak heads, that they know not how to perform the work of self-trial; they are not able, rationally, to argue the case; they will acknowledge the premises, and yet deny the apparent conclusion; or, if they be brought to acknowledge the conclusion, yet they do but fluctuate and stagger in their concession, and hold it so weakly, that every assault may take it from them. If God do not some other way supply to these men the defect of their reason, I see not how they should have clear and settled peace.

Sect. VIII. 8. Another great and too common cause of doubting and discomfort, is the secret maintaining of some known sin. When a man liveth in some unwarrantable practice, and God hath oft touched him for it, and conscience is galled, and yet he continueth it, it is no wonder if this person want both assurance and comfort. One would think, that a soul that lieth under the fears of wrath, and is so tender, as to tremble and complain, should be as tender of sinning,

and scarcely adventure upon the appearance of evil. And yet, sad experience tells us that it is frequently otherwise: I have known too many such, that would complain, and yet sin; and accuse themselves, and yet sin still; yea, and despair, and yet proceed in sinning; and all arguments and means could not keep them from the wilful committing of that sin again and again, which yet they themselves did think would prove their destruction. Yea, some will be carried away with those sins which seem most contrary to their dejected temper. I have known them that would fill men's ears with the constant lamentations of their miserable state, and despairing accusations against themselves, as if they had been the most humble people in the world; and yet be as passionate in the maintaining their innocency, when another accuseth them; and as intolerably peevish, and tender of their own reputation in any thing they are blamed for, as if they were the proudest persons on earth; still denying or extenuating every disgraceful fault that they are charged with.

This cherishing of sin doth hinder assurance these four ways: 1. It doth abate the degree of our graces, and so make them more undiscernible. 2. It obscureth that which it destroyeth not; for it beareth such sway, that grace is not in action, nor seen to stir, nor scarce heard to speak, for the noise of this corruption. 3. It putteth out, or dimmeth the eye of the soul, that it cannot see its own condition; and it benumbeth and stupifieth that it cannot feel its own case. 4. But especially, it provoketh God to withdraw himself, his comforts, and the assistance of the Spirit, without which, we may search long enough before we have assurance. God hath made a separation betwixt sin and peace; though they may consist together in remiss degrees, yet so much as sin prevaieth in the soul, so much will the peace of that soul be defective. As long as thou dost favour or cherish thy pride and self-esteem, thy aspiring projects and love of the world, thy secret lust, and pleasing desires of the flesh, or any the like unchristian practice, thou expectest assurance and comfort in vain. God will not encourage thee, by his precious gifts, in a course of sinning. This worm will be crawling and gnawing upon thy conscience; it will be a fretting, devouring canker to thy consolations.

Thou mayst steal a spark of false comfort from thy worldly prosperity or delight; or thou mayst have it from some false opinions, or from the delusions of Satan; but from God thou wilt have no more comfort, than thou makest conscience of sinning. However an Antinomian may tell thee that thy comforts have no such dependence upon thy obedience, nor thy discomforts upon thy disobedience,ⁱ and therefore may speak as much peace to thee in the course of thy sinning as in thy most conscionable walking, yet thou shalt find by experience that God will not do so. If any man set up his idols in his heart, and put the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a minister, or to God, to inquire for assurance and comfort, God will answer that man by himself, and instead of comforting him, he will set his face against him: "He will answer him according to the multitude of his idols." Read Ezek. 14:3–9.

Sect. IX. Another very great and common cause of want of assurance and comfort is, when men grow lazy in the spiritual part of duty, and keep not up their graces in constant and lively action. As Dr. Sibbs saith truly, "It is the lazy Christian commonly that lacketh assurance." The way of painful duty is the way of fullest comfort. Christ carrieth all our comforts in his hand: if we are out of that way where Christ is to be met, we are out of the way where comfort is to be had.

These three ways doth this laziness debar us of our comforts.

1. By stopping the fountain, and causing Christ to withhold this blessing from us. Parents use not to smile upon children in their neglects and disobedience. So far as the Spirit is grieved, he will suspend his consolations. Assurance and peace are Christ's great encouragements to faithfulness and obedience: and, therefore, though our obedience do not merit them, yet they usually rise and fall with our diligence in duty. They that have entertained the Antinomian dotages to cover their idleness and viciousness, may talk their nonsense against this at pleasure, but the laborious Christian knows it by experience. As prayer must have faith and fervency to

procure its success, besides the blood-shed and intercession of Christ, (James 5:15, 16,) so must all other parts of our obedience. He that will say to us in that triumphing day, "Well done, good and faithful servant, &c., enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," will also encourage his servants in their most affectionate and spiritual duties, and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, take this foretaste of thy everlasting joy." If thou grow seldom, and customary, and cold in duty, especially in thy secret prayers to God, and yet findest no abatement in thy joys, I cannot but fear that thy joys are either carnal or diabolical.

2. Grace is never apparent and sensible to the soul, but while it is in action; therefore, want of action must needs cause want of assurance. Habits are not felt immediately, but by the freeness and facility of their acts: of the very being of the soul itself, nothing is felt or perceived but only its acts. The fire that lieth still in the flint is neither seen nor felt, but when you smite it, and force it into act, it is easily discerned. The greatest action doth force the greatest observation, whereas the dead and inactive are not remembered or taken notice of. Those that have long lain still in their graves, are out of men's thoughts as well as their sight, but those that walk the streets, and bear rule among them, are noted by all; it is so with our graces. That you have a habit of love or faith, you can no otherwise know but as a consequence by reasoning; but that you have acts, you may know by feeling. If you see a man lie still in the way, what will you do to know whether he be drunk, or in a swoon, or dead? Will you not stir him, or speak to him, to see whether he can go; or feel his pulse, or observe his breath, knowing that where there is life, there is some kind of motion? I earnestly beseech thee, Christian, observe and practise this excellent rule: thou now knowest not whether thou have repentance, or faith, or love, or joy; why, be more in the acting of these, and thou wilt easily know it. Draw forth an object for godly sorrow, or faith, or love, or joy, and lay thy heart flat unto it, and take pains to provoke it into suitable action, and then see whether thou have these graces or not. As Dr. Sibbs observeth, "There is sometimes grief for sin in us when we think there is none."

It wants but stirring up by some quickening word: the like he saith of love, and it may be said of every other grace. You may go seeking for the hare or partridge many hours, and never find them while they lie close and stir not; but when once the hare betakes himself to his legs, and the bird to her wings, then you see them presently. So long as a Christian hath his graces in lively action, so long, for the most part, he is assured of them. How can you doubt whether you love God in the act of loving, or whether you believe in the very act of believing! If, therefore, you would be assured whether this sacred fire be kindled in your hearts, blow it up; get it into a flame, and then you will know: believe till you feel that you do believe, and love till you feel that you love.

3. The acting of the soul upon such excellent objects, doth naturally bring consolation with it. The very act of loving God in Christ, doth bring inexpressible sweetness with it into the soul. The soul that is best furnished with grace, when it is not in action, is like a lute well stringed and tuned, which while it lieth still doth make no more music than a common piece of wood; but when it is taken up and handled by a skilful lutist, the melody is most delightful. "Some degree of comfort," saith that comfortable doctor, "follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, and as beams and influence issue from the sun;" which is so true, that very heathens upon the discharge of a good conscience have found comfort and peace answerable: this is *præmium ante præmium*, a reward before the reward.

As a man, therefore, that is cold, should not stand still and say, I am so cold that I have no mind to labour,' but labour till his coldness be gone, and heat excited; so he that wants assurance of the truth of his grace, and the comfort of assurance, must not stand still and say, 'I am so doubtful and uncomfortable that I have no mind to duty,' but ply his duty, and exercise his graces, till he find his doubts and discomforts to vanish.

Sect. X. Lastly: Another ordinary nurse of doubtings and discomfort, is the prevailing of melancholy in the body, whereby the brain is continually troubled and darkened, the fancy hindered, and reason perverted by the distemperring of its instruments, and the soul is still clad in mourning weeds. It is no more wonder for a conscientious man that is overcome with melancholy to doubt, and fear, and despair, than it is for a sick man to groan, or a child to cry when he is beaten. This is the case with most that I have known lie long in doubting and distress of spirit. With some, their melancholy being raised by crosses or distemper of body, or some other occasion, doth afterwards bring in trouble of conscience as its companion. With others, trouble of mind is their first trouble, which long hanging on them, at last doth bring the body also into a melancholy habit: and then trouble increaseth melancholy, and melancholy again increaseth trouble, and so round. This is a most sad and pitiful state. For as the disease of the body is chronical and obstinate, and physic doth seldom succeed, where it hath far prevailed; so without the physician, the labours of the divine are usually in vain. You may silence them, but you cannot comfort them; you may make them confess that they have some grace, and yet cannot bring them to the comfortable conclusions. Or if you convince them of some work of the Spirit upon their souls, and a little at present abate their sadness, yet as soon as they are gone home, and look again upon their souls through this perturbing humour, all your convincing arguments are forgotten, and they are as far from comfort as ever they were. All the good thoughts of their state which you can possibly help them to, are seldom above a day or two old. As a man that looks through a black, or blue, or red glass, doth think things which he sees, to be of the same colour; and if you would persuade him to the contrary he will not believe you, but wonder that you should offer to persuade him against his eye-sight; so a melancholy man sees all things in a sad and fearful plight, because his reason looketh on them through his black humour, with which his brain is darkened and distempered. And as a man's eyes which can see all things about him, yet cannot see any imperfection in themselves; so it is almost impossible to make many of these men to know that they are melancholy. But as

those who are troubled with the ephialtes do cry out of some body that lieth heavy upon them, when the disease is in their own blood and humours; so these poor men cry out of sin and the wrath of God, when the main cause is in this bodily distemper. The chief part of the cure of these men must be upon the body, because there is the chief part of the disease.

And thus I have showed you the chief causes, why so many Christians do enjoy so little assurance and consolation.

CHAP. IX

Containing an Exhortation, and motives to Examine.

SECT. I. Having thus discovered the impediments to examination, I would presently proceed to direct you to the performance of it, but that I am yet jealous whether I have fully prevailed with your wills, and whether you are indeed resolved to set upon the duty. I have found by long experience, as well as from Scripture, that the main difficulty lieth in bringing men to be willing, and to set themselves in good earnest to the searching of their hearts.

Many love to hear and read of marks and signs by which they may try; but few will be brought to spend an hour in using them when they have them. They think they should have their doubts resolved as soon as they do but hear a minister name some of their signs; and if that would do the work, then assurance would be more common; but when they are informed that the work lies most upon their own hands, and what pains it must cost them to search their hearts faithfully, then they give up and will go no further.

This is not only the case of the ungodly, who commonly perish through this neglect; but multitudes of the godly themselves are like idle beggars, who will rather make a practice of begging and bewailing their misery, than they will set themselves to labour

painfully for their relief; so do many spend days and years in sad complaints and doubtings, that will not be brought to spend a few hours in examination. I entreat all these persons, what condition soever they are of, to consider the weight of these following arguments, which I have propounded, in hope to persuade them to this duty.

Sect. II. 1. To be deceived about your title to heaven is exceeding easy; and not to be deceived, is exceeding difficult. This I make manifest to you thus:

1. Multitudes that never suspected any falsehood in their hearts, have yet proved unsound in the day of trial; and they that never feared any danger toward them, have perished for ever; yea many that have been confident of their integrity and safety. I shall adjoin the proofs of what I say in the margin, for brevity sake. How many poor souls are now in hell, that little thought of coming thither! and that were wont to despise their counsel that bid them try and make sure! and to say, they made no doubt of their salvation!

2. Yea, and many that have excelled in worldly wisdom, yet have been befooled in this great business; and they that had wit to deceive their neighbours, were yet deceived by Satan and their own hearts. Yea, men of strongest head-pieces, and profoundest learning, who knew much of the secrets of nature, of the courses of the planets, and motions of the spheres, have yet been utterly mistaken in their own hearts.

3. Yea, those that have lived in the clear light of the Gospel, and heard the difference between the righteous and the wicked plainly laid open, and many a mark for trial laid down, and many a sermon pressing them to examine, and directing them how to do it, yet even these have been, and daily are, deceived.

4. Yea, those that have had a whole lifetime to make sure in, and have been told over and over, that they had their lives for no other

end but to provide for everlasting rest, and make sure of it, have yet been deceived, and have wasted that lifetime in forgetful security.

5. Yea, those that have preached against the negligence of others, and pressed them to try themselves, and showed them the danger of being mistaken, have yet proved mistaken themselves.

And is it not then time for us to rifle our hearts, and search them to the very quick?

Sect. III. 2. To be mistaken in this great point is also very common, as well as easy; so common that it is the case of most in the world. (Gal. 6:3, 4, 7; Matt. 7:21.) In the old world we find none that were in any fear of judgment; and yet how few persons were not deceived! So in Sodom; so among the Jews; and I would it were not so in England! Almost all men amongst us do verily look to be saved. You shall scarce speak with one of a thousand that doth not; and yet Christ telleth us, "that few find the strait gate and narrow way that leads to life." Do but reckon up the several sorts of men that are mistaken in thinking they have title to heaven, as the Scripture doth enumerate them, and what a multitude will they prove! 1. All that are ignorant of the fundamentals of religion. 2. All heretics who maintain false doctrines against the foundation, or against the necessary means of life. 3. All that live in the practice of gross sin. 4. Or that love and regard the smallest sin. 5. All that harden themselves against frequent reproof (Prov. 29:1.) 6. All that mind the flesh more than the spirit, (Rom. 8:6, 7, 13,) or the world more than God. (Phil. 3:18, 19; 1 John 2:15, 16.) 7. All that do as the most do. (Luke 13:24–26; 1 John 5:19.) 8. All that are deriders at the godly, and discourage others from the way of God by their reproaches. (Prov. 1:22, &c., 3:34, and 19:29.) 9. All that are unholy; and that never were regenerate and born anew. 10. All that have not their very hearts set upon heaven. (Matt. 6:21.) 11. All that have a form of godliness without the power. 12. And all that love either parents, or wife, or children, or house, or lands, or life, more than Christ. (Luke 14:26.)

Every one of these that thinketh he hath any title to heaven, is as surely mistaken as the Scripture is true.

And if such multitudes are deceived, should not we search the more diligently, lest we should be deceived as well as they?

Sect IV. 3. Nothing more dangerous than to be thus mistaken. The consequents of it are lamentable and desperate. If the godly be mistaken in judging their state to be worse than it is, the consequents of this mistake will be very sad; but if the ungodly be mistaken, the danger and mischief that followeth is unspeakable.

1. It will exceedingly confirm them in the service of Satan, and fasten them in their present way of death. They will never seek to be recovered, as long as they think their present state will serve. As the prophet saith, "A deceived heart will turn them aside, that they cannot deliver their own soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:20.)

2. It will take away the efficacy of means that should do them good; nay, it will turn the best means to their hardening and ruin. If a man mistake his bodily disease, and think it to be clean contrary to what it is, will he not apply contrary remedies which will increase it? So when a Christian should apply the promises, his mistake will cause him to apply the threatenings; and when an ungodly man should apply the threatenings and terrors of the Lord, this mistake of his state will make him apply the promises; and there is no greater strengthener of sin, and destroyer of the soul, than Scripture misapplied. Worldly delights, and the deceiving words of sinners, may harden men most desperately in an unsafe way; but Scripture misapplied will do it far more effectually and dangerously.

3. It will keep a man from compassionating his own soul; though he be a sad object of pity to every understanding man that beholdeth him, yet will he not be able to pity himself, because he knoweth not his own misery. As I have seen a physician lament the case of his

patient, when he hath discerned his certain death in some small beginning, when the patient himself feared nothing, because he knew not the mortal nature of his disease; so doth many a minister, or godly Christian, lament the case of a carnal wretch, who is so far from lamenting it himself, that he scorns their pity, and biddeth them be sorry for themselves, they shall not answer for him; and taketh them for his enemies, because they tell him the truth of his danger. (Acts 7:54, 22:21.) As a man that seeth a beast going to the slaughter, doth pity the poor creature, when it cannot pity itself, because it little thinketh that death is so near: so is it with these poor sinners; and all long of this mistaking their spiritual state. Is it not a pitiful sight to see a man laughing himself, when his understanding friends stand weeping for his misery? Paul mentioneth the voluptuous men of his time, and the worldlings, with weeping; (Phil. 3:17, 18;) but we never read of their weeping for themselves. Christ standeth weeping over Jerusalem, when they knew not of any evil that was towards them; (Luke 19;) nor give him thanks for his pity or his tears.

4. It is a case of greatest moment, and therefore mistaking must needs be most dangerous. If it were in making an ill bargain, yet we might repair our loss in the next. Scipio was wont to say, "It was an unseemly, absurd thing in military cases to say, 'I had not thought;' or, 'I was not aware.' " The matter being of so great concernment, every danger should be thought of, that you may be aware. Sure, in this weighty case, where our everlasting salvation or damnation is in question, and to be determined, every mistake is insufferable and inexcusable which might have been prevented by any cost or pains! Therefore men will choose the most able lawyers and physicians, because the mistakes of one may lose them their estate, and the mistakes of the other may lose them their lives: but mistakes about their souls are of a higher nature.

5. If you should continue your mistakes till death, there will be no time after to correct them for your recovery. Mistake now, and you are ruined for ever. Men think, to see a man die quietly or

comfortably, is to see him die happily; but if his comfort proceed from this mistake of his condition, it is the most unhappy case and pitiful sight in the world. To live mistaken, in such a case, is lamentable; but, to die mistaken, is desperate.

Seeing then that the case is so dangerous, what wise man would not follow the search of his heart, both night and day, till he were assured of his safety?

Sect. V. 4. Consider how small the labour of this duty is, in comparison of the sorrow which followeth its neglect. A few hours' or days' work, if it be closely followed, and with good direction, may do much to resolve the question. There is no such trouble in searching our hearts, nor any such danger as may deter men from it. What harm can it do to you to try or to know? It will take no very long time, or if it did, yet you have your time given you for that end. One hour so spent, will comfort you more than many otherwise. If you cannot have while to make sure of heaven, how can you have while to eat, or drink, or live? You can endure to follow your callings at plough, and cart, and shop; to toil and sweat from day to day, and year to year, in the hardest labours: and cannot you endure to spend a little time in inquiring what shall be your everlasting state? What a deal of sorrow and after-complaining might this small labour prevent! How many miles' travel, besides the vexation, may a traveller save by inquiring of the way! Why, what a sad case are you in, while you live in such uncertainty! You can have no true comfort in any thing you see, or hear, or possess; you are not sure to be an hour out of hell, and if you come thither, you will do nothing but bewail the folly of this neglect: no excuse will then pervert justice, or quiet your conscience. If you say, 'I little thought of this day and place;' God and conscience may reply, 'Why didst thou not think of it? Wast thou not warned? Hadst thou not time? Therefore must thou perish, because thou wouldst not think of it.' As the commander answered his soldier, in Plutarch, when he said, "Non volens erravi," "I erred against my will;" he beat him, and replied, "Non volens pœnas dato," "Thou shalt be punished also against thy will."

Sect. VI. 5. Thou canst scarce do Satan a greater pleasure, nor thyself a greater injury. It is the main scope of the devil, in all his temptations, to deceive thee, and keep thee ignorant of thy danger till thou feel the everlasting flames upon thy soul; and wilt thou join with him to deceive thyself? If it were not by this deceiving thee, he could not destroy thee: and if thou do this for him, thou dost the greatest part of his work, and art the chief destroyer and devil to thyself. And hath he deserved so well of thee, and thyself so ill, that thou shouldest assist him in such a design as thy damnation? To deceive another is a grievous sin, and such as perhaps thou wouldst scorn to be charged with: and yet thou thinkest it nothing to deceive thyself. Saith Solomon, "As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?" (Prov. 26:18, 19.) Surely, then, he that maketh but a sport, or a matter of nothing, to deceive his own soul, may well be thought a madman, casting firebrands and death at himself. "If any man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," saith Paul. (Gal. 6:3.) Certainly, among all the multitudes that perish, this is the commonest cause of their undoing, that they would not be brought to try their state in time. And is it not pity to think that so many thousands are merrily travelling to destruction, and do not know it, and all for want of this diligent search?

Sect. VII. 6. The time is near when God will search you, and that will be another kind of trial than this. If it be but in this life, by the fiery trial of affliction, it will make you wish again and again that you had spared God that work, and yourselves the sorrow; and that you had tried and judged yourselves, that so you might have escaped the trial and judgment of God. (1 Cor. 11:30, 31.) He will examine you, then, as officers do offenders, with a word and a blow: and as they would have done by Paul, examine him by scourging. (Acts 22:24.) It was a terrible voice to Adam, when God called to him, "Adam, where art thou? Hast thou eaten," &c.? And to Cain, when God asked him, "Where is thy brother?" To have demanded this of himself had been easier. Men think God mindeth their state and ways no more than

they do their own. "They consider not in their hearts" (saith the Lord) "that I remember all their wickedness; now their own doings have beset them about, they are before my face." (Hos. 7:2.) Oh, what a happy preparation would it be to that last and great trial, if men had but thoroughly tried themselves, and made sure work before hand! When a man doth but soberly and believably think of that day, especially when he shall see the judgment-seat, what a joyful preparation is it, if he can truly say, 'I know the sentence shall pass on my side: I have examined myself by the same law of Christ which now must judge me, and I have found that I am quit from all my guilt, and am a justified person in law already.' Oh, sirs, if you knew but the comfort of such a preparation, you would fall close to the work of self-examining yet before you slept!

7. Lastly, I desire thee to consider what would be the sweet effects of this examining. If thou be upright and godly, it will lead thee straight towards assurance of God's love. If thou be not, though it will trouble thee at the present, yet doth it tend to thy happiness, and will lead thee to assurance of that happiness.

1. The very knowledge itself is naturally desirable. Every man would fain know things to come, especially concerning themselves. If there were a book written which would tell every man his destiny, what shall befall him to his last breath, how desirous would people be to procure it and read it? How did Nebuchadnezzar's thoughts run on things that after should come to pass, and he worshipped Daniel, and offered oblations to him, because he foretold them! When Christ had told his disciples "that one of them should betray him," how desirous are they to know who it was, though it were a matter of sorrow! How busily do they inquire when Christ's predictions should come to pass, and what were the signs of his coming! With what gladness doth the Samaritan woman run into the city, saying, 'Come and see a man that hath told me all that ever I did,' though he told her of her faults! When Ahaziah lay sick, how desirous was he to know whether he should live or die! Daniel is called a man greatly beloved, therefore God would reveal to him things that long after must come to pass.

And is it so desirable a thing to hear prophecies, and to know what shall befall us hereafter? And is it not then most especially to know what shall befall our souls; and what place and state we must be in for ever? Why, this you may know, if you will but faithfully try.

2. But the comforts of that certainty of salvation, which this trial doth conduce toward, are yet for greater. If ever God bestow this blessing of assurance on thee, thou wilt account thyself the happiest man on earth, and feel that it is not a notional or empty mercy. For,

1. What sweet thoughts wilt thou have of God! All that greatness, and jealousy, and justice, which is the terror of others, will be matter of encouragement and joy to thee. As the son of a king doth rejoice in his father's magnificence and power, which is the awe of subjects, and terror of rebels; when the thunder doth roar, and the lightning flash, and the earth quake, and the signs of dreadful omnipotency do appear, thou canst say, 'All this is the effect of my Father's power.'

2. How sweet may every thought of Christ, and the blood which he hath shed, and the benefits he hath procured, be unto thee who hast got this assurance! Then will the name of a Saviour be a sweet name; and the thoughts of his gentle and loving nature, and of the gracious design which he hath carried on for our salvation, will be pleasing thoughts. Then will it do thee good to view his wounds by the eye of faith, and to put thy fingers, as it were, into his side; when thou canst call him, as Thomas did, "My Lord and my God."

3. Every passage, also, in the word will then afford thee comfort. How sweet will be the promises when thou art sure they are thy own! The Gospel will then be glad tidings indeed. The very threatenings will occasion thy comfort, to remember that thou hast escaped them. Then wilt thou cry, with David, "O how I love thy law! it is sweeter than honey, more precious than gold," &c.; and with Luther, that thou wilt "not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible." When thou wast in thy sin, this book was to thee as Micaiah to Ahab, "It never spoke good of thee, but evil;" and therefore, no wonder if then thou

didst hate it; but now it is the charter of thy everlasting rest, how welcome will it be to thee; and, how beautiful the very feet of those that bring it! (Rom. 10:15.)

4. What boldness and comfort then mayst thou have in prayer, when thou canst say "Our Father" in full assurance; and knowest that thou art welcome and accepted through Christ; and that thou hast a promise to be heard whenever thou askest; and knowest that God is readier to grant thy requests than thou to move them! With what comfortable boldness mayest thou then approach the throne of grace; (Heb. 10:22, 29;) especially when the case is weighty, and thy necessity great! This assurance in prayer will be a sweet privilege indeed. A despairing soul, that feeleth the weight of sin and wrath, especially at a dying hour, would give a large price to be a partaker of this privilege, and to be sure that he might have pardon and life for the asking for.

5. This assurance will give the sacrament a sweet relish to thy soul, and make it a refreshing feast indeed.

6. It will multiply the sweetness of every mercy thou receivest. When thou art sure that all proceeds from love, and are the beginnings and earnest of everlasting mercies. Thou wilt then have more comfort in a morsel of bread than the world hath in the greatest abundance of all things.

7. How comfortably then mayest thou undergo all afflictions, when thou knowest that he meaneth thee no hurt in them, but hath promised, "that all shall work together for thy good;" when thou art sure that he chasteneth thee because he loveth thee, and scourgeth thee, because thou art a son whom he will receive, and that out of very faithfulness he doth afflict thee! (Rom. 8:28; Heb. 12:6, 7; Psal. 75.) What a support must this be to thy heart; and how will it abate the bitterness of the cup! Even the Son of God himself doth seem to take comfort from this assurance, when he was, in a manner, forsaken for our sins, and therefore he cries out, "My God, my God,

why hast thou forsaken me?" And even the prodigal, under his guilt and misery, doth take some comfort in remembering that he hath a father.

8. This assurance will sweeten to thee the forethoughts of death, and make thy heart glad to forethink of that entrance into joy; (Num. 23:10;) when a man that is uncertain whither he is going must needs die in horror.

9. It will sweeten also thy forethoughts of judgment, when thou art sure that it will be the day of thy absolution and coronation.

10. Yea, the very thoughts of the flames of hell, will administer matter of consolation to thee, when thou canst certainly conclude thou art saved from them.

11. The forethoughts of heaven also will be more incomparably delightful, when thou art certain that it is the place of thine everlasting abode.

12. It will make thee exceedingly lively and strong in the work of the Lord. With what courage wilt thou run when thou knowest thou shalt have the prize; and fight, when thou knowest thou shalt conquer! It will make thee always abound in the work of the Lord, when thou knowest that thy labour is not in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58.)

13. It will also make thee more profitable to others. Thou wilt be a most cheerful encourager of them from thine own experience; thou wilt be able to refresh the weary, and to strengthen the weak, and to speak a word of comfort in season to a troubled soul; whereas now, without assurance, instead of comforting others, thou wilt rather have need of support thyself: so that others are losers by thy uncertainty as well as thyself.

14. Assurance will put life into all thy affections or graces. 1. It will help thee to repent, and melt over thy sins, when thou knowest how dearly God did love thee, whom thou hast abused. 2. It will inflame

thy soul with love to God, when thou once knowest thy near relation to him, and how tenderly he is affected toward thee. (Psal. 116:1, and 18:1, 2.) 3. It will quicken thy desires after him, when thou art once sure of thy interest in him. (1 Thess. 4:17, 18; Psal. 118:28; Isai. 25:1.) 4. It is the most excellent fountain of continual rejoicing. (Hab. 3:17–19.) 5. It will confirm thy trust and confidence in God in the greatest straits. (Psal. 89:26, and 46:1–3, &c.) 6. It will fill thy heart with thankfulness. 7. It will raise thee in the high, delightful work of praise. 8. It will be the most excellent help to a heavenly mind. 9. It will exceedingly tend to thy perseverance in all this. He that is sure of the crown will hold on to the end, when others will be tired, and give up through discouragement.

All these sweet effects of assurance would make thy life a kind of heaven on earth. Seeing, then, that the examining of our state is the way to this assurance, and the means without which God doth not usually bestow it, doth it not concern us to fall close to this searching work?

Sect. IX. I would not have bestowed this time and labour in urging you with all these foregoing considerations, but that I know how backward man is to this duty. And though I am certain that these motives have weight of reason in them, yet experience of men's unreasonableness in things of this nature, doth make me jealous lest you should lay by the book, when you have read all this, as if you had done, and never set yourselves to the practice of the duty. Reader, thou seest the case in hand is of the greatest moment. It is to know whether thou shalt everlastingly live in heaven or hell. If thou hast lived hitherto in dark uncertainty, it is a pitiful case; but if thou wilfully continue so, thy madness is inexpressible: and is it not wilfully, when a thorough trial might help thee to be resolved, and thou wilt not be persuaded to be at so much pains? What sayest thou now? Art thou fully resolved to fall upon the work? Shall all this labour that I have bestowed in persuading thee, be lost, or no? If thou wilt not obey, I would thou hadst never read these lines, that they might not have aggravated thy guilt, and silenced thee in

judgment. I here put this special request to thee in behalf of thy soul; nay, I lay this charge upon thee in the name of the Lord; that thou defer no longer, but take the next opportunity that thou canst have, and take thy heart to task in good earnest, and think with thyself, 'Is it so easy, so common, and so dangerous, to be mistaken? Are there so many wrong ways? Is the heart so guileful? Why then do I not search into every corner, and ply this work till I know my state? Must I so shortly undergo the trial at the bar of Christ? And do I not presently fall on trying myself? Why, what a case were I in, if I should then miscarry! May I know by a little diligent inquiry now, and do I stick at the labour?' And here set thyself to the duty. Object. But it may be, thou wilt say, I know not how to do it. Answ. That is the next work that I come to, to give directions herein; but, alas! it will be in vain if thou be not resolved to practise them. Wilt thou, therefore, before thou goest any further, here promise before the Lord, to set thyself, to thy power, upon the speedy performing of the duty, according to these directions, which I shall lay down from the word? I demand nothing unreasonable or impossible of thee: it is but that thou wouldest presently bestow a few hours' time, to know what shall become of thee for ever. If a neighbour, or common friend, desires but an hour's time of thee, in conference, or in labour, or any thing that thou mayst help them in, thou wouldest not, sure, deny it. How much less shouldst thou deny this to thyself in so great a case? I pray thee take this request from me, as if upon my knees, in the name of Christ, I did prefer it to thee; and I will betake me upon my knees to Christ again, to beg that he will persuade thy heart to the duty: and, in hope that thou wilt practise them, I will here give thee some directions.

CHAP. X

**Containing Directions for Examination, and some Marks
for Trial.**

SECT. I. I will not stand here to lay down the directions necessary for preparation to this duty, because you may gather them from what is said concerning the hinderances: for the contraries of those hinderances will be most necessary helps. Only before you set upon it, I advise you moreover to the observation of these rules. 1. Come not with too peremptory conclusions of yourselves beforehand. Do not judge too confidently before you try. Many godly, dejected souls come with this prejudging to the work, concluding certainly that their state is miserable before they have tried it: and most wicked men, on the contrary side, do conclude most confidently that their state is good, or tolerable at the least; no wonder if these both miscarry in judging, when they pass the sentence before the trial.

2. Be sure to be so well acquainted with the Scripture, as to know what is the tenor of the covenant of grace, and what are the conditions of justification and glorification, and consequently what are sound marks to try thyself by, and wherein the truth of grace, and essence of Christianity, do both consist,

3. And it will not be unuseful to write out some of the chief, and those scriptures withal which hold them forth, and so to bring this paper with you when you come to examination.

4. Be a constant observer of the temper and motions of thy heart; almost all the difficulty of the work doth lie in the true and clear discerning of it. Be watchful in observing the actings both of grace and corruption, and the circumstances of their actings; as how frequent; how violent; how strong or weak were the outward incitements; how great or small the impediments; what delight, or loathing, or fear, or reluctancy, did go with those acts! By these, and the like observations, you may come to a more infallible knowledge of yourselves.

5. Be sure you set upon the work with a serious, roused, awakened soul, apprehensive of how great concernment it is.

6. And lastly: Resolve to judge thyself impartially, neither better nor worse than thou art, but as the evidence shall prove thee.

Being thus provided, then set to the business, and therein observe these directions following, which I will mention briefly, that lying close together, you may be able to view and observe them the more easily:

1. Empty thy mind of all thy other cares and thoughts, that they do not distract or divide thy mind. This work will be enough at once of itself, without joining others with it.

2. Then fall down before God, and in hearty prayer desire the assistance of his Spirit, to discover to thee the plain truth of thy condition, and to enlighten thee in the whole progress of the work.

3. Make choice of the most convenient time and place. I shall not stand upon the particular directions about these, because I shall mention them more largely when I come to direct you in the duty of contemplation: only this in brief: 1. Let the place be the most private, that you may be free from distractions. 2. For the time thus, 1. When you are most solitary, and at leisure; you cannot cast accounts, especially of such a nature as these, either in a crowd of company, or of employment. 2. Let it be a set and chosen time, when you have nothing to hinder you. 3. But if it may be, let it be the present time, especially if thou hast been a stranger hitherto to the work; there is no delaying in matters of such weight. 4. Especially when you have a more special call to search yourselves: as in public calamities, in time of sickness, before a sacrament, &c. 5. When God is trying you by some affliction, and, as Job saith, is searching after your sin, then set in with him, and search after them yourselves. (Job 10:6.) 6. Lastly: You should specially take such a time when you are most fit for the work. When you are not secure and stupid on the one hand, nor yet under deep desertions or melancholy on the other hand, for else you will be unfit judges of your own state.

4. When you have thus chosen the fittest time and place, then draw forth, either from thy memory, or in writing, the forementioned marks, or Gospel conditions, or descriptions of the saints. Try them by Scripture, and convince thy soul thoroughly of their infallible truth.

5. Proceed, then, to put the question to thyself, but be sure to state it right. Let it not be whether there be any good in thee at all, for so thou wilt err on the one hand; nor yet whether thou have such or such a degree and measure of grace, for so thou wilt err on the other hand, but whether such or such a saving grace be in thee at all in sincerity, or not?

6. If thy heart draw back, and be loth to the work, suffer it not so to give thee the slip, but force it on; lay thy command upon it; let reason interpose, and use its authority; look over the foregoing arguments, and press them home; yea, lay the command of God upon it, and charge it to obey upon pain of his displeasure. Set conscience at work also. Let it do its office, till thy lazy heart be spurred up to the work; for if thou suffer it to break away once and twice, &c., it will grow so headstrong, that thou canst not master it.

7. Let not thy heart trifle away the time, when it should be diligently at the work. Put the question to it seriously, Is it thus and thus with me, or not? Force it here to an answer. Suffer it not to be silent, nor to jangle and think of other matters. If the question be hard, through the darkness of thy heart, yet do not give it over so, but search the closer, and study the case the more exactly, and if it be possible, let not thy heart give over till it hath resolved the question, and told thee off or on, in what case thou art. Ask it strictly, as Joseph examined his brethren, (Gen. 43:7,) How it stands affected. Do as David, (Psal. 77:6,) "My spirit made diligent search." If thy heart strive to break away before thou art resolved, wrestle with it till thou hast prevailed, and say, 'I will not let thee go till thou hast answered.' He that can prevail with his own heart, shall also be a prevailer with God.

8. If thou find the work beyond thy strength, so that after all thy pains thou art never the more resolved, then seek out for help: go to some one that is godly, experienced, able, and faithful, and tell him thy case, and desire his best advice and help. Not that any man can know thy heart so well as thyself: but if thou deal faithfully, and tell him what thou knowest by thyself, he can tell thee whether they be sound evidence or not; and show thee Scripture how to prove them so; and direct thee in the right use of such evidences; and show thee how to conclude from them. Yea, when thou canst get no further, the very judgment of an able, godly man should take much with thee, as a probable argument: as the judgment of a physician, concerning the state of thy body. Though this can afford thee no full certainty, yet it may be a great help to stay and direct thee. But be sure thou do not make this a pretence to put off thy own duty of examining, but only use it as one of the last remedies, when thou findest thy own endeavours will not serve. Neither be thou forward to open thy case to every one, or to a carnal, flattering, and unskilful person; but to one that hath wisdom to conceal thy secrets, and tenderness to compassionate thee, and skill to direct thee, and faithfulness to deal truly and plainly with thee.

9. When by all this pains and means thou hast discovered the truth of thy state, then pass the sentence on thyself accordingly. A mere examination will do thee little good, if it proceed not to a judgment. Conclude as thou findest, either that thou art a true believer, or that thou art not. But pass not this sentence rashly, nor with self-flattery, nor from melancholy terrors and fears, but do it groundedly, and deliberately, and truly, as thou findest according to thy conscience. Do not conclude, as some do, 'I am a good Christian,' or as others do, 'I am a reprobate, or an hypocrite, and shall be damned.' When thou hast no ground for what thou sayest but thy own fancy, or hopes, or fears, nay, when thou art convinced by Scripture and reason of the contrary, and hast nothing to say against the arguments; let not thy judgment be any way biassed or bribed, and so forestalled from sentencing aright.

10. Labour to get thy heart kindly affected with its discovered condition, according to the sentence passed on it. Do not think it enough to know; but labour to feel what God hath made thee see. If thou find thyself undoubtedly graceless, oh! get this to thy heart, and think what a doleful condition it is to be an enemy to God; to be unpardoned, unsanctified; and if thou shouldst so die, to be eternally damned! One would think such a thought should make a heart of stone to quake. On the contrary, if thou find thyself renewed and sanctified indeed, oh! get this warm and close to thy heart; bethink thyself what a blessed state the Lord hath brought thee into; to be his child, his friend; to be pardoned, justified, and sure to be saved! Why, what needest thou fear but sinning against him? Come war, or plague, or sickness, or death, thou art sure they can but thrust thee into heaven.

Thus follow these meditations, till they have left their impression on thy heart.

11. Be sure to record this sentence so passed; write it down, or at least write it in thy memory: at such a time, upon thorough examination, I found my state to be thus or thus: this record will be very useful to thee hereafter. If thou be ungodly, what a damp will it be to thy presumption and security, to go and read the sentence of thy misery under thy own hand! If thou be godly, what a help will it be against the next temptation to doubting and fear, to go and read under thy hand this record! Mayst thou not think, if at such a time I found the truth of grace, is it not likely to be now the same, and these my doubts to come from the enemy of my peace?

12. Yet would I not have thee so trust to one discovery, as to try no more, especially if thou have made any foul defection from Christ, and played the backslider; see, then, that thou renew the search again.

13. Neither would I have this hinder thee in the daily search of thy ways, or of thy increase in grace and fellowship with Christ. It is an ill

sign, and a desperate vile sin, for a man, when he thinks he hath found himself gracious, and in a happy state, to let down his watch, and grow negligent of his heart and ways, and scarce look after them any more.

14. Neither would I have thee give over in discouragement, if thou canst not at once, or twice, or ten times trying, discover thy case: but follow it on till thou hast discovered. If one hour's labour will not serve, take another; if one day, or month, or year, be too little, follow it still. If one minister cannot direct thee sufficiently, go to another. The issue will answer all thy pains. There is no sitting down discouraged in a work that must be done.

15. Lastly: Above all, take heed, if thou find thyself to be yet unregenerate, that thou do not conclude of thy future state by thy present; nor say, 'Because I am ungodly, I shall die so;' or, 'Because I am an hypocrite, I shall continue so:' no; thou hast another work to do; and that is, to resolve presently to cleave to Christ, and to break off thy hypocrisy and thy wickedness. If thou find that thou hast been all this while out of the way, do not sit down in despair; but make so much the more haste to turn into it: if thou hast been an hypocrite, or ungodly person, all thy life, yet is the promise offered thee by Christ; and he tendereth himself to be thy Lord and Saviour. Neither canst thou possibly be so willing to accept of him, as he is to accept thee. Nothing but thy own unwillingness can keep thy soul from Christ, though thou hast hitherto abused him, and dissembled with him.

Object. But if I have gone so far, and been a professor so long, and yet find myself an hypocrite now, after all, what hope is there that I should now become sincere? Answ. Dost thou heartily desire to be sincere; thy sincerity doth lie especially in thy will: as long as thou art unwilling, I confess, thy case is sad; but if thou be willing to receive Christ as he is offered to thee, and so to be a Christian indeed, then thou art sincere. Neither has Christ restrained his Spirit, or promises, to any set time; or said to thee, 'Thou shalt find grace, if

thou but sin so much, or so long; but if thou be heartily willing at any time, I know not who can hinder thy happiness.' Yet is this no diminution of the sin or danger of delaying.

Thus I have given you these directions for examination, which conscionably practised, will be of singular advantage and use to discover your states; but it is not the bare reading of them that will do it. I fear, of many that will approve of this advice, there will but few be brought to use it; however, those that are willing, may find help by it, and the rest will be left most inexcusable in judgment.

Sect. III. I will not digress further, to warn you here of the false rules and marks of trial which you must beware, having opened them to you more fully when I preached on that subject; but I will briefly adjoin some marks to try your title to this rest, by referring you, for a fuller discovery, to the description of the people of God, in the first part of this book: but be sure you search thoroughly, and deal plainly, or else you will but lose your labour, and deceive yourselves. (Mark 1.)

1. Every soul that hath title to this rest, doth place his chiefest happiness in it, and make it the chief and ultimate end of his soul. This is the first mark; which is so plain a truth, that I need not stand to prove it: for this rest consisteth in the full and glorious enjoyment of God; and he that maketh not God his chief good, and ultimate end, is, in heart, a pagan, and vile idolater, and doth not take the Lord for his God truly.

Let me ask thee, then, Dost thou truly, in judgment and affection, account it thy chiefest happiness to enjoy the Lord in glory, or dost thou not? Canst thou say, with David, "The Lord is my portion;" (Psal. 16:5;) and, as Psal. 73:15, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and whom in earth that I desire in comparison of thee?" If thou be an heir of rest, it is thus with thee. (Psal. 119:57, and 142:5; Lam. 3:4.) Though the flesh will be pleading for its own delights, and the world will be creeping into thine affection, and thou canst not be quite

freed from the love of it, yet in thy ordinary, settled, prevailing judgment and affections, thou preferrest God before all things in the world.

1. Thou makest him the end of thy desires and endeavours. The very reason why thou hearest and prayest, why thou desirest to live and breathe on earth, is chiefly this; that thou mayst seek the Lord, and make sure of thy rest: thou seekest first the kingdom of God and its righteousness. Though thou do not seek it so desirously and zealously as thou shouldest, yet it hath the chief of thy desires and endeavours, and nothing else is desired or preferred against it; (Matt. 6:33;) so that thy very heart is thus far set upon it. (Matt. 6:21; Col. 3:1–3.)

2. Also thou wilt think no labour or suffering too great to obtain it; and though the flesh may sometimes shrink, or draw back, yet art thou resolved and content to go through all.e (Matt. 7:13; 2 Tim. 2:5, 12; Rom. 8:17; Luke 4:24, Luke 14:26, 27.)

3. Also, if thou be an heir of rest, thy valuation of it will be so high, and thy affection to it so great, that thou wouldst not exchange thy title to it, and hopes of it, for any worldly good whatsoever. Indeed, when the soul is in doubts of enjoying it, perhaps it may possibly desire rather the continuance of an earthly happiness, than to depart out of the body with fears of going to hell. But if he were sure that heaven should be his own, he would desire to depart, and to be with Christ, as being the best state of all. And if God would set before him an eternity of earthly pleasure and contents on one hand, and the rest of the saints on the other hand, and bid him take his choice, he would refuse the world, and choose this rest. (Psal. 16:9, 10; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:2, 3; Phil. 3:20.) Thus, if thou be a Christian indeed, thou takest God for thy chiefest good, and this rest for the most amiable and desirable state: and by the foresaid means thou mayst discover it.

But if thou be yet in the flesh, and an unsanctified wretch, then is it clean contrary with thee in all these respects. Then dost thou in thy heart prefer thy worldly happiness and fleshly delights before God; and though thy tongue may say that God is the chief good, yet thy heart doth not so esteem him. For, 1. The world is the chief end of thy desires and endeavours; thy very heart is set upon it; thy greatest care and labour is to maintain thy estate, or credit, or fleshly delights, but the life to come hath little of thy care or labour. Thou didst never perceive so much excellency in that unseen glory of another world, as to draw thy heart so after it, or set thee a labouring so heartily for it: but that little pains which thou bestowest that way, it is but in the second place, and not the first. God hath but the world's leavings, and that time and labour which thou canst spare from the world, or those few cold and careless thoughts which follow thy constant, earnest, and delightful thoughts of earthly things. Neither wouldest thou do any thing at all for heaven, if thou knewest how to keep the world: but lest thou shouldest be turned into hell, when thou canst keep the world no longer, therefore thou wilt do something.

2. Therefore it is that thou thinkest the way of God too strict, and wilt not be persuaded to the constant labour of conscionable walking according to the Gospel rule: and when it comes to trial, that thou must forsake Christ or thy worldly happiness, and the wind which was in thy back doth turn in thy face, then thou wilt venture heaven rather than earth, and, as desperate rebels used to say, thou wilt rather trust God's mercy for thy soul, than man's for thy body, and so wilfully deny thy obedience to God.

3. And certainly if God would but give thee leave to live in health and wealth for ever on earth, thou wouldst think it a better state than rest. Let them seek for heaven that would, thou wouldst think this thy chiefest happiness. This is thy case if thou be yet an unregenerate person, and hast no title to the saint's rest.

Sect. IV. The second mark which I shall give thee, to try whether thou be an heir of rest, is this: as thou takest God for thy chief good, so thou dost heartily accept of Christ for thy only Saviour and Lord to bring thee to this rest. The former mark was the sum of the first and great command of the law of nature, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart," or above all. This second mark is the sum of the command or condition of the Gospel, which saith, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." And the performance of these two is the whole sum or essence of godliness and Christianity. Observe, therefore, the parts of this mark, which is but a definition of faith.

1. Dost thou find that thou art naturally a lost, condemned man for thy breach of the first covenant? And dost believe that Jesus Christ is the mediator, who hath made a sufficient satisfaction to the law; and hearing in the Gospel that he is offered without exception unto all, dost heartily consent that he alone shall be thy Saviour; and dost no further trust to thy duties and works, than as conditions required by him, and means appointed in subordination to him, not looking at them as in the least measure able to satisfy the course of the law, or as a legal righteousness, nor any part of it, but art content to trust thy salvation on the redemption made by Christ?

2. Art thou also content to take him for thy only Lord and King, to govern and guide thee by his laws and Spirit? And to obey him even when he commandeth the hardest duties, and those which most cross the desires of the flesh? Is it thy sorrow when thou breakest thy resolution herein; and thy joy when thou keepest closest in obedience to him? And though the world and flesh do sometimes entice and over-reach thee, yet is it thy ordinary desire and resolution to obey, so that thou wouldst not change thy Lord and Master for all the world? Thus it is with every true Christian. But if thou be an hypocrite, it is far otherwise. Thou mayest call Christ thy Lord and thy Saviour, but thou never foundest thyself so lost without him, as to drive thee to seek him, and trust him, and lay thy salvation on him alone. Or, at least, thou didst never heartily consent that he

should govern thee as thy Lord; nor didst resign up thy soul and life to be ruled by him; nor take his word for the law of thy thoughts and actions. It is like thou art content to be saved from hell by Christ when thou diest, but, in the mean time, he shall command thee no further than will stand with thy credit, or pleasure, or worldly estate and ends. And if he would give thee leave, thou hadst far rather live after the world and flesh, than after the word and Spirit. And though thou mayest now and then have a motion or purpose to the contrary, yet this that I have mentioned is the ordinary desire and choice of thy heart: and so thou art no true believer in Christ, for though thou confess him in words, yet in works thou dost deny him, being disobedient, and to every good work a disapprover and reprobate. (Tit. 1:16.) This is the case of those that shall be shut out of the saint's rest.

But especially I would here have you observe, that it is in all this the consent of your hearts, or wills, which I lay down in this mark to be inquired after; for that is the most essential act of justifying faith: therefore, I do not ask whether thou be assured of salvation; nor yet whether thou canst believe that thy sins are pardoned, and that thou art beloved of God in Christ. These are no parts of justifying faith, but excellent fruits and consequents, which they that do receive are comforted by them; but perhaps thou mayst never receive them while thou livest, and yet be a true heir of rest. Do not say, then, 'I cannot believe that my sin is pardoned, or that I am in God's favour, and therefore I am no true believer.' This is a most mistaking conclusion: the question is, whether thou canst heartily accept of Christ, that thou mayst be pardoned; reconciled to God, and so saved? Dost thou consent that he shall be thy Lord, who hath bought thee, and take his own course to bring thee to heaven? This is justifying, saving faith; and this is the mark that thou must try thyself by: yet, still observe, that all this consent must be hearty and real; not feigned or with reservations. It is not saying, as that dissembling son, Matt. 21:30, "I go, sir," when he went not; to say, 'Christ shall be my Lord,' and yet let corruption ordinarily rule thee, or be unwilling that his commands should encroach upon the interest of the world or

flesh. If any have more of the government of thee than Christ,; or if thou hadst rather live after any other laws than his, if it were at thy choice, thou art not his disciple. Thus I have laid you down these two marks, which, I am sure, are such as every Christian hath, and no other but sincere Christians. I will add no more, seeing the substance of Christianity is contained in these. Oh that the Lord would now persuade thee to the close performance of this self-trying task! that thou mayst not tremble with horror of soul, when the Judge of all the world shall try thee, but have thy evidence and assurance so ready at hand, and be so able to prove thy title to rest, that the thoughts and approaching of death and judgment may revive thy spirits, and fill thee with joy; and not appal thee, and fill thee with amazement!

CHAP. XI

A more exact Inquiry into the Number and Use of Marks; the Nature of Sincerity; with other things of great moment in the work of Self-examination

SECT. I. It is a matter of such inexpressible consequence for every man to make sure work in the great business of his salvation; it being so easy, so ordinary, and so dangerous to be mistaken, that I think fit yet to add some further advice, to help men in the trial of their own states. There is no Christian that hath any care of his soul, or any belief and true sense of the matters of eternity, but must needs be very solicitous in inquiring, 'How he may know what will become of him for ever and ever?' and be glad of a clear, undeceiving direction for the discovery of this. As I lay under seven years' doubting and perplexity of spirit myself, much through my ignorance in the managing of this work, so was I very inquisitive still after signs of sincerity, and I got all the books that ever I could buy, which laid down evidences and marks of true grace, and tended to discover the difference betwixt the true Christian and the hypocrite or unsound; I liked no sermon so well as that which contained most of these marks; and afterward, when I was called to the ministry myself, I preached in this way as much as most. I have heard as many complaints of doubting, distressed souls as most: and had as many that have opened their hearts to me in this point; of whom many have proved the most humble, self-denying, mortified Christians; and many that were deepest in doubtings and distress, upon trial of their lives, I found also deepest in pride, peevishness, unmortified lusts, and unfaithful walking, which did feed their troubles. Upon this long experience of myself and others, and most serious study of this point, and prayer to God for his direction, I think it but my duty to open yet more fully, for the benefit of others, what I have herein discovered, which is necessary for them to understand in this weighty work: for one error here may put the hearts and lives of godly people quite out

of frame, and may do much to the confirming of the wicked in their presumption and self-deceit. I shall therefore lay down what I conceive to be the truth, in certain propositions.

Sect. II. Prop. 1. A sincere Christian may attain to an infallible knowledge of his own sincerity in grace, or his performance of the conditions of the covenant of life, and consequently of his justification, adoption, and title to glory; and this without any extraordinary revelation.

This proposition I have proved before, and therefore need to say no more to it now. I lay it down here by way of caution to prevent mistakes; lest any should think that I am against an attainment of assurance here, because of some passages following.

Sect. III. Prop. 2. This infallible knowledge is not properly a certainty of faith, as too many divines affirm.

This also I have proved before in opening the nature of assurance, and in the Appendix of my Aphorisms of Justification; and Mr. Wotton de Reconcil., and very many learned divines of late, have confirmed it fully. Proper certainty of faith is, when a man, by mere believing, is sure of the truth of the thing believed: this, therefore, leaneth fully on a divine testimony. But there is no divine testimony revealing, that such or such a man's sins are pardoned, or he justified. The testimony of the Spirit is but partly by giving us the conditions of the promise, which is our evidence, and partly helping us to see them, and conclude from them, and take comfort therein: and so it witnesseth with our consciences, by causing our consciences spiritually and effectually to witness. But this testimony is not the object of faith; it is only God's testimony in Scripture which affords us a certainty of faith, properly divine, in this point. Though in other cases natural discoveries may be truly called a divine testimony in a larger sense; yet this is above nature: now, God's word doth only say, he that repenteth and believeth shall be pardoned, and justified, and saved: but nowhere saith, that you or I shall be saved. Object. But,

you will say, as long as we may know that we believe, is it not all one? Answ. No: for God's word tells me not that I believe; therefore this must be known by reflection and internal sense, and not by believing. He that believeth he doth believe, believeth himself and not God; for God nowhere telleth him so: so then it is beyond doubt, that assurance, as I said before, ariseth from the conclusion; one of whose premises is in the word of God, and must be believed; the other is in our own hearts, and must be felt or known; and therefore the conclusion is mixed, and to be deduced by reason, and is not an object properly of divine faith, or of any faith at all. There is but one objection that seems to me to have any appearance of strength, to take with any reasonable man; and that, some think, cannot be answered. And thus they argue: Whatsoever we ask of God through Christ, according to his will, we must believe we shall receive: but we ask justification and glory of God according to his will, through Christ: therefore we must believe we shall receive them. Answ. This makes not our justification and salvation, to be upon certainty of faith. For, 1. The major proposition doth only express a conditional promise of justification and salvation, and no absolute promise. Now, a conditional promise puts nothing in being till the performance of the condition, nor gives any certainty but on such performance. The condition here expressed is, that we ask, and that we ask according to God's will; which implies many other conditions; for it must be in faith and repentance, and to right ends, not "to consume it on our lusts," saith James, and we must be certain that we are sincere in all this, before we can, upon this conditional promise, have a certainty: 2. So that the minor proposition here, that we thus ask according to God's will in true faith, &c., this no Scripture speaks; and therefore must be known otherwise than by believing: 3. Yet we may be said to believe we shall receive, in reference to the major proposition or promise in Scripture, which is an object of our belief.

Sect. IV. Prop. 3. Though infallible assurance, as aforesaid, may be here attained, yet perfect certainty in degree cannot, nor may lawfully be by any man expected.

This also I have proved before. For if we may be perfect in the degree of assurance, why not of all grace as well; and so have no sin? nay, there are so many graces exercised in producing our assurance, besides reason itself, that if they be not first perfect, it is impossible that assurance should be perfect. For example: He that believeth not in perfection the truth of Scripture, and of that promise, that "Whosoever believeth shall be saved;" 2. And he that knoweth not in perfection the sincerity of his own faith, neither of which any man breathing doth do; cannot possibly be perfectly certain that he is justified, and shall be saved: for who can be perfectly certain of the conclusion, who is but imperfectly certain of the premises? And yet I have met with some men that think themselves very learned and spiritual, that confidently dispute for a perfection in assurance. If any man say, that Bellarmine meant as much as this imperfect certainty, when he grants a conjectural certainty; and be sure that he speaks truly; I will like Bellarmine the better, and his opposers in this the worse, but I will like a plain, necessary truth of God never the worse. Sure I am that our great divines affirming, that we are sure of salvation by a certainty of faith, hath given the papists fearful ground to baffle them and play upon us, and triumph over them. And when their own students and followers find it so, it hardens them against us fearfully. And as sure I am that no man is perfect gradually in this life in any grace, much less in so high a point as his assurance. Among all those consciences that I have had opened to me, I never met with a humble, heavenly, upright Christian, that would say, he was perfectly certain; nay, and but few, that durst call their persuasion a certainty, but rather a strong hope: but some licentious, fantastical disputers, I have heard plead for such a perfect certainty; whose pride and loose living, and unmortified passions and corruptions, told the standers-by, that they were the farthest from true certainty of any.

Sect. V. Prop. 4. Though in some cases it may be useful to name several marks; yet the true, infallible marks of sincerity, which a man may gather assurance from, are very few, and lie in a narrower room than most have thought.

As I would not pick quarrels with the most godly divines, who lay down many marks of sincerity in their sermons and books; so would I not, in foolish tenderness of any man's reputation, be so cruel to the souls of poor Christians, as to hide the truth from them in so weighty a point: and I speak against no man more than myself heretofore. I know ordinary Christians cannot discern how these multitudes of marks do lie open to exceptions; but the judicious may easily perceive it. I shall therefore here tell you the truth, how far these many marks are commendable and convenient, and how far they are condemnable and dangerous. And, I. When we are only discovering the nature of some sin, rather than the certainty of the unholiness of the sinner, it is both easy and useful to give many signs, as from the effects, &c., by which it may be known what that sin is: and so men may know how far they are guilty of it. But to know certainly whether that sin will prove the damnable state of the sinner, is neither easy, in most cases, nor to be done by many marks.

2. When we are discovering the nature of some duty or grace, and not the very point wherein the soul's sincerity in that grace or duty lieth, it is both easy and useful to give many marks of them. But by these no man can gather assurance of his sincerity.

3. When we are describing a high degree of wickedness, which is far from the best state of an unregenerate man, it is both easy and useful to give plain marks of such a state. But to discover just how much sin will stand with true grace, is another matter.

4. When we are describing the state of the strongest Christians, it is easy and useful to mark them out, and to give many marks of their strength; but to give many of their truth, and to discover the least degree of true grace, is not easy. So I have shown you wherein marks may commendably be multiplied; but to lay down many marks of sincerity, and say, 'By these you may certainly know whether you shall be saved or not;' this I dare not do.

Sect. VI. Prop. 5. There is a threefold truth to be inquired after in examination: 1. The truth of the actor habit; 2. The moral truth of it as a grace or duty; 3. The moral truth of it as a saving or justifying grace or duty, or as the condition of justification and salvation. It is the last of these three only that the great business in self-examination lieth on, and which we are now searching after; the two first being presupposed as more easily discernible, and less controvertible.

I will not here trouble plain readers, for whose sakes I write, with any scholastic inquiries into the nature of truth, but only look into so much as is of flat necessity to a right managing of the work of self-examination: for it is inconceivable how a man should rationally judge of his own condition, when he knows not what to inquire after; or that he should clearly know his sincerity, who knows not what sincerity is. Yet I doubt not but, by an internal feeling, a strong, sound Christian, who hath his faith and love and other graces in action, may comfortably perceive the sincerity of his graces, though he be so ignorant as not clearly and distinctly to know the nature of sincerity, or to give any just description of it; even as an unlearned man, that is of a sound and healthful body, may feel what health is when he cannot describe it, nor tell distinctly wherein it doth consist. But yet, as he hath a general knowledge of it, so hath this ignorant, sincere Christian, of the nature of sincerity. And, withal, this is a more dangerous ground to stand on, because our sense is so uncertain in this case, more than in the welfare of the body; and the assurance of such a soul will be more defective and imperfect, and very inconstant, who goes by mere feeling, without knowing the nature of what he feeleth, even as the forementioned unlearned man, in case of bodily health, if he have no knowledge, but mere feeling of the nature of health, he will be cast down with a tooth-ache, or some harmless disease, if it be painful, as if he should presently die, when a knowing man could tell that there is no danger; and he would make light of a hectic, or other mortal disease, till it be incurable, because he feels no great pain in it. It is, therefore, a matter of necessity to open, most clearly and distinctly, the nature of sincerity or truth, so

far as concerns the case in hand. I told you before, that there is a metaphysical truth of being, and a moral; I now add further, that here are three things to be inquired after: 1. The truth of the act; 2. The truth of the virtuousness of the act; 3. The truth of the justifying or saving nature of the act. The first is of natural, the two last of moral consideration: as, for example, if you be trying the sincerity of your love to God, you must first know that you do love him indeed, without dissembling; 2. That this love is such as is a duty or good, which God requireth; 3. That this love is such as will certainly prove you in a state of salvation. The first of these (whether you believe and love Christ or not) must needs be first known; and this must be known by internal feeling, joined with a consideration of the effects of real love. And to this end many marks may be useful, though, indeed, inward feeling must do almost all; no man else can tell me whether I believe and love, if I cannot tell myself. It is no hard matter to a solid, knowing Christian, to discern this ordinarily; but when they do know this, they are far enough from true assurance, except they go to the rest. A man may be a true man, and not an image, or a shadow, or a corpse, and yet be a false thief, or a liar, and no true man in a moral sense: this I lay down to these uses.

First, That you take heed when you hear or read marks of grace, how you receive and apply them; and inquire whether it be not only the truth of the being of the act or habit that those marks discover, rather than the virtuous, or the saving being or force.

Secondly, That you take heed, in examination, of taking up at this first step, as if, when you have found that you believe, and love, and repent, you had found all, when yet you have not found that you do it savingly.

Thirdly, To take heed of the doctrine of many in this, who tell you, that every man that hath faith, knows he hath it; and it is impossible to believe, and not to know we believe. This may, ordinarily, but not always, be true about this first truth, of the mere being of the act; but is it no wonder that they should not consider that this is but a

presupposed matter, and not the great thing that we have to inquire after in point of sincerity? and that they may know they believe long enough, and yet not know their faith to be saving? It is our beyond-sea divines that so mistake in this point: our English divines are sounder in it than any in the world, generally: I think because they are more practical, and have had more wounded, tender consciences under cure, and less empty speculation and dispute. The second truth to be inquired after is, that this act is truly good, or a virtue, or grace; for every act is not a virtue, nor every act that may seem so. I will not stand here curiously to open to you, wherein the goodness of an action doth consist. Somewhat will be said in the following propositions: only thus much at present. To denominate an action properly and fully good, it must be fully agreeable to God's will of precept, both in the matter, end, measure, and all circumstances; but, improperly and imperfectly, it may be called good or virtuous, though there be evil mixed, if the good be most eminent, as if the substance of the action be good, though the circumstances be evil; and thus we ordinarily call actions good: but if the evil be so predominant as that the good lie only in ends or circumstances, and the substance, as it were, of the action be forbidden, then we may not call it a good action, or a grace, or duty. So that it is not perfect, proper goodness that I here speak of, but the second, that is imperfect; when the action is commanded and good in itself, and the good more eminent than the evil; yet it may not be saving for all that.

For there is a common grace which is not saving, yet real, and so true and good, and so true grace; as well as a special grace, which is saving; and there are common duties commanded by God, as alms-deeds, fasting, prayer, &c., which, though they are necessary, yet salvation doth not certainly accompany them, or follow them. A man that finds any moral virtue to be in himself truly, and to be truly a virtue, cannot thence conclude that he shall be saved, nor a man that doth a duty truly good in itself. Many did that which was good in the sight of the Lord, but not with an upright heart; and even an Ahab's humiliation may have some moral goodness, and so some acceptance

with God, and bring some benefit to himself, and yet not be saving nor justifying.

And some actions again may be so depraved by the end and manners, that they deserve not the name of good or duty. As to repent of a sinful attempt is, in itself, considered a duty and good; but if a man repent of it only because it did not succeed, or because he missed of the gain, or pleasure, or honour, which he expected by it, thus he makes it a greater sin; and if he repent but because his pleasure is gone, or because he is brought to poverty or disgrace by his sin, this is but a natural thing, and deserves not the name of a virtue. So to love God is in itself good, and the highest duty; but if a man love God as one that he thinks hath prospered him in his sin, and helped and succeeded him in his revenge, unjust blood-shed, robbery, sinful rising and thriving, thanking God, and loving him for his pleasure in lust, drunkenness, gluttony, or the like, as the most men that idolise their flesh-pleasure do, when they have ease and honour, and all at will, that they may offer a full sacrifice to their flesh, and say, 'Soul, take thine ease,' then they thank God for it, and may really love him under this notion. This is to make God a pander or servant to our flesh, and so to love him for serving and humouring it; and this is so far from being a virtue, that it is one of the greatest of all sins; and if another man love God in a better notion a little, and love his lusts more, this is no saving love, as I shall more fully show you. So that you see a man hath more to look after than the mere honesty, virtue, or moral goodness of his action; or else all actions that are virtuous, would be saving.

The third thing to be inquired after is, the sincerity of grace considered as saving. This is much more than the two former, and, indeed, is the greater matter in self-examination to be looked after: here is the work; here is the difficulty; here it is that we are now inquiring, how far marks may be multiplied; how far they may be useful; and wherein this sincerity doth consist. The two former will not denominate a man a sincere Christian, nor prove him justified, and in a state of salvation, without this. Wherein this consisteth, I

shall show you in the following propositions: now, I have first showed you what it is that you must inquire after; and I hope no wise Christian will judge me too curious and exact here, seeing it is a work that nearly concerns us, and is not fit to be done in the dark: our cause must be thoroughly sifted at judgment, and our game then must be played above-board; and therefore it is desperate to juggle and cheat ourselves now; only, before I proceed, let me tell you, that according to this threefold truth or sincerity, so there is a threefold self-delusion or hypocrisy; taking hypocrisy for a seeming to be what we are not, either to ourselves or others, though, perhaps, we have no direct dissembling intent. 1. To take on us to repent, believe, love Christ, &c., when we do not at all: this is the grossest kind of hypocrisy, as wanting the very natural truth of the act.

2. To seem to believe, repent, love God, &c., virtuously, according to the former description, and yet to do it but in subserviency to our lusts and wicked ends, this is another sort of gross hypocrisy; yea, to do it in mere respect to fleshly prosperity, as to repent because sin hath brought us to sickness and poverty, to love God merely because he keeps up our flesh's prosperity, &c.; this is still gross hypocrisy.

It may be a great question, which of these is the greater sin: to repent and love God in subserviency to our sin, or not to do it at all?

Answ. It is not much worth the thinking on, they are both so desperately wicked; therefore I will not trouble the reader with a curious resolution of this question, only thus: Though to deny God's being, be a blasphemous denial of his natural excellency, and so of his attributes, which are the first platform of that which we call morality in the creature; yet to deny these his attributes, and, withal, to ascribe sin and positive wickedness to the blessed, holy God, seems to me the greater sin; *Sicut esse diabolus est pejus (quoad ipsum) quam non esse.*

3. The next kind of hypocrisy, and the most common, is, when men want the sincerity of grace as saving only, but have both the truth of

it as an act or habit, and as a virtue. When men have some repentance, faith, hope, love, &c., which is un-dissembled, and hath good ends, but yet is not saving; this is the unsoundness which most among us in the church perish by, that do perish, and which every Christian should look most to his heart in. This, I think, is discerned by few that are guilty of it, though they might all discern it, if they were willing and diligent.

Sect. VII. Prop. 6. As it is only the precepts of Christ that can assure us that one action is virtuous, or a duty more than another; so it is only the tenor of the covenant of grace, bestowing justification or salvation upon any act, which makes that act, or grace, justifying or saving, and can assure us that it is so.

By the precepts, I mean any divine determination concerning our duty, what we ought to do or avoid. It is the same sacred instrument which is called God's testament, his covenant, and his new law, the several names being taken from several respects, as I have opened elsewhere, and cannot now stand to prove; this law of God hath two parts, the precept and the sanction. The precept may be considered either as by itself, 'Do this or do that,' and so it maketh duty: this constitutes the virtue of actions, regulating them; and so the second kind of sincerity, 'whether an action be good or bad,' must be tried by the precepts as precepts. What God requireth, is a virtue: what he forbiddeth, is a vice: what he neither requireth nor forbiddeth, is indifferent, as being not of moral consideration: for the popish doctrines of divine counsels is vain.

2. And then these precepts must be considered not only as they stand by themselves, and constitute duty simply, saying 'Do this;' but also as they stand in conjunction with the sanction, and say, 'Do this or that, and be saved, or else perish,' as 'Believe and be saved, else not.' And in this respect and sense, they constitute the conditions of the covenant; and so they are the only rule by which to know what is saving grace, and what not: and only in this respect it is that they justify or condemn men. They may justify or condemn the action, as

bare precepts and prohibitions; but they justify not, nor condemn the person himself, but as precepts conjoined with the sanction; that is, with the promise or threatening.

So that it is hence evident, that no human conjecture can gather what is a saving grace or duty, and what not, either from a bare precept, considered disjunct from the promise, or from any thing in the mere nature and use of the gracious act itself. The nature of the act is but its aptitude to its office; but the consequents (for I will not call them effects), justification and salvation, proceed from or upon them only as conditions on which the free promise bestoweth those benefits directly. Those, therefore, which make the formal reason of faith's justifying to lie in its apprehension, which they call its instrumentality, being indeed the very nature and being of the act, do little know what they say, nor how derogatory to Christ, and arrogating to themselves, their doctrine is, as I have elsewhere manifested.

I conclude, then, that it is only the Scripture that can tell you what is justifying or saving grace, by promising and annexing salvation thereto.

Sect. VIII. Prop. 7. Whatsoever therefore is the condition which the covenant of grace requireth of man, for the attaining of justification and salvation, and upon which it doth bestow them, that only is a justifying and saving act. And inferior duties are no further marks to try by, nor are justifying and saving, than as they are reducible to that condition.

This is it which I have asserted in the last foregoing chapter, and this is the reason why I laid down but two marks there. Though, in the first part, in the description of God's people, I laid down the whole description, which must needs contain some things common, and not only special properties, yet now I am to give you the true points of difference, I dare not number so many particulars. The performance of the proper condition of the new covenant, promising

justification or salvation, then, is the only mark of justification or salvation, direct and infallible; or is the only justifying and saving grace properly so called. Now, you must understand that the covenant of life hath two parts, as the condition for man to perform, if he will receive the benefits. The first is, the natural part concerning the pure Godhead, who is the first and the last, the principal, efficient, and ultimate end of all; who is our Creator, Preserver, Governor, happiness, or rest. This is 'the taking the Lord only for our God,' in opposition to all idols visible or invisible. As the end, as such, is before and above all the means, and the Father, or mere Godhead, is above Christ the Mediator as such, (as he saith, John 14:28, "The Father is greater than I,") so this is the first and greater part of the condition of the covenant: and so idolatry and atheism are the greatest and first condemning sins. The second part of the condition is, 'That we take Jesus Christ only for the Mediator and our Redeemer, and so as our only Saviour and supreme Lord, by the right of redemption.' This is the second part, consisting in the choice of the right and only way and means to God, as he is the end: for Christ, as Mediator, is not the ultimate end, but the way to the Father. These two parts of the condition are most evident in the word, both in their distinction and necessity. The former was part of that covenant made with Adam, which is not repealed, nor ever will be, though the rest of that covenant may be laid by. It was afterwards still fully expressed to the church before Christ's coming in the flesh: in all the people's covenanting, this was still the sum, that they took the Lord only to be their God. But the latter part was not in the covenant with Adam: nor was it openly and in full plainness put into the covenant of grace in the beginning, but still implied, and more darkly intimated, the light and clearness of revelation still increasing till Christ's coming. Yet so, as that at the utmost they had but the discovery of a Saviour to be born of a virgin, of the tribe of Judah, at such a time, but never that this Jesus was the Christ. And so it was only in a Saviour so to be revealed that they were to believe before: but after Christ's coming, and his miracles, and resurrection, at utmost, he tells them, "If ye believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins." So that to them to whom he was revealed, at least it was

of necessity to believe that this Jesus is he, and not to look for another. Now, to us Christians under the New Testament, this latter part of the covenant (concerning the Mediator) is most fully expressed, and most frequently inculcated: not as if the former part (concerning God the Creator and end) were become less necessary than before, or ever the less to be studied by Christians, or preached by the ministers of the Gospel, but on the contrary, it is still implied, as being fully revealed before, and a thing generally received by the church; yea, and confirmed and established by the adding of the Gospel, and preaching of Christ; for the end is still supposed and implied, when we determine of the means; and the means confirm and not deny the excellency and necessity of the end. Therefore, when Paul (Acts 17 &c.) was to preach to the Athenians or other heathens, he first preacheth to them the Godhead, and seeks to bring them from their idols, and then preacheth Christ. And therefore it is said, "He that comes to God (as the end and his happiness, or Creator and Preserver) must first believe that God is, and that he is (in the Redeemer) a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11.) And, therefore, the apostles preached "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21.) The first is, "the turning from idols to the true God," and so repentance is in order of nature before faith in the Mediator, and more excellent in its nature, as the end is than the way; but not before faith in the Godhead. The second is the only highway to God. Therefore, Paul was by preaching, to turn men from darkness to light; both from the darkness of atheism and idolatry, and the darkness of infidelity, but first from the power of Satan, and worshipping devils, to God; that so next, by faith in Christ, they might receive remission of sin, and inheritance among them that are sanctified. (Acts 26:28.) And Christ himself took the same course, and preached these two parts of the condition of the covenant distinctly. "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and (then) Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.) Words of knowledge in Scripture commands, import affection. And "The Father is greater than I." (John 14:28.) And "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." (John 14:6.) And "Ye believe in God (there is he first part),

Believe also in me;" (John 14:1;) (there is the second part.) But intended brevity forbids me to heap up more proof in so plain a case.

To this last part of the condition is opposed infidelity, or not believing in Christ, being the chiefest condemning sin, next to atheism and idolatry, which are opposite to the first part. On these two parts of the condition of the covenant, hath God laid all our salvation, as much as concerns our part; still supposing that God and the Mediator have done and will do all their part.

The first part of the condition I call, the natural part, being from the beginning, and written in the nature of every reasonable creature, and by an eminency and excellency it is of natural morality above all other laws whatsoever. The second I call the supernatural part of the condition: as being not known to any man by the mere light of nature, but is supernaturally revealed to the world by the Gospel. The first part also is the basis or great command of the decalogue, "Thou shalt have none other God but me;" or in other terms, "Thou shalt love God above all." The second is the great command of the Gospel, "Believe in the Lord Jesus;" or in other terms, "Love Christ above all." For, as I said, words of knowledge in Scripture imply affection, especially will, where all acts of the soul are complete, which in the intellect are but incomplete, imperfect, and preparatory, the understanding being but the entrance to the will, and the will being an extended understanding. Therefore, sometimes Christ saith, "He that believeth not, is condemned." Sometimes, "He that loveth any thing more than me, is not worthy of me, and cannot be my disciple." And he joineth them together in John 16:27. Therefore hath the Father loved you, because you have loved me, and have believed, &c. Intellectual belief, or assent, therefore, wherever you read it commanded, implieth the will's consent and love.

And thus I have showed you what the conditions of the covenant are, which I have done the more fully, that you might know what is a saving grace or act, and what not. For you may easily conceive that it must needs be safer trying by these than by any lower act or duty:

and as all other are no further saving, than as they belong to these, or are reducible to them, so you can no further try yourselves by them, but as they are reduced to these. And now you see the reason why I mentioned but only two marks in the foregoing chapter, and why I say that true marks are so few by which a man may safely try his title to heaven. And yet you shall see that we must yet reduce them to a narrower room, when we come to open the nature of sincerity. In preparation to which I must tell you, that in the terms of these two marks, or two parts of the condition of the covenant, there is contained somewhat common, which an unregenerate man may perform, and somewhat special and proper to the saints. Though all must go together and be found in those that will be saved, yet the specifical form, or constitutive difference, by which, as saving, the act of a true believer is discerned from the act of an unsound person, doth lie but in a part of it, and I think but in one point: as a man is defined to be a reasonable living creature; but to be a creature will not prove him a man, nor to be a living creature neither, because that there are other creatures, and living creatures, or animate, besides himself. But to be a reasonable animal, or living creature, will prove him a man, because reason contains his specific form and constitutive difference. Other inferior creatures may have bodies, and fleshly bodies, as well as man, and others may have life, which we call a soul, and yet man must have these two; but others with these have not reason, or a soul endued with a power of reasoning. So in these marks of grace, or conditions of the covenant. To love, is common to every man. To love God and Christ, is common to a Christian, with an hypocrite or wicked man; but to love Christ savingly, that is, as I shall show you presently, sovereignly, or chiefly, this is the form or constitutive difference of love which is saving. To take or accept, is common to every man; to take or accept of God and Christ, is common to a true Christian and a false; but to take or accept of God and his Christ sincerely and savingly, is proper to a sound believer; so that even in these two marks, the sincerity of both lieth in one point. For, supposing the truth of the act, and the truth of the virtue in general, (which are both common, as I have told you,) the truth or sincerity of them as saving, is the only thing to be

inquired after. And in this sense, I know but one infallible mark of sincerity: seeing sincerity lieth in this one point. But before I come to open it more fully, I will premise, and but briefly name, two more propositions.

Sect. IX. Prop. 8. God hath not in the covenant promised justification or salvation upon any mere act or acts considered without that degree and suitableness to their objects, wherein the sincerity of them, as saving, doth consist.

It is said, indeed, "that he that believeth shall be saved," but then it is supposed that it be sincere believing; for any believing is not here meant. For many that believed, and that without gross dissimulation, shall perish, as not believing sincerely. And, therefore, Christ would not trust himself with those that yet believed in him, because he knew their hearts, that they did it not in faithfulness and sincerity. (John 2:23, 24.) But I shall confirm this more fully afterwards.

Sect. X. Prop. 9. There is no one act, considered in its mere nature and kind, without its measure and suitableness to its object, which a true Christian may perform, but an unsound Christian may perform it also.

I have great reason to add this, that you may take heed of trying and judging of yourselves by any mere act, considered in itself. If any doubt of this, we might soon prove it by producing the most excellent acts, and showing it of them in particular. Believing is as proper to the saved as any thing for the act. And yet, as for the assenting act, James tells us the devils believe. And as for resting on Christ by affiance, and expecting pardon and salvation from him, we see beyond question, that many thousand wicked men have no other way to quiet them in sinning, but that they are confident Christ will pardon and save them, and they undissemblingly quiet or rest their souls in this persuasion, and undissemblingly expect salvation from him when they have sinned as long as they can. And, indeed, herein lieth the nature of presumption: and so real are they in this faith,

that all our preaching cannot beat them from it. If the question be, whether a wicked man can pray, or meditate, or forbear the act of this or that sin, I think none will deny it. But yet all this will be opened more fully anon.

Sect. XI. Prop. 10. The supremacy of God and the Mediator in the soul, or the precedency and prevalency of his interest in us, above the interest of the flesh, or of inferior good, is the very point wherein materially the sincerity of our graces, as saving, doth consist; and so is the one mark by which those must judge of their state that would not be deceived.

Propos. 11. For the saving object being resolved of in the Gospel, here the sincerity of the act, as saving, consisteth formally in being suited to its adequate object, considered in those respects which are essential to it as such an object. And so to believe in, accept, and love God as God, and Christ as Christ, is the sincerity of these acts. But this lieth in believing, accepting, and loving God, as the only supreme Authority, or Ruler, and God and Christ as the only Redeemer, and so our Lord, our sovereign Saviour, our Husband and our Head.

I join both these propositions together, because the explication of both will be best joined together. And first, I will tell you what I mean by some of these terms in these propositions.

1. When I speak of the interest of God and the Mediator in the soul, I do not mean a mere right to us, which we call *jus ad rem*, for so God and the Mediator, God-man, have interest in all men: as being undoubtedly rightful Lord of all, whether they obey him or not; but I mean Christ's actual interest in us, and possession of us, which we call *jus in re*, and that, as it consisteth in a voluntary entertainment of him into all the powers of the soul, according to the several capacities and offices. As we use to say of men in respect of their friends, 'Such a man hath so much interest in his friend, that he can prevail with him before any other.' So, when God's interest in us is greater than the interest of the flesh, that he hath the precedency and

supremacy in our understandings, wills, and affections, this is the sincerity of all our graces as saving; and so the discovery of our soul's sincerity. I shall yet more fully open this anon.

2. I here include the interest of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, both as they are conjunct, and as they are distinct. As considered in the essence and unity of the Godhead, so their interest is conjunct; both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being our Creator, Ruler, and ultimate End, and chief Good. But in the distinction of persons, as it was the Son in a proper sense that redeemed us, and thereby purchased a peculiar interest in us, and dominion over us, as he is Redeemer, so doth he carry on this interest in a peculiar way. And so the interest of the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, is specially advanced by our yielding to his motions, &c.

3. By the supremacy of God, and the prevalency of Christ's interest, I do not mean, that it always prevaieth for actual obedience against the suggestions and allurements of the flesh. A man may possibly pleasure a lesser friend, or a stranger, before a greater friend, for once or more, and then it proves not that the stranger hath the greatest interest in him. But I mean, that God hath really more of his esteem, and will, and rational, though not passionate, love, and desire, and authority, and rule, in his heart and life.

4. When I speak of the interest of the flesh, I chiefly intend and include that inferior good which is the flesh's delight. For here are, considerably distinct, 1. The part which would be pleased in opposition to Christ; and that, with the Scripture, I call the flesh. 2. The thing which this flesh desires as its happiness; and that is, its own pleasure, delight, and full content. 3. The objects from whence it expecteth this delight and content; and that is, all inferior good which it apprehendeth to conduce most to that end, as being most suitable to itself. By the flesh, then, I mean, the soul as sensitive, as it is now since the fall become unruly, by the strengthening of its raging desires, and the weakening of reason that should rule it, and consequently the rational part thereby seduced; or if the rational

(misinformed and ill-disposed) be the leader in any sin, before or without the sensitive; so that I mean, that which inordinately inclineth us to any inferior good. This inferior good consisteth in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life, as John distinguisheth them; or as commonly they are distributed, in pleasure, profits, and honour; all which are concentrated and terminated in the sin we call flesh-pleasing in the general; for that pleasure it is which is sought in all; or it is the pursuit of an inferior, fleshly happiness, preferred before the superior, spiritual, everlasting happiness. Though most commonly this pleasure be sought in honour, riches, eating, drinking, pleasant dwellings, company, sports and recreations, clothes, wantonness, or lustful uncleanness, the satisfying of passions and malicious desires, or the like; yet sometime it riseth higher, and the sinner seeketh his happiness and content in largeness of knowledge, much learning and curious speculations about the nature of the creatures, yea, and about God himself. But perhaps it will be found that these are nearly of the same nature with the former sensitive delights. For it is not the excellency or goodness of God himself that delighteth them, but the novelty of the thing, and the agitation of their own imagination, fancy, and intellect, thereupon, which is naturally desirous to be actuated, and employed, as receiving thereby some seeming addition to its own perfection; and that not as from God, who is the object of their knowledge, but as from the mere enlargement of knowledge in itself; or, which is far worse, they make the study of God and divine things which they delight in, but subservient to some base, inferior object; and so though they delight in studying and knowing God, and heaven, and Scripture, yet not in God as God, or the chief Good, nor in heaven as heaven, nor out of any true saving love to God; but either, because, as some preachers, they make a gainful trade of it, by teaching others; or because it is an honour to know these things, and be able to discourse of them, and a dishonour to be ignorant; or at best, as I said before, they desire to know God and divine truths, out of a delight in the novelty, and actuating, and natural elevation of the understanding hereby; it is one thing to delight in knowing, and another to delight in the thing known. An ungodly man may delight

in studying and knowing several axioms or truths concerning God, but he never chiefly delighteth in God himself. As a studious man desires to know what hell is, and where, and many truths concerning it; but he desireth not hell itself, nor delighteth in it. A godly man desireth to know the nature and danger of sin, and Satan's way and wiles in temptations; but he doth not therefore desire sin and temptation itself. So a wicked man may desire to know the nature of grace, and Christ, and glory, and yet not desire grace, and Christ, and glory. It is one thing to terminate a man's desire and delight in bare knowledge, or the esteem, or self-advancement, that accrues thereby; and another thing to terminate it in the thing which we desire to know; making knowledge but a means to its fruition. So that, though the virtuousness or viciousness of our willing, and several affections, do receive its denomination and specification very much from the object, as in loving God, and loving sinful pleasure, &c. because there is a proper and ultimate terminus of the soul's motion, yet the acts of the understanding may be exercised about the best of objects, without any virtuousness at all; it being but the truth and not the goodness that is its object; and that truth may be in the best object and in the worst. And so it is the same kind of delight that such a man hath in knowing God, and knowing other things; for it is the same kind of truth that he seeks in both. And, indeed, truth is not the ultimate object terminating the soul's motion, not as it is truth, but an intermediate prerequisite to good, which is the ultimately terminating object; and accordingly the acts of the mere understanding are but preparatory to the act of the will, and so are but imperfect initial acts of the soul, as having a further end than their own proper object; and therefore it is that all philosophers place no moral habits in the understanding, but all in the will; for till they come to the will, though they may be in a large sense morally good or evil, virtuous or vicious, yet they are but so in an imperfect kind and sense, and therefore they call such habits only intellectual.

The sum of all this is, that it is but the flesh's pleasure and interest which an ungodly man chiefly pursueth, even in his delightful studying of holy things; for he studieth holy things and profane alike.

Or if any think it too narrow a phrase, to call this flesh-pleasing, or preferring the interest of the flesh, it being the soul as rational, and not only as sensitive, which turneth from God to inferior things; I do not gainsay this: I know that man apostatized from God to himself; and that in regeneration he is turned again from himself to God. Yet this must be very cautelously understood; for God forbiddeth not man to seek himself duly, but commandeth it: man may and must seek his own happiness. The chief good is desired as good to us. But to state this case rightly, and determine the many great difficulties that here rise in the way, is no fit work for this place: I will not therefore so much as name them. The easiest and safest way therefore to clear the present difficulty to us is, to look chiefly at the different objects and ends: God, who is the supreme Good, presenteth and offereth himself to us to be enjoyed. Inferior good stands up in competition with him, and would insinuate itself into our hearts, as if it were more amiable and desirable than God. Now, if God's interest prevail, it is a certain sign of grace; if inferior good prevail, and have more actual interest or possession than God, it is a certain sign of an unhappy condition; or that the person is not yet in a state of salvation.

And as you thus see what I mean by the interest of the flesh, or inferior good in us; so in all this I include the interest of the world and the devil: for the world is, at least, the greatest part of this inferior good, which stands in competition with God. And Satan is but the envious agent to present this bait before us; to put a false gloss on it in his presentation; to weaken all God's arguments that should restrain us; to disgrace God himself to our souls; and so to press and urge us to a sinful choice and prosecution. He shows us the forbidden fruit as pleasant, and as a means to our greater advancement and happiness, and draweth us to unbelief for the hiding of the danger. He takes us up in our imagination, and shows us the kingdoms of the world and their glory, to steal our hearts from the glorious kingdom of God. So that the interest of the flesh, the interest of the world, and the interest of Satan, in us, is all one in

effect. For they are but several causes to carry the soul from God, to a false, deluding, miserable end.

Again, in the proposition, I say, 'It is the prevalency of the interest of God or Christ, above inferior good,' putting inferior good as the competitor with God, who is the greatest Good; because the will cannot incline to any thing under the notion of evil, or of indifferent, but only as good. No man can will evil as evil; he must first cease to be rational, and to be man. If evil appeared only as evil, there were no danger in it. The force of the temptation lies in making evil seem good, either to the senses, or imagination, or reason, or all. Here lies the danger of a pleasing condition in regard of credit, delights, riches, friends, habitation, health, or any inferior thing; the more good appeareth or seemeth to be in them, as disjunct from God, the more dangerous; for they are the liker to stand up in competition with him, and to carry it with our partial, blinded souls in the competition. Remember this, if you love yourselves, when you would have all things about you more pleasing and lovely. Here lies the unknown danger of a prosperous state; and on the contrary lies the precious benefit of adversity, which, if men were not brutish and unbelieving, they would heartily welcome as the safest condition.

Again, observe here, that I mention inferior 'good,' and not 'truth,' as that which stands in competition with God. For of two truths, both are equally true, though not equally evident; and, therefore, though Satan would persuade the soul that inferior good is better for us than God, yet he sets not truth against truth in competition. He would indeed make us believe that God's word is not true at all, or the truth not certain. But with the understanding there is no competition between truth and truth, if known so to be. For the understanding can know and believe several truths at once, though about ever so different matters, as that there is a heaven and a hell, that there is a God, a Christ, a world, a devil, &c. But the will cannot embrace and choose all different good at once; for God hath made the enjoyment of them incompatible; much less can it will two things as the chiefest

good, when there is but one such; or God and the creature equally good, and both in the highest degree.

Here, then, you further see the meaning of the proposition; when I speak of the prevalency of Christ's interest, I mean it directly and principally in the will of man, and not in the understanding. For though I doubt not but there is true grace in the understanding as well as in the will, yet, as I shall further show anon, as it is in the intellect, it is not certainly and fully discernible, but only as the force of the intellectual acts appear in the motions and resolutions of the will. And, therefore, men must not try their state directly by any graces or marks in the understanding. And also if it were possible to discern their sincerity immediately in the understanding, yet it must not be there by this way of competition of different objects in regard of the degree of verity, as if one were more true, and the other less; as it is with the will about the degrees of goodness in the objects which stand in competition. Though yet a kind of competition there is with the intellect too; as, 1. Between God and the creature, who is to be believed rather; and, 2. Between two contradictory or opposite propositions, which is true, and which false. As between these, God is the chief Good, and, God is not the chief Good; or these, God is the chief Good, and, pleasure is the chief good. But though the truth be here believed, yet that is no certain evidence of sincerity; except it be so believed, as may be prevalent with the will; which is not discernible in the bare act of believing, but in the act of willing. So that it is the prevalency of Christ's interest in the will that we here speak of; and consequently in the affections, and conversation. And indeed, as is before hinted, all human acts, as they are in the mere understanding, are but crude and imperfect; for it is but the first digestion, as it were, that is there performed, as of meat in the stomach, but in the will they are more perfectly concocted, as the chyle is sanguified in the liver, spleen, and veins; and in the affections they are yet further raised and concocted, as the vital spirits are begotten in the heart; though many here take mere flatulency for spirits; and so they do common passion for spiritual affections; and then in the conversation, as the food in the habit of

the body, the concoction is finished; so that the sincerity of grace cannot, [think, be discerned by any mere intellectual act: as you may find judicious Dr. Stoughton asserting in his 'Righteous Man's Plea to Happiness.' But yet do not misunderstand it, as if saving grace did not reside in the understanding.

Now, as the apostle saith, "The flesh warreth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other:" (Gal. 5:17:) a Christian's life is a continual combat between these two contrary interests. God will be taken for our portion and happiness, and so be our ultimate End, or else we shall never enjoy him to make us happy: the flesh suggesteth to us the sweetness and delight of carnal contentments, and would have us glut ourselves with these. God will rule, and that in supremacy, or he will never save us. The flesh would fain be pleased, and have its desire, whether God be obeyed and pleased or not. There is no hope of reconciling these contrary interests. God hath already made his laws, containing the conditions of our salvation or damnation; these laws do limit the desires of the flesh, and contradict its delights: the flesh cannot love that which is against it. It hates them, because they speak not good of it, but evil, because it so mightily crosseth its contents. It was meet it should be so; for if God had suffered no competitors to set up their interest against his, how would the faithfulness of his subjects be tried; how would his providences and graces be manifested? Even to Adam, that yet had no sin, this way of trial was judged necessary: and when he would please his eye and his taste, and desire to be higher, it was just with God to displease him, and to bring him lower. God will not change these, his holy and righteous laws, to please the flesh, nor conform himself to its will. The flesh will not conform itself to God; and so here is the christian combat. Christ, who has purchased us, expeeteth the first or chief room in our affections, or else he will effectively be no Saviour for us. The flesh doth importunately solicit the affections to give the chief room and entertainment to its contents. Christ, who hath so dearly bought the dominion over us all, will either rule us as our sovereign, or condemn us for our rebellion. (Luke 19:27.) The flesh would be free, and is still

soliciting us to treason. For as easy as Christ's yoke is, and light as is his burden, yet it is no more suited with the flesh's interest, than the heavier and more grievous law was: the law of liberty, is not a law of carnal liberty. Now, in this combat, the word and ministry are solicitors for Christ; so is reason itself, so far as it is rectified and well guided: but because reason is naturally weakened and blind; yea, and the Word alone is not sufficient to illuminate and rectify it; therefore Christ sends his Spirit into the souls of his people, to make that word effectual to open their eyes: here is the great help that the soul hath for the maintaining or carrying on the interest of Christ. But yet once illuminating is not enough. For the will doth not necessarily choose that which the understanding concludeth to be best, (even *hic et nunc, et consideratis considerandis.*) A drunkard's understanding may tell him, that it is far better, all things laid together, to forbear a cup of wine, than to drink it: and that the good of virtue and duty is to be preferred before the good of pleasure, this experience assures us of, though all the philosophers in the world should contradict it, and I am not disputing now, and therefore I will not stand to meddle with men's contrary opinions; and yet the violence of his sensual appetite may cause him to lay hands on the cup and pour it in. And, indeed, so far it is a brutish act; and it is no such wonder to have sinful acts termed and proved brutish, if we knew that all true reason is against them. Reason is on God's side, and that which is against him is not reason. We may by discourse proceed to sin; but the arguments are all fallacious that draw us. There is no necessity for the committing of a sin, that reason or the understanding should first conclude it best; so great is the power of sense upon the fancy and imagination, and of these on the passions, and the choosing power, especially as to the exciting of the locomotive, that if reason be but silent and suspended, sin will be committed, as a man hath lustful, and revengeful, and covetous desires in his dream, and that very violent. Reason is often asleep when the senses are awake; and then they may easily play their game: even as the godliest man cannot restrain a sinful thought or desire in his dream, as he can waking; so, neither when he is waking, if reason be asleep: although reason never take part with sin, yet if it stand neuter, the sin will be committed.

Yea, that is not all; but if reason do conclude for duty and against sin, and stand to that conclusion; yet, I think, the sensitive sinful appetite and imagination may prevail with the will, unless you may say that this appetite is the will itself, man having but one will, and so may itself command the locomotive, against, as well as without the conclusion of reason, as in the example before mentioned.

To understand this, you must know, that to the motion of the will effectually, especially where there are violent contrary motions and inducements, it is not only necessary that the understanding say, This is a duty, or This is a sin; or, It is better to let it alone: but this must be concluded of as a matter of great importance and concernment; and the understanding must express the weight as well as the truth of what it utters concerning good or evil; and this must especially be by a strong and forcible act; or else, though it conclude rightly, yet it will not prevail. Many men may have their understandings informed of the same duty, and all at the very exercise conclude it good and necessary; and so concerning the evil of sin. And yet though they all pass the same conclusion, they shall not all alike prevail with the will; but one more, and another less: because one passeth this conclusion seriously, vigorously, importunately; and the other, slightly, and sleepily, and remissly. If you be busy, writing or reading, and one friend comes to you to call you away to some great business, and useth very weighty arguments, yet if he speak them coldly and sleepily, you may perhaps not be moved by him; but if another come and call you but upon a lesser business, and speak loud and earnestly, and will take no denial, though his reasons be weaker, he may sooner prevail. Do we not feel that the words of a preacher do take more with our wills and affections, from the moving, pathetic manner of expression, than from the strength of argument, except with very wise men? at least, how much that furthers it! when the best arguments in the mouth of a sleepy preacher, or unseasonably and ill-favouredly delivered, will not take. And why should we think that there is so great difference between other men's reasonings prevailing with our wills, and our own reason's way of prevailing?

Now, all this being so, that there must be a strong, lively, loud, pressing, importunate reasoning, and not only a true reasoning and concluding; hence it is that there is necessary to the soul, not only so much illumination as may discover the truth, but so much as may discover it clearly and fully, and may show us the weight of the matter, as well as the truth, and especially as may be still an exciter of the understanding to do its duty, and may quicken it up to do it vigorously; and therefore to this end Christ giveth his Spirit to his people, to strive against the flesh. The soul is seated in all the body, but we certainly and sensibly perceive that it doth not exercise or act alike in all; but it understandeth in and by the brain, or animal spirits; and it willeth, and desireth, and loveth, and feareth, and rejoiceth, in and by the heart; and doubtless the vital spirits, or those in the heart, are the soul's instrument in this work. Now, to procure a motion of the spirits in the heart, by the foremotion of the spirits in the brain, requires some strength in the first motion; and the more forcible it is, likely the more forcible will the motion in the heart be. This order and instrumentality in acting, is no disparagement to the soul; but is a sweet discovery of God's admirable and orderly works. Now, therefore, besides a bare act of understanding, there is necessary to this effectual prevailing with the will, that there be added that which we call consideration, which is a dwelling upon the subject, and is a serious, fixed, constant acting of the understanding, which therefore is likely to attain the effect: the use of this, and its power on the will and affections, and the reasons, I have showed you in the Fourth Part of this book. Hence it is, that let their wits be ever so great, yet inconsiderate men are ever wicked men; and men of sober, frequent consideration, are usually the most godly, and prevail most against any temptation; there being no more effectual means against any temptation, indeed, whether it be to omission or commission, than this setting reason forcibly a-work by consideration. The most considerate men are the most resolved and confirmed. So that besides a bare, cold conclusion of the understanding, though you call it practical, this consideration must give that force, and fixedness, and importunity, to your conclusions, which may make them stronger than all the sensitive solicitations to

the contrary, or else the soul will still follow the flesh. Now Christ will have his Spirit to excite this consideration; and to enable us to perform it more powerfully, and successfully, than else we should ever do. And thus the Spirit is Christ's solicitor in and to our souls; and by them it advanceth Christ's interest, and maintaineth it in the saints, and causeth it to prevail against the interest of the flesh. Where he prevaieth not in the main, as well as striveth, there is yet no saving grace in that soul. Whatever pleadings, or strivings, or reasonings, or concludings, there may be in and by the soul on Christ's side, yet if the flesh's interest be still greater and stronger in the soul than Christ's, that soul is in a state of wrath: he may be in a hopeful way to come to a safer condition, and not far from the kingdom of God, and almost persuaded to be a Christian; but if he die in that state, no doubt he shall be damned. He may be a Christian by common profession; but, in a saving sense, no man is a Christian, in whose soul any thing hath a greater and higher interest than God the Father, and the Mediator.

Sect. XII. Prop. 12. Therefore the sincerity of saving grace lieth materially, not in the bare nature of it, but in the degree; not in the degree, considered absolutely in itself, but comparatively, as it is prevalent against its contrary.

I cannot expect that the reader should suddenly receive this truth, though of so great consequence, that many men's salvation are concerned in it, as I shall show anon, till I have first made it plain. Long have I been poring on this doubt, whether the sincerity of grace, and so the difference between an hypocrite and a true Christian, do materially consist in the nature, or only in the degree; whether it be physically considered a gradual or specifical difference; and I never durst conclude that it lay but in the physical degree. 1. Because of the seeming force of the objections, which I shall answer anon; and, 2. Because of the contrary judgment of those divines whom I highest valued. For though I am ashamed of my own ignorance, yet I do not repent that I received some things upon trust from the learned, while I was learning and studying them, or that I

took them by a human faith, when I could not reach to take them by a divine faith. Only, I then must hold them but as opinions; but not absolutely as articles of my creed. But I am now convinced of my former mistake; and shall therefore endeavour to rectify others, being in a matter of such moment.

You must remember, therefore, that I have showed you already, that God hath not made an act, considered in its mere nature, without considering it as in this prevailing degree, to be the condition of salvation; and that a wicked man may perform an act for the nature of it, which a true Christian may. But let us yet consider the proposition more distinctly.

Divines use to give the title of saving grace to four things.

The first is, God's purpose of saving us, and the special love and favour which he beareth to us, and so his will to do special good. This is, indeed, most principally, properly, and by an excellency, called saving grace. It is the fountain from which all other grace doth proceed; and by this grace we are elected, redeemed, justified, and saved. Now, the question in hand, is not concerning this grace which is immanent in God, where no doubt there is no specific difference, when divines accord that there is no diversity or multiplicity at all, but perfect unity, allowing still the unsearchable mystery of the Trinity; therefore, I rest confident that no solid divine will say, that God's common love or grace to the unsanctified, doth by a natural specification differ from his special love and grace to his chosen, as they are in God.

The second thing which is commonly called saving grace, is, the act of God, by which the Spirit infuseth or worketh the special, habitual saving gifts in the soul; not the effect, for that I shall next mention, but the act of the Holy Ghost, which worketh this effect. This is called *gratia operans*, working grace; as the effect in us is called *gratia operata*, grace wrought in us. Now,

1. This is none of it we inquire after in the question in hand, when we ask, 'Whether the truth of grace lie only in the comparative or prevailing degree?'

2. If it were, yet there is here no place for such a doubt. 1. Because no man can prove such a natural, specific difference in the acts of God, nor will, I think, affirm them. 2. Especially, because in the judgment of great divines, there is no such act of God at all distinct from his essence and immanent, eternal acts; so that this is the same with the former. God doth not need, as man, to put forth any act, but his mere willing it for the producing of any effect. If man will have a stone moved, his will cannot stir it; but it must be the strength of his arm: but God doth but will it, and it is done; as Dr. Twisse once or twice saith, but Bradwardine and the Thomists peremptorily maintain. Now, God's will is his essence, and he never did begin or cease to will any thing, though he will the beginning or ceasing of things. He willed the creation of the world and the dissolution of it at once from eternity; though he willed from eternity, that it should be created and dissolved in time; and so the effect only doth begin and end, but not the cause. This is our ordinary, metaphysical divinity. If any vulgar reader think it beyond his capacity, I am content that he move in a lower orb. But we must not feign a natural, specific difference of acts in God.

The third thing which we commonly call saving grace is, the special effects of this work of the Spirit on the soul, commonly called habitual grace, or the Spirit in us, or the seed of God abiding in us, or our real holiness, or our new nature.

Now, 1. Our question is not directly and immediately of this, 'Whether common and special grace do differ more than by the fore-mentioned degree:' for this is not it which a Christian searcheth after immediately, or directly, in his self-examination. For habits, as Suarez and others conclude, are not to be felt of themselves, but only by their acts. We cannot know that we are disposed to love God, but

by feeling the stirrings of love to him. So that it is the act that we must directly look for, and thence discern the habit.

2. But if any man will needs put the question of this habitual grace only, though it be not that I speak of principally, yet I answer him, that no man doubteth but that common grace containeth good dispositions, as special grace containeth habits. Now, who knoweth not that a disposition and a habit do differ but in degree? A carnal man, by the help of common grace, hath a weak inclination to good, and a strong inclination to evil; or, if you will speak properly (for the will cannot choose evil as evil, but as a seeming good), he hath a weak inclination to spiritual and heavenly, superior good, and a strong inclination to fleshly, earthly, inferior good; whereupon the stronger bears down the weaker. But the regenerate have stronger inclinations to superior, spiritual good, than to inferior, fleshly good; and so the stronger in most temptations prevaieth. Now, what natural difference is here, but only in degree?

The fourth thing which we call saving grace, is, the exercise or acts which, from these habits or effectual inclinations, do proceed; and this is the grace which the soul must inquire after directly in its self-examination; and therefore this is it of which we raise the question, wherein the truth or sincerity of it doth consist? There are, indeed, other things without us which may yet be called saving grace, as redemption and donation (commonly called the imputation) of Christ's righteousness, and so remission, justification, &c.; but because every one may see that our question is not of these, I will not stand to make more mention of them. Now, for these acts of grace, who can produce any natural, specific difference between them, when they are special and saving, and when they are common and not saving? Is not common knowledge and special knowledge, common belief and special belief, all knowledge and belief; and is not belief the same thing in one and in another, supposing both to be real, though but one saving? Our understandings and wills are all, physically, of the like substance; and an act and an act, are accidents of the same kind; and we suppose the object to be the same: common

love to God, and special saving love to God, be both acts of the will upon an object physically the same.

But here, before I proceed further, I must tell you, that you must still distinguish between a physical or natural specification, and a moral; and remember, that our question is only of a physical difference, which I deny; and not of a moral, which I make no doubt of. And you must know, that a mere difference in degrees, in the natural respect, doth ordinarily constitute a specific difference in morality; and the moral good or evil of all our actions lieth much in the degree, to wit, that they be kept in the mean between the two extreme degrees: and so a little anger, and a great deal, and little love to creatures, and a great deal, though they differ but gradually in their natures, yet they differ specifically in morality; so that one may be an excellent virtue, and the other an odious vice: so, between speaking too much and too little; eating or drinking too much or too little; the middle between these is a virtue, and both extremes are vices; and yet, naturally, they differ but in degree. Virtue, as virtue, consisteth not in the bare nature of an act; but formally it consisteth in the agreement or conformity of our actions or dispositions to the rule or law, which determineth of their dueness; which law, or rule, prescribeth the mean or middle degree, and forbiddeth and condemneth both the extremes, in degree, where such extremes are possible, and we capable of them. So that there is a very great moral difference, such as may be termed specific, between those acts which naturally do differ only in degree. I say a moral, specific difference is usually founded in a natural, gradual difference: if you confound these two specifications, you will lose yourselves in this point, and injuriously understand me.

Furthermore, observe that I say, that sincerity of grace, as saving, lieth in the degree, not formally, but, as it were, materially only; for I told you before, the form of it consisteth in their being the condition on which salvation is promised. The form which we inquire after, is a relation. As the relation of our actions to the precept is the form of their virtuousness, viz., when they are such as are commanded; so

the relation of them to the promise, is the form of them, as saving, and so as justifying: but because this promise giveth not salvation to the act considered in its mere being, and natural sincerity, but to the act as suited to its object, in its essential respects; and that suitableness of the act, to the form of its object, consisteth only in a certain degree of the act, seeing the lowest degree cannot be so suited; therefore, I say that sincerity lieth, as it were, materially, only in the degree of those acts, and not in the bare and natural being of it.

Lastly, consider, especially, that I say not that sincerity lieth in the degree of any act in itself considered, as if God had promised salvation to us, if we love him so much, or up to such a height, considered absolutely; but it is, in the degree, considered comparatively, as to God compared with other things, and as other objects or commanders stand in competition with him; and so it is in the prevalency of the act or habit against all contraries.

Sect. XIII. Having thus explained my meaning herein, the clearing of all this to you, and fuller confirmation, will be best dispatched these three ways: 1. By exemplifying in each particular grace, and trying this rule upon them severally; 2. By examining some of the most ordinary marks, which have been hitherto delivered, and Christians use to take comfort in; 3. By inquiring what Scripture saith in the point. And, after these, I shall answer the objections that are against it, and then show you the usefulness and necessity of it, and danger of the contrary.

1. The graces of the spirit in man's soul, are either in the understanding, or in the will and affections. Those in the understanding, as knowledge, prudence, assent to God's word, called faith, &c., I make no question, are as truly grace, and as proper to the saints, as those in the will and affections. Divers err here on both extremes: some say that there is no special grace in the understanding, but in the will only; others say that all special grace is in the understanding, and that the will is capable of nothing but

freedom to choose or refuse, and that it ever follows the last dictate of the practical understanding, and therefore no more is needful but to inform the understanding; others say, both understanding and will are the subject of special, sanctifying grace, and that in both it must be sought after, and may be discerned. Between these extremes, I conceive this is the truth: Both understanding and will, that is, the whole soul, which both understandeth and willeth, is truly sanctified where either is truly sanctified; and the several acts of this sanctified soul, are called several actual graces. But though grace be in both faculties, as they are called, yet it is certainly discernible only in the will, and not in the understanding; for all acts, as they are merely in the understanding, are but imperfectly virtuous, being but preparatory and introductory to the will, where they are digested and perfected, as I said before. Dr. Stoughton's words are these: "As for my own part, I could never comprehend that which divines have gone about, to be able to put a characteristical difference in the nature of knowledge, that a man may be able to say such a knowledge is, and such a knowledge is not, a saving knowledge; but only as I use to express it, 'The sun is the greater light, but the moon hath greater influence on waterish bodies;' so knowledge, let it be what it will, if it be good and saving, it hath an influence on the soul. There may be a great deal of knowledge, which is not vital and practical, which carrieth not the heart and affections along with it; and they that have it, have not saving knowledge. But they that have the least degree of knowledge, so it be such as hath an influence to draw the heart and affections along with it, love God, and obey God, it is solid and saving knowledge." So Dr. Stoughton, in his 'Righteous Man's Plea to Happiness,' pp. 38, 39.

And, for my part, I know no mark, drawn from the mere nature of knowledge, or belief, or any mere intellectual act, by which we can discern it from what may be in an unholy person. Those that think otherwise, use to say that the knowledge and belief which is saving, is deep, lively, operative, &c. I doubt not but this is true: but how, by the depth, we shall discern the saving sincerity directly, I know not: or how to discern it in the liveliness or operativeness, but only in its

operations and effects on the will and affections, I know not. Whether it be so deep and lively as to be saving, must not be discerned immediately in itself, but in its vital, prevalent operations on the will; so that I shall dismiss all the mere acts of the understanding out of this inquiry, as being not such as a Christian can try himself immediately by: and for them that say otherwise, they place the sincerity of them in the depth and liveliness, that is, in the degree of knowledge and belief; for, no doubt, a wicked man may know and believe every particular truth which a Christian doth believe. Some learned men, I have heard, affirm, indeed, that no wicked man can believe Scripture to be the word of God; but that is a fancy that I think needs no confutation: the devils believe it, no doubt. If any say that saving knowledge is experimental, and other is not,

I answer: 1. Of matters of mere faith, we have no experience; as, that Christ is the second person, was incarnate, crucified, buried, rose again, &c.

2. Of common practicals, wicked men have experience; as, that the world is deceitful, that man is prone to sin, that Satan must be resisted, &c.

3. For those other special, internal experiences, which denominate a Christian's knowledge experimental, the mark of sincerity lieth in the experienced thing itself, rather than the knowledge of it; for example, a Christian knows experimentally what the new birth is, what it is to love God, to delight in him, &c. Now, the mark lieth not properly in his knowledge of these, but in that love, delight, and renovation, which he possesseth, and so knoweth.

It follows, therefore, that we inquire into the acts of the will, and see wherein their saving sincerity doth consist; for, except the acts of the understanding, all that may be called saving is reducible to those two words of St. Paul, 'to will,' and 'to do.' For all the other acts of the soul are nothing but velle et nolle; either exercised on the object as

variously presented and apprehended, as absent or present, facile or difficult, &c., or exercised with that vigour as moveth the spirits in the heart, and denominates them affections or passions.

First, therefore, to begin with the proper act of willing, though of ourselves, without grace, no man ever willeth God in Christ; yet on this willing hath God laid our salvation, more than on any other qualification or act in ourselves whatsoever. And yet simply to will God, to will Christ, to will heaven, is not a saving act; but when God and the creature stand in competition, to will God above all, and to will Christ above all, and heaven before earth, this is to will savingly; that is, to will God as God, the chief Good, and cause of good; to will Christ as Christ, the only Saviour and chief Ruler of us; and to will heaven as the state of our chief happiness in the glorifying enjoyment of God. Not that all the sincerity of these acts lieth in the understandings apprehending God to be the chief Good and cause of it, and Christ to be the only Redeemer, &c.; for a man may will that God, and that Christ, who is thus apprehended by the understanding, and yet not will him as he is thus apprehended. The understanding may overgo the will, and the will not follow the understanding; and this is no saving willing. If a man do know and believe ever so much, that God is the chief Good, and do not chiefly will him, as the devils may so believe, it is not saving; yea, it is a great question whether many do not will God (not only who is apprehended to be the supreme Good, but also) as he is apprehended to be the supreme Good, and yet love something else more than him, which they know not to be the chief Good, but, against their knowledge, are drawn to it by the force of sensuality, and so these men perish for all their willing; for, certainly, if God have not ordinarily the prevailing part of the will, that man's state is not good. When I say such men will God, as apprehended to be the chief Good, I mean they will him under such a notion, but not with an act of will answering that notion. I refer the term 'as' to the understanding's apprehension, but not to the will's action, as if it loved him as the chief Good should be loved or willed; for that is it that is wanting, for which they perish. I propound this to the consideration of the judicious; for it is certainly

worth our consideration. It depends on the common question, whether the will always follow the last dictate of the practical intellect, which I shall handle elsewhere. What I have said of willing, you may easily perceive, may be said of desire and love, which are nothing but willing. Love is an intense, absolute willing of good, as good; desire, also, is a willing it as a good not yet enjoyed: therefore the saving sincerity of both lieth in the same point. Many that perish, desire God, and Christ, and heaven; and love God, and Christ, and heaven; but they desire and love some inferior good more. He that desireth and loveth God sincerely and savingly, desireth him and loveth him above all things else; and there lieth his sincerity.

I need not instance in hope, fear, hatred, or any of the acts or passions of the irascible; for they are therefore good, because they set against the difficulty, which is in the way of their attainment to that good which they will and love; and so their chief virtuousness lieth in that will or love which is contained in them, or supposed to them. A wicked man may fear God, but the fear of men or temporal evils is more prevalent in the trial. He may have an aversion of his mind from sin, or some low degree of hatred; it is known to him to be evil, and to hurt him; but his love to it is greater, and prevaieth against his hatred. If any doubt whether a wicked man may have the least hatred of sin, yea, as sin, or as displeasing to God, we are sure of it two ways.

1. By daily experience of some drunkards, that when they are considering how much they sin against God, and wrong themselves, their hearts rise against their own sin, (especially if the temptation be out of sight,) and they will weep, and be ready to tear their own flesh; and yet yield to the next temptation, and live weekly in committing of the sin.

2. By the experience of our own hearts before our sanctification (those that were not sanctified in infancy), many have felt that their hearts had some weak degree of dislike and hatred to the sin that captivated them. And I know divers swearers and drunkards that do

so hate the same sins in their children, that they are ready to fall on them violently if they commit them.

3. And we may know it by reason too. For whatsoever a man may know to be evil, that his will may have some hatred or aversion towards, though not enough; but a wicked man may know sin to be evil; therefore he may have some hatred to it. The will may sure follow the understanding a little way, though it do not far enough. But methinks those should not contradict this, that are for the will's constant determination by the understanding.

The like I may say also of repentance, so much of it as lieth in the will; that is, the will's turning from inferior good (which it formerly chose) to God, the supreme Good, whom it now chooseth: the sincerity of this lieth in the prevailing degree, for if it be not such a change as carrieth the will more now to God than the creature, but to God a little, and the creature still more, it is not saving. And if it be not a choosing of God before the creature, though it be a choosing of God in the second place, it will not serve turn. And for that repentance which consisteth in sorrow for sin: 1. If it be not to such a degree that it prevail over our delight in sin and love to it, it is not saving. Many wicked men do daily repent and sin. I have known men that would be drunk almost daily, and some seven or eight days continue in one fit of drunkenness before ever they were sober, and yet lament it with tears, and pray daily against it; and being men of much knowledge and able parts, would confess it, and condemn themselves in very moving language, and yet no means could keep them from it, but they have lived in it some ten, some twenty years. Who dare think that this was true repentance, when the apostle concludes, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die?" (Rom. 8:6, 13:2.) Yet I must tell you, that all these graces which are expressed by passions of sorrow, fear, joy, hope, love, are not so certainly to be tried by the passion that is in them, as by the will that is either contained in them, or supposed in them; not as acts of the sensitive, but of the rational appetite. I will not here stand on the question whether grace be in the sensitive or rational appetite, as its subject,

or both. Burgersdicius and others say, that moral virtue is in the sensitive only, but something like it in the will, but theological virtues are in the will. But, doubtless, if he do prove moral virtue to be in the sensitive, he will prove a proportionable measure of theological virtue to be there too. For there is no virtue, truly so called, which is not theological as well as moral.

But if there be any doubt whether unregenerate man may perform the same act as a true Christian, it will be especially about the two great and principal graces of faith and love. And for that of faith, I have said enough before. It consisteth, according to the judgment of most reformed divines, partly in the understanding, partly in the will. As it is in the understanding, it is called assent or belief: and for this I have showed before, that a wicked man may have it in some degree, and that grace, as it is in the understanding, cannot be discerned directly; but only as it thence produeeth those acts in the will wherein it may be discerned. There is no one truth which a true Christian may know, but a wicked man may also know it, though not with that lively degree of knowledge which will overrule the heart and life. Nor is there any one truth which a true Christian may believe, but a wicked man may also believe it. If any deny this, let them name me one. And do not our divines confess as much against the papists, who place faith in bare assent? And do they not expound James's (the devils believe) of such an assent? If this were not so, it were an easy matter to try and know one's own sincerity, and so to have assurance of salvation? For we might presently name such or such an axiom, (as, that the Scripture is the word of God, or the like,) and ask whether we do know or believe this to be true, and so might quickly be resolved. For it is the heart or will that is deceitful above all things, but the bare acts of the understanding may more easily be discerned, as whether we know or assent to such an axiom or not; though I know also that even the understanding participateth of the guilefulness, and may be somewhat strange to itself.

But some will say that no wicked man can believe the pardon of his own sins, or assent to the truth of this axiom, 'My sins are pardoned.'

Answ. I confess, so many have harped on this string heretofore, that I am ashamed that the papists should read it in our writings, and thereby have that occasion of hardening them in their errors, and of insulting over the reformed doctrine. I confess, no wicked man (in sensu composito) can believe for the pardon of sin, or hath such a faith as pardon is promised to; but that they may believe their sins are pardoned, and seriously believe it, did not error make it necessary, I should be ashamed to bestow any words to prove it. 1. A wicked man may (in my judgment without any great difficulty) believe an untruth, especially which he would fain have to be true, though every untruth he cannot believe. But this is an untruth to every wicked man that his sins are pardoned, or, even by the Antinomian's confession, it is untrue of all wicked men not elected; and an untruth which he would fain have to be true, (for what man is so perverse in his fancy as to doubt whether a wicked man would have his sins pardoned,) therefore he may believe it. 2. That which is one of the chief pillars in the kingdom of the devil, and the master, deceiving, damning sin, is not surely inconsistent with a wicked man's condition: but even such is the ungrounded belief that his sins are pardoned (commonly called presumption, and false faith) therefore, &c. 3. If it be the main work of a skilful, faithful ministry, to beat wicked men from such an ungrounded belief, and experience tells us that all means will hardly do it, and yet that God doth it on all before he bring them by the ministry to true conversion, then surely it is more than possible for a wicked man to have such a belief. But Scripture, and a world of lamentable experience, prove the antecedent; what do such writings as. Hooker's, Bolton's, Whately's, &c. else drive at? therefore, &c. 4. Yea, that the actual pardon of our sins is not properly credendum, or a material object of faith, I have proved elsewhere, and therefore need not stand on it now.

2. And for those acts of faith which are directly in and by the will, I know not one of them, considered in the nature of the act, without the prevalent degree, which a wicked man may not perform. For the most proper and immediate, act, 'willing,' which containeth a choice of Christ, and a consent that he shall be ours, together with his

benefits, this I have before made manifest to be consistent with an unregenerate state. If any will affirm, that a wicked man cannot be willing to have pardon of all his sins, justification, and salvation from hell, I think it not worthy my writing six lines to confute them; sense will do it sufficiently. That this man cannot desire, or choose, or will, holiness, and glory with Christ, more heartily, strongly, and prevailingly, than his pleasures or inferior good, I easily acknowledge: for in that gradual defect consisteth his unsoundness. But that he may will, choose, accept, or desire, holiness and glory in a second place, next to his carnal delights or inferior good, is to me beyond doubt. And, accordingly, for the obtaining of these, he may will or accept of Christ himself that gives them. This I shall prove anon, when we speak of love.

And for that act of faith, which most affirm to be peculiarly the justifying act, that is, affiance, resting on Christ, recumbency, adherence, apprehension of him, &c., these, almost all metaphorical terms, contain, not one, but many acts, all which are most frequently found in the ungodly. For we undoubtedly know it; 1. By experience of ourselves whilst we were in their state; 2. And, by constant experience of the vilest sinners, that they not only undissemblingly rest on Christ, (that is, trust verily to be pardoned and saved by him, and expect it from him,) but also that this is the strongest encouragement to them in sinning, and we have need to lay all our batteries against this bulwark of presumption. Alas! to the grief of my soul, my frequent and almost daily experience forceth me to know this, whatsoever men write from their speculations to the contrary. I labour with my utmost skill to convince common drunkards, swearers, worldlings, &c., of their misery, and I cannot do it for my life; and this false faith is the main reason. They tell me, I know I am a sinner, and so are you, and all, as well as I. But if any man sin "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" I put my whole trust in him, and cast my salvation on him; for, "He that believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." If I tell them of the nature of true faith, and the necessity of obedience, they answer me that they know their own

hearts better than I, and are sure they do really rest on Christ, and trust him with their souls. And for obedience, they will mend as well as they can, and as God will give them grace; and, in the mean time, they will not boast as the Pharisee, but cry, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;" and that I shall never drive them from believing and trusting in Christ for mercy, because they be not so good as others, when Christ tells them that men are not justified by works, but by faith, and he that believeth shall be saved. This is the case of the most notorious sinners, many of them, and I am most confident they speak as they think: and from this ungrounded confidence in Christ, I cannot remove them. Where now is any difference in the nature of this affiance, and that of true believers? If you say that it brings not forth fruit, and therefore is unsound, that is true: but that is only an extrinsical difference in the effects, and speaks not the difference in the nature of the act itself. But I have spoken of this more fully elsewhere.

But the greatest doubt is, whether, in loving God and Christ as Mediator, there be not more than a gradual difference between the regenerate and unregenerate; and I shall show you that there is not: for it is undeniable that an unholy person may love God and the Mediator, and as undeniable that they cannot love God above all, till they are regenerate. The latter I take for granted. The former, if any deny, is thus proved: 1. That which the understanding apprehendeth to be good, both in itself and to the person, that the will may in some measure love. But an unregenerate man's understanding may apprehend God to be good, both in himself and to his person; therefore, he may in some measure love him. That wicked men may believe that God is good, is no more to be doubted of, than that they may believe there is a God. For he that believeth there is a God, must needs believe that he is good. And that he may believe that God is good to him also, is evident, thus: 1. Men know that they have all their temporal, corporal mercies from God, (which are to them the sweetest of all,) and therefore for these, and the continuance of them, they may apprehend God to be good to them, and so love him. 2. And Scripture and constant experience tell us, that it is usual with wicked

men, not only to apprehend the goodness of prosperity, but thence mistakingly to gather, that God doth specially favour and love them as his people to salvation. 3. Also, nothing is more common with them almost, than from the thoughts of God's mercifulness and goodness, and from mistaken seeming evidences in themselves, to conclude most confidently that their sins are pardoned, and that God will not condemn them, but will save them as certainly as any other. Also, that Christ having died in their stead, and made satisfaction for all their sins, they shall, through him, be pardoned, justified, and saved. Many a wicked man doth as confidently believe that God loveth him through Christ, and doth as confidently thank God daily in his prayers for vocation, adoption, justification, and assured hope of glory, as if they were all his own indeed. Nay, out of the apprehensions of some extraordinary love and mercy of God to him above others, he oft giveth thanks as the Pharisee, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as this publican." And, doubtless, all their apprehensions of love, may produce some love to God again. As the grounded faith and hope of the godly, produceth a solid saving love, so the ungrounded faith and hope of the wicked, produceth a slight and common love, agreeable to the cause of it. As Christ hath a common love to the better sort of wicked men, more than to the worst, he looked on the young man (Mark 13:21, 22) and loved him, and said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," so may such men have a common love to Christ, and that above the ordinary sort of the ungodly. For I am persuaded there is no man so wicked among us, who believeth, indeed, that Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour, but he hath some love to Christ, more or less. For, 4. God hath been pleased to give those advantages to the christian religion, above all other religions among us, which may easily procure some love to Christ from ungodly men. It is the religion of our country; it is a credit to be a Christian; it is the religion of our ancestors, of our parents, and dearest friends; it is that which princes favour, and all men speak well of. Christ is in credit among us; every man acknowledgeth him to be God, and the Redeemer of the world, and therefore on the same grounds, or better, as a Turk doth love and honour Mahomet, and a Jew, Moses, may a wicked Christian in some

kind love and honour Christ, yea, and venture his life against that man that will speak against him, as Dr. Jackson and Mr. Pink have largely manifested.

Sect. XIV. If any object that it is not God or Jesus Christ that these men love, but his benefits, I answer, it is God and the Redeemer for his benefits. Only here is the unsoundness, which undoes them: they love his inferior, earthly blessings better than him; and for this they perish.

Having thus viewed these several graces, and found that it is the prevalent degree wherein their sincerity, as they are saving, doth consist, I will next briefly try this point upon some of the ordinary marks of sincerity besides, that are given by divines; in which I shall not speak a word in quarrelling at other men's judgments, for I shall speak but of those that I was wont to make use of myself; but only what I conceive necessary to prevent the delusion and destruction of souls.

1. One mark of sincerity, commonly delivered, is this: to love the children of God because they are such. I the rather name this, because many a soul hath been deluded about it. Multitudes of those that since are turned haters and persecutors of the godly, did once, without dissembling, love them; yea, multitudes that are killing them by thousands, when they differ from them in opinion, or stand in the way of their carnal interest, did once love them, and do love others of them still. I have proved before, that a wicked man may have some love to Christ, and then no doubt but he may have some love to a Christian, and that for his sake. Quest. But may he love a godly man for his godliness? Answ. Yes, no doubt; those before mentioned did so. If a wicked man may have some degree of love to godliness, then he may have some degree of love to the godly for it; but that he may have some degree of love to godliness, is evident: 1. By experience of others, and of the godly before conversion, who know this was their own case; 2. The understanding of an ungodly man may know that grace and godliness is good, and therefore his will may in some

degree choose and effect it; 3. That which drew moral heathens so strongly to love men for their virtue and devotion, the same principle may as well draw a man that is bred among Christians to love a Christian for his virtues and devotion to Christ.

Object. But doth not the Scripture say, "that we know we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren?"

Answ. Yes; but then you may easily know it speaks of sincere love. So it saith, "Whoever believeth shall be saved;" and yet (Matt. 13.) Christ showeth that many believe, who yet fall away and perish, for want of deep rooting: so that the sincerity of this love also lieth in the degree; and, therefore, when the promise is made to it, or it made a mark of true Christians, you must still understand it of that degree which may be called sincere and saving. The difference lieth plainly here. An unsound Christian, as he hath some love to Christ, and grace, and godliness, but more to his profits, or pleasures, or credit in the world, so he hath some love to the godly, as such, being convinced that the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour; but not so much as he hath to these carnal things. Whereas the sound Christian, as he loves Christ and grace above all worldly things, so it is Christ in a Christian that he so loves, and the Christian for Christ's sake above all such things: so that when a carnal professor will think it enough to wish them well, but will not hazard his worldly happiness for them, if he were called to it; the sincere believer will not only love them, but relieve them, and value them so highly, that, if he were called to it, he would part with his profits, or pleasures, for their sakes. For example, in Queen Mary's days, when the martyrs were condemned to the fire, there were many great men that really loved-them, and wished them well, and their hearts grieved in pity for them, as knowing them to be in the right; but yet they loved their honour, and wealth, and safety, so much better, that they would sit on the bench, yea, and give sentence for their burning, for fear of hazarding their worldly happiness. Was this sincere, saving love to the brethren? Who dares think so, especially in them that went on to do thus? Yet, what did it want but a more intense

degree, which might have prevailed over their love to carnal things? Therefore, Christ will not, at the last judgment, inquire after the bare act of love; but, whether it so far prevailed over our love to carnal interest as to bring us to relieve, clothe, visit them, &c., and Christ in them: that is, to part with these things for them when we are called to it. Not that every man that loves the godly is bound to give them all he hath in their necessity; for God hath directed us in what order to bestow and lay out our estates; and we must begin at ourselves, and so to our families, &c.; so that God may call for our estates some other ways. But mark it, you false-hearted worldlings, he that doth not so much love the ordinary sort of the godly, and Christ in them, as that he can find in his heart to bestow all his worldly substance for their relief, if God did not require him otherwise to expend it, this man hath no saving love to the godly. If, therefore, you would not cheat yourselves, as multitudes in this age have done, about your love to the brethren, try not by the bare act; but by the radicated, prevalent degree of your love.

2. Another ordinary mark of sincerity is this: when a man is the same in secret before God alone as he is in public before men, making conscience of secret as well as of open duties. But, no doubt, as many a godly man may be the more restrained from sin, and incited to good, from public, and perhaps carnal, motives, and so may be better, in appearance, publicly than he is in secret; for all men have some hypocrisy in them; so many an unregenerate man may make conscience of secret duties as well as open; yea, even of the thoughts of his heart. But, still, both secret duties and open are at the disposal of his carnal interest; for he will follow them no further than is consistent with that; so that this mark doth but show a man's sincerity in opposition to gross hypocrisy or dissembling, but not the sincerity of grace as it is saving.

3. Another ordinary mark of sincerity is thus delivered: when a man loves the closest and most searching preaching of the word, and that which putteth on to the highest degree of holiness. If he therefore love it because it putteth himself on to the highest degree of holiness,

and so far love it as that he is willing to be searched and put on by it; and if he therefore come to this light, that he may know his evil thereby, that he may mortify it, and may get Christ and his interest advanced in his soul; then it is a sign that he hath that degree which I have mentioned, wherein sincerity of saving grace doth consist: but many a wicked man doth love a searching preacher in other respects, and one that draweth men to the highest strain, partly because he may love to have other men searched, and their hypocrisy discovered, and be put on to the highest, and partly because himself may be of, and delight in, the highest strain of opinion, though his heart will not be true to his principles; nay, many a man thinks that he may the more safely be a little more indulgent to his carnal interest in heart and life, because he is of the strictest opinion, and therefore may love to hear the strictest preachers. His conscience is so blind, and dull in the application, that he can easily overlook the inconsistency of his judgment, and his heart and practice. O how glad is he when he hears a rousing sermon, because, thinks he, this meets with such a man or such a man; this fits the profane and lower sort of professors. So that, in these, respects, he may love a searching preacher.

4. Another common mark of sincerity is, when a man hath no known sin which he is not willing to part with. This is a true and sound mark indeed; for it signifieth not only a dislike, nor only a hatred of sin, but such a degree as is prevalent in the will, as I have before described: that Christ's interest in the will is prevalent over all the interest of the flesh. So that this is but, in effect, the same mark that I have before delivered. Except this willingness to part with all sin should be but a cold, inconstant wish, which is accompanied with a greater and more prevalent love to it, and desire to enjoy it; and then who dare think that it is any mark of saving sincerity? The like I might say of hatred to sin, love to good, and many the like marks, that the sincerity lieth in the prevalent degree: so also of the spirit of prayer, which is another mark. The spirit of prayer, so far as it is proper to the saints, lieth in desire after the things prayed for, with the other graces which in prayer are exercised; for an hypocrite may

have as excellent words as the best, and as many of them. Now these desires must be such prevalent desires as is aforesaid.

I think, if I could stand to mention all the other marks of grace, so far as I remember, it would appear that the life and truth of them all lieth in this one, as being the very point wherein saving sincerity doth consist, viz., in the prevalency of Christ's interest in the soul, above the interest of inferior good; and so in the degree, not in the bare nature of any act.

Sect. XV. 3. To this end, let us but briefly inquire further into the scripture way of discovering sincerity, and see whether it do not fully confirm what I say. Christ saith, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me," &c. (Matt. 10:37.) So Luke 14:26: "If any man come to me, and hate not" (that is, love not less) "his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple: and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." So ver. 33: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Here, you see, sincerity is plainly laid, not in mere love to Christ, but in the prevalent degree of love, as Christ is compared to other things. And for obedience, Christ shows it. (Matt. 25; Luke 19:20, &c.) Therefore Christ saith, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter, and not be able." (Luke 13:24.) Seeking comes short of striving, in the degree. And Paul saith, "They which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the price: so run that ye may obtain." (1 Cor. 9:24.) So ver. 26, 27, and Heb. 12:1. And Christ commandeth), "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." (Matt. 6:33.) Showing plainly, that the saving sincerity of our seeking lieth in this comparative degree; in preferring God's kingdom before the things below. So he saith, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth" (not in comparison), "but for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son will give you." (John 6:27.) So Heb. 11:6, 14, 16, 25, 26, 35, and 13:14; Col. 3:1; Rom. 2:7; Luke 17:33, and 12:30, 31; Am. 5:4, 8, 14; Isa. 58:2, 3, and

1:17; Prov. 8:17; Psal. 109:2.) Also, an hundred places might be produced, wherein Christ sets himself still against the world as his competitor, and promiseth life on the condition that we prefer Him before it. To this end are all those precepts for suffering, and bearing the cross, and denying ourselves, and forsaking all. The merchant that buyeth this pearl, must sell all that he hath to buy it, though he give nothing for it. All the beginning of Rom. 8, as ver. 1–14, do fully show that our work and warfare lieth in a perpetual combat between the flesh and spirit, between their several interests, motives, ends, and desires; and that which prevaieth shows what we are. When the flesh prevaieth, finally, it is certain death: and where the Spirit prevaieth, it is certain life. What can be more plain than that sincerity of grace, as saving, is here placed in the comparative or prevailing degree? So also Gal. 5:17, 24: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other. But they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof." Therefore are we charged, to make no provision for the flesh to satisfy its lusts. (Rom. 13:14.) So 1 John 2:16; Ephes. 2:3; Gal. 5:16–19; John 1:13, and 3:6. And Christ shows fully, (Matt. 13:5, 23, &c.,) that the difference between those that fall away, and those that persevere, proceedeth hence, that one giveth deep rooting to the Gospel, and the other doth not. The seed is rooted in both, or else it would not bring forth a blade and imperfect fruit; but the stony ground gives it not deep rooting, which the good ground doth. Doth not this make it as plain as can be spoken, that sincerity lieth in degree, and not in any physical difference either of habits or acts? The like may be gathered from all those texts of Scripture, where salvation is promised to those that overcome, or on condition of overcoming; not to all that fight, but to all that overcome; as Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 13; 21:7: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." So 1 John 5:4, 5: "He that is born of God, overcometh the world. And they overcame the wicked one." (1 John 2:13; 4:4.) So Luke 11:22. And the state of wicked men is described by being overcome by sin and the world. (2 Pet. 2:19, 20.) Fighting is the same action naturally in both; but the valiant, strong, and constant,

conquer; when the feeble, faint, and cowardly, and impatient, do turn their backs, and are overcome. So Christ saith, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Now violence is not any distinct action, but a different degree of action. Nor can you say that all these places speak only of outward action. For no doubt but it is inward violence more than outward, and the inward actions of the soul intended, more than the motions of the body, which lay hold on the kingdom, and make us conquerors. So the saints are described in Scripture by such gradual and prevalent different acts. As David; "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in earth that I desire in comparison of thee." (Psalm 73:26, 27.) "Thy loving kindness is better than life." (Psalm 63:3.) "The Lord is my portion," &c. A wicked man may esteem God and his loving kindness; but not as his portion, nor better than life. So the wicked are called "lovers of pleasure more than God." (2 Tim. 3:4.) The godly may love pleasure, but not more than God. The Pharisees loved the praise of men more than the honour which is from God. (John 12:43.) A godly man may love the praise of men, but not more, &c. See also, Job 3:21, 23:12; Psalm 47, 19:10, 52:3, 119:72. Very many more texts might be produced which prove this point, but these may suffice.

Sect. XVI. 5. The next thing which I have to do is, to answer those objections which may be brought against it, and which, I confess, have sometime seemed of some weight to myself.

Object. 1. Do not all divines say that it is not the measure of grace, but the truth; not the quantity, but the quality, that we must judge ourselves by? And doth not Christ say that he despiseth not the day of small things, and that he will not quench the smoking flax; and if we had faith, which is as a grain of mustard-seed, we may do wonders, &c.

Answ. All this is true of sincere grace, but not of unsincere. Now I have showed you that except it be of a prevalent degree, it is not savingly sincere. If you love God a little, and the world a deal more,

will any man dare to think that it is a sincere saving love, when the Scripture saith, "He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him?" that is, there is no sincere saving love in him; for no doubt the young man had some love to Christ that yet forsook him, because he loved the world more: or else, 1. Christ would not have loved him; 2. Nor would the man have gone away from him in sorrow. But if you love Christ ever so little more than the world or inferior good, though it be but as a grain of mustard-seed, it will be saving, and Christ will accept it. Cicero can tell you that friendship, or the sincerity of love to a friend, consisteth not in every act and degree of undissembled love. If a man love you a little, and a thousand men much more, or if he love his wealth so much better than you, that he cannot find in his heart to be at any loss for your sake, this man is not your friend; he doth truly love you, but he hath no true, sincere friendship or friendly love to you; for that consisteth in such a degree as will enable a man to do and suffer for his friend. If a woman love her husband without dissembling, but yet loves twenty men better, and prostitutes herself to them, she hath true love, but no true conjugal love to her husband; for that consisteth in an higher degree. In a word, lay Christ, as it were, in one end of the balance in your estimation, and all your carnal interest, and all inferior good, in the other, and see which you love most; and every grain of love which Christ hath from you more than the world and inferior things, he will accept it as sincere: and in this sense you must not judge of yourselves by the measure of your grace, but by the truth: that is, not by any higher degree, if you have once that degree which makes it true and saving. And I do not think that you will meet with any sober divine that will tell you, that if you will love God ever so little without dissembling, yet he will accept it, though you love your lusts before him. Nor will any sober man tell you that if you love the godly without dissembling, God will accept it, though you love your carnal interest so much better; that if they hunger or thirst, or are naked, or in want, you cannot find in your heart to relieve them: or if they be in prison for a good cause, you dare, not be seen to visit them.

Object. 2. But, perhaps you will say, If this be so, then there is no specific difference between saving grace and common.

Answ. I told you before that you must distinguish betwixt a physical specification, and a moral. The confounding of our physics and ethics in divinity, hath made and continued abundance of controversies, and much confusion. In a word, there is a moral, specific difference grounded but in a physical, gradual difference, both of habits and acts, as is already more fully opened.

Object. 3. But, you may say, If there be such a difference in degrees, then how can a man know the truth of his grace, or ever get assurance; for who can discern just the parting point? Who can say, 'Just such a degree of love or faith is sincere and saving, and the next degree short of it is not?'

Answ. This objection being of most weight, I shall answer it in these propositions:

1. Where the prevailing degree is not discernible, there no true assurance can be had, in an ordinary way; and where it is very hard to discern the degree, there it will be as hard to get assurance.

2. Therefore, those that have the smallest degree of saving grace, do not use to have any assurance of salvation. Assurance is the privilege of stronger Christians, and not of weak ones, or of all that shall be saved. A little is hardly discernible from none in nature.

3. And it seemeth that the reason of God's disposal herein is very evident: for if God should let men clearly see the least measure of love, faith, fear, or obedience, that is saving; and the greatest measure of sin that will stand with sincerity, and say, 'Just so far thou mayst sin, or mayst deny me thy love, and yet be saved and sincere,' then it might have been a strong temptation to men to sin as far as ever they may, and to neglect their graces. I know some will say that assurance breeds not security. But that great measure of corruption which liveth with our small measure of grace, will make

assurance an occasion of security and boldness in sinning. A strong Christian may bear and improve assurance, but so cannot the weakest; and therefore God useth not to give assurance to weakest Christians.

But, then, mistake me not, but remember that by weak Christians I do not mean those that are weak in gifts, and common parts and expressions; nor by strong Christians, those that excel in these. Those are weak Christians that have no more love to God, nor desire after Christ, than will just stand with sincerity; and that have as much love to the world and flesh, and take as much liberty to sin, as ever will stand with salvation. And those are strong Christians who strongly love God, and have mortified and mastered their corruptions.

4. Where grace is thus strong and in a great degree, there it is easily discernible, and therefore to such, assurance is ordinary, except in a fit of temptation, revolting, or desertion.

5. But the chief part of my answer is this: It is not the degree of grace absolutely in itself considered, wherein sincerity doth consist, nor which we must inquire after in trial, but it is the degree in a comparative sense; as when we compare God and the creature, and consider which we desire, love, fear, &c., more; and, therefore, here it is far easier to try by the degree. You know that gold is not current except it be weight as well as pure metal. Now, if you put your gold in one end of the scales, and nothing in the other, you cannot judge whether it be weight or not; but if you put the weights against it, then you may discern it. If it be downright weight, you may discern it without either difficulty or doubt. If it be but a grain overweight, you may yet discern it; though it is possible it may be so little, that the scales will scarcely turn, and then you will not discern so easily, which is the heavier end. But if it want much, then you will as easily on the other side discern the defectiveness. So thus here: if God had said absolutely, 'So much love you must have to me, or you cannot be saved,' then it were hard to know when we reach the degree. But you

must, as I said, put Christ and heaven in one end, and all things below in the other, and then you may well find out the sincerity in the degree. Every grain that Christ hath more than the creature, is sincere and saving.

Sect. XVII. 6. Lastly, having thus given you my judgment in this great point, I will give you some hint of the necessity of it, and the danger of mistaking in this case.

And, 1. I am certain that the misunderstanding of this point hath occasioned the delusion of multitudes of men: even common profane men (much more those that are not far from the kingdom of God), when they hear that it is not the quantity or measure of grace, that we must try by, but the quality, and that the least seed or spark is saving as well as the greatest degree, they are presently confident of the soundness of their state. Alas, how many have I known thus deceived! When they have heard that the least true desire is accepted with God for the deed, they knew that they had desires that were not counterfeit, and therefore doubted not but God did accept them, when in the mean time their desire to pleasure, and profits, and honour, was so much stronger, that it overcame their weak desires after God and goodness, and made them live in the daily practice of gross sin: and they knew not that the sincerity of their desire did lie in the prevailing degree. God doth indeed accept the will for the deed, and the best are fain to cry out with Paul, "To will is present with me, but to do I find not;" in regard of those higher parts of spiritual duty, and in the avoiding of divers infirmities and passions; but then it is only the prevailing bent and act of the will which is thus accepted.

So have, I know, multitudes been deceived by their small degree of love to the godly, hearing that the least was a certain sign of grace, and knowing themselves to love them without counterfeiting, who yet have since been carried to be their constant persecutors, and shed their blood; the like I may say of other marks. And doth it not concern people, then, to be better grounded in this?

2. And, doubtless, the mistake of this hath caused many sincere Christians to take up their comforts on deceitful grounds, which accordingly prove deceitful comforts, and leave them oft in a sorrowful case (though not in a damnable), when they come to make use of them. Satan knows how to shake such ill-grounded comforts, and he usually doth it in a man's greatest agonies, letting them stand till then, that he may have advantage by their fall for our greater terror. When he can put a poor Christian to a loss many times that hath the soundest evidences, what may he do by those that either have none but unsound ones, or know them not at least?

3. Moreover, the ignorance of this truth hath caused some ministers to wrong the holy God, and abuse poor souls, and misapply the promises; absolving those whom God condemneth, by mistaking the meaning of that saying, "That the least degree is saving as well as the greatest;" which is true only of the least prevailing degree, but not of the greatest that it overmastered by the prevalency of its contrary.

4. And to my knowledge this hath been no small hinderance to many to keep them from fruitfulness and growth in grace. They have been more securely contented with their low degree: whereas if they had known that their very sincerity lieth in the prevalency of the degree, they would have looked more after it. For them that say that assurance will make men strive for increase, I answered before: If there were no contrary corruption in strength in us, then I confess it would be as they say.

5. And lastly, the ignorance of this hath been no small cause of keeping the godly in low degrees of assurance and comfort, by keeping them from the right way of attaining them. If they had considered, that both the saving sincerity of their graces lieth in the prevailing degree, and also that the higher degree they attain the clearer and more unquestionable will be their evidence, and consequently, the easier and more infallible will be their assurance; this would have taught them to have spent those thoughts and hours in labouring after growth in grace, which they spent in inquiring

after the lowest degree which may stand with sincerity, and in seeking for that in themselves which was almost undiscernible.

To conclude, this doctrine is exceedingly comfortable to the poor soul that groans, and mourns, and longs for Christ, and knows that though he be not what he should and would be, yet he would be what he should be, and had rather have Christ than all the world. God hath the prevailing degree of this man's will, desire, and love.

And as necessary is this doctrine for caution to all, that as they love their souls, they take heed how they try and judge of their condition by the bare nature of any dispositions or actions, without regard to the prevalency of degree.

I advise all Christians, therefore, in the fear of God, as ever they would have assurance and comforts that will not deceive them, that they make it the main work of their lives to grow in grace, to strengthen and advance Christ's interest in their souls, and to weaken and get down the interest of the flesh. And take heed of those pestilent principles of presumption, which would deceive you by the bare name and specious title of free grace; which make Christ, as justifier only, to be the object of justifying faith, and not Christ as your Head, Husband, or King; which tell you, that you have fulfilled the law, and satisfied it fully in Christ; and so need no more than to get the sense of pardon, or show your thankfulness; which tell you that if you do but believe that you are pardoned, and shall be saved, it shall be so indeed; as if this were the faith that must justify and save you. Deceivers may persuade you that Christ hath done all, and left you nothing to do for your justification or salvation; but you may easily see, from what I have said, that to mortify the flesh, to overcome Satan and the world, and to this end to stand always armed upon our watch, and valiantly and patiently to fight it out, is a matter of more concernment both to our assurance and salvation than many do consider. Indeed, it is so great a part of our very baptismal vow, and covenant of Christianity, that he that performeth it not, is yet no more than a nominal Christian, whatsoever his parts

and profession may be; and, therefore, that Christ whom they trusted in, and whose free grace they boasted of, will profess to these professors, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:23.) "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his; but let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;" (2 Tim. 2:19;) or else he shall never find himself among the sealed. "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience to righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16.) Not every one that seeketh, or runneth, or fighteth, much less that presumptuously believeth and trusteth, but he that overcometh, shall have the hidden manna, the white stone, the new name, the white raiment, and power over the nations; he shall eat of the tree of life in the midst of God's paradise, and shall not be hurt of the second death; he shall be confessed by Christ before his Father and the angels; yea, he will make him a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go out no more; he will write on him the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from his God: and his new name. Yea, he will grant him to sit with him in his throne, as himself overcame, and is set down with his Father in his throne. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, and 3:5, 12, 21, 22.)

CHAP. XII

USE IV.—The Reason of the Saint's Afflictions here

SECT. I. A further necessary use we must make of the present doctrine is this: to inform us why the people of God do suffer so much in this life. What wonder, when you see their rest doth yet remain! They are not yet come to their resting place. We would all fain have continual prosperity, because it is easy and pleasing to the

flesh; but we consider not the unreasonableness of such desires. We are like children, who, if they see any thing which their appetite desireth, do cry for it: and if you tell them that it is unwholesome, or hurtful for them, they are never the more quieted; or if you go about to heal any sore that they have, they will not endure you to hurt them, though you tell them that they cannot otherwise be healed; their sense is too strong for their reason, and therefore reason doth little persuade them. Even so it is with us when God is afflicting us. He giveth us reasons why we must bear them, so that our reason is often convinced and satisfied; and yet we cry and complain still, and we rest satisfied never the more. It is not reason, but ease that we must have. What cares the flesh for Scripture and argument, if it still suffer and smart? These be but wind and words, which do not move or abate its pain. Spiritual remedies may cure the spirit's maladies; but that will not content the flesh. But, methinks, Christians should have another palate than that of the flesh, to try and relish providences by: God hath purposely given them the Spirit to subdue and overrule the flesh. And therefore I shall here give them some reasons of God's dealing in their present sufferings, whereby the equity and mercy therein may appear: and they shall be only such as are drawn from the reference that these afflictions have to our rest, which being a Christian's happiness, and ultimate end, will direct him in judging of all estates and means. Though if we intended the full handling of this subject, abundance more considerations, very useful, might be added. Especially, we should direct Christians to remember the sin that procured them, the blood and mercy which sanctifieth them, the fatherly love that ordereth them, and the far greater sufferings that are naturally our due. But I shall now chiefly tell you, how they further the saints in the way to their rest.

Sect. II. 1. Consider then, that labour and trouble are the common way to rest, both in the course of nature and of grace; can there possibly be rest, without motion and weariness? Do you not travel and toil first, and then rest you afterwards? The day for labour goes first, and then the night for rest doth follow. Why should we desire the course of grace to be perverted, any more than we would do the

course of nature; seeing this is as perfect and regular as the other? God did once dry up the sea to make a passage for his people; and once made the sun in the firmament to stand still; but must he do so always, or as oft as we would have him? It is his established decree, "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Acts 14:22,) and "that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him." (2 Tim. 2:22.) And what are we, that God's statutes should be reversed for our pleasure? As Bildad said to Job, "Shall the earth be forsaken for thee, or the rock be removed out of his place?" (Job 18:4.) So, must God pervert his established order for thee?

Sect. III. 2. Consider also, that afflictions are exceedingly useful to us, to keep us from mistaking our resting place, and so taking up short of it. A Christian's motion heavenwards is voluntary, and not constrained. Those means, therefore, are most profitable to him, which help his understanding and will in this prosecution. The most dangerous mistake that our souls are capable of, is, to take the creature for God, and earth for heaven. And yet, alas, how common is this! and, in how great a degree are the best guilty of it! Though we are ashamed to speak so much with our tongues, yet how oft do our hearts say, 'It is best being here;' and how contented are we with an earthly portion! So that I fear, God would displease most of us more to afflict us here, and promise us rest hereafter, than to give us our heart's desire on earth, though he had never made us a promise of heaven: as if the creature without God, were better than God without the creature. Alas, how apt are we, like foolish children, when we are busy at our sports and worldly employments, to forget both our Father and our home! Therefore, is it a hard thing for a rich man to enter into heaven, because it is hard for him to value it more than earth, and not to think he is well already. Come to a man that hath the world at will, and tell him, 'This is not your happiness; you have higher things to look after;' and how little will he regard you! But when affliction comes, it speaks convincingly, and will be heard when preachers cannot. What warm, affectionate, eager thoughts, have we of the world till afflictions cool them, and moderate them!

How few and cold would our thoughts of heaven be, how little should we care for coming thither, if God would give us rest on earth! Our thoughts are with God, as Noah's dove was in the ark, kept up to him a little against their inclinations and desire; but when once they can break away, they fly up and down, over all the world, to see if it were possible to find any rest out of God; but when we find that we seek in vain, and that the world is all covered with the waters of instable vanity, and bitter vexation, and that there is no rest for the sole of our foot, or for the foot of our soul; no wonder, then, if we return to the ark again. Many a poor Christian, whom God will not suffer to be drowned in worldliness, nor to take up short of his rest, is sometimes bending his thoughts to thrive in wealth; sometimes he is enticed to some flesh-pleasing sin; sometimes he begins to be lifted up with applause; and sometimes, being in health and prosperity, he hath lost his relish of Christ, and the joys above; till God break in upon his riches, and scatter them abroad, or upon his children, or upon his conscience, or upon the health of his body, and break down his mount, which he thought so strong; and then, when he lieth in Manasseh's fetters, or is fastened to his bed with pining sickness, oh, what an opportunity hath the Spirit to plead with his soul! When the world is worth nothing, then heaven is worth something. I leave every Christian to judge by his own experience, whether we do not overlove the world more in prosperity than adversity; and whether we be not lother to come away to God, when we have what the flesh desireth here? How oft are we sitting down on earth, as if we were loth to go any further, till affliction calls to us, as the angel to Elijah, "Up, thou hast a great way to go." How oft have I been ready to think myself at home, till sickness hath roundly told me, I was mistaken! and how apt yet to fall into the same disease, which preyaileth till it be removed by the same cure! If our dear Lord did not put these thorns into our bed, we should sleep out our lives, and lose our glory: therefore doth the Lord sometimes deny us an inheritance on earth with our brethren, because he hath separated us to stand before him, and minister to him, and the Lord himself will be our inheritance, as he hath promised; as it is said of the tribe of Levi. (Deut. 10:8, 9.)

Sect. IV. 3. Consider also, that afflictions be God's most effectual means to keep us from straggling out of the way of our rest. If he had not set a hedge of thorns on the right hand, and another on the left, we should hardly keep the way to heaven. If there be but one gap open, without these thorns, how ready are we to find it, and turn out at it! but when we cannot go astray, but these thorns will prick us, perhaps we will be content to hold the way. When we grow fleshly, and wanton, and worldly, and proud, what a notable means is sickness, or other affliction, to reduce us! It is every Christian, as well as Luther, that may call affliction one of his best schoolmasters. Many a one, as well as David, may say by experience, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I (sincerely) kept thy precepts." (Psal. 119:76.) As physicians say of bodily destruction, so may we of spiritual, "that peace killeth more than war." Read Nehem. 9. Their case is ours. When we have prosperity, we grow secure and sinful; then God afflicteth us, and we cry for mercy, and purpose reformation; but after we have a little rest, we do evil again, till God take up the rod again, that he may bring us back to his law. (Nehem. 9:22, 29.) And thus, prosperity, and sinning, and suffering, and repenting, and deliverance, and sinning again, do run all in a round; even as peace breeds contention, and that breeds war, and that, by its bitterness, breeds peace again. Many a thousand poor recovered sinners may cry, 'Oh, healthful sickness! oh, comfortable sorrows! oh, gainful losses! oh, enriching poverty! oh, blessed day that ever I was afflicted!' It is not only the pleasant streams, and the green pastures, but his rod and staff also, that are our comfort; (Psal. 23;) though I know it is the word and Spirit that do the main work; yet certainly the time of suffering is so opportune a season, that the same word will take then, which before was scarce observed. It doth so unbolt the door of the heart, that a minister, or a godly man, may then be heard, and the word may have easier entrance to the affections. Even the threats of judgment will bring an Ahab, or a Nineveh, into their sackcloth and ashes, and make them cry mightily unto God. Something, then, will the feeling of those judgments do.

Sect. V. 4. Consider also, that afflictions are God's most effectual means to make us mend our pace in the way to our rest. They are his rod, and his spur; what sluggard will not awake and stir when he feeleth them? It were well, if mere love would prevail with us, and that we were rather drawn to heaven than driven; but seeing our hearts are so bad that mercy will not do it, it is better to put on with the sharpest scourge, than loiter out our time till the doors are shut. (Matt. 25:3, 5, 10.) Oh, what a difference is there betwixt our prayers in health and in sickness; betwixt our prosperity and our adversity repentings! He that before had not a tear to shed, or a groan to utter, now can sob, and sigh, and weep his fill; he that was wont to lie like a block in prayer, and scarce minded what he said to God, now, when affliction presseth him down, how earnestly can he beg! how doth he mingle his prayers and his tears! how doth he purpose and promise reformation! and cry out, what a person he will be, if God will but hear him, and deliver him. Alas! if we did not sometimes feel the spur, what a slow pace would most of us hold towards heaven! and if we did not sometimes smart by affliction, how dead and blockish would be the best men's hearts! Even innocent Adam is liker to forget God in a paradise, than Joseph in a prison, or Job upon a dunghill: even as Solomon is like enough to fall in the midst of pleasure and prosperity, when the most wicked Manasses in his irons may be recovered. As Dr. Stoughton saith, "We are like to children's tops, that will go but little longer than they are whipped." Seeing, then, that our own vile natures do thus require it, why should we be unwilling that God should do us good by so sharp a means? Sure that is the best dealing for us, which surest and soonest doth further us to heaven. I leave thee, Christian, to judge by thy own experience, whether thou dost not go more watchfully, and lively, and speedily, in thy way to rest, in thy sufferings, than thou dost in thy more pleasing and prosperous state. If you go to the vilest sinner on his dying bed, and ask him, 'Will you now drink, and whore, and scorn at the godly, as you were wont to do?' you shall find him quite in another mind. Much more then will affliction work on a gracious soul.

Sect. VI. 5. Consider further, it is but this flesh which is troubled and grieved, for the most part, by affliction: and what reason have we to be so tender of it? In most of our sufferings the soul is free, further than we do wilfully afflict it ourselves. Suppose thou be pinched by poverty, it is thy flesh only that is pinched. If thou have sores or sicknesses, it is but the flesh that they assault; if thou die, it is but that flesh that must rot in the grave. Indeed, it useth also to reach our hearts and souls, when the body suffereth; but that is, because we pore upon our evils, and too much pity and condole the flesh; and so we open the door, and let in the pain to the heart ourselves, which else could have gone no further than the flesh; God smites the flesh, and therefore we will grieve our spirits; and so multiply our grief, as if we had not enough before. O if I could but have let my body have suffered alone in all the pining and paining sicknesses which God laid upon it, and not have foolishly added my own self-tormenting fears, and cares, and sorrows, and discontents; but have quieted and comforted my soul in the Lord, my Rock and Rest; I had escaped the far greater part of the afflictions. Why is this flesh so precious in our eyes; why are we so tender of these dusty carcasses; is flesh so excellent a thing; is it not our prison; and what, if it be broken down, is it not our enemy; yea, and the greatest that ever we had; and are we so fearful lest it be overthrown; is it not it that hath so long hampered and clogged our souls, and tied them to earth; and enticed them to forbidden lusts and pleasures: and stolen away our hearts from God; was it not it, that longed for the first forbidden fruit; and must needs be tasting, whatever it cost? And still it is of the same temper; it must be pleased, though God be displeased by it, and ourselves destroyed. It maketh all God's mercies the occasion of our transgressing, and draweth poison from the most excellent objects. If we behold our food, it enticeth to gluttony; if drink, to drunkenness; if apparel, or any thing of worth, to pride; if we look upon beauty, it enticeth to lust; if upon money or possessions, to covetousness. It causeth our very spiritual love to the godly, to degenerate into carnal; and our spiritual zeal, and joy, and other graces; it would make all carnal like itself. What are we beholden to this flesh for, that we are so loth that any thing should ail it? Indeed, we must not wrong it

ourselves, for that is forbidden us; nor may we deny it any thing that is fit for a servant, that so it may be useful to us, while we are forced to use it. But if God chastise it for rebelling against him and the Spirit, and it begin to cry and complain under this chastisement, shall we make the suffering greater than it is, and take its part against God? Indeed, the flesh is very near to us, we cannot choose but condole its sufferings, and feel somewhat of that which it feeleth. But is it so near as to be our chiefest part; or can it not be sore, but we must be sorry; or cannot it consume and pine away, but our peace and comfort must consume with it; what, if it be undone, are we therefore undone? or if it perish and be destroyed, do we therefore perish? O fie upon this carnality and unbelief, which are so contradictory to the principles of Christianity! surely, God dealeth the worse with this flesh, because we so overvalue and idolise it. We make it the greatest part of our care and labour to provide for it, and to satisfy its desires; and we would have God to be of our mind, and to do so too. But as he hath commanded us "to make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the desires or lusts thereof;" (Rom. 13:14;) so will he follow the same rule himself in his dealings with us; and will not much stick at the displeasing of the flesh, when it may honour himself, or profit our souls. The flesh is aware of this, and perceives that the word and works of God are much against its desires and delights, and therefore is it also against the word and works of God: it saith of the word, as Ahab of Micaiah, "I hate it, for it doth not speak good concerning me, but evil." (1 Kings 22:8.) There is such an enmity betwixt this flesh and God, "that they that are in the flesh cannot please him, and the carnal mind is enmity against him; for it is not subject to his law, nor indeed can be:" so inconsistent is the pleasing of the flesh and the pleasing of God, that he hath concluded, "that to mind the things of the flesh, or to be carnally minded, is death; and if we live after the flesh, we shall die: but if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live." (Rom. 8:4-8, 13.)

So that there is no likelihood that ever God's dealings should be pleasing to the flesh; no more than its works are pleasing to God. Why then, O my soul, dost thou side with this flesh, and say as it

saith, and complain as it complaineth? It should be part of thine own work to keep it down, and bring it in subjection; (1 Cor. 9:26, 27;) and if God do it for thee, shouldst thou be discontented? Hath not the pleasing of it been the cause of almost all thy spiritual sorrows? Why, then, may not the displeasing of it further thy joys? Should not Paul and Silas sing, because their feet were in the stocks, and their flesh yet sore with the last day's scourgings? (Acts 16.) Why, their spirits were not imprisoned, not scourged! Ah, unworthy soul, is this thy thanks to God for his tenderness of thy good, and for his preferring thee so far before the body! Art thou turned into flesh thyself by thy dwelling a few years in flesh, that thy joys and thy sorrows are most of them so fleshly? (Rom. 8:12.) Art thou so much a debtor to the flesh, that thou shouldst so much live to it, and value its prosperity? Hath it been so good a friend to thee, and to thy peace; or, is it not thy enemy as well as God's? Why dost thou look so sadly on those withered limbs, and on that pining body? Do not so far mistake thyself as to think its joys and thine are all one, or that its prosperity and thine are all one, or that they must needs stand or fall together. (Heb. 12:13.) When it is rotting and consuming in the grave, then shalt thou be a companion of the perfected spirits of the just; and when those bones are scattered about the churchyard, then shalt thou be praising God in rest. And, in the mean time, hast not thou food of consolation which the flesh knoweth not of; and a joy which this stranger meddleth not with? And do not think that, when thou art turned out of this body, that thou shalt have no habitation: art thou afraid thou shalt wander destitute of a resting place? Is it better resting in flesh than in God? Dost thou not know, that when this house of earth is dissolved, "thou hast a building with God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?" (2 Cor. 5:1, 2.) It would, therefore, better become thee earnestly to groan, desiring to be clothed upon with that. (Ver. 3, 4.) Is thy flesh any better than the flesh of Noah was? and yet, though God saved him from the common deluge, he would not save him from common death. Or, is it any better than the flesh of Abraham, Job, or David, or all the saints that ever lived? yet did they all suffer and die. Dost thou think that those souls which are now with Christ do so much pity their rotten or dusty

corpse, or lament that their ancient habitation is ruined, and their once comely bodies turned into earth? Oh! what a thing is strangeness and disaequaintance! It maketh us afraid of our dearest friends, and to draw back from the place of our only happiness; so was it with thee towards thy chiefest friends on earth: while thou wast unacquainted with them, thou didst withdraw from their society; but when thou didst once know them thoroughly, thou wouldst have been loth again to be deprived of their fellowship. And even so, though thy strangeness to God and another world do make thee loth to leave this flesh; yet, when thou hast been but one day or hour there, if we may so speak of that eternity, where is neither day nor hour, thou wouldst be full loth to return into this flesh again. Doubtless, when God, for the glory of his Son, did send back the soul of Lazarus into its body, he caused it quite to forget the glory which it had enjoyed, and to leave behind it the remembrance of that happiness, together with the happiness itself; or else it might have made his life a burden to him to think of the blessedness that he was fetched from, and have made him ready to break down the prison doors of his flesh, that he might return to that happy state again. O, then, impatient soul, murmur not at God's dealings with that body; but let him alone with his work and way. He knows what he doth; but so dost not thou: he seeth the end; but thou seest but the beginning. If it were for want of love to thee, that he did thus chastise thy body, then would he not have dealt so by all his saints. Dost thou think he did not love David and Paul, or Christ himself? or, rather, doth he not chasten because he loveth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth? (Heb. 12:4–8, 10, 11; Matt. 6:23; Rom. 8:6–8; 1 Cor. 2:2, 10–14.) Believe not the flesh's reports of God, nor its commentaries upon his providences. It hath neither will nor skill to interpret them aright: not will; for it is an enemy to them. They are against it, and it is against them. Not skill; for it is darkness: it savoureth only the things of the flesh; but the things of the spirit it cannot understand, because they are spiritually discerned. Never expect then that the flesh should truly expound the meaning of the rod. It will call love, hatred; and say, God is destroying, when he is saving: and murmur, as if he did thee wrong, and used thee hardly, when he is showing

thee the greatest mercy of all. Are not the foul steps the way to rest, as well as the fair? yea, are not thy sufferings the most necessary passages of his providence? And though, for the present, they are not joyous, but grievous; yet, in the end, do they bring forth the quiet fruits of righteousness to all those that are exercised thereby. (Heb. 12:11.) Hast thou not found it so by former experience, when yet this flesh would have persuaded thee otherwise? Believe it then no more, which hath misinformed thee so oft; for, indeed, there is no believing the words of a wicked and ignorant enemy. Ill-will never speaks well; but when malice, viciousness, and ignorance, are combined, what actions can expect a true and fair interpretation? This flesh will call love, anger; and anger, hatred; and chastisements, judgments. It will tell thee, that no man's case is like thine; and if God did love thee, he would never so use thee. (Psalm 116:11.) It will tell thee, that the promises are but deceiving words, and all thy prayers and uprightness are vain. (Psalm 73:13–15.) If it find thee sitting among the ashes, it will say to thee, as Job's wife, "Dost thou yet retain thine integrity?" (Job 2:8–10.) Thus will it draw thee to offend against God, and the generation of his children. It is a party, and a suffering party, and therefore not fit to be the judge. If your child should be the judge when and how oft you should chastise him, and whether your chastisement be a token of fatherly love, you may easily imagine what would be his judgment. If we could once believe God, and judge of his dealings by what he speaks in his word, and by their usefulness to our souls, and reference to our rest, and could stop our ears against all the clamours of the flesh, then we should have a truer judgment of our afflictions.

6. Lastly, consider, God doth seldom give his people so sweet a foretaste of their future rest as in their deep afflictions. He keepeth his most precious cordials for the time of our greatest faintings and dangers. To give them to such men that are well and need them not, is but to cast them away: they are not capable of discerning their working or their worth. A few drops of divine consolation in the midst of a world of pleasure and contents, will be but lost and neglected, as some precious spirits cast into a vessel or river of

common waters. The joys of heaven are of unspeakable sweetness; but a man that overflows with earthly delights is scarce capable of tasting their sweetness. They may easilier comfort the most dejected soul, than him that feeleth not any need of comfort, as being full of other comforts already. Even the best of saints do seldom taste of the delights of God, and pure, spiritual, unmixed joys, in the time of their prosperity, as they do in their deepest troubles and distress. God is not so lavish of his choice favours as to bestow them unseasonably. Even to his own will he giveth them at the fittest time, when he knoweth that they are needful, and will be valued, and when he is sure to be thanked for them, and his people rejoiced by them. Especially, when our sufferings are more directly for his cause, then doth he seldom fail of sweetening the bitter cup. Therefore have the martyrs been possessors of the highest joys, and therefore were they in former times so ambitious of martyrdom. I do not think that Paul and Silas did ever sing more joyfully, than when they were sore with scourgings, and were fast in the inner prison, with their feet in the stocks. (Acts 16:24, 25.) When did Christ preach such comforts to his disciples, and leave them his peace, and assure them of his providing them mansions with himself, but when he was ready to leave them, and their hearts to be sorrowful because of his departure? When did he appear among them, and say, "Peace be unto you," but when they were shut up together for fear of the persecuting Jews? When did the room shake where they were, and the Holy Ghost come down upon them, and they lift up their voices in praising God, but when they were imprisoned, convented, and threatened for the name of Christ? (Acts 4:24, 31.) When did Stephen see heaven opened, but when he was giving up his life for the testimony of Jesus? (Acts 7:55.) And though we be never put to the suffering of martyrdom, yet God knoweth that in our natural sufferings we need support. Many a Christian that hath waited for Christ, with Simeon in the temple, in duty and holiness all his days, yet never finds him in his arms till he is dying, though his love was fixed in their hearts before; and they that wondered they tasted not of his comforts, have then, when it was needful, received abundance. And, indeed, in time of prosperity, that comfort which we have is so mixed, according to the mixed causes of

it, that we can very hardly discern what of it is carnal and what is spiritual. But when all worldly comforts and hopes are gone, then that which is left is most likely to be spiritual. And the Spirit never worketh more sensibly and sweetly than when it worketh alone. Seeing, then, that the time of affliction is the time of our most pure, spiritual, heavenly joy, for the most part, why should a Christian think it so sad a time? Is not that our best estate wherein we have most of God? Why else do we desire to come to heaven? If we look for a heaven of fleshly delights, we shall find ourselves mistaken. Conclude, then, that affliction is not so bad a state for a saint in his way to rest as the flesh would make it. Are we wiser than God? Doth not he know what is good for us better than we? Or is he not as careful of our good as we are of our own? Ah! woe to us if he were not much more; and if he did not love us better than we love either him or ourselves.

Sect. VIII. But let us hear a little what it is the flesh can object.

1. 'Oh!' saith one, 'I could bear any other affliction save this: if God had touched me in any thing else, I could have undergone it patiently; but it is my dearest friend, or child, or wife, or my health itself,' &c.

I answer, It seemeth God hath hit the right vein, where thy most inflamed, distempered blood did lie: it is his constant course to pull down men's idols, and take away that which is dearer to them than himself. There it is that his jealousy is kindled; and there it is that thy soul is most endangered. If God should have taken from thee that which thou canst let go for him, and not that which thou canst not; or have afflicted thee where thou canst bear it, and not where thou canst not; thy idol would neither have been discovered nor removed. This would neither have been a sufficient trial to thee, nor a cure; but have confirmed thee in thy soul-deceit and idolatry.

Object. 2. Oh! but, saith another, if God would but deliver me out of it yet, I could be content to bear it: but I have an incurable sickness;

or, I am likely to live and die in poverty, or disgrace, or the like distress.

I answer, 1. Is it nothing that he hath promised, it shall work for thy good; (Rom. 8:28;) and that, with the affliction, he will make a way to escape: that he will be with thee in it; and deliver thee in the fittest manner and season? 2. Is it not enough that thou art sure to be delivered at death, and that with so full an advancing deliverance? Oh! what cursed unbelief doth this discover in our hearts! that we would be more thankful to be turned back again into the stormy, tumultuous sea of the world, than to be safely and speedily landed at our rest; and would be gladder of a few years' inferior mercies at a distance, than to enter upon the eternal inheritance with Christ. Do we call God our chief Good, and heaven our happiness; and yet is it no mercy or deliverance to be taken hence, and put into that possession?

Object. 3. Oh! but, saith another, if my affliction did not disable me for duty, I could bear it; but it maketh me useless, and utterly unprofitable.

Answ. 1. For that duty which tendeth to thy own personal benefit, it doth not disable thee, but is the greatest quickening help that thou canst expect. Thou usest to complain of coldness, and dulness, and worldliness, and security: if affliction will not help thee against all these, by warning, quickening, rousing thy spirit, I know not what will. Surely thou wilt repent thoroughly, and pray fervently, and mind God and heaven more seriously, either now or never. 2. And for duty to others, and for thy service to the church, it is not thy duty when God doth disable thee. He may call thee out of the vineyard in this respect, even before he call thee by death. If he lay thee in the grave, and put others in thy place to do the service, is this any wrong to thee, or doth it beseem thee to repine at it? Why so, if he call thee out before thy death, and let thee stand by, and set others to do the work in thy stead, shouldst thou not be as well content? Must God do all the work by thee? Hath he not many others as dear to him, and as

fit for the employment? But, alas! what deceitfulness lieth in these hearts! When we have time, and health, and opportunity, to work, then we loiter, and do our Master but very little service; but when he layeth affliction upon us, then we complain that he disableth us for his work, and yet perhaps we are still negligent in that part of the work which we can do: so, when we are in health and prosperity, we forget the public, and are careless of other men's miseries and wants, and mind almost nothing but ourselves. But when God afflicteth us, though he excite us more to duty for ourselves, yet we complain that he disableth us for our duty to others; as if, on the sudden, we were grown so charitable that we regard other men's souls far more than our own. But is not the hand of the flesh, in all this dissimulation, secretly thus pleading its own cause? What pride of heart is this, to think that other men cannot do the work as well as we; or, that God cannot see to his church, and provide for his people, without us?

Object. 4. Oh! but, saith another, it is the godly that are my afflieters: they disclaim me, and will scarcely look at me; they censure me, and backbite me, and slander me, and look upon me with a disdainful eye. If it were ungodly men, I could bear it easily: I look for no better at their hands: but when those that were my delight, and that I looked for daily comfort and refreshing from; when these shall be my grief, and as thorns in my sides; who can bear it?

Answ. 1. Whoever is the instrument, the affliction is from God, and the provoking cause from thyself; and were it not fitter then that thou look more to God and thyself? 2. Dost thou not know that the best men are still sinful in part, and that their hearts are naturally deceitful, and desperately wicked, as well as others? And this being but imperfectly cured, so far as they are fleshly, the fruits of the flesh will appear in them; which are, strife, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, seditions, heresies, envyings, &c. (Gal. 5:19–21.) So far, the best is a brier, and the most upright of them sharper than a thorny hedge: learn, therefore, a better use from the prophet: "Trust not too much in a friend, nor put confidence in a guide; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom, &c. But look rather for the

Lord, and wait for the God of thy salvation." (Micah 7:4–7.) It is likely thou hast given that love and trust to saints, which were due only to God, or which thou hast denied him, and then no wonder if he chastise thee by them. If we would use our friends as friends, God would make them our helps and comforts; but when once we make them our gods, by excessive love, delight, and trust, then he suffers them to prove Satans to us, and to be our accusers and tormentors. It is more safe to me to have any creature a Satan than a God; to be tormented by them, than to idolize them. Or perhaps the observation of the excellency of grace hath made thee forget the vileness of nature; and therefore God will have thee take notice of both. Many are tender of giving too much to the dead saints, that yet give too much to the living without scruple. Till thou hast learned to suffer from a saint, as well as from the wicked, and to be abused by the godly as well as the ungodly, never look to live a contented or comfortable life, nor ever think thou hast truly learned the art of suffering. Do not think that I vilify the saints too much in so saying: I confess, it is a pity that saints should suffer from saints; and it is quite contrary to their holy nature, and their Master's laws, who hath left them his peace, and made love to be the character of his disciples, and to be the first and great and new commandment; and I know that there is much difference between them and the world in this point; but yet, as I said, they are saints but in part, and therefore Paul and Barnabas may so fall out, as to part asunder, and upright Asa may imprison the prophet, call it persecution or what you please: Joseph's brethren, that cast him into a pit, and sold him to strangers for a slave, I hope were not all ungodly; Job's wife and friends were sad comforters; David's enemy was his familiar friend, with whom he had taken sweet counsel, and they had gone up together to the house of God. And know also that thy own nature is as bad as theirs, and thou art as likely thyself to be a grief to others. Can such ulcerous, leperous sinners, as the best are, live together, and not infect and molest each other with the smell of their sores? Why, if thou be a Christian, thou art a daily trouble to thyself, and art molested more with thy own corruptions than with any man's else: and dost thou take it so heinously to be molested with the frailties of others, when

thou canst not forbear doing more against thyself? For my part, for all our graces, I rather admire at that wisdom and goodness of God, that maintains the order and union we have amongst us; and that he suffereth us not to be still one another's executioners, and to lay violent hands on ourselves and each other. I dare not think that there is no one gracious that hath laboured to destroy others that were so in these late dissensions. Sirs, you do not half know yet the mortal wickedness of depraved nature. If the best were not more beholden to the grace of God without them, than to the habitual grace within them, you should soon see "that men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be put in the balance, they are lighter than vanity itself." (Psal. 62:7–9.) "For what is man, that he should be clean; and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints, and the heavens are not clean in his sight: how much more abominable and filthy is man, that drinketh up iniquity like water!" (Job 15:14–16.)

Object. 5. Oh, but if I had that consolation which you say God reserveth for our suffering times, I should suffer more contentedly; but I do not perceive any such thing.

Answ. 1. The more you suffer for righteousness' sake, the more of this blessing you may expect; and the more you suffer for your own evil doing, the longer you must look to stay till that sweetness come. When we have by our folly provoked God to chastise us, shall we presently look that he should fill us with comfort? That were, as Mr. Paul Bayn saith, "to make affliction to be no affliction." What good would the bitterness do us if it be presently drowned in that sweetness? It is well in such sufferings if you have but supporting grace, and your sufferings sanctified to work out your sin, and bring you to God.

2. Do you not neglect or resist the comforts which you desire? God hath filled precepts, and promises, and other of his providences, with matter of comfort; if you will overlook all these, and make nothing of them, and pore all upon your sufferings, and observe one cross more

than a thousand mercies, who maketh you uncomfortable but yourselves? If you resolve that you will not be comfortable as long as any thing aileth your flesh, you may stay till death before you have comfort.

3. Have your afflictions wrought kindly with you, and fitted you for comfort? Have they humbled you, and brought you to a faithful confession and reformation of your beloved sins; and made you set close to your neglected duties; and weaned your hearts from their former idols; and brought them unfeignedly to take God for their portion and their rest? If this be not done, how can you expect comfort? Should God bind up the sore while it festereth at the bottom? It is not mere suffering that prepares you for comfort, but the success and fruit of suffering upon your hearts.

I shall say no more on this subject of afflictions, because so many have written on it already, among which I desire you especially to read Mr. Bayn's letters, and Mr. Hughes' 'Dry Rod Blooming and Fruit-bearing,' and Young's 'Counter-poison.'

CHAP. XIII

USE V.—An Exhortation to those that have got Assurance of this Rest, or Title to it, that they would do all that they possibly can to help others to it also

SECT. I. Hath God set before us such a glorious prize as this everlasting rest of the saints is, and hath he made man capable of such an inconceivable happiness? Why then do not all the children of this kingdom bestir themselves more to help others to the enjoyment of it? Alas, how little are poor souls about us beholden to the most of us! We see the glory of the kingdom, and they do not; we see the misery and torment of those that miss of it, and they do not; we see them wandering quite out of the way, and know if they hold on they can never come there, and they discern not this themselves. And yet we will not set upon them seriously, and show them their danger and error, and help to bring them into the way that they may live. Alas, how few Christians are there to be found that live as men that are made to do good, and that set themselves with all their might to the saving of souls! No thanks to us if heaven be not empty, and if the souls of our brethren perish not for ever.

But because this is a duty which so many neglect, and so few are convinced that God doth expect it at their hands, and yet a duty of so high a concernment to the glory of God, and the happiness of men, I will speak of it somewhat the more largely, and show you, 1. Wherein it doth consist, and how to be done. 2. What is the cause that it is so neglected. 3. And then give some considerations, to persuade you to the performance of it, and others to the bearing of it. 4. And lastly, apply this more particularly to some persons whom it doth nearly concern. Of all these in order.

Sect. II. 1. I would have you, therefore, well understand what is this work which I am persuading you to: know, then, on the negative, 1. It

is not to invade the office of the ministry, and every man to turn a public preacher: I would not have you go beyond the bounds of your callings. We see, by daily experience, what fruits those men's teachings do bring forth, who run uncalled and thrust themselves into the place of public teachers, thinking themselves the fittest for the work, in the pride of their hearts, while they had need to be taught the very first principles of religion. How little doth God bless the labours of these self-conceited intruders!

Neither do I persuade you to a zealous promoting of factions and parties, and venting of uncertain opinions, which men's salvation is little concerned in. Alas, what advantage hath the devil lately got in the church by this imposture! The time that should be employed in drawing men's souls from sin to Christ, is employed in drawing them to opinions and parties. When men are fallen in love with their own conceits, and proudly think themselves the wisest, how diligently do they labour to get them followers! as if to make a man a proselyte to their opinions, were as happy a work as to convert him to Christ; and when they fall among the lighter, ignorant, un-sounder sort of professors, whose religion is all in their brain, and on their tongues, they seldom fail of their desired success. These men shall shortly know, that to bring a man to the knowledge and love of Christ, is another kind of work, than to bring him to be baptised again; or to be of such a church, or such a side. Unhappy are the souls that are taken in their snare! who, when they have spent their lives in studying and contending for the circumstantial of religion, which should have been spent in studying and loving the Lord Jesus, do in the end, reap an empty harvest suitable to their empty profession.

3. Nor do I persuade you to speak against men's faults behind their backs, and be silent before their faces, as the common custom of the world is. To tell other men of their faults, tendeth little to their reformation, if they hear it not themselves. To whisper out men's faults to others, as it cometh not from love, or from any honest principle, so usually doth it produce no good effect; for if the party hear not of it, it cannot better him; if he do, he will take it but as the

reproach of an enemy, tending to disgrace him, and not as the faithful counsel of a friend, tending to recover him; and as that which is spoken to make him odious, and not to make him virtuous. It tendeth not to provoke to godliness, but to raise contention; for "a whisperer separateth the chiefest friends;" (Prov. 16:28;) and how few shall we find that make conscience of this horrible sin, or that will confess it, and bewail it, when they are reprehended for it! especially if men are speaking of their enemies, or those that have wronged them, or whom they suppose to have wronged them; or if it be of one that eclipseth their glory, (Gen. 31:1; Psal. 41:7,) or that standeth in the way of their gain or esteem; or if it be one that differeth from them in judgment; or of one that is commonly spoken against by others; who is it that maketh any conscience of backbiting such as these? And you shall ever observe, that the forwarder they are to backbiting, the more backward always to faithful admonishing; and none speak less of a man's faults to his face for his reformation, than those that speak most of them behind his back, to his defamation. If ill-will or envy lie at the heart, it maketh them cast forth disgracing speeches as oft as they can meet with such as themselves, who will hear and entertain them. Even as a corrupt humour in the stomach provoketh a man to vomit up all that he taketh, while itself remaineth, and continueth the disease. (1 Sam. 22:9; Dan. 6:3; Rom. 1:29, 30; John 7:51.) It is Chrysostom's similitude.

So far am I from persuading, therefore, to this preposterous course, that I would advise you to oppose it wherever you meet with it. See that you never hear a man speaking against his neighbour behind his back, without some special cause or call, but presently rebuke him; ask him, whether he hath spoke those things in a way of love to his face: if he have not, ask him, how he dare to pervert God's prescribed order, who commandeth to rebuke our neighbour plainly, and to tell him his fault first in private, and then before witness, till he see whether he will be won or not; (Lev. 19:17; Matt. 18:15, 17;) and how he dare do as he would not be done by.

Sect. III. The duty therefore that I would press you to, is of another nature, and it consisteth in these things following. 1. That you get your hearts affected with the misery of your brethren's souls; be compassionate towards them; yearn after their recovery to salvation: if you did earnestly long after their conversion, and your hearts were fully set to do them good, it would set you a work, and God would usually bless it.

2. Take all opportunities that you possibly can, to confer with them privately about their states, and to instruct and help them to the attaining of salvation. And lest you should not know how to manage this work, let me tell you more particularly what you are herein to do.

1. If it be an ignorant, carnal person that you have to deal with, who is an utter stranger to the mysteries of religion, and to the work of regeneration on his own soul, the first thing you have to do is, to acquaint him with these doctrines; labour to make him understand wherein man's chief happiness doth consist, and how far he was once possessed of it, and what law and covenant God then made with him, and how he broke it, and what penalty he incurred, and what misery he brought himself into thereby; teach him what need men had of a Redeemer, and how Christ in mercy did interpose and bear the penalty, and what covenant now he hath made with man, and on what terms only salvation is now to be attained, and what course Christ taketh to draw men to himself, and what are the riches and privileges that believers have in him.

If, when he understandeth these things, he be not moved by them, or if you find that the stop lieth in his will and affections, and in the hardness of his heart, and in the interest that the flesh and the world have got in him, then show him the excellency of the glory which he neglecteth, and the intolerableness of the loss of it, and the extremity and eternity of the torments of the damned, and how certainly they must endure them, and how just it is for their wilful refusals of grace, and how heinous a sin it is to reject such free and abundant mercy, and to tread underfoot the blood of the covenant; show him the certainty, nearness, and terrors of death and judgment, and the

vanity of all things below which now he is taken up with, and how little they will bestead him in that time of his extremity; show him that by nature he himself is a child of wrath, an enemy to God, and by actual sin much more; show him the vile and heinous nature of sin, the absolute necessity he standeth in of a Saviour, the freeness of the promise, the fulness of Christ, the sufficiency of his satisfaction, his readiness to receive all that are willing to be his; the authority and dominion which he hath purchased over us; show him also the absolute necessity of regeneration, faith, and holiness of life, how impossible it is to have salvation by Christ without these, and what they are, and the true nature of them. If, when he understandeth all this, you find his soul enthralled in presumption and false hopes, persuading himself that he is a true believer, and pardoned, and reconciled, and shall be saved by Christ; and all this upon false grounds, or merely because he would have it so, which is a common case; then urge him hard to examine his state; show him the necessity of trying, the danger of being deceived, the commonness and easiness of mistaking, through the deceitfulness of the heart, the extreme madness of putting it to a blind adventure, or of resting in negligent or wilful uncertainty; help him in trying himself; produce some undeniable evidences from Scripture; ask him, whether these be in him or not? whether ever he found such workings or dispositions in his heart? urge him to a rational answer; do not leave him till you have convinced him of his misery, and then seasonably and wisely show him the remedy. If he produce some common gifts, or duties, or work, know to what end he doth produce them; if to join with Christ in composing him a righteousness, show him how vain and destructive they are; if it be by way of evidence to prove his title to Christ, show him how far a common work may reach, and wherein the life of Christianity doth consist, and how far he must go further, if he will be Christ's disciple. In the mean time, that he be not discouraged with hearing of so high a measure, show him the way by which he must attain it; be sure to draw him to the use of all means; set him a hearing and reading of the word, calling upon God, accompanying the godly; persuade him to leave his actual sin, and to get out of all ways of temptation, especially to forsake ungodly

company, and to wait patiently on God in the use of means; and show him the strong hopes that in so doing he may have of a blessing, this being the way that God will be found in.

If you perceive him possessed with any prejudicate conceits against the godly, and the way of holiness, show him their falsehood, and with wisdom and meekness answer his objections.

If he be addicted to delay the duties he is convinced of, or laziness and stupidity to endanger his soul, then lay it on the more powerfully, and set home upon his heart the most piercing considerations, and labour to fasten them as thorns in his conscience, that he may find no ease or rest till he change his state.

Sect. IV. But because in all works the manner of doing them is of greatest moment, and the right performance doth much further the success, I will here adjoin a few directions, which you must be sure to observe in this work of exhortation, for it is not every advice that useth to succeed, nor any manner of doing it that will serve the turn. Observe, therefore, these rules:

1. Set upon the work sincerely, and with right intentions. Let thy ends be the glory of God in the party's salvation. Do it not to get a name or esteem to thyself, or to bring men to depend upon thee, or to get thee followers; do not, as many carnal parents and masters will do, viz., rebuke their children and servants for those sins that displease them, and are against their profit, or their humours: as, disobedience, unthriftiness, unmannerliness, &c., and labour much to reform them in these, but never seek in the right way that God hath appointed to save their souls; but be sure the main end be to recover them from misery, and bring them into the way of eternal rest. We have many reprovers, but the manner shows too plainly that there are few sincere. Pride bids men reprove others, to manifest a high estimation of themselves; and they obey; and proudly, censoriously, and contemptuously they do it. Passion bids them reprove, and passionately they do it. But it is those that do it in

compassion and tender love to men's souls, who do it in obedience to Christ, the most tender, compassionate lover of souls, and who imitate him in their measure and place, who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Sect. V. 2. Do it speedily: as you would not have them delay their returning, so do not you delay to seek their return. You are purposing long to speak to such an ignorant neighbour, and to deal with such a scandalous sinner, and yet you have never done it. Alas! he runs on the score all this while; he goes deeper in debt; wrath is heaping up; sin taketh rooting; custom doth more fasten him; engagements to sin grow stronger and more numerous; conscience grows seared; the heart grows hardened: while you delay, the devil rules and rejoiceth; Christ is shut out; the Spirit is repulsed; God is daily dishonoured, his law is violated, he is without a servant, and that service from him which he should have; the soul continues in a doleful state; time runs on; the day of visitation hasteth away; death and judgment are even at the door; and what, if the man die and miss of heaven, while you are purposing to teach him and help him to it? what, if he drop into hell while you are purposing to prevent it? If in case of his bodily distress, you must not bid him go, and come again to-morrow, when you have it by you, and he is in want, (Prov. 3:27, 28,) how much less may you delay the succour of his soul! If once death snatch him away, he is then out of the reach of your charity. That physician is no better than a murderer, that negligently delayeth till his patient be dead or past cure. Delay in duty is a great degree of disobedience, though you afterwards perform it: it shows an ill heart, that is indisposed to the work. Oh, how many a poor sinner perisheth, or grows rooted, and next to incurable in sin, while we are proposing to seek their recovery! Opportunities last not always. When thou hearest that the sinner is dead, or removed, or grown obstinate, will not conscience say to thee, 'How knowest thou but thou mightest have prevented the damnation of a soul?' Lay by thy excuses then, and all lesser business, and obey God's command, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any one be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13.)

Sect. VI. 3. Let thy exhortation proceed from compassion and love, and let the manner of it clearly show the person thou dealest with, that it hence proceedeth. It is not jeering, or scorning, or reproaching a man for his faults, that is a likely way to work his reformation; nor is it the right way to convert him to God, to rail at him, and vilify him with words of disgrace. Men will take them for their enemies that thus deal with them: and the words of an enemy are little persuading. Lay by your passion, therefore, and take up compassion, and go to poor sinners with tears in your eyes, that they may see you indeed believe them to be miserable, and that you do unfeignedly pity their case; deal with them with earnest, humble entreatings; let them see that your very bowels do yearn over them, and that it is the very desire of your hearts to do them good; let them perceive that you have no other end but the procuring of their everlasting happiness; and that it is your sense of their danger, and your love to their souls, that forced you to speak, even because you knew the terrors of the Lord, and for fear lest you should see them in eternal torments; say to them, 'Why, friend, you know it is no advantage of my own that I seek. The way to please you, and to keep your friendship, were to soothe you in your way, or to speak well of you, or to let you alone, but love will not suffer me to see you perish, and be silent; I seek nothing at your hands, but that which is necessary to your own happiness; it is yourself that will have the gain and comfort if you come in to Christ,' &c. If men would thus go to every ignorant, wicked neighbour they have, and thus deal with them, oh, what blessed fruit should we quickly see! I am ashamed to hear some lazy, hypocritical wretches, to revile their poor, ignorant neighbours, and separate from their company and communion, and proudly to judge them unfit for their society, before ever they once tried with them this compassionate exhortation. Oh, you little know what a prevailing course this were like to prove! and how few of the vilest drunkards or swearers would prove so obstinate, as wholly to reject or despise the exhortations of love! I know it must be God that must change men's hearts, but I know also that God worketh by means, and when he meaneth to prevail with men, he usually fitteth the means accordingly, and stirreth up men to plead with them in a

prevailing way, and so setteth in with his grace, and maketh it successful. Certainly, those that have tried, can tell you by experience, that there is no way so prevailing with men as the way of compassion and love. So much of these as they discern in your exhortation, usually, so much doth it succeed with their heart; and, therefore, I beseech those that are faithful to practise this course. Alas! we see the most godly people among us, or at least those that would seem most godly, cannot bear a reproof that comes not in meekness and in love; if there be the least bitterness of passion, or relish of disgrace in it, they are ready to spit it out in your face; yea, if you do not so sugar your reproof with fair words, that it be liker to flattery than plain dealing, or liker a commendation than a reproof, they cannot well digest it, but their heart will rise up against you, instead of a thankful submission and a reformation; if it savour not liker to food than physic, it will hardly down with them, or they will soon vomit it up. What should we flatter one another for? It is now no time to flatter professors, when their sins have broke forth more shamefully than ever in the world; for my part, the most of them that I have been acquainted with yet are such. I meet not with one of a multitude that seem the most godly, but this is their very case; such heinous pride remaineth in the best. And do you expect then, that poor, ignorant, carnal sinners, should take that well that professors cannot endure; and should drink in those bitter reproofs as a pleasant draught, which you can scarcely pour into professors as a drench? Can you look that the same dealing should be saving to them, which you find to be exasperating and distempering to yourselves? Oh, that it were not too evident that the Pharisee is yet alive in the breasts of many thousands, that seem most religious, even in this one point of bearing plain and sharp reproof! They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. (Matt. 23:4.) So far are they from doing, in this, as they would be done by.

Sect. VII. 4. Another direction I would give you, is this: Do it with all possible plainness and faithfulness; do not daub with men, and hide

from them their misery or danger, or any part of it; do not make their sins less than they are, nor speak of them in an extenuating language; do not encourage them in a false hope or faith, any more than you would discourage the sound hopes of the righteous. If you see his case dangerous, tell him plainly of it: 'Neighbour, I am afraid God hath not yet renewed your soul, and that it is yet a stranger to the great work of regeneration and sanctification; I doubt you are not yet recovered from the power of Satan to God, nor brought out of the state of wrath, which you were born in, and have lived in; I doubt you have not chosen Christ above all, nor set your heart upon him, nor unfeignedly taken him for your sovereign Lord. If you had, sure you durst not so easily disobey him; you could not so neglect him and his worship in your family and in public; you could not so eagerly follow the world, and talk of almost nothing but the things of this world, while Christ is seldom mentioned or sought after by you. If you were in Christ, you would be a new creature; old things would be passed away, and all things would become new; you would have new thoughts, and new talk, and new company, and new endeavours, and a new conversation: certainly, without these you can never be saved. You may think otherwise, and hope better as long as you will, but your hopes will deceive you, and perish with you. Alas! it is not as you will, nor as I will, who shall be saved, but it is as God will; and God hath told us, "that without holiness none shall see him;" and "except we be born again, we cannot enter into his kingdom;" and "that all that would not have Christ reign over them, shall be brought forth and destroyed before him." (Heb. 12:14; John 3:3; Luke 19:27.) Oh! therefore look to your state in time. Thus must you deal roundly and faithfully with men, if ever you intend to do them good; it is not hovering at a distance in a general discourse, that will serve the turn; it is not in curing men's souls, as in curing their bodies, where they must not know their danger, lest it sadden them, and hinder the cure. They are here agents in their own cure, and if they know not their misery, they will never bewail it, nor know how much need they have of a Saviour. If they know not the worst, they will not labour to prevent it, but will sit still, or loiter till they drop into perdition, and will trifle out their time in delays till it be too late; and, therefore,

Speak to men, as Christ to the Pharisees, till they knew that he meant them: deal plainly, or you do but deceive and destroy them.

Sect. VIII. 5. And as you must do it plainly, so also, seriously, zealously, and effectually. The exceeding stupidity and deadness of men's hearts is such, that no other dealing will ordinarily work. You must call loud to awaken a man in a swoon or lethargy. If you speak to the common sort of men of the evil of their sin, of their need of Christ, of the danger of their souls, and of the necessity of regeneration, they will wearily and unwillingly give you the hearing, and put off all with a sigh, or a few good wishes, and say, 'God forgive us, we are all sinners,' and there is an end. If ever you will do them good, therefore, you must sharpen your exhortation, and set it home, and follow it with their hearts, till you have roused them up, and made them begin to look about them. Let them know that thou speakest not to them of indifferent things, nor about children's games, or worldlings' vanities, or matters of a few days' or years' continuance, nor yet about matters of uncertainty, which perhaps may never come to pass; but it is about the saving and damning of their souls and bodies, and whether they shall be blessed with Christ or tormented with devils, and that for ever and ever without any change; it is how to stand before God in judgment, and what answer to give, and how they are like to speed: and this judgment and eternal state they shall very shortly see, they are almost at it, yet a few more nights and days, and they shall presently be at that last day; a few more breaths they have to breathe, and they shall breathe out their last, and then as certainly shall they see that mighty change, as the heaven is over their heads, and the earth under their feet. O labour to make men know that it is mad jesting about salvation or damnation, and that heaven and hell be not matters to be played with, or passed over with a few careless thoughts. It is most certain that one of these days thou shalt be either in everlasting, unchangeable joy or torments; and doth it not awake thee? Is there so few that find the way of life, so many that go the way of death? Is it so hard to escape, so easy to miscarry? and that while we fear nothing but think all is well; and yet you sit still and trifle; why what

do you mean? What do you think on? The world is passing away; its pleasures are fading; its honours are leaving you; its profits will prove unprofitable to you; heaven or hell are a little before you; God is just and jealous; his threatenings are true; the great day of his judgement will be terrible; your time runs on; your lives are uncertain; you are far behindhand; you have loitered long; your case is dangerous; your souls are far gone in sin; you are strange to God; you are hardened in evil customs; you have no assurance of pardon to show; if you die tomorrow, how unready are you, and with what terror will your souls go out of your bodies! and do you yet loiter for all this? why, consider with yourselves: God standeth all this while waiting your leisure: his patience beareth, his justice forbearth; his mercy entreateth you; Christ standeth offering you his blood and his merits; you may have him freely, and life with him; the Spirit is persuading you; conscience is accusing and urging you; ministers are praying for you, and calling upon you; Satan stands waiting, when justice shall cut off your lives, that he may have you: this is your time: now or never. What! had you rather lose heaven than your profits or pleasures? Had you rather burn in hell than repent on earth? Had you rather howl and roar there, than pray day and night for mercy here? Or to have devils your tormentors, than to have Christ your governor? Will you renounce your part in God and glory, rather than renounce your cursed sins? Do you think a holy life too much for heaven, or too dear a course to prevent an endless misery? O friends, what do you think of these things? God hath made you men, and endued you with reason, do you renounce your reason where you should chiefly use it? In this manner you must deal roundly and seriously with men. Alas! it is not a few dull words, between jest and earnest, between sleep and waking, as it were, that will waken an ignorant, dead-hearted sinner. When a dull hearer and a dull speaker meet together, a dead heart and a dead exhortation, it is far unlike to have a lively effect. If a man fall down in a swoon, you will not stand trifling with him, but lay hands on him presently, and snatch him up, and rub him, and call aloud to him; if a house be on fire, you will not in a cold affected strain go tell your neighbour of it, nor go make an oration of the nature and danger of fire; but you will

run out, and cry, 'Fire, fire.' Matters of moment must be seriously dealt with. To tell a man of his sins as softly as Eli did his sons, reprove him so gently as Jehosaphat did Ahab, "Let not the king say so," doth usually as much harm as good. (1 Sam. 23; 1 Kings 22:8.) I am persuaded the very manner of some men's reproof and exhortation, hath hardened many a sinner in the way of destruction. To tell them of sin, or of heaven, or hell, in a dull, easy, careless language, doth make men think you are not in good sadness, nor do mean as you speak; but either you scarce think yourselves such things are true, or else you take them in such a slight and indifferent manner. O sirs, deal with sin as sin, and speak of heaven and hell as they are, and not as if you were in jest. I confess, I have failed much in this myself; the Lord lay it not to my charge. Lothness to displease men, makes us undo them.

Sect. IX. 6. Yet, lest you run into extremes, I advise you to do it with prudence and discretion. Be as serious as you can; but yet with wisdom. And especially you must be wise in these things following:

1. In choosing the fittest season for your exhortation, not to deal with men when they are in passion, or drink, or in public where they will take it for a disgrace. Men should observe when sinners are fittest to hear instructions. Physic must not be given at all times, but in season. Opportunity advantageth every work. It is an excellent example that Paul giveth us Gal. 2:2. He communicateth the Gospel to them, yet privately to them of reputation, lest he should run in vain. Some men would take this to be a sinful complying with their corruption, to yield so far to their pride and bashfulness, as to teach them only in private, because they would be ashamed to own the truth in public. But Paul knew how great a hinderance men's reputation is to their entertaining of the truth, and that the remedy must not only be fitted to the disease, but also to the strength of the patient, and that in so doing, the physician is not guilty of favouring the disease, but is praiseworthy for taking the right way to cure it; and that learners and young beginners must not be dealt with as open professors. Moreover, means will work easily if you take the

opportunity; when the earth is soft, the plough will enter. Take a man when he is under affliction, or in the house of mourning, or newly stirred by some moving sermon, and then set it home, and you may do him good. Christian faithfulness doth require us, not only to do good when it falls in our way, but to watch for opportunities of doing good.

2. Be wise also in suiting your exhortation to the quality and temper of the person. All meats are not for all stomachs: one man will vomit that up again in your face, which another will digest. 1. If it be a learned, or ingenious, rational man, you must deal more by convincing arguments, and less by passionate persuasions. 2. If it be one that is both ignorant and stupid, there is need of both. 3. If one that is convinced, but yet is not converted, you must use most those means that rouse up the affections. 4. If they be obstinate and secure, you must reprove them sharply. 5. If they be of timorous, tender natures, and apt to dejections or distractions, they must be tenderly dealt with. All cannot bear that rough dealing as some can. Love, and plainness, and seriousness, take with all: but words of terror some can scarce bear. This is (as we say of stronger physic, 'hellebore, colloquintida, &c. et nec puero, nec seni, nec imbecillo, sed robusto,' &c.) not fit for every complexion and state.

3. You must be wise also in using the aptest expressions. Many a minister doth deliver most excellent, necessary matter in such unsavoury, harsh, and unseeming language, that it makes the hearers loathe the food that they should live by, and laugh at a sermon that might make them quake: especially if they be men of curious ears and carnal hearts, and have more common wit and parts than the speaker. And so it is in private exhortation as well as public: if you clothe the most amiable, beautiful truth in the sordid rags of unbeseeming language, you will make men disdain it as monstrous and deformed, though it be the offspring of God, and of the highest nature.

Sect. X. 7. Let all your reproofs and exhortations be backed with the authority of God. Let the sinner be convinced that you speak not from yourselves, or of your own head. Show them the very words of Scripture for what you say. Turn them to the very chapter and verse where the sin is condemned and where the duty is commanded. Press them with the truth and authority of God. Ask them whether they believe that this is his word, and that his word is true. So much of God as appeareth in our words, so much will they take. The voice of man is contemptible, but the voice of God is awful and terrible. They can and may reject your words, they cannot dare reject the words of the Almighty. Be sure, therefore, to make them know that you speak nothing but what God hath spoken first.

Sect. XI. 8. You must also be frequent with men in this duty of exhortation; it is not once or twice that usually will prevail. If God himself must be constantly solicited, as if importunity could prevail with him when nothing else can, and therefore requires us always to pray, and not to wax faint, the same course, no doubt, will be most prevailing with men. Therefore, we are commanded "to exhort one another daily, and with all long suffering." As Lipsius saith, "The fire is not always brought out of the flint at one stroke; nor men's affections kindled at the first exhortation." And if they were, yet if they be not followed, they will soon grow cold again. Weary out sinners with your loving and earnest entreaties; follow them, and give them no rest in their sin. This is true charity, and this is the way to save men's souls; and a course that will afford you comfort upon review.

Sect. XII. 9. Strive to bring all your exhortation to an issue; stick not in the work done, but look after the success, and aim at the end in all your speeches. I have long observed it in ministers and private men, that if they speak ever so convincing and powerful words, and yet their hearts do not long after the success of them with the hearers, but all their care is over when they have done their speech, pretending that having done their duty, they leave the issue to God, these men do seldom prosper in their labours; but those whose very

heart is set upon the work, and that long to see it take for the hearer's conversion, and use to inquire how it speeds, God usually blesseth their labours, though more weak. Labour, therefore, to drive all your speeches to the desired issue. If you are reprovng a sin, cease not till (if it may be) you have got the sinner to promise you to leave it, and to avoid the occasions of it: if you are exhorting to a duty, urge the party to promise you presently to set upon it. If you would draw them to Christ, leave not till you have made them confess that their present unregenerate state is miserable, and not to be rested in; and till they have subscribed to the necessity of Christ, and of a change, and till they have promised you to fall close to the use of means. O that all Christians would be persuaded to take this course with all their neighbours that are yet in the flesh, that are enslaved to sin, and strangers to Christ!

Sect. XIII. 10. Lastly, Be sure that your examples may exhort as well as your words. Let them see you constant in all the duties that you persuade them to: let them see in your lives that difference from sinners, and that excellency above the world, which you persuade them to in your speeches. Let them see by your constant labours for heaven, that you do indeed believe that which you would have them to believe. If you tell others of the admirable joys of heaven, and yourselves do nothing but drudge for the world, and are as much taken up in striving to be rich, or as quarrelsome with your neighbours in a case of commodity, as any others, who will then believe you; or who will be persuaded by you to seek the everlasting riches? Will they not rather think, that you persuade them to look after another world, and to neglect this, that so you might have the more of it to yourself? Let not men see you proud, while you exhort them to be humble: nor to have a seared conscience in one thing, while you would have theirs tender in another. An innocent life is a continual, powerful reproof to the wicked: and the constant practice of a holy and heavenly life, is a constant disquietment to the conscience of a worldling, and a constant solicitation to him to change his course.

And thus I have opened to you the first and great part of this duty, consisting in private, familiar exhortation, for the helping of poor souls to this rest, that are out of the way, and have yet no title to it; and I have showed you also the manner how to perform it that you may succeed. I will now speak a little of the next part.

Sect. XIV. Besides the duty of private admonition, you must do your utmost endeavours to help men to profit by the public ordinances. And to that end you must do these things. First, Do your endeavours for the procuring of faithful ministers where they are wanting. This is God's ordinary means of converting and saving. How shall they hear without a preacher? Not only for your own sakes therefore, but for the poor miserable ones about you, do all you can to bring this to pass. If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. Where vision faileth, the people perish. Improve, therefore, all your interest and diligence to this end. Ride, and go, and seek, and make friends, till you do prevail; if means be wanting to maintain a minister, extend your purses to the utmost, rather than the means of men's salvation should be wanting. Who knoweth how many souls may bless you, who have been converted and saved by the ministry which you have procured? It is a higher and nobler work of charity, than if you gave all that you have to relieve their bodies: though both must be regarded, yet the soul in the first place. What abundance of good might great men do in this, if they were faithful improvers of their interests and estates, as men that believe God hath the chief interest, and will shortly call them to an account for their stewardship! What unhappy reformers hath the church still met withal, that instead of taking away the corruptions in the church, do diminish that maintenance which should further the work! If our ignorant forefathers gave it for the service of the church, and their more knowing posterity do take it away, without the least pretence of right to it; I doubt not but the pious intent of progenitors will more extenuate the fault of their ignorance, than the knowledge of their posterity will excuse their sacrilege. Alas, that the sad example of King Henry the Eighth's Reformation, and the almost miraculous consumption of the estates of impropiators,^h and the many hundred

congregations that live in woful darkness for want of maintenance for a ministry, should yet be no more effectual a warning to this age! If they take away most, and give back a little, we are beholden to their bounty. If a corrupt officer lose his interest, the church doth not lose hers. Here is a great talk of reducing the church to the primitive pattern: if so, I dare affirm that every church must have many ministers. And they that know wherein the work of the ministry doth consist, will no more wonder at that, than that a regiment of soldiers should have many officers. And how will that be, when they will scarcely afford maintenance for one? They are likelier to bring the church to the primitive poverty, than to the primitive pattern. If I were not known to be quite beyond their exceptions myself, I might not say so much, lest I were thought to plead my own interest; especially a dying man should be out of the reach of such accusations. But the Lord knoweth, that it is not a desire that ministers should be rich, that maketh me speak this; but earnest desire of the happiness of the church; nor do I mean the ministry only by the word "church." It is the people that are robbed and bear the loss, more than the ministers: ministers must and will have maintenance, or else men will set their children to other studies; when there is no other, the people must allow it themselves, or be without. What minister can well oversee, and watch over more than a thousand souls? Nor I think so many. Many congregations have four thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand, some fifty thousand, yea, seventy thousand. How many officers will the state maintain in an army of thirty thousand? I had almost said, the work of governing the church is greater, and hath need of as many. I would all Scripture and primitive patterns were well viewed in this. O happy reformation, if able godly men were put in places, or in right offices, without such diminution of the number or the maintenance! Or if a supply at present could not be had, yet should they not have overthrown the hopes of posterity. But to leave this digression, I hope those that God hath called to his work, will labour, nevertheless, for the shortness of their maintenance: and those of the people that can do no more, can yet pray the Lord of the harvest that

he would send forth labourers. And he that hath put that petition into our mouths, I hope will put the answer into our hands.

Sect. XV. 2. Yet it is not enough that you seek after teachers, but especially you must seek after such as are fitted for the work. An ignorant empiric that killeth more than he cureth, doth not so much differ from an able physician, as an unskilful minister from one that is able. Alas! this is the great defect among us: men that are fitted for the work indeed, are most wonders; one, or two, or three, or four in some counties is much. How few that have dived into the mysteries of divinity; or have thoroughly studied the most needful controversies; or are able to explain or maintain the truth! But only they store their memories with the opinions and phrases of those teachers that are in most credit, in common cases; and then they think they are divines: and every man that steps out of their common road, they can say that he is erroneous or heretical; but how to confute him they cannot tell. And almost as few that are well skilled in managing known truths upon the conscience. Alas! whence cometh this misery to the church? There is not a choice made of the most excellent wits, and those youths that are ripest in learning and religion: but some of them are so rich, that the ministry is too mean for them: and some so poor, that they have no maintenance to subsist on at the universities. And so every one that is best furnished to make a trade of the ministry, or whose parents have best affection to it, how unfit soever the child is, must be a minister: and those few, very few, choice wits that would be fittest, are diverted.

How small a matter were it, and yet how excellent a work, for every knight or gentleman of means in England, to cull out some one or two, or more poor boys in the country schools, who are of the choicest wits and most pious dispositions, who are poor and unable to proceed in learning, and to maintain them a few years in the universities, till they were fit for the ministry! It were but keeping a few superfluous attendants the less, or a few horses or dogs the less: if they had hearts to do it, it were easily spared out of their sports, or rich apparel, or superfluous diet; or, what if it were out of more

useful costs, or out of their children's larger portions? I dare say they would not be sorry for it when they come to their reckoning. One sumptuous feast, or one costly suit of apparel, would maintain a poor boy a year or two at the university, who, perhaps, might come to have more true worth in him than many a glittering, sensual lord, and to do God more service in his church than ever they did with all their estates and power.

Sect. XVI. 3. And when you do enjoy the blessing of the Gospel, you must yet use your utmost diligence to help poor souls to receive the fruit of it. To which end you must draw them constantly to hear and attend it. Mind them often of what they have heard: draw them, if it be possible, to repeat it in their families. If that cannot be, then draw them to come to others that do repeat it, that so it may not die in the hearing. The very drawing of men into the company and acquaintance of the godly, besides the benefit they have by their endeavours, is of singular use to the recovery of their souls. Association breedeth familiarity, and familiarity breedeth love; and familiarity and love to the godly, doth lead to familiarity and love to God and godliness. It is also a means to take off prejudice, by confuting the world's slanders of the ways and people of God. Use, therefore, often to meet together, besides the more public meeting in the congregation: not to vent any unsound opinions, nor yet in distaste of the public meeting, nor in opposition to it, nor at the time of public worship, nor yet to make a groundless schism, or to separate from the church whereof you are members; nor to destroy the old that you may gather a new church out of its ruins, as long as it hath the essentials, and there is hope of reforming it; nor yet would I have you forward to vent your own supposed gifts and parts in teaching, where there is no necessity of it; nor to attempt that in the interpretation of difficult scriptures, or explication of difficult controversies, which is beyond your ability, though, perhaps, pride will tell you that you are as able as any. But the work which I would have you meet about, is this, to repeat together the word which you have heard in public; to pour out your joint prayers for the church and yourselves; to join in cheerful singing the praises of God; to open

your scruples, and doubts, and fears, and get resolution; to quicken each other in love, and heavenliness, and holy walking; and all this, not as a separated church, but as a part of the church more diligent than the rest in redeeming time, and helping the souls of each other heavenward.

I know some careless ones think this course needless; and I know some formalists do think it schismatical, who have nothing of any moment to say against it. Against both these, if I durst so far digress, I could easily prove it warrantable and useful. I know also that many of late do abuse private meetings to schism, and to vilify God's ordinances, and vent the windy issue of their empty brains. But betwixt these extremes, I advise you to walk, and neither to "forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another." (Heb. 10:25.) Nor yet to be "carried about with divers and strange doctrine:" but let all your private meetings be in subordination to the public, and by the approbation and consent of your spiritual guides, and not without them of your own heads, where such guides are men of knowledge and godliness; remembering them which have the rule over you, which speak to you the word of God, following their faith, and as men whose hearts are stablished with grace, considering the whole end of a Christian's conversation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. (Heb. 13:7–9, 17.) "And I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them: for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17, 18.) I would you would ponder every one of these words, for they are the precious advice of the Spirit of God, and necessary now, as well as then.

Sect. XVII. 4. One thing more I advise you concerning this. If you would have souls converted and saved by the ordinances, labour still to keep the ordinances and ministry in esteem. No man will be much wrought on by that which he despiseth. The great causes of this

contempt, are a perverted judgment and a graceless heart. It is no more wonder for a soul to loathe the ordinances, that savoureth not their spiritual nature, nor seeth God in them, nor is thoroughly wrought on by them, than it is for a sick man to loathe his food. Nor is it any wonder for a perverted understanding to make a jest of God himself, much less to set light by his ordinances. Oh! what a rare blessing is a clear, sound, sanctified judgment! Where this is wanting, the most hellish vice may seem a virtue, and the most sacred ordinance of divine institution may seem as the waters of Jordan to Naaman. If any enemies to God's ordinances assault you, I refer you to the reading of Mr. Henry Lawrence's late book for ordinances.

The profane scorers of the ministry and worship heretofore, were the means of keeping many a soul from heaven; but the late generation of proud ignorant sectaries amongst us, have quite outstripped in this the vile persecutors. O how many souls may curse these wretches in hell for ever, that have by them been brought to contemn the means that should save them! By many years' experience in my conversing with these men, I can speak it knowingly, that the chiefest of their zeal is let out against the faithful ministers of Christ. He is the ablest of their preachers that can rail at them in the most devilish language. It is their most common discourse in all companies, both godly and profane, to vilify the ministry, and make them odious to all, partly by slanders, and partly by scorns. Is this the way to win souls? Whereas, formerly, they thought that if a man were won to a love of the ministry and ordinances, he was in a hopeful way of being won to God. Now these men are diligent to bring all men to scorn them, as if this were all that were necessary to the saving of their souls, and he only shall be happy that can deride at ministers and discipline. If any man doubt of the truth of what I say, he is a stranger in England, and for his satisfaction, let him read all the books of Martin Mar-priest, and tell me whether the devil ever spoke so with a tongue of flesh before. For you, my dear friends, I acknowledge to God's praise, that you are as far from the contempt of ordinances or ministry, as any people I

know in the land. I shall confirm you herein, not in my own words, but in his that I know you dare not disregard. (1 Thes. 5:11–13.) "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as ye also do: and we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace among yourselves. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17.)

Thus you see part of your duty for the salvation of others.

Sect. XVIII. And now, Christian reader, seeing it is a duty that God hath laid upon every man according to his ability, thus to exhort and reprove, and with all possible diligence to labour after the salvation of all about him, judge then whether this work be conscionably performed. Where shall we find the man almost among us, that setteth himself to it with all his might, and that hath set his heart upon the souls of his brethren, that they may be saved?

Let us here, therefore, a little inquire what may be the causes of the gross neglect of this duty, that the hinderances being discovered may the more easily be overcome.

1. One hinderance is, men's own gracelessness and guiltiness. They have not been ravished themselves with the heavenly delights. How, then, should they draw others so earnestly to seek them? They have not felt the wickedness of their own natures, nor their lost condition, nor their need of Christ, nor felt the transforming renewing work of the Spirit. How, then, can they discover these to others? Ah! that this were not the case of many a learned preacher in England! And the cause why they preach so frozenly and generally! Men also are guilty themselves of the sins they should reprove, and this stops their mouth, and maketh them ashamed to reprove.

2. Another hinderance is, a secret infidelity prevailing in men's hearts; whereof even the best have so great a measure, that it causeth this duty to be done by the halves. Alas! sirs, we do not, surely, believe men's misery; we do not believe, surely, that the threatenings of God are true. Did we verily believe that all the unregenerate and unholy shall be eternally tormented, as God hath said, oh, how could we hold our tongues when we are among the unregenerate? How could we choose but burst out into tears when we look them in the face, as the prophet did when he looked upon Hazael? Especially when they are our kindred or friends, that are near and dear to us? Thus doth secret unbelief of the truth of Scripture consume the vigour of each grace and duty. Oh, Christians, if you did verily believe that your poor, carnal, ungodly neighbour, or wife, or husband, or child, should certainly lie for ever in the flames of hell, except they be thoroughly recovered and changed; and that quickly, before death doth snatch them from hence would not this make you cast off all discouragements, and lay at them day and night till they were persuaded, and give them no rest in their carnal state? How could you hold your tongue, or let them alone till another day, if this were soundly believed? If you were sure that any of your dear friends, that are dead were now in hell, and persuading to repentance would get him out again, would you not persuade him day and night, if he were in hearing? And why should you not do as much then to prevent it, while he is in your hearing, but that you do not believe God's word that speaks the danger? Why did Noah prepare an ark so long before, and persuade the world to save themselves, but because he believed God, that the flood should come? And, therefore, saith the Holy Ghost, "By faith Noah prepared the ark," (Heb. 11:7,) and why did not the world hearken to his persuasion, and seek to save themselves as well as Noah, but because they did not believe there would be any such deluge? They see all fair and well, and therefore they thought that threatenings were but wind. The rich man in hell cries out, "Send to my brethren to warn them, that they come not to this place of torment;" (Luke 16:13;) he felt it, and therefore being convinced of its truth, would have them prevent it; but his brethren on earth, they did not see and feel as he, and therefore they did not believe, nor

would have been persuaded, "though one had risen from the dead." I am afraid most of us do believe the predictions of Scripture but as we believe the predictions of an almanack, which telleth you that such a day will be rain, and such a day wind; you think it may come to pass, and it may not: and so you think of the predictions of the damnation of the wicked. Oh! were it not for this cursed unbelief, our own souls, and our neighbours, would gain more by us than they do.

3. This faithful dealing with men for their salvation, is much hindered also by our want of charity and compassion to men's souls. We are hard-hearted and cruel towards the miserable; and, therefore, as the priest and the Levite did by the wounded man, we look on them, and pass by. Oh! what tender heart could endure to look upon a poor, blind, forlorn sinner, wounded by sin, and captivated by Satan, and never once open our mouths for his recovery? What though he be silent, and do not desire thy help himself, yet his very misery cries aloud: misery is the most effectual suitor to one that is compassionate. If God had not heard the cry of our miseries before he heard the cry of our prayers, and been moved by his own pity, before he was moved by our importunity, we might have long enough continued the slaves of Satan. Is it not the strongest way of arguing that a poor Lazarus hath, to unlap his sores, and show them to the passengers? All his words will not move them so much as such a pitiful sight. Alas! what pitiful sights do we daily see: the ignorant, the profane, the neglecters of Christ and their souls; their sores are open and visible to all that know them, and yet do we not pity them! You will pray to God for them, in customary duties, that God would open the eyes and turn the hearts of your ignorant, carnal friends and neighbours. And why do you not endeavour their conversion if you desire it? And if you do not desire it, why do you ask it? Doth not your negligence convince you of hypocrisy in your prayers, and of abusing the high God with your deceitful words? Your neighbours are near you, your friends are in the house with you; you eat, and drink, and work, and walk, and talk with them, and yet you say little or nothing to them. Why do you not pray to them to consider and return, as well as pray God to convert

and turn them? Have you as oft and as earnestly begged of them to think on their ways, and to reform, as you have taken on you to beg of God that they may so do? What, if you should see your neighbour fallen into a pit, and you should presently fall down on your knees, and pray God to help him out, but would neither put forth your hand to help, nor once persuade or direct him to help himself, would not any man censure you to be cruel and hypocritical? What the Holy Ghost saith of men's bodily miseries, I may say much more of the misery of their souls: "If any man seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17.) Or, what love hath he to his brother's soul? Surely, if you saw your friend in hell, you would persuade him hard to come thence, if that would serve; and why do you not now persuade him to prevent it? The charity of our ignorant forefathers may rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us. They would give all their estates almost, for so many masses, or pardons, to deliver the souls of their friends from a feigned purgatory, and we will not so much as importunately admonish, and entreat them, to save them from the certain flames of hell; though this may be effectual to do them good, and the other will do none.

4. Another hinderance is, a base man-pleasing disposition that is in us. We are so loth to displease men, and so desirous to keep in credit and favour with them, that it makes us most unconscionably neglect our known duty. A foolish physician he is, and a most unfaithful friend, that will let a sick man die for fear of troubling him; and cruel wretches are we to our friends, that will rather suffer them to go quietly to hell, than we will anger them, or hazard our reputation with them. If they did but fall in a swoon, we would rub them and pinch them, and never stick at hurting them. If they were distracted, we would bind them with chains, and we would please them in nothing that tended to their hurt; and yet, when they are beside themselves in point of salvation, and in their madness posting on to damnation, we will not stop them, for fear of displeasing them. How can these men be Christians, that love the praise and favour of men more than the favour of God? (John 12:43.) For if they yet seek to

please men, they are no longer the servants of Christ. (Gal. 1:10.) To win them indeed, they must become all things to all men; but to please them to their destruction, and let them perish, that we may keep our credit with them, is a course so base and barbarously cruel, that he that hath the face of a Christian should abhor it. (1 Cor. 9:21–24; Prov. 11:3–6.)

5. Another common hinderance is, a sinful bashfulness. When we should labour to make men ashamed of their sins, we are ourselves ashamed of our duties. May not these sinners condemn us, when they will not blush to swear, or be drunk, or neglect the worship of God, and we will blush to tell them of it, and persuade them from it? Elisha looked on Hazael till he was ashamed; and we are ashamed to look on, or speak to the offender. (2 Kings 8:11; Jer. 6:15, 8:12; Luke 9:26.) Sinners will rather boast of their sins, and impudently show them in the open streets, and shall not we be as bold in drawing them from it? Not that I approve of impudence in any; for, as one saith, I take him for a lost man that hath lost his modesty. Nor would I have inferiors forget their distance in admonishing their superiors; but do it with all humility, and submission, and respect. But yet I would much less have them forget their duty to God and their friends, be they ever so much their superiors: it is a thing that must be done. Bashfulness is unseemly in cases of flat necessity. And, indeed, it is not a work to be ashamed of; to obey God in persuading men from their sins to Christ, and helping to save their souls, is not a business for a man to blush at; and yet, alas! what abundance of souls have been neglected through the prevailing of this sin! even the most of us are heinously guilty in this point. Reader, is not this thy own case? Hath not thy conscience told thee of thy duty many a time, and put thee on to speak to poor sinners, lest they perish, and yet thou hast been ashamed to open thy mouth to them, and so let them alone to sink or swim? believe me, thou wilt ere long be ashamed of this shame. O read those words of Christ, and tremble: "He that is ashamed of me and of my words before this adulterous generation, of him will the Son of man be ashamed before his Father and the angels." (Luke 9:26; Mark 8:38.)

6. Another hinderance is, impatency, laziness, and favouring of the flesh. It is an ungrateful work, and for the most part maketh those our enemies that were our friends; and men cannot bear the reproaches and unthankful returns of sinners. It may be they are their chief friends on whom is all their dependence, so that it may be their undoing to displease them. Besides, it is a work that seldom succeedeth at the first, except it be followed on with wisdom and unweariedness. You must be a great while teaching an ignorant person, before he will be brought to know the very fundamentals; and a great while persuading an obstinate sinner, before he will come to a full resolution to return. Now, this is a tedious course to the flesh, and few will bear it. Not considering what patience God used towards us when we were in our sins, and how long he followed us with the importunities of his Spirit, holding out Christ and life, and beseeching us to accept them. Woe to us if God had been as impatient with us as we are with others. If Christ be not weary, nor give over to invite them, we have little reason to be weary of doing the message. See 2 Tim. 2:24, 25.

7. Another hinderance is, self-seeking and self-minding. Men are all for themselves, and all mind their own things, but few the things of Christ and their brethren. Hence is that Cainish voice, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Every man must answer for himself. Hence also it is that a multitude of ignorant professors do think only where they may enjoy the purest ordinances, and thither they will go over sea and land; or what way of discipline will be sweetest to themselves, and therefore are prone to groundless separation: but where they have the fairest opportunity to win the souls of others, or in what place or way they may do most good, these things they little or nothing regard, as if we had learned of the monks, and were setting up their principles and practice when we seem to oppose them.

If these men had tried what some of their brethren have done, they would know that all the purest ordinances and churches will not afford that solid comfort, as the converting of a few sinners by our unwearied, compassionate exhortations. Two men in a frosty season

come where a company of people are ready to starve; the one of them laps himself, and taketh shelter, for fear lest he should perish with them; the other, in pity, falls to rub them that he may recover heat in them, and while he laboureth hard to help them, he getteth far better heat to himself than his unprofitable companion doth.

8. With many, also, pride is a great impediment. If it were to speak to a great man, they would do it, so it would not displease him. But to go among the poor multitude, and to take pains with a company of ignorant beggars, or mean persons, and to sit with them in a smoky, nasty cottage, and there to instruct them and exhort them from day to day, where is the person almost that will do it? Many will much rejoice if they have been instruments of converting a gentleman, (and they have good cause,) but for the common multitude, they look not after them: as if God were a respecter of the persons of the rich, or the souls of all were not alike to him. Alas! these men little consider how long Christ did stoop to us! When the God of glory comes down in flesh, to worms, and goeth preaching up and down among them from city to city! Not the silliest woman that he thought too low to confer with. Few rich, and noble, and wise, are called. It is the poor that receive the glad tidings of the Gospel. (John 4 and 1 Cor. 1:26.)

9. Lastly; With some also their ignorance of the duty doth hinder them from performing it. Either they know it not to be a duty, or at least not to be their duty. Perhaps they have not considered much of it, nor been pressed to it by their teachers, as they have been to hearing, and praying, and other duties. If this be thy case who readest this, that mere ignorance or inconsiderateness hath kept thee from it, then I am in hope now thou art acquainted with thy duty, thou wilt set upon it.

Object. 1. O, but saith one, I am of so weak parts and gifts, that I am unable to manage an exhortation, especially to men of strong natural parts and understanding.

Answ. First; Set those upon the work who are more able: Secondly, Yet do not think that thou art so excused thyself, but use faithfully that ability which thou hast, not in teaching those of whom thou shouldst learn, but in instructing those who are more ignorant than thyself, and in exhorting those who are negligent in the things which they do know. If you cannot speak well yourself, yet you can tell them what God speaketh in his word. It is not the excellency of speech that winneth souls, but the authority of God manifested by that speech, and the power of his word in the mouth of the instructor. A weak woman may tell what God saith in the plain passages of the Word, as well as a learned man. If you cannot preach to them, yet you can turn to the place in your Bible, or at least remember them of it, and say, "Thus it is written." One of mean parts may remember the wisest of their duty when they forget it. David received seasonable advice from Abigail, a woman. When a man's eyes are blinded with passion, or the deceits of the world, or the lusts of the flesh, a weak instructor may prove very profitable; for in that case he hath as much need to hear of what he knoweth, as of what he doth not know.

Object. 2. It is my superior that needeth my advice and exhortation; and is it fit for me to teach or reprove my betters? Must the wife teach the husband, of whom the Scripture biddeth them learn? Or must the child teach the parents, whose duty it is to teach them?

Answ. First, It is fit that husbands should be able to teach their wives, and parents to teach their children; and God expecteth they should be so, and therefore commandeth the inferiors to learn of them. But if they through their own negligence do disable themselves, or through their own wickedness do bring their souls into such misery, as that they have the greatest need of advice and reproof themselves, and are objects of pity to all that know their case; then it is themselves, and not you, that break God's order, by bringing themselves into disability and misery.

Matter of mere order and manners must be dispensed with in cases of flat necessity. Though it were your minister, you must teach him in

such a case. It is the part of parents to provide for their children, and not children for their parents: and yet if the parents fall into want, must not the children relieve them? It is the part of the husband to dispose of the affairs of the family and estate; and yet, if he be sick or beside himself, must not the wife do it? The rich should relieve the poor; but if the rich fall into beggary, they must be relieved themselves. It is the work of the physician to look to the health of others; and yet, if he fall sick, somebody must help him, and look to him. So must the meanest servant admonish his master, and the child his parent, and the wife her husband, and the people their ministers, in cases of necessity.

Secondly, Yet let me give you these two cautions here.

1. That you do not pretend necessity when there is none, out of a mere desire of teaching. There is scarcely a more certain discovery of a proud heart than to be forwarder and more desirous to teach than to learn, especially toward those that are fitter to teach us.

2. And when the necessity of your superiors doth call for your advice, yet do it with all possible humility, and modesty, and meekness. Let them discern your reverence and submission to their superiority in the humble manner of your addresses to them. Let them perceive that you do it not out of a mere teaching humour, or proud self-conceitedness. An elder must be admonished, but not rebuked. If a wife should tell her husband of his sin in a masterly, railing language; or if a servant reprove his master, or a child his father, (1 Tim. 5:1,) in a saucy, disrespectful way, what good could be expected from such reproof? But if they should meekly and humbly open to him his sin and danger, and entreat him to bear with them in what God commandeth, and his misery requireth; and if they could by tears testify their sense of his ease, what father, or master, or husband, could take this ill?

Object. 3. But some may say, This will make us all preachers, and cause all to break over the bounds of their callings; every boy and

woman then will turn preacher.

Answ. 1. This is not taking a pastoral charge of souls, nor making an office or calling of it, as preachers do.

2. And in the way of our callings, every good Christian is a teacher, and hath a charge of his neighbour's soul. Let it be only the voice of a Cain to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" I would have one of these men, that are so loth that private men should teach them, to tell me, what, if a man fall down in a swoon in the streets, though it be your father or superior, would you not take them up presently, and use all means you could to recover him? or would you let him lie and die, and say, 'It is the work of the physician, and not mine; I will not invade the physician's calling.' In two cases, every man is a physician. First, in case of necessity, and when a physician cannot be had. And secondly, in case the hurt be so small, that every man can do as well as the physician. And in the same two cases, every man must be a teacher.

Object. 4. Some will further object, to put off this duty, that the party is so ignorant, or stupid, or careless, or rooted in sin, and hath been so oft exhorted in vain, and there is no hope.

Answ. How know you when there is no hope? Cannot God yet cure him? And must it not be by means? And have not many as far gone been cured? Should not a merciful physician use means while there is life? And is it not inhuman cruelty in you to give up your friend to the devil and damnation as hopeless, upon mere backwardness to your duty, or upon groundless discouragements? What, if you had been so given up yourself when you were ignorant?

Object. 5. But we must not cast pearls before swine, nor give that which is holy to dogs.

Answ. That is but a favourable dispensation of Christ for your own safety. When you are in danger to be torn in pieces, Christ would have you forbear, but what is that to you that are in no such danger?

As long as they will hear, you have encouragement to speak, and may not cast them off as contemptuous swine.

Object. 6. Oh, but it is a friend that I have all my dependence on, and by telling him of his sin and misery, I may lose his love, and so be undone.

Answ. Surely no man that hath the face of a Christian, will for shame own such an objection as this. Yet, I doubt, it oft prevaileth in the heart. Is his love more to be valued than his safety? Or thy own benefit by him, than the salvation of his soul? Or wilt thou connive at his damnation, because he is thy friend? Is that thy best requital of his friendship? Hadst thou rather he should burn for ever in hell, than thou shouldst lose his favour, or the maintenance thou hast from him?

Object. 7. But I hope, though he be not regenerate and holy, that he is in no such danger.

Answ. Nay, then, if thou be one that dost not believe God's word, I have no more to say to thee. (John 3; Heb. 12:14.) I told you before that this unbelief was the root of all.

Sect. XVIII. To conclude this use, that I may prevail with every soul that feareth God, to use their utmost diligence to help all about them to this blessed rest which they hope for themselves, let me entreat you to consider of these following motives:

1. Consider, Nature teacheth the communicating of good, and grace doth especially dispose the soul thereunto; the neglect, therefore, of this work, is a sin both against nature and grace. He that should never seek after God himself, would quickly be concluded graceless by all: and is not he as certainly graceless that doth not labour for the salvation of others, when we are bound to love our neighbour as ourself? Would you not think that man or woman unnatural, that would let their own children or neighbours famish in the streets, while they have provision at hand? And is not he more unnatural,

that will let his children or neighbours perish eternally, and will not open his mouth to save them? Certainly, this is most barbarous cruelty. Pity to the miserable is so natural, that we account an unmerciful, cruel man a very monster, to be abhorred of all. Many vicious men are too much loved in the world, but a cruel man is abhorred of all. Now, that it may appear to you what a cruel thing this neglect of souls is, do but consider of these two things. First, How great a work it is, Secondly, And how small a matter it is that thou refusest to do for the accomplishing so great a work. First, It is to save thy brother from eternal flames, that he may not there lie roaring in endless, remediless torments. It is to bring him to the everlasting rest, where he may live in inconceivable happiness with God. Secondly, And what is it that you should do to help him herein? Why, it is to teach him, and persuade him, and lay open to him his sin, and his duty, his misery, and the remedy, till you have made him willing to yield to the offers and commands of Christ. And is this so great a matter for to do, to the attaining of such a blessed end? If God had bid you give them all your estates to win them, or lay down your lives to save them, surely you would have refused, when you will not bestow a little breath to save them? Is not the soul of a husband, or wife, or child, or neighbour, worth a few words? It is worth this, or it is worth nothing. If they did lie dying in the streets, and a few words would save their lives, would not every man say, that he were a cruel wretch that would let them perish, rather than speak to them? Even the covetous hypocrite, that James reproveth, would give a few words to the poor, and say, 'Go and be warmed, and be clothed.' What a barbarous, unmerciful wretch, then, art thou, that wilt not vouchsafe a few words of serious, sober admonition, to save the soul of thy neighbour or friend? Cruelty and unmercifulness to men's bodies, is a most damnable sin, but to their souls much more, as the soul is of greater worth than the body, and as eternity is of greater moment than this short time. Alas! you do not see or feel what case their souls are in, when they are in hell, for want of your faithful admonition. Little know you what many a soul may now be feeling, who have been your neighbours and acquaintance, and died in their sins, on whom you never bestowed one hour's sober advice for the

preventing of their unhappiness. If you did know their misery, you would now do more to bring them out of hell. But, alas! it is too late, you should have done it while they were with you; it is now too late. As one said in reproach of physicians, "That they were the most happy men, because all their good deeds and cures were seen above ground to their praise, but all their mistakes and neglects were buried out of sight." So I may say to you, Many a neglect of yours to the souls about you, may be now buried with those souls in hell, out of your sight and hearing, and therefore now it doth not much trouble you, but, alas! they feel it, though you feel it not. May not many a papist rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us? They will give their lands and estates to have so many masses said for the souls of their deceased friends, when it is too late, to bring them out of a feigned purgatory, and we will not ply them with persuasions while we may, to save them from real threatened condemnation; though this cheaper means may prove effectual, when that dearer way of papists will do no good. Jeremy cried out, "My bowels, my bowels, I cannot hold my peace," because of a temporal destruction of his people. And do not our bowels yearn? And can we hold our peace at men's eternal destruction?

2. Consider, What a rate Christ did value souls at, and what he hath done towards the saving of them. He thought them worth his blood and sufferings, and shall not we then think them worth the breath of our mouths? Will you not set in with Christ for so good a work? Nor do a little, where he hath done so much?

3. Consider, What fit objects of pity they are. It is no small misery to be an enemy to God, unpardoned, unsanctified, strangers to the church's special privileges, without hope of salvation if they so live and die. And, which is yet more, they are dead in these their trespasses and miseries, and have not hearts to feel them, or to pity themselves. If others do not pity them, they will have no pity; for it is the nature of their disease to make them pitiless to their own souls, yea, to make them the most cruel destroyers of themselves.

4. Consider, It was once thy own case. Thou wast once a slave of Satan thyself, and confidently didst thou go in the way to condemnation. What, if thou hadst been let alone in that way, whither hadst thou gone, and what had become of thee? It was God's argument to the Israelites to be kind to strangers, because themselves were sometimes strangers in Egypt; so it may persuade you to show compassion to them that are strangers to Christ, and to the hopes and comforts of the saints, because you were once as strange to them yourselves.

5. Consider, The relation that thou standest in towards them. It is thy neighbour, thy brother, whom thou art bound to be tender of, and to love as thyself. He that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth daily, most certainly doth not love God, whom he never saw: and doth he love his brother, that will stand by, and see him go to hell, and never hinder him? (John 3:10, 4:20, 21.)

6. Consider, What a deal of guilt this neglect doth lay upon thy soul. First, Thou art guilty of the murder and damnation of all those souls whom thou dost thus neglect. He that standeth by and seeth a man in a pit, and will not pull him out if he can, doth drown him. And he that standeth by while thieves rob him, or murderers kill him, and will not help him if he can, is accessory to the fact. And so he that will silently suffer men to damn their souls, or will let Satan and the world deceive them, and not offer to help them, will certainly be judged guilty of damning them. And is not this a most dreadful consideration? Oh, sirs, how many souls, then, have every one of us been guilty of damning! What a number of our neighbours and acquaintance are dead, in whom we discerned no signs of sanctification, and we never did once plainly tell them of it, or how to be recovered! If you had been the cause but of burning a man's house through your negligence, or of undoing him in the world, or of destroying his body, how would it trouble you as long as you lived! If you had but killed a man unadvisedly, it would much disquiet you. We have known those that have been guilty of murder, that could never sleep quietly after, nor have one comfortable day, their own

consciences did so vex and torment them. Oh, then, what a heart mayest thou have, that hast been guilty of murdering such a multitude of precious souls! Remember this when thou lookest thy friend or carnal neighbour in the face, and think with thyself, 'Can I find in my heart, through my silence and negligence, to be guilty of his everlasting burning in hell?' Methinks such a thought should even untie the tongue of the dumb.

2. And as you are guilty of their perishing, so are you of every sin which in the mean time they do commit. If they were converted, they would break off their course of sinning; and if you did your duty, you know not but they might be converted. As he that is guilty of a man's drunkenness, is guilty of all the sins which that drunkenness doth cause him to commit; so he that is guilty of a man's continuing unregenerate, is also guilty of the sins of his unregeneracy. How many curses and oaths, and scorns at God's ways, and other sins of most heinous nature, are many of you guilty of, that little think of it! You that live godlily, and take much pains for your own souls, and seem fearful of sinning, would take it ill of one that should tell you, that you are guilty of weekly or daily whoredoms, and drunkenness, and swearing, and lying, &c. And yet it is too true, even beyond all denial, by your neglect of helping those who do commit them.

3. You are guilty also, as of the sin, so of all the dishonour that God hath thereby. And how much is that? And how tender should a Christian be of the glory of God, the least part whereof is to be valued before all our lives!

4. You are guilty, also, of all those judgments which those men's sins do bring upon the town or country where they live. I know you are not such atheists, but you believe it is God that sendeth sickness, and famine, and war; and also that it is only sin that moveth him to this indignation. What doubt, then, is there, but you are the cause of judgments, who do not strive against those sins which do cause them? God hath staid long in patience, to see if any would deal plainly with the sinners of the times, and so free their own souls from

the guilt: but when he seeth that there is almost none, but all become guilty, no wonder then if he lay the judgment upon all. We have all seen the drunkards, and heard the swearers in our streets, and we would not speak to them; we have all lived in the midst of an ignorant, worldly, unholy people, and we have not spoke to them with earnestness, plainness, and love; no wonder, then, if God speak in his wrath both to them and us. Eli did not commit the sin himself, and yet he speaketh so coldly against it, that he also must bear the punishment. Guns and cannons speak against sin in England, because the inhabitants would not speak. God pleadeth with us with fire and sword, because we would not plead with sinners with our tongues. God locketh up the clouds, because we have shut up our mouths. The earth is grown as hard as iron to us, because we have hardened our hearts against our miserable neighbours. The cries of the poor for bread are loud, because our cries against sin have been so low. Sickneses run apace from house to house, and sweep away the poor unprepared inhabitants, because we swept not out the sin that breedeth them. When you look over the woful desolations in England, how ready are you to cry out on them that were the causers of it! But did you consider how deeply yourselves were guilty? And, as Christ said in another case, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would speak." (Luke 9:40.) So, because we held our peace at the ignorance, ungodliness, and wickedness of our places, therefore do these plagues and judgments speak.

7. Consider, What a thing it will be to look upon your poor friends eternally in those flames, and to think that your neglect was a great cause of it! And that there was a time when you might have done much to prevent it! If you should there perish with them, it would be no small aggravation of your torment: if you be in heaven, it would surely be a sad thought, were it possible, that any sorrow could dwell there, to hear a multitude of poor souls there to cry out for ever, Oh! if you would but have told me plainly of my sin and danger, and dealt roundly with me, and set it home, I might have escaped all this torment, and been now in rest.' Oh! what a sad voice will this be!

8. Consider, What a joy it is like to be in heaven to you, to meet those there whom you have been a means to bring thither! To see their faces, and join with them for ever in the praises of God, whom ye were instruments to bring to the knowledge and obedience of Christ! What it will then be, we know not: but surely, according to our present temper, it would be no small joy.

9. Consider, How many souls have we drawn into the way of damnation, or at least hardened, or settled in it! And should we not now be more diligent to draw men to life? There is not one of us but have had our companions in sin, especially in the days of our ignorance and unregeneracy. We have enticed them, or encouraged them to Sabbath-breaking, drinking, or revellings, or dancings, and stage-plays, or wantonness and vanities, if not to scorn and oppose the godly. We cannot so easily bring them from sin again, as we did draw them to it. Many are dead already without any change discovered, who were our companions in sin. We know not how many are and will be in hell that we drew thither, and there may curse us in their torments for ever. And doth it not beseem us, then, to do as much to save men, as we have done to destroy them; and be merciful to some as we have been cruel to others.

10. Consider, How diligent are all the enemies of these poor souls to draw them to hell! And if nobody be diligent in helping them to heaven, what is likely to become of them? The devil is tempting them day and night. Their inward lusts are still working and withdrawing them. The flesh is still pleading for its delights and profits. Their old companions are ready to entice them to sin, and to disgrace God's ways and people to them, and to contradict the doctrine of Christ that should save them, and to increase their prejudice and dislike of holiness. Seducing teachers are exceeding diligent in sowing tares, and in drawing off the unstable from the doctrine and way of life: so that when we have done all we can, and hope we have won men, what a multitude of late have, after all, been taken in this snare! And shall a seducer be so unwearied in proselyting poor, ungrounded souls to

his fancies; and shall not a sound Christian be much more unwearied in labouring to win men to Christ and life?

11. Consider, The neglect of this doth very deeply wound when conscience is awaked. When a man comes to die, conscience will ask him, What good hast thou done in thy lifetime? The saving of souls is the greatest good work; what hast thou done towards this? How many hast thou dealt faithfully with? I have oft observed that the consciences of dying men do very much wound them for this omission. For my own part, to tell you my experience, whenever I have been near death, my conscience hath accused me more for this than for any sin. It would bring every ignorant profane neighbour to my remembrance, to whom I never made known their danger: it would tell me, thou shouldst have gone to them in private, and told them plainly of their desperate danger, without bashfulness or daubing, though it had been when thou shouldst have eaten or slept, if thou hadst no other time: conscience would remember me, how, at such a time or such a time, I was in company with the ignorant, or was riding by the way with a wilful sinner, and had a fit opportunity to have dealt with them, but did not; or, at least, did it by halves, and to little purpose. The Lord grant I may better obey conscience hereafter while I live and have time, that it may have less to accuse me of at death!

12. Consider, further, It is now a very seasonable time which you have for this work. Take it therefore while you have it. There are times wherein it is not safe to speak; it may cost you your liberties, or your lives: it is not so now with us. Besides, your neighbours will be here with you but a very little while: they will shortly die, and so must you. Speak to them, therefore, while you may; set upon them, and give them no rest till you have prevailed. Do it speedily, for it must be now or never. A Roman emperor, when he heard of a neighbour dead, he asked, "And what did I do for him before he died?" and it grieved him that a man should die near him; and it could not be said that he had first done him any good. Methinks you should think of this when you hear that any of your neighbours are

dead; but I had far rather, while they are alive, you would ask the question: There is such and such a neighbour (alas, how many!) that are ignorant and ungodly, what have I done, or said, that might have in it any likelihood of recovering them? They will shortly be dead, and then it is too late.

13. Consider, This is a work of greatest charity, and yet such as every one of you may perform. If it were to give them monies, the poor have it not to give: if to fight for them, the weak cannot: if it were to suffer, the fearful will say, they cannot: but every one hath a tongue to speak to a sinner. The poorest may be thus charitable as well as the rich.

14. Consider, also, The happy consequences of this work, where it is faithfully done. To name some:

1. You may be instrumental in that blessed work of saving souls, a work that Christ came down and died for, a work that the angels of God rejoice in; for, saith the Holy Ghost, "If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:19, 20.) And how can God more highly honour you, than to make you instruments in so great a work?

2. Such souls will bless you here and hereafter. They may be angry with you at first; but if your words prevail and succeed, they will bless the day that ever they knew you, and bless God that sent you to speak to them.

3. If you succeed, God will have much glory by it; he will have one more to value and accept of his Son, of whom Christ's blood hath attained its end: he will have one more to love him and daily worship and fear him, and to do him service in his church.

4. The church also will have gain by it; there will be one less provoker of wrath, and one more to strive with God against sin and judgment,

and to engage against the sins of the times, and to win others by doctrine and example. If thou couldst but convert one persecuting Saul, he might become a Paul, and do the church more service than ever thou didst thyself. However, the healing of sinners is the surest method for preventing or removing of judgments.

5. It is the way also to purity and flourishing of the church, and to the right erecting and executing the discipline of Christ; if men would but do what they ought with their neighbours in private, what a help would it be to the success of the public endeavours of the ministry! And what hope might we have that daily some would be added to the church! And if any be obstinate, yet this is the first course that must be taken to reclaim them. Who dare separate from them, or excommunicate them, before they have been first thoroughly admonished and instructed in private, according to Christ's rule? (Matt. 18:15, 16.)

6. It bringeth much advantage to yourselves: First, It will increase your graces, both as it is a course that God will bless, and as it is an acting of them in this persuading of others: he that will not let you lose a cup of water which is given for him, will not let you lose these greater works of charity; besides those that have practised this duty most conscionably, do find, by experience, that they never go on more speedily and prosperously towards heaven than when they do most to help others thither with them. It is not here as with worldly treasure, the more you give away, the less you have; but here, the more you give, the more you have. The setting forth Christ in his fulness to others, will warm your own hearts and stir up your love. The opening of the evil and danger of sin to others, will increase your hatred of it, and much engage yourselves against it. Secondly, And it seemeth that it will increase your glory as well as your grace, both as a duty which God will so reward, "for those that convert many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever;" (Dan. 12:3, and 11:33;) and also as we shall there behold them in heaven, and be their associates in blessedness, whom God made us here the instruments to convert. Thirdly, However, it will give us much peace

of conscience, whether we succeed or not, to think that we were faithful, and did our best to save them, and that we are clear from the blood of all men, and their perishing shall not lie upon us. Fourthly, Besides, that it is a work that, if it succeed, doth exceedingly rejoice an honest heart. He that hath a sense of God's honour, or the least affection to the soul of his brother, must needs rejoice much at his conversion, whosoever be the instrument, but especially when God maketh ourselves the means of so blessed a work. If God make us the instruments of any temporal good, it is very comfortable, but much more of eternal good. There is naturally a rejoicing followeth every good work answerable to the degree of its goodness: he that doth most good, hath usually the most happy and comfortable life. If men knew the pleasure that there is in doing good, they would not seek after their pleasure so much in evil. For my own part, it is an unspeakable comfort to me, that God hath made me an instrument for the recovering of so many from bodily diseases, and saving their natural lives;^b but all this is yet nothing to the comfort I have in the success of my labours, in the conversion and confirmation of souls; it is so great a joy to me that it drowneth the painfulness of my daily duties, and the trouble of my daily languishing, and bodily griefs; and maketh all these, with all oppositions and difficulties in my work, to be easy and as nothing. And of all the personal mercies that ever I received, next to his love in Christ and to my soul, I must most joyfully bless him for the plenteous success of my endeavours upon others. Oh, what fruit, then, might I have seen, if I had been more faithful, and plied the work in private and public as I ought! I know we have need to be very jealous of our deceitful hearts in this point, lest our rejoicing should come from our pride and self-ascribing. Naturally we would, every man, be in the place of God, and have the praise of every good work ascribed to ourselves, but yet, to imitate our Father in goodness and mercy, and to rejoice in that degree we attain to, is the part of every child of God. I tell you therefore, to persuade you from my own experience, that if you did but know what a joyful thing it is to be an instrument for the converting and saving of souls, you would set upon it presently, and follow it night and day through the greatest discouragements and resistance. Fifthly, I might

also tell you of the honourableness of this work; but I will pass by that, lest I excite your pride instead of your zeal.

And thus I have showed you what should move and persuade you to this duty. Let me now conclude with a word of entreaty. First, To all the godly in general. Secondly, To some above others in particular, to set upon the conscionable performance of this most excellent work.

CHAP. XIV

An Advice to some more specially to help others to this Rest, pressed largely on Ministers and Parents

SECT. I. Up, then, every man that hath a tongue, and is a servant of Christ, and do something of this your Master's work. Why hath he given you a tongue but to speak in his service? And how can you serve him more eminently, than in the saving of souls? He that will pronounce you blessed at the last day, and sentence you to the kingdom prepared for you, because you fed him, and clothed him, and visited him, &c., in his members, will surely pronounce you blessed for so great a work as is the bringing over of souls to his kingdom, and helping to drive the match betwixt them and him. He that saith, "The poor you have always with you," hath left the ungodly always with you, that you might still have matter to exercise your charity upon. Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians, or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor, ignorant, ungodly neighbours. Alas! there is but a step betwixt them and death and hell; many hundred diseases are waiting ready to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate, they are lost for ever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If you believe not the word of God, and the danger of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves? If you do believe it, why do you not bestir you to the helping of others? Do you not care who is damned, so you be saved? If so, you have as much cause to pity yourselves; for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace. Should you not rather say, as

the lepers of Samaria, Is it not a day of glad tidings, and do we sit still, and hold our peace? (1 Kings 7:9.) Hath God had so much mercy on you, and will you have no mercy on your poor neighbours? You need not go far to find objects for your pity. Look but into your streets, or into the next house to you, and you will probably find some. Have you never an ignorant and unregenerate neighbour that sets his heart below, and neglecteth eternity? Oh, what blessed place do you live in, where there is none such. If there be not some of them in thine own family, it is well; and yet art thou silent? Dost thou live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labour with them, or travel with them, or sit still and talk with them, and say nothing to them of their souls, or the life to come? If their houses were on fire, thou wouldst run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell? If thou knewest but a remedy for their diseases, thou wouldst tell it them, or else thou wouldst judge thyself guilty of their death. Cardan speaks of one that had a receipt that would suddenly and certainly dissolve the stone in the bladder; and he concludes of him, that he makes no doubt but that man is in hell, because he never revealed it to any before he died. What shall we say, then, of them that know of the remedy for curing souls, and do not reveal it; nor persuade men to make use of it? Is it not hypocrisy to pray daily for their conversion and salvation, and never once endeavour to procure it? And is it not hypocrisy to pray, "that God's name may be hallowed," and never to endeavour to bring men to hallow it, nor hinder them from profaning it? And can you pray "Let thy kingdom come," and yet never labour for the coming or increase of that kingdom? Is it no grief to your hearts to see the kingdom of Satan so to flourish, and to see him lead captive such a multitude of souls? You take on you that you are soldiers in Christ's army, and will you do nothing against his prevailing enemies? You pray also daily, "that his will may be done;" and should you not daily, then, persuade men to do it, and dissuade them from sinning against it? You pray, "that God would forgive them their sins, and that he would not lead them into temptation, but deliver them from evil;" and yet will you not help them against temptations, nor help to deliver them from the greatest evil. Nor help them to repent

and believe, that they maybe forgiven. Alas! that your prayers and your practice should so much disagree! Look about you, therefore, Christians, with an eye of compassion on the ignorant ungodly sinners about you; be not like the priest or Levite who saw the man wounded, and passed by. God did not so pass by you, when it was your own case. Are not the souls of your neighbours fallen into the hands of Satan? Doth not their misery cry out to you, Help! help! As you have any compassion towards men in the greatest misery, help! As you have the hearts of men, and not of tigers in you, help! Alas! how forward are hypocrites in their sacrifice, and how backward to show mercy! How much in praying, and duties of worship, and how little in plain reproof and exhortation, and other duties of compassion! And yet God hath told them, "that he will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" that is, mercy before sacrifice. And how forward are these hypocrites to censure ministers for neglecting their duties! Yea, to expect more duty from one minister, than ten can perform! And yet they make no conscience of neglecting their own. Nay, how forward are they to separate from those about them! And how censorious against those that admit them to the Lord's supper, or that join with them! And yet will they not be brought to deal with them in Christ's way for their recovery: as if other men were to work, and they only to sit by and judge. Because they know it is a work of trouble, and will many times set men against them, therefore no persuasion will bring them to it. They are like men that see their neighbour sick of the plague, or drowning in the water, or taken captive by the enemy, and they dare not venture to relieve him themselves: but none so forward to put on others. So are these men the greatest expecters of duty, and the least performers.

Sect. II. But as this duty lieth upon all in general, so upon some more especially, according as God hath called or qualified them thereto. To them, therefore, more particularly I will address my exhortation, whether they be such as have more opportunity and advantages for this work, or such as have better abilities to perform it, or such as have both. And these are of several sorts.

1. All you that God hath given more learning and knowledge to, and endued with better parts for utterance than your neighbours, God expecteth this duty especially at your hand. The strong are made to help the weak, and those that see must direct the blind. God looketh for this faithful improvement of your parts and gifts, which if you neglect, it were better for you that you never had received them: for they will but further your condemnation, and be as useless to your own salvation, as they were to others.

Sect. III. 2. All those that have special familiarity with some ungodly men, and that have interest in them, God looks for this duty at their hands. Christ himself did eat and drink with publicans and sinners, but it was only to be their physician, and not their companion. Who knows but God gave you interest in them to this end, that you might be the means of their recovery? They that will not regard the words of another, will regard a brother, or sister, or husband, or wife, or near friend; besides, that the bond of friendship doth engage you to more kindness and compassion than ordinary.

Sect. IV. 3. Physicians that are much about dying men, should, in a special manner, make conscience of this duty: they have a treble advantage. First, They are at hand. Secondly, They are with men in sickness and dangers, when the ear is more open, and the heart less stubborn than in time of health. He that made a scorn of godliness before, will then be of another mind, and hear counsel then, if ever he will hear it. Thirdly, Besides, they look upon their physician as a man in whose hand is their life; or at least may do much to save them, and therefore they will the more regardfully hear his advice. Oh, therefore, you that are of this honourable profession, do not think this a work beside your calling; as if it belonged to none but ministers, except you think it beside your calling to be compassionate, or to be Christians. Oh, help, therefore, to fit your patients for heaven, and whether you see they are for life or death, teach them both how to live and to die, and give them some physic for their souls, as you do for their bodies. Blessed be God that very many of the chief physicians of this age, have, by their eminent piety,

vindicated their profession from the common imputation of atheism and profaneness.

Sect. V. 4. Another sort that have excellent advantages for this duty, is, men that have wealth and authority, and are of great place and command in the world, especially that have many that live in dependence on them. Oh, what a world of good might gentlemen, and knights, and lords, do, that have a great many tenants, and that are the leaders of the country, if they had but hearts to improve their interest and advantage! Little do you that are such, think of the duty that lies upon you in this. Have you not all your honour and riches from God? And is it not evident, then, that you must employ them for the best advantage of his service? Do you not know who hath said, "that to whom men commit much, from them they will expect the more?"

You have the greatest opportunities to do good, of most men in the world. Your tenants dare not contradict you, lest you dispossess them or their children of their habitations. They fear you more than they do God himself; your frown will do more with them, than the threatenings of the Scripture; they will sooner obey you, than God. If you speak to them for God and their souls, you may be regarded, when even a minister that they fear not, shall be despised. If they do but see you favour the way of godliness, they will lightly counterfeit it, at least, to please you, especially if they live within the reach of your observation. Oh, therefore, as you value the honour of God, your own comfort, and the salvation of souls, improve your interest to the utmost for God. Go visit your tenants and neighbours' houses, and see whether they worship God in their families, and take all opportunities to press them to their duties. Do not despise them because they are poor or simple. Remember, God is no respecter of persons; your flesh is of no better metal than theirs; nor will the worms spare your faces or hearts any more than theirs; nor will your bones or dust bear the badge of your gentility; you must be all equals when you stand in judgment; and, therefore, help the soul of a poor man, as well if he were a gentleman. And let men see that you excel

others as much in piety, heavenliness, compassion, and diligence in God's work, as you do in riches and honour in the world.

I confess you are like to be singular if you take this course; but then remember, you shall be singular in glory, for few great, and mighty, and noble, are called.

Sect. VI. 5. Another sort that have special opportunity to this work of helping others to heaven, is, the ministers of the Gospel. As they have, or should have more ability than others, so it is the very work of their calling, and every one expecteth it at their hands, and will better submit to their teaching than to others. I intend not these instructions so much to teachers as to others, and therefore I shall say but little to them; and if all, or most ministers among us, were as faithful and diligent as some, I would say nothing. But, because it is otherwise, let me give these two or three words of advice to my brethren in this office.

1. Be sure that the recovering and saving of souls be the main end of your studies and preaching. (Acts 20 and 26:18.) O do not propound any low and base ends to yourselves. This is the end of your calling, let it be also the end of your endeavours. God forbid that you should spend a week's study to please the people, or to seek the advancing of your own reputation. Dare you appear in the pulpit on such a business, and speak for yourselves, when you are sent, and pretend to speak for Christ? Dare you spend that time, and wit, and parts, for yourselves? And waste the Lord's-day in seeking applause, which God hath set apart for himself. Oh, what notorious sacrilege is this! Set out the work of God as skilfully and adornedly as you can, but still let the winning of souls be your end, and let all your studies and labours be serviceable thereto. Let not the window be so painted as to keep out the light, but always judge that the best means that most conduceth to the end. Do not think that God is best served by a neat, starched, laced oration; but that he is the able, skilful minister, that is best skilled in the art of instructing, convincing, persuading, and so winning of souls; and that is the best sermon that is best in these.

When you once grow otherwise minded, and seek not God but yourselves, God will make you the basest and most contemptible of men, as you make yourselves the most sinful and wretched. Hath not this brought down the ministry of England once already? It is true of your reputation, as Christ saith of your lives, "They that will save them, will lose them." Oh! let the vigour, also, of your persuasions show that you are sensible on how weighty a business you are sent. Oh! preach with that seriousness and fervour as men that believe their own doctrine, and that know their hearers must either be prevailed with, or be damned. What you would do to save them from everlasting burning, that do while you have the opportunity and price in your hand; that people may discern that you are in good sadness, and mean as you speak; and that you are not stage-players, but preachers of the doctrine of salvation. Remember what Cicero saith, "that if the matter be ever so combustible, yet, if you put not fire to it, it will not burn." And what Erasmus saith, "that a hot iron will pierce, when a cold one will not." And if the wise men of the world account you mad, say as Paul, "If we are beside ourselves, it is to God." And remember that Christ was so busy in doing of good, that his friends themselves begun to lay hands on him, thinking he had been beside himself. (Mark 3)

Sect. VII. 2. The second and chief word of advice that I would give you, is this: Do not think that all your work is in your studies, and in the pulpit. I confess that is great; but, alas! it is but a small part of your task. You are shepherds, and must know every sheep, and what is their disease, and mark their strayings, and help to cure them, and fetch them home.

If the paucity of ministers in great congregations (which is the great unobserved mischief in England that cries for reformation) did not make it a thing impossible in many places, I should charge the ministers of England with most notorious unfaithfulness, for neglecting so much the rest of their work, which calleth for their diligence as much as public preaching. O learn of Paul, (Acts 20:19, 20, 31,) to preach publicly, and from house to house, night and day

with tears. Let there not be a soul in your charge that shall not be particularly instructed and watched over. Go from house to house daily, and inquire how they grow in knowledge and holiness, and on what grounds they build their hopes of salvation; and whether they walk uprightly, and perform the duties of their several relations, and use the means to increase their abilities. See whether they daily worship God in their families; and set them in a way, and teach them how to do it: confer with them about the doctrines and practice of religion, and how they receive and profit by public teaching, and answer all their carnal objections; keep in familiarity with them, that you may maintain your interest in them, and improve all your interest for God. See that no seducers do creep in amongst them, or if they do, be diligent to countermine them; and preserve your people from infection of heresies and schisms; or if they be infected, be diligent to procure their recovery; not with passion and lordliness, but with patience and condescension: as Musculus did by the Anabaptists, visiting them in prison, where the magistrate had cast them, and there instructing and relieving them; and though they reviled him when he came, and called him a false prophet, and anti-christian seducer that thirsted for their blood, yet he would not so leave them, till at last by his meekness and love he had overcome them, and recovered many to the truth, and to unity with the church.

Have a watchful eye upon each particular sheep in your flock: do not do as the lazy separatists, that gather a few of the best together, and take them only for their charge, leaving the rest to sink or swim, and giving them over to the devil and their lusts; and except it be by a sermon in the pulpit, scarce ever endeavouring their salvation, nor once looking what becomes of them. O let it not be so with you! If any be weak in the faith, receive him, but not to doubtful disputations. (Rom. 14:1.) If any be too careless of their duties, and too little savour the things of the Spirit, let them be pitied, and not neglected: if any walk scandalously and disorderly, deal with them for their recovery, with all diligence and patience, and set before them the heinousness and danger of their sin; if they prove obstinate after all, then avoid them, and cast them off: but do not so cruelly as

to un-church them by hundreds and by thousands, and separate from them as so many pagans, and that before any such means have been used for their recovery. If they be ignorant, it may be your fault as well as theirs; and however, they are fitter to be instructed than rejected, except they absolutely refuse to be taught. Christ will give you no thanks for keeping or putting out such from his school that are unlearned, when their desire or will is to be taught. I confess, it is easier to shut out the ignorant, than to bestow our pains night and day in teaching them; but woe to such slothful, unfaithful servants. (Matt. 24:45, 46.) Who then is a faithful and a wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season, according to every one's age and capacity? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. O be not asleep while the wolf is waking! Let your eye be quick in observing the dangers and strayings of your people. If jealousies, heart-burnings, or contentions arise among them, quench them before they break out into raging, irresistible flames. As soon as you discern any to turn worldly, or proud, or factious, or self-conceited, or disobedient, or cold, and slothful in his duty; delay not, but presently make out for his recovery: remember how many are losers in the loss of a soul.

Sect. VIII. 3. Do not daub, or deal slightly with any; some will not tell their people plainly of their sins, because they are great men, and some because they are godly, as if none but the poor and the wicked should plainly be dealt with; do not you so, but reprove them sharply, though differently, and with wisdom, that they may be sound in the faith. When the Palsgrave chose Pitiseus for his household chaplain, he charged him, That without fear he should discharge his duty, and freely admonish him of his faults, as the Scriptures do require. Such encouragement from great ones, would embolden ministers, and free themselves from the unhappiness of sinning unreprieved. If gentlemen would give no more thanks to Doegs, and accusers of the ministers, than Wigandus's prince did to that flattering lawyer who accused him for speaking to princes too plainly, they should learn quickly to be silent, when they had been

forced as Haman's themselves, to clothe Mordecai, and set him in honour. However, God doth sufficiently encourage us to deal plainly; He hath bid us speak and fear not; He hath promised to stand by us, and He will be our security; He may suffer us to be anathema secundum dici (as Bucholeer said), but non secundum esse: He will keep us, as he did Huss's heart from the power of fire, though they did beat it, when they found it among the ashes; they may burn our bones, as Bucer's and Fagius's; or they may raise lies of us when we are dead, as of Luther, Calvin, and Œcolampadius; but the soul feeleth not this, that is rejoicing with his Lord; in the mean time let us be as well learned in the art of suffering (as Xenophon) as they are in the art of reproaching: I had rather hear from the mouth of Balak, "God hath kept thee from honour;" or from Ahab, "Feed him with the bread and water of affliction;" or from Amaziah, "Art thou made of the king's council? forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?" than to hear conscience say, 'Thou hast betrayed souls to damnation by thy cowardice and silence;' or to hear God say 'Their blood will I require at thy hands;' or to hear from Christ the judge, "Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" yea, or to hear these sinners cry out against me in eternal fire, and with implacable rage to charge me with their undoing. (Numb. 22:11; 1 Kings 22:27; 2 Chron. 25:16; Ezek. 3:18, 20, and 33:8; Matt. 25:30.)

And as you must be plain and serious, so labour to be skilful and discreet, that the manner may somewhat answer the excellency of the matter. How oft have I heard a stammering tongue, with ridiculous expressions, vain repetitions, tedious circumlocutions, and unseemly pronunciation, to spoil most precious spiritual doctrine, and make the hearers either loathe it, or laugh at it! How common are these extremes in the ministers of England! That while one spoils the food of life by affectation, and new-fashioned mincing, and pedantic toys, either setting forth a little and mean matter with a great deal of froth, and gaudy dressing; so that there is more of the shell or paring than of the meat: or like children's babies, that when you have taken away the dressing, you have taken away all; or else

hiding excellent truths in a heap of vain rhetoric, and deforming its naked beauty with their paintings, so that no more seriousness can be perceived in their sermons, than in a schoolboy's declamations: and our people are brought to hear sermons, as they do stage-plays, because ministers behave themselves but as the actors: on the other side, how many by their slovenly dressing, and the uncleanness of the dish that it is served up in, do make men loathe and nauseate the food of life, and even despise and cast up that which should nourish them! Such novices are admitted into the sacred function, to the hardening of the wicked, the saddening of the godly, and the disgrace and wrong of the work of the Lord; and those that are not able to speak sense or reason, are made the ambassadors of the most high God.

I know, our style must not be the same with different auditories: our language must not only be suited to our matter, but also to our hearers, or else the best sermon may be the worst; we must not read the highest books to the lowest form: therefore was Luther wont to say, that "*Qui pueriliter, populariter, trivialiter, et simplicissime docent, optimi ad vulgus sunt concionatores:*" but yet it is a poor sermon that hath nothing but words and noise. Every reasonable soul hath both judgment and affection; and every rational, spiritual sermon must have both. A discourse that hath judgment without affection is dead, and ineffectual; and that which hath affection without judgment is mad and transporting: remember the proverb, "*Non omnes qui habent citharam, sunt citharædi,*" Every man is not a musician that hath an instrument, or that can jangle it, and make a noise on it: and that other proverb, "*Multi sunt qui boves stimulant, pauci aratores,*" Many can prick the oxen, but few can plough; so, many preachers can talk loud and earnestly, but few can guide their flock aright, or open to them solidly the mysteries of the Gospel, and show the true mean between the extremes of contrary errors: I know both must be done; holding the plough without driving the oxen, doth nothing; and driving without holding, maketh mad work, and is worse than nothing: but yet remember, that every plough-boy can drive; but to guide is more difficult, and therefore belongeth to the

master-workman: the violence of the natural motion of the winds can drive on the ship; but there is necessary a rational motion to guide and govern it, or else it will quickly be on the rocks and shelves, either broke or sunk, and had better lie still in the harbour, at an anchor; the horses that have no reason, can set the coach or cart a-going, but if there be not some that have reason to guide them, it were better stand still. Oh, therefore, let me bespeak you, my brethren, in the name of the Lord, especially those that are more young and weak, that you tremble at the greatness of this holy employment, and run not up into a pulpit as boldly as into the marketplace; study and pray, pray and study, till you are become workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, that your people may not be ashamed, or weary to hear you; but that besides your clear unfolding of the doctrine of the Gospel, you may also be masters of your people's affections, and may be as potent in your divine rhetoric, as Cicero in his human, who, as it is said, while he pleaded for Ligarius, "Arma de imperatoris quantumvis irati manu excusserit, et misero supplicii veniam impetrarit;" or, as it is said of excellent Bucholcer, that he never went up into the pulpit, but he raised in men almost what affections he pleased: so raising the dejected, and comforting the afflicted, and strengthening the tempted, that though it were two hours before he had done, yet not any, even of the common people, were weary of hearing him. Set before your eyes such patterns as these, and labour with unwearied diligence to be like them. To this end take Demosthenes' counsel, "Plus olci quam vini absumere." It is a work that requireth your most serious, searching thoughts. Running, hasty, easy studies, bring forth blind births. When you are the most renowned doctors in the church of God, alas, how little is it that you know, in comparison of all that which you are ignorant of! Content not yourselves to know what is the judgment of others, as if that were to know the truth in its evidence; give not over your studies when you know what the orthodox hold, and what is the opinion of the most esteemed divines: though I think while you are novices, and learners yourselves, you may do well to take much upon trust from the more judicious: yet stop not there; but know, that such faith is

more borrowed than your own: an implicit faith in matters, not fundamental, and of great difficulty, is oftentimes commendable, yea, and necessary in your people, who are but scholars; but in you that are masters and teachers, it is a reproach.

Sect. IX. 4. Be sure that your conversation be teaching as well as your doctrine. Do not contradict and confute your own doctrine by your practice. Be as forward in a holy and heavenly life, as you are in pressing on others to it. Let your discourse be as edifying and spiritual as you teach them that theirs must be. Go not to law with your people, nor quarrel with them, if you can possibly avoid it. If they wrong you, forgive them: for evil language give them good, and blessing for their cursing. Let go your right rather than let go your hopes and advantages for the winning of one soul. Suffer any thing rather than the Gospel and men's souls should suffer. Become all things lawful to all men, if by any means you may win some. Let men see that you use not the ministry only for a trade to live by, but that your very hearts are wholly set upon the welfare of their souls. Whatsoever meekness, humility, condescension, or self-denial, you teach them from the Gospel, oh! teach it them also by your undissembled, leading example. This is to be guides, and pilots, and governors of the church indeed. Be not like the orators that Diogenes blamed, that studied bene dicere, non bene facere; nor like the sign at the inn-door, that hangs out in the rain itself, while it shows others where they may have shelter and refreshing; nor like the fencer that can offend, but not defend; as Cicero said of Cælius, that he was a good right-hand man, but an ill left-hand man. See that you be as well able to defend yourselves when you are tempted by Satan, or accused by men to be proud, covetous, or negligent, as to tell others what they should be. Oh, how many heavenly doctrines are in some people's ears, that never were in the preacher's heart! Too true is that of Hilary, "*Sanctiores sunt aures plebis, quam corda sacerdotum.*" Alas, that ever pride, emulation, hypocrisy, or covetousness, should come into a pulpit! They are hateful in the shops and street, but more hateful in the church, but in the pulpit most of all. What an odious sight is it, to see pride and ambition stand up to preach humility; and

hypocrisy to preach up sincerity; and an earthly-minded man to preach for a heavenly conversation! Do I need to tell you that are teachers of others, that we have but a little while longer to preach; and but a few more breaths to breathe, and then we must come down, and be accountable for our work? Do I need to tell you that we must die, and be judged as well as our people; or that justice is most severe about the sanctuary; and judgment beginneth at the house of God; and revenge is most implacable about the altar; and jealousy is hottest about the ark? Have you not learned these lessons from Eli, Corah, Nadab, and Abihu, Uzzah, and the Bethshemites, &c., though I had said nothing? Can you forget that even some of our tribe shall say at judgment, "Lord, we have taught in thy name," (Matt. 7,) who yet must depart with "I know you not?" Do you learn nothing by the afflictions that now lie upon you? You see what hath been done against the ministry of England: how some have been laid hold on by the hand of justice, and some by the hand of violence and injustice, and how all are lashed and reproached by the wanton tongues of ignorant, insolent sectaries; neither prelatical, presbyterian, nor mere independent, now spared, it being the very calling itself that now they set against; how they rob the church of her due maintenance, and make no more of it than Dionysius did of robbing Æsculapius of his golden beard, "Quia barbatus erat filius, at pater Apollo non ita;" or than the same Dionysius did of robbing Jupiter Olympius of the golden coat that Hieron. had given, saying, "that a coat of gold was too heavy for summer, and too cold for winter, but cloth would be suitable to both;" or than he did of robbing the images of the vessels of gold which they held in their hands, saying, "he did but take what they offered, and held forth to him;" or than the same Dionysius did of robbing the temple of Proserpina, when afterwards his ships had a prosperous wind, "Videtis, inquit, quàm prospera navigatio à Diis immortalibus detur sacrilegis: ex hoc colligens aut non esse Deos, aut illis non esse molesta sacrilegia." Sirs, doth God lay all this on the church and ministry for nothing? Doth not the world know that an ignorant, lazy ministry formerly possessed many churches in the land? And how many such are there yet remaining? And those that are better, alas! how far from what we should be,

either in knowledge or practice; and yet how unwilling are they to learn what they know not! Even as unwilling as their people are to learn of them, if not much more, Oh, see your errors by the glass of your afflictions, and if the words of God will not serve the turn, let the tongues of enemies and sectaries show you your transgressions. Of whom may I say to you as Erasmus of Luther, "Deus dedit huic postremæ ætati propter morborum multitudinem acrem medicum;" and as the Emperor Charles of the same Luther, "Si sacrificuli frugi essent, nullo indigerent Luthero." Yet let not any papist catch at this, as if our ministry were unlearned and vicious, in comparison of theirs; the contrary of the common sort is well known: and though the Jesuits of late have been so industrious and learned, yet I could tell them, out of Erasmus, of some that proved heretics must be killed, from Paul's "hæreticum hominem devita," i.e. vita tolle; and of Hen. Stephanus' priest of Artois, that would prove that it belonged to his parishioners to pave the church, and not to him; From Jeremy's "paveant illi," not "paveam ego." Or if these seem partial witnesses, I could tell them what Bellarmine saith of the ninth age: "Seculo hoc nullum extitit indoctius aut infelicius, quo qui mathematicæ aut philosophiæ operam dabat, magnus vulgo putabatur;" and as Espencæus saith, "Et Græce nosse suspectum fuerit, Hebraice prope hæreticum." I could tell them also what a clergy was found in Germany, and in England,x at the Reformation; what barbarous ignorance, beastly uncleanness, and murders of the children begotten in whoredom, was found among them. I could tell them who have been turned from their church by a mere journey to Rome; there seeing the wickedness of their chiefest clergy: and what Petrarch, Mantuan, with multitudes more, say of it: and (if the most horrid murders were not become virtues with them; and did they not think they did God service by killing his servants) should mind them of all the burnings in England, and of all the unparalleled, bloody massacres in France, and the Inquisition of Spain, which their clergy yet manage and promote. If any say, that I speak this but upon reports, we have seen no such thing, I answer as Pausanias, when he was blamed for dispraising a physician that he had never made trial of, "Si periculum fecissem nequaquam viverem." If we had fallen into

their hands, it had been too late to complain: "Quia me vestigia terrent, omnia in adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum." And some taste of the fruits of their projects we have lately had in England, by which paw we may sufficiently conjecture of the lion. So that, as bad as we are, our adversaries have little cause to reproach us.

But yet, brethren, let us impartially judge ourselves; for God will shortly judge us impartially. What is it that hath occasioned so many novices to invade the ministry, who, being puffed up with pride, are fallen into the snare of the devil, (1 Tim. 3:6,) and bring the work of God into contempt by their ignorance? Hath not the ungodliness and ambition of those that are more learned, by bringing learning itself into contempt, been the cause of all this? Alas! who can be so blinded by his charity, as not to see the truth of this among us? How many of the greatest wits have the most graceless hearts! and relish Cicero, Demosthenes, or Aristotle, better than David, or Paul, or Christ; and even loathe those holy ways which customarily they preach for; that have no higher ends in entering upon the ministry, than gain and preferment: and when the hopes of preferment are taken away, they think it but folly to choose such a toilsome and ungrateful work. And thus the ball of reproach is tossed between the well-meaning ignorant, and the ungodly learned; and between these two, how miserable is the church! The one cries out of unlearned schismatics; the other cries out of proud, ungodly persecutors; and say, 'These are your learned men, who study for nothing but for a benefice, or a bishoprick; that are as strange to the mysteries of regeneration, and a holy life, as any others!' and oh, that these reproaches were not too true of many! God hath lessened ministers of late, one would think sufficiently, to beware of ambition and secular avocations; but it is hard to hear God speak by the tongue of an enemy, or to see and acknowledge his hand where the instrument doth miscarry. If English examples have lost their force, as being so near your eyes that you cannot see them, remember the end of Funicus, that learned chronologer, who might have lived longer as a divine, but died as a prince's counsellor, and the distich pronounced at his death.

Disce meo exemplo, mandato munere fungi,

Et fuge ceu pestem τὴν πολυπραγμοσύνην.

And the like fate of Justus Jonas, (J. C., son of that great divine of that name,) the next year, whose last verses were like the former.

Quid juvat innumeros scire atque evolvere casus,

Si facienda fugis, si fugienda facis?

Study not, therefore, the way of rising, but the way of righteousness. Honesty will hold out, when honours will deceive you. If your hearts be once infected with the fermentation of this swelling humour, it will quickly rise up to your brain, and corrupt your intellectuals, and then you will be of that opinion which your flesh thinks to be good, and not that which your judgment thought to be true; and you will fetch your religion from the statute-book, and not from the Bible, as the jest went of Agricola, who turned from a protestant to an antinomian; and being convinced of that error, turned papist, into the other extreme; and Pflugius and Sidonius, authors of the Interim; "Chrisma ab eis et oleum pontificium inter alia defenduntur, ut ipsi discederent unctiores," because they obtained bishopricks by it. Oh, what a doleful case is it to see so many brave wits, and men of profound learning, to be made as useless and hurtful to the church of God by their pride and ungodliness, as others are by their pride and ignorance! Were a clear understanding conjoined with a holy heart and heavenly life, and were they as skilful in spiritual as human learning, what a glory and blessing would they be to the churches!

Sect. X. 5. Lastly, Be sure that you study and strive after unity and peace. If ever you would promote the kingdom of Christ, and your people's salvation, do it in a way of peace and love: public wars and private quarrels do usually pretend the reformation of the church, the vindicating of the truth, and the welfare of souls, but they as usually prove in the issue, the greatest means to the overthrow of all.

It is as natural for both wars and private contentions to produce errors, schisms, contempt of magistracy, ministry, and ordinances, as it is for a dead carrion to breed worms and vermin: believe it from one that hath too many years' experience of both in armies and garrisons: it is as hard a thing to maintain, even in your people, a sound understanding, a tender conscience, a lively, gracious, heavenly frame of spirit, and an upright life, in a way of war and contention, as to keep your candle lighted in the greatest storms, or under the waters.

The like I may say of perverse and fierce disputings about baptism, and the circumstantial of discipline, or other questions that are far from the foundation; they oftener lose the truth than find it.

A synod is as likely and lawful a means as any for such decisions; and yet Nazianzen saith, "Se hactenus non vidisse ullius synodi utilem finem, aut in qua res male se habentes, non magis exacerbatae quam curatae fuerint."

With the vulgar, he seems to be the conqueror that hath the last word, or at least he that hath the most plausible deportment, the most affecting tone, the most earnest and confident expressions, the most probable arguments, rather than he that hath the most naked demonstrations. He takes with them most, that speaks for the opinion which they like and are inclined to, though he speak nonsense: and he that is most familiar with them, hath the best opportunities and advantages to prevail, especially he that hath the greatest interest in their affections. So that a disputation before the vulgar, even of the godly, is as likely a means to corrupt them, as to cure them; usually the most erroneous seducers will carry out their cause with as good a face, as fluent a tongue, as great contempt and reproach of their opposers, and as much confidence, that the truth is on their side, as if it were so indeed.

Paræus's master taught him that "certo certius in qualibet minutissima panis portione, vere et substantialiter integrum corpus

Christi esset: item in, apud, cum, sub minutissima vini guttula adesset integer sanguis dominicus." What confidence was here in a bad cause! And if you depend on the most reverend and best-esteemed teachers, and suffer the weight of their reputation to turn the scales, you may in many things be never the nearer to the truth. How many learned able men have the name and authority of Luther misled in the point of con-substantiation? Ursin was carried away with it awhile, till he was turned from it by the reading of Luther's own arguments, they were such paralogisms. Yet was it Luther's charge to his followers, "that none should call themselves after his name, because he died not for them, nor was his doctrine his own." The only way, therefore, to the prospering your labours, is, to quench all flames of contention, to your power. If you would have the waters of verity and piety to be clear, the way is not to stir in them, and trouble them, but to let them settle in peace, and run down into practice.

Woe to those ministers who make unnecessary divisions and parties among the people, that so they may get themselves a name, and be cried up by many followers! And as you should thus study the peace and unity of your congregations, so keep out all the occasions of division, especially the doctrine of separation, and popular church government, the apparent seminary of faction and perpetual contentions. If once your people be taught that it belongeth to them to govern themselves, and those that Scripture calleth their guides and rulers, you shall have mad work! When every one is a governor, who are the governed? When the multitude, how unable soever, must hear and judge of every cause, both their teachers and others, they need no other employment to follow: this will find them work enough, as it doth to parliament-men to sit, and hear, and speak, and vote.

Is it not strange that so learned a man as Pet. Ramus should be advocate for the multitude's authority in church-government? But that God must use so sharp a cure for those contentions, as that bloody French massacre, methinks should make England tremble to

consider it, lest the same disease here must have the like cure. If an army had tried this popular government but one year among themselves in their military affairs, and had attempted and managed all their designs by the vote of the whole army, I durst have valued their judgments the better ever after in this point.

Woe to the patient that must have a mistaken physician, till he be grown skilful by making experiments upon his diseases: and woe to the people that are in such hands, as must learn their skill in government from the common calamities only, and from their experience of the sufferings of the people! This kind of knowledge, I confess, is the thoroughest; but it is pity that so many others should pay so dear for it.

You, therefore, who are the guides of this chariot of Christ, take heed of losing the reins, lest all be overthrown. Alas! poor England, how are thy bowels torn out, because thy inhabitants, yea, and guides, run all into extremes, like a drunken man that reeleth from side to side, but cannot keep the middle way: nay, they hate a man of peace, who runs not out into their extremes. One party would pluck up the hedge of government, as if the vineyard could not be fruitful, except it lie waste to the pleasure of all the beasts of the forest. They are like the pond that should grudge at the banks and dam, and thinks it injurious to be thus restrained of its liberty, and therefore combine with the winds to raise a tempest, and so assault and break down the banks in their rage; and now where is that peaceable association of waters? Methinks the enemies of government are just in the case, as I remember, when I was a boy, our school was in, when we had barred out our master, we grudged at our yoke, we longed for liberty; because it was not given us, we resolved to take it. When we had got out our master, and shut fast the doors, we grew bold, and talked to him at our pleasure: then no one was master, and every one was our master. We spend our time in playing and quarrelling, we treat at last with our master about coming in; but our liberty was so sweet that we were loth to leave it, and we had run ourselves so deep in guilt, that we durst not trust him, and therefore we resolve to let him

in no more: but, in the end, when our playdays, which we called holidays, were over, we were fain to give an account of our boldness, and soundly to be whipped for it, and so to come under the yoke again. Lord, if this be the case of England, let us rather be whipped, and whipped again, than turned out of thy school, and from under thy government.

We feel now how those are mistaken that think the way for the church's unity, is to dig up the banks and let all loose, that every man in religion may do what he list.k

On the other side, some men, to escape this Scylla, do fall into the Charybdis of violence and formality. They must have all men to walk in fetters, and they must be the makers of them; and ministers must be taught to preach by such jives as their horses are taught to pace. No man must be suffered to come into a pulpit, that thinks not or speaks not as they would have him: or, if they cannot take away his liberty, they will do what they can to blast his reputation. Yet if he cannot have the repute of being orthodox, it were well if they would leave him the reputation of a Christian.

But having, also, a Christianity of their own making, and proper to themselves, they will presently unchristen him, and make him a heretic by proclamation; as if they had so far the power of the keys, as to lock up the doors of heaven against him, and wipe out his name from the book of life.

It striketh me sometimes into an amazement with admiration, that it should be possible for such mountains of pride to remain in the hearts of many godly, reverend ministers! That they should no more be conscious of the weakness of their own understandings, but that even in disputable, difficult things they must be the rule by which all others must be judged. So that every man's judgment must be cut meet to the standard of theirs; and whatsoever opinion is either shorter or longer, must be rejected with the scorn of a heresy or an error. Wonderful! That men who have ever studied divinity should

no more discern the profundities, and difficulties, and their own incapacities! More wonderful, that any disciple of Christ should be such an enemy to knowledge as to resolve they will know no more themselves than is commonly known, or suffer any other to know more. So that when a man hath read once what is the opinion of the divines that are in most credit, he dare search no further, for fear of being counted a novelist or heretic, or lest he bear their curse for adding to, or taking from, the common conceits! So that divinity is become an easier study than heretofore. We are already at a ne plus ultra. It seemeth vain, when we know the opinion is in credit, to search any further. We have then nothing to do but easily to study for popular sermons: nor is it safe so much as to make them our own, by looking into and examining their grounds, lest in so doing we should be forced to a dissent: so that scholars may easily be drawn to think that it is better to be at a venture of the common belief, which may be with ease, than to weary and spend themselves in tedious studies, when they are sure, beforehand, of no better reward from men than the reputation of heretics, which is the lot of all that go out of the common road. So that who will hereafter look after any more truth than is known and in credit, except it be some one that is so taken with admiration of it as to cast all his reputation overboard, rather than make shipwreck of his self-prized merchandise; yet most wonderful it is, that any Christian, especially so many godly ministers, should arrogate to themselves the high prerogatives of God, viz., to be the rule and standard of truth! I know they will say that Scripture is the rule; but when they must be the peremptory judges of the sense of that Scripture, so that in the hardest controversies none must swerve from their sense, upon pain of being branded with heresy or error, what is this but to be the judges themselves, and Scripture but their servant? The final, full, decisive interpretation of laws, belongeth to none but the law-makers themselves; for who can know another man's meaning beyond his expressions, but himself?

And it yet increaseth my wonder that these divines have not forgotten how constantly our divines, that write against the papists,

do disclaim any such living, final, decisive judge of controversies, but make Scripture the only judge. Oh! what mischief hath the church of Christ suffered by the enlarging of her creed. While it contained but twelve articles, believers were plain, and peaceable, and honest: but a Christian now is not the same thing as then; our heads swell so big, like children that have the rickets, that all the body fares the worse for it. Every new article that was added to the creed, was a new engine to stretch the brains of believers, and in the issue to rend out the bowels of the church.

It never went so well with the church, since it begun, as Erasmus saith of the times of the Nicene council, "*rem ingeniosam fore Christianum esse,*" to be a matter of so much wit and cunning to be a Christian. Not but all our wit should be here employed, and controversies of difficulty may be debated; but when the decision of these must be put into our creed, and a man must be of the faith that the church is of, it goes hard. Methinks I could read Aquinas, or Scotus, or Bellarmine, with profit, *ut philosophiam et theologiam liberam;* but when I must make them all parts of my creed, and subscribe to all they say, or else be no Catholic, this is hard dealing. I know now we have no Spanish Inquisition to fire us from the truth; but, as Grynæus was wont to say, "*Pontifici Romano Erasmus plus nocuisse jocando, quam Lutherum stomachando;*" so some men's reproaches may do more than other men's persecutions.

And it is not the least aggravation of these men's arrogance, that they are most violent in the points that they have least studied, or which they are most ignorant in: yea, and that their cruel reproaches are usually so incessant, that where they once fasten, they scarce ever loose again; having learned the old lesson, "To be sure to accuse boldly, for the scar will remain when the wound is healed." Yea, some will not spare the fame of the dead, but when their souls have the happiness of saints with God, their names must have the stain of heresy with men. More ingenuity had Charles the emperor, when the Spanish soldiers would have dug up the bones of Luther: "*Sinite ipsum, inquit, quiescere ad diem resurrectionis et iudicium*

omnium," &c. "Let him rest," saith he, "till the resurrection and the final judgment; if he were a heretic, he shall have as severe a judge as you can desire."

These are the extremes which poor England groaneth under; and is there no remedy? Besides the God of peace, there is no remedy. Peace is fled from men's principles and judgments, and therefore it is a stranger to their affections and practices; no wonder then if it be a stranger in the land, both in church and state.

If either of the forementioned extremes be the way to peace, we may have it, or else where is the man that seeketh after it? But I remember Luther's oracle, and fear it now to be verified; "Hæc perdent religionem Christianam: 1. Oblivio beneficiorum ab evangelio acceptorum. 2. Securitas, quæ jam passim et nbique regnat. 3. Sapientia mundi, quæ vult omnia redigcre in ordinem, et impiis mediis ecclesiæ paci consulere." Three things will destroy the Christian religion: First, Forgetfulness of the benefit we received by the Gospel. Secondly, Security. Thirdly, The wisdom of the world, which will needs reduce all into order, and look to the church's peace by ungodly means.

The zeal of my spirit after peace, hath made me digress here further than I intended; but the sum and scope of all my speech is this: Let every conscionable minister study equally for peace and truth, as knowing that they dwell both together in the golden mean, and not at such a distance as most hotspurs do imagine; and let them believe that they are likely to see no more success of their labours, than they are so studious of peace; and that all wounds will let out both blood and spirits; and both truth and godliness is ready to run out at every breach that shall be made among the people or themselves, and that the time for the pastures of profession to be green, and for the field of true godliness to grow ripe for the harvest, and for the rose of devotion and heavenliness to be fragrant and flourish, is not in the blustering stormy tempestuous winter, but in the calm delightful summer of peace.

Oh, what abundance of excellent, hopeful fruits of godliness have I seen blown down before they were ripe, by the impetuous winds of wars, and other contentions, and so have lain trodden under foot by libertinism and sensuality, as meat for swine, who else might have been their master's delight! In a word, I never yet saw the work of the Gospel go on well in wars, nor the business of men's salvation succeed among dissensions; but if one have in such times proved a gainer, multitudes have been losers: the same God is the God both of truth and peace; the same Christ is the Prince of Peace, and author of salvation; the same word is the Gospel of peace and salvation: both have the same causes; both are wrought and carried on by the same Spirit; the same persons are the sons of peace and salvation, so inseparably do they go hand in hand together: O therefore let us be the ministers and helpers of our people's peace, as ever we desire to be helpers of their salvation.

And how impossible is it for ministers to maintain peace among their people, if they maintain not peace among themselves! Oh, what a staggering is it to the faith of the weak, when they see their teachers and leaders at such odds! It makes them ready to throw away all religion, when they see scarcely two or three of the most learned and godly divines of one mind, but like the bitterest enemies, disgracing and vilifying one another, and all because the articles of our faith must be so unlimited, voluminous, and almost infinite; so that no man well knows when he may call himself an orthodox Christian. When our creed is swelled to the bigness of a national confession, one would think that he that subscribeth to that confession should be orthodox; and yet if he jump not just with the times in expounding every article of that confession, and run not with the stream in every other point that is in question among them, though he had subscribed to the whole harmony of confessions, he is never the nearer the estimation of orthodox. Were we all bound together by a confession or subscription of the true fundamentals, and those other points that are next to fundamentals only, and there took up our Christianity and unity, yielding each other a freedom of differing in smaller or more difficult points, or in expressing ourselves in

different terms, and so did live peaceably and lovingly together notwithstanding such differences, as men that all know the mysteriousness of divinity, and the imperfection of their own understandings, and that here we know but in part, and therefore shall most certainly err and differ in part; what a world of mischief might this course prevent!

I oft think on the examples of Luther and Melancthon: it was not a few things that they differed in, nor such as would now be accounted small, besides the imperious harshness of Luther's disposition, as Carolostadius could witness; and yet how sweetly, and peaceably, and lovingly did they live together, without any considerable breach or disagreement! As Mel. Adamus saith of them, "Et si tempora fuerunt ad distractiones proclivia, hominumque levitas dissidiorum cupida, tamen cum alter alterius vitia nosset, nunquam inter eos similtas extitit, ex qua animorum alienatio subsecuta sit;" so that their agreement arose not hence, that either was free from faults or error, but knowing each other's faults, they did more easily bear them. Certainly if every difference in judgment in matters of religion should seem intolerable, or make a breach in affection, then no two men on earth must live together, or tolerate each other, but every man must resolve to live by himself; for no two on earth but differ in one thing or other, except such as take all their faith upon trust, and explicitly believe nothing at all. God hath not made our judgments all of a complexion, any more than our faces; nor our knowledge all of a size, any more than our bodies; and methinks men, that be not resolved to be any thing in religion, should be afraid of making the articles of their faith so numerous, lest they should shortly become heretics themselves, by disagreeing from themselves; and they should be afraid of making too strict laws for those that differ in judgment in controvertible points, lest they should shortly change their judgments, and so make a rod for their own backs; for how know they, in difficult disputable cases, but within these twelve months themselves may be of another mind, except they are resolved never to change, for fear of incurring the reproach of novelty and mutability; and then they were best resolve to study no more, nor

ever to be wiser. I would we knew just at what age a man must receive this principle against changing his judgment; I am afraid lest at last they should teach it their children, and lest many divines do learn it too young; and if any, besides Christ and his apostles, must be the standard and foundation of our faith, I would we could certainly tell who they are; for I have heard yet none but the pope, or his general council, expressly lay claim to the prerogative of infallibility; and I think there are few that have appeared more fallible: for my own part, I admire the gifts of God in our first reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, &c. And I know no man, since the apostles' days, whom I value and honour more than Calvin, and whose judgment, in all things, one with another, I more esteem and come nearer to; though I may speed as Amyraldus, to be thought to defend him but for a defence to his own errors; but yet if I thought we must needs be in all things of his mind, and know no more in any one point than he did, I should heartily wish that he had lived one fifty years longer, that he might have increased and multiplied his knowledge before he died, and then succeeding ages might have had leave to have grown wiser, till they had attained to know as much as he. Some men can tell what to say in point of ceremonies, common-prayer, &c. when they are pressed with the examples and judgments of our first reformers; but in matters of doctrine, they forget their own answers, as if they had been perfect here, and not in the other; or as if doctrinals were not much fuller of mysteries and difficulties than worship. So far am I from speaking all this for the security of myself in my differing from others, that if God would dispense with me for my ministerial services, without any loss to his people, I should leap as lightly as Bishop Ridley, when he was stripped of his pontificalia, and say as Pædaretus the Laconian, when he was not chosen in numerum trecentorum, "Gratias habeo tibi, O Deus, quod tot homines me meliores huic civitati dedisti."

But I must stop, and again apologise for this tediousness; though it be true, as Zeno saith, "verbis multis non eget veritas;" yet "respicendum etiam quibus egent lectores," I conclude not with a laconism, but a christianism, as hoping my brethren will at least hear

their Master, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another:" (Mark 9:50:) and Calvin's exposition, which is the sum of all I have said, q. d. "Danda est vobis opera, non tantum ut salsi intus sitis, sed etiam ut saliat alios: quia tamen sal acrimonia sua mordet, ideo statim admonet, sic temperandum esse condituram, ut pax interim salva maneat." And with R. Meldenius Paræn. fol. f. 2. "Verbo dicam: si nos servaremus in necessariis unitatem, in non necessariis libertatem, in utrisque charitatem; optimo certe loco essent res nostræ: ita fiat. Amen." Inquit Conr. Bergius hæc recitans.

Sect. XI. 6. The last whom I would persuade to this great work of helping others to the heavenly rest, is, parents, and masters of families: All you that God hath intrusted with children or servants, O consider what duty lieth on you for the furthering of their salvation. That this exhortation may be the more effectual with you, I will lay down these several considerations for you seriously to think on:

1. What plain and pressing commands of God are there that require this great duty at your hand! "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. 6:6–8.) So Deut. 11. And how well is God pleased with this in Abraham! "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord," &c. (Gen. 18:19.) And it is Joshua's resolution, "that he and his household will serve the Lord." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6.) "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4.) Many the like precepts, especially in the book of Proverbs, you may find: so that you see it is a work that the Lord of heaven and earth hath laid upon you, and how then dare you neglect it, and cast it off?

2. It is a duty that you owe your children in point of justice; from you they received the defilement and misery of their natures, and therefore you owe them all possible help for their recovery. If you had but hurt a stranger, yea, though against your will, you would think it your duty to help to cure him.

3. Consider, How near your children are to you, and then you will perceive that from this natural relation also they have interest in your utmost help. Your children are, as it were, parts of yourselves, if they prosper when you are dead, you take it almost as if you lived and prospered in them. If you labour ever so much, you think it not ill bestowed, nor your buildings or purchases too dear, so that they may enjoy them when you are dead; and should you not be of the same mind for their everlasting rest?

4. You will else be witnesses against your own selves; your great care, and pains, and cost for their bodies, will condemn you for your neglect of their precious souls. You can spend yourselves in toiling and caring for their bodies, and even neglect your own souls, and venture them sometimes upon unwarrantable courses, and all to provide for your posterity; and have you not as much reason to provide for their souls? Do you not believe that your children must be everlastingly happy or miserable when this life is ended? and should not that be forethought in the first place?

5. Yea, all the very brute creatures may condemn you; which of them is not tender of their young? How long will the hen sit to hatch her chickens; and how busily scrape for them; and how carefully shelter and defend them! and so will even the most vile and venomous serpent, and will you be more unnatural and hard-hearted than all these? Will you suffer your children to be ungodly and profane, and run on in the undoubted way to damnation, and let them alone to destroy themselves without control?

6. Consider, God hath made your children to be your charge; yea, and your servants too. Every one will confess they are the minister's

charge, and what a dreadful thing it is for them to neglect them, when God hath told them, that if they tell not the wicked of their sin and danger, their blood shall be required at that minister's hands; and is not your charge as great and as dreadful as theirs? Have not you a greater charge of your own families than any minister hath? Yea, doubtless, and your duty it is to teach, and admonish, and reprove them, and watch over them, and at your hands else God will require the blood of their souls. The greatest it is that ever you were intrusted with, and woe to you if you prove unfaithful, and betray your trust, and suffer them to be ignorant for want of your teaching, or wicked for want of your admonition or correction. Oh, sad account, that many parents will make!

7. Look into the dispositions and lives of your children, and see what a work there is for you to do. First, It is not one sin that you must help them against, but thousands; their name is Legion, for they are many. It is not one weed that must be pulled up, but the field is overspread with them. Secondly, And how hard is it to prevail against any one of them! They are hereditary diseases, bred in their natures: "Naturam expellas furca," &c. They are as near them as the very heart; and how tenacious are all things of that which is natural! How hard to teach a hare not to be fearful; or a lion or a tiger not to be fierce! Besides, the things you must teach them are quite above them; yea, and clean contrary to the interest and desires of their flesh: how hard is it to teach a man to be willing to be poor, and despised, and destroyed here for Christ; to deny themselves, and displease the flesh; to forgive an enemy; to love those that hate us; to watch against temptations; to avoid occasions and appearance of evil; to believe in a crucified Saviour; to rejoice in tribulation; to trust upon a bare word of promise, and let go all in hand, if called to it, for something in hope that they never saw, nor ever spake with man that did see; to make God their chief delight and love, and to have their hearts in heaven, while they live on earth: I think none of this is easy; they that think otherwise, let them try and judge: yet all this must be learned, or they are undone for ever. If you help them not to some trade, they cannot live in the world; but if they be destitute of these

things, they shall not live in heaven. If the mariner be not skilful, he may be drowned; and if the soldier be not skilful, he may be slain; but they that cannot do the things above mentioned, will perish for ever, "for without holiness none shall see God." (Heb. 12:14.) Oh, that the Lord would make all you that are parents sensible what a work and charge doth lie upon you! You that neglect this important work, and talk to your families of nothing but the world, I tell you the blood of souls lies on you; make as light of it as you will, if you repent not, and amend, the Lord will shortly call you to an account for your guiltiness of your children's everlasting undoing; and then you that could find in your hearts to neglect the souls of your own children, will be judged more barbarous than the Irish or Turks, that kill the children of others.

8. Consider also, What a world of sorrows do you prepare for yourselves, by the neglect of your children.

First, You can expect no other but that they should be thorns in your very eyes, and you may thank yourselves if they prove so, seeing they are thorns of your own planting.

Secondly, If you should repent of this your negligence, and be saved yourselves, yet is it nothing to you to think of the damnation of your children? You know God hath said, "that except they be born again, they shall not enter into the kingdom of God." Methinks, then, it should be a heart-breaking to all you that have unregenerate children; methinks you should weep over them every time you look them in the face, to remember that they are in the way to eternal fire. Some people would lament the fate of their children, if but a wizard should foretell them some ill fortune to befall them, and do you not regard it when the living God shall tell you, "that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all they that forget God." (Psal. 9:17.)

Thirdly, Yet all this were not so doleful to you, if it were a thing that you had no hand in, or could do nothing to help; but to think that all this is much long of you! that ever your negligence should bring your

child to these everlasting torments, which the very damned man (Luke 16) would have had his brethren been warned to escape. If this seem light to thee, thou hast the heart of a hellish fiend in thee, and not of a man.

Fourthly, But yet worse than all this will it prove to you if you die in this sin, for then you shall be miserable as well as they: and, oh, what a greeting will there be then between ungodly parents and children! What a hearing will it be to your tormented souls, to hear your children cry out against you: 'All this that we suffer was long of you; you should have taught us better, and did not; you should have restrained us from sin, and corrected us, but you did not; and what an addition will such outcries be to your misery!

9. On the other side, do but think with yourselves, what a world of comfort you may have if you be faithful in this duty. First, If you should not succeed, yet you have freed your own souls; and though it be sad, yet not so sad, for you may have peace in your own consciences. Secondly, But if you do succeed, the comfort is inexpressible. For First, Godly children will be truly loving to yourselves that are their parents; when a little riches, or matters of this world, will oft make ungodly children to eat off their very natural affection. 2. Godly children will be most obedient to you; they dare not disobey and provoke you, because of the command of God, except you should command them that which is unlawful, and then they must obey God rather than men. 3. And if you should fall into want, they would be most faithful in relieving you, as knowing they are tied by a double bond, of nature and of grace. 4. And they will also be helpers to your souls, and to your spiritual comforts; they will be delighting you with the mention of heaven, and with holy conference and actions; when wicked children will be grieving you with cursing, and swearing, or drunkenness, or disobedience. 5. Yea, when you are in trouble, or sickness, and at death, your godly children will be at hand to advise and to support you; they will strive with God in prayers for you; oh, what a comfort is it to a parent to have a child that hath the spirit of prayer and interest in God! How

much good may they do you by their importunity with God! and what a sadness is it to have children, that when you lie sick, can do no more but ask you how you do; and look on you in your misery! 6. Yea, all your family may fare the better for one child or servant that feareth God; yea, perhaps all the town where he liveth: as Joseph's case proveth, and Jacob's, and many the like, when one wicked child may bring a judgment on your house. 7. And if God make you instruments of your children's conversion, you will have a share in all the good that they do through their lives; all the good they do to their brethren, or to the church of God, and all the honour they bring to God, will redound to your happiness as having been instruments of it. 8. And what a comfort may it be to you all your lives, to think that you shall live with them for ever with God! 9. But the greatest joy will be when you come to the possession of this, and you shall say, 'Here am I, and the children thou hast given me.' And are not all these comforts enough to persuade you to this duty?

10. Consider further, that the very welfare of church and state lieth mainly on this duty of well educating children; and without this, all other means are like to be far less successful. I seriously profess to you that I verily think all the sins and miseries of the land may acknowledge this sin for their great nurse and propagator. Oh, what happy churches might we have, if parents did their duties to their children! Then we need not exclude so many for ignorance or scandal, nor have our churches composed of members so rude. Then might we spare most of the quarrels about discipline, reformation, toleration, and separation: any reasonable government would do better with a well-taught people, than the best will do with the ungodly. It is not good laws and orders that will reform us, if the men be not good, and reformation begin not at home; when children go wicked from the hands of their parents; thence some come such to the universities, and so we come to have an ungodly ministry; and in every profession they bring this fruit of their education with them. When gentlemen teach their children only to hunt, and hawk, and game, and deride the godly, what magistrates, and what parliaments, and so what government, and what a commonwealth, are we likely to

have, when all must be guided by such as these! Some perverse, inconsiderate persons lay the blame of all this on the ministers; that people of all sorts are so ignorant and profane; as if one man can do the work of many hundreds. I beseech you that are masters and parents, do your own duties, and free ministers from these unjust aspersions, and the church from her reproach and confusion. Have not ministers work enough of their own to do? Oh, that you knew what it is that lieth on them! And if, besides this, you will cast upon them the work of every master and parent in the parish, it is likely, indeed, to be well done. How many sorts of workmen must there be to the building of a house! And if all of them should cast it upon one, and themselves do nothing, you may judge how much were likely to be done. If there be three or four schoolmasters in a school, amongst three or four hundred scholars, and all the lower that should fit them for the higher schools, should do nothing at all but send all these scholars to the highest schoolmaster as ignorant as they received them, would not his life be a burden to him, and all the work be frustrated and spoiled? Why, so it is here. The first work towards the reforming and making happy of church and commonwealth, lies in the good education of your children; the most of this is your work; and if this be left undone, and then they come to ministers raw and ignorant, and hardened in their sins, alas! what can a minister do? Whereas, if they came trained up in the principles of religion, and the practice of godliness, and were taught the fear of God in their youth, O what an encouragement would it be to ministers! And how would the work go on in our hands! I tell you seriously, this is the cause of all our miseries and unreformedness in church and state, even the want of a holy education of children. Many lay the blame on this neglect and that, but there is none hath so great a hand in it as this. What a school must there needs be where all are brought raw, as I said, to the highest form! What a house must there needs be built, when clay is brought to the mason's hands instead of bricks! What a commonwealth may be expected if all the constables and justices should do nothing, but cast all upon king and parliament! And so, what a church may we expect, when all the parents and masters in the parish shall cast all their duty on their ministers! Alas! how long

may we catechise them, and preach to them, before we can get them to understand the very principles of the faith! This, this is the cause of our church's deformities, and this is the cause of the present difficulty of reformation. It is in vain to contend about orders and discipline if the persons that live under it be not prepared. Perhaps you will say, 'The apostles had not their hearers thus prepared to their hands. Is not the word the first means of conversion?'

Answ. 1. The apostles preached to none at first but infidels and pagans. And are you no better? Will you do no more for your children than they?

2. All the success of their labours was to gather here and there a church from among the world of unbelievers. But now, the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ.

3. And yet the apostles were extraordinarily qualified for the work, and seconded it by miracles for the convincing of their hearers.

4. I do verily believe that if parents did their duty as they ought, the word publicly preached would not be the ordinary means of regeneration in the church, but only without the church, among infidels. Not that I believe Doctor Burgess and Mr. Bedford's doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But God would pour out his grace upon the children of his people, and hear prayers for them, and bless such endeavours for their holy education, that we should see the promises made good to our seed, and the unthankful Anabaptists, that will not confess that the children of the saints are any nearer God, or more beholden to him than pagans, so much as for the favour to be visible church members, should, by sweet experience, be convinced of their error, and be taught better how to understand that our children are holy.

11. I entreat you that are parents, also to consider what excellent advantages you have above all others for the saving of your children.

1. They are under your hands while they are young and tender, and flexible; but they come to ministers when they are grown elder, and stiffer, and settled in their ways, and think themselves too good to be catechised, and too old to be taught. You have a twig to bend, and we an oak. You have the young plants of sin to pluck up, and we the deep-rooted vices. The consciences of children are not so seared with a custom of sinning and long-resisting grace, as others. You have the soft and tender earth to plough in, and we have the hard and stony ways, that have been trodden on by many years' practice of evil. When they are young, their understandings are like a sheet of white paper, that hath nothing written on, and so you have opportunity to write what you will. But when they are grown up in sin, they are like the same paper written over with falsehoods, which must all be blotted out again, and truth written in the place. And how hard is that! We have a double task; first to unteach them, and then to teach them better, but you have but one. We must unteach them all that the world, and flesh, and wicked company, and the devil, have been diligently teaching them in many years' time. We have hardened hearts to beat on like a smith's anvil, that will not feel us; we may tell them of death and judgment, heaven and hell, and they hear us as if they were asleep or dead; you have the soft clay to mould, and we have the hardened burned bricks. You have them before they are possessed with prejudice and false conceits against the truth, but we have them to teach when they have many years lived among those that have scorned at godliness, and taught them to think God's ways to be foolish preciseness. Custom hath not ensnared and engaged our little ones to contrary ways, but of old sinners, the Lord himself hath said, "that if the Ethiopian can change his skin, and the leopard his spots, then may those that are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well." (Jer. 13:23.) Doth not the experience of all the world show you the power of education? What else makes all the children of the Jews to be Jews; and all the children of the Turks to be Mahometans; and of Christians to be in profession Christians; and of each sect or party in religion to follow their parents, and the custom of the place? Why now, what an advantage have you to use all this for the furtherance of their happiness, and possess them as strongly beforehand against

sin, as else Satan would do for it; and so Satan should come to them upon some of those disadvantages that now Christ comes on.

2. Consider, also, That you have the affections of your children more than any others. None in the world hath that interest in their hearts as you. You will receive that counsel from an undoubted friend, that you would not do from an enemy, or a stranger. Why now, your children cannot choose but know that you are their friends, and advise them in love; and they cannot choose but love you again. Their love is loose and arbitrary to others, but to you it is determinate and fast. Nature hath almost necessitated them to love you. Oh, therefore, improve this your interest in them for their good.

3. You have also the greatest authority over them. You may command them, and they dare not disobey you; or else it is your own fault, for the most part, for you can make them obey you in your business in the world; yea, you may correct them to enforce obedience. Your authority also is the most unquestioned authority in the world. The authority of kings and parliament has been disputed, but yours is past dispute. And therefore, if you use it not to constrain them to the works of God, you are without excuse.

4. Besides, their whole dependence is on you for their maintenance and livelihood. They know you can either give them or deny them what you have, and so punish and reward them at your pleasure. But on ministers or neighbours they have no such dependence.

5. Moreover, you that are parents know the temper and inclinations of your children, what vices they are most inclined to, and what instruction or reproof they most need, but ministers that live more strange to them, cannot know this.

6. Above all, you are ever with them, and so have opportunity as to know their faults, so to apply the remedy. You may be still talking to them of the word of God, and minding them of their state and duty, and may follow and set home every word of advice, as they are in the

house with you, or in the shop, or in the field at work. Oh, what an excellent advantage is this, if God do but give you hearts to use it. Especially you, mothers, remember this; you are more with your children while they are little ones than their fathers, be you therefore still teaching them as soon as ever they are capable of learning. You cannot do God such eminent service yourselves as men, but you may train up children that may do it, and then you will have part of the comfort and honour. Bathsheba had part of the honour of Solomon's wisdom; (Prov. 31:1;) for she taught him; and Timothy's mother and grandmother, of his piety. Plutarch speaks of a Spartan woman, that when her neighbours were showing their apparel and jewels, she brought out her children virtuous and well taught, and said, "These are my ornaments and jewels." Oh, how much more will this adorn you than your bravery! What a deal of pains you are at with the bodies of your children more than the fathers, and what do you suffer to bring them into the world; and will not you be at as much pains for the saving their souls? You are naturally of more tender affections than men; and will it not move you to think that your children should perish for ever? Oh, therefore, I beseech you, for the sake of the children of your bowels, teach them, admonish them, watch over them, and give them no rest till you have brought them over to Christ.

And thus I have showed you reason enough to make you diligent in teaching your children, if reason will serve, as methinks among reasonable creatures it should do.

Sect. XII. Let us next hear what is usually objected against this by negligent men.

Object. 1. We do not see but those children prove as bad as others that are taught the Scriptures, and brought up so holily; and those prove as honest men and good neighbours, that have none of this ado with them.

Answ. Oh, who art thou, man, that disputest against God? Hath God charged you to teach your children diligently his word, speaking of it as you sit at home, and as you walk abroad, as you lie down, and as you rise up; (Deut. 6:6–8;) and dare you reply that it is as good to let it alone? Why, this is to set God at defiance, and, as it were, to spit in his face, and give him the lie. Will you take it well at your servants, if, when you command them to do a thing, they should return you such an answer that they do not see but it were as good to let it alone? Wretched worm! Darest thou thus lift up thy head against the Lord that made thee, and must judge thee? Is it not he that commandeth thee? If thou dost not believe that this Scripture is the word of God, thou dost not believe in Jesus Christ: for thou hast nothing else to tell thee that there is a Christ. And if thou do believe that this is his word, how darest thou say, 'It is as good disobey it?' This is devilish pride indeed when such sottish, sinful dust shall think themselves wiser than the living God, and take upon them to reprove and cancel his word.

2. But, alas! you know not what honesty is when you say that the ignorant are as honest as others. You think those are the honestest men that best please you, but I know those are the most honest that best please God. Christ saith, in Luke 8:15, that an honest heart is that which keepeth the word of God; and you say, they are as honest that reject it. God made men to please himself, and not to please you; and you may know by his laws who please him best. The commandments have two tables, and the first is, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart;" and the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:33.)

3. And what if some prove naught that are well brought up? it is not the generality of them. Will you say that Noah's family was no better than the drowned world, because there was one Cham in it; nor David's, because there was one Absalom; nor Christ's, because there was one Judas?

4. But what if it were so: have men need of the less teaching, or the more? You have more wit in the matters of this world. You will not say, 'I see many labour hard, and yet are poor, and therefore it is as good never to labour at all;' you will not say, 'Many that go to school learn nothing, and therefore they may learn as much though they never go: or many that are great tradesmen break, and therefore it is as good never trade at all: or many great eaters are as lean as others, and many sick men recover no strength though they eat, and therefore it is as good for men never to eat more: or many plough and sow, and have nothing come up, and therefore it is as good never to plough more.' What a fool were he that should reason thus! And is he not a thousand times worse that shall reason thus for men's souls? Peter reasons the clean contrary way, "If the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18.) And so doth Christ, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter, and not be able." (Luke 13:24.) Other men's miscarriages should quicken our diligence, and not make us cast away all. What would you think of that man that should look over into his neighbour's garden, and because he sees here and there a nettle or weed among much better stuff, should say, 'Why, you may see these men that bestow so much pains in digging and weeding, have weeds in their garden as well as I that do nothing, and therefore who would be at so much pains?' Just thus doth the mad world talk; you may see now that those that pray, and read, and follow sermons, have their faults as well as we, and have wicked persons among them as well as we. Yea, but that is not the whole garden, as yours is; it is but here and there a weed, and as soon as they spy it, they pluck it up, and cast it away.

But, however, if such men be as wicked as you imagine, can you for shame lay the fault upon the Scripture, or ordinances of God? Do they find any thing in the Scriptures to encourage them to sin? You may far better say 'It is wrong of the judge and the law which hangs them, that there are so many thieves.' Did you ever read a word for sin in the Scripture; or ever hear a minister or godly man persuade people to sin, or from it rather? I speak not of sectaries, who usually

grow to be enemies to Scripture. Lord, what horrible impudence is in the faces of ungodly men! When a minister hath spent himself in studying and persuading his people from sin, or when parents have done all they can to reform their children, yet people will say, 'It is long of this that they are so bad.' What! will reproof and correcting for sin bring them soonest to it? I dare challenge any man breathing, to name any one ruler that ever was in the world, that was so severe against sin as Jesus Christ; or to show me any law that ever was made in the world so severe against sin as the laws of God? And yet it must be long of Christ and Scripture that men are evil! When he threateneth damnation against impenitent sinners, it is yet long of him. Yea, see how these wicked men contradict themselves! What is it that they hate the Scripture for, but that it is so strict and precise, and forbids them their pleasures and fleshly liberties, that is their sins? And yet if any fall into sin, they will blame the Scripture, that forbids it. I know in these late years of licentiousness and apostacy, many that talk much of religion, prove guilty of grievous crimes, but then they turn away so far from Christ and Scripture. As bad as the godly are, I dare yet challenge you to show me any society under heaven like them that most study and delight in the Scriptures: or any school, like the scholars of Christ. Because parents cannot, by all their diligence, get their children to be as good as they should be, shall they therefore leave them to be as bad as they will? Because they cannot get them to be perfect saints, shall they therefore leave them to be as incarnate devils? Certainly, your children untaught will be little better.

Sect. XIII. 2. Some will further object, and say, It is the work of ministers to teach both us and our children, and therefore we may be excused.

Answ. 1. It is first your duty, and then the ministers'; It will be no excuse for you, because it is their work, except you could prove it were only theirs: magistrates must govern both you and your children: doth it therefore follow that you must not govern them? It belongs to the schoolmaster to correct them, and doth it not belong

also to you? There must go many hands to this great work, as to the building of a house there must be many workmen, one to one part, and another to another; and as your corn must go through many hands before it be bread: the reaper's, the thresher's, the miller's, the baker's; and one must not leave their part, and say, It belongs to the other: so it is here in the instructing of your children: first, you must do your work, and then the minister do his: you must be doing it privately night and day; the minister must do it publicly, and privately as oft as he can.

2. But as the case now stands with the ministers of England, they are disabled from doing that which belongs to their office, and therefore you cannot now cast your work on them. I will instance but in two things. First, It belongs to their office to govern the church, and to teach with authority; and great and small are commanded to obey them. (Heb. 3:7, 17, &c.) But now this is unknown, and hearers look on themselves as freemen, that may obey or not, at their own pleasure: a parent's teaching which is with authority, will take more than one's that is taken to have none: people think we have authority to speak to them when they please to hear, and no more. Nay, few of the godly themselves do understand the authority that their teachers have over them from Christ: they know how to value a minister's gifts, but not how they are bound to learn of him, and obey him because of his office. Not that they should obey him in evil, nor that he should be a final decider of all controversies, nor should exercise his authority in things of no moment; but as a schoolmaster may command his scholars when to come to school, and what book to read, and what form to be of; and as they ought to obey him, and to learn of him, and not to set their wits against his, but to take his word, and believe him as their teacher, till they understand as well as he, and are ready to leave his school; just so are people bound to obey and learn of their teachers, and to take their words while they are learners, in that which is beyond their present capacity, till they are able to see things in their proper evidence. Now this ministerial authority is unknown, and so ministers are the less capable of doing their work, which comes to pass, First, From the pride of man's

nature, especially novices, which makes men impatient of the reins of guidance and command; Secondly, From the popish error of implicit faith; to avoid which we are driven as far into the contrary extreme; Thirdly, And from the modesty of ministers that are loth to show their commission, and make known their authority, lest they should be thought proud. As if a schoolmaster should let his scholars do what they list; or a pilot let the seamen run the ship whither they will, for fear of being thought proud in exercising their authority. Secondly, But a far greater clog than this yet doth lie upon the ministers, which few take notice of; and that is, the fewness of ministers, and the greatness of congregations. In the apostles' time every church had a multitude of ministers, and so it must be again, or we shall never come near that primitive pattern; and then they could preach publicly, and from house to house. But now, when there is but one or two ministers to many thousand souls, we cannot so much as know them, much less teach them one by one: it is as much as we can do to discharge the public work. So that you see, you have little reason to cast your work on the ministers, but should the more help them by your diligence, in your several families, because they are already so over burdened.

Sect. XIV. 3. But some will say, 'We are poor men, and must labour for our living, and so must our children, and cannot have while to teach them the Scriptures, we have somewhat else for them to do.'

Answ. And are not poor men subject to God, as well as rich; and are they not Christians: and must they not give account of their ways; and have not your children souls to save or lose, as well as the rich? Cannot you have while to speak to them as they are at their work? Have you not time to instruct them on the Lord's-day? You can find time to talk idly, as poor as you are, and can you find no time to talk of the way to life? You can find time on the Lord's-day for your children to play, or walk or talk in the streets, but no time to mind the life to come. Methinks you should rather say to your children, 'I have no lands or lordships to leave you, nothing but hard labour and poverty in the world; you have no hope of great matters here, be sure

therefore to make the Lord your portion, and to get interest in Christ, that you may be happy hereafter: if you could get riches, they would shortly leave you, but the riches of grace and glory will be everlasting.' Methinks you should say as Peter, "Silver and gold I have none, but such as I have I give you." The kingdoms of the world cannot be had by beggars, but the kingdom of heaven may. O what a terrible reckoning will many poor men have, when Christ shall plead his cause, and judge them! May not he say, 'I made the way to worldly honours inaccessible to you, that you might not look after it for yourselves, or your children; but heaven I set open, that you might have nothing to discourage you; I confined riches and honour to a few, but my blood and salvation I offered to all, that none may say, I was not invited; I tendered heaven to the poor, as well as the rich; I made no exception against the meanest beggar, that did not wilfully shut out themselves: why then did you not come yourselves, and bring your children, and teach them the way to the eternal inheritance? Do you say, you were poor? Why, I did not set heaven to sale for money, but I called those that had nothing, to take it freely; only on condition they would take me for their Saviour and Lord, and give up themselves unfeignedly to me in obedience and love.' What can you answer Christ, when he shall thus convince you? It is not enough, that your children are poor and miserable here, but you would have them be worse for everlasting too! If your children were beggars, yet if they were such beggars as Lazarus, they may be conveyed by angels into the presence of God. But believe it, as God will save no man because he is a gentleman, so will he save no man because he is a beggar. God hath so ordered it in his providence, that riches are exceeding occasions of men's damnation, and will you think poverty a sufficient excuse? The hardest point in all our work is to be weaned from the world, and in love with heaven; and if you will not be weaned from it, who have nothing in it but labour and sorrow, you have no excuse. The poor cannot have while, and the rich will not have while, or they are ashamed to be so forward: the young think it too soon, and the old too late: and thus most men, instead of being saved, have somewhat to say against their salvation: and when Christ sendeth to invite them, they say, 'I pray thee have me excused;' O

unworthy guests of such a blessed feast, and most worthy to be turned into the everlasting burnings!

Sect. XV. 4. But some will object, We have been brought up in ignorance ourselves, and therefore we are unable to teach our children.

Answ. Indeed this is the very sore of the land: but is it not pity that men should so receive their destruction by tradition? Would you have this course to go on thus still? Your parents did not teach you, and therefore you cannot teach your children, and therefore they cannot teach theirs: by this course the knowledge of God should be banished out of the world, and never be recovered. But if your parents did not teach you, why did not you learn when you came to age? The truth is, you had no hearts to it; for he that hath not knowledge, cannot value it, or love it. But yet, though you have greatly sinned, it is not too late, if you will but follow my faithful advice in these four points:

1. Get your hearts deeply sensible of your own sin and misery, because of this long time which you have spent in ignorance and neglect. Bethink yourselves sometimes when you are alone; did not God make you, and sustain you for his service? Should not he have had the youth and strength of your spirits? Did you live all this while at the door of eternity? What, if you had died in ignorance, where had you been then? What a deal of time have you spent to little purpose! Your life is near done, and your work all undone. You are ready to die, before you have learned to live. Should not God have had a better share of your lives, and your souls been more duly regarded and provided for? In the midst of these thoughts, cast down yourselves in sorrow, as at the feet of Christ; bewail your folly, and beg pardon, and recovering grace.

2. Then think as seriously how you have wronged your children: if an unthrift, that hath sold all his lands, will lament it for his children's sake, as well as his own, much more should you.

3. Next set presently to work, and learn yourselves. If you can read, do; if you cannot, get some that can; and be much among those that will instruct and help you: be not ashamed to be seen among learners, though it be to be catechised, but be ashamed that you had not learned sooner. God forbid you should be so mad, as to say, I am now too old to learn: except you be too old to serve God, and be saved, how can you be too old to learn to be saved? Why not rather, I am too old to serve the devil and the world, I have tried them too long to trust them any more. What if your parents had not taught you any trade to live by; or what if they had never taught you to speak; would not you have set yourselves to learn, when you had come to age? Remember, that you have souls to care for, as well as your children, and therefore first begin with yourselves.

4. In the mean time while you are learning yourselves, teach your children what you do know: and what you cannot teach them yourselves, put them on to learn it of others that can: persuade them into the company of the godly, who will be glad to instruct them. If Frenchmen or Welshmen lived in the town among us, that could not understand our language, would they not converse with those that do understand it? and would they not daily send their children to learn it, by being in the company of those that speak it? So do you, that you may learn the heavenly language: get among those that use it, and encourage your children to do so: have you no godly neighbours that will be helpful to you herein? O do not keep yourselves strange to them, but go among them, and desire their help; and be thankful to them, that they will entertain you into their company. God forbid you should be like those that Christ speaks of, (Luke 11:52,) that would neither enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer those that would to enter. God forbid you should be such cruel, barbarous wretches, as to hinder your children from being godly, and to teach them to be wicked! And yet, alas! how many such are there swarming every where among us? If God do but touch the heart of their children or servants, and cause them to hear and read the word, and call upon him, and accompany with the godly, who will sooner scorn them, and revile them, and discourage them, than an ungodly

parent? What, say they, 'You will now be one of the holy brethren! You will be wiser than your parents!' Just such as Pharaoh was to the Israelites, such are these wicked wretches to their own children, (Exod. 5:3, 8, 9,) when Moses said, "Let us go sacrifice to the Lord, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or sword," &c. Pharaoh answers, "They are idle, therefore they say, Let us go sacrifice: lay more work upon them," &c. Just so do these people say to their children. You know Pharaoh was the representer of the devil, and yet let me tell you, these ungodly parents are far worse than Pharaoh: for the children of Israel were many thousands, and were to go three days' journey out of the land, but these men hinder their children from serving God at home: Pharaoh was not their father, but their king; but these men are enemies to the children of their bodies: nay, more, let me tell you, I know none on earth that play the part of the devil himself more truly than these men. And if any thing that walks in flesh may be called a devil, I think it is a parent that thus hindereth his children from salvation. I solemnly profess I do not speak one jot worse of these men, than I do think and verily believe in my soul: nay, take it how you will, I will say thus much more, I verily think that in this they are far worse than the devil. God is a righteous judge, and will not make the devil himself worse than he is: I pray you be patient while you consider it, and then judge yourselves. They are the parents of their children, and so is not the devil. Do you think then that it is as great a fault in him to seek their destruction, as in them? Is it as great a fault for the wolf to kill the lambs, as for their own dams to do it? Is it so horrid a fault for an enemy in war to kill a child; or for a bear or a mad dog to kill it, as for the mother to dash its brains against the wall? You know it is not: do not you think then that it is so hateful a thing in Satan to entice your children to sin and hell, and to discourage and dissuade them from holiness and from heaven, as it is in you. You are bound to love them by nature, more than Satan is. O then what people are those that will teach their children, instead of holiness, to curse, and swear, and rail, and backbite, to be proud and revengeful, to break the Lord's-day, and to despise his ways, to speak wantonly, and filthily, to scorn at holiness, and glory in sin! O when God shall ask these children, 'Where

learned you this language and practice?' and they shall say, 'I learned it of my father or mother;' I would not be in the case of those parents for all the world! Alas, is it a work that is worth the teaching, to undo themselves for ever? Or can they not without teaching learn it too easily of themselves? Do you need to teach a serpent to sting, or a lion to be fierce? Do you need to sow weeds in your garden? Will they not grow of themselves? To build a house, requires skill and teaching; but a little may serve to set a town on fire. To heal the wounded or the sick, requireth skill; but to make a man sick, or to kill him, requireth but little. You may sooner teach your children to swear, than to pray; and to mock at godliness, than to be truly godly. If these parents were sworn enemies to their children, and should study seven years how to do them the greatest mischief, they could not possibly find out a surer way, than by drawing them to sin, and withdrawing them from God.

Sect. XVI. I shall therefore conclude with this earnest request to all Christian parents that read these lines, that they would have compassion on the souls of their poor children, and be faithful to the great trust that God hath put in them. O sirs, if you cannot do what you would do for them, yet do what you can; both church and state, city and country, do groan under the neglect of this weighty duty; your children know not God, nor his laws, but take his name in vain, and slight his worship, and you do neither instruct them nor correct them; and therefore doth God correct both them and you. You are so tender of them that God is the less tender both of them and you. Wonder not if God make you smart for your children's sins; for you are guilty of all they commit, by your neglect of doing your duty to reform them; even as he that maketh a man drunk, is guilty of all the sin that he committeth in his drunkenness. Will you resolve therefore to set upon this duty, and neglect it no longer? Remember Eli. Your children are like Moses in the basket in the water, ready to perish if they have not help. As ever you would not be charged before God for murderers of their souls, and as ever you would not have them cry out against you in everlasting fire, see that you teach them how to escape it, and bring them up in holiness, and the fear of God. You

have heard that the God of heaven doth flatly command it you; I charge every one of you, therefore, upon your allegiance to him, as you will very shortly answer the contrary at your peril, that you neither refuse nor neglect this most necessary work. If you are not willing, now you know it to be so plain and so great a duty, you are flat rebels, and no true subjects of Christ. If you are willing to do it, but know not how, I will add a few words of direction to help you. 1. Teach them by your own example, as well as by your words. Be yourselves such as you would have them be: practice is the most effectual teaching of children, who are addicted to imitation, especially of their parents. Lead them the way to prayer, and reading, and other duties: be not like base commanders, that will put on their soldiers, but not go on themselves. Can you expect your children should be wiser or better than you? Let them not hear those words out of your mouths, nor see those practices in your lives, which you reprove in them. No man shall be saved because his children are godly, if he be ungodly himself. Who should lead the way in holiness, but the father and master of the family? It is a sad time when he must be accounted a good master or father that will not hinder his family from serving God, but will give them leave to go to heaven without him.

I will but name the rest of your direct duty for your family. You must help to inform their understandings. 2. To store their memories. 3. To rectify their wills. 4. To quicken their affections. 5. To keep tender their consciences. 6. To restrain their tongues, and help them to skill in gracious speech; and to reform and watch over their outward conversation.

To these ends, 1. Be sure to keep them, at least, so long at school till they can read English. It is a thousand pities that a reasonable creature should look upon a Bible as upon a stone, or a piece of wood. 2. Get them Bibles and good books, and see that they read them. 3. Examine them often what they learn. 4. Especially bestow the Lord's-day in this work, and see that they spend it not in sports or idleness. 5. Show them the meaning of what they read and learn.

(Josh. 4:6, 21, 22; Psal. 78:4–6, and 34:11.) 6. Acquaint them with the godly, and keep them in good company, where they may learn good, and keep them out of that company that would teach them evil. 7. Be sure to cause them to learn some catechism containing the chief heads of divinity.

Sect. XVII. These heads of divinity, which you must teach them first, are these:

1. That there is one only God, who is a Spirit invisible, infinite, eternal, almighty, good, merciful, true, just, holy, &c.
2. That this God is one in three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. That he is the Maker, Maintainer, and Lord of all.
4. That man's happiness consisteth in the enjoying of this God, and not in fleshly pleasure, profits, or honours.
5. That God made the first man upright and happy, and gave him a law to keep, with condition, that if he kept it perfectly, he should live happy for ever, but if he broke it he should die.
6. That man broke this law, and so forfeited his welfare, and became guilty of death as to himself and all his posterity.
7. That Christ the Son of God did here interpose, and prevent the full execution, undertaking to die instead of man, and so to redeem him; whereupon all things were delivered into his hands as the Redeemer, and he is under that relation the Lord of all.
8. That Christ hereupon did make with man a better covenant or law, which proclaimed pardon of sin to all that did but repent, and believe, and obey sincerely.
9. That he revealed this covenant and mercy to the world by degrees; first, in darker promises, prophecies, and sacrifices; then, in many ceremonious types; and then, by more plain foretelling by the prophets.
10. That in the fulness of time Christ came and took our nature unto union with his godhead, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.
11. That while he was on earth he lived a life of sorrows, was crowned with thorns, and bore the pains that our sins deserved; at last, being crucified to death, and buried, so satisfied the justice of God.
12. That he also preached himself to the Jews, and by constant miracles did prove the truth of his doctrine and mediatorship before thousands of witnesses; that he revealed

more fully his new law or covenant; that whosoever will believe in him, and accept him for Saviour and Lord, shall be pardoned and saved, and have a far greater glory than they lost; and they that will not, shall lie under the curse and guilt, and be condemned to the everlasting fire of hell. 13. That he rose again from the dead, having conquered death, and took fuller possession of his dominion over all, and so ascended up into heaven, and there reigneth in glory. 14. That before his ascension he gave charge to his apostles to preach the foresaid Gospel to all nations and persons, and to offer Christ, and mercy, and life, to every one without exception, and to entreat and persuade them to receive him; and that he gave them authority to send forth others on the same message, and to baptize, and to gather churches, and confirm and order them, and settle a course for a succession of ministers and ordinances to the end of the world. 15. That he also gave them power to work frequent and evident miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the convincing of the world; and to annex their writings to the rest of the Scriptures, and to finish and seal them up, and deliver them to the world as his infallible word and laws, which none must dare to alter, and which all must observe. 16. That though his free grace is offered to the world, yet the heart is by nature so desperately wicked, that no man will believe and entertain Christ sincerely, except by an almighty power he be changed and born again; and therefore doth Christ send forth his Spirit with his word, which secretly and effectually worketh holiness in the hearts of the elect, drawing them to God and the Redeemer. 17. That the means by which Christ worketh and preserveth this grace, is the word read and preached, together with frequent fervent prayer, meditation, sacraments, gracious conference; and it is much furthered also by special providences keeping us from temptation, fitting occurrences to our advantage, drawing us by mercies, and driving us by afflictions; and therefore it must be the great and daily care of every Christian to use faithfully all the said ordinances, and improve the said providences. 18. That though the new law or covenant be an easy yoke, and there is nothing grievous in Christ's commands, yet so bad are our hearts, and so strong our temptations, and so diligent our enemies, that whosoever

will be saved, he must strive, and watch, and bestow his utmost care and pains, and deny his flesh, and forsake all that would draw him from Christ, and herein continue to the end, and overcome. And because this cannot be done without continual supplies of grace, whereof Christ is the only fountain, therefore we must live in continual dependence on him by faith, and know that our life is hid with God in him. 19. That Christ will thus by his word and Spirit gather him a church of all the elect out of the world, which is his body, and spouse, and he their head and husband, and will be tender of them as the apple of his eyes, and preserve them from danger, and continue among them his presence and ordinances; and that the members of this church must live together in most entire love and peace, delighting themselves in God and his worship, and the forethoughts and mention of their everlasting happiness; forbearing and forgiving one another, and relieving each other in need, as if that which they have were their brother's. And all men ought to strive to be of this society. Yet will the visible churches be mixed of good and bad. 20. That when the full number of these elect are called home, Christ will come down from heaven again, and raise all the dead, and set them before him to be judged; and all that have loved God above all, and believed in Christ, and been willing that he should reign over them, and have improved their mereies in the day of grace, them he will justify, and sentence them to inherit the everlasting kingdom of glory; and those that were not such, he will condemn to everlasting fire: both which sentences shall be then executed accordingly.

This is the creed, or brief sum, of the doctrine which you must teach your children. Though our ordinary creed, called the apostles' creed, contains all the absolute fundamentals; yet in some it is so generally and darkly expressed, that an explication is necessary.

Sect. XVIII. Then, for matter of practice, teach them the meaning of the commandments, especially of the great commands of the Gospel; show them what is commanded and forbidden, in the first table and in the second, towards God and men, in regard of the inward and the outward man; and here show them, 1. The authority commanding;

that is, the Almighty God, by Christ the Redeemer. They are not now to look at the command as coming from God immediately, merely as God, or the Creator, but as coming from God by Christ the Mediator, who is now the Lord of all, and only lawgiver; seeing the Father now judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. (John 5:21–24.) 2. Show them the terms on which duty is required, and the ends of it. 3. And the nature of duties, and the way to perform them aright. 4. And the right order; that they first love God above all, and then their neighbour: first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. 5. Show them the excellences and delights of God's service. 6. And the flat necessity. 7. Especially labour to get all to their hearts, and teach them not only to speak the words.

And for sin, show them its evil and danger, and watch over them against it. Especially, 1. The sins that youth is commonly addicted to. 2. And which their nature and constitution most lead them to. 3. And which the time and place do most strongly tempt to. 4. But especially be sure to kill their killing sins; those that all are prone to, and are of all most deadly: as, pride, worldliness, ignorance, profaneness, and flesh-pleasing.

And for the manner, you must do all this: 1. Betimes, before sin get rooting. 2. Frequently. 3. Seasonably. 4. Seriously and diligently. 5. Affectionately and tenderly. 6. And with authority; compelling where commanding will not serve, and adding correction where instruction is frustrate.

And thus I have done with the use of exhortation to do our utmost for the salvation of others. The Lord give men compassionate hearts that it may be practised: and then, I doubt not, but he will succeed it to the increase of his church.

THE FOURTH PART

CONTAINING

**A DIRECTORY FOR THE GETTING AND KEEPING OF THE
HEART IN HEAVEN**

By the Diligent Practice of that excellent unknown Duty of Heavenly Meditation. Being the main thing intended by the Author in the writing of this Book, and to which all the rest is but subservient.

TO

MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS IN THE LORD

THE

INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

BOTH MAGISTRATES, MINISTERS, AND PEOPLE

As also of the neighbouring Parts

RICHARD BAXTER devoteth this part of this Treatise as a testimony of his love to his native soil, and to his many godly and faithful friends there living;

HEARTILY praying the Lord and Head of the Church to keep them in unity, peace, humility, vigilancy, and steadfastness in the truth; and to cause them to contribute their utmost endeavours for the setting up of able, faithful teachers, and building up the House of God, which hath so long been neglected, and which hath now so many hands employed to divide and demolish it: and that the Lord

would save them in this hour of temptation, that they may be approved in this trial, and not be found light when God shall weigh them: and that he would acquaint them with the daily serious exercise of this most precious, spiritual, soul-exalting work of heavenly meditation, and that when the Lord shall come, he may find them so doing.

THE INTRODUCTION

IN the former part, I have chiefly pressed those duties which must be used for the attainment of this everlasting rest. In this I shall chiefly handle those which are necessary to raise the heart to God, and to a heavenly and comfortable life on earth. It is a truth too evident, which an inconsiderate zealot reprehended in Master Culverwell as an error, that many of God's children do not enjoy that sweet life and blessed estate in this world, which God their Father hath provided for them; that is, which he offereth them in his promises, and chargeth upon them as their duty in his precepts, and bringeth even to their hands in all his means and mercies. God hath set open heaven to us in his word, and told every humble, sincere Christian that they shall shortly there live with himself in inconceivable glory; and yet, where is the person that is affected with this promise; whose heart leaps for joy at the hearing of the news; or that is willing, in hopes of heaven, to leave this world? But even the godly have as strange unsavoury thoughts of it, as if God did but delude us, and there were no such glory; and are almost as loth to die as men without hope. The consideration of this strange disagreement between our professions and affections, caused me to suspect that there was some secret, lurking unbelief in all our hearts; and therefore I wrote those arguments in the second part, for the divine authority of the Scripture: and because I find another cause to be, the

carelessness, forgetfulness, and idleness of the soul, and not keeping in action that faith which we have, I have here attempted the removal of that cause, by prescribing a course for the daily acting of those graces which must fetch in the celestial delights into the heart. Oh! the princely, joyful, blessed life, that the godly lose through mere idleness! As the papists have wronged the merits of Christ by their ascribing too much to our own works, so it is almost incredible, how much they, on the other extreme, have wronged the safety and consolation of men's souls, by telling them that their own endeavours are only for obedience and gratitude, but are not so much as conditions of their salvation, or means of their increased sanctification or consolation. And while some tell them that they must look at nothing in themselves, for acceptance with God, or comfort, and so make that acceptance and comfort to be equally belonging to a Christian and a Turk; and others tell them that they must look at nothing in themselves, but only as signs of their good estates; this hath caused some to expect only enthusiastic consolation, and others to spend their days in inquiring after signs of their sincerity. Had these poor souls well understood that God's way to persuade their wills, and to excite and actuate their affections, is by the discourse, reasoning, or consideration of their understandings, upon the nature and qualifications of the objects which are presented to them: and had they bestowed but that time in exercising holy affections, and in serious thoughts of the promised happiness, which they have spent in inquiring only after signs, I am confident, according to the ordinary working of God, they would have been better provided, both with assurance and with joys. How should the heir of a kingdom have the comfort of his title, but by fore-thinking on it? It is true, God must give us our comforts by his Spirit: but how? By quickening up our souls to believe, and consider of the promised glory; and not by comforting us, we know not how, nor why: or by giving men the foretastes of heaven, when they never think of it.

I have here prescribed thee, reader, the delightfulest task to the spirit, and the most tedious to the flesh, that ever men on earth were

employed in. I did it first only for myself, but am loth to conceal the means that I have found so consolatory. If thou be one that wilt not be persuaded to a course so laborious, but wilt only go on in thy task of common formal duties, thou mayest let it alone, and so be destitute of delights, except such as the world and thy forms can afford thee; but then, do not, for shame, complain for want of comfort, when thou dost wilfully reject it: and be not such a hypocrite as to pray for it, while thou dost refuse to labour for it. If thou say thy comfort is all in Christ, I must tell thee it is a Christ remembered and loved, and not a Christ forgotten or only talked of, that will solidly comfort. Though the directory for contemplation was only intended for this part, yet I have now premised two other uses. The heart must be taken off from resting on earth before it will be fit to converse above. The first part of saving religion, is the taking God only for our end and rest.

CHAP. I

USE. VI.—Reproving our Expectations of Rest on Earth

SECT. I. Doth this rest remain? How great, then, is our sin and folly to seek and expect it here? Where shall we find the Christian that deserves not this reproof? Surely, we may all cry 'Guilty!' to this accusation. We know not how to enjoy convenient, houses, goods, lands, and revenues, but we seek rest in these enjoyments. We seldom, I fear, have such sweet and heart-contenting thoughts of God and glory, as we have of our earthly delights. How much rest do the voluptuous seek, in buildings, walks, apparel, ease, recreation, sleep, pleasing meats and drinks, merry company, health and strength, and long life! Nay, we can scarce enjoy the necessary means which God hath appointed for our spiritual good, but we are seeking rest in them. Do we want ministers, godly society, or the like helps? Oh! think we, if it were but thus and thus with us, we were well. Do

we enjoy them? Oh! how we settle upon them, and bless ourselves in them, as the rich fool in his wealth? Our books, our preachers, sermons, friends, abilities for duty, do not our hearts hug them, and quiet themselves in them, even more than in God? Indeed, in words we disclaim it, and God hath usually the pre-eminence in our tongues and professions; but it is too apparent that it is otherwise in our hearts, by these discoveries: First, Do we not desire these more violently, when we want them, than we do the Lord himself? Do we not cry out more sensibly, 'O my friend, my goods, my health,' than 'O my God!' Do we not miss ministry and means more passionately than we miss our God? Do we not bestir ourselves more to obtain and enjoy these than we do to recover our communion with God? Secondly, Do we not delight more in the possession of these than we do in the fruition of God himself? Nay, be not those mercies and duties most pleasant to us, wherein we stand at greatest distance from God? We can read, and study, and confer, preach, and hear, day after day, without much weariness, because in these we have to do with instruments and creatures; but in secret prayer and conversing with God immediately, where no creature interposeth, how dull, how heartless and weary are we! Thirdly, And if we lose creatures or means, doth it not trouble us more than our loss of God? If we lose but a friend, or health, &c., all the town will hear of it; but we can miss our God, and scarce bemoan our misery. Thus it is apparent, we exceedingly make the creature our rest. Is it not enough that they are sweet delights, and refreshing helps in our way to heaven, but they must also be made our heaven itself? Christian reader, I would as willingly make thee sensible of this sin as of any sin in the world, if I could tell how to do it; for the Lord's greatest quarrel with us is in this point. Therefore I most earnestly beseech thee to press upon thine own conscience these following considerations.

Sect. II. 1. It is gross idolatry to make any creature or means our rest. To settle the soul upon it, and say, 'Now I am well,' upon the bare enjoyment of the creature. What is this but to make it our God? Certainly, to be the soul's rest, is God's own prerogative. And as it is palpable idolatry to place our rest in riches and honours; so it is but a

more spiritual and refined idolatry to take up our rest in excellent means, in the church's prosperity, and in its reformation. When we would have all that out of God which is to be had only in God, what is this but to turn away from him to the creature, and in our hearts to deny him? When we fetch more of our comfort and delight from the thoughts of prosperity, and those mercies which here we have at a distance from, than from the fore-thoughts of our everlasting blessedness, in him: nay, when the thought of that day when we must come to God is our greatest trouble, and we would do any thing in the world to escape it; but the enjoyment of creatures, though absent from him, is the very thing our souls desire: when we had rather talk of him than come to enjoy him; and had rather go many miles to hear a powerful sermon of Christ and heaven, than to enter and possess it; Oh! what vile idolatry is this! When we dispute against epicures, academics, and all pagans, how earnestly do we contend that God is the chief good, and the fruition of him our chief happiness! What clear arguments do we bring to evince it! But do we believe ourselves; or are we Christians in judgment, and pagans in affection? Or do we give our senses leave to be the choosers of our happiness, while reason and faith stand by? O Christians! how ill must our dear Lord needs take it, when we give him cause to complain, as sometimes he did of our fellow-idolaters, (Jer. 50:6,) that we have been lost sheep, and have forgotten our resting-place! When we give him cause to say, 'Why, my people can find rest in any thing rather than in me! They can find delight in one another, but none in me; they can rejoice in my creatures and ordinances, but not in me; yea, in their very labours and duty they seek for rest, and not in me; they had rather be any where than be with me. Are these their gods? Have these delivered and redeemed them? Will these be better to them than I have been, or than I would be? If yourselves have but a wife, a husband, a son, that had rather be any where than in your company, and is never so merry as when farthest from you, would you not take it ill yourselves?' Why so must our God needs do: for what do we but lay these things in one end of the balance and God in the other, and foolishly, in our choice, prefer them before him? As Elkanah said to Hannah, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1

Sam. 1:8.) So when we are longing after creatures, we may hear God say, 'Am not I better than all the creatures to thee?'

2. Consider, How thou contradictest the end of God in giving these things. He gave them to help thee to him, and dost thou take up with them in his stead? He gave them that they might be comfortable refreshments in thy journey, and wouldst thou now dwell in thy inn, and go no further? Thou dost not only contradict God herein, but lovest that benefit which thou mightest receive by them, yea, and makest them thy great hurt and hinderance. Surely, it may be said of all our comforts and all ordinances, and the blessedest enjoyments in the church on earth, as God said to the Israelites of his ark, "The ark of the covenant went before them, to search out for them a resting place." (Numb. 10:33.) So do all God's mercies here. They are not that rest, (as John professeth he was not the Christ,) but they are voices crying in this wilderness, to bid us prepare, for the kingdom of God, our true rest, is at hand. Therefore, to rest here, were to turn all mercies clean contrary to their own ends, and our own advantages, and to destroy ourselves with that which should help us.

Sect. IV. 3. Consider, Whether it be not the most probable way, to cause God, either First, To deny those mercies which we desire; or, Secondly, To take from us these which we enjoy; or, Thirdly, To embitter them at least, or curse them to us? Certainly, God is no where so jealous as here. If you had a servant whom your own wife loved better than she did yourself, would you not both take it ill of such a wife, and rid your house of such a servant? You will not suffer your child to use a knife till he have wit to do it without hurting him. Why so, if the Lord see you begin to settle in the world, and say, 'Here I will rest,' no wonder if he soon in his jealousy unsettle you. If he love you, no wonder if he take that from you wherewith he sees you are about to destroy yourselves. It hath been my long observation of many, that when they have attempted great works, and have just finished them, or have aimed at great things in the world, and have just obtained them; or have lived in much trouble and unsettlement, and have just overcome them, and begin with

some content to look upon their condition, and rest in it, they are usually near to death or ruin. You know the story of the fool in the Gospel. When a man is once at this language, Soul, take thy ease or rest; the next news usually is, Thou fool, this night, or this month, or this year, shall they require thy soul, and then whose shall these things be? Oh, what house is there where this fool dwelleth not! Dear Christian friends, you to whom I have especially relation, let you and I consider whether this be not our own case. Have not I, after such an unsettled life, and after four years' living in the weary condition and the displeasing state of war, and after so many years' groaning under the church's unreformedness, and the great fears that lay upon us, and after so many longings, and prayers for these days: have I not thought of them with too much content? And been ready to say, 'Soul, take thy rest?' Have not I comforted myself more in the forethoughts of enjoying these, than of coming to heaven and enjoying God? What wonder, then, if God cut me off, when I am just sitting down in this supposed rest? And hath not the like been your condition? Many of you have been soldiers, driven from house to house, endured a life of trouble and blood, been deprived of ministry and means, longing to see the church's settling. Did you not reckon up all the comforts you should have at your return; and glad your hearts with such thoughts more than with the thoughts of your coming to heaven? Why, what wonder if God now somewhat cross you, and turn some of your joy into sadness? Many a servant of God hath been destroyed from the earth by being overvalued and overloved. I pray God you may take warning for the time to come, that you rob not yourselves of all your mercies. I am persuaded our discontents, and murmurings with our displeasing condition, and our covetous desires after more, are not so provoking to God, nor so destructive to the sinner, as our too sweet enjoying, and rest of spirit in a pleasing state. If God have crossed any of you in wife, children, goods, friends, &c., either by taking them from you, or the comfort of them, or the benefit and blessing, try whether this above all other be not the cause. For where-soever your desires stop, and you say, 'Now I am well,' that condition you make your God, and engage the jealousy of God against it. Whether you be friends to God or enemies,

you can never expect that God should wink at such idolatry, or suffer you quietly to enjoy your idols.

Sect. V. 4. Consider, If God should suffer thee thus to take up thy rest here, it were one of the surest plagues and greatest curses that could possibly befall thee. It were better for thee, if thou never hadst a day of ease or content in the world, for then weariness might make thee seek after the true rest. (Psalm 17:14; Luke 16:25.) But if he should suffer thee to sit down and rest here, where were thy rest when this deceives thee? A restless wretch thou wouldst be through all eternity. To have their portion in this life, and their good things on the earth, is the lot of the most miserable, perishing sinners. And doth it become Christians, then, to expect so much here? Our rest is our heaven, and where we take our rest, there we make our heaven. And wouldst thou have but such a heaven as this? Certainly, as Saul's messengers found but Michal's man of straw when they expected David, so wilt thou find but a rest of straw, of wind, of vanity, when thou most needest rest. It will be but a handful of waters to a man that is drowning, which will help to destroy, but not to save him. But that is the next.

Sect. VI. 5. Consider, Thou seekest rest where it is not to be found, and so wilt lose all thy labour, and, if thou proceed, thy soul's eternal rest, too. I think I shall easily evince this by these clear demonstrations following:

First, Our rest is only in the full obtaining of our ultimate end, but that is not to be expected in this life, therefore, neither is rest to be here expected. Is God to be enjoyed in the best reformed church, in the purest and most powerful ordinances here, as he is in heaven? I know you will all confess he is not. How little of God, not only the multitude of the blind world, but sometimes the saints themselves do enjoy, even under the most excellent means, let their own frequent complainings testify. And how poor comforters are the best ordinances and enjoyments, without God, the truly spiritual Christian knows! Will a stone rest in the air in the midst of its fall,

before it comes to the earth? No, because its centre is its end. Should a traveller take up his rest in the way? No, because his home is his journey's end. When you have all that creatures and means can afford, have you that you sought for? Have you that you believe, pray, suffer for? I think you dare not say so. Why, then, do we once dream of resting here? We are like little children strayed from home, and God is now fetching us home; and we are ready to turn into any house, stay and play with every thing in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and much ado there is to get us home.

Secondly, As we have not yet obtained our end, so are we in the midst of labours and dangers, and is there any resting here? What painful work doth lie upon our hands! Look to our brethren, to godly, to ungodly, to the church, to our souls, to God, and what a deal of work in respect of each of these doth lie before us! And can we rest in the midst of all our labours? Indeed, we may take some refreshing, and ease ourselves sometimes in our troubles, if you will call that rest, but that is not the settling rest we now are speaking of; we may rest on earth, as the ark is said to have rested in the midst of Jordan. (Josh. 3:13.) A short and small rest, no question; or as the angels of heaven are desired to turn in, and rest them on earth. (Gen. 18:4.) They would have been loth to have taken up their dwelling there. Should Israel have settled his rest in the wilderness among serpents, and enemies, and weariness, and famine? Should Noah have made the ark his home, and have been loth to come forth when the waters were fallen? Should the mariner choose his dwelling on the sea, and settle his rest in the midst of rocks, and sands, and raging tempests? Though he may adventure through all these for a commodity of worth, yet I think he takes it not for his rest. Should a soldier rest in the midst of fight, when he is in the very thickest of his enemies, and the instruments of death compass him about? I think he cares not how soon the battle is over. And though he may adventure upon war for the obtaining of peace, yet I hope he is not so mad as to take that instead of peace. And are not Christians such travellers, such mariners, such soldiers? Have you not fears within, and troubles without? Are we not in the thickest of continual dangers? We cannot

eat, drink, sleep, labour, pray, hear, confer, &c., but in the midst of snares and perils, and shall we sit down and rest here? Oh, Christian, follow thy work, look to thy danger, hold on to the end; win the field and come off the ground, before thou think of a settling rest. I read indeed that Peter on the mount, when he had seen a glimpse of glory, said, "It is good for us to be here." But surely, when he was on the sea, in the midst of the waves, he doth not then say, "It is good to be here." No, then he hath other language, "Save, Master, we perish." And even his desires to rest on the mount, are noted in Scripture to come from hence, He knew not what he said: it was on earth, though with Christ in his transfiguration. And I dare say the like of thee, whenever thou talkest of resting on earth, Thou knowest not what thou sayest. I read that Christ, when he was on the cross, comforted the converted thief with this, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But if he had only comforted him with telling him that he should rest there on that cross, would he not have taken it for a derision? Methinks it should be ill resting in the midst of sicknesses and pains, persecution and distresses. One would think it should be no contentful dwelling for lambs among wolves. The wicked have some slender pretence for their sin in this kind; they are among their friends, in the midst of their portion, enjoying all the happiness that they are likely to enjoy. But is it so with the godly? Surely, the world is at best but a stepmother to them; nay, an open enemy. But if nothing else would convince us, yet surely the remainders of sin which doth so easily beset us, would quickly satisfy a believer that here is not his rest. What, a Christian! and rest in a state of sinning! It cannot be; or do they hope for a perfect freedom here? That is impossible. I say, therefore, to every one that thinketh of rest on earth, as Micah, "Arise ye, depart; this is not your rest, because it is polluted." (Chap. 2. v.10.)

Thirdly, The nature of all these things may convince you, that they cannot be a Christian's true rest. They are too poor to make us rich, and too low to raise us to happiness; and too empty to fill our souls; and too base to make us blessed: and of too short continuance to be our eternal contents. They cannot subsist themselves without

support from heaven; how, then, can they give subsistence to our souls? Surely, if prosperity, or whatsoever we here can desire, be too base to make us gods of, then are they too base to be our rests.

Fourthly, That which is the soul's true rest, must be sufficient to afford it perpetual satisfaction; but all things below do delight us only with fresh variety. The content which any creature affordeth, doth wax old and abate after a short enjoyment. We pine away for them, as Amnon for his sister; and when we have satisfied our desire, we are weary of them and loathe them. If God should rain down angels' food, after awhile our souls would loathe that dry manna. The most dainty fare, the most costly clothing would not please us, were we tied to them alone. The most sumptuous house, the softest bed, were we confined to them, would be but a prison. One recreation pleaseth not long, we must have supply of new, or our delights will languish. Nay, our delight in our society and friendship, especially if carnal, is strongest while fresh: and in the ordinances of God themselves, so far as we delight in them for themselves, and not for God, if novelty support not our delight, grows dull. If we hear still the same minister, or if in preaching and praying, he use oft the same expressions, or if he preach oft the same sermon, how dull grows our devotion, though the matter be never so good, and at first did never so highly please us! If we read the most excellent and pleasing books, the third or fourth reading is usually more heartless than the first or second; nay, in our general way of Christianity, our first godly acquaintance, our first preachers, our first books, our first duties, have too commonly our strongest affections. All creatures are to us, as the flowers to the bee; there is but little of that matter which affords them honey on any flower, and therefore they must have supply of fresh variety, and take of each a superficial taste, and so to the next; yea, some having gone through variety of states, and tasted of the pleasures of their own country, do travel for fresh variety abroad, and when they come home, they usually betake themselves to some solitary corner, and sit down, and cry with Solomon, 'Vanity and vexation!' And with David, 'I have seen an end of all perfection:' and can this be a place of rest for the soul?

Fifthly, Those that know the creature least, do affect it most; the more it is known, the less it satisfieth: those only are taken with it, who can see no farther than its outward beauty, not beholding its outward vanity; it is like a comely picture, if you stand too near it, it appears less beautiful; we are prone to over-admire the persons of men, places of honour, and other men's happy condition; but it is only while we do but half know them: stay but a while till we know them thoroughly, and have discovered the evil as well as the good, and the defects as well as the perfections, and we then do cease our admiration.

Sect. VII. 6. To have creatures and means without God, who is their end, is so far from being our happiness, that it is an aggravation of our misery, even as to have food without strength, and starve in the midst of plenty, and as Pharaoh's kine, to devour all, and lean still. What the better were you if you had the best minister on earth, the best society, the purest church; and therewithal the most plentiful estate, but nothing of God? If God should say, Take my creatures, my word, my servants, my ordinances, but not myself, would you take this for a happiness? If you had the word of God, and not the Word which is God? Or the bread of the Lord, and not the Lord, which is the true bread? Or could cry with the Jews, "The temple of the Lord," and had not the Lord of the temple? this were a poor happiness.

Was Capernaum the more happy, or the more miserable, for seeing the mighty works which they had seen, and hearing the words of Christ which they did hear? Surely, that which aggravates our sin and misery cannot be our rest.

7. If all this be nothing, do but consult with experience, both other men's and your own, too many thousands and millions have made trial, but did ever one of these find a sufficient rest for his soul on this earth? Delights I deny not but they have found, and imperfect temporary content, but rest and satisfaction they never found: and shall we think to find that which never man could find before us? Ahab's kingdom is nothing to him, except he had also Naboth's

vineyard, and did that satisfy him, think you, when he obtained it? If we had conquered to ourselves the whole world, we should perhaps do as Alexander is fabled to have done, sit down and weep because there is never another world to conquer. If I should send you forth as Noah's dove, to go through the earth, to look for a resting-place, you would return with a confession, that you can find none: go ask honour, Is there rest here? Why you may as well rest on the top of the tempestuous mountains, or in Ætna's flames, or on the pinnacle of the temple. If you ask riches, Is there rest here? Even such as is in a bed of thorns; or were it a bed of down, yet you must arise in the morning, and leave it to the next guest that shall succeed you; or if you inquire of worldly pleasure and ease, can they give you any tidings of true rest? Even such as the fish or bird hath in the net, or in swallowing down the deceitful bait; when the pleasure is at the sweetest, death is the nearest: it is just such a content and happiness, as the exhilarating vapours of the wine do give to a man that is drunk: it causeth a merry and cheerful heart, it makes him forget his wants and miseries, and conceive himself the happiest man in the world, till his sick vomitings have freed him of his disease, or sleep hath assuaged and subdued those vapours which deluded his phantasy, and perverted his understanding, and then he awakes a more unhappy man than ever he was before. Such is the rest and happiness that all worldly pleasures do afford. As the phantasy may be delighted in a pleasant dream, when all the senses are captivated by sleep; so may the flesh of sensitive appetite, when the reasonable soul is captivated by security: but when the morning comes, the delusion vanisheth, and where is the pleasure and happiness then? Or if you should go to learning, to purest, plentifullest, powerfulest ordinances, or compass sea and land to find out the perfectest church, and holiest saints, and inquire whether there your soul may rest: you might happily receive from these indeed an olive-branch of hope, as they are means to your rest, and have relation to eternity; but in regard of any satisfaction in themselves, you would remain as restless as ever before. Oh how well might these answer many of us, with that indignation, as Jacob did Rachel, "Am I instead of God?" Or as the king of Israel said to the messengers of the king of Assyria,

when he required him to restore Naaman to health, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends to me to recover a man of his leprosy?" So may the highest perfection on earth say, 'Are we God, or instead of God, that this man comes to us to give a soul rest?' Go take a view of all estates of men in the world, and see whether any of them have found this rest. Go to the husbandman, and demand of him, behold his circular endless labours, his continual care and toil and weariness, and you will easily see, that there is no rest: go to the tradesman, and you shall find the like: if I should send you lower, you would judge your labour lost; or go to the conscionable painful minister, and there you will yet more easily be satisfied; for though his spending, killing, endless labours are exceeding sweet, yet it is not because they are his rest, but in reference to his people's, and his own eternal rest, at which he aims, and to which they may conduce: if you should ascend to magistracy, and inquire at the throne, you would find there is no condition so restless, and your hearts would even pity poor princes and kings. Doubtless neither court nor country, towns or cities, shops or fields, treasuries, libraries, solitariness, society, studies, or pulpits, can afford any such thing as this rest. If you could inquire of the dead of all generations, or if you could ask the living through all dominions, they would all tell you, 'Here is no rest;' and all mankind may say, "All our days are sorrow, and our labour is grief, and our hearts take not rest." (Eccles. 2:23.) Go to Geneva, go to New England, find out the church which you think most happy, and we may say of it, as lamenting Jeremy of the church of the Jews, "She dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest, all her persecutors overtake her." (Lam. 1:3.) The holiest prophet, the blesseddest apostle would say, as one of the most blessed did, "Our flesh had no rest, without were fightings, within were fears." (2 Cor. 7:5.) If neither Christ nor his apostles, to whom was given the earth and the fulness thereof, had no rest here, why should we expect it?

Or if other men's experiences move you not, do but take a view of your own: can you remember the estate that did fully satisfy you? Or if you could, will it prove a lasting state? For my own part, I have run

through several places and states of life, and though I never had the necessities which might occasion discontent, yet did I never find a settlement for my soul; and I believe we may all say of our rest, as Paul of our hopes, "If it were in this life only, we were of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.) Or if you will not credit your past experience, you may try in your present or future wants: when conscience is wounded, God offended, your bodies weakened, your friends afflicted, see if these can yield you rest. If then either Scripture, or reason, or the experience of ourselves, and all the world, will satisfy us, we may see there is no resting here. And yet how guilty are the generality of professors of this sin! How many halts and stops do we make, before we will make the Lord our rest! How must God even drive us, and fire us out of every condition, lest we should sit down and rest there! If he give us prosperity, riches, or honour, we do in our hearts dance before them, as the Israelites before their calf, and say, 'These are thy gods,' and conclude it is good being here. If he imbitter all these to us by crosses, how do we strive to have the cross removed, and the bitterness taken away, and are restless till our condition be sweetened to us, that we may sit down again and rest where we were! If the Lord, seeing our perverseness, shall now proceed in the cure, and take the creature quite away, then how do we labour, and care, and cry, and pray, that God would restore it, that if it may be, we may make it our rest again! And while we are deprived of its actual enjoyment, and have not our former idol to delight in, yet rather than come to God, we delight ourselves in our hopes of recovering our former state; and as long as there is the least likelihood of obtaining it, we make those very hopes our rest: if the poor by labouring all their days, have but hopes of a fuller estate when they are old (though a hundred to one they die before they have obtained it, or certainly at least immediately after), yet do they labour with patience, and rest themselves on these expectations. Or if God doth take away both present enjoyments, and all hopes of ever recovering them, how do we search about, from creature to creature, to find out something to supply the room, and to settle upon, instead thereof? Yea, if we can find no supply, but are sure we shall live in poverty, in sickness, in disgrace, while we are on

earth, yet will we rather settle in this misery, and make a rest of a wretched being, than we will leave all and come to God. A man would think, that a multitude of poor people, who beg their bread, or can scarce with their hardest labour have sustenance for their lives, should easily be driven from resting here, and willingly look to heaven for rest; and the sick who have not a day of ease, nor any hope of recovery left them. But oh the cursed averseness of these souls From God! We will rather account our misery our happiness; yea, that which we daily groan under as intolerable, than we will take up our happiness in God. If any place in hell were tolerable, the soul would rather take up its rest there, than come to God. Yea, when he is bringing us over to him, and hath convinced us of the worth of his ways and service, the last deceit of all is here, we will rather settle upon those ways that lead to him, and those ordinances which speak of him, and those gifts which flow from him, than we will come clean over to himself. Christian, marvel not that I speak so much of resting in these; beware lest it should prove thy own case: I suppose thou art so far convinced of the vanity of riches, and honour, and carnal pleasure, that thou canst more easily disclaim these, and it is well if it be so; but for thy more spiritual mercies in thy way of profession, thou lookest on these with less suspicion, and thinkest they are so near to God, that thou canst not delight in them too much, especially seeing most of the world despise them, or delight in them too little. But doth not the increase of those mercies dull thy longings after heaven? If all were according to thy desire in the church, wouldest thou not sit down and say, I am well, Soul, take thy rest; and think it a judgment to be removed to heaven? Surely if thy delight in these excel not thy delight in God, or if thou wouldest gladly leave the most happy condition on earth, to be with God, then art thou a rare man, a Christian indeed. I know the means of grace must be loved and valued, and the usual enjoyment of God is in the use of them; and he that delighteth in any worldly thing more than in them, is not a true Christian: but when we are content with duty instead of God, and had rather be at a sermon than in heaven; and a member of a church here, than of that perfect church, and rejoice in ordinances, but as they are part of our earthly prosperity; this is a sad mistake. Many

were more willing to go to heaven in the former days of persecution, when they had no hopes of seeing the church reformed, or delivered: but now men are in hopes to have all things almost as they desire, the case is altered; and they begin to look at heaven as strangely and sadly, as if it would be a loss to be removed to it. Is this the right use of reformation? Or is this the way to have it continued or perfected? Should our deliverances draw our hearts from God? Oh, how much better were it, in every trouble, to fetch our chief arguments of comfort, from the place where our chiefest rest remains! And when others comfort the poor with hopes of wealth, or the sick with hopes of health and life, let us comfort ourselves with the hopes of heaven. So far rejoice in the creature, as it comes from God, or leads to him, or brings thee some report of his love: so far let thy soul take comfort in ordinances, as God doth accompany them with quickening, or comfort, or gives himself unto thy soul by them: still remembering, when thou hast even what thou dost desire, yet this is not heaven; yet these are but the first-fruits. Is it not enough that God alloweth us all the comfort of travellers, and accordingly to rejoice in all his mercies, but we must set up our staff as if we were at home? "While we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord;" (2 Cor. 5:6–9;) and while we are absent from him, we are absent from our rest. If God were as willing to be absent from us as we from him, and if he were as loth to be our rest as we are loth to rest in him, we should be left to an eternal restless separation. In a word, as you are sensible of the sinfulness of your earthly discontents, so be you also of your irregular contents, and pray God to pardon them much more. And above all the plagues and judgments of God on this side hell, see that you watch and pray against this (of settling any where short of heaven, or reposing your souls to rest on any thing below God). Or else, when the bough which you tread on breaks, and the things which you rest upon deceive you, you will perceive your labour all lost, and your sweetest contents to be preparatives to your woe, and your highest hopes will make you ashamed. Try, if you can persuade Satan to leave tempting, and the world to cease both troubling and seducing, and sin to cease inhabiting and acting; if you can bring the glory of God from above, or remove the court from heaven to earth,

and secure the continuance of this through eternity, then settle yourselves below, and say, Soul, take thy rest here; but till then, admit not such a thought.

CHAP. II

USE VII.—Reproving our Unwillingness to Die

SECT. I. Is there a rest remaining for the people of God? Why are we then so loth to die, and to depart from hence that we may possess this rest? If I may judge of other men's hearts by my own, we are exceeding guilty in this point. We linger, as Lot in Sodom, till God being merciful to us, doth pluck us away against our wills. How rare is it to meet with a Christian, though of strongest parts, and longest profession, that can die with an unfeigned willingness! Especially if worldly calamity constrain them not to be willing! Indeed, we sometime set a good face on it, and pretend a willingness when we see there is no remedy, and that our unwillingness is only a disgrace to us, but will not help to prolong our lives: but if God had enacted such a law for the continuance of our lives on earth, as is enacted for the continuance of that parliament, that we should not be dissolved till our own pleasure; and that no man should die till he were truly willing; I fear heaven might be empty for the most of us; and if our worldly prosperity did not fade, our lives on earth would be very long, if not eternal. We pretend desires of being better prepared, and of doing God some greater service, and to that end we beg one year more, and another, and another; but still our promised preparation and service are as far to seek as ever before, and we remain as unwilling to die, as we were when we begged our first reprival. If God were not more willing of our company, than we are of his, how long should we remain thus distant from him? And as we had never been sanctified if God had staid till we were willing; so if he should refer it wholly to ourselves, it would at least be long before we should be glorified. I confess that death of itself is not desirable; but the soul's rest is with God, to which death is the common passage. And because

we are apt to make light of this sin, and to plead our common nature to patronize it, let me here set before you its aggravations; and also propound some further considerations, which may be useful to you and myself against it.

Sect. II. And, first, consider what a deal of gross infidelity doth lurk in the bowels of this sin. Either paganish unbelief of the truth of that eternal blessedness, and of the truth of the Scripture which doth promise it to us; or, at least, a doubting of our own interest; or most usually somewhat of both these. And though Christians are usually most sensible of the latter, and therefore complain most against it, yet I am apt to suspect the former to be the main radical master-sin, and of greatest force in this business. Oh! if we did but verily believe that the promise of this glory is the word of God, and that God doth truly mean as he speaks, and is fully resolved to make it good; if we did verily believe that there is, indeed, such blessedness prepared for believers as the Scripture mentioneth, surely we should be as impatient of living as we are now fearful of dying, and should think every day a year till our last day should come. We should as hardly refrain from laying violent hands on ourselves, or from the neglecting of the means of our health and life, as we do now from overmuch carefulness and seeking of life by unlawful means. If the eloquent oration of a philosopher, concerning the soul's immortality and the life to come, could make his affected hearer presently to cast himself headlong from the rock, as impatient of any longer delay, what would a serious christian belief do, if God's law against self-murder did not restrain? Is it possible that we can truly believe that death will remove us from misery to such glory, and yet be loth to die? If it were the doubts of our interest which made us afraid, yet a true belief of the certainty and excellency of this rest would make us restless till our interest be cleared. If a man that is desperately sick to-day, did believe he should arise sound the next morning; or a man to-day, in despicable poverty, had assurance that he should to-morrow arise a prince; would they be afraid to go to bed, or rather think it the longest day of their lives, till that desired night and morning came? The truth is, though there is much faith and

Christianity in our mouths, yet there is much infidelity and paganism in our hearts, which is the main cause that we are so loth to die.

Sect. III. 3. And as the weakness of our faith, so also the coldness of our love, is exceedingly discovered by our unwillingness to die. Love doth desire the nearest conjunction, the fullest fruition, and closest communion. Where these desires are absent, there is only a naked pretence of love. He that ever felt such a thing as love working in his breast, hath also felt these desires attending it. If we love our friend, we love his company: his presence is comfortable, his absence is troublesome. When he goes from us, we desire his return: when he comes to us, we entertain him with welcome and gladness: when he dies, we mourn, and usually overmourn. To be separated from a faithful friend, is to us as the renting of a member from our bodies; and would not our desires after God be such, if we really loved him? Nay, should it not be much more than such, as he is above all friends most lovely? The Lord teach us to look closely to our hearts, and take heed of self-deceit in this point: for, certainly, whatever we pretend or conceit, if we love either father, mother, husband, wife, child, friend, wealth, or life, more than Christ, we are yet none of his sincere disciples. When it comes to the trial, the question will not be who hath preached most, or heard most, or talked most, but who hath loved most. When our account is given, Christ will not take sermons, prayers, fastings; no, not the giving of our goods, nor the burning of our bodies instead of love. (1 Cor. 13:1-4, 8, 13, and 16:22; Eph. 6:24.) And do we love him, and yet care not how long we are from him? If I be deprived of my bosom friend, methinks I am as a man in a wilderness, solitary and disconsolate: and is my absence from God no part of my trouble; and yet can I take him for my chiefest friend? If I delight but in some garden, or walk, or gallery, I would be much in it: if I love my books, I am much with them, and almost unweariedly poring on them. The food which I love, I would often feed on: the clothes that I love, I would often wear: the recreations which I love, I would often use them: the business which I love, I would be much employed in. And can I love God, and that above all these, and yet have no desires to be with him? Is it not a far

likelier sign of hatred than of love, when the thoughts of our appearing before God are our most grievous thoughts; and when we take ourselves as undone, because we must die and come unto him? Surely, I should scarce take him for an unfeigned friend, who were as well contented to be absent from me, as we ordinarily are to be absent from God. Was it such a joy to Jacob to see the face of Joseph in Egypt, and shall we so dread the sight of Christ in glory, and yet say we love him? I dare not conclude that we have no love at all when we are so loth to die; but I dare say, were our love more, we should die more willingly. Yea, I dare say, did we love God but as strongly as a worldling loves his wealth, or as an ambitious man his honour, or a voluptuous man his pleasure, yea, as a drunkard loves his swinish delight, or an unclean person his brutish lust; we should not then be so exceeding loth to leave the world, and go to God. Oh! if this holy flame of love were thoroughly kindled in our breasts, instead of our pressing fears, our dolorous complaints, and earnest prayers against death, we should join in David's wilderness lamentations. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42:1, 2.) The truth is, as our knowledge of God is exceeding dark, and our faith in him exceeding feeble; so is our love to him but little, and therefore are our desires after him so dull.

Sect. IV. 3. It appears we are little weary of sinning, when we are so unwilling to be freed by dying. Did we take sin for the greatest evil, we should not be willing of its company so long; did we look on sin as our cruellest enemy, and on a sinful life as the most miserable life, sure we should then be more willing of a change. But, oh! how far are our hearts from our doctrinal profession, in this point also! We preach, and write, and talk against sin, and call it all that naught is: and when we are called to leave it, we are loth to depart: we brand it with the most odious names that we can imagine, and all fall short of expressing its vileness; but when the approach of death puts us to the trial, we choose a continuance with these abominations, before the presence and fruition of God. But as Nemon smote his soldier for

railing against Alexander's enemy, saying, "I hired thee to fight against him, and not to rail against him;" so may God smite us also when he shall hear our tongues reviling that sin which we resist so slothfully, and part with so unwillingly. Christians, seeing we are conscious that our hearts deserve a smiting for this, let us join together to chide and smite our own hearts, before God do judge and smite them. O foolish, sinful, heart! hast thou been so long a sink of sin, a cage of all unclean lusts, a fountain incessantly streaming forth the bitter and deadly waters of transgression: and art thou not yet more weary? Wretched soul! hast thou been so long wounded in all thy faculties; so grievously languishing in all thy performances; so fruitful a soul for all iniquities; and art thou not yet weary? Hast thou not yet transgressed long enough; nor long enough provoked thy Lord; nor long enough abused love? Wouldst thou yet grieve the Spirit more, and sin against thy Saviour's blood, and more increase thine own wounds, and still lie under thy grievous imperfections? Hath thy sin proved so profitable a commodity, so necessary a companion, such a delightful employment, that thou dost so much dread the parting day? Hath thy Lord deserved this at thy hands, that thou shouldst choose to continue in the suburbs of hell, rather than live with him in light; and rather stay and drudge in sin, and abide with his and thy own professed enemy, than come away and dwell with God? May not God justly grant thee thy wishes, and seal thee a lease of thy desired distance, and nail thy ear to these doors of misery, and exclude thee eternally from his glory? Foolish sinner! who hath wronged thee, God or sin? Who hath wounded thee and caused thy groans? Who hath made thy life so woful, and caused thee to spend thy days in dolour? Is it Christ, or is it thy corruption; and art thou yet so loth to think of parting? Shall God be willing to dwell with man, and the Spirit to abide in thy peevish heart; and that where sin doth straiten his room, and a cursed inmate, inhabit with him, which is ever quarrelling and contriving against him: and shall man be loth to come to God, where is nothing but perfect blessedness and glory? Is not this to judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life? If they in Acts 13:46, who put the Gospel from them, did judge themselves unworthy, do not we who flee from life and glory?

Sect. V. 4. It shows that we are insensible of the vanity of the creature, and of the vexation accompanying our residence here, when we are so loth to hear or think of a removal. Whatever we say against the world, or how grievous soever our complaints may seem; we either believe not, or feel not what we say, or else we should be answerably affected to it. We call the world our enemy, and cry out of the oppression of our taskmasters, and groan under our sore bondage; but either we speak not as we think, or else we imagine some singular happiness to consist in the possession of worldly things, for which all this should be endured. Is any man loth to leave his prison, or to remove his dwelling from his cruel enemies, or to escape the hands of murderous robbers? Do we take the world indeed for our prison, our cruel, spoiling, murderous foe; and yet are we loth to leave it? Do we take this flesh for the clog of our spirits; and a veil that is drawn betwixt us and God; and a continual indwelling traitor to our souls; and yet are we loth to lay it down? Indeed, Peter was smitten by the angel, q before he arose and left his prison; but it was more from his ignorance of his intended deliverance, than any unwillingness to leave the place. I have read of Joseph's long imprisonment, and Daniel's casting into the den of lions, and Jeremiah's sticking fast in the dungeon, and Jonah's lying in the belly of the whale, and David from the deep crying to God; but I remember not that any were loth to be delivered. I have read, indeed, that they suffered cheerfully, and rejoiced in being afflicted, destitute, and tormented; yea, and that some of them would not accept of deliverance: but not from any love to the suffering, or any unwillingness to change their condition, but because of the hard terms of their deliverance, and from the hope they had of a better resurrection. Though Paul and Silas could sing in the stocks, s and comfortably bear the cruel scourgings, yet I do not believe they were unwilling to go forth, nor took it ill when God released them. Ah, foolish, wretched soul! doth every prisoner groan for freedom, and every slave desire his jubilee, and every sick man long for health, and every hungry man for food; and dost thou alone abhor deliverance? Doth the seaman long to see the land? Doth the husbandman desire the harvest, and the labouring man to receive his pay? Doth the

traveller long to be at home, and the runner long to win the prize, and the soldier long to win the field? And art thou loth to see thy labours finished, and to receive the end of thy faith and sufferings, and to obtain the thing for which thou livest? Are all thy sufferings only seeming? Have thy gripes, thy griefs and groans, been only dreams? If they were, yet methinks we should not be afraid of waking. Fearful dreams are not delightful. Or, is it not rather the world's delights that all were dreams and shadows? Is not all its glory as the light of the glow-worm, a wandering fire, yielding but small directing light, and as little comforting heat in all our doubtful and sorrowful darkness? Or, hath the world, in these its latter days, laid aside its ancient enmity? Is it become of late more kind? Hath it left its thorny, renting nature? Who hath wrought this great change, and who hath made this reconciliation? Surely, not the great Reconciler. He hath told us, in the world we shall have trouble, and in him only we shall have peace. We may reconcile ourselves to the world at our peril, but it will never reconcile itself to us. O foolish, unworthy soul, who hadst rather dwell in this land of darkness, and rather wander in this barren wilderness, than be at rest with Jesus Christ; who hadst rather stay among the wolves, and daily suffer the scorpions' stings, than to praise the Lord with the hosts of heaven. If thou didst well know what heaven is, and what earth is, it would not be so.

Sect. VI. This unwillingness to die, doth actually impeach us of high treason against the Lord: is it not a choosing of earth before him; and taking these present things for our happiness, and consequently making them our very God? If we did indeed make God our God; that is, our end, our rest, our portion, our treasure, how is it possible but we should desire to enjoy him? It behoves us the rather to be fearful of this, it being utterly inconsistent with saving grace, to value any thing before God, or to make the creature our highest end. Many other sins, foul and great, may possibly yet consist with sincerity; but so, I am certain, cannot that. But concerning this I have spoken before.

Sect. VII. 6. And all these defects being thus discovered, what a deal of dissembling doth it moreover show! We take on us to believe undoubtedly the exceeding, eternal weight of glory; we call God our chiefest good, and say, We love him above all; and for all this, we flee from him as if it were from hell itself. Would you have any man believe you, when you call the Lord your only hope, and speak of Christ as all in all, and talk of the joy that is in his presence, and yet would endure the hardest life rather than die, and come into his presence? What self-contradiction this, to talk so hardly of the world and flesh, to groan and complain of sin and suffering, and yet fear no day more than that which we expect should bring our final freedom! What shameless, gross dissembling is this, to spend so many hours and days in hearing sermons, reading books, conferring with others, and all to learn the way to a place which we are loth to come to; to take on us all our lifetime to walk towards heaven, to run, to strive, to fight for heaven, which we are loth to come to! What apparent, palpable hypocrisy is this, to lie upon our knees in public and private, and spend one hour after another in prayer for that which we would not have! If one should overhear thee in thy daily devotions crying out, 'Lord, deliver me from this body of death, from this sin, this sickness, this poverty, these cares and fears; how long, Lord, shall I suffer these?' And withal should hear thee praying against death, can he believe thy tongue agrees with thy heart? Except thou have so far lost thy reason as to expect all this here; or except the papist's doctrine were true, that we are able to fulfil the law of God; or our late perfectionists were truly enlightened, who think they can live and not sin: but if thou know these to be undoubtedly false, how canst thou deny thy gross dissembling?

Sect. VIII. 7. Consider, How do we wrong the Lord and his promises, and disgrace his ways in the eyes of the world! As if we would actually persuade them to question, whether God be true of his word or not; whether there be any such glory as Scripture mentions; when they see those who have professed to live by faith, and have boasted of their hopes in another world, and persuaded others to let go all for these hopes, and spoken disgracefully of all things below, in

comparison of these inexpressible things above; I say, when they see these very men so loth to leave their hold of present things, and to go to that glory which they talked and boasted of, how doth it make the weak to stagger, and confirm the world in their unbelief and sensuality; and make them conclude, Sure if these professors did expect so much glory, and make so light of the world as they seem, they would not themselves be so loth of a change. Oh, how are we ever able to repair the wrong which we do to God and poor souls by this scandal! and, what an honour to God; what a strengthening to believers; what a conviction to unbelievers would it be if Christians in this did answer their professions, and cheerfully welcome the news of rest!

Sect. IX. 8. It evidently discovers that we have been careless loiterers, that we have spent much time to little purpose, and that we have neglected and lost a great many warnings. Have we not had all our lifetime to prepare to die? So many years to make ready for one hour, and are we so unready and unwilling yet? What have we done, why have we lived, that the business of our lives is so much undone? Had we any greater matters to mind? Have we not foolishly wronged our souls in this? Would we have wished more frequent warnings! How oft hath death entered the habitations of our neighbours! How oft hath it knocked at our own doors! We have first heard that 'such an one is dead,' and then 'such an one,' and 'such an one,' till our towns have changed most of their inhabitants; and was not all this a sufficient warning to tell us that we were also mortals, and our own turn would shortly come? Nay, we have seen death raging in towns and fields, so many hundred a day dead of the pestilence, so many thousands slain by the sword? and did we not know it would reach to us at last? How many distempers have vexed our bodies; frequent languishings, consuming weaknesses, wasting fevers; here pain, and there trouble, that we have been forced to receive the sentence of death; and what were all these but so many messengers sent from God to tell us we must shortly die, as if we had heard a lively voice bidding us, 'Delay no more, but make you ready;' and are we unready and unwilling after all this? O careless, dead-hearted sinners,

unworthy neglecters of God's warning, faithless betrayers of your own souls!

All these heinous aggravations do lie upon this sin of unwillingness to die, which I have laid down to make it hateful to my own soul, which is too much guilty of it, as well as yours; and for a further help to our prevailing against it, I shall adjoin these following considerations:

Sect. X. 1. Consider, "Not to die," were "never to be happy." To escape death, were to miss of blessedness; except God should translate us as Enoch and Elias, which he never did before or since. If our hope in Christ were in this life only, we were then of all men most miserable: the epicure hath more pleasure to his flesh than the Christian; the drunkard, the whore-master, and the jovial lads, do swagger it out with gallantry and mirth, when a poor saint is mourning in a corner: yea, the very beasts of the field do eat, and drink, and skip, and play, and care for nothing, when many a Christian dwells with sorrows: so that if you would not die, and go to heaven, what would you have more than an epicure or a beast? What doth it avail us to fight with beasts, as men, if it were not for our hopes of a life to come: why do we pray, and fast, and mourn: why do we suffer the contempt of the world: why are we the scorn and hatred of all: if it were not for our hopes after we are dead? Why are we Christians, and not pagans and infidels, if we do not desire a life to come? Why, Christian, wouldst thou lose thy faith, and lose thy labour in all thy duties, and all thy sufferings? Wouldst thou lose thy hope, and lose all the end of thy life, and lose all the blood of Christ, and be contented with the portion of a worldling or a brute? If thou say No to this, how canst thou then be loth to die? As good old Milius said, when he was dying, and was asked whether he was willing to die or not, "Illius est nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad Christum." A saying of Cyprian's, which he oft repeated, "Let him be loth to die, who is loth to be with Christ."z

Sect. XI. 2. Consider, Is God willing by death to glorify us; and are we unwilling to die that we may be glorified? Would God freely give us heaven; and are we unwilling to receive it? As the prince who would have taken the lame beggar into his coach, and he refused, said to him, "Optime mereris qui in luto hæreas," "Thou well deservest to stick in the dirt;" so may God to the refusers of rest, 'You well deserve to live in trouble.' Methinks, if a prince were willing to make you his heir, you should scarce be unwilling to accept it. Surely the refusing of such a kindness must needs discover ingratitude and unworthiness. As God hath resolved against them who make excuses when they should come to Christ, "Verily, none of these that were bidden shall taste of my supper;" so is it just with him to resolve against us who frame excuses when we should come to glory. Ignatius, when he was condemned to be torn with wild beasts, was so afraid, lest by the prayers and means of his friends, he should lose the opportunity and benefit of martyrdom, that he often entreated them to let him alone, and not hinder his happiness; and tells them he was afraid of their love, lest it would hurt him, and their carnal friendship would keep him from death.

Sect. XII. 3. The Lord Jesus was willing to come from heaven to earth for us, and shall we be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for ourselves and him? Surely if we had been once possessed of heaven, and God should have sent us to earth again, as he did his Son for our sakes, we should then have been loth to remove indeed. It was another kind of change than ours is, which Christ did freely submit unto, to clothe himself with the garments of flesh, and to take upon him the form of a servant; to come from the bosom of the Father's love to bear his wrath which we should have borne. Shall he come down to our hell, from the height of glory to the depth of misery, to bring us up to his eternal rest? and shall we be after this unwilling?c Sure Christ had more cause to be unwilling; he might have said, 'What is it to me if these sinners suffer? If they value their flesh above their spirits, and their lusts above my Father's love, if they needs will sell their souls for nought, who is it fit should be the loser; and who should bear the blame and curse? Should I whom they have

wronged? Must they wilfully transgress my law, and I undergo their deserved pain? Is it not enough that I bear the trespass from them, but I must also bear my Father's wrath, and satisfy the justice which they have wronged? Must I come down from heaven to earth, and clothe myself with human flesh; be spit upon, and scorned by man; and fast, and weep, and sweat, and suffer, and bleed, and die a cursed death? And all this for wretched worms, who would rather hazard all they had, and venture their souls and God's favour, than they would forbear one forbidden morsel! Do they eat away themselves so slightly, and must I redeem them again so dearly?' Thus we see that Christ had much to have pleaded against his coming for man, and yet he pleaded none of this; he had reason enough to have made him unwilling, and yet did he voluntarily condescend. But we have no reason against our coming to him, except we will reason against our hopes, and plead for a perpetuity of our own calamities. Christ came down to fetch us up, and would we have him lose his blood and labour, and go away again without us? Hath he bought our rest at so dear a rate? Is our inheritance purchased with the blood of God, and are we after all this loth to enter? Ah! sirs, it was Christ, and not we, that had cause to be loth. The Lord forgive and heal this foolish ingratitude.

Sect. XIII. 4. Consider, Do we not combine with our most cruel, mortal foes, and jump with them in their most malicious design, while we are loth to die and go to heaven? Where is the height of their malice; and what is the scope of all temptations; and what is the devil's daily business? Is it not to keep our souls from God? And shall we be well content with this, and join with Satan in our desires? What though it be not those eternal torments, yet it is the one half of hell which we wish to ourselves, while we desire to be absent from heaven and God. If thou shouldst take counsel of all thine enemies, if thou shouldst beat thy brains both night and day in studying to do thyself a mischief, what greater than this could it possibly be, to continue here on earth from God; excepting only hell itself? Oh, what sport is this to Satan, that his desires and thine should so concur; that when he sees he cannot get thee to hell, he can so long keep thee

out of heaven, and make thee the earnest petitioner for it thyself! Oh, gratify not the devil so much to thy own displeasure!

Sect. XIV. 5. Do not our daily fears of death make our lives a continual torment? The fears of death being, as Erasmus saith, a sorer evil than death itself. And thus, as Paul did die daily in regard of preparation, and in regard of the necessary sufferings of this life, so do we in regard of the torments and the useless sufferings which we make ourselves. Those lives which might be full of joys in the daily contemplation of the life to come, and the sweet, delightful thoughts of bliss, how do we fill them up with terrors through all these causeless thoughts and fears! Thus do we consume our own comforts, and prey upon our truest pleasures. When we might lie down, and rise up, and walk abroad, with our hearts full of the joys of God, we continually fill them with perplexing fears. For he that fears dying, must be always fearing, because he hath always cause to expect it. And how can that man's life be comfortable, who lives in continual fear of losing his comforts?

Sect. XV. 6. Moreover, All these are self-created sufferings: as if it were not enough to be the deservers, but we must also be the executioners of our own calamities. As if God had not inflicted enough upon us, but we must inflict more upon ourselves! Is not death bitter enough to the flesh of itself, but we must double, and treble, and multiply its bitterness? Do we complain so much of the burden of our troubles, and yet daily add unto the weight? Surely, the state of poor mortals is sufficiently calamitous; they need not make it so much worse. The sufferings laid upon us by God, do all lead to happy issues; the progress is from suffering to patience, from thence to experience, and so to hope, and at last to glory. (Rom. 5:3, 4, 8:17.) But the sufferings which we do make ourselves, have usually issues answerable to their causes. The motion is circular and endless; from sin to suffering, from suffering to sin, and so to suffering again, and so in infinitum; and not only so, but they multiply in their course; every sin is greater than the former, and so every suffering also greater. This is the natural progress of them, which, if mercy do

intercept, no thanks to us. So that, except we think that God hath made us to be our own tormenters, we have small reason to nourish our fears of death.

Sect. XVI. 7. Consider, further, They are all but useless, unprofitable fears. (Matt. 6:27, 34.) As all our care cannot make one hair white or black, or add one cubit to our stature, so can neither our fear prevent our sufferings, nor delay our dying time an hour: willing or unwilling, we must away. Many a man's fears have hastened his end, but no man's ever did avert it. It is true, a cautelous fear or care concerning the danger after death, hath profited many, and is very useful to the preventing of that danger; but for a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven, to be afraid of entering his own inheritance, this is a sinful, useless fear.

Sect. XVII. 8. But though it be useless in respect of good, yet to Satan it is very serviceable. Our fears of dying ensnare our souls, and add strength to many temptations. Nay, when we are called to die for Christ, and put to it in a day of trial, it may draw us to deny the known truth, and forsake the Lord God himself. You look upon it now as a small sin, a common frailty of human nature; but if you look to the dangerous consequences of it, methinks it should move you to other thoughts. What made Peter deny his Lord? What makes apostates in suffering times forsake the truth, and the green blade of unrooted faith to wither before the heat of persecution? Fear of imprisonment and poverty may do much, but fear of death will do much more. When you see the gibbet, or hear the sentence, if this fear of dying prevail in you, you will straight begin to say as Peter, "I know not the man." When you see the faggots set, and fire ready, you will say as that apostate to the martyr, "Oh! the fire is hot, and nature is frail," forgetting that the fire of hell is hotter: Sirs, as light as you make of it, you know not of what force these fears are to separate your souls from Jesus Christ. Have we not lately had frequent experience of it? How many thousands have fled in flight, and turned their backs on a good cause, where they knew the honour of God was concerned, and their country's welfare was the prize for which they

fought, and the hopes of their posterity did lie at the stake, and all through unworthy fear of dying! Have we not known those who, lying under a wounded conscience, and living in the practice of some known sin, durst scarce look the enemy in the face, because they durst not look death in the face, but have trembled, and drawn back, and cried, 'Alas! I dare not die: if I were in the case of such or such, I durst die.' He that dare not die, dare scarce fight valiantly. Therefore, we have seen in our late wars, that there is none more valiant than these two sorts: 1. Those who have conquered the fear of death by the power of faith; 2. And those who have extinguished it by desperate profaneness, and cast it away through stupid security. So much fear as we have of death, usually so much cowardice in the cause of God. However, it is an evident temptation and snare. Beside the multitude of unbelieving contrivances and discontents at the wise disposals of God, and hard thoughts of most of his providences, which this sin doth make us guilty of: besides, also, it loseth us much precious time, and that for the most part near our end. When time should be most precious of all to us, and when it should be employed to better purpose, then do we vainly and sinfully waste it in the fruitless issues of these distracting fears. So that you see how dangerous a snare these fears are, and how fruitful a parent of many evils.

Sect. XVIII. 9. Consider, What a competent time the most of us have had; some thirty, some forty, some fifty or sixty years. How many come to the grave younger, for one that lives to the shortest of these! Christ himself, as is generally thought, lived but thirty-three years on earth. If it were to come as it is passed, you would think thirty years a long time. Did you not, long ago, in your threatening sickness, think with yourselves, 'Oh, if I might but enjoy one seven years more, or ten years more!' And now you have enjoyed perhaps more than you then begged, and are you nevertheless unwilling yet? except you would not die at all, but desire an immortality here on earth, which is a sin inconsistent with the truth of grace. If your sorrow be merely this, that you are mortal, you might as well have lamented it all your lives, for surely you could never be ignorant of this. Why should not a man that would die at all, be as well willing, at thirty or forty, if God

see it meet, as at seventy or eighty; nay, usually when the longest day is come, men are as loth to depart as ever. He that loseth so many years, hath more cause to bewail his own neglect, than to complain of the shortness of his time, and were better lament the wickedness of his life, than the brevity. Length of time doth not conquer corruption, it never withers nor decays through age. Except we receive an addition of grace, as well as time, we naturally grow the older the worse. Let us, then, be contented with our allotted proportion. And as we are convinced that we should not murmur against our assigned degree of wealth, of health, of honour, and other things here, so let us not be discontented with our allowed proportion of time. O my soul, depart in peace! Hast thou not here enjoyed a competent share? As thou wouldst not desire an unlimited state in wealth and honour, so desire it not in point of time. Is it fit that God or thou should be the sharer. If thou wert sensible how little thou deservest an hour of that patience which thou hast enjoyed, thou wouldst think thou hast had a large part. Wouldst thou have thy age called back again; canst thou eat thy bread, and have it too? Is it not divine wisdom that sets the bounds? God will not let one have all the work, nor all the suffering, nor all the honour of the work. He will honour himself by variety of instruments; by various persons and several ages, and not by one person or age. Seeing thou hast acted thine own part, and finished thine appointed course, come down contentedly, that others may succeed, who must have their turns as well as thou. As of all other outward things, so also of that time and life, thou mayest as well have too much, as too little: only of God and eternal life, thou canst never enjoy too much, nor too long. Great receivings will have great accounts; where the lease is longer, the fine and rent must be the greater. Much time hath much duty. Is it not as easy to answer for the receivings and the duties of thirty years, as of an hundred? Beg therefore for grace to improve it better, but be contented with thy share of time.

Sect. XIX. 10. Consider, Thou hast had a competency of the comforts of life, and not of naked time alone. God might have made thy life a misery; till thou hadst been as weary of possessing it, as thou art now

afraid of losing it. If he had denied thee the benefits and ends of living, thy life would have been but a slender comfort. They in hell have life as well as we, and longer far than they desire. God might have suffered thee to have consumed thy days in ignorance, or to have spent thy life to the last hour, before he brought thee home to himself, and given thee the saving knowledge of Christ, and then thy life had been short, though thy time long. But he hath opened thine eyes in the morning of thy days, and acquainted thee betimes with the trade of thy life. I know the best are but negligent loiterers, and spend not their time according to its worth; but yet he that hath a hundred years' time, and loseth it all, lives not so long as he that hath but twenty, and bestows it well. It is too soon to go to hell at a hundred years old, and not too soon to go to heaven at twenty. The means are to be valued in reference to their end; that is the best means which speedliest and surest obtaineth the end. He that hath enjoyed most of the ends of life, hath had the best life, and not he that hath lived longest. You that are acquainted with the life of grace, what, if you live but twenty or thirty years, would you change it for a thousand years of wickedness? God might have let you have lived like the ungodly world, and then you would have had cause to be afraid of dying. We have lived in a place and time of light; in Europe, not in Asia, Africa, or America; in England, not in Spain or Italy; in the age when knowledge doth most abound, and not in our forefathers' days of darkness. We have lived among Bibles, sermons, books, and Christians. As one acre of fruitful soil is better than many of barren commons; as the possession of a kingdom for one year, is better than a lease of a cottage for twenty; so twenty or thirty years living in such a place or age as we, is better than Methuselah's age, in the case of most of the world besides. And shall we not then be contented with our portion? If we who are ministers of the Gospel have seen abundant fruit of our labours; if God hath blessed our labour in seven years, more than some others in twenty or thirty; if God have made us the happy, though unworthy, means of converting and saving more souls at a sermon, than some better men in all their lives, what cause have we to complain of the shortness of our time in the work of God? Would unprofitable, unsuccessful preaching have

been comfortable? Will it do us good to labour to little purpose, so we may but labour long? If our desires of living are for the service of the church, as our deceitful hearts are still pretending, then surely if God honour us to do the more service, though in the lesser time, we have our desire. God will have each to have his share; when we have had ours, let us rest contented. Persuade, then, thy backward soul to its duty, and argue down these dreadful thoughts. Unworthy wretch! hath thy Father allowed thee so large a part, and caused thy lot to fall so well, and given thee thine abode in pleasant places, and filled up all thy life with mercies, and dost thou think thy share too small? Is not that which thy life doth want in length, made up in breadth, and weight, and sweetness? Lay all together, and look about thee, and tell me how many of thy neighbours have more; how many in all the town or country have had a better share than thou. Why mightest not thou have been one of the thousands, whose carcasses thou hast seen scattered as dung on the earth; or why mightest not thou have been one that is useless in the church, and an unprofitable burden to the place thou livest in? What a multitude of hours of consolation; of delightful sabbaths; of pleasant studies; of precious companions; of wondrous deliverances; of excellent opportunities; of fruitful labours; of joyful tidings; of sweet experiences; of astonishing providences; hath thy life partaked of! So that many a hundred who have each of them lived a hundred years, have not altogether enjoyed so much, and yet art thou not satisfied with thy lot? Hath thy life been so sweet that thou art loth to leave it? Is that the thanks thou returnest to him, who sweetened it to draw thee to his own sweetness? Indeed, if this had been all thy portion, I could not blame thee to be discontented. And yet let me tell thee too, that of all these souls, who have no other portion, but receive all their good things in this life, there is few or none even of them who ever had so full a share as thyself. And hast thou not, then, had a fair proportion, for one that must shortly have heaven besides? O foolish soul! would thou wert as covetous after eternity, as thou art for a fading, perishing life; and after the blessed presence of God, as thou art for continuance with earth and sin! Then thou wouldst rather look through the windows, and cry through the lattices, "Why is his

chariot so long a coming; why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" (Judges 5:28.) How long, Lord! how long!

Sect. XX. 11. Consider, What if God should grant thy desire, and let thee live yet many years, but withal should strip thee of the comforts of life, and deny thee the mercies which thou hast hitherto enjoyed: would this be a blessing worth the begging for? Might not God in judgment give thee life, as he gave the murmuring Israelites quails; or as he oftentimes gives men riches and honour, when he sees them over-earnest for it? Might he not justly say to thee, Seeing thou hadst rather linger on earth, than come away and enjoy my presence; seeing thou art so greedy of life, take it, and a curse with it; never let fruit grow on it more, nor the sun of comfort shine upon it, nor the dew of my blessing ever water it. Let thy table be a snare; let thy friends be thy sorrow; let thy riches be corrupted, and the rust of thy silver eat thy flesh. (Jam. 5:2, 3.) Go, hear sermons as long as thou wilt, but let never sermon do thee good more; let all thou hearest make against thee, and increase the smart of thy wounded spirit. If thou love preaching better than heaven, go and preach till thou be weary, but never profit soul more. Sirs, what if God should thus chastise our inordinate desires of living, were it not just; and what good would our lives then do us? Seest thou not some that spend their days on their couch in groaning; and some in begging by the highway sides; and others in seeking bread from door to door; and most of the world in labouring for food and raiment, and living only that they may live, and losing the ends and benefits of life? Why, what good would such a life do thee, were it never so long; when thy soul shall serve thee only instead of salt, to keep thy body from stinking? God might give thee life, till thou art weary of living, and as glad to be rid of it, as Judas or Ahitophel, and make thee like many miserable creatures in the world, who can hardly forbear laying violent hands on themselves. Be not, therefore, so importunate for life, which may prove a judgment instead of a blessing.

Sect. XXI. 12. Consider, How many of the precious saints of God, of all ages and places, have gone before thee. Thou art not to enter an

untrodden path, nor appointed first to break the ice. Except only Enoch and Elias, which of the saints have escaped death? And art thou better than they? There are many millions of saints dead, more than do now remain on earth. What a number of thine own bosom friends, and intimate acquaintance, and companions in duty, are now there; and why shouldst thou be so loth to follow? Nay, hath not Jesus Christ himself gone this way? Hath he not sanctified the grave to us, and perfumed the dust with his own body; and art thou loth to follow him too? Oh! rather let us say as Thomas, "Let us also go, and die with him;" or rather, let us suffer with him, that we may be glorified together with him.p

Many suchlike considerations might be added, as that Christ hath taken out the sting. How light the saints have made of it: how cheerfully the very pagans have entertained it! &c. But because all that is hitherto spoken, is also conducive to the same purpose, I pass them by. If what hath been said will not persuade, Scripture and reason have little force.

I have said the more on this subject, finding it so needful to myself and others; finding that among so many Christians, who could do and suffer much for Christ, there is yet so few that can willingly die; and of many who have somewhat subdued other corruptions, so few have got the conquest of this. This caused me to draw forth these arrows from the quiver of Scripture, and spend them against it.

Sect. XXII. I will only yet answer some objections, and so conclude this use.

1. Object. Oh! if I were but certain of heaven, I should then never stick at dying.

Answ. 1. Search, for all that, whether some of the fore-mentioned causes may not be in fault, as well as this.

2. Didst thou not say so long ago? Have you not been in this song this many years? If you are yet uncertain, whose fault is it? You have had

nothing else to do with your lives, nor no greater matter than this to mind. Were you not better presently fall to the trial, till you have put the question out of doubt? Must God stay while you trifle; and must his patience be continued to cherish your negligence? If thou have played the loiterer, do so no longer. Go, search thy soul, and follow the search close, till thou come to a clear discovery. Begin to night; stay not till the next morning. Certainty comes not by length of time, but by the blessing of the Spirit upon wise and faithful trial. You may linger out thus twenty years more, and be still as uncertain as now you are.

3. A perfect certainty may not be expected; we shall still be deficient in that as well as in other things. They who think the apostle speaks absolutely, and not comparatively, of a perfect assurance in the very degree, when he mentions a plerophory or full assurance, I know no reason but they may expect perfection in all things else as well as this. When you have done all, you will know this but in part. If your belief of that scripture which saith, "Believe and be saved," be imperfect; and if your knowledge, whether your own deceitful hearts do sincerely believe or not, be imperfect; or if but one of these two be imperfect, the result or conclusion must needs be so too. If you would then stay till you are perfectly certain, you may stay for ever: if you have attained assurance but in some degree, or got but the grounds for assurance laid, it is then the speediest and surest way, to desire rather to be quickly in rest; for then, and never till then, will both the grounds and assurance be fully perfect.

4. Both your assurance, and the comfort thereof, is the gift of the Spirit, who is a free bestower: and God's usual time to be largest in mercy, is when his people are deepest in necessity. A mercy in season is the sweetest mercy. I could give you here abundance of late examples of those who have languished for assurance and comfort; some all their sickness, and some most of their lives: and when they have been near to death they have received in abundance. Never fear death, then, through imperfection of assurance; for that is the most usual time of all, when God most fully and sweetly bestows it.

Object. 2. Oh! but the church's necessities are great. God hath made me useful in my place; so that the loss will be to many; or else, methinks I could willingly die.

Sect. XXIII. Answ. This may be the case of some, but yet remember the heart is deceitful. God is often pretended, when ourselves are intended. But if this be it that sticks with thee indeed, consider, Wilt thou pretend to be wiser than God? Doth not he know how to provide for his church? Cannot he do his work without thee, or find out instruments enough besides thee? Think not too highly of thyself, because God hath made thee useful. Must the church needs fall when thou art gone? Art thou the foundation on which it is built? Could God take away a Moses, an Aaron, David, Elias, &c., and find a supply for all their places; and cannot he also find a supply for thine? This is to derogate from God too much, and to arrogate too much unto thyself. Neither art thou so merciful as God, nor canst love the church so well as he. As his interest is infinitely beyond thine, so is his tender care and bounty. But of this before.

Yet mistake me not in all that I have said. I deny not but that it is lawful and necessary for a Christian, upon both the before-mentioned grounds, to desire God to delay his death, both for a further opportunity of gaining assurance, and also to be further serviceable to the church. See Phil. 2:26, 27. Time and life is a most precious mercy; not so much because of what we here enjoy, but because eternity of joy or torment dependeth on this time, when it must go with man for ever in heaven or hell, according to the provision he makes on earth; and they that will find a treasure in heaven must now lay it up there. (Matt. 6:19, 20.) I do not blame a man that is well in his wits, if he be loth to die, till he hath some comfortable assurance that it shall certainly go well with him in another world. And every man's assurance, as I have proved, is imperfect. And there I doubt not but, 1. We may pray for recovery from sicknesses. 2. And may rejoice in it, and give thanks for it, as a great mercy. 3. And may pray hard for our godly and ungodly friends in their sickness. 4. And must value our time highly, and improve it,

as a mercy which we must be accountable for. 5. And every godly man is so useful to the church, ordinarily, that, even for the church's service, he may desire to live longer, as Paul did, even till he come to the full age of man, and while he is able to serve the church, and it hath need of him. No man should be over hasty to a state that must never be changed, when both assurance of glory and his fitness for it are still imperfect; and ordinarily the saints grow fitter in their age. But then this must not be in love of earth, but we must take it as our present loss to be kept from heaven, though it may tend to the church's and our own future advantage, and so may be desired: so that you must still see that heaven be valued and loved above earth, even when you have cause to pray for longer time, as she that longs to be married to a prince, may desire delay for preparation. But, First, This is nothing to their case who are still delaying, and never willing; whose true discontents are at death itself, more than at the unseasonableness of dying. Secondly, Though such desires are sometimes lawful, yet must they be carefully bounded and moderated; to which end are the former considerations. We must not be too absolute and peremptory in our desires, but cheerfully yield to God's disposal. The rightest temper is that of Paul's, to be in a strait between two; desiring to depart, and be with Christ, and yet to stay while God will have us, to do the church the utmost service. But, alas! we are seldom in this strait: our desires run out all one way, and that for the flesh, and not the church. (Phil. 1:23.) Our straits are only for fear of dying, and not betwixt the earnest desires of dying, and of living. He that desireth life only to prepare for heaven, doth love heaven better than life on earth, for the end is still more beloved than all the means.

Sect. XXIV. Object. But is not death a punishment of God for sin? Doth not Scripture call it the "king of fears;" and nature, above all other evils, abhor it?

Answ. I will not meddle with that which is controversial in this: whether death be properly a punishment or not: but grant, that, in itself considered, it may be called evil, as being naturally the

dissolution of the creature. Yet being sanctified to us by Christ, and being the season and occasion of so great a good, as is the present possession of God in Christ, it may be welcomed with a glad submission, if not with desire. Christ affords us grounds enough to comfort us against this natural evil; and therefore endues us with the principle of grace, to raise us above the reach of nature.

For all those low and poor objections, as leaving house, goods, and friends, leaving our children unprovided, &c., I pass them over, as of lesser moment, than to take much with men of grace.

Sect. XXV. Lastly, Understand me in this also, that I have spoken all this to the faithful soul. I persuade not the ungodly from fearing death. It is a wonder rather that they fear it no more, and spend not their days in continual horror, as is said before. Truly, but that we know a stone is insensible, and a hard heart is dead and stupid, or else a man would admire how poor souls can live in ease and quietness, that must be turned out of these bodies into everlasting flames; or that be not sure, at least, if they should die this night, whether they shall lodge in heaven or hell the next, especially when many are called, and so few chosen, and the righteous themselves are scarcely saved. One would think such men should eat their bread with trembling, and the thoughts of their danger should keep them waking in the night, and they should fall presently a searching themselves, inquiring of others, and crying to God, that if it were possible they might quickly be out of this danger, and so their hearts be freed from horror. For a man to quake at the thoughts of death that looks by it to be dispossessed of his happiness, and knoweth not whither he is next to go, this is no wonder. But for the saints to fear their passage by death to rest, this is an unreasonable, hurtful fear.

CHAP. III

Motives to a heavenly Life

SECT. I. We have now, by the guidance of the word of the Lord, and by the assistance of his Spirit, showed you the nature of the rest of the saints, and acquainted you with some duties in relation thereto. We come now to the close of all, to press you to the great duty, which I chiefly intended, when I begun this subject, and have here reserved it to the last place, because I know hearers are usually of slippery memories, yet apt to retain the last that is spoken, though they forget all that went before. Dear friends, it is pity that either you or I should forget any thing of that which doth so nearly concern us, as this eternal rest of the saints doth. But if you must needs forget something, let it be any thing else, rather than this: let it be rather all that I have hitherto said (though I hope of better) than this one ensuing use.

Is there a rest, and such a rest remaining for us? Why then are our thoughts no more upon it? Why are not our hearts continually there? Why dwell we not there in constant contemplation? Sirs, ask your hearts in good earnest, What is the cause of this neglect? Are we reasonable in this, or are we not? Hath the eternal God provided us such a glory, and promised to take us up to dwell with himself, and is not this worth the thinking on? Should not the strongest desires of our hearts be after it, and the daily delights of our souls be there? Do we believe this; and can we yet forget and neglect it? What is the matter? Will not God give us leave to approach this light; or will he not suffer our souls to taste and see it? Why, then, what mean all his earnest invitations? Why doth he so condemn all our earthly-mindedness, and command us to set our affections above? Ah, vile hearts! if God were against it, we were likelier to be for it; when he would have us to keep our station, then we are aspiring to be like God, and are ready to invade the divine prerogatives; but when he commands our hearts to heaven, then they will not stir an inch: like our predecessors the sinful Israelites: when God would have them march for Canaan, then they mutiny, and will not stir; either they fear the giants, or the walled cities, or want necessaries; something hinders them; but when God bids them not go, then will they needs be presently marching, and fight they will, though it be to their

overthrow. If the fore-thoughts of glory were forbidden fruits, perhaps we should be sooner drawn unto them, and we should itch, as the Bethshemites, to be looking into this ark. Sure I am, where God hath forbidden us to place, our thoughts and our delights, thither it is easy enough to draw them. If he say, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world," we dote upon it nevertheless. We have love enough if the world require it, and thoughts enough to pursue our profits. How delightfully and unweariedly can we think of vanity; and day after day employ our minds about the creature! And have we no thoughts of this our rest? How freely and how frequently can we think of our pleasures, our friends, our labours, our flesh, our lusts, our common studies, our news; yea, our very miseries, our wrongs, our sufferings, and our fears! But where is the Christian whose heart is on his rest? Why, sirs, what is the matter? Why are we not taken up with the views of glory, and our souls more accustomed to these delightful meditations? Are we so full of joy that we need no more: or, is there no matter in heaven for our joyous thoughts: or rather, are not our hearts carnal and blockish? Earth will to earth. Had we more spirit, it would be otherwise with us. As the Jews use to cast to the ground the book of Esther before they read it, because the name of God is not in it; and as Augustin cast by Cicero's writings, because they contained not the name of Jesus; so let us humble and cast down these sensual hearts that have in them no more of Christ and glory. As we should not own our duties any further than somewhat of Christ is in them, so should we no further own our hearts; and as we should delight in the creatures no further than they have reference to Christ and eternity, so should we no further approve of our own hearts. If there were little of Christ and heaven in our mouths, but the world were the only subject of our speeches, then all would account us to be ungodly, why then may we not call our hearts ungodly that have so little delight in Christ and heaven? A holy tongue will not excuse or secure a profane heart. Why did Christ pronounce his disciples' eyes and ears so blessed, but as they were doors to let in Christ by his works and words into their heart? Oh, blessed are the eyes that so see, and the ears that so hear, that the heart is thereby raised to this blessed, heavenly frame! Sirs, so much

of your hearts as is empty of Christ and heaven, let it be filled with shame and sorrow, and not with ease.

Sect. II. But let me turn my reprehension to exhortation, that you would turn this conviction into reformation. And I have the more hope because I here address myself to men of conscience, that dare not wilfully disobey God; and to men whose relations to God are many and near, and therefore, methinks, there should need the fewer words to persuade their hearts to him; yea, because I speak to no other men but only them whose portion is there, whose hopes are there, and who have forsaken all, that they may enjoy this glory; and shall I be discouraged from persuading such to be heavenly-minded? Why, fellow Christians, if you will not hear and obey, who will? Well may we be discouraged to exhort the poor, blind, ungodly world, and may say, as Moses, "Behold the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me?" (Exod. 16:12.) Whoever thou art, therefore, that readest these lines, I require thee, as thou tenderest thine allegiance to the God of heaven, as ever thou hopest for a part in this glory, that thou presently take thy heart to task; chide it for its wilful strangeness to God; turn thy thoughts from the pursuit of vanity; bend thy soul to study eternity; busy it about the life to come; habituate thyself to such contemplations, and let not those thoughts be seldom and cursory; but settle upon them: dwell here; bathe thy soul in heaven's delights; drench thine affections in these rivers of pleasure, or rather, in this sea of consolation; and if thy backward soul begin to flag, and thy loose thoughts to fly abroad, call them back, hold them to their work, put them on, bear not with their laziness, do not connive at one neglect; and when thou hast once in obedience to God tried this work, and followed on till thou hast got acquainted with it, and kept a close guard upon thy thoughts till they are accustomed to obey, and till thou hast got some mastery over them, thou wilt then find thyself in the suburbs of heaven, and, as it were, in a new world; thou wilt then find, indeed, that there is sweetness in the work and way of God, and that the life of Christianity is a life of joy. Thou wilt meet with those abundant consolations, which thou hast prayed, and panted, and groaned after,

and which so few Christians do here obtain, because they know not the way to them, or else make not conscience of walking in it.

You see the work now before you: this, this is that I would fain persuade your souls to practise. Beloved friends, and christian neighbours, who hear me this day, let me bespeak your consciences in the name of Christ, and command you by the authority I have received from Christ, that you faithfully set upon this weighty duty, and fix your eye more steadfastly on your rest, and daily delight in the forethoughts thereof. I have persuaded you to many other duties, and (I bless God) many of you have obeyed, and I hope never to find you at that pass as to say, when you perceive the command of the Lord, that you will not be persuaded, nor obey; if I should, it were high time to bewail your misery. Why, you may almost as well say, 'We will not obey,' as sit still and not obey. Christians, I beseech you, as you take me for your teacher, and have called me hitherto, so hearken to this doctrine. If ever I shall prevail with you in any thing, let me prevail with you in this, to set your hearts where you expect a rest and treasure. Do you not remember that when you called me to be your teacher, you promised me under your hands that you would faithfully and conscionably endeavour the receiving every truth, and obeying every command which I should from the word of God manifest to you? I now charge your promise upon you: I never delivered to you a more apparent truth, nor pressed upon you a more apparent duty than this. If I knew you would not obey, what should I do here preaching? Not that I desire you to receive it chiefly as from me, but as from Christ, on whose message I come. Methinks, if a child should show you Scripture, and speak to you the word of God, you should not dare to disobey it. Do not wonder that I persuade you so earnestly, though indeed if we were truly reasonable in spiritual things, as we are in common, it would be a real wonder that men should need so much persuasion to so sweet and plain a duty; but I know the employment is high, the heart is earthly, and will still draw back; the temptations and hinderances will be many and great, and therefore I fear before we have done, and laid open more fully the nature of the duty, that you will confess all these persuasions little

enough. The Lord grant they prove not so too little, as to fail of success, and leave you as they find you. Say not, 'We are unable to set our own hearts on heaven, this must be the work of God only, and therefore all your exhortation is in vain,' for I tell you, though God be the chief disposer of your hearts, yet next under him you have the greatest command of them yourselves, and a great power in the ordering of your own thoughts, and for determining your own wills in their choice: though without Christ you can do nothing, yet under him you may do much, and must do much, or else it will be undone, and you undone through your neglect. Do your own parts, and you have no cause to distrust whether Christ will do his. Do not your own consciences tell you, when your thoughts fly abroad, that you might do more than you do to restrain them; and when your hearts lie flat, and neglect eternity, and seldom mind the joys before you, that most of this neglect is wilful? If you be to study a set speech, you can force your thoughts to the intended subject; if a minister be to study a sermon, he can force his thoughts to the most saving truths, and that without any special grace; might not a true Christian then mind more the things of the life to come, if he did not neglect to exercise that authority over his own thoughts which God hath given him? Especially in such a work as this, where he may more confidently expect the assistance of Christ, who useth not to forsake his people in the work he sets them on. If a carnal minister can make it his work to study about Christ and heaven through all his lifetime, and all because it is the trade he lives by, and knows not how to subsist without it, why, then, methinks a spiritual Christian should study as constantly the joys of heaven, because it is the very business he lives for, and that the place he must be in for ever. If the cook can find in his heart to labour and sweat about your meat, because it is the trade that maintains him, though perhaps he taste it not himself, methinks then you, for whom it is prepared, should willingly bestow that daily pains to taste its sweetness, and feed upon it; and if it were about your bodily food, you would think it no great pains neither. A good stomach takes it for no great labour to eat and drink of the best till it be satisfied; nor needs it any great invitation thereto. Christians, if your souls were sound and right, they would perceive incomparably

more delight and sweetness in knowing, thinking, believing, loving, and rejoicing in your future blessedness in the fruition of God, than the soundest stomach finds in its food, or the strongest senses in the enjoyment of their objects; so little painful would this work be to you, and so little should I need to press you to it. It is no great pains to you to think of a friend, or any thing else that you dearly love, and as little would it be to think of glory, if your love and delight were truly there. If you do but see some jewel, or treasure, you need not long exhortations to stir up your desires, the very sight of it is motive enough. If you see the fire when you are cold, or see a house in a stormy day, or see a safe harbour from a tempestuous sea, you need not be told what use to make of it; the sight doth presently direct your thought: you think, you look, you long, till you obtain it. Why should it not be so in the present case? Sirs, one would think, to show you this crown and glory of the saints, should be motive enough to make you desire it; to show you that harbour where you may be safe from all dangers, should soon teach you what use to make of it, and should bend your daily studies towards it; but because I know while we have flesh about us, and any remnants of that carnal mind which is enmity to God, and to this noble work, that all motives are little enough; and because my own, and others' sad experiences tell me, how hardly the best are drawn to a constancy and faithfulness in this duty, I will here lay down some moving considerations, which, if you will but vouchsafe to ponder thoroughly, and deliberately weigh with an impartial judgment, I doubt not but they will prove effectual with your hearts, and make you resolve upon this excellent duty. I pray you, friends, let them not fall to the ground, but take them up, and try them, and if you find them concern you, make much of them, and obey them accordingly.

Sect. III. 1. Consider, A heart set upon heaven will be one of the most unquestionable evidences of thy sincerity, and a clear discovery of a true work of saving grace upon thy soul. You are much in inquiring after marks of sincerity, and I blame you not: it is dangerous mistaking when a man's salvation lies upon it. You are oft asking, 'How shall I know that I am truly sanctified?' Why, here is a mark

that will not deceive you, if you can truly say that you are possessed of it: even, a heart set upon heaven. Would you have a sign infallible, not from me, or from the mouth of any man, but from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, which all the enemies of the use of marks can lay no exception against? Why, here is such an one, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21.) Know once assuredly where your heart is, and you may easily know that your treasure is there. God is the saints' treasure and happiness: heaven is the place where they must fully enjoy him. A heart therefore set upon heaven is no more but a heart set upon God, desiring after this full enjoyment: and, surely, a heart set upon God through Christ, is the truest evidence of saving grace. External actions are easiest discovered, but those of the heart are the surest evidences. When thy learning will be no good proof of thy grace; when thy knowledge, thy duties, and thy gifts, will fail thee; when arguments from thy tongue and thy hand may be confuted, yet then will this argument from the bent of thy heart prove thee sincere. Take a poor Christian that can scarce speak true English about religion, that hath a weak understanding, a failing memory, a stammering tongue, yet his heart is set on God, he hath chosen him for his portion; his thoughts are on eternity; his desires there, his dwelling there; he cries out, 'O that I were there!' He takes that day for a time of imprisonment, wherein he hath not taken one refreshing view of eternity. I had rather die in this man's condition, and have my soul in his soul's case, than in the case of him that hath the most eminent gifts, and is most admired for parts and duty, whose heart is not thus taken up with God. The man that Christ will find out at the last day, and condemn for the want of a wedding garment, will he be that wants this frame of heart. The question will not then be, 'How much you have known, or professed, or talked?' but, 'How much you have loved, and where was your heart?' Why, then, Christians, as you would have a sure testimony of the love of God, and a sure proof of your title to glory, labour to get your hearts above. God will acknowledge that you really love him, and take you for faithful friends indeed, when he sees your hearts are set upon him. Get but your hearts once truly in heaven, and, without

all question, yourselves will follow. If sin and Satan keep not thence your affections, they will never be able to keep away your persons.

Sect. IV. 2. Consider, A heart in heaven is the highest excellency of your spirits here, and the noblest part of your christian disposition: as there is not only a difference between men and beasts, but also among men, between the noble and the base; so there is not only a common excellency, whereby a Christian differs from the world, but also a peculiar nobleness of spirit, whereby the more excellent differ from the rest: and this lies especially in a higher and more heavenly frame of spirit. Only man, of all inferior creatures, is made with a face directed heavenward: but other creatures have their faces to the earth. As the noblest of creatures, so the noblest of Christians are they that are set most direct for heaven. As Saul is called a choice and goodly man, higher by the head than all the company; so is he the most choice and goodly Christian, whose head and heart is thus the highest. (1 Sam. 4:2, and 10:23, 24.) Men of noble birth and spirits, do mind high and great affairs, and not the smaller things of low poverty. Their discourse is of councils and matters of state, of the government of the commonwealth, and public things: and not of the countryman's petty employments. Oh! to hear such a heavenly saint, who hath fetched a journey into heaven by faith, and hath been raised up to God in his contemplations, and is newly come down from the views of Christ, what discoveries will he make of those superior regions! What ravishing expressions drop from his lips! How high and sacred is his discourse! Enough to make the ignorant world astonished, and perhaps say, "Much study hath made them mad:" (Acts 26:24:) and enough to convince an understanding hearer that they have seen the Lord: and to make one say, 'No man could speak such words as these, except he had been with God.' This, this is the noble Christian; as Bucholcer's hearers concluded, when he had preached his last sermon, being carried between two into the church, because of his weakness, and there most admirably discoursed of the blessedness of souls departed this life, "*Cæteros concionatores à Bucholcero semper omnes, illo autem die etiam ipsum à sese superatum,*" that Bucholcer did ever excel other

preachers, but that day he excelled himself: so may I conclude of the heavenly Christian, he ever excelleth the rest of men, but when he is nearest heaven he excelleth himself. As those are the most famous mountains that are highest; and those the fairest trees that are tallest; and those the most glorious pyramids and buildings whose tops do reach nearest to heaven; so is he the choicest Christian, whose heart is most frequently and most delightfully there. If a man have lived near the king, or have travelled to see the sultan of Persia, or the great Turk, he will make this a matter of boasting, and thinks himself one step higher than his private neighbours, that live at home. What shall we then judge of him that daily travels as far as heaven, and there hath seen the King of kings? That hath frequent admittance into the Divine presence, and feasteth his soul upon the tree of life? For my part, I value this man before the ablest, the richest, the most learned in the world.

Sect. V. 3. Consider, A heavenly mind is a joyful mind; this is the nearest and the truest way to live a life of comfort. And without this, you must needs be uncomfortable. Can a man be at the fire, and not be warm; or in the sunshine, and not have light? Can your heart be in heaven, and not have comfort? The countries of Norway, Iceland, and all the northward, are cold and frozen, because they are farther from the power of the sun; but in Egypt, Arabia, and the southern parts, it is far otherwise, where they live more near its powerful rays. What could make such frozen, uncomfortable Christians, but living so far as they do from heaven? And what makes some few others so warm in comforts, but their living higher than others do, and their frequent access so near to God? When the sun in the spring draws near our part of the earth, how do all things congratulate its approach! The earth looks green, and casteth off her mourning habit: the trees shoot forth; the plants revive; the pretty birds, how sweetly do they sing! the face of all things smiles upon us, and all the creatures below rejoice. Beloved friends, if we would but try this life with God, and would but keep these hearts above, what a spring of joy would be within us; and all our graces be fresh and green! How would the face of our souls be changed; and all that is within us

rejoice! How should we forget our winter sorrows; and withdraw our souls from our sad retirements! How early should we rise (as those birds in the spring) to sing the praise of our great Creator! O Christian, get above: believe it, that region is warmer than this below. Those that have been there, have found it so, and those that have come thence have told us so: and I doubt not but that thou hast sometime tried it thyself. I dare appeal to thy own experience, or to the experience of any soul that knows what the true joys of a Christian are: when is it that you have largest comforts? Is it not after such an exercise as this, when thou hast got up thy heart, and conversed with God, and talked with the inhabitants of the higher world, and viewed the mansions of the saints and angels, and filled thy soul with the forethoughts of glory? If thou know by experience what this practice is, I dare say thou knowest what spiritual joy is. David professeth that the light of God's countenance would make his heart more glad than theirs that have corn, and wine, and oil. "Thou shalt fill me full of joy with thy countenance." (Psal. 4:6, 7; and Acts 2:28, out of Psal. 16.) If it be the countenance of God that fills us with joy, then surely they that draw nearest, and most behold it, must needs be fullest of these joys. Sirs, if you never tried this art, nor lived this life of heavenly contemplation, I never wonder that you walk uncomfortably, that you are all complaining, and live in sorrows, and know not what the joy of the saints means. Can you have comforts from God, and never think of him? Can heaven rejoice you, when you do not remember it? Doth anything in the world glad you, when you think not on it? Must not every thing first enter your judgment and consideration, before it can delight your heart and affection? If you were possessed of all the treasures of the earth; if you had title to the highest dignities and dominions, and never think on it; surely it would never rejoice you. Whom should we blame then, that we are so void of consolation, but our own negligent, unskilful hearts? God hath provided us a crown of glory, and promised to set it shortly on our heads, and we will not so much as think of it: he holdeth it out in the Gospel to us, and biddeth us behold and rejoice; and we will not so much as look at it; and yet we complain for want of comfort. What a perverse course is this, both against God and our

own joys! I confess, though in fleshly things, the presenting of a comforting object is sufficient to produce an answerable delight, yet in spirituals we are more disabled. God must give the joy itself, as well as afford us matter for joy: but yet withal, it must be remembered, that God doth work upon us as men, and in a rational way doth raise our comforts: he enableth and exciteth us to mind and study these delightful objects, and from thence to gather our own comforts, as the bee doth gather her honey from the flowers; therefore he that is most skilful and painful in this gathering art, is usually the fullest of this spiritual sweetness. Where is the man that can tell me from experience, that he hath solid and usual joy in any other way but this, and that God worketh it immediately on his affections, without the means of his understanding and considering? c It is by believing that we are filled with joy and peace; (Rom. 15:13:) and no longer than we continue our believing. It is in hope that the saints rejoice, yea, in this hope of the glory of God, (Rom. 5:2,) and no longer than they continue hoping. And here let me warn you of a dangerous snare, an opinion which will rob you of all your comfort: some think, if they should thus fetch in their comfort by believing and hoping, and work it out of Scripture promises, and extract it by their own thinking and studying, that then it would be a comfort only of their own hammering out, (as they say,) and not the genuine joy of the Holy Ghost. A desperate mistake, raised upon a ground that would overthrow almost all duty, as well as this, which is their setting the workings of God's Spirit and their own spirits in opposition, when their spirits must stand in subordination to God's: they are conjunct causes, co-operating to the producing of one and the same effect. God's Spirit worketh our comforts, by setting our own spirits a-work upon the promises, and raising our thoughts to the place of our comforts. As you would delight a covetous man by showing him gold, or a voluptuous man with fleshly delights; so God useth to delight his people, by taking them, as it were, by the hand, and leading them into heaven, and showing them himself, and their rest with him. God useth not to cast in our joys while we are idle, or taken up with other things. It is true, he sometime doth it suddenly, but yet usually in the aforesaid order, leading it into our hearts by

our judgment and thoughts: and his sometime sudden extraordinary casting of comforting thoughts in our hearts, should be so far from hindering endeavours in a meditating way, that it should be a singular motive to quicken us to it; even as a taste given us of some cordial or choicer food, will make us desire and seek the rest. God feedeth not saints as birds do their young, bringing it to them, and putting it into their mouths, while they lie still in the nest, and only gape to receive it. But as he giveth to man the fruits of the earth, the increase of their land in corn and wine, while we plough, and sow, and weed, and water, and dung, and dress, and then with patience expect his blessing; so doth he give the joys of the soul. Yet I deny not, that if any should so think to work out his own comforts by meditation, as to attempt the work in his own strength, and not do all in subordination to God, nor perceive a necessity of the Spirit's assistance, the work would prove to be like the workman, and the comfort he would gather would be like both: even mere vanity: even as the husbandman's labour without the sun, and rain, and blessing of God.

So then you may easily see, that close meditation on the matter and cause of our joy, is God's way to procure solid joy. For my part, if I should find my joy of another kind, I should be very prone to doubt of its sincerity. If I find a great deal of comfort in my heart, and know not how it came thither, nor upon what rational ground it was raised, nor what considerations do feed and continue it, I should be ready to question, How I know whether this be from God? And though, as the cup in Benjamin's sack, it might come from love, yet it would leave me but in fears and amazements, because of uncertainty. As I think, our love to God should not be like that of fond lovers, who love violently, but they know not why; so I think a Christian's joy should be grounded, rational joy, and not to rejoice, and know not why. Though perhaps in some extraordinary case, God may cast in such an extraordinary kind of joy, yet I think it is not his usual way. And if you observe the spirit of most forlorn, uncomfortable, despairing Christians, you shall find the reason to be, their ungrounded expectation of such unusual kind of joys; and accordingly are their

spirits variously tossed, and most unconstantly tempered: sometime, when they meet with such joys, (or at least think so,) then they are cheerful and lifted up: but because these are usually short-lived joys, therefore they are straight as low as hell; and ordinarily that is their more lasting temper. And thus they are tossed as a vessel at sea, up and down, but still in extremes; whereas, alas! God is most constant, Christ the same, heaven the same, and the promise the same: and if we took the right course for fetching in our comfort from these, surely our comforts should be more settled and constant, though not always the same. Whoever thou art, therefore, that readest these lines, I entreat thee in the name of the Lord, and as thou vainest the life of constant joy, and that good conscience which is a continual feast, that thou wouldst but seriously set upon this work, and learn the art of heavenly-mindedness, and thou shalt find the increase a hundredfold, and the benefit abundantly exceed thy labour. But this is the misery of man's nature: though every man naturally abhorreth sorrow, and loves the most merry and joyful life; yet few do love the way to joy, or will endure the pains by which it is obtained; they will take the next that comes to hand, and content themselves with earthly pleasures, rather than they will ascend to heaven to seek it; and yet when all is done, they must have it there, or be without it.

Sect. VI. 4. Consider, A heart in heaven will be a most excellent preservative against temptations, a powerful means to kill thy corruptions, and to save thy conscience from the wounds of sin. God can prevent our sinning, though we be careless; and keep off the temptation which we would draw upon ourselves, and sometimes doth so, but this is not his usual course, nor is this our safest way to escape. When the mind is either idle, or ill employed, the devil needs not a greater advantage: when he finds the thoughts let out on lust, revenge, ambition, or deceit, what an opportunity hath he to move for execution, and to put on the sinner to practise what he thinks on! Nay, if he find but the mind empty, there is room for anything that he will bring in: but when he finds the heart in heaven, what hope that any of these motions should take? Let him entice to any forbidden course, or show us the bait of any pleasure, the soul will

return Nehemiah's answer, "I am doing a great work, and cannot come." (Neh. 6:3.) Several ways will this preserve us against temptation, First, By keeping the heart employed; Secondly, By clearing the understanding, and so confirming the will: Thirdly, By prepossessing the affections with the highest delights: Fourthly, And by keeping us in the way of God's blessing.

First, By keeping the heart employed: when we are idle, we tempt the devil to tempt us; as it is an encouragement to a thief, to see your doors open, and nobody within; and as we use to say, 'Careless persons make thieves:' so it will encourage Satan, to find your hearts idle; but when the heart is taken up with God, it cannot have while to hearken to temptations; it cannot have while to be lustful and wanton, ambitious or worldly: if a poor man have a suit to any of you, he will not come when you are taken up in some great man's company or discourse; that is but an ill time to speed.

If you were but busied in your lawful callings, you would not be so ready to hearken to temptations; much less if you were busied above with God: will you leave your plough and harvest in the field, or leave the quenching of a fire in your houses, to run with children a hunting of butterflies? would a judge be persuaded to rise from the bench, when he is sitting upon life and death, to go and play among the boys in the streets? No more will a Christian, when he is busy with God, and taking a survey of his eternal rest, give ear to the alluring charms of Satan. *Non vacat exiguis, &c.*, is a character of the truly prudent man; the children of that kingdom should never have while for trifles, but especially when they are employed in the affairs of the kingdom; and this employment is one of the saints' chief preservatives against temptation. For, as Gregory saith, "*Nunquam Dei amor otiosus est: operatur enim magna, si est: si vero operari renuit, non est amor;*" The love of God is never idle; it worketh great things when it truly is; and when it will not work, it is not love. Therefore, being still thus working, it is still preserving.

Secondly, A heavenly mind is freest from sin, because it is of clearest understanding in spiritual matters of greatest concernment. A man that is much in conversing above, hath truer and livelier apprehensions of things concerning God and his soul, than any reading or learning can beget: though, perhaps, he may be ignorant in divers controversies and matters that less concern salvation; yet those truths which must establish his soul, and preserve him from temptation, he knows far better than the greatest scholars; he hath so deep an insight into the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature, the brutishness of fleshly, sensual delights, that temptations have little power on him; for these earthly vanities are Satan's baits, which, though they may take much with the undiscerning world, yet, with the clear-sighted, they have lost their force. "In vain," saith Solomon, "the net is spread in the sight of any bird." (Prov. 1:17.) And usually in vain doth Satan lay his snares to entrap the soul that plainly sees them. When a man is on high, he may see the farther: we use to set our discovering sentinels on the highest place that is near unto us, that they may discern all the motions of the enemy. In vain doth the enemy lay his ambuscades when we stand over him on some high mountain, and clearly discover all he doth: when the heavenly mind is above with God, he may far easier from thence discern every danger that lies below, and the whole method of the devil in deceiving; nay, if he did not discover the snare, yet were he more likely far to escape it than any others that converse below. A net or bait that is laid on the ground, is unlikely to catch the bird that flies in the air; while she keeps above, she is out of danger, and the higher the safer; so it is with us. Satan's temptations are laid on the earth, earth is the place, and earth is the ordinary bait: how shall these ensnare the Christian who hath left the earth, and walks with God? But, alas! we keep not long so high, but down we must to the earth again, and then we are taken.

If conversing with wise and learned men is the way to make one wise and learned, then no wonder if he that converseth with God, become wise. If men that travel about the earth, do think to return home with more experience and wisdom, how much more he that travels to

heaven! As the very air and climate that we most abide in, do work our bodies to their own temper, no wonder if he that is much in that sublime and purer region, have a purer soul and quicker sight, and if he have an understanding full of light, who liveth with the Sun, the Fountain, the Father of light; as certain herbs and meats we feed on, do tend to make our sight more clear, so the soul that is fed with angels' food, must needs have an understanding much more clear, than they that dwell and feed on earth. And, therefore, you may easily see that such a man is in far less danger of temptation, and Satan will hardlier beguile his soul, even as a wise man is hardlier deceived than fools and children. Alas! the men of the world that dwell below, and know no other conversation but earthly, no wonder if their understandings be darkened, and they be easily drawn to every wickedness; no wonder if Satan take them captive at his will, (2 Tim. 2:26,) and lead them about, as we see a dog lead a blind man with a string. The foggy air and mists of earth do thicken their sight; the smoke of worldly care and business blinds them, and the dungeon which they live in, is a land of darkness. How can worms and moles see, whose dwelling is always in the earth? While this dust is in men's eyes, no wonder if they mistake gain for godliness, sin for grace, the world for God, their own wills for the law of Christ, and in the issue, hell for heaven. If the people of God will but take notice of their own hearts, they shall find their experiences confirming this that I have said. Christians, do you not sensibly perceive, that when your hearts are seriously fixed on heaven, you presently become wiser than before? Are not your understandings more solid, and your thoughts more sober? Have you not truer apprehensions of things than you had? For my own part, if ever I be wise, it is when I have been much above, and seriously studied the life to come. Methinks I find my understanding after such contemplations, as much to differ from what it was before, as I before differed from a fool or idiot. When my understanding is weakened, and befooled with common employment, and with conversing long with the vanities below, methinks a few sober thoughts of my Father's house, and the blessed provision of his family in heaven, doth make me, with the prodigal, to come to myself again. Surely, when a Christian withdraws himself

from his earthly thoughts, and begins to converse with God in heaven, he is as Nebuchadnezzar, taken from the beasts of the field to the throne, and his understanding returneth to him again. Oh, when a Christian hath had but a glimpse of eternity, and then looks down on the world again, how doth he befool himself for his sin; for neglects of Christ; for his fleshly pleasures; for his earthly cares! How doth he say to his laughter, 'Thou art mad!' and to his vain mirth, 'What dost thou?' How could he even tear his very flesh, and take revenge on himself for his folly! How verily doth he think there is no man in Bedlam so truly mad as wilful sinners and lazy betrayers of their own souls, and unworthy slights of Christ and glory!

This is it that makes a dying man to be usually wiser than other men are, because he looks on eternity as near, and knowing he must very shortly be there, he hath more deep and heart-piercing thoughts of it than ever he could have in health and prosperity. Therefore it is that the most deluded sinners that were cheated with the world, and bewitched with sin, do then most ordinarily come to themselves, so far as to have a righter judgment than they had; and that many of the most bitter enemies of the saints would give a world to be such themselves, and would fain die in the condition of those whom they hated; even as wicked Balaam, when his eyes are opened to see the perpetual blessedness of the saints, will cry out, "Oh! that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my last end might be like his." As witches when they are taken, and in prison, or at the gallows, have no power left them to bewitch any more, so we see commonly the most ungodly men, when they see they must die, and go to another world, their judgments are so changed, and their speech so changed, as if they were not the same men, as if they were come to their wits again, and sin and Satan had power to bewitch them no more. Yet let the same men recover, and lose their apprehension of the life to come, and how quickly do they lose their understandings with it! In a word, those that were befooled with the world and the flesh, are far wiser when they come to die; and those that were wise before, are now wise indeed. If you would take a man's judgment about sin, or grace, or Christ, or heaven, go to a dying man, and ask him which you were

best to choose? Ask him whether you were best be drunk or no; or be lustful, or proud, or revengeful, or no? Ask him whether you were best pray, and instruct your families, or no; or to sanctify the Lord's-day, or no? though some to the death may be desperately hardened, yet, for the most part, I had rather take a man's judgment then, about these things, than at any other time. For my own part, if my judgment be ever solid, it is when I have the most serious apprehensions of the life to come; nay, the sober mention of death sometimes will a little compose the most distracted understanding. Sirs, do you not think, except men are stark devils, but that it would be a harder matter to entice a man to sin when he lies a dying, than it was before? If the devil, or his instruments, should then tell him of a cup of sack, of merry company, of a stage-play, or morris-dance, do you think he would then be so taken with the motion? If he should then tell him of riches, or honours, or show him a pair of cards, or dice, or a whore, would the temptation, think you, be as strong as before? Would he not answer, Alas! what is all this to me, who must presently appear before God, and give account of all my life, and straightways be in another world! Why, Christian, if the apprehension of the nearness of eternity will work such strange effects upon the ungodly, and make them wiser than to be deceived so easily as they were wont to be in time of health, oh! then, what rare effects would it work with thee, and make thee scorn the baits of sin, if thou couldst always dwell in the views of God, and in lively thoughts of thine everlasting state! Surely, a believer, if he improve his faith, may ordinarily have truer and more quickening apprehensions of the life to come, in the time of his health, than an unbeliever hath at the hour of his death.

Thirdly, Furthermore, a heavenly mind is exceedingly fortified against temptations, because the affections are so thoroughly prepossessed with the high delights of another world. Whether Satan do not usually by the sensitive appetite prevail with the will, without any further prevailing with the reason, than merely to suspend it, I will not now dispute; but, doubtless, when the soul is not affected with good, though the understanding do never so clearly apprehend

the truth, it is easy for Satan to entice that soul. Mere speculations, be they never so true, which sink not into the affections, are poor preservatives against temptations. He that loves most, and not only he that knows most, will easiest resist the motions of sin. There is in a Christian a kind of spiritual taste whereby he knows these things, besides his mere discursive reasoning power: the will doth as sweetly relish goodness, as the understanding doth truth, and here lies much of a Christian's strength. If you should dispute with a simple man, and labour to persuade him that sugar is not sweet, or that wormwood is not bitter, perhaps you might by sophistry over-argue his mere reason, but yet you could not persuade him against his sense; whereas, a man that hath lost his taste, is easier deceived for all his reason. So is it here; when thou hast had a fresh delightful taste of heaven, thou wilt not be so easily persuaded from it; you cannot persuade a very child to part with his apple while the taste of its sweetness is yet in his mouth. O that you would be persuaded to try this course, to be much in feeding on the hidden manna, and to be frequently tasting the delights of heaven. It is true, it is a great way off from our sense, but faith can reach as far as that. How would this raise thy resolutions, and make thee laugh at the fooleries of the world, and scorn to be cheated with such childish toys! Reader, I pray thee tell me in good sadness, dost thou think, if the devil had set upon Peter in the mount, when he saw Christ in his transfiguration, and Moses and Elias talking with him, would he so easily have been drawn to deny his Lord? What! with all that glory in his eye? No, the devil took a greater advantage, when he had him in the high priest's hall, in the midst of danger and evil company, when he had forgotten the sight of the mount, and then he prevails; so if he should set upon a believing soul, when he is taken up in the mount with Christ, what would such a soul say? 'Get thee behind me, Satan; wouldst thou persuade me from hence with trifling pleasures, and steal my heart from this my rest; wouldst thou have me sell these joys for nothing? Is there any honour or delight like this; or can that be profit which loseth me this?' Some such answer would the soul return. But, alas! Satan stays till we are come down, and the taste of heaven is out of our mouths, and the glory we saw is even forgotten, and then he

easily deceives our hearts. What! if the devil had set upon Paul, when he was in the third heaven, and seeing those unutterable things, could he then, do you think, have persuaded his heart to the pleasures, or profits, or honours of the world? If his prick in the flesh, which he after received, were not affliction, but temptation, surely it prevailed not, but sent him to heaven again for preserving grace. Though the Israelites below may be enticed to idolatry, and from eating and drinking to rise up to play, yet Moses in the mount with God will not do so; and, if they had been where he was, and had but seen what he there saw, perhaps they would not so easily have sinned. If he give a man aloes after honey, or some loathsome thing when he hath been feeding on junkets, will he not soon perceive, and spit it out? Oh, if we could keep the taste of our soul continually delighted with the sweets above, with what disdain should we spit out the baits of sin!

Fourthly, Besides, whilst the heart is set on heaven, a man is under God's protection; and therefore, if Satan then assault him, God is more engaged for his defence, and will doubtless stand by us, and say, 'My grace is sufficient for thee:' when a man is in the way of God's blessing, he is in the less danger of sin's enticings.

So that now, upon all this, let me entreat thee, christian reader, if thou be a man that is haunted with temptation, (as doubtless thou art, if thou be a man,) if thou perceive thy danger, and wouldst fain escape it, O use much this powerful remedy; keep close with God by a heavenly mind; learn this art of diversion; and when the temptation comes, go straight to heaven, and turn thy thoughts to higher things; thou shalt find this a surer help than any other resisting whatsoever: as men will do with scolding women, let them alone and follow their business, as if they heard not what they said; and this will sooner put them to silence, than if they answered them word for word; so do by Satan's temptations; it may be he can over-talk you, and over-wit you in dispute, but let him alone, and study not his temptations, but follow your business above with Christ, and keep your thoughts to their heavenly employment, and you sooner will this way vanquish

the temptation, than if you argued or talked it out with the tempter; not but that sometimes it is most convenient to over-reason him; but in ordinary temptations, you shall find it far better to follow this your work, and neglect the allurements, and say, as Gryneus (out of Chrysost.) when he sent back Pistorius's letters, not so much as opening the seal, "Inhonestum est honestam matronam cum meretrice litigare:" It is an unseemly thing for an honest matron to be scolding with a whore; so it is a dishonest thing for a son of God, in apparent cases, to stand wrangling with the devil, and to be so far at his beck as to dispute with him at his pleasure, even as oft as he will be pleased to tempt us. Christian, if thou remember that of Solomon, (Prov. 15:24,) thou hast the sum of what I intend, "The way of life is above to the wise, to avoid the path of hell beneath;" and withal remember Noah's example, "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation;" (Gen. 6:9;) and no wonder, for Noah "walked with God." (Gen. 40:40.) So I may say to thee, even as God to Abraham, "Walk before God, and thou wilt be upright." (Gen. 17:1.)

Sect. VII. 5. Consider, The diligent keeping of your hearts on heaven, will preserve the vigour of all your graces, and put life into all your duties. It is the heavenly Christian, that is, the lively Christian. It is our strangeness to heaven that makes us so dull; it is the end that quickens to all the means: and the more frequently and clearly this end is beheld, the more vigorous will all our motion be. How doth it make men unweariedly labour, and fearlessly venture, when they do but think of the gainful prize! How will the soldier hazard his life, and the mariner pass through storms and waves; how cheerfully do they compass sea and land! And no difficulty can keep them back, when they think of an uncertain, perishing treasure. Oh, what life then would it put into a Christian's endeavours, if he would frequently forethink of his everlasting treasure! We run so slowly, and strive so lazily, because we so little mind the prize. When a Christian hath been tasting the hidden manna, and drinking of the streams of the paradise of God, what life doth this ambrosia and nectar put into him! How fervent will his spirit be in prayer, when he considers that he prays for no less than heaven! If Enoch, Elias, or

any of the saints who are now in heaven, and have been partakers of the vision of the living God, should be sent down to the earth again to live on the terms as we now do, would they not strive hard, and pray earnestly, rather than lose that blessed rest? No wonder, for they would know what it is they pray for. It is true, we cannot know it here so thoroughly as they, yet if we would but get as high as we can, and study but that which may now be known, it would strangely alter both our spirits and our duties. Observe but the man who is much in heaven, and you shall see he is not like other Christians. There is somewhat of that which he hath seen above, appeareth in all his duty and conversation; nay, take but the same man immediately when he is returned from these views of bliss, and you shall easily perceive that he excels himself, as if he were not, indeed, as before. If he be a preacher, how heavenly are his sermons; what clear descriptions; what high expressions; what savoury passages, hath he of that rest! If he be a private Christian, what heavenly conference; what heavenly prayers; what a heavenly carriage hath he! May you not even hear in a preacher's sermons, or in the private, duties of another, when they have been most above? When Moses had been with God in the mount, he had derived so much glory from God that made his face to shine, that the people could not behold him. Beloved friends, if you but set upon this employment, even so would it be with you. Men would see the face of your conversation shine, and say, 'Surely, he hath, been with God.' As the body is apt to be changed into the temper of the air it breathes in, and the food it lives on, so will your spirits receive an alteration according to the objects which they are exercised about. If your thoughts do feed on Christ and heaven, you will be heavenly; if they feed on earth, you will be earthly. It is true, a heavenly nature goes before this heavenly employment; but yet the work will make it more heavenly. There must be life before we can feed; but our life is continued and increased by feeding: therefore, reader, let me here inform thee, that if thou lie complaining of deadness and dulness, that thou canst not love Christ, nor rejoice in his love; that thou hast no life in prayer, nor any other duty, and yet never tried this quickening course, or at least art careless and inconstant in it. Why, thou art the cause of thy own complaints; thou

deadeſt and dulleſt thine own heart; thou denieſt thyſelf that life which thou talkeſt of. Is not thy "life hid with Chriſt in God?" (Col. 3:3.) Whither muſt thou go but to Chriſt for it? and whither is that but to heaven, where he is? Thou wilt not come to Chriſt, that thou mayeſt have Chriſt. (John 5:42.) If thou wouldeſt have light and heat, why art thou then no more in the ſunſhine? If thou wouldeſt have more of that grace which flows from Chriſt, why art thou no more with Chriſt for it? Thy ſtrength is in heaven, and thy life in heaven, and there thou muſt daily fetch it if thou wilt have it. For want of this recourſe to heaven, thy ſoul is as a candle that is not lighted, and thy duties as a ſacrifice which hath no fire. Fetch one coal daily from this altar, and ſee if thy offering will not burn. Light thy candle at this flame, and feed it daily with oil from hence, and ſee if it will not gloriouſly ſhine; keep cloſe to this reviving fire, and ſee if thy affections will not be warm. Thou bewaiſeſt thy want of love to God, and well thou mayeſt, for it is a heinous crime, a killing ſin; why, lift up thy eye of faith to heaven, behold his beauty, contemplate his excellences, and ſee whether his amiableneſs will not fire thy affections, and his perfect goodneſs raviſh thy heart. As the eye doth incenſe the ſenſual affections by its over-much gazing on alluring objects, ſo doth the eye of our faith in meditation inflame our affections towards our Lord, by the frequent gazing on that higheſt beauty. Whoever thou art, that art a ſtranger to this employment, be thy parts and profeſſion ever ſo great, let me tell thee, thou ſpendeſt thy life but in trifling or idleneſs; thou ſeemeſt to live, but thou art dead. I may ſay of thee, as Seneca of idle Vacia, "Scis latere, vivere neſeis," Thou knoweſt how to lurk in idleneſs, but how to live thou knoweſt not; and as the ſame Seneca would ſay, when he paſſed by that ſluggard's dwelling, "Ibi ſitus eſt Vacia;" ſo it may be ſaid of thee, There lies ſuch an one, but not there lives ſuch an one; for thou ſpendeſt thy days liker to the dead than the living. One of Draco's laws to the Athenians was, that he who was convict of idleneſs ſhould be put to death. Thou doſt execute this on thy own ſoul, whiſt by thy idleneſs thou deſtroyeſt its livelineſs.

Thou mayst many other ways exercise thy parts, but this is the way to exercise thy graces. They all come from God as their fountain, and lead to God as their ultimate end; and are exercised on God as their chiefest object, so that God is their all in all. From heaven they come, and heavenly their nature is, and to heaven they will direct and move thee. And as exercise maintaineth appetite, strength, and liveliness, to the body, so doth it also to the soul. "Use limbs, and have limbs," is the known proverb; and use grace and spiritual life in these heavenly exercises, and you shall find it quickly cause their increase. The exercise of your mere abilities of speech will not much advantage your graces, but the exercise of these heavenly soul-exalting gifts will inconceivably help to the growth of both. For as the moon is then most full and glorious when it doth most directly face the sun, so will your souls be both in gifts and graces when you do most nearly view the face of God. This will feed your tongue with matter, and make you abound and overflow, both in preaching, praying, and conferring: besides, the fire which you fetch from heaven for your sacrifices, is no false or strange fire, as your liveliness will be much more, so will it be also more sincere. A man may have a great deal of fervour in affections and duties, and all prove but common and unsound when it is raised upon common grounds and motives: your zeal will partake of the nature of those things by which it is acted; the zeal therefore which is kindled by your meditations on heaven, is most likely to prove a heavenly zeal; and the liveliness of the spirit, which you fetch from the face of God, must needs be the divinest, sincerest life. Some men's fervency is drawn only from their books, and some from the pricks of some stinging affliction, and some from the mouth of a moving minister, and some from the encouragement of an attentive auditory; but he that knows this way to heaven, and derives it daily from the pure fountain, shall have his soul revived with the water of life, and enjoy that quickening which is the saint's peculiar. By this faith thou mayest offer Abel's sacrifice, more excellent than that of common men, and by it obtain witness that thou art righteous, God testifying of thy gifts that they are sincere, (Heb. 11:4,) when others are ready, as Baal's priests, to beat themselves, and cut their flesh, because their sacrifice will not burn;

then if thou canst get but the spirit of Elias, and in the chariot of contemplation canst soar aloft, till thou approachest near to the quickening Spirit, thy soul and sacrifice will gloriously flame, though the flesh and the world should cast upon them the water of all their opposing enmity. Say not now, 'How shall we get so high, or how can mortals ascend to heaven?' For faith hath wings, and meditation is its chariot; its office is to make absent things as present. Do you not see how a little piece of glass, if it do but rightly face the sun, will so contract its beams and heat as to set on fire that which is behind it, which without it would have received but little warmth? Why, thy faith is as the burning-glass to thy sacrifice, and meditation sets it to face the sun; only take it not away too soon, but hold it there awhile, and thy soul will feel the happy effect. The slanderous Jews did raise a foolish tale of Christ, that he got into the holy of holies, and thence stole the true name of God; and lest he should lose it, cut a hole in his thigh, and sewed it therein, and by virtue of this he raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, cast out devils, and performed all his miracles. Surely, if we can get into the holy of holies, and bring thence the name and image of God, and get it closed up in our hearts, this would enable us to work wonders; every duty we performed would be a wonder, and they that heard would be ready to say, 'Never man spake as this man speaketh.' The Spirit would possess us, as those flaming tongues, and make us every one to speak, not in the variety of the confounded languages, but in the primitive, pure language of Canaan, the wonderful works of God. We should then be in every duty, whether prayer, exhortation, or brotherly reproof, as Paul was at Athens, his spirit (ὠραωξὺνετο) was stirred within him, (Acts 17:16,) and should be ready to say, as Jeremy did, "His word was in my heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." (Jer. 20:9.)

Christian reader, art thou not thinking when thou seest a lively believer, and hearest his soul-melting prayers, and soul-ravishing discourse, Oh, how happy a man is this! Oh, that my soul were in this blessed plight! Why, I here direct and advise thee from God: try this fore-mentioned course, and set thy soul conscionably to this work,

and thou shalt be in as good a case. Wash thee frequently in this Jordan, and thy leprous, dead soul will revive, and thou shalt know that there is a God in Israel, and that thou mayst live a vigorous and joyous life, if thou wilfully cast not by this duty, and so neglect thine own mercies. If thou be not a lazy, reserved hypocrite, but most truly value this strong and active frame of spirit, show it then by thy present attempting this heavenly exercise. Say not now, but thou hast heard the way to obtain this life into thy soul, and into thy duties. If thou wilt yet neglect it, blame thyself. But, alas! the multitude of professors come to a minister just as Naaman came to Elias; they ask us, 'How shall I know I am a child of God? How shall I overcome a hard heart, and get such strength, and life of grace?' But they expect that some easy means should do it; and think we should cure them with the very answer to their question, and teach them a way to be quickly well; but when they hear of a daily trading in heaven, and the constant meditations on the joys above; this is a greater task than they expected, and they turn their backs as Naaman to Elias, or the young man on Christ, and few of the most conscionable will set upon the duty. Will not preaching, and praying, and conference, serve, say they, without this dwelling still in heaven? Just as country people come to physicians; when they have opened their case, and made their moan, they look he should cure them in a day or two, or with the use of some cheap and easy simple; but when they hear of a tedious method of physic, and of costly compositions, and bitter potions, they will hazard their lives with some sottish empiric, who tells them an easier and cheaper way; yea, or venture on death itself before they will obey such difficult counsel. Too many that we hope well of, I fear, will take this course here. If we could give them life, as God did, with a word, or could heal their souls, as charmers do their bodies, with easy stroking, and a few good words, then they would readily hear and obey. I entreat thee, reader, beware of this folly: fall to the work; the comfort of spiritual health will countervail all the trouble of the duty. It is but the flesh that repines and gainsays, which thou knowest was never a friend to thy soul. If God had set thee on some grievous work, shouldst thou not have done it for the

life of thy soul? How much more when he doth but invite thee heavenward to himself!

Sect. VIII. 6. Consider, The frequent believing views of glory are the most precious cordial in all afflictions. First, To sustain our spirits, and make our sufferings far more easy. Secondly, To stay us from repining, and make us bear with patience and joy: and, Thirdly, To strengthen our resolutions, that we forsake not Christ for fear of trouble. Our very beast will carry us more cheerfully in travel, when he is coming homeward, where he expecteth rest. A man will more quietly endure the lancing of his sores, the cutting out the stone, when he thinks on the ease that will afterwards follow. What, then, will not a believer endure, when he thinks of the rest to which it tendeth? What, if the way be never so rough, can it be tedious if it lead to heaven! Oh! sweet sickness, sweet reproaches, imprisonments, or death, which is accompanied with these tastes of our future rest. This doth keep the suffering from the soul, so that it can work upon no more but our fleshly outside, even as alexipharmical medicines preserve the heart, that the contagion reach not the vital spirits. Surely, our sufferings trouble not the mind, according to the degrees of bodily pain, but as the soul is more or less fortified with this preserving antidote. Believe it, reader, thou wilt have a doleful sickness, thou wilt suffer heavily, thou wilt die most sadly, if thou have not at hand the foretastes of rest. For my own part, if thou regard the experience of one that hath often tried, had it not been for that little (alas! too little) taste which I had of rest, my sufferings would have been grievous, and death more terrible. I may say, as David, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the laud of the living." (Psalm 27:13.) And, as the same David, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me: no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." (Psalm 142:4, 5.) I may say of the promise of this rest, as David said of God's law, "Unless this had been my delight, I had perished in mine affliction." (Psalm 119:92.) "One thing," saith he, "I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek

after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple: for in time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me; he shall set me upon a rock. And then shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore shall I offer in that his tabernacle sacrifices of joy, and sing, yea, sing praises unto the Lord." (Psalm 27:4–6.) Therefore as thou wilt then be ready, with David, to pray, "Be not far from me, for trouble is near." (Psalm 22:11.) So let it be thy own chiefest care not to be far from God and heaven, when trouble is near, and thou wilt then find him to be unto thee a very present help in trouble. (Psal. 44.) Then, though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither should fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields should yield no meat, the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there were no herd in the stalls; yet thou mightest rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of thy salvation. (Hab. 3:17, 18.) All sufferings are nothing to us, so far as we have the foresight of this salvation, No bolts, nor bars, nor distance of place, can shut out these supporting joys, because they cannot confine our faith and thoughts, although they may confine our flesh. Christ and faith are both spiritual, and therefore prisons and banishments cannot hinder their intercourse. Even when persecution and fear hath shut the doors, Christ can come in, and stand in the midst, and say to his disciples, "Peace be unto you." And Paul and Silas can be in heaven, even when they are locked up in the inner prison, and their bodies scourged, and their feet in the stocks. No wonder if there be more mirth in their stocks than on Herod's throne, for there was more of Christ and heaven. The martyrs find more rest in the flames than their persecutors can in their pomp and tyranny, because they foresee the flames they escape, and the rest which that fiery chariot is conveying them to. It is not the place that gives the rest, but the presence and beholding of Christ in it. If the Son of God will walk with us in it, we may walk safely in the midst of those flames which shall devour those that cast us in. (Dan. 3.) Why, then, Christian, keep thy soul above with Christ: be as little as may be out of his company, and then all conditions will be alike unto thee. For that is the best estate to thee,

in which thou possessest most of him. The moral arguments of a heathen philosopher may make the burden somewhat lighter, but nothing can make us soundly joy in tribulation, except we can fetch our joy from heaven. How came Abraham to leave his country, and follow God he knew not whither? Why, because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:8–10.) What made Moses choose affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt? Why, because he had respect to the recompense of reward. (Heb. 11:24–26.) What made him to forsake Egypt, and not to fear the wrath of the king? Why, he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (Ver. 27.) How did they quench the violence of fire; and out of weakness were made strong? Why would they not accept deliverance when they were tortured? Why, they had their eye on a better resurrection which they might obtain. Yea, it is most evident that our Lord himself did fetch his encouragement to sufferings from the foresight of his glory; for, to this end, he both died and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living. (Rom. 14:9.) "Even Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2.) Who can wonder that pain and sorrow, poverty and sickness, should be exceeding grievous to that man who cannot reach to see the end? Or that death should be the king of terrors to him who cannot see the life beyond it? He that looks not on the end of his sufferings, as well as on the suffering itself, he needs must loose the whole consolation: and if he see not the quiet fruit of righteousness which it afterward yieldeth, it cannot to him be joyous, but grievous. (Heb. 12:11.) This is the noble advantage of faith; it can look on the means and end together. This, also, is the reason why we oft pity ourselves more than God doth pity us, though we love not ourselves so much as he doth; and why we would have the cup to pass from us, when he will make us drink it up. We pity ourselves with an ignorant pity, and would be saved from the cross, which is the way to save us. God sees our glory as soon as our suffering, and sees our suffering as it

conducteth to our glory. He sees our cross and our crown at once, and therefore pitieth us the less, and will not let us have our wills. Sirs, believe it, this is the great reason of our mistakes, impatience, and censuring of God, of our sadness of spirit at sickness and at death, because we gaze on the evil itself, but fix not our thoughts on what is beyond it. We look only on the blood, and ruin, and danger; but God sees these, with all the benefits to souls, bodies, church, state, and posterity, all with one single view. We see the ark taken by the Philistines, but we see not their god falling before it, and themselves returning it home with gifts. They that saw Christ only on the cross, or in the grave, do shake their heads, and think him lost: but God saw him dying, buried, rising, glorified, and all this with one view. Surely, faith will imitate God in this, so far as it hath the glass of a promise to help it. He that sees Joseph only in the pit, or in the prison, will more lament his case, than he that sees his dignity beyond it. Could old Jacob have seen so far, it might have saved him a great deal of sorrow. He that sees no more than the burying of the corn under ground, or the threshing, the winnowing, and the grinding of it, will take both it and the labour for lost; but he that foresees its springing and increase, and its making bread for the life of man, will think otherwise. This is our mistake: we see God burying us under ground, but we foresee not the spring when we shall all revive: we feel him threshing and winnowing and grinding us, but we see not when we shall be served to our Master's table. If we should but clearly see heaven as the end of all God's dealings with us, surely none of his dealings could be so grievous. Think of this, I entreat thee, reader. If thou canst but learn this way to heaven, and get thy soul acquainted there, thou needest not be unfurnished of the choicest cordials to revive thy spirits in every affliction: thou knowest where to have them whenever thou wantest. Thou mayest have arguments at hand, to answer all that the devil or flesh can say to thy discomfort. Oh! if God would once raise us to this life, we should find that though heaven and sin are at a great distance, yet heaven and a prison, or remotest banishment; heaven and the belly of a whale in the sea; heaven and a den of lions; a consuming sickness, or invading death; are at no such distance. But as Abraham so far off saw Christ's

day, and rejoiced, so we, in our most forlorn estate, might see that day when Christ shall give us rest, and therein rejoice. I beseech thee, Christian, for the honour of the Gospel, and for the comfort of thy soul, that thou be not to learn this heavenly art, when in the greatest extremity thou hast most need to use it. I know thou expectest suffering days; at least, thou lookest to be sick and die. Thou wilt then have exceeding need of consolation. Why, whence dost thou think to draw thy comforts? If thou broach every other vessel, none will come. It is only heaven that can afford thee store. The place is far off: the well is deep; and if, then, thou have not wherewith to draw, nor got thy soul acquainted with the place, thou wilt find thyself at a fearful loss. It is not an easy nor a common thing, even with the best sort of men, to die with joy. As ever thou wouldst shut up thy days in peace, and close thy dying eyes with comfort, die daily. Live now above, be much with Christ, and thy own soul and the saints about thee shall bless the day that ever thou tookest this counsel. When God shall call thee to a sick bed, and a grave, thou wilt perceive him saying to thee, "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." (Isa. 26:20.) It is he that, with Stephen, doth see heaven opened, and Christ sitting at the right-hand of God, who will comfortably bear the storm of stones. (Acts 7:56.) Thou knowest not yet what trials thou mayest be called to. The clouds begin to rise again, and the times to threaten us with fearful darkness: few ages so prosperous to the church, but that still we must be saved so as by fire, (1 Cor. 2:15,) and go to heaven by the old road. Men that would fall if the storm should shake them, do frequently meet with that which tries them. Why, what wilt thou do if this should be thy case? Art thou fitted to suffer imprisonment, or banishment; to bear the loss of goods and life? How is it possible thou shouldst do all this, and do it cordially and cheerfully, except thou hast a taste of some greater good, which thou lookest to gain by losing these? Will the merchant throw his goods overboard till he sees he must otherwise lose his life? And wilt thou cast away all thou hast before thou hast felt the sweetness of that rest, which else thou must lose by saving these? Nay, and it is not a speculative knowledge,

which thou hast got only by reading or hearing of heaven, which will make thee part with all to get it. As a man that only hears of the sweetness of pleasant food, or reads of the melodious sounds of music, this doth not much excite his desires; but when he hath tried the one by his taste, and the other by his ear, then he will more lay out to get them: so if thou shouldst know only by the hearing of the ear what is the glory of the inheritance of the saints, this would not bring thee through sufferings and death; but if thou take this trying, tasting course, by daily exercising thy soul above, then nothing will stand in thy way, but thou wouldst on till thou art there, though through fire and water. What state more terrible than that of an apostate, when God hath told us, if any man draw back, his soul shall have no pleasure in him; (Heb. 10:38;) because they take not their pleasure in God, and fill not themselves with the delights of his ways, and of his heavenly paths, which drop fatness: (Psal. 65:11:) therefore do they prove backsliders in heart, and are filled with the bitterness of their own ways? (Prov. 14:14.)

Nay, if they should not be brought to trial, and so not actually deny Christ, yet they are still interpretatively such, because they are such in disposition, and would be such in action, if they were put to it. I assure thee, reader, for my part, I cannot see how thou wilt be able to hold out to the end, if thou keep not thine eye upon the recompense of reward, and use not frequently to taste this cordially; for the less thy diligence is in this, the more doubtful must thy perseverance needs be; for the joy of the Lord is thy strength, and that joy must be fetched from the place of thy joy: and if thou walk without thy strength, how long dost thou think thou art like to endure?

Sect. IX. 7. Consider, It is he that hath his conversation in heaven, who is the profitable Christian to all about him: with him yon may take sweet counsel, and go up to the celestial house of God. When a man is in a strange country, far from home, how glad is he of the company of one of his own nation! How delightful is it to them to talk of their country, of their acquaintance, and the affairs of their home; why, with a heavenly Christian thou mayest have such

discourse: for he hath been there in the Spirit, and can tell thee of the glory and rest above. What pleasant discourse was it to Joseph to talk with his brethren in a strange land, and to inquire of his father, and his brother Benjamin? Is it not so to a Christian to talk with his brethren that have been above, and inquire after his Father, and Christ his Lord? When a worldling will talk of nothing but the world, and a politician of nothing but the affairs of the state, and a mere scholar of human learning, and a common professor of duties, and of Christians; the heavenly man will be speaking of heaven, and the strange glory which his faith hath seen, and our speedy and blessed meeting there. I confess, to discourse with able men, of clear understandings and piercing wits, about the controverted difficulties in religion, yea, about some criticisms in languages and sciences, is both pleasant and profitable; but nothing to this heavenly discourse of a believer. Oh, how refreshing and savoury are his expressions! How his words do pierce and melt the heart! How they transform the hearers into other men, that they think they are in heaven all the while? How cloth his doctrine drop as the rain, and his speech distil as the gentle dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb; and as the showers upon the grass; while his tongue is expressing the name of the Lord, and ascribing greatness to his God! (Deut. 32:1–3.) Is not his feeling, sweet discourse of heaven, even like that box of precious ointment, which being opened to pour on the head of Christ, doth fill the house with the pleasure of its perfume? All that are near may be refreshed by it. His words are like the precious ointment on Aaron's head, that ran down upon his beard, and the skirts of his garments, even like the dew of Hermon; and as the dew that descendeth from the celestial Mount Zion, where the Lord hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. (Psal. 133:3.) This is the man who is as Job; "When the candle of God did shine upon his head, and when by his light he walked through darkness: when the secret of God was upon his tabernacle, and when the Almighty was yet with him: then the ear that heard him, did bless him; and the eye that saw him, gave witness to him." (Job 29:3–5, 11.) Happy the people that have a heavenly minister; happy the children and servants that have a heavenly father or master; happy the man that hath heavenly

associates, if they have but hearts to know their happiness! This is the companion who will watch over thy ways; who will strengthen thee when thou art weak; who will cheer thee when thou art drooping, and comfort thee with the same comforts wherewith he hath been so often comforted himself. (2 Cor. 1:4.) This is he that will be blowing at the spark of thy spiritual life, and always drawing thy soul to God, and will be saying to thee, as the Samaritan woman, 'Come and see one that hath told me all that ever I did, one that hath ravished my heart with his beauty; one that hath loved our souls to the death.' Is not this the Christ? Is not the knowledge of God and him eternal life? Is not it the glory of the saints to see his glory? If thou come to this man's house, and sit at his table, he will feast thy soul with the dainties of heaven: thou shalt meet with a better than Plato's philosophical feast, even a taste of that feast of fat things; "of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined;" (Isa. 25:6;) that thy soul may be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and thou mayest praise the Lord with joyful lips. (Psal. 63:5.) If thou travel with this man on the way, he will be directing and quickening thee in thy journey to heaven: if thou be buying or selling, or trading with him in the world, he will be counselling thee to lay out for the inestimable treasure. If thou wrong him, he can pardon thee, remembering that Christ hath not only pardoned great offences to him, but will also give him this invaluable portion. If thou be angry, he is meek, considering the meekness of his heavenly pattern; or if he fall out with thee, he is soon reconciled, when he remembereth that in heaven you must be everlasting friends. This is the Christian of the right stamp: this is the servant that is like his Lord; these be the innocent that save the island, and all about them are the better where they dwell. O sirs, I fear the men I have described are very rare, even among the religious; but were it not for our own shameful negligence, such men we might all be. What families; what towns; what commonwealths; what churches, should we have, if they were but composed of such men! but that is more desirable than hopeful, till we come to that land which hath no other inhabitants, save what are incomparably beyond this. Alas! how empty are the speeches, and how unprofitable the society, of all other

sorts of Christians in comparison of these! A man might perceive by his divine song, and high expression, (Deut. 32 and 33.) that Moses had been often with God, and that God showed him part of his glory. Who could have composed such spiritual psalms, and poured out praises as David did, but a man after God's own heart; and a man that was near the heart of God, and no doubt had God also near his heart? Who could have preached such spiritual doctrine, and dived into the precious mysteries of salvation, as Paul did, but one who had been called with a light from heaven, and had been wrapped up into the third heavens, in the Spirit, and there had seen the unutterable things? If a man should come down from heaven amongst us, who had lived in the possession of that blessed state, how would men be desirous to see or hear him! and all the country, far and near, would leave their business and crowd about him: happy would he think himself that could get a sight of him; how would men long to hear what reports he would make of the other world; and what he had seen; and what the blessed there enjoy! Would they not think this man the best companion, and his discourse to be of all most profitable? Why, sirs, every true believing saint shall be there in person, and is frequently there in spirit, and hath seen it also in the glass of the Gospel. Why then do you value their company no more; and why do you inquire no more of them; and why do you relish their discourse no better? Well, for my part, I had rather have the fellowship of a heavenly-minded Christian, than of the most learned disputers, or princely commanders.

Sect. X. 8. Consider, There is no man so highly honoureth God, as he who hath his conversation in heaven; and without this we deeply dishonour him. Is it not a disgrace to the father, when the children do feed on husks, and are clothed in rags, and accompany with none but rogues and beggars? Is it not so to our Father, when we who call ourselves his children, shall feed on earth, and the garb of our souls be but like that of the naked world? And when our hearts shall make this clay and dust their more familiar and frequent company, who should always stand in our Father's presence, and be taken up in his own attendance? Surely, it beseems not the spouse of Christ, to live

among his scullions and slaves, when they may have daily admittance into his presence-chamber; he holds forth the sceptre, if they will but enter. Surely we live below the rates of the Gospel, and not as becometh the children of a king, even of the great King of all the world. We live not according to the height of our hopes, nor according to the plenty that is in the promises, nor according to the provision of our Father's house, and the great preparations made for his saints. It is well we have a Father of tender bowels, who will own his children, even in dirt and rags: it is well the foundation of God stands sure, and that the Lord knoweth who are his: or else he would hardly take us for his own, so far do we live below the honour of saints: if he did not first challenge his interest in us, neither ourselves nor others could know us to be his people. But, oh! when a Christian can live above, and rejoice his soul in the things that are unseen; how doth God take himself to be honoured by such a one! The Lord may say, 'Why, this man believes me: I see he can trust me, and take my word: he rejoiceth in my promises, before he hath possession: he can be glad and thankful for that which his bodily eyes did never see: this man's rejoicing is not in the flesh: I see he loves me, because he minds me: his heart is with me, he loves my presence: and he shall surely enjoy it in my kingdom for ever.' "Because thou hast seen," saith Christ to Thomas, "thou hast believed; but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29.) How did God take himself honoured by Caleb and Joshua, when they went into the promised land, and brought back to their brethren a taste of the fruits, and gave it commendation, and encouraged the people! And what a promise and recompense do they receive! (Numb. 14:24, 30.) For those that honour him, he will honour. (1 Sam. 2:30.)

Sect. XI. 9. Consider, If thou make not conscience of this duty of diligent keeping thy heart in heaven, First, Thou disobeyest the flat commands of God: Secondly, Thou lovest the sweetest parts of Scripture: Thirdly, And dost frustrate the most gracious discoveries of God.

God hath not left it as a thing indifferent, and at thy own choice, whether thou wilt do it or not. He hath made it thy duty, as well as the means of thy comfort, that so a double bond might tie thee not to forsake thy own mercies. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above; set your affections on things above, not on things on earth." (Col. 3:1, 2.) The same God that hath forbidden thee to murder, to steal, to commit adultery, incest, or idolatry, hath forbidden thee the neglect of this great duty; and darest thou wilfully disobey him? Why makest thou not conscience of the one as well as of the other? Secondly, Besides, thou lovest the most comfortable passages of the Word. All those most glorious descriptions of heaven, all those discoveries of our future blessedness, all God's revelations of his purposes towards us, and his frequent and precious promises of our rest; what are they all but lost to thee? Are not these the stars in the firmament of the Scripture, and the most golden lines in that book of God? Of all the Bible, methinks thou shouldst not part with one of those promises or predictions; no, not for a world. As heaven is the perfection of all our mercies, so the promises of it in the Gospel, are the very soul of the Gospel. That word, which was sweeter to David than the honey and the honeycomb, and to Jeremy, the joy and rejoicing of his heart, (Jer. 15:16,) the most pleasant part of this thou lovest. Thirdly, Yea, thou dost frustrate the preparations of Christ for thy joy, and makest him to speak in vain. Is a comfortable word from the mouth of God of so great worth, that all the comforts of the world are nothing to it; and dost thou neglect and overlook so many of them? Reader, I entreat thee to ponder it, why God should reveal so much of his counsel, and tell us beforehand of the joys we shall possess, but only that he would have us know it for our joy? If it had not been to make comfortable our present life, and fill us with the delights of our foreknown blessedness, he might have kept his purpose to himself, and never have let us know till we come to enjoy it, nor have revealed it to us till death had discovered it, what he meant to do with us in the world to come; yea, when we had got possession of our rest, he might still have concealed its eternity from us, and then the fears of losing it again, would have bereaved us of much of the sweetness of our joys. But it hath pleased our Father

to open his counsel, and to let us know the very intent of his heart, and to acquaint us with the eternal extent of his love; and all this that our joy may be full, and we might live as the heirs of such a kingdom. And shall we now overlook all, as if he had revealed no such matter? Shall we live in earthly cares and sorrows, as if we knew of no such thing? And rejoice no more in these discoveries, than if the Lord had never written it? If thy prince had sealed thee but a patent of some lordship, how oft wouldst thou be casting thine eye upon it, and make it thy daily delight to study it, till thou shouldst come to possess the dignity itself. And hath God sealed thee a patent of heaven, and dost thou let it lie by thee, as if thou hadst forgot it! O that our hearts were as high as our hopes, and our hopes as high as these infallible promises!

Sect. XII. 10. Consider, It is but equal that our hearts should be on God, when the heart of God is so much on us. If the Lord of glory can stoop so low, as to set his heart on sinful dust, surely one would think we should easily be persuaded to set our hearts on Christ and glory, and to ascend to him in our daily affections, who vouchsafeth to condescend to us! Oh, if God's delight were no more in us, than ours is in him, what should we do; what a case were we in! Christian, dost thou not perceive that the heart of God is set upon thee, and that he is still minding thee with tender love, even when thou forgettest both thyself and him? Dost thou not find him following thee with daily mercies, moving upon thy soul, providing for thy body, preserving both? Doth he not bear thee continually in the arms of love; and promise that all shall work together for thy good; and suit all his dealings to thy greatest advantage, and give his angels charge over thee; and canst thou find in thy heart to cast him by, and be taken up with the joys below, and forget thy Lord, who forgets not thee? Fie upon this unkind ingratitude! Is not this the sin that Isaiah so solemnly doth call both heaven and earth to witness against? "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:2, 3.) If the ox or ass do straggle in the day, they likely come to their home at night, but we will not so much as once a day, by our serious thoughts ascend to

God. When he speaks of his own respects to us, hear what he saith, "when Zion saith, The Lord hath forsaken, my Lord hath forgotten me: Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget: behold! I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." (Isa. 49:14.) But, when he speaks of our thoughts to him, the case is otherwise. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire; yet my people have forgotten me days without number." (Jer. 2:32.) As if he should say, You will not forget the clothes on your backs, you will not forget your braveries and vanities! you will not rise one morning, but you will remember to cover your nakedness. And are these of more worth than your God; or of more concernment than your eternal life; and yet you can forget these day after day? O brethren, give not God cause to expostulate with us, as "Ye are they that have forsaken the Lord, and that forget my holy mountain." (Isa. 65:11.) But rather admire his minding of thee, and let it draw thy mind again to him, and say, "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him; and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him; and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" (Job 7:17, 18.) So let thy soul get up to God, and visit him every morning, and thy heart be towards him every moment.

Sect. XIII. 11. Consider, Should not our interest in heaven, and our relation to it, continually keep our hearts upon it; besides that excellency which is spoken of before. Why, there our Father keeps his court. Do we not call him "Our Father which art in heaven?" Ah! ungracious unworthy children, that can be so taken up in their play below as to be mindless of such a Father? Also, there is Christ our Head, our Husband, our Life; and shall we not look towards him, and send to him, as oft as we can, till we come to see him face to face? If he were, by transubstantiation, in the sacraments, or other ordinances, and that as gloriously as he is in heaven, then there were some reason for our lower thoughts; but when the heavens must receive him till the restitution of all things, let them also receive our hearts with him. There, also, is our mother. For Jerusalem, which is

above, is the mother of us all. (Gal. 4:26.) And there are multitudes of our elder brethren. There are our friends and our ancient acquaintance, whose society in the flesh we so much delighted in, and whose departure hence we so much lamented. And is this no attractive to thy thoughts? If they were within thy reach on earth, thou wouldst go and visit them; and why wilt thou not oftener visit them in spirit, and rejoice beforehand to think of thy meeting them there again? Saith old Bullinger, "Socrates gaudet sibi moriendum esse, propterea quod Homerum, Hesiodum, et alios præstantissimos viros se visurum crederet; quanto magis ego gaudeo, qui certus sum me visurum esse Christum, Servatorem meum, æternum Dei Filium, in assumptâ carne; et præterea tot sanctissimos et eximios Patriarchas," &c. Socrates rejoiced that he should die, because he believed he should see Homer, Hesiod, and other excellent men; how much more do I rejoice, who am sure to see Christ, my Saviour, the eternal Son of God, in his assumed flesh; and, besides, so many holy and excellent men. When Luther desired to die a martyr, and could not obtain it, he comforted himself with these thoughts, and thus did write to them in prison: "Vestra vincula mea sum, vestri carceres et ignes mei sunt, dum confiteor et prædico, vobisque simul compatior et congratulor;" Yet this is my comfort, your bonds are mine, your prisons and fires are mine, while I confess and preach the doctrine for which you suffer, and while I suffer and congratulate with you in your sufferings. Even so should a believer look to heaven, and contemplate the blessed state of the saints, and think with himself, Though I am not yet so happy as to be with you, yet this is my daily comfort, you are my brethren and fellow members in Christ, and therefore your joys are my joys, and your glory, by this near relation, is my glory, especially while I believe in the same Christ, and hold fast the same faith and obedience, by which you were thus dignified; and also, while I rejoice in spirit with you, and in my daily meditations congratulate your happiness. Moreover, our house and home is above, "for we know if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Why do we, then, look no oftener towards it, and groan not earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with

our house, which is from heaven? (2 Cor. 5:1, 2.) Surely, if our home were far meaner, we should yet remember it, because it is our home. You use to say, "Home is home, be it never so poor;" and should such a home then be no more remembered? If you were but banished into a strange land, how frequent thoughts would you have of home; how oft would you think of your old companions! which way ever you went, or what company soever you came in, you would still have your hearts and desires there. You would even dream in the night that you were at home; that you saw your father, or mother, or friends; that you were talking with wife, or children, or neighbours. And why is it not thus with us in respect of heaven? Is not that more truly and properly our home where we must take up our everlasting abode than this, which we are looking every hour, when we are separated from, and shall see it no more; we are strangers, and that is our country. (Heb. 11:14, 15.) We are heirs, and that is our inheritance; even an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for us. (1 Pet. 1:4.) We are here in continual distress and want, and there lies our substance; even that better and more enduring substance. (Heb. 10:34.) We are here fain to be beholden to others, and there lies our own perpetual treasure. (Matt. 6:21.) Yea, the very hope of our souls is there; all our hope of relief from our distresses; all our hope of happiness, when we are here miserable; all this hope is laid up for us in heaven, whereof we hear in the true word of the Gospel. (Col. 1:5.) Why, beloved Christians, have we so much interest, and so seldom thoughts; have we so near relation, and so little affection? are we not ashamed of this? Doth it become us to be delighted in the company of strangers, so as to forget our Father and our Lord, or to be so well pleased with those that hate and grieve us, as to forget our best and dearest friends; or to be so besotted with borrowed trifles, as to forget our own profession and treasure; or to be so taken up with a strange place, as not once a day to look toward home; or to fall in love with tears and wants, as to forget our eternal joy and rest? Christians, I pray you think whether this become us, or whether this be the part of a wise or thankful man? Why, here thou art like to other men, as the heir under age, who differs not from a servant; but there it is that

thou shalt be promoted, and fully estated in all that was promised. Surely, God useth to plead his propriety in us, and from thence to conclude to do us good, even because we are his own people, whom he hath chosen out of all the world; and why then do we not plead our interest in him, and thence fetch arguments to raise up our hearts, even because he is our own God, and because the place is our own possession? Men use in other things to over-love and over-value their own, and too much to mind their own things. Oh, that we would mind our own inheritance, and value it but half as it doth deserve!

Sect. XIV. 12. Lastly, Consider, There is nothing else that is worth the setting our hearts on. If God have them not, who or what shall have them? If thou mind not thy rest, what wilt thou mind? As the disciples said of Christ, Hath any man given him meat to eat, that we know not of? (John 4:32, 33;) so say I to thee. Hast thou found out some other God or heaven, that we know not of; or something that will serve thee instead of rest? Hast thou found on earth an eternal happiness; where is it, and what is it made of: or who was the man that found it out, or who was he that last enjoyed it? Where dwelt he, and what was his name? Or art thou the first that hast found this treasure, and that ever discovered heaven on earth? Ah, wretch! trust not to thy discoveries, boast not of thy gain till experience bid thee boast, or rather take up with the experience of thy forefathers, who are now in the dust, and deprived of all, though sometime they were as lusty and jovial as thou. I would not advise thee to make experiments at so dear rates, as all those do that seek after happiness below, lest, when the substance is lost, thou find too late that thou didst catch but a shadow; lest thou be like those men that will needs search out the philosopher's stone, though none could effect it that went before them; and to buy their experience with the loss of their own estates and time, which they might have had at a cheaper rate, if they would have taken up with the experience of their predecessors. So I would wish thee not to disquiet thyself in looking for that which is not on earth; lest thou learn thy experience with the loss of thy soul, which thou mightest have learned at easier terms, even by the warnings of God in his word, and loss of thousands of souls before

thee. It would pity a man to see that men will not believe God in this, till they have lost their labour, and heaven, and all. Nay, that many Christians, who have taken heaven for their resting place, do lose so many thoughts needlessly on earth, and care not how much they oppress their spirits, which should be kept nimble and free for higher things. As Luther said to Melanethon, when he over-pressed himself with the labours of his ministry, so may I much more say to thee, who oppressest thyself with the cares of the world: "Vellem te adhuc decies plus obrui. Adeo me nihil tui miseret, qui toties monitus, ne onerares te ipsum tot oneribus, et nihil audis, omnia bene monita contemnis. Erit cum sero stultum tuum hunc velum frustra damnabis, quo jam ardes solus omnia portare, quasi ferrum aut saxum sis." "It were no matter if thou wert oppressed ten times more; so little do I pity thee, who, being so often warned that thou shouldst not load thyself with so many burdens, dost no whit regard it, but contemnest all these wholesome warnings. Thou wilt shortly, when it is too late, condemn this thy foolish forwardness, which makes thee so desirous to bear all this, as if thou wert made of iron or stone." Alas! that a Christian should rather delight to have his heart among these thorns and briars, than in the bosom of his crucified, glorified Lord! Surely, if Satan should take thee up to the mountain of temptation, and show thee the kingdoms and glory of the world, he could show thee nothing that is worthy thy thoughts, much less to be preferred before thy rest. Indeed, so far as duty and necessity require it, we must be content to mind the things below; but who is he that contains himself within the compass of those limits? And yet if we bound our cares and thoughts as diligently as ever we can, we shall find the least to be bitter and burdensome; even as the least wasp hath a sting, and the smallest serpent hath his poison. As old Hiltenius said of Rome: "Est proprium Romanæ potestatis ut sit ferrum, et licet digiti minorentur ad parvitatem acus, tamen manent ferrei." "It is proper to the Roman power to be of iron, and though the fingers of it be diminished to the smallness of a needle, yet they are iron still." The like may I say of our earthly cares; it is their property to be hard and troublous, and so they will be when they are at the least. Verily, if we had no higher hopes than what are

on earth, I should take man for a most silly creature, and his work and wages, all his travel and his felicity, to be no better than dreams and vanity, and scarce worth the minding or mentioning; especially to thee, a Christian, should it seem so, whose eyes are opened by the Word and Spirit, to see the emptiness of all these things, and the precious worth of the things above. Oh, then, be not detained by these silly things, but if Satan present them to thee in a temptation, send them away from whence they came, as Pellicanus did send back the silver bowl which the bishop had sent him for a token, with this answer: "Astricti sunt quotquot Tiguri cives et inquilini, bis singulis annis, solemniter jura mento, ne quis eorum ullum munus ab ullo principe accipiat." "All that are citizens and inhabitants of Zurich, are solemnly sworn twice a year not to receive any gift from any prince abroad." Say thou, We the citizens and inhabitants of heaven, are bound by solemn and frequent covenants, not to have our hearts enticed or entangled with any foreign honours or delights, but only with those of their own country. If thy thoughts should, like the laborious bee, go over the world from flower to flower, from creature to creature, they would bring thee no honey or sweetness home, save what they gathered from their relations to eternity.

Object. But you will say, perhaps, Divinity is of larger extent than only to treat of the life to come, or the way thereto; there are many controversies of great difficulty, which therefore require much of our thoughts, and so they must not be all of heaven.

Answ. For the smaller controversies which have vexed our times, and caused the doleful divisions among us, I express my mind as that of Graserus: "Cum in visitatione ægrotorum, et ad emigrationem ex hac vita ad beatam præparationem deprehendisset, controversias illas theologicas, quæ scientiam quidem infantem pariunt, conscientias vero fluctuantes non sedant, quæque hodie magna animorum contentione agitantur, et magnos tumultus in rebus publicis excitant, nullum prorsus usum habere, quinimo conscientias simpliciorum non aliter ac olim in papatu humana figmenta intricare; cœpit ab eis toto animo abhorrere, et in publicis concionibus tantum ea proponere,

quæ ad fidem salvificam in Christum accedendam, et ad pietatem veram juxta verbum Dei exercendam, veramque consolationem in vita et morte præstandam faciebant:" "When he had found in his visiting the sick, and in his own preparations for well dying, that the controversies in divinity, which beget a swelling knowledge, but do not quiet troubled consciences, and which are at this day agitated with such contention of spirits, and raise such tumults in commonwealths, are indeed utterly useless; yea, and moreover do entangle the consciences of the simple, just as the human inventions in popery formerly did; he begun with full bent of mind to shun or abhor them, and in his public preaching to propound only those things which tended to the kindling a true faith in Jesus Christ, and to the exercise of true godliness, according to the word of God, and to the procuring of true consolation both in life and death." I can scarcely express my own mind more plainly than this historian's expressions of the mind of Graserus. While I had some competent measure of health, and looked at death as at a greater distance, there was no man more delighted in the study of controversy; but when I saw dying men have no mind on it, and how unsavoury and uncomfortable such conference was to them, and when I had oft been near to death myself, and found no delight in them further than they confirmed or illustrated the doctrine of eternal glory, I have minded them ever since the less, though every truth of God is precious, and it is the sin and shame of professors that they are no more able to defend the truth; yet should all our study of controversy be still in relation to this perpetual rest, and consequently be kept within its bounds, and with most Christians, not have the twentieth part of our time or thoughts. Who that hath tried both studies, doth not cry out, as Summer-hard was wont to do of the popish school-divinity, "Quis me miserum tandem liberabit ab ista rixosa theologia?" "Who will once deliver me, wretch, from this wrangling kind of dignity?" And as it is said of Bucholcer: "Cum eximiis à Deo dotibus esset decoratus, in certamen tamen cum rabiosis illius seculi theologis descendere noluit. Desii (inquit) disputare, cœpi supputare: quoniam illud dissipationem, hoc collectionem significat. Vidit enim ab iis controversias moveri, quas nulla unquam amoris

Dei scintilla calefecerat: vidit ex diuturnis theologorum rixis, utilitatis nihil, detrimenti plurimum in ecclesias redundassi:" i.e. "Though he was adorned by God with excellent gifts, yet would he never enter into contention with the furious divines of that age. I have ceased," saith he, "my disputations, and now begin my supputation; for that signifieth dissipation, but this collection." For he saw, that those men were the movers of controversies who had never been warmed with one spark of the love of God; he saw, that from the continual brawls of divines, no benefit, but much hurt, did accrue to the churches." And it is worth the observing, which the historian adds: "Quapropter omnis ejus cura in hoc erat, ut auditores fidei suæ commissos, doceret bene vivere et beate mori; et annotatum in universariis amici ejus repererunt, permultos in extremo agone constitutos gratias ipsi hoc nomine egisse, quod ipsius ductu servatorem suum Jesum agnovissent, cujus in cognitione pulchrum vivere, mori vero longe pulcherrimum ducerent. Atque haud scio annon hoc ipsum longe Bucholcero coram Deo sit gloriosius futurum, quam si aliquot contentiosorum libellorum myriadas posteritatis memoriæ consecrasset:" i.e. "Therefore this was all his care, that he might teach his hearers committed to his charge, to live well, and die happily; and his friends found noted down in his papers a great many of persons, who in their last agony did give him thanks for this very reason, that by his direction they had come to the knowledge of Jesus their Saviour; in the knowledge of whom, they esteem it sweet to live, but to die far more sweet. And I cannot tell whether this very thing will not prove more glorious to Bucholcer before God, than if he had consecrated to the memory of posterity many myriads of contentious writings." And as the study of controversies is not the most pleasant nor the most profitable, so much less the public handling of them; for to do it with the greatest meekness and ingenuity, yet shall we meet with such unreasonable men, as the said Bucholcer did, "qui arrepta ex aliquibus vocolis calumniandi materia, hærescos insimulare et traducere optimum virum non erubescerent; frustra obtestante ipso, dextrè data, dextrè acciperent:" i. e., "who, taking occasion of reproach from some small words, were not ashamed to traduce the

good man, and accuse him of heresy, while he in vain obtested with them, that they should take in good part what was delivered with a good intention." Siracides saith, in Ecclesiasticus, chap. 26, that a scolding woman shall be sought out for to drive away the enemies, but experience of all ages tells us, to our sorrow, that the wrangling divine is their chiefest inlet, and no such scarecrow to them at all.

So then it is clear to me that there is nothing worth our minding but heaven, and the way to heaven.

All the question will be about the affairs of church and state. Is not this worth our minding, to see what things will come to, and how God will conclude our differences?

Answ. So far as they are considered as the providences of God, and as they tend to the settling of the Gospel, and government of Christ, and so to the saving of our own, and our posterity's souls, they are well worth our diligent observation: but these are only their relations to eternity. Otherwise, I should look upon all the stirs and commotions in the world, but as the busy gadding of a heap of ants, or the swarming of a nest of wasps or bees; the spurn of a man's foot destroys all their labour: or as an interlude, or a tragedy, of a few hours long. They first quarrel, and then fight, and let out one another's blood, and bring themselves more speedily and violently to their graves, which, however, they could not have long delayed, and so come down, and the play is ended. And the next generation succeeds them in their madness, and makes the like bustle in the world for a time; and so they also come down, and lie in the dust. Like the Roman gladiators, that would kill one another by the hundreds, to make the beholders a solemn show; or as the young men of Joab and Abner, that must play before them, by stabbing one another to the heart, and fall down and die, and there is an end of the sport. And is this worth a wise man's observance?

Surely, our very bodies themselves, for which we make all this ado in the world, are very silly pieces: look upon them (not as they are set

out in a borrowed bravery) but as they lie rotting in a ditch, or grave; and you will say, they are silly things indeed. Why then, surely all our dealings in the world, our buyings and sellings, and eating and drinking, our building and marrying, our wealth and honours, our peace and our war, so far as they relate not to the life to come, but tend only to the support and pleasing of this silly flesh, must needs themselves be silly things, and not worthy the frequent thoughts of a Christian: for the means (as such) is meaner than their end.

And now doth not thy conscience say as I say, that there is nothing but heaven, and the way to it, that is worth thy minding?

Sect. XV. Thus I have given thee these twelve arguments to consider of, and, if it maybe, to persuade thee to a heavenly mind. I now desire thee to view them over; read them deliberately, and read them again, and then tell me, are they reason, or are they not? Reader, stop here, while thou answerest my question: Are these considerations weighty, or not? Are these arguments convincing, or not? Have I proved it thy duty, and a flat necessity, to keep thy heart on things above, or have I not? Say yea, or nay, man! If thou say nay, I am confident thou contradictest thine own conscience, and speakest against the light that is in thee, and thy reason tells thee, thou speakest falsely: if thou say yea, and acknowledge thyself convinced of the duty, bear witness then, that I have thine own confession: that very tongue of thine shall condemn thee, and that confession be pleaded against thee if thou now go home, and cast this off, and wilfully neglect such a confessed duty; and these twelve considerations shall be as a jury to convict thee, which I propounded, hoping they might be effectual to persuade thee. I have not yet fully laid open to you the nature and particular way of that duty, which I am all this while persuading you to; that is the next thing to be done: all that I have said hitherto, is but to make you willing to perform it. I know the whole work of man's salvation doth stick most at his own will; if we could once get over this block well, I see not what could stand before us. Be soundly willing, and the work is more than half done. I have now a few plain directions to give you, for to help you in

doing this great work; but, alas! it is in vain to mention them, except you be willing to put them in practice. What sayest thou, reader? Art thou willing, or art thou not? Wilt thou obey, if I show thee the way of thy duty? However, I will set them down, and tender them to thee, and the Lord persuade thy heart to the work.

CHAP. IV

Containing some Hinderances of a Heavenly Life

SECT. I. The first task that I must here set thee, consists in the avoiding some dangerous hinderances, which otherwise will keep thee off from this work, as they have done many a thousand before thee. If I show thee briefly where the rocks and gulf do lie, I hope thou wilt beware. If I stick up a mark at every quicksand, I hope I need to say no more, to put thee by it. Therefore, as thou valuest the comforts of a heavenly conversation, I here charge thee from God to beware most carefully of these impediments.

I. The first is, the living in a known unmortified sin. Observe this: O what havoc will this make in thy soul! O the joys that this hath destroyed! The blessed communion with God that this hath interrupted! The ruins it hath made amongst men's graces! The soul-strengthening duties that this hath hindered! And above all others, it is especially an enemy to this great duty.

Christian reader, I desire thee, in the fear of God, stay here a little, and search thy heart. Art thou one that hath used violence with thy conscience? Art thou a wilful neglecter of known duties, either public, private, or secret? Art thou a slave to thine appetite, in eating or drinking, or to any other commanding sense? Art thou a proud seeker of thine own esteem, and a man that must needs have men's good opinion, or else thy mind is all in a combustion? Art thou a wilfully peevish and passionate person, as if thou wert made of tinder, or gunpowder, ready to take fire at every word, or every wry look, or every supposed slighting of thee; or every neglect of a compliment or courtesy? Art thou a knowing deceiver of others in thy dealing, or one that hath set thyself to rise in the world? not to speak of greater sins, which all take notice of. If this be thy case, I dare say, heaven and thy soul are very great strangers: I dare say,

thou art seldom in heart with God, and there is little hope it should ever be better, as long as thou continuest in these transgressions. These beams in thine eyes will not suffer thee to look to heaven; these will be a cloud between thee and God. When thou dost but attempt to study eternity, and to gather comfort from the life to come, thy sin will presently look thee in the face, and say, These things belong not to thee. How shouldst thou take comfort from heaven, who takest so much pleasure in the lusts of thy flesh? O, how this will damp thy joys, and make the thoughts of that day and state to become thy trouble, and not thy delight! Every wilful sin that thou livest in, will be to thy comforts as water to the fire, when thou thinkest to quicken them, this will quench them; when thy heart begins to draw near to God, this will presently come in thy mind, and cover thee with shame, and fill thee with doubting. Besides (which is most to the point in hand), it doth utterly indispose thee, and disable thee to this work: when thou shouldst wind up thy heart to heaven, alas! it is biassed another way; it is entangled in the lusts of the flesh; and can no more ascend in divine meditation, than the bird can fly, whose wings are clipped, or that is entangled in the lime twigs, or taken in the snare. Sin doth cut the very sinews of the soul, therefore, I say of this heavenly life, as Mr. Bolton saith of prayer, Either it will make thee leave sinning, or sin will make thee leave it, and that quickly too, for these cannot continue together. If thou be here guilty, who readest this, I require thee sadly to think of this folly. O man! what a life dost thou lose; and what a life dost thou choose; what daily delights dost thou sell for the swinish pleasure of a stinking lust; what a Christ! what a glory dost thou turn thy back upon, when thou art going to the embracements of thy hellish pleasures! I have read of a gallant addicted to uncleanness, who at last meeting with a beautiful dame, and having enjoyed his fleshly desires of her, found her in the morning to be the dead body of one that he had formerly sinned with, which had been acted by the devil all night, and left dead again in the morning. Surely, all thy sinful pleasures are such: the devil doth animate them in the darkness of the night; but when God awakes thee, at the farthest at death, the deceit is vanished, and nothing left but a carcass to amaze thee, and be a spectacle of horror

before thine eyes. Thou thinkest thou hast hold of some choice delight, but it will turn in thy hand (as Moses's rod) into a serpent; and then thou wouldst fain be rid of it, if thou knewest how; and would fly from the face of it, as thou dost now embrace it: and shall this now detain thee from the high delights of the saints? If heaven and hell can meet together, and if God can become a lover of sin, then mayest thou live in thy sin, and in the tastes of glory, and mayest have a conversation in heaven, though thou cherish thy corruption. If, therefore, thou find thyself guilty, never doubt on it, but this is the cause that estrangeth thee from heaven; and take heed lest it keep out thee, as it keeps out thy heart; and do not say, but thou wast bid take heed. Yea, if thou be a man that hitherto hast escaped, and knowest no reigning sin in thy soul, yet let this warning move thee to prevention, and stir up a dread of this danger in thy spirit. As Hunnius writes of himself, that, hearing the mention of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, it stirred up such fears in his spirit, that made him cry out, What if this should be my case? and so roused him to prayer and trial. So think thou, though thou yet be not guilty, what a sad thing were it, if ever this should prove thy case, and therefore watch. Especially resolve to keep from the occasions of sin, and, as much as is possible, out of the way of temptations. The strongest Christian is unsafe among occasions of sin. O what need have we to pray daily, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil?" And shall we pray against them, and cast ourselves upon them? If David, Solomon, Peter, &c., teach you not, at least look upon the multitudes that have revolted of late times, and fallen into the most horrid sins, with religious pretences. As Christ thought meet to say to his disciples, "Remember Lot's wife; and what I say to one I say to all, Watch;" so say I, Remember these, and watch.

Sect. II. 2. A second hinderance carefully to be avoided, is, an earthly mind; for you may easily conceive that this cannot stand with a heavenly mind. God and Mammon, earth and heaven, cannot both have the delight of thy heart. This makes thee like Anselm's bird, with a stone tied to the foot, which as oft as she took flight, did pluck her to the earth again. If thou be a man that hast fancied to thyself,

some content or happiness to be found on earth, and beginnest to taste a sweetness in gain, and to aspire after a fuller and a higher estate; and hast hatched some thriving projects in thy brain, and art driving on thy rising design; believe it, thou art marching with thy back upon Christ, and art posting apace from this heavenly life. Why, hath not the world that from thee, which God hath from the heavenly believer? When he is blessing himself in his God, and rejoicing in hope of the glory to come, then thou art blessing thyself in thy prosperity, and rejoicing in hope of thy thriving here: when he is solacing his soul in the views of Christ, of the angels and saints, that he shall live with for ever, then art thou comforting thyself with thy wealth, in looking over thy bills and bonds, in viewing thy money, thy goods, thy cattle, thy buildings, or large possessions; and art recreating thy mind in thinking on thy hopes; of the favour of some great ones, on whom thou dependest; of the pleasantness of a plentiful and commanding state; of the larger provision for thy children after thee; of the rising of thy house, or the obeisance of thine inferiors. Are not these thy morning and evening thoughts, when a gracious soul is above with Christ? Dost thou not delight and please thyself with a daily rolling these thoughts in thy mind, when a gracious soul should have higher delights? If he were a fool by the sentence of Christ that said, "Soul, take thy rest, thou hast enough laid up for many years;" what a fool of fools art thou, that, knowing this, yet takest not warning, but in thy heart speakest the same words! Look them over seriously, and tell me what difference between this fool's expressions, and thy affections? I doubt not but thou hast more wit than to speak thy mind just in his language; but, man, remember thou hast to do with the Searcher of hearts. It may be, thou holdest on thy course of duty, and prayest as often as thou didst before; it may be, thou keepest in with good ministers, and with godly men, and seemest as forward in religion as ever: but what is all this to the purpose? Mock not thy soul, man, for God will not be so mocked. What good may yet remain in thee, I know not; but sure I am, thy course is dangerous, and, if thou follow it on, will end in dolour. Methinks I see thee befooling thyself, and tearing thy hair, and gnashing thy teeth, when thou hearest thy case laid open by God:

"Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul from thee; and then whose are all these things?" Certainly, so much as thou delightest and restest on earth, so much is abated of thy delights in God. Thine earthly mind may consist with thy profession and common duties, but it cannot consist with this heavenly duty. I need not tell thee all this, if thou wouldst deal impartially, and not be a traitor to thy own soul: thou knowest thyself how seldom and cold, how cursory and strange, thy thoughts have been of the joys hereafter, ever since thou didst trade so eagerly for the world. Methinks I even perceive thy conscience stir now, and tell thee plainly that this is thy case. Hear it, man! Oh! hear it now, lest thou hear it in another manner when thou wouldst be full loth. O the cursed madness of many that seem to be religious; who thrust themselves into a multitude of employments, and think they can never have business enough till they are loaded with labours and clogged with cares; that their souls are as unfit to converse with God, as a man to walk with a mountain on his back, and till he hath even transformed his soul almost into the nature of his drossy carcass, and made it as unapt to soar aloft as his body is to leap above the sun: and when all is done, and they have lost that heaven they might have had upon earth, they take up a few rotten arguments to prove it lawful, and then they think that they have solved all. Though these sots would not do so for their bodies, nor forbear their eating, or drinking, or sleeping, or sporting, though they could prove it lawful so to do, though, indeed, they cannot prove it lawful neither. They miss not the pleasures of this heavenly life, if they can but quiet their consciences, while they fasten upon lower and baser pleasures. For thee, O Christian, who hast tasted of these pleasures, I advise thee, as thou vainest their enjoyment, as ever thou wouldst taste of them any more, take heed of this gulf of an earthly mind; for if once thou come to this, that thou wilt be rich, "thou fallest into temptation, and a snare, and into divers foolish and hurtful lusts:" it is St. Paul's own words. (1 Tim. 6:9.) Set not thy mind, as Saul, on the asses, when the kingdom of glory is set before thee. Keep these things as thy upper garments, still loose about thee, that thou mayest lay them by whenever there is cause: but let God and glory be next thy heart, yea, as the very blood and spirit by which

thou livest. Still remember that of the Spirit, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) And, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world: if any love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15.) This is plain dealing, and happy he that faithfully receives it.

Sect. III. 3. A third hinderance which I must advise thee to beware is, the company of ungodly and sensual men. Not that I would dissuade thee from necessary converse, or from doing them any office of love, especially not from endeavouring the good of their souls, as long as thou hast an opportunity or hope: nor would I have thee conclude them to be dogs and swine, that so thou mayest evade the duty of reproof; nor yet to judge them such at all, as long as there is any hope of better, or before thou art certain they are such indeed. Much less can I approve of the practice of those who, because the most of the world are naught, do therefore conclude men, dogs, or swine, before ever they faithfully and lovingly did admonish them, yea, or perhaps before they have known them, or spoke with them: and hereupon they will not communicate with them in the Lord's-supper, but separate from them into distinct congregations. I persuade thee to no such ungodly separation, as I never found one word in Scripture where either Christ or his apostles denied admittance to any man that desired to be a member of the church, though but only professing to repent and believe; so neither did I ever there find that any but convicted heretics, and scandalous ones, and that for the most part after due admonition, were to be avoided or debarred our fellowship. And whereas it is urged that they are to prove their title to the privileges which they lay claim to, and not we to disprove it. I answer, If that were granted, yet their mere sober professing to repent and believe in Christ, is as to us a sufficient evidence of their title to church-membership, and admittance thereto by baptism, supposing them not admitted before; and their being baptised persons, if at age, or members of the universal visible church, into which it is that they are baptised, and owning their baptismal profession, is sufficient evidence of their title to the supper, till they

do by heresy or scandal blot that evidence; which evidence, if they do produce in the church of which they are members, yea, though they are yet weak in the faith of Christ, who is he that dare refuse to receive them? And this, after much doubting, dispute, and study of the Scriptures, I speak as confidently as almost any truth of equal moment: so plain is the Scripture in this point, to a man that brings his understanding to the model of Scripture, and doth not bring a model in his brain, and reduce all he reads to that model. The door of the visible church is incomparably wider than the door of heaven; and Christ is so tender, so bountiful, and forward to convey his grace, and the Gospel so free an offer and invitation to all, that surely Christ will keep no man off: if they will come quite over in spirit to Christ, they shall be welcome; if they will come but only to a visible profession, he will not deny them admittance there, because they intend to go no farther, but will let them come as near as they will; and that they come no further, shall be their own fault: and so it is not his readiness to admit such, nor the openness of the door of his visible church, that makes men hypocrites, but their own wickedness. Christ will not keep such out among infidels, for fear of making hypocrites: but when the net is drawn unto the shore, the fishes shall be separated; and when the time of harvest comes, "then the angels shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that work iniquity." (Matt. 13:41.) There are many saints, or sanctified men, that yet shall never come to heaven, who are only saints by their separation from paganism, into fellowship with the visible church, but not saints in the strictest sense, by separation from the ungodly into the fellowship of the mystical body of Christ. (Heb. 10:29; Deut. 7:6, 14:2, 21, 26:19, and 28:9; Exod. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:13, 14; Rom. 11:16; Heb. 3:1, compared with verse 12; 1 Cor. 3:17, and 14:33; 1 Cor. 1:2, compared with 11:20, 21, &c.; Gal. 3:26, compared with Gal. 3:3, 4, 4:11, and 5:2-4; John 15:2.

Thus far have I digressed, by way of caution, that you may not think that I dissuade you from lawful converse, but it is the unnecessary society of ungodly men, and too much familiarity with unprofitable companions, though they be not so apparently ungodly, that I

dissuade you from. There are many persons whom we may not avoid or excommunicate out of the church, no nor out of our private society, judicially, or by way of penalty to them, whom yet we must exclude from our too-much familiarity in way of prudence for preservation of ourselves. It is not only the profane, the swearer, the drunkard, and the enemies of godliness, that will prove hurtful companions to us, though these, indeed, are chiefly to be avoided; but too frequent society with dead-hearted formalists, or persons merely civil and moral, or whose conference is empty, unsavoury, and barren, may much divert our thoughts from heaven, and do ourselves a great deal of wrong. As mere idleness and forgetting God, will keep a soul as certainly from heaven, as a profane, licentious, fleshly life; so also will the useless company of such idle, forgetful, negligent persons, as surely keep our hearts from heaven, as the company of men more dissolute and profane. Alas! our dulness and backwardness is such, that we have need of the most constant and powerful helps. A clod, or a stone that lies on the earth, is as prone to arise and fly in the air, as our hearts are naturally to move towards heaven. You need not hold nor hinder the earth and rocks, to keep them from flying up to the skies; it is sufficient that you do not help them. And, surely, if our spirits have not great assistance, they may easily be kept from flying aloft, though they never should meet with the least impediment. Oh, think of this in the choice of your company. When your spirits are so powerfully disposed for heaven that you need no help to lift them up; but, as the flames, you are always mounting upward, and carrying with you all that is in your way, then you may, indeed, be less careful of your company: but till then, as you love the delights of a heavenly life, be careful therein. As it is reported of a lord that was near to his death, and the doctor that prayed with him read over the Litany; "for all women labouring with child, for all sick persons and young children, &c.; from lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle, murder, and sudden death," &c. "Alas!" saith he, "What is this to me who must presently die?" &c. so mayest thou say of such men's conference, who can talk of nothing but their callings and vanity. Alas! what is this to me who must shortly be in rest, and

should now be refreshing my soul with its foretastes? What will it advantage thee to a life with God, to hear where the fair is such a day, or how the market goes, or what weather is, or is like to be; or when the moon changeth, or what news is stirring? Why, this is the discourse of earthly men. What will it conduce to the raising of thy heart God-ward, to hear that this is an able minister, or that a serious Christian, or that this was an excellent sermon, or that an excellent book; to hear a violent arguing, or tedious discourse of baptism, ceremonies, the power of the keys, the order of God's decrees, or other such controversies of great difficulty, but little importance? Yet this, for the most part, is the sweetest discourse that thou art like to have of a formal, speculative, dead-hearted professor. Nay, if thou hadst newly been warming thy heart in the contemplation of the blessed joys above, would not this discourse benumb thine affections and quickly freeze thy heart again? I appeal to the judgment of any man that hath tried it, and maketh observations on the frame of his spirit. Men cannot well talk of one thing and mind another, especially things of such differing natures. You young men, who are most liable to this temptation, think sadly of what I say. Can you have your hearts in heaven on an alehouse bench, among your roaring, singing, swaggering companions, or when you work in your shops with none but such whose ordinary language is oaths, or filthiness, or foolish talking, or jesting? Nay, let me tell you thus much more; that if you choose such company when you might have better, and find most delight and content in such, you are so far from a heavenly conversation, that as yet you have no title to heaven at all, and in that estate shall never come there: for were your treasure there, your heart would not be on things so distant. (Matt. 6:21.) In a word, our company will be part of our happiness in heaven, and it is a singular part of our furtherance to it, or hinderance from it. As the creatures living in the several elements are commonly of the temperature of the element they live in, as the fishes cold and moist like the water, the worms cold and dry as the earth, and so the rest: so are we usually like the society which we most converse in. He that never found it hard to have a heavenly mind in earthly company, it is certainly because he never tried.

Sect. IV. 4. A fourth hinderance to heavenly conversation, is, too frequent disputes about lesser truths, and especially when a man's religion lies only in his opinions: a sure sign of an unsanctified soul. If sad examples be doctrinal to you, or the judgments of God upon us be regarded, I need to say the less upon this particular. It is legibly written in the faces of thousands; it is visible in the complexion of our diseased nation: this *facies hypocritica* is our *facies hypocritica*. He that hath the least skill in physiognomy may see that this complexion is mortal, and this picture-like, shadow-like visage affordeth our state a sad prognostic. You that have been my companions in armies and garrisons, in cities and countries, I know have been my companions in this observation, that they are usually men least acquainted with a heavenly life, who are the violent disputers about the circumstantial of religion. He whose religion is all in his opinions, will be most frequently and zealously speaking his opinions; and he whose religion lies in the knowledge and love of God in Christ, will be most delightfully speaking of that time when he shall enjoy God and Christ. As the body doth languish in consuming fevers, when the native heat abates within, and an unnatural heat inflaming the external parts succeeds; so, when the zeal of a Christian doth leave the internals of religion, and fly to ceremonials, externals, or inferior things, the soul must needs consume and languish: yea, though you were sure your opinions were true, yet when the chiefest of your zeal is turned thither, and the chiefest of your conference there laid out, the life of grace decays within, and your hearts are turned from this heavenly life. Not that I would persuade you to undervalue the least truth of God, nor that I do acknowledge the hot disputers of the times to have discovered the truth above their brethren; but in case we should grant them to have hit on the truth, yet let every truth in our thoughts and speeches have their due proportion, and I am confident the hundredth part of our time and our conference would not be spent upon the now common themes. For as there are a hundred truths of far greater consequence, who do all challenge the precedency before these, so many of those truths alone are of a hundred times nearer concernment to our souls, and therefore should have an answerable proportion in our thoughts.

Neither is it any excuse for our casting by those great, fundamental truths, because they are common and known already; for the chief improvement is yet behind, and the soul must be daily refreshed with the truth of Scripture, and the goodness of that which it offereth and promiseth, as the body must be with its daily food, or else the known truths that lie idle in your heads will no more nourish, or comfort, or save you, than the bread that lies still in your cupboards will feed you. Ah! he is a rare and precious Christian who is skilled in the improving of well-known truths. Therefore let me advise you that aspire after this joyous life, spend not too much of your thoughts, your time, your zeal, or your speeches, upon quarrels that less concern your souls; but when hypocrites are feeding on husks or shells, or on this heated food which will burn their lips far sooner than warm and strengthen their hearts, then do you feed on the joys above. I could wish you were all understanding men, able to defend every truth of God; and to this end that you would read and study controversy more; and your understanding and stability in these days of trial is no small part of my comfort and encouragement. But still I would have the chiefest to be chiefly studied, and none to shoulder out your thoughts of eternity. The least controverted points are usually most weighty, and of most necessary frequent use to our souls.

For you, my neighbours and friends in Christ, I bless God that I have so little need to urge this hard upon you, or to spend my time and speeches in the pulpit on these quarrels, as I have been necessitated, to my discontent, to do elsewhere; I rejoice in the wisdom and goodness of our Lord, who hath saved me much of this labour, 1. Partly by his tempering of your spirits to sincerity. 2. Partly by the doleful, yet profitable example of those few that went from us, whose former and present condition of spirit makes them stand, as the pillar of salt, for a continual terror and warning to you, and so to be as useful as they were like to be hurtful. 3. Partly by the confessions and bewailings of this sin that you have heard from the mouth of the dying, advising you to beware of changing your fruitful society for the company of deceivers. I do unfeignedly rejoice in these providences,

and bless the Lord who thus establisheth his saints. Study well these precepts of the Spirit, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive, but not to doubtful disputations." (Rom. 14:1.) "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes; and the servant of the Lord must not strive," (2 Tim. 2:23;) "but avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain." (Tit. 3:9.) "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. 4:3-5.)

Sect. V. 5. As you value the comforts of a heavenly life, take heed of a proud and lofty spirit. There is such an antipathy between this sin and God, that thou wilt never get thy heart near him, nor get him near thy heart, so long as this prevaileth in it. If it cast the angels from heaven that were in it, it must needs keep thy heart estranged from it. If it east our first parents out of paradise, and separated between the Lord and us, and brought his curse on all the creatures here below, it must needs then keep our hearts from paradise, and increase the cursed separation from our God. Believe it, hearers, a proud heart and a heavenly heart are exceeding contrary. Intercourse with God will keep men low, and that lowliness will further their intercourse. When a man is used to be much with God, and taken up in the study of his glorious attributes, he abhors himself in dust and ashes, and that self-abhorrence is his best preparative to obtain admittance to God again. Therefore, after a soul-humbling day, or in times of trouble, when the soul is lowest, it useth to have freest access to God, and savour most of the life above. He will bring them into the wilderness, and there he will speak comfortably to them. (Hos. 2:14.) The delight of God is an humble soul, even him that is contrite, and trembleth at his word; and the delight of an humble soul is in God; and surely, where there is mutual delight, there will be

freest admittance, and heartiest welcome, and most frequent converse. Heaven would not hold God and the proud angels together, but a humble soul he makes his dwelling; and surely if our dwelling be with him, and in him, and his dwelling also be with us, and in us, there must needs be a most near and sweet familiarity. But the soul that is proud cannot plead this privilege. God is so far from dwelling in it, that he will not admit it to any near access, but looks upon it afar off. (Psal. 138:6.) The proud he resisteth, and the proud resisteth him, but to the humble he gives this and other graces. (1 Pet. 5:5.) A proud mind is a high mind in conceit, self-esteem, and carnal aspiring. A heavenly mind is a high mind indeed in God's esteem, and in higher, yet holy, aspiring. These two sorts of high-mindedness are more adverse to one another, than a high mind and a low: as we see that most wars and bloodshed is between princes and princes, and not between a prince and a ploughman. A low spirit and an humble is not so contrary to a high and heavenly, as a high and à proud. A grain of mustard-seed may come to be a tree; a small acorn may be a great oak; the sail of the windmill that is now down may presently be the highest of all; a subject that is low may be raised high, and he that is high may be yet higher, as long as he stands in subordination to his prince, who is the fountain of honour; but if he break out of that subordination, and become a competitor, or will assume and arrogate honour to himself, he will find this prove the falling way. A man that is swelled in a dropsy with wind or water, is as far from a sound, well-fleshed constitution, as he that is in a consuming atrophy. Well, then, art thou a man of worth in thine own eyes, and very tender of thine esteem with others? Art thou one that much valueth the applause of the people, and feelest thy heart tickled with delight when thou hearest of thy great esteem with men, and much dejected when thou hearest that men slight thee? Dost thou love those best who highly honour thee, and doth thy heart bear a grudge at those that thou thinkest do undervalue thee, and entertain mean thoughts of thee, though they be otherwise men of godliness and honesty? Art thou one that must needs have thy humours fulfilled, and thy judgment must be a rule to the judgments of others, and thy word a law to all about thee? Art thou ready to quarrel with

every man that lets fall a word in derogation from thy honour? Are thy passions kindled if thy word or will be crossed? Art thou ready to judge humility to be sordid baseness, and knowest not how to stoop and submit; and wilt not be brought to shame thyself by humble confession when thou hast sinned against God, or injured thy brother? Art thou one that honourest the godly that are rich, and thinkest thyself somebody if they value and own thee, but lookest strangely at the godly poor, and art almost ashamed to be their companion? Art thou one that canst not serve God in a low place as well as in a high; and thinkest thyself the fittest for offices and honours, and lovest God's service when it stands with preferment? Hast thou thine eye and thy speech much on thy own deservings; and are thy boastings restrained more by wit than by humility? Dost thou delight in opportunities of setting forth thy parts, and lovest to have thy name made public to the world, and wouldst fain leave behind thee some monument of thy worth, that posterity may admire thee when thou art dead and gone? Hast thou witty circumlocutions to commend thyself, while thou seemest to abase thyself, and deny thy worth? Dost thou desire to have all men's eyes upon thee, and to hear men observing thee, say, 'This is he?' Is this the end of thy studies and learning, of thy labours and duties, of seeking degrees, and titles, and places, that thou mayest be taken for somebody abroad in the world? Art thou unacquainted with the deceitfulness and wickedness of thy heart; or knowest thyself to be vile only by reading and by hearsay, but not by experience, and feeling of thy vileness? Art thou readier to defend thyself, and maintain thine innocency, than to accuse thyself, or confess thy fault? Canst thou hardly bear a close reproof, and dost digest plain dealing with difficulty and distaste? Art thou readier in thy discourse to teach than to learn, and to dictate to others than to hearken to their instructions? Art thou bold and confident of thy own opinions, and little suspicious of the weakness of thy understanding, but a slighter of the judgment of all that are against thee? Is thy spirit more disposed to command and govern, than it is to obey and be ruled by others? Art thou ready to censure the doctrine of thy teachers, the actions of thy rulers, and the persons of thy brethren; and to think, if thou wert a judge, thou wouldst be

more just; or, if thou wert a minister, thou wouldst be more fruitful in doctrine, and more faithful in overseeing? Or, if thou hadst the managing of other men's business, thou wouldst have carried it more honestly and wisely? If these symptoms be undeniably in thy heart, beyond doubt thou art a proud person. I will not talk of thy following the fashions, of thy bravery and comportment, thy proud gestures and arrogant speeches, thy living at a rate above thy abilities. Perhaps thy incompetency of estate, or thy competency of wit, may suffice to restrain these unmanly fooleries. Perhaps thou mayest rather seem sordid to others, and to live at a rate below thy worth, and yet, if thou be guilty of the former accusations, be it known to thee thou art a person abominably proud; it hath seized on thy heart, which is the principal fort; there is too much of hell abiding in thee, for thee to have any acquaintance in heaven. Thy soul is too like the devil for thee to have any familiarity with God. A proud man is all in the flesh, and he that will be heavenly must be much in the Spirit. It is likely that the man whom I have here described, hath either will or skill to go out of himself, and out of the flesh, as it were, and out of the world, that so he may have freedom for converse above. A proud man makes himself his God, and admires and sets himself as his idol; how, then, can he have his affections set on God? As the humble, godly man is the zealot in forward worshiping of God, so the ambitious man is the great zealot in idolatry; for what is his ambition but a more hearty and earnest desire after his idol, than the common and calmer idolaters do reach? And can this man possibly have his heart in heaven? It is possible his invention and memory may furnish his tongue both with humble and heavenly expressions, but in his spirit there is no more heaven than there is humility.

I entreat you, readers, be very jealous of your souls in this point. There is nothing in the world will more estrange you from God. I speak the more of it, because it is the most common and dangerous sin in morality, and most promoting the great sin of infidelity. You would little think (yea, and the owners do little think) what humble carriage, what exclaiming against pride, what moanful self-accusings, may stand with this devilish sin of pride. O, Christian, if

thou wouldst live continually in the presence of thy Lord, and lie in the dust, he would thence take thee up: descend first with him into the grave, thence thou mayest ascend with him to glory. Learn of him to be meek and lowly, and then thou mayest taste of this rest to thy soul. Thy soul else will be as the troubled sea, still casting out mire and dirt, which cannot rest; and, instead of these sweet delights in God, thy pride will fill thee with perpetual disquietness. It is the humble soul that forgets not God, and God will not forget the humble. (Psalm 9:12, 10:12.) As he that humbleth himself as a little child, shall hereafter be greatest in the kingdom of God, (Matt. 8:4,) so shall he now be greatest in the foretastes of the kingdom; for, as whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, so he that humbleth himself shall be, in both these respects, exalted. (Matt. 23:12.) God therefore dwelleth with him that is humble and contrite, to revive the spirit of such with his presence. (Isa. 57:15.) I conclude with that counsel of James and Peter, Humble yourselves, therefore, in the sight of the Lord, and he shall now in the spirit lift you up, (Jam. 4:10,) and in due time shall perfectly exalt you. (1 Pet. 5:6.) And when others are cast down, then shalt thou say, "There is a lifting up, and he shall save the humble person." (Prov. 15:33; 18:22; Job 22:29.)

Sect. VI. 6. Another impediment to this heavenly life, is, wilful laziness, and slothfulness of spirit; and I verily think for knowing men, there is nothing hinders more than this. Oh, if it were only the exercise of the body, the moving of the lips, the bending of the knee, then it were an easy work indeed, and men would as commonly step to heaven as they go a few miles to visit a friend; yea, if it were to spend most of our days in numbering beads, and repeating certain words and prayers, in voluntary humility, and neglecting the body, after the commandments and doctrines of men; (Col. 2:21–23;) yea, or in the outward part of duties commanded by God, yet it were comparatively easy. Further, if it were only in the exercise of parts and gifts, though we made such performance our daily trade, yet it were easy to be heavenly-minded. But it is a work more difficult than all this to separate thoughts and affections from the world; to force

them to a work of so high a nature; to draw forth all our graces in their order, and exercise each on its proper object; to hold them to this till they perceive success, and till the work doth thrive and prosper in their hands. This, this is the difficult task. Reader, heaven is above thee, the way is upwards. Dost thou think, who art a feeble, short-winded sinner, to travel daily this steep ascent without a great deal of labour and resolution? Canst thou get that earthly heart to heaven, and bring that backward mind to God, while thou liest still, and takest thine ease? If lying down at the foot of the hill, and looking toward the top, and wishing we were there, would serve the turn, then we should have daily travellers for heaven. But the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. (Matt. 11:12.) There must be violence used to get these first fruits, as well as to get the full possession. Dost thou not feel it so, though I should not tell thee? Will thy heart get upwards, except thou drive it? Is it not like a dull and jadish horse, that will go no longer than he feels the spur? Dost thou find it easy to dwell in the delights above? It is true, the work is exceeding sweet, and no condition on earth so desirable; but therefore it is that our hearts are so backward, especially in the beginning, till we are acquainted with it. Oh, how many hundred professors of religion, who can easily bring their hearts to ordinary duties, as reading, hearing, praying, conferring, could never yet in all their lives, bring them, and keep them to a heavenly contemplation one half hour together! Consider here, reader, as before the Lord, whether this be not thine own case. Thou hast known that heaven is all thy hopes; thou knowest thou must shortly be turned hence, and that nothing below can yield thee rest; thou knowest, also, that a strange heart, a seldom and careless thinking of heaven, can fetch but little comfort thence; and dost thou yet for all this let slip thy opportunities, and lie below in dust, or mere duties, when thou shouldst walk above, and live with God? Dost thou commend the sweetness of a heavenly life, and judge those the excellent Christians that use it; and yet didst never once try it thyself? But as the sluggard that stretched himself on his bed, and cried, 'Oh, that this were working!' so dost thou talk and trifle, and live at thy ease, and say, 'Oh, that I could get my heart to heaven!'

This is to lie a-bed and wish, when thou shouldst be up and doing, 'How many a hundred do read books, and hear sermons, in expectation to hear of some easy course, or to meet with a shorter cut to comforts, than ever they are like to find in this world! And if they can hear of none from the preachers of truth, they will snatch it with rejoicing from the teachers of falsehood; and presently applaud the excellency of the doctrine, because it hath fitted their lazy temper, and think there is no other doctrine will comfort the soul, because it will not comfort it with hearing and looking on. They think their venison is best, though accompanied with a lie, because it is the easiest caught, and next at hand, and they think it will procure the chiefest blessing, and so it may, if God be as subject to mistake as blind Isaac. And while they pretend enmity only to the impossibilities of the law, they oppose the easier conditions of the Gospel, and cast off the burden that is light also, and which all must bear that will find rest to their souls; and in my judgment may as fitly be styled enemies to the Gospel, as enemies to the law, from whence they receive their common title. The Lord of light and Spirit of comfort show these men in time a surer way for lasting comfort. The delusions of many of them are strong, and ungrounded comforts they seem to have store. I can judge it to be of no better a kind, because it comes not in the Scripture way. They will some of them profess, that when they meditate and labour for comfort themselves, they either have none, or at least but human, and of a lower kind; but all the comforts that they own and value, are immediately injected without their pains: so do I expect my comforts to come in, in heaven; but till then, I am glad if they will come with labour, and the Spirit will help me to suck them from the breasts of the promise, and to walk from them daily to the face of God. It was an established law among the Argi, that if a man were perceived to be idle and lazy, he must give an account before the magistrate, how he came by his victuals and maintenance. And surely, when I see these men lazy in the use of God's appointed means for comfort, I cannot but question how they came by their comforts. I would they would examine it thoroughly themselves, for God will require an account of it from them. Idleness, and not improving the truth in painful duty, is the common cause of

men's seeking comfort from error; even as the people of Israel, when they had no comfortable answer from God, because of their own sin and neglect, would run to seek it from the idols of the heathens. So, when men were false-hearted to the truth, and the Spirit of truth did deny them comfort, because they denied him sincere obedience, therefore they will seek it from a lying spirit.

A multitude also of professors there are, that come and inquire for marks and signs, How shall I know whether my heart be sincere? and they think the bare naming of some mark is enough to discover it; but never bestow one hour in trying themselves by the marks they hear. So here, they ask for directions for a heavenly life; and if the hearing and knowing of these directions will serve, then they will be heavenly Christians; but if we set them to task, and show them their work, and tell them they cannot have these delights on easier terms, then, here they leave us, as the young man left Christ, with sorrow. How our comforts are only in Christ, and yet this labour of ours is necessary thereto, I have showed you already in the beginning of this book, and therefore still refer you thither, when any shall put in that objection. My advice to such a lazy sinner is this: As thou art convict that this work is necessary to thy comfortable living, so resolvedly set upon it; if thy heart draw back, and be undisposed, force it on with the command of reason; and if thy reason begin to dispute the work, force it with producing the command of God; and quicken it up with the consideration of thy necessity, and the other motives before propounded; and let the enforcements that brought thee to the work, be still in thy mind to quicken thee in it: do not let such an incomparable treasure lie before thee, while thou liest still with thy hand in thy bosom: let not thy life be a continual vexation, which might be a continual delightful feasting, and all because thou wilt not be at the pains. When thou hast once tasted of the sweetness of it, and a little used thy heart to the work, thou wilt find the pains thou takest with thy backward flesh, abundantly recompensed in the pleasures of thy spirit. Only sit not still with a disconsolate spirit, while comforts grow before thine eyes, like a man in the midst of a garden of flowers, or delightful meadow, that will not rise to get

them, that he may partake of their sweetness. Neither is it a few formal, lazy, running thoughts that will fetch thee this consolation from above, any more than a few lazy, formal words will prevail with God instead of fervent prayer. I know Christ is the fountain, and I know this, as every other gift, is of God; but yet if thou ask my advice, how to obtain these waters of consolation, I must tell thee, There is something also for thee to do: the Gospel hath its conditions and works, though not such impossible ones as the Law; Christ hath his yoke and his burden, though easy, and thou must come to him weary, and take it up, or thou wilt never find rest to thy soul. The well is deep, and thou must get forth this water before thou canst be refreshed and delighted with it. What answer would you give a man that stands by a pump or draw-well, and should ask you, How shall I do to get out the water? Why you must draw it up, or labour at the pump, and that not a motion or two, but you must pump till it comes, and then hold on till you have enough. Or, if a man were lifting at a heavy weight, or would move a stone to the top of a mountain, and should ask you, How he should get it up? Why what should you say, but that he must put to his hands, and put forth his strength; and what else can I say to you, in directing you to this art of a heavenly life, but this: You must deal roundly with your hearts, and drive them up, and spur them on, and follow them close till the work be done, as a man will do a lazy, unfaithful servant, who will do nothing longer than your eye is on him; or as you will your horse or ox at his labour, who will not stir any longer than he is driven: and if your heart lie down in the midst of the work, force it up again till the work be done, and let it not prevail by its lazy policies. I know so far as you are spiritual, you need not all this striving and violence, but that is but in part, and in part you are carnal; and as long as it is so, there is no talk of ease. Though your renewed nature do delight in this work, yea, no delight on earth so great, yet your nature, so far as it is fleshly and unrenewed, will draw back and resist, and necessitate your industry. It was the Parthians' custom, that none must give their children any meat in the morning, before they saw the sweat on their faces with some labour: and you shall find this to be God's most usual course, not to give his children the tastes of his delights, till

they begin to sweat in seeking after them.^b Therefore lay them both together, and judge whether a heavenly life or thy carnal ease be better, and, as a wise man, make thy choice accordingly. Yet this let me say to encourage thee, Thou needest not expend thy thoughts more than now thou dost; it is but only to employ them better: I press thee not to busy thy mind much more than thou dost, but to busy it upon better and more pleasant objects. As Socrates said to a lazy fellow that would fain go up to Olympus, but that it was so far off; "Why," saith he, "walk but as far every day as thou dost up and down about thy house, and in so many days thou wilt be at Olympus." So say I to thee; Employ but so many serious thoughts every day upon the excellent glory of the life, to come, as thou now employest on thy necessary affairs in the world; nay, as thou daily lovest on vanities and impertinencies, and thy heart will be at heaven in a very short space.

To conclude this, As I have seldom known Christians perplexed with doubts about their state for want of knowing right evidences to try by, so much as for want of skill and diligence in using them; so have I seldom known a Christian that wants the joys of this heavenly life, for want of being told the means to get it, but for want of a heart to set upon the work, and painfully to use the means they are directed to. It is the field of the slothful that is overgrown with weeds, (Prov. 24:30–34;) and the desire of the slothful killeth his joys, because his hands refuse to labour; (Prov. 21:25.) While he lies wishing, his soul lies starving. He saith, There is a lion (there is difficulty) in the way, and turneth himself on the bed of his ease, as a door turneth on the hinges: he hideth his hand in his bosom, and it grieveth him to bring it to his mouth, (Prov. 26:13–15,) though it be to feed himself with the food of life. What is this but despising the feast prepared, and setting light by the dear-bought pleasures; and consequently by the precious blood that bought them, and throwing away our own consolations? For the Spirit hath told us, "that he also that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster." (Prov. 18:9.) Apply this to thy spiritual work, and study well the meaning of it.

Sect. VII. 7. It is also a dangerous and secret hinderance to content ourselves with the mere preparatives to this heavenly life, while we are utter strangers to the life itself. When we take up with the mere studies of heavenly things, and the notions and thoughts of them in our brain, or the talking of them with one another, as if this were all that makes us heavenly people: there is none in more danger of this snare than those that are much in public duty, especially preachers of the Gospel. Oh, how easily may they be deceived here, while they do nothing more than read of heaven, and study of heaven, and preach of heaven, and pray and talk of heaven. What! is not this the heavenly life? O that God would reveal to our hearts the dangers of this snare! Alas! all this is but mere preparation; this is not the life we speak of, but it is indeed a necessary help hereto. I entreat every one of my brethren in the ministry, that they search and watch against this temptation: alas! this is but gathering the materials, and not the erecting of the building itself; this is but gathering our manna for others, and not eating and digesting ourselves; as he that sits at home may study geography, and draw most exact descriptions of countries, and yet never see them, nor travel toward them; so may you describe to others the joys of heaven, and yet never come near it in your own hearts: as a man may tell others of the sweetness of meat which he never tasted, or as a blind man by learning may dispute of light and of colours; so may you study and preach most heavenly matter, which yet never sweetened your own spirits; and set forth to others that heavenly light, wherewith your own souls were never enlightened; and bring that fire for the hearts of your people, that never once warmed your own hearts. If you should study of nothing but heaven while you lived, and preach of nothing but heaven to your people, yet might your own hearts be strangers to it. What heavenly passages had Balaam in his prophecies! yet little of it (it is likely) in his spirit. Nay, we are under a more subtile temptation than any other men, to draw us from this heavenly life: if our employments did lie at a great distance from heaven, and did take up our thoughts upon worldly things, we should not be so apt to be so contented and deluded; but when we find ourselves employed upon nothing else, we are easier drawn to take up here. Studying and preaching of heaven

is liker to a heavenly life, than thinking and talking of the world is, and the likeness is it that is like to deceive us: this is to die the most miserable death, even to famish ourselves, because we have bread on our tables, which is worse than to famish when we cannot get it; and to die for thirst while we draw waters for others; thinking it enough that we have daily to do with it, though we never drink it to our souls' refreshing. All that I will say to you more of this, shall be in the words of my godly and judicious friend Mr. George Abbot, which I shall transcribe, lest you have not the book at hand, in his 'Vindiciæ Sabbathi,' pp. 147–149.

"And here let me, in a holy jealousy, annex an exhortation to some of the ministers of this land, (for, blessed be God, it needs not to all,) that they would carefully provide, and look that they do not build the tabernacle on the Lord's-day; I mean, that they rest not in the opus operatum of their holy employments, and busying themselves about the carnal part of holy things, in putting off the studying of their sermons, or getting them by heart, (except it be to work them upon the heart, and not barely commit them to memory,) till that day; and so, though they take care to build the tabernacle of God's church, yet they in the mean time neglect the temple of their own hearts in serving God in the spirit, and not in the letter or outward performance only: but it were well if they would gather and prepare their manna, seethe it, and break it the day before, that when the sabbath comes they might have nothing to do but to chew and concoct it into their own spirits, and so spiritually, in the experience of their own hearts (not heads), dish it out to their hearers, which would be a happy means to make them see better fruit of their labours; for commonly that which is notionally delivered, is notionally received; and that which is spiritually and powerfully delivered in the evidence of the Spirit, is spiritually and savingly received; for spirit begets spirit, as fire begets fire, &c. It is an easy thing to take great pains in the outward part or performance of holy things, which oft proves a snare, causing the neglect of the spirit of the inner man; for many are great labourers in the work of the Lord, that are starvelings in the spirit of the Lord, satisfying themselves in

a popish peace of conscience in the deed-doing, instead of joy in the Holy Ghost; bringing, indeed, meat to their guests, but through haste or laziness, eating none themselves; or, like tailors, make clothes for other men to wear; so they, never assaying their own points how they fit, or may suit with their own spirits, but think it is their duty to teach, and other men's duty to do." So far the author.

CHAP. V

Some General Helps to a Heavenly Life

SECT. I. Having thus showed thee the blocks in thy way, and told thee what hinderances will resist thee in the work, I shall now lay thee down some positive helps, and conclude with a directory to the main duty itself. But first, I expect that thou resolve against the forementioned impediments, that thou read them seriously, and avoid them faithfully, or else thy labour will be all in vain; thou dost but go about to reconcile light and darkness, Christ and Belial, and to conjoin heaven and hell in thy spirit: thou mayest sooner bring down heaven to earth, than do this. I must tell thee also, that I expect thy promise, faithfully to set upon the helps which I shall prescribe thee, and that the reading of them will not bring heaven into thy heart, but in their constant practice the Spirit will do it. It were better for thee I had never written them, and thou hadst never seen this book, nor read them, if thou do not buckle thyself to the duty.

As thou valuest, then, the delights of these foretastes of heaven, make conscience of performing these following duties:

Sect. II. 1. Know heaven to be the only treasure, and labour to know also what a treasure it is. Be convinced once that thou hast no other happiness, and then be convinced what happiness is there. If thou do not soundly believe it to be the chiefest good, thou wilt never set thy heart upon it; and this conviction must sink into thy affections; for if it be only a notion, it will have little operation. And surely we have

reason enough to be easily convinced of this, as you may see in what hath been spoken already. Read over the description and nature of this rest, in the beginning of this book, and the reasons against thy resting below, in chapter first, and conclude that this is the only happiness. As long as your judgments do undervalue it, your affections must needs be cold towards it. If your judgments do mistake blear-eyed Leah for beautiful Rachel, so will your affections also mistake them. If Eve do once suppose she sees more worth in the forbidden fruit than in the love and fruition of God, no wonder if it have more of her heart than God. If your judgments once prefer the delights of the flesh before the delights in the presence of God, it is impossible, then, your hearts should be in heaven. As it is the ignorance of the emptiness of things below that makes men so overvalue them; so it is ignorance of the high delights above, which is the cause that men so little mind them. If you see a purse of gold, and believe it to be but stones or counters, it will not entice your affections to it. It is not a thing's excellency in itself, but it is excellency known that provokes desire. If an ignorant man see a book containing the secrets of arts or sciences, yet he values it no more than a common piece, because he knows not what is in it: but he that knows it, doth highly value it; his very mind is set upon it, he can pore upon it day and night, he can forbear his meat, and drink, and sleep, to read it. As the Jews inquired after Elias, when Christ tells them that verily Elias is already come, and ye knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever he listed; (Matt. 17:11, 12;) so men inquire after happiness and delight, when it is offered to them in the promise of rest, and they know it not, but trample it under foot; and as the Jews killed the Messiah, while they waited for the Messiah, and that because they did not know him, (John 1:10; Acts 13:27;) for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; (1 Cor. 2:8;) so doth the world cry out for rest, and busily seek for delight and happiness, even while they are neglecting and destroying their rest and happiness, and this because they thoroughly know it not; for did they know thoroughly what it is, they could not so slight the everlasting treasure.

Sect. III. 2. Labour as to know heaven to be the only happiness, so also to be thy happiness. Though the knowledge of excellency and suitableness may stir up that love which worketh by desire; yet there must be the knowledge of our interest or propriety, to the setting a-work of our love of complacency. We may confess heaven to be the best condition, though we despair of enjoying it; and we may desire and seek it, if we see the obtainment to be but probable and hopeful: but we can never delightfully rejoice in it, till we are somewhat persuaded of our title to it. What comfort is it to a man that is naked, to see the rich attire of others; or, to a man that hath not a bit to put in his mouth, to see a feast which he must not taste of? What delight hath a man that hath not a house to put his head in, to see sumptuous buildings of others? Would not all this rather increase his anguish, and make him more sensible of his own misery? So, for a man to know the excellences of heaven, and not to know whether he shall ever enjoy them, may well raise desire, and provoke to seek it, but it will raise but little joy and content. Who will set his heart on another man's possessions? If your house, your goods, your cattle, your children were not your own, you would less mind them, and delight less in them. O, therefore, Christians, rest not till you can call this rest your own; sit not down without assurance; get alone, and question with thyself; bring thy heart to the bar of trial; force it to answer the interrogatories put to it; set the conditions of the Gospel and qualifications of the saints on one side, and thy performance of those conditions and the qualifications of thy soul on the other side, and then judge how near they resemble. Thou hast the same word before thee, to judge thyself by now, by which thou must be judged at the great day; thou art there before told the questions that must then be put to thee. Put these questions now to thyself. Thou mayest there read the very articles upon which thou shalt be tried. Why, try thyself by those articles now. Thou mayest there know beforehand, on what terms men shall be then acquitted and condemned; why, try now whether thou art possessed of that which will acquit thee, or whether thou be upon the same terms with those that must be condemned, and accordingly acquit or condemn thyself. Yet, be sure thou judge by a true touchstone, and mistake not the Scripture description of a

saint, that thou neither acquit nor condemn thyself upon mistakes: for, as groundless hopes do tend to confusion, and are the greatest cause of most men's damnation; so groundless doubtings do tend to discomforts, and are the great cause of the disquieting of the saints. Therefore lay thy grounds of trial safely and advisedly: proceed in the work deliberately and methodically: follow it to an issue resolutely and industriously: suffer not thy heart to give thee the slip, and get away before a judgment, but make it stay to hear its sentence: if once, or twice, or thrice, will not do it, nor a few days of hearing bring it to issue, follow it on with unwearied diligence, and give not over till the work be done, and till thou canst say knowingly off or on, either thou art, or art not a member of Christ: either that thou hast, or that thou hast not yet title to this rest. Be sure thou rest not in wilful uncertainties. If thou canst not despatch the work well thyself, get the help of those that are skilful. Co to thy minister, if he lie a man of experience; or go to some able, experienced friend; open thy case faithfully, and wish them to deal plainly; and thus continue till thou hast got assurance: not but some doubtings may still remain; but yet thou mayest have so much assurance as to master them, that they may not much interrupt thy peace. If men did know heaven to be their own inheritance, we should less need to persuade their thoughts unto it, or to press them to set their delight in it. Oh! if men did truly know that God is their own Father, and Christ their own Redeemer and Head, and that those are their own everlasting habitations, and that there it is that they must abide and be happy for ever; how could they choose but be ravished with the forethoughts thereof! If a Christian could but look upon sun, and moon, and stars, and reckon all his own in Christ, and say, 'These are the portion that my Husband doth bestow; these are the blessings that my Lord hath procured me, and things incomparably greater than these;' what holy raptures would his spirit feel! The more do they sin against their own comforts, as well as against the grace of the Gospel, who are wilful maintainers of their own doubtings, and plead for their unbelief, and cherish distrustful thoughts of God, and scandalous, injurious thoughts of their Redeemer: who represent the covenant, as if it were of works and not of grace; and represent Christ

as an enemy rather than as a Saviour, as if he were glad of advantages against them, and were willing that they should keep off from him, and die in their unbelief; when he hath called them so oft, and invited them so kindly, and borne the hell that they should bear. Ah! wretches that we are, that be keeping up jealousies of the love of our Lord, when we should be rejoicing and bathing our souls in his love; that can question that love which hath been so fully evidenced; and doubt still whether he that hath stooped so low, and suffered so much, and taken up a nature and office on purpose, be yet willing to be theirs, who are willing to be his; as if any man could choose Christ before Christ hath chosen him, or any man could desire to have Christ more than Christ desires to have him, or any man were more willing to be happy than Christ is to make him happy. Fie upon these injurious, if not blasphemous thoughts! If ever thou have harboured such thoughts in thy breast; or if ever thou have uttered such words with thy tongue, spit out that venom, vomit out that rancour, cast them from thee, and take heed how thou ever entertainest them more! God hath written the names of his people in heaven, as you use to write your names in your own books, or upon your goods, or set your marks on your own sheep: and shall we be attempting to raze them out, and to write our names on the doors of hell? But blessed be our God, whose foundation is sure, (2 Tim. 2:19,) and who keepeth us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. (1 Peter 1:5.) Well, then, this is my second advice to thee, that thou follow on the work of self-examination, till thou hast got assurance that this rest is thy own; and this will draw thy heart unto it, and feed thy spirits with fresh delights, which else will be but tormented so much the more, to think that there is such rest for others, but none for thee.

Sect. IV. 3. Another help to sweeten thy soul with the foretastes of rest, is this, Labour to apprehend how near it is, think seriously of its speedy approach. That which we think is near at hand, we are more sensible of than that which we behold at a distance. When we hear of war or famine in another country, it troubleth us not so much; or if we hear it prophesied of a long time hence: so if we hear of plenty a

great way off, or of a golden age that shall fall out who knows when, this never rejoiceth us. But if judgments or mercies begin to draw near, then they affect us. If we were sure we should see the golden age, then it would take with us. When the plague is in a town but twenty miles off, we do not fear it; nor much, perhaps, if it be in another street; but if once it come to the next door, or if it seize on one in our own family, then we begin to think on it more feelingly. It is so with mercies as well as judgments. When they are far off, we talk of them as marvels; but when they draw close to us, we rejoice in them as truths. This makes men think on heaven so insensibly, because they conceit it at too great a distance. They look on it as twenty, or thirty, or forty years off; and this is it that dulls their sense. As wicked men are fearless and senseless of judgment, because the sentence is not speedily executed; (Eccles. 8:11;) so are the godly deceived of their comforts, by supposing them farther off than they are. This is the danger of putting the day of death far from us, when men will promise themselves longer time in the world than God hath promised them, and judge of the length of their lives by the probabilities they gather from their age, their health, their constitution and temperature: this makes them look at heaven as a great way off. If the rich fool in the Gospel had not expected to have lived many years, he would surely have thought more of providing for eternity, and less of his present store and possessions: (Luke 12:17–20:) and if we did not think of staying many years from heaven, we should think on it with far more piercing thoughts. This expectation of long life, doth both the wicked and the godly a great deal of wrong. How much better were it to receive the sentence of death in ourselves, and to look on eternity as near at hand! (2 Cor. 1:8–10.) Surely, reader, thou standest at the door; and hundreds of diseases are ready waiting to open the door and let thee in. Are not the thirty or forty years of thy life that are past quickly gone? Are they not a very little time when thou lookest back on them, and will not all the rest be shortly so too? Do not days and nights come very thick? Dost thou not feel that building of flesh to shake, and perceive thy house of clay to totter? Look on thy glass, see how it runs; look on thy watch, how fast it getteth. What a short moment is between us

and our rest: what a step is it from hence to everlastingness! While I am thinking and writing of it, it hasteth near, and I am even entering into it before I am aware. While thou art reading this it posteth on, and thy life will be gone as a tale that is told. Mayest thou not easily foresee thy dying time, and look upon thyself as ready to depart? It is but a few days till thy friends shall lay thee in the grave, and others do the like for them. If you verily believed you should die tomorrow, how seriously would you think of heaven to-night! The condemned prisoner knew before that he must die, and yet he was then as jovial as any; but when he hears the sentence, and knows he hath not a week to live, then how it sinks his heart within him: so that the true apprehension of the nearness of eternity doth make men's thoughts of it be quick and piercing, and put life into their fears and sorrows, if they are unfitted, and into their desires and joys, if they have assurance of its glory. When the witch's Samuel had told Saul, By to-morrow this time thou shalt be with me, (1 Sam. 28:19,) this quickly worked to his very heart, and laid him down as dead on the earth. And if Christ should say to a believing soul, 'By to-morrow this time thou shalt be with me,' this would be a working word, indeed, and would bring him in spirit to heaven before. As Melancthon was wont to say of his uncertain station, because of the persecution of his enemies, "Ego jam sum hic, Dei beneficio, 40 annos, et nunquam potui dicere aut certus esse, me per unam septimanam mansuram esse;" i. e. I have now been here these forty years, and yet could never say, or be sure, that I shall tarry here for one week: so may we all say of our abode on earth. As long as thou hast continued out of heaven, thou canst not say thou shalt be out of it one week longer. Do but suppose that you are still entering in it, and you shall find it will much help you more seriously to mind it.

Sect. V. 4. Another help to this heavenly life, is, to be much in serious discoursing of it, especially with those that can speak from their hearts, and are seasoned themselves with a heavenly nature. It is a pity, saith Mr. Bolton, that Christians should ever meet together without some talk of their meeting in heaven, or the way to it, before they part; it is a pity so much precious time is spent among

Christians in vain discourses, foolish janglings, and useless disputes, and not a sober word of heaven among them. Methinks we should meet together of purpose to warm our spirits with discoursing of our rest. To hear a minister, or other private Christian, set forth that blessed, glorious state, with power and life from the promises of the Gospel, methinks should make us say, as the two disciples, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he was opening to us the Scripture?" (Luke 24:32,) while he was opening to us the windows of heaven? If a Felix, or wicked wretch, will tremble, when he hears his judgment powerfully denounced, (Acts 24:25;) why should not the believing soul be revived when he hears his eternal rest revealed? Get then together, fellow Christians, and talk of the affairs of your country and kingdom, and comfort one another with such words. (1 Thess. 4:18.) If worldlings get together, they will be talking of the world; when wantons are together, they will be talking of their lusts, and wicked men can be delighted in talking of wickedness; and should not Christians, then, delight themselves in talking of Christ; and the heirs of heaven in talking of their inheritance? This may make our hearts revive within us, as it did Jacob's, to hear the message that called him to Goshen, and to see the chariots that should bring him to Joseph. Oh that we were furnished with skill and resolution to turn the stream of men's common discourse to these more sublime and precious things; and when men begin to talk of things unprofitable, that we could tell how to put in a word for heaven, and say, as Peter, of his bodily food, "Not so, for I eat not that which is common and unclean," (Acts 10:14,) this is nothing to my eternal rest. Oh, the good that we might both do and receive by this course! If it had not been needful to deter us from unfruitful conference, Christ would not have talked of giving an account of every idle word at judgment; (Matt. 12:36;) say then, as David, when you are in conference, "Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest mirth;" (Psal. 137:5, 6;) and then you shall find the truth of that, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life." (Prov. 15:4.)

Sect VI. 5. Another help to this heavenly life is this, Make it thy business in every duty to wind up thy affections nearer heaven. A man's attainments and receivings from God are answerable to his own desires and ends; that which he sincerely seeks he finds; God's end in the institution of his ordinances was, that they be as so many stepping-stones to our rest, and as the stairs, by which, in subordination to Christ, we may daily ascend unto it in our affections. Let this be thy end in using them, as it was God's end in ordaining them, and doubtless they will not be unsuccessful: though men be personally far asunder, yet they may even by letters have a great deal of intercourse. How have men been rejoiced by a few lines from a friend, though they could not see him face to face! What gladness have we when we do but read the expressions of his love; or if we read of our friend's prosperity and welfare! Many a one that never saw the fight, hath triumphed and shouted, made bonfires, and rung bells, when they have but heard and read of the victory; and may not we have intercourse with God in his ordinances, though our persons be yet so far remote? May not our spirits rejoice in the reading of those lines which contain our legacy and charter for heaven? With what gladness may we read the expressions of love, and hear of the state of our celestial country! With what triumphant shoutings may we applaud our inheritance, though yet we have not the happiness to behold it! Men that are separated by sea and land, can yet, by the mere intercourse of letters, carry on both great and gainful trades, even to the value of their whole estate; and may not a Christian, in the wise improvement of duties, drive on this happy trade for rest? Come not, therefore, with any lower ends to duties; renounce formality, customariness, and applause. When thou kneelest down in secret or public prayer, let it be in hope to get thy heart nearer God before thou risest off thy knees. When thou openest thy Bible, or other books, let it be with this hope, to meet with some passage of divine truth, and some such blessings of the Spirit with it, as may raise thine affections nearer heaven, and give thee a fuller taste thereof. When thou art setting thy foot out of thy door, to go to the public ordinance and worship, say, 'I hope to meet with somewhat from God, that may raise my affections before I return; I

hope the Spirit will give me the meeting, and sweeten my heart with those celestial delights; I hope that Christ will appear to me in the way, shine about me with light from heaven, and let me hear his instructing and reviving voice, and cause the scales to fall from mine eyes, that I may see more of that glory than ever I yet saw; I hope, before I return to my house, my Lord will take my heart in hand, and bring it within the view of rest, and set it before his Father's presence, that I may return, as the shepherds, from the heavenly vision, glorifying and praising God for all the things I have heard and seen, (Luke 2:20,) and say, as those that beheld his miracles, "We have seen strange things to day." (Luke 5:26.) Remember also to pray for thy teacher, that God would put some divine message into his mouth, which may leave a heavenly relish on thy spirit.

If these were our ends, and this our course, when we set to duty, we should not be so strange as we are to heaven.

When the Indians first saw the use of letters by our English, they thought there was surely some spirit in them, that men should converse together by a paper. If Christians would take this course in their duties, they might come to such a holy fellowship with God, and see so much of the mysteries of the kingdom, that it would make the standers-by admire what is in those lines, what is in that sermon, what is in this praying, that fills his heart so full of joy, and that so transports him above himself. Certainly, God would not fail us in our duties, if we did not fail ourselves, and then experience would make them sweeter to us.

Sect. VII. 6. Another help is this, Make an advantage of every object thou seest, and of every passage of Divine Providence, and of every thing that befalls in thy labour and calling, to mind thy soul of its approaching rest. As all providences and creatures are means to our rest, so do they point us to that as their end. Every creature hath the name of God, and of our final rest, written upon it, which a considerate believer may as truly discern, as he can read upon a post or hand, in a cross-way, the name of the town or city which it points

to. This spiritual use of creatures and providences is God's great end in bestowing them on man; and he that overlooks this end must needs rob God of his chiefest praise, and deny him the greatest part of his thanks. The relation that our present mercies have to our great eternal mercies, is the very quintessence and spirits of all these mercies; therefore do they lose the very spirits of all their mercies, and take nothing but the husks and bran, who do overlook this relation, and draw not forth the sweetness of it in their contemplations. God's sweetest dealings with us at the present would not be half so sweet as they are if they did not intimate some further sweetness. As ourselves have a fleshly and a spiritual substance, so have our mercies a fleshly and a spiritual use, and are fitted to the nourishing of both our parts. He that receives the carnal part, and no more, may have his body comforted by them, but not his soul. It is not all one to receive sixpence merely as sixpence, and to receive it in earnest of a thousand pounds; though the sum be the same, yet surely the relation makes a wide difference. Thou takest but the bare earnest, and overlookest the main sum, when thou receivest thy mercies, and forgettest thy crown. Oh, therefore, that Christians were skilled in this art! You can open your Bibles, and read there of God and of glory; oh, learn to open the creatures, and to open the several passages of providence, to read of God and glory there. Certainly, by such a skilful, industrious improvement, we might have a fuller taste of Christ and heaven in every bit of bread that we eat, and in every draught of beer we drink, than most men have in the use of the sacrament. If thou prosper in the world, and thy labour succeed, let it make thee more sensible of thy perpetual prosperity: if thou be weary of thy labours, let it make thy thoughts of rest more sweet: if things go cross and hard with thee in the world, let it make thee the more earnestly desire that day when all thy sorrows and sufferings shall cease. Is thy body refreshed with food or sleep? remember the inconceivable refreshings with Christ. Dost thou hear any news that makes thee glad? remember what glad tidings it will be to hear the sound of the trump of God, and the absolving sentence of Christ, our Judge. Art thou delighting thyself in the society of the saints? remember the everlasting amiable fraternity thou shalt have with

perfected saints in rest. Is God communicating himself to thy spirit? why, remember the time of thy highest advancement, when thy joy shall be full, as thy communion is full. Dost thou hear the raging noise of the wicked, and the disorders of the vulgar, and the confusions of the world like the noise in a cloud, or the roaring of the waters? why think of the blessed agreement in heaven, and the melodious harmony in that choir of God. Dost thou hear or feel the tempest of wars, or see any cloud of blood arising? remember the day when thou shalt be housed with Christ, where there is nothing but calmness and amiable union, and where we shall solace ourselves in perfect peace, under the wings of the Prince of Peace for ever. Thus you may see, what advantages to a heavenly life every condition and creature doth afford us, if we had but hearts to apprehend and improve them. As it is said of the Turks, that they will make bridges of the dead bodies of their men, to pass over the trenches or ditches in their way; so might Christians of the very ruins and calamities of the times, and of every dead body or misery that they see, make a bridge for the passage of their thoughts to their rest. And as they have taught their pigeons, which they call carriers, in divers places, to bear letters of intercourse from friend to friend, at very great distance, so might a wise, industrious Christian get his thoughts carried into heaven, and receive, as it were, returns from thence again by creatures of slower wing than doves, by the assistance of the Spirit, the Dove of God. This is the right Dedalian flight; and thus we may take from each bird a feather, and make us wings, and fly to Christ.

Sect. VIII. 7. Another singular help is this; Be much in that angelical work of praise. As the most heavenly spirits will have the most heavenly employment, so the more heavenly the employment, the more will it make the spirit heavenly. Though the heart be the fountain of all our actions, and the actions will be usually of the quality of the heart, yet do those actions, by a kind of reflection, work much on the heart from whence they spring: the like also may be said of our speeches. So that the work of praising God, being the most heavenly work, is likely to raise us to the most heavenly temper. This

is the work of those saints and angels, and this will be our everlasting work. If we were more taken up in this employment now, we should be liker to what we shall be then. When Aristotle was asked what he thought of music, he answers, "Jovem neque canere, neque citharam pulsare;" that Jupiter did never sing, nor play on the harp, thinking it an unprofitable art to men, which was no more delightful to God. But Christians may better argue from the like ground, that singing of praise is a most profitable duty, because it is so delightful, as it were, to God himself, that he hath made it his people's eternal work; for they shall sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. As desire, and faith, and hope, are of shorter continuance than love and joy, so also preaching, and prayer, and sacraments, and all means for confirmation, and expression of faith and hope, shall cease, when our thanks, and praise, and triumphant expressions of love and joy, shall abide for ever. The liveliest emblem of heaven that I know upon earth, is, when the people of God, in the deep sense of his excellency and bounty, from hearts abounding with love and joy, do join together, both in heart and voice, in the cheerful and melodious singing of his praises. Those that deny the lawful use of singing the Scripture-psalms in our times, do disclose their unheavenly, inexperienced hearts, I think, as well as their ignorant understandings. Had they felt the heavenly delights that many of their brethren in such duties have felt, I think they would have been of another mind. And whereas they are wont to question whether such delights be genuine, or any better than carnal or delusive; surely, the very relish of God and heaven that is in them, the example of the saints in Scripture, whose spirits have been raised by the same duty, and the command of Scripture for the use of this means, one would think, should quickly decide the controversy. And a man may as truly say of these delights, as they use to say of the testimony of the Spirit, that they witness themselves to be of God, and bring the evidence of their heavenly parentage along with them. And whereas they allow only extemporate psalms, immediately dictated to them by the Spirit, when I am convinced that the gift of extemporate singing is so common to the church, that any man who is spiritually merry can use it, (James 5:13,) and when I am convinced that the use

of Scripture-psalms is abolished or prohibited, then I shall more regard their judgment. Certainly, as large as mine acquaintance hath been with men of this spirit, I never yet heard any of them sing a psalm extempore, that was better than David's; yea, or that was tolerable to a judicious hearer, and not rather a shame to himself and his opinion. But sweet experience will be a powerful argument, and will teach the sincere Christian to hold fast his exercise of this soul-raising duty.

Little do we know how we wrong ourselves, by shutting out of our prayers the praises of God, or allowing them so narrow a room as we usually do, while we are copious enough in our confessions and petitions. Reader, I entreat thee, remember this: Let praises have a larger room in thy duties; keep ready at hand matter to feed thy praise, as well as matter for confession and petition. To this end, study the excellences and goodness of the Lord, as frequently as thy own necessities and vileness; study the mercies which thou hast received, and which are promised; both their own proper worth and their aggravating circumstances, as often as thou studiest the sins thou hast committed. Oh, let God's praise be much in your mouths, for in the mouths of the upright, his praise is comely. (Psal. 33:1.) Seven times a day did David praise him. (Psalm 119:164.) Yea, his praise was continually of him. (Psalm 71:6.) As he that offereth praise glorifieth God, (Psalm 50:23,) so doth he most rejoice and glad his own soul. (Psalm 98:4.) Offer, therefore, the sacrifice of praise continually. (Heb. 13:15.) In the midst of the church, let us sing his praise. (Heb. 2:12.) Praise our God, for he is good; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant. (Psalm 135:3; 147:1.) Yea, let us rejoice and triumph in his praise. (Psalm 106:47.)

Do you think that David had not a most heavenly spirit, who was so much employed in this heavenly work? Doth it not sometime very much raise your hearts, when you do but seriously read that divine song of Moses, Deut. 32, and those heavenly iterated praises of David, having almost nothing sometime but praise in his mouth? How much more would it raise and refresh us, to be skilled and

accustomed in the work ourselves! I confess, to a man of a languishing body, where the heart doth faint, and the spirits are feeble, the cheerful praising of God is more difficult; because the body is the soul's instrument, and when it lies unstringed, or untuned, the music is likely to be accordingly but dull. Yet a spiritual cheerfulness there may be within, and the heart may praise, if not the voice. But where the body is strong, the spirits lively, and the heart cheerful, and the voice at command, what advantage have such for this heavenly work! With what alacrity and vivacity may they sing forth praises! O the madness of heathful youth, that lay out this vigour of body and mind upon vain delights and fleshly lusts, which is so fit for the noblest work of man! And O the sinful folly of many of the saints, who drench their spirits in continual sadness, and waste their days in complaints and groans, and fill their bodies with wasting diseases, and so make themselves both in body and mind unfit for this sweet and heavenly work! That when they should join with the people of God in his praises, and delight their souls in singing to his name, they are questioning their worthiness, and studying their miseries, or raising scruples about the lawfulness of the duty, and so rob God of his praise, and themselves of their solace. But the greatest destroyer of our comfort in this duty, is our sticking in the carnal delight thereof, and taking up in the tune and melody, and suffering the heart to be all the while idle, which must perform the chiefest part of the work, and which should make use of the melody, for its reviving and exhilarating.

Sect. IX. If thou wouldst have thy heart in heaven, keep thy soul still possessed with true believing thoughts of the exceeding, infinite love of God. Love is the attractive of love. No man's heart will be set upon him that hates him, were he never so excellent, nor much upon him that doth not much love him. There are few so vile, but will love those that love them, be they never so mean. No doubt it is the death of our heavenly life, to have hard and doubtful thoughts of God; to conceive of him as a hater of the creature (except only of obstinate rebels), and as one that had rather damn us, than save us, and that is glad of an opportunity to do us a mischief, or at least hath no great

good-will to us: this is to put the blessed God into the similitude of Satan. And who, then, can set his heart and love upon him? When in our vile unbelief and ignorance we have drawn the most ugly picture of God in our imaginations, then we complain that we cannot love him, and delight in him. This is the case of many thousand Christians. Alas! that we should thus belie and blaspheme God, and blast our own joys, and depress our spirits! Love is the very essence of God. The Scripture tells us, that "God is love;" it telleth us, that fury dwelleth not in him; that he delighteth not in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he repent and live. (1 John 4:16; Isa. 27:4; Ezek. 18:32, and 33:11.) Much more, that he testifieth his love to his chosen; and his full resolution, effectually to save them. Oh, if we could always think of God but as we do of a friend! As of one that doth unfeignedly love us, even more than we do ourselves; whose very heart is set upon us to do us good, and hath therefore provided us an everlasting dwelling with himself; it would not then be so hard to have our heart still with him! Where we love most heartily, we shall think most sweetly, and most freely; and nothing will quicken our love more than the belief of his love to us. Get therefore a truer conceit of the loving nature of God, and lay up all the experiences and discoveries of his love to thee; and then see if it will not further thy heavenly-mindedness. I fear, most Christians think higher of the love of a hearty friend, than of the love of God: and then what wonder if they love their friends better than God, and trust them more confidently than God, and had rather live with them than with God, when they take them for better and trustier friends than God, and of more merciful and compassionate nature!

Sect. X. 9. Another thing I would advise you to, is this: Be a careful observer of the drawings of the Spirit, and fearful of quenching its motions, of resisting its workings; if ever thy soul get above the earth, and get acquainted with this living in heaven, the Spirit of God must be to thee as the chariot to Elijah; yea, the very living principle by which thou must move and ascend. O, then, grieve not thy guide, quench not thy life, (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19,) knock not off thy chariot-wheels! If thou do, no wonder if thy soul be at a loss, and all

stand still, or fall to the earth. You little think how much the life of all your graces, and the happiness of your souls doth depend upon your ready and cordial obedience to the Spirit. When the Spirit urgeth thee to secret prayer, and thou refuseth obedience; when he forbids thee thy known transgressions, and yet thou wilt go on; when he telleth thee which is the way, and which not, and thou wilt not regard; no wonder if heaven and thy soul be strange. If thou wilt not follow the Spirit while it would draw thee to Christ, and to thy duty; how should it lead thee to heaven, and bring thy heart into the presence of God? O, what supernatural help, what bold access shall that soul find in its approaches to the Almighty, that is accustomed to a constant obeying of the Spirit! And how backward, how dull, and strange, and ashamed will he be to these addresses, who hath long used to break away from the Spirit that would have guided him! Even as stiff and unfit will they be for this spiritual motion, as a dead man to a natural. I beseech thee, christian reader, learn well this lesson, and try this course; let not the motions of thy body only, but also the very thoughts of thy heart, be at the Spirit's beck. Dost thou not feel sometimes a strong impulsion to retire from the world, and draw near to God? O do not thou disobey, but take the offer, and hoist up sail while thou mayest have this blessed gale. When the wind blows strongest, thou goest fastest, either backward or forward. The more of this Spirit we resist, the deeper will it wound; and the more we obey, the speedier is our pace; as he goes heaviest that hath the wind in his face, and he easiest that hath it in his back.

10. Lastly, I advise as a further help to this heavenly work, that thou neglect not the due care for the health of thy body, and for the maintaining a vigorous cheerfulness in thy spirits; nor yet over-pamper and please, thy flesh: learn how to carry thyself with prudence to thy body. It is a useful servant if thou give it its due, and but its due: it is a most devouring tyrant, if thou give it the mastery, or suffer it to have what it unreasonably desireth. And it is as a blunted knife, as a horse that is lame, as thy ox that is famished, if thou injuriously deny it what is necessary to its support. When we consider how frequently men offend on both extremes, and how few

use their bodies aright, we cannot wonder if they be much hindered in their heavenly conversing. Most men are very slaves to their sensitive appetite, and can scarce deny anything to the flesh, which they can give it on easier rates, without much shame, or loss, or grief. The flesh thus used is as unfit to serve you as a wild colt to ride on. When such men should converse in heaven, the flesh will carry them out to an ale-house, or to their sports, to their profits, or credit, or vain company; to wanton practices, or sights, or speeches, or thoughts: it will thrust a whore, or a pair of cards, or a good bargain into their minds, instead of God. Look to this specially, you that are young, and heathful, and lusty: as you love your souls, remember that in Rom. 13:14, which converted Austin, Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil its desires; and that in Rom. 8:4–8, 12–14. Some few others do much hinder their heavenly joy, by over-rigorous denying the body its necessaries, and so making it unable to serve them. But the most, by surfeiting and excess, do overthrow and disable it. You love to have your knife keen, and every instrument you use in order: when your horse goes lustily, how cheerfully do you travel! As much need hath the soul of a sound and cheerful body. If they who abuse their bodies, and neglect their health, did wrong the flesh only, the matter were small, but they wrong the soul also: as he that spoils the house, doth wrong the inhabitant. When the body is sick, and the spirits do languish, how heavily move we in these meditations and joys! Yet where God denieth this mercy, we may the better bear it, because he oft occasioneth our benefit by the denial.

CHAP. VI

Containing the Description of the great Duty of Heavenly Contemplation

SECT. I. Though I hope what is already spoken be not un-useful, and that it will not by the reader be cast aside; yet I must tell you, that the main thing intended is yet behind, and that which I aimed at when I set upon this work. I have observed the maxim, that my principal end

be last in execution, though it was first in my intention. All that I have said is but for the preparation to this: the doctrinal part is but to instruct you for this; the rest of the uses are but introductions to this: the motives I have laid down, are but to make you willing for this: the hinderances mentioned were but so many blocks in the way to this: the general helps which I last delivered, are but the necessary attendants of this; so that, reader, if thou neglect this that follows, thou dost frustrate the main end of my design, and makest me lose (as to thee) the chief of my labour. I once more entreat thee, therefore, as thou art a man that maketh conscience of a revealed duty, and that darest not wilfully resist the Spirit, as thou valuest the high delights of a saint, and the soul-ravishing exercise of heavenly contemplation, as all my former moving considerations seem reasonable to thee, and as thou art faithful to the peace and prosperity of thine own soul, that thou diligently study these directions following, and that thou speedily and faithfully put them into practice: practice is the end of all sound doctrine, and all right faith doth end in duty. I pray thee, therefore, resolve before thou readest any further, and promise here, as before the Lord, that if the following advice be wholesome to thy soul, thou wilt conscionably follow it, and seriously set thyself to the work; and that no laziness of spirit shall take thee off, nor the lesser business interrupt thy course, but that thou wilt approve thyself a doer of this word, and not an idle hearer only. Is this thy promise; and wilt thou stand to it? Resolve, man; and then I shall be encouraged to give thee my advice: if I spread not before thee a delicious feast, if I set thee not upon as gainful a trade, and put not into thy hand as delightful an employment as ever thou dealtest with in all thy life, then cast it away, and tell me I have deceived thee; only try it thoroughly, and then judge: I say again, if in the faithful following of this prescribed course, thou dost not find an increase of all thy graces, and dost not grow beyond the stature of common Christians, and art not made more serviceable in thy place, and more precious in the eyes of all that are discerning; if thy soul enjoy not more fellowship with God, and thy life be not fuller of pleasure and solace, and thou have not comfort readier by thee at a dying hour, and when thou hast greatest

need; then throw these directions back in my face, and exclaim against me as a deceiver for ever: except God should leave thee uncomfortable for a little season, for the more glorious manifestation of his attributes, and thy integrity, and single thee out as he did Job, for an example and mirror of constancy and patience, which would be but a preparative for thy fuller comfort. Certainly, God will not forsake this his own ordinance thus conscionably performed, but will be found of those that thus diligently seek him. God hath, as it were, appointed to meet thee in this way, do not thou fail to give him the meeting, and thou shalt find by experience that he will not fail.

The duty which I press upon thee so earnestly, I shall now describe and open to thee; for I suppose, by this time, thou art ready to inquire, 'What is this so highly extolled work?' Why, it is the set and solemn acting of all the powers of the soul upon this most perfect object, rest, by meditation.

Sect. II. I will a little more fully explain the meaning of this description, that so the duty may lie plain before thee. 1. The general title that I give this duty is meditation; not as it is precisely distinguished from thought, consideration, and contemplation; but as it is taken in the larger and usual sense for thinking on things spiritual, and so comprehending consideration and contemplation.

That meditation is a duty of God's ordaining, not only in his written law, but also in nature itself, I never met with a man that would deny; but that it is a duty constantly and conscionably practised even by the godly, so far as my acquaintance extends, I must, with sorrow, deny it. It is in word confessed to be a duty by all, but by the constant neglect denied by most; and, I know not by what fatal customary security it comes to pass that men that are very tender-conscienced towards most other duties, yet do as easily overslip this, as if they knew it not to be a duty at all. They that are presently troubled in mind, if they omit but a sermon, a fast, a prayer in public or private, yet were never troubled that they have omitted meditation, perhaps all their lifetime to this very day; though it be that duty by which all

other duties are improved, and by which the soul digesteth truths, and draweth forth their strength for its nourishment and refreshing. Certainly, I think that a man is but half an hour in chewing and taking into his stomach that meat which he must have seven or eight hours at least to digest; so a man may take into his understanding and memory more truth in one hour than he is able well to digest in many. A man may eat too much, but he cannot digest too well. Therefore, God commanded Joshua, that the book of the law depart not out of his mouth, but that he meditate therein day and night; that he may observe to do according to that which is written therein. (Josh. 1:8.) As digestion is the turning of the raw food into chyle and blood, and spirits and flesh, so meditation rightly managed, turneth the truths received and remembered, into warm affection, raised resolution, and holy and upright conversation. Therefore, what good those men are like to get by sermons or providences, who are unacquainted with, and unaccustomed to, this work of meditation, you may easily judge. And why so much preaching is lost among us, and professors can run from sermon to sermon, and are never weary of hearing or reading, and yet have such languishing, starved souls, I know no truer or greater cause than their ignorance and unconscionable neglect of meditation. If a man have the lientery, that his meat passes from him as he took it in; or, if he vomits it up as fast as he eats it, what strength, and vigour of body, and senses, is this man like to have? Indeed, he may well eat more than a sounder man, and the small abode that it makes in the stomach, may refresh it at the present, and help to draw out a lingering, languishing, uncomfortable, unprofitable life; and so do our hearers that have this disease; perhaps they hear more than otherwise they needed, and the clear discovery and lively delivery of the truth of God, may warm and refresh them a little, while they are hearing, and perhaps an hour or two after; and, it may be, linger out their grace in a languishing, uncomfortable, unprofitable life; but if they did hear one hour, and meditate seven; if they did as constantly digest their sermons as they hear them, and not take in one sermon before the former is well concocted, they would find another kind of benefit by sermons, than the ordinary sort of the forwardest Christians do. I know many

carnal persons do make this an argument against frequent preaching and hearing, who do it merely from a loathing of the Word, and know far less how to meditate than they know how understandingly to hear; only they pretend meditation against often hearing, because, that being a duty of the mind, you cannot so easily discern their omission of it. These are sick of the anorexia and aepsia; they have neither appetite nor digestion. The other of the boulimia; they have appetite, but no digestion.

Sect. III. But because meditation is a general word, and it is not all meditation that I here intend, I shall therefore lay thee down the difference whereby this meditation that I am urging thee to, is distinguished from all other kinds; and the difference is taken from the act, and from the object of it.

1. From the act, which I call the set and solemn acting of all the powers of the soul.

1. I call it the acting of them; for it is action that we are directing you in now, and not relations or dispositions; yet these also are necessarily presupposed. It must be a soul that is qualified for the work by the supernatural renewing grace of the Spirit, which must be able to perform this heavenly exercise. It is the work of the living, and not of the dead; it is a work of all other most spiritual and sublime, and therefore not to be well performed by a heart that is merely carnal and terrene. Also, they must necessarily have some relation to heaven before they can familiarly there converse. I suppose them to be the sons of God, when I persuade them to love him; and to be of the family of God, yea, the spouse of his Son, when I persuade them to press into his presence, and to dwell with him. I suppose them to be such as have title to rest, when I persuade them to rejoice in the meditations of rest. These, therefore, being all presupposed, are not the duties here intended and required, but it is the bringing of their sanctified dispositions into act, and the delightful reviewing of their high relations. Habits and powers are but to enable us to action. To say, I am able to do this, or I am

disposed to it, doth neither please God, nor advantage ourselves, except withal we really do it. God doth not regenerate thy soul that it may be able to know him, and not know him; or that it may be able to believe, and yet not believe; or that it may be able to love him, and yet not to love him; but he therefore makes thee able to know, to believe and love, that thou mayest indeed both know, believe, and love him. What good doth that power which is not reduced into act? Therefore, I am not now exhorting thee to be an able Christian, but to be an active Christian, according to the degree of that ability which thou hast. As thy store of money, or food, or raiment, which thou lettest lie by thee, and never usest, doth thee no good but please thy fancy, or raise thee to an esteem in the eyes of others, so all thy gifts, and powers, and habits, which lie still in thy soul, and are never acted, do profit or comfort thee little or nothing, but in satisfying thy fancy, and raising thee to the repute of an able man, so far as they are discernible to the standers-by.

Sect. IV. 2. I call this mediation, "the acting of the powers of the soul," meaning the soul as rational, to difference it from the cogitations of the soul as sensitive: the sensitive soul hath a kind of meditation by the common sense, the fantasy and estimation. The fleshly man mindeth the things of the flesh. (Rom. 8.) If it were the work of the ear, or the eye, or the tongue, or the hands, which I am setting you on, I doubt not but you would more readily take it up; but it is the work of the soul, for bodily exercise doth here profit but little. The soul hath its labour and its ease; its business and its idleness; its intention and remission, as well as the body; and diligent students are usually as sensible of the labour and weariness of their spirits and brain, as they are of that of the members of the body. This action of the soul is it I persuade thee to.

Sect. V. 3. I call it the acting of "all" the powers of the soul, to difference it from the common meditation of students, which is usually the mere employment of the brain. It is not a bare thinking that I mean, nor the mere use of invention or memory, but a business of a higher and more excellent nature. When truth is apprehended

only as truth, this is but an unsavoury and loose apprehension; but when it is apprehended as good, as well as true, this is a fast and delightful apprehension. As a man is not so prone to live according to the truth he knows, except it do deeply affect him, so neither doth his soul enjoy its sweetness, except speculation do pass to affection. The understanding is not the whole soul, and therefore cannot do the whole work. As God hath made several parts in man to perform their several offices for his nourishing and life, so hath he ordained the faculties of the soul to perform their several offices for his spiritual life: the stomach must chylify, and prepare for the liver; the liver and spleen must sanguify, and prepare for the heart and brain; and these must beget the vital and animal spirits, &c.; so the understanding must take in truths, and prepare them for the will, and it must receive them, and commend them to the affections. The best digestion is in the bottom of the stomach; the affections are, as it were, the bottom of the soul; and therefore the best digestion is there. While truth is but a speculation swimming in the brain, the soul hath not half received it, nor taken fast hold of it; Christ and heaven have various excellences, and therefore God hath formed the soul with a power of apprehending divers ways, that so we might be capable of enjoying those divers excellences in Christ. Even as the creatures having their several uses, God hath given us several senses, that so we might enjoy the delights of them all. What the better had we been for the pleasant, odoriferous flowers and perfumes, if we had not possessed the sense of smelling; or what good would language or music have done us, if God had not given us the sense of hearing? or what delight should we have found in meats, or drinks, or sweetest things, if we had been deprived of the sense of tasting? So also, what good could all the glory of heaven have done us; or what pleasure should we have had, even in the goodness and perfection of God himself, if we had been without the affections of love and joy, whereby we are capable of being delighted in that goodness? And what benefit of strength or sweetness canst thou possibly receive by thy meditations on eternity, while thou dost not exercise those affections which are the senses of the soul, by which it must receive this sweetness and strength?

This is it that hath deceived Christians in this business; they have thought that meditation is nothing but the bare thinking on truths, and the rolling of them in the understanding and memory; when every schoolboy can do this, or persons that hate the things which they think on.

Therefore this is the great task in hand, and this is the work that I would set thee on: to get these truths from thy head to thy heart, and that all the sermons which thou hast heard of heaven, and all the notions that thou hast conceived of this rest, may be turned into the blood and spirits of affection, and thou mayest feel them revive thee, and warm thee at the heart, and mayest so think of heaven as heaven should be thought on.

There are two accesses of contemplation, said Bernard, one in intellection, the other in affection; one in light, the other in heat; one in acquisition, the other in devotion. If thou shouldst study of nothing but heaven while thou livest, and shouldst have thy thoughts at command, to turn them hither on every occasion, and yet shouldst proceed no further than this; this were not the meditation that I intend, nor would it much advantage or better thy soul; as it is thy whole soul that must possess God hereafter, so must the whole, in a lower manner, possess him here. I have shown you in the beginning of this treatise, how the soul must enjoy the Lord in glory; to wit, by knowing, by loving, and joying in him. Why, the very same way must thou begin in thy enjoyment here.

So much as thy understanding and affections are sincerely acted upon by God, so much dost thou enjoy him: and this is the happy work of this meditation. So that you see here is somewhat more to be done than barely to remember and think of heaven. As running, ringing, and moving, and such-like labours, do not only stir a hand or foot, but do strain and exercise the whole body, so doth meditation the whole soul.

As the affections of sinners are set on the world, and turned to idols, and fallen from God, as well as the understanding, so must the affections of men be reduced to God, and taken up with him, as well as the understanding; and as the whole was filled with sin before, so the whole must be filled with God now. As St. Paul saith of knowledge, and gifts, and faith to remove mountains, that if thou have all these without love, "thou art but as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal;" (1 Cor. 13:1, 2;) so I may say of the exercise of these, If in this work of meditation thou do exercise knowledge, and gifts, and faith of miracles, and not exercise love and joy, thou dost nothing; thou playest the child, and not the man; the sinner's part, and not the saint's. For so will sinners do also. If thy meditation tends to fill thy note-book with notions, and good sayings, concerning God, and not thy heart with longings after him, and delight in him, for aught I know thy book is as much a Christian as thou. Mark but David's description of the blessed man: "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night." (Psal. 1:3.)

Sect. VI. 4. I call this meditation "set and solemn," to difference it from that which is occasional and cursory. As there is prayer which is solemn, when we set ourselves wholly to the duty, and prayer which is sudden and short, commonly called ejaculations, when a man, in the midst of other business, doth send up some brief request to God; so also there is meditation solemn, when we apply ourselves only to that work; and there is meditation which is short and cursory, when in the midst of our business we have some good thoughts of God in our minds; and as solemn prayer is either first set, when a Christian, observing it as a standing duty, doth resolvedly practise it in a constant course; or, secondly, occasionally, when some unusual occasion doth put us upon it at a season extraordinary; so also meditation admits of the like distinction. Now, though I would persuade you to that meditation which is mixed with your common labours in your callings, and to that which special occasions do direct you to, yet these are not the main things which I here intend; but that you would make it a constant, standing duty, as you do by hearing,

and praying, and reading the Scripture; and that you would solemnly set yourselves about it, and make it for that time your whole work, and intermix other matters no more with it than you would do with prayer or other duties. Thus you see, as it is differenced by its act, what kind of meditation it is that we speak of; viz., it is the set and solemn acting of all the powers of the soul.

Sect. VII. The second part of the difference is drawn from its object, which is "rest," or the most blessed state of man in his everlasting enjoyment of God in heaven. Meditation hath a large field to walk in; and hath as many objects to work upon, as there are matters, and lines, and words in the Scripture, as there are known creatures in the whole creation, and as there are particular discernible passages of Providence in the government of the persons and actions through the world; but the meditation that I now direct you in, is only of the end of all these, and of these as they refer to that end. It is not a walk from mountains to valleys, from sea to land, from kingdom to kingdom, from planet to planet; but it is a walk from mountains and valleys to the holy mount Zion; from sea and land to the land of the living; from the kingdoms of this world to the kingdom of saints; from earth to heaven; from time to eternity. It is a walking upon sun, and moon, and stars; it is a walking in the garden and paradise of God. It may seem far off; but spirits are quick, whether in the body or out of the body; their motion is swift; they are not so heavy or dull as these earthly lumps, nor so slow of motion as these clods of flesh. I would not have you cast off your other meditations, but, surely, as heaven hath the pre-eminence in perfection, so should it have the pre-eminence also in our meditations. That which will make us most happy when we possess it, will make us most joyful when we meditate upon it, especially when that meditation is a degree of possession, if it be such affecting meditation as I here describe.

You need not here be troubled with the fears of the world, lest studying so much on these high matters should craze your brains, and make you mad, unless you would go mad with delight and joy, and that of the purest and most solid kind. If I set you to meditate as

much on sin and wrath, and to study nothing but judgment and damnation, then you might justly fear such an issue. But it is heaven, and not hell, that I would persuade you to walk in. It is joy, and not sorrow, that I persuade you to exercise. I would urge you to look upon no deformed object, but only upon the ravishing glory of saints, and the unspeakable excellences of the God of glory, and the beams that stream from the face of his Son. Are these such sadding and madding thoughts? Will it distract a man to think of his only happiness? Will it distract the miserable to think of mercy, or the captive or prisoner to see deliverance, or the poor to think of riches and honour approaching? Neither do I persuade your thoughts to matters of great difficulty, or to study thorny and knotty controversies of heaven, or to search out things beyond your reach. If you should thus set your wit and invention upon the tenters, you might be quickly distracted or distempered indeed. But it is your affections more than your wits and inventions, which must be used in this heavenly employment we speak of. They are truths which are commonly known and professed, that your souls must draw forth and feed upon. The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, are articles of your creed, and not nicer controversies. Methinks it should be liker to make a man mad, to think of living in a world of woe, to think of abiding in poverty and sickness, among the rage of wicked men, than to think of living with Christ in bliss. Methinks, if we be not mad already, it should sooner distract us, to hear the tempests and roaring waves, to see the billows, and rocks, and sands, and gulfs, than to think of arriving safe at rest. But wisdom is justified of all her children. (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35.) Knowledge hath no enemy but the ignorant. This heavenly course was never spoke against by any, but those that never either knew it, or used it. I more fear the neglect of men that do approve it, than the opposition or arguments of any against it. Truth loseth more by loose friends than by sharpest enemies.

CHAP. VII

Containing the fittest Time and Place for this Contemplation, and the Preparation of the Heart unto it

SECT. I. Thus I have opened to you the nature of this duty, and by this time I suppose you partly apprehend what it is that I so press upon you; which, when it is opened more particularly, you will more fully discern. I now proceed to direct you in the work: where I shall first show you how you must set upon it; and, Secondly, How you must behave yourself in it; and, Thirdly, How you shall shut it up. And here I suppose thee to be a man that dost conscionably avoid the forementioned hinderances, and conscionably use the forementioned helps, or else it is in vain to set thee a higher lesson, till thou hast first learned that; which, if thou have done, I then further advise thee: First, Somewhat concerning the time and season; Secondly, Somewhat concerning the place; and, Thirdly, Somewhat concerning the frame of thy spirit.

And, First, For the time, I advise thee that, as much as may be, it may be set and constant. Proportion out such a part of thy time to the work.

Stick not at their scruple, who question the stating of times as superstitious. If thou suit out thy time to the advantage of the work, and place no more religion in the time itself, thou needest not to fear lest this be superstition. As a workman in his shop will have a set place for every one of his tools and wares, or else when he should use it, it may be to seek; so a Christian should have a set time for every ordinary duty, or else when he should practise it, it is ten to one but he will be put by it. Stated time is a hedge to duty, and defends it against many temptations to omission. God hath stated none but the Lord's-day himself, but he hath left it to be stated and determined by ourselves, according to every man's condition and occasions, lest otherwise his law should have been a burden or a snare. Yet hath he left us general rules, which, by the use of reason and christian prudence, may help us to determine of the fittest times. It is as ridiculous a question of them that ask us where Scripture commands

to pray so oft, or at such hours, privately, or in families; as if they asked where the Scripture commands that the church-house, or temple, stand in such a place, or the pulpit in such a place, or my seat in such a place; or where it commands a man to read the Scriptures with a pair of spectacles, &c. Most that I have known to break the bond of duty, and to argue against a stated time, have at last grown careless of the duty itself, and showed more dislike against the work than the time. If God give me so much money or wealth, and tell me not in Scripture how much such a poor man must have, nor how much my family, nor how much in clothes, and how much in expenses; is it not lawful, yea, and necessary, that I make the division myself, and allow to each the due proportion? So, if God bestow on me a day or week of time, and give me such and such work to do in this time, and tell me not how much I shall allot to each work, certainly I must make the division myself, and cut my coat according to my cloth, and proportion it wisely and carefully too, or else I am like to leave something undone. Though God hath not told you at what hour you shall rise in the morning, or at what hours you shall eat and drink, yet your own reason and experience will tell you that, ordinarily, you should observe a stated time. Neither let the fear of customariness and formality deter you from this. That argument hath brought the Lord's-supper from once a week to once a quarter, or once a year; and it hath brought family duties, with too many of late, from twice a day to once a week, or once a month; and if it were not that man, being proud, is naturally of a teaching humour, and addicted to works of popularity and ostentation, I believe it would diminish preaching as much: and will it deal any better with secret duties, especially this of holy meditation? I advise thee, therefore, if thou well mayest, to allow this duty a stated time, and be as constant in it as in hearing and praying. Yet be cautious in understanding this. I know this will not prove every man's duty. Some have not themselves and their time at command, and therefore cannot set their hours. Such are most servants, and many children of poor and earnal parents; and many are so poor that the necessity of their families will deny them this freedom. I do not think it the duty of such to leave their labours for this work just at certain set times; no,

nor for prayer, or other necessary worship. No such duty is at all times a duty. Affirmatives, especially positive, bind not semper et ad semper. When two duties come together, and cannot both be performed, it were then a sin to perform the lesser. Of two duties we must choose the greater, though of two sins we must choose neither. I think such persons were best to be watchful, to redeem time as much as they can, and take their vacant opportunities as they fall, and especially to join meditation and prayer, as much as they can, with the very labours of their callings. There is no such enmity between labouring and meditating, or praying in the spirit, but that both may conveniently be done together. Yet, I say, (as Paul, in another ease,) if thou canst be free, use it rather. Those that have more spare time from worldly necessities, and are masters to dispose of themselves and their time, I still advise that they keep this duty to a stated time: and, indeed, it were no ill husbandry, nor point of folly, if we did so by all other duties. If we considered of the ordinary works of the day, and suited out a fit season and proportion of time to every work, and fixed this in our memory and resolution, or wrote it in a table, and kept it in our closets, and never break it but upon unexpected or extraordinary cause. If every work of the clay had thus its appointed time, we should be better skilled, both in redeeming time and performing duty.

Sect. II. 2. I advise thee also, concerning thy time for this duty, that as it be stated, so it be frequent: just how oft it should be, I cannot determine, because men's several conditions may vary it; but in general, that it be frequent, the Scripture requireth, when it mentioneth meditating continually, and day and night. (Psal. 1:2; 119:48, 97, 99.) Circumstances of our condition, may much vary the circumstances of our duties. It may be one man's duty to hear or pray oftener than another, and so it may be in this of meditation. But for those that can conveniently omit other business, I advise, that it be once a day at least. Though Scripture tells us not how oft in a day we should eat or drink, yet prudence and experience will direct us twice or thrice a day, according to the temper and necessities of our bodies. Those that think they should not tie themselves to order or number

of duties, but should then only meditate or pray, when they find the Spirit provoking them to it, do go upon uncertain and unchristian grounds. I am sure, the Scripture provokes us to frequency, and our necessity secondeth the voice of Scripture; and if through my own neglect, or resistance of the Spirit, I do not find it so to excite and quicken me, I dare not therefore disobey the Scripture, nor neglect the necessities of my own soul. I should suspect that spirit which would turn my soul from constancy in duty: y if the Spirit in Scripture bid me meditate or pray, I dare not forbear it, because I find not the Spirit within me to second the command: if I find not incitation to duty before, yet I may find assistance while I wait in performance. I am afraid of laying my corruptions upon the Spirit, or blaming the want of the Spirit's assistance, when I should blame the backwardness of my own heart; nor dare I make one corruption a plea for another; nor urge the inward rebellion of my nature, as a reason for the outward disobedience of my life: and for the healing of my nature's backwardness, I more expect that the Spirit of Christ should do it in a way of duty, (which I still find to be his ordinary season of working,) than in a way of disobedience, and neglect of duty. Men that fall on duty, according to the frame of their spirits only, are like our ignorant vulgar, (or if you will, like the swine,) who think their appetite should be the only rule of their eating; when a wise man judgeth both of quantity and quality, by reason and experience; lest when his appetite is depraved, he should either surfeit or famish. Our appetite is no sure rule for our times of duty; but the word of God in general, and our spiritual reason, experience, necessity, and convenience in particular, may truly direct us.

Three reasons especially should persuade thee to frequency in this meditation on heaven.

1. Because seldom conversing with him will breed a strangeness betwixt thy soul and God: frequent society breeds familiarity, and familiarity increaseth love and delight, and maketh us bold and confident in our addresses. This is the main end of this duty; that thou mayest have acquaintance and fellowship with God therein;

therefore, if thou come but seldom to it, thou wilt keep thyself a stranger still, and so miss of the end of the work. Oh! when a man feels his need of God, and must seek his help in a time of necessity, when nothing else can do him any good, you would little think what an encouragement it is, to go to a God that we know, and are acquainted with. Oh! saith the heavenly Christian, I know both whither I go, and to whom, I have gone this way many a time before now; it is the same God that I daily conversed with; it is the same way that was my daily walk; God knows me well enough, and I have some knowledge of him. On the other side, what a horror and discouragement to the soul will it be, when it is forced to fly God in straits: to think, Alas! I know not whither to go; I never went the way before; I have no acquaintance at the court of heaven; my soul knows not that God that I must speak to; and I fear he will not know my soul! But especially when we come to die, and must immediately appear before this God, and expect to enter into his eternal rest, then the difference will plainly appear; then what a joy will it be to think, I am going to the place that I daily conversed in; to the place from whence I tasted so frequent delights; to that God whom I have met in my meditation so oft! My heart hath been at heaven before now, and tasted the sweetness that hath oft revived it; and (as Jonathan by his honey) if my eyes were so enlightened, and my mind refreshed, when I tasted but a little of that sweetness, what will it be when I shall feed on it freely? (1 Sam. 14:29.) On the other side, what a terror must it be to think, I must die, and go I know not whither; from a place where I am acquainted, to a place where I have no familiarity or knowledge; O sirs! it is an inexpressible horror to a dying man, to have strange thoughts of God and heaven; I am persuaded there is no cause so common, that makes death even to godly men unwelcome and uncomfortable. Therefore, I persuade thee to frequency in this duty, that seldomness breed not estrangedness from God.

2. And besides that, seldomness will make thee unskilful in the work, and strange to the duty, as well as to God. How unhandsomely and clumsily do men set their hands to a work that they are seldom employed in! Whereas frequency will habituate thy heart to the work,

and thou wilt better know the way which thou daily walkest, yea, and it will be more easy and delightful also: the hill which made thee pant and blow at the first going up, thou mayest run up easily when thou art once accustomed to it. The heart, which of itself is naturally backward, will contract a greater unwillingness through disuse; and as an untamed colt not used to the hand, it will hardly come to hand, when thou shouldst use it.

3. And lastly, Thou wilt lose that heat and life by long intermissions, which with much ado thou didst obtain in duty. If thou eat but a meal in two or three days, thou wilt lose thy strength as fast as thou gettest it; if in holy meditation thou get near to Christ, and warm thy heart with the fire of love, if thou then turn away and come but seldom, thou wilt soon return to thy former coldness. If thou walk or labour till thou hast got thee heat, and then sit idle all day after, wilt thou not surely lose thy heat again? Especially, it being so spiritual a work, and so against the bent of nature, we shall be still inclining to our natural temper.

If water that is heated be long from the fire, it will return to its coldness, because that is its natural temper. I advise thee, therefore, that thou be as oft as may be in this soul-raising duty, lest when thou hast long rowed hard against the stream, or tide, and wind, the boat should go farther down by thy intermission, than it was got up by all thy labour: and lest, when thou hast been long rolling thy stony heart towards the top of the hill, it should go faster down when thou dost slack thy diligence. It is true, the intermixed use of other duties may do much to the keeping thy heart above, especially secret prayer; but meditation is the life of most other duties; and the view of heaven is the life of meditation.

Sect. III. 3. Concerning the time of this duty, I advise thee that thou choose the most seasonable time. All things are beautiful and excellent in their season. Unseasonableness may lose thee the fruit of thy labour; it may raise up disturbances and difficulties in the work; yea, it may turn a duty to sin: when the seasonableness of a duty doth

make it easy, doth remove impediments, doth embolden us to the undertaking, and doth ripen its fruit.

The seasons of this duty are either, First, Extraordinary; or, Secondly, Ordinary.

1. The ordinary season for your daily performance cannot be particularly determined by man: otherwise God would have determined it in his word. But men's conditions of employment, and freedom, and bodily temper, are so various, that the same may be a seasonable hour to one, which may be unseasonable to another. If thou be a servant, or a hard labourer, that thou hast not thyself, nor thy time at command, thou must take that season which thy business will best afford thee. Either as thou sittest in the shop at work, or as thou travellest on the way, or as thou liest waking in the night. Every man best knows his own time, even when he hath the least to hinder him of his business in the world. But for those whose necessities tie them not so close, but that they may well lay aside their earthly affairs, and choose what time of the day they will, my advice to such is, that they carefully observe the temper of their body and mind, and mark when they find their spirits most active and fit for contemplation, and pitch upon that as the stated time. Some men are freest for duties when they are fasting, and some are unfittest of all. Some are fit for duties of humiliation at one season, and for duties of exultation at another. Every man is the meetest judge for himself. Only give me leave to tender you my observation, which time I have always found fittest for myself; and that is, the evening; from sun-setting to twilight; and sometimes in the night, when it is warm and clear. Whether it be any thing from the temperature of my body, I know not; but I conjecture that the same time would be seasonable to most tempers, for several natural reasons, which I will not now stand to mention. Neither would I have mentioned my own experience in this, but that I was encouraged hereunto by finding it suit with the experience of a better and a wiser man than myself, and that is Isaac: for it is said in Gen. 24:63, that he went to meditate in a field at the eventide. And his experience I dare more boldly recommend unto

you than my own; and as I remember, Dr. Hall, in his excellent treatise of meditation, gives you the like account of his own experience.

Sect. IV. 2. The Lord's-day is a time exceeding seasonable for this exercise. When should we more seasonably contemplate on rest, than on that day of rest which doth typify it to us? Neither do I think that typifying use is ceased, because the antitype is not fully yet to come; however, it being a day appropriated to worship and spiritual duties, methinks we should never exclude this duty which is so eminently spiritual. I think, verily, this is the chiefest work of a christian sabbath, and most agreeable to the intent of its positive institution. What fitter time to converse with our Lord than on that day which he hath appropriated to such employment, and therefore called it the Lord's-day? What fitter day to ascend to heaven than that on which our Lord did arise from earth, and fully triumph over death and hell, and take possession of heaven for us? The fittest temper for a true believer is to be in the Spirit on the Lord's-day: this was St. John's temper on that day; (Rev. 1:13;) and what can bring us to this ravishment in the Spirit but the spiritual beholding of our ravishing glory? Surely, though an outward ordinance may delight the ear, or tickle the fancy, yet it is the view of God that must ravish the soul. There is a great deal of difference betwixt the receiving of the word with joy, (Matt. 13:20,) and being in the Spirit on the Lord's-day. (Rev. 1:10.)

Two sorts of Christians I would entreat to take notice of this especially.

1. Those that spend the Lord's-day only in public worship, either through the neglect of this spiritual duty of meditation, or else by their over-much exercise of the public, allowing no time to private duty. Though there be few that offend in this last kind, yet some there are, and a hurtful mistake to the soul it is. They will grow but in gifts, and common accomplishments, if they exercise but their gifts in outward performances.

2. Those that have time on the Lord's-day for idleness and vain discourse, and find the day longer than they know how well to spend, were these but acquainted with this duty of contemplation, they would need no other recreation or pastime; they would think the longest day short enough, and be sorry that the night hath shortened their pleasure.

Whether this day be of positive divine institution, and so to us Christians of necessary observation, is out of my way to handle here. I refer those that doubt to what is in print on that subject, especially Master George Abbot against Broad; and, above all, Master Cawdry, and Master Palmer, their 'Sabbatum Redivivum.' It is an encouragement to the doubtful, to find the generality of its rational opposers, to acknowledge the usefulness, yea, the necessity, of a stated day, and the fitness of this above all other days. I would I could persuade those that are convinced of its morality, to spend a greater part of it in this true spirituality. But we do in this as in most things else, think it enough that we believe our duty, as we do the articles of our faith, and let who will put it in practice: we will dispute for duty, and let others perform it. As I have known some drunkards upon the ale-bench will plead for godly men, while themselves are ungodly; so do too many for the observation of the Lord's-day, who themselves are unacquainted with this spiritual part of its observation. Christians, let heaven have some share in your sabbaths, where you must shortly keep your everlasting sabbath. As you go from stair to stair, till you come to the top, so use your sabbaths as steps to glory, till you have passed them all, and are there arrived. Especially you that are poor men, and servants, that cannot take time in the week as you desire, see that you well improve this day. Now your labour lies not so much upon you; now you are unyoked from your common business, be sure, as your bodies rest from their labours, that your spirit seek after rest with God. I admonish all those that are possessed of the censorious devil, that if they see a poor Christian walking privately in the fields on the Lord's-day, they would not pharisaically conclude him a sabbath-breaker, till they know more. It may be he takes it as the opportunist

place to withdraw himself from the world to God. Thou seest where his body walks, but thou seest not where he is walking in spirit. Hannah was censured for a woman drunk, till Eli heard her speak for herself; and when he knew the truth, he was ashamed of his censure. The silent, spiritual worshipper is most liable to their censure, because he gives not the world an account of his worship.

Thus I have directed thee to the fittest season for the ordinary performance of this heavenly work.

Sect. V. 2. For the extraordinary performance, these following are seasonable times. 1. When God doth extraordinarily revive and enable thy spirit. When God hath enkindled thy spirit with fire from above, it is that it may mount aloft more freely. It is a choice part of a Christian's skill, to observe the temper of his own spirit, and to observe the gales of grace, and how the Spirit of Christ doth more upon his. Without Christ we can do nothing; (John 15:5;) therefore, let us be doing when he is doing: and be sure not to be out of the way, nor asleep, when he comes. The sails of the windmill stir not without the wind; therefore, they must set them a-going when the wind blows. Be sure that thou watch this wind and tide, if thou wouldst have a speedy voyage to heaven. A little labour will set thy heart a-going at such a time as this, when another time thou mayest study and take pains to little purpose. Most Christians do sometime find a more than ordinary reviving and activeness of spirit: take this as sent from heaven to raise thee thither: and when the Spirit is lifting thy heart from the earth, be sure thou then lift at it thyself. As when the angel came to Peter in his prison and irons, and smote him on the side, and raised him up, saying, "Arise up quickly, gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, and cast thy garments about thee, and follow me;" and Peter arose and followed till he was delivered; (Acts 12:7, 8, &c.) so when the Spirit finds thy heart in prison and irons, and smites it, and bids thee "Arise quickly, and follow me," be sure thou then arise and follow, and thou shalt find thy chains fall off, and all doors will open, and thou wilt be at heaven before thou art aware.

Sect. VI. 2. When thou art cast into perplexing troubles of mind, through sufferings, or fear, or care, or temptations, then is it seasonable to address thyself to this duty. When should we take our cordials but in our times of fainting? When is it more seasonable to walk to heaven, than when we know not in what corner on earth to live with comfort; or when should our thoughts converse above, but when they have nothing but grief to converse with below? Where should Noah's dove be, but in the ark, when the waters do cover the earth, and she cannot find rest for the sole of her foot? (Gen. 8:8, 9.) What should we think on but our Father's house, when we want even the husks of the world to feed on? Surely, God sends thee thy afflictions to this very purpose. Happy, thou poor man, if thou make this use of thy poverty; and thou that art sick, if thou so improve thy sickness. It is seasonable to go to the promised land, when our burdens and tasks are increased in Egypt, and when we endure the dolours of a grievous wilderness. Believe it, reader, if thou knewest but what a cordial in thy griefs and cares the serious views of glory are, thou wouldst less fear these harmless troubles, and more use that preserving, reviving remedy. I would not have thee, as mountebanks, take poison first, and then their antidote, to show its power; so to create thy affliction to try this remedy: but if God reach thee forth the bitterest cup, drop in but a little of the taste of heaven, and I warrant thee it will sufficiently sweeten it to thy spirit. If the case thou art in seem never so dangerous, take but a little of this antidote of rest, and never fear the pain or danger. I will give thee, to confirm this, but the example of David and the opinion of Paul, and desire thee thoroughly to consider of both. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me," saith David, "thy comforts delight my soul." (Psalm 94:19.) As if he should say, 'I have multitudes of saddening thoughts which crowd upon me; thoughts of my sins, and thoughts of my foes; thoughts of my dangers, and thoughts of my pains; yet, in the midst of all this crowd, one serious thought of the comforts of thy love, and especially of the comfortable life in glory, doth so dispel the throng, and scatter my cares, and disperse the clouds which my troubles had raised, that they do even revive and delight my soul.' And Paul, when he had cast up his full accounts, gives thee the sum

in Rom. 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Study these words well, for every one of them is full of life. If these true sayings of God were truly and deeply fixed in thy heart, and if thou couldst, in thy sober meditation, but draw out the comfort of this one scripture, I dare affirm it would sweeten the bitterest cross, and in a sort make thee forget thy trouble, as Christ saith, "A woman forgets her travel, for joy that a man is born into the world." (John 16:21.) Yea, and make thee rejoice in thy tribulation. I will add but one text more: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:16, 17.)

Sect. VII. 4. Another fit season for this heavenly duty is, when the messengers of God do summon us to die; when either our gray hairs, or our languishing bodies, or some such-like forerunners of death, do tell us that our change cannot be far off; when should we more frequently sweeten our souls with the believing thoughts of another life, than when we find that this is almost ended, and when flesh is raising fears and terrors? Surely, no men have greater need of supporting joys than dying men; and those joys must be fetched from our eternal joy. Men that have earthly pleasures in their hands, may think they are well, though they taste no more; but when a man is dying, and parting with all other pleasures, he must then fetch his pleasure from heaven, or have none: when health is gone, and friends lie weeping by our beds; when houses, and lands, and goods, and wealth, cannot afford us the least relief, but we are taking our leave of earth for ever, except a hole for our bodies to rot in; when we are daily expecting our final day, it is now time to look to heaven, and to fetch in comfort and support from thence; and as heavenly delights are sweetest when they are unmixed and pure and have no earthly delights conjoined with them, so therefore, the delights of

dying Christians are oftentimes the sweetest that ever they had. Therefore have the saints been generally observed to be then most heavenly when they were nearest dying. What a prophetic blessing hath Jacob for his sons when he lay a-dying; and so Isaac! What a heavenly song, what a divine benediction doth Moses conclude his life withal! (Deut. 32:33.) Nay, as our Saviour increased in wisdom and knowledge, so did he also in their blessed expressions, and still the last the sweetest. What a heavenly prayer, what a heavenly advice doth he leave his disciples, when he is about to leave them! When he saw he must leave the world and go to the Father, how doth he wean them from worldly expectations! How doth he mind them of the mansions in his Father's house; and remember them of his coming again to fetch them thither; and open the union they shall have with him, and with each other; and promise them to be with him to behold his glory! There is more worth in those four chapters, John 14–17, than in all the books in the world beside. When blessed Paul was ready to be offered up, what heavenly exhortation doth he give the Philippians; what advice to Timothy; what counsel to the elders of the Ephesian church! (Acts 20.) How near was St. John to heaven in his banishment in Patmos, a little before his translation to heaven! What heavenly discourse had Luther in his last sickness! How close was Calvin to his divine studies in his very sickness, that when they would have dissuaded him from it, he answers, "Vultisne me otiosum a Domino apprehendi!" What! would you have God find me idle? I have not lived idly, and shall I die idly? The like may be said of our famous Reynolds. When excellent Bucholcer was near his end, he wrote his book 'De Consolatione Decumbentium.' Then it was that Tossanus wrote his 'Vade mecum.' Then Doctor Preston was upon the 'Attributes of God.' And then Mr. Bolton was on the 'Joys of Heaven.' It were endless to enumerate the eminent examples of this kind. It is the general temper of the spirits of the saints, to be then most heavenly when they are nearest to heaven. As we used to say of the old and the weak, 'that they have one foot in the grave already;' so we may say of the godly, when they are near their rest, 'they have one foot, as it were, in heaven already.' When should a traveller look homewards with joy, but when he is come within the sight of his

home? It is true, the pains of our bodies and the fainting of our spirits, may somewhat abate the liveliness' of our joy; but the measure we have will be the more pure and spiritual, by how much the less it is kindled from the flesh. Oh, that we, who are daily languishing, could learn this daily heavenly conversing, and could say as the apostles in the forecited place: (2 Cor. 4:16–18:) Oh, that every gripe that our bodies feel, might make us more sensible of future ease; and that every weary day and hour might make us long for our eternal rest! That as the pulling down of one end of the balance is the lifting up of the other, so the pulling down of our bodies might be the lifting up of our souls; that as our souls were usually at the worst when our bodies were at the best, so now they might be at the best when our bodies are at the worst. Why should we not think thus with ourselves? why, every one of these gripes that I feel, are but the cutting of the stiches for the ripping off mine old attire, that God may clothe me with the glory of his saints. Had I rather live in these rotten rags, than be at the trouble and pains to shift me? Should the infant desire to stay in the womb, because of the straitness and pains of the passage; or because he knows not the world that he is to come into; nor is acquainted with the fashions and inhabitants thereof? Am not I nearer to my desired rest than ever I was? If the remembrance of these griefs will increase my joy, when I shall look back upon them from above, why then should not the remembrance of that joy abate my griefs when I look upwards to it from below? And why should the present feeling of these dolours so much diminish the foretastes of glory, when the remembrance of them will then increase it? All these gripes and woes that I feel, are but the farewell of sin and sorrows. As nature useth to struggle hard a little before death, and as the devil cast the man to the ground and tore him, when he was going out of him; (Mark 9:26;) so this tearing and troubling which I now feel, is but at the departure of sin and misery: for as the effects of grace are sweetest at last, so the effects of sin are bitterest at the last, and this is the last that ever I shall taste of it; when once the whirlwind and earthquake is past, the still voice will next succeed, and God only will be in the voice, though sin also was in the earthquake and whirlwind.

Thus, Christian, as every pang of sickness should mind the wicked of their eternal pangs, and make them look into the bottom of hell, so should all thy woe and weakness mind thee of thy near approaching joy, and make thee look as high as heaven. And, as a ball, the harder thou art smitten down to earth, the higher shouldst thou rebound up to heaven. If this be thy case, who readest these lines, (and if it be not now, it will be shortly,) if thou lie in consuming, painful sickness, if thou perceive the dying time draw on, O where should thy heart be now but with Christ? Methinks thou shouldst even behold him, as it were, standing by thee, and shouldst bespeak him as thy father, thy husband, thy physician, thy friend. Methinks thou shouldst even see, as it were, the angels about thee waiting to perform their last office to thy soul, as thy friends wait to perform theirs to thy body; those angels which disdained not to bring the soul of a scabbed beggar to heaven, will not think much to conduct thee thither. Oh, look upon thy sickness as Jacob did on Joseph's chariots, and let thy spirit revive within thee, and say, 'It is enough that Joseph, that Christ is yet alive; for because he lives, I shall live also.' (John 14:19.) As thou art sick, and needest the daintiest food, and choicest cordials, so here are choicer than the world affords. Here is the food of angels and glorified saints; here are all the joys that heaven doth yield, even the vision of God, the sight of Christ, and whatsoever the blessed there possess: this table is spread for thee to feed on in thy sickness; these dainties are offered thee by the hand of Christ: he hath written thee the receipt in the promises of the Gospel; he hath prepared thee all the ingredients in heaven; only put forth the hand of faith, and feed upon them, and rejoice and live. The Lord saith to thee, as he did to Elias, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee." (1 Kings 19:7.) Though it be not long, yet the way is foul: I counsel thee, therefore, that thou obey his voice, and arise and eat, and in the strength of that meat thou mayest walk till thou come to the mount of God. Die not in the ditch of horror or stupidity; but, as the Lord said to Moses, "Go up into the mount, and see the land that the Lord hath promised, and die in the mount." (Deut. 32:49, 50.) And as old Simeon, when he saw Christ in his infancy in the temple, so do thou behold him in the temple of the New Jerusalem as in his glory, and

take him in the arms of thy faith, and say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eye (of faith) hath seen thy salvation." As thou wast never so near to heaven as now, so let thy spirit be nearer it now than ever.

So you have seen which is the fittest season for this duty: I should here advise thee also of some times unseasonable, but I shall only add this one caution, The unseasonable urging of the most spiritual duty, is more from the tempter than from the Spirit of God! When Satan sees a Christian in a condition wherein he is unable and unfit for a duty, or wherein he may have more advantage against us by our performance of it than by our omitting it, he will then drive on as earnestly to duty, as if it were the very Spirit of holiness: that so upon our omitting, or ill performance, he may have somewhat to cast in our teeth, and to trouble us with. And this is one of his ways of deceiving, when he transforms himself into an angel of light. It may be, when thou art on thy knees in prayer, thou shalt have many good thoughts will come into thy mind; or when thou art hearing the word, or at such unseasonable times. Resist these good thoughts as coming from the devil, for they are formally evil, though they are materially good; even good thoughts in themselves may be sinful to thee. It may be, when thou shouldst be diligent in thy necessary labours, thou shalt be moved to cast aside all, that thou mayest go to meditation or to prayer: these motions are usually from the spirit of delusion: the Spirit of Christ doth nothing unseasonably: God is not the God of confusion, but of order.

Sect. VIII. Thus much I thought necessary to advise thee concerning the time of this duty. It now follows that I speak a word of the fittest place. Though God is everywhere to be found by a faithful soul; yet some places are more convenient for a duty than others.

1. As this is a private and spiritual duty, so it is most convenient that thou retire to some private place: our spirits had need of every help, and to be freed from every hinderance in the work: and the quality of these circumstances, though to some they may seem small things,

doth much conduce to our hinderance or our help. Christ himself thought it not vain to direct in this circumstance of private duty. (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18.) If in private prayer we must shut our door upon us, that our Father may hear us in secret, so it is also requisite in this meditation. How oft doth Christ himself depart to some mountain, or wilderness, or other solitary place! For occasional meditation I give thee not this advice, but for this daily set and solemn duty I advise that thou withdraw thyself from all society, yea, though it were the society of godly men, that thou mayest awhile enjoy the society of Christ: if a student cannot study in a crowd, who exercises only his invention and memory, much less when thou must exercise all the powers of thy soul, and that upon an object so far above nature: when thy eyes are filled with the persons and actions of men, and thine ears with their discourse, it is hard then to have thy thoughts and affections free for this duty. Though I would not persuade thee to Pythagoras's cave, nor to the hermit's wilderness, nor to the monk's cell; yet I would advise thee to frequent solitariness, that thou mayest sometimes confer with Christ, and with thyself, as well as with others. We are fled so far from the solitude of superstition, that we have cast off the solitude of contemplative devotion. Friends use to converse most familiarly in private, and to open their secrets, and let out their affections most freely. Public converse is but common converse. Use, therefore, as Christ himself did, (Mark 1:35,) to depart sometimes into a solitary place, that thou mayest be wholly vacant for this great employment. (See Matt. 14:23; Mark 6:47; Luke 9:18, 36; John 6:15, 16.) We seldom read of God's appearing, by himself, or his angels, to any of his prophets or saints in a throng, but frequently when they were alone.

And as I advise thee to a place of retiredness, so also that thou observe more particularly, what place and posture best agreeth with thy spirit: whether within doors, or without; whether sitting still, or walking. I believe Isaac's example in this also, will direct us to the place and posture which will best suit with most, as it doth with me, viz., his walking forth to meditate in the field at the eventide. And Christ's own example in the places forecited give us the like

direction. Christ was so used to a solitary garden, that even Judas, when he came to betray him, knew where to find him. (John 18:1, 2.) And though he took his disciples thither with him, yet did he separate himself from them for more secret devotions. (Luke 22:41.) And though his meditation be not directly named, but only his praying, yet it is very clearly implied. (Matt. 26:38, 39.) His soul is first made sorrowful with the bitter meditations on his death and sufferings, and then he poureth it out in prayer. (Mark 14:34.) So that Christ had his accustomed place, and consequently accustomed duty, and so must we. Christ hath a place that is solitary, whither he retireth himself even from his own disciples, and so must we: Christ's meditations do go further than his thoughts; they affect and pierce his heart and soul, and so must ours. Only there is a wide difference in the object: Christ meditates on the suffering that our sins had deserved, that the wrath of his Father even passed through his thoughts upon all his soul: but the meditation that we speak of, is on the glory he hath purchased; that the love of the Father, and the joy of the Spirit, might enter at our thoughts, and revive our affections, and overflow our souls. So that, as Christ's meditation was the sluice or floodgate, to let in hell to overflow his affections, so our meditation should be the sluice to let in heaven into our affections.

Sect. IX. So much concerning the time and place of this duty. I am next to advise thee somewhat concerning the preparations of thy heart. The success of the work doth much depend on the frame of thy heart. When man's heart had nothing in it that might grieve the Spirit, then was it the delightful habitation of his Maker. God did not quit his residence there, till man did repel him by unworthy provocations. There grew no strangeness, till the heart grew sinful, and too loathsome a dungeon for God to delight in. And were this soul reduced to its former innocency, God would quickly return to his former habitation: yea, so far as it is renewed and repaired by the Spirit, and purged of its lusts, and beautified with his image, the Lord will yet acknowledge it his own, and Christ will manifest himself unto it, and the Spirit will take it for his temple and residence. So far as the soul is qualified for conversing with God, so

far it doth actually, for the most part, enjoy him. Therefore, with all diligence keep thy heart, for from thence are the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23.)

More particularly, when thou settest on this duty; First, Get thy heart as clear from the world as thou canst; wholly lay by the thoughts of thy business, of thy troubles, of thy enjoyments, and of every thing that may take up any room in thy soul. Get thy soul as empty as possibly thou canst, and so it may be the more capable of being filled with God. It is a work, as I have said, that will require all the powers of thy soul, if they were a thousand times more capacious and active than they are, and therefore you have need to lay by all other thoughts and affections, while you are busied here. If thou couldst well perform some outward duty with a piece of thy heart, while the other is absent, yet this above all I am sure thou canst not. Surely, if thou once address thyself to the business indeed, thou wilt be as the covetous man at the heap of gold, that when he might take as much as he could carry away, lamented that he was able to bear no more. So when thou shalt get into the mount of contemplation, thou wilt find there as much of God and glory, as thy narrow heart is able to contain; and almost nothing to hinder thy full possession, but only the uncapableness of thy own spirit. O then (wilt thou think) that this understanding were larger, that I might conceive more! that these affections were wider to contain more! it is more my own unfitness than any thing else, which is the cause that even this place is not my heaven! God is in this place, and I know it not. This mount is full of the angels of God, but mine eyes are shut, and cannot see them. O the words of love that Christ hath to speak! O the wonders of love that he hath to show! But, alas! I cannot bear them yet: heaven is here ready at hand for me, but my incapable heart is unready for heaven! Thus wouldst thou lament, that the deadness of thy heart doth hinder thy joys; even as a sick man is sorry that he wants a stomach when he sees a feast before him.

Therefore, reader, seeing it is much in the capacity and frame of thy heart, how much thou shalt enjoy of God in this contemplation, be

sure that all the room thou hast be empty; and, if ever, seek him here with all thy soul: thrust not Christ into the stable and the manger, as if thou hadst better guests for the chiefest rooms. Say to all thy worldly business and thoughts, as Christ to his disciples, "Sit you here, while I go and pray yonder." (Matt. 26:36.) Or, as Abraham, when he went to sacrifice Isaac, left his servant and ass below the mount, saying, "Stay you here, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you:" so say thou to all thy worldly thoughts, "Abide you below, while I go up to Christ, and then I will return to you again." Yea, as God did terrify the people with his threats of death, if any one should dare to come to the mount, when Moses was to receive the law from God; so do thou terrify thy own heart, and use violence against thy intruding thoughts, if they offer to accompany thee to the mount of contemplation. Even as the priests thrust Uzziah the king out of the temple, where he presumed to burn incense, when they saw the leprosy to arise upon him; so do thou thrust these thoughts from the temple of thy heart, which have the badge of God's prohibition upon them. As you will beat back your dogs, yea, and leave your servants behind you, when yourselves are admitted into the prince's presence, so also do by these. Yourselves may be welcome, but such followers may not.

Sect. X. 2. Be sure thou set upon this work with the greatest seriousness that possibly thou canst. Customariness here is a killing sin. There is no trifling in holy things: God will be sanctified of all that draw near him. These spiritual, excellent, soul-raising duties are the most dangerous, if we miscarry in them, of all. The more they advance the soul, being well used, the more they destroy it, being used unfaithfully: as the best meats corrupted, are the worst. To help thee therefore to be serious when thou settest on this work; First, Labour to have the deepest apprehensions of the presence of God, and the incomprehensible greatness of the majesty which thou approachest. If Rebecca veil her face at her approach to Isaac; if Esther must not draw near till the king hold forth the sceptre; if dust and worms'-meat must have such respect, think, then, with what reverence thou shouldst approach thy Maker; think thou art

addressing thyself to Him that made the worlds with the word of his mouth; that upholds the earth as in the palm of his hand; that keeps the sun, and moon, and heaven, in their courses; that bounds the raging sea with the sands, (Jer. 5:22,) and saith, "Hitherto go, and no further:" thou art going about to converse with Him, before whom the earth will quake, and devils tremble; before whose bar thou must shortly stand, and all the world with thee, to receive their doom. O think, I shall then have lively apprehensions of his majesty; my drowsy spirits will then be awakened; and my stupid irreverence be laid aside: why should I not now be roused with a sense of his greatness, and the dread of his name possess my soul?

Secondly, Labour to apprehend the greatness of the work which thou attemptest, and to be deeply sensible both of its weight and height, of its concernment and excellency. If thou wert pleading for thy life at the bar of a judge, thou wouldst be serious; and yet that were but a trifle to this: if thou wert engaged in such a work as David was against Goliah, whereon the kingdom's deliverance did depend, in itself considered, it were nothing to this. Suppose thou wert going to such a wrestling as Jacob's; suppose thou wert going to see the sight which the three disciples saw in the mount; how seriously, how reverently wouldst thou both approach and behold! If the sun do suffer any notable eclipse, how seriously do all run out to see it! If some angel of heaven should but appoint to meet thee, at the same time and place of thy contemplations, how dreadfully, how apprehensively, wouldst thou go to meet him! Why, consider then with what a spirit thou shouldst meet the Lord, and with what seriousness and dread thou shouldst daily converse with him: when Manoah had seen but an angel, he cries out, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." (Judg. 13:22.)

Consider also the blessed issue of the work; if it do succeed, it will be an admission of thee into the presence of God; a beginning of thy eternal glory on earth; a means to make thee live above the rate of other men, and admit thee into the next room to the angels themselves; a means to make thee both live and die both joyfully and

blessedly: so that the prize being so great, thy preparation should be answerable. There is none on earth that live such a life of joy and blessedness as those that are acquainted with this heavenly conversation. The joys of all other men are but like a child's play, a fool's laughter; as a dream of health to the sick, or as a fresh pasture to a hungry beast. It is he that trades at heaven that is the only gainer, and he that neglecteth it that is the only loser; and, therefore, how seriously should this work be done!

CHAP. VIII

Of Consideration, the Instrument of this Work; and what Force it hath to move the Soul

SECT. I. Having showed thee how thou must set upon this work, I come now to direct thee in the work itself, and to show thee the way which thou must take to perform it. All this has been but to set the instrument (thy heart) in tune, and now we are come to the music itself; all this hath been but to get thee an appetite; it follows now that thou approach unto the feast; that thou sit down and take what is offered, and delight thy soul as with marrow and fatness. Whoever you are that are children of the kingdom, I have this message to you from the Lord: "Behold, the dinner is prepared; the oxen and fatlings are killed: come, for all things are now ready." (Matt. 22:4; Luke 14:17.) Heaven is before you; Christ is before you; the exceeding, eternal weight of glory is before you: come, therefore, and feed upon it. Do not make light of this invitation, (Matt. 22:5,) nor put off your own mercies with excuses, (Luke 14:18,) whatever thou art, rich or poor, though in alms-houses or hospitals, though in highways or hedges, my commission is, if possible, to compel you to come in: "And blessed is he that eateth bread in the kingdom of God." (Luke 14:15.) The manna lieth about your tents; walk forth into the wilderness, gather it up, take it home, and feed upon it. So that the remaining work is only to direct you how to use your understandings for the warming of your affections, and to fire your hearts by the help

of your heads; and herein it will be necessary that I observe this method: First, To show you what instrument it is that you must work by. Secondly, Why, and how this way of working is like to succeed, and attain its end. Thirdly, What powers of the soul should here be acted, and what are the particular affections to be excited, and what objective considerations are necessary thereto, and in what order you should proceed. Fourthly, By what acts you must advance to the height of the work. Fifthly, What advantages you must take, and what helps you must use for the facilitating your success. Sixthly, In what particulars you must look narrowly to your hearts through the whole; and I will be the briefer in all, lest you should lose my meaning in a crowd of words, or your thoughts be carried from the work itself, by an over-long and tedious explication of it.

Sect. II. 1. The great instrument that this work is done by, is ratiocination, reasoning the case with yourselves, discourse of mind, cogitation, or thinking; or, if you will, call it consideration. I here suppose you to know the things to be considered, and therefore shall wholly pass over that meditation of students which tends only to speculation, or knowing. They are known truths that I persuade you to consider, for the grossly ignorant that know not the doctrine of everlasting life, are for the present incapable of this duty.

Man's soul, as it receives and retains the ideas or shapes of things, so hath it a power to choose out any of these deposited ideas, and draw them forth, and act upon them again and again; even as a sheep can fetch up his meat for rumination; or otherwise nothing would affect us but while the sense is receiving it, and so we should be somewhat below the brutes. This is the power that here you must use: to this choice of ideas or subjects for your cogitations, there must necessarily concur the act of the will, which indeed must go along in the whole work; for this must be a voluntary, not a forced cogitation: some men do consider whether they will or not, and are not able to turn away their own thoughts; so will God make the wicked consider of their sins, when he shall set them all in order before them. (Psal. 50:21, 22.) And so shall the damned consider of heaven, and of the

excellency of Christ whom they once despised, and of the eternal joys which they have foolishly lost. But this forced consideration is not that I mean, but that which thou dost willingly and purposely choose; but though the will be here requisite, yet still consideration is the instrument of the work.

Sect. III. 2. Next, let us see what force consideration hath for the moving the affections, and for the powerful imprinting of things in the heart.

Why, First, Consideration doth, as it were, open the door between the head and the heart; the understanding having received truths, lays them up in the memory; now, consideration is the conveyer of them from thence to the affections: there are few men of so weak understanding or memory, but they know and can remember that which would strangely work upon them, and make great alterations in their spirits, if they were not locked up in their brain, and if they could but convey them down to their hearts: now, this is the great work of consideration. O what rare men would they be, who have strong heads, and much learning, and knowledge, if the obstructions between the head and the heart were but opened, and their affections did but correspond to their understanding! Why, if they would but bestow as much time and pains in studying the goodness and the evil of things, as they bestow in studying the truth and falsehood of enunciations, it were the readiest way to obtain this: he is usually the best scholar, who hath the most quick, clear, and tenacious apprehension. He is the best scholar who hath the readiest passage from the ear to the brain; but he is the best Christian who hath the readiest passage from the brain to the heart; now, consideration is that on our parts that must open the passage, though the Spirit open as the principal cause: inconsiderate men are stupid and senseless.

Sect. IV. 2. Matters of great weight, which do nearly concern us, are aptest to work most effectually upon the heart; now, meditation draweth forth these working objects, and presents them to the affections in their worth and weight; the most delectable object doth

not please him that sees it not; nor doth the joyfullest news affect him that never hears it: now, consideration presents before us those objects that were as absent, and brings them to the eye and the ear of the soul. Are not Christ, and glory, think you, affecting objects? Would not they work wonders upon the soul, if they were but clearly discovered; and strangely transport us, if our apprehensions were any whit answerable to their worth? Why, by consideration it is that they are presented to us: this is the prospective glass of the Christian, by which he can see from earth to heaven.

Sect. V. 3. As consideration draweth forth the weightiest objects, so it presenteth them in the most affecting way, and presseth them home with enforcing arguments. Man is a rational creature, and apt to be moved in a reasoning way; especially when reasons are evident and strong: now, consideration is a reasoning the case with a man's own heart, and what a multitude of reasons, both clear and weighty; are always at hand for to work upon the heart! When a believer would reason his heart to this heavenly work, how many arguments do offer themselves! From God, from the Redeemer, from every one of the divine attributes, from our former estate, from our present estate, from promises, from seals, from earnest, from the evil we now suffer, from the good we partake of, from hell, from heaven: every thing doth offer itself to promote our joy. Now, meditation is the hand to draw forth all these; as when you are weighing a thing in the balance, you lay on a little more, and a little more, till it weigh down; so if your affections do hang in a dull indifferency, why, due meditation will add reason after reason, till the scales do turn; or, as when you are buying any thing of necessity for your use, you bid a little more, and a little more, till at last you come to the seller's price; so when meditation is persuading you to joy, it will first bring one reason, and then another, till it have silenced all your distrust and sorrows, and your cause to rejoice lies plain before you. If another man's reasons will work so powerfully with us, though we are uncertain whether his heart do concur with his speeches, and whether his intention be to inform us, or deceive us; how much more should our own reasons work with us, when we are acquainted with the right intentions of

our own hearts! Nay, how much more rather should God's reasons work with us, which we are sure are neither fallacious in his intent, nor in themselves, seeing he did never yet deceive, nor was ever deceived! Why, now, meditation is but the reading over and repeating God's reasons to our hearts, and so disputing with ourselves in his arguments and terms. And is not this then likely to be a prevailing way? What reasons doth the prodigal plead with himself, why he should return to his Father's house! And as many and strong have we to plead with our affections, to persuade them to our Father's everlasting habitations. And by consideration it is that they must all be set a-work.

Sect. VI. 4. Meditation puts reason in its authority and preeminence. It helpeth to deliver it from its captivity to the senses, and setteth it again upon the throne of the soul. When reason is silent, it is usually subject; for when it is asleep the senses domineer. Now, consideration awakeneth our reason from its sleep, till it rouse up itself, as Sampson, and break the bonds of sensuality wherewith it is fettered; and then, as a giant refreshed with wine, it bears down the delusions of the flesh before it. What strength can the lion put forth when he is asleep? What is the king more than another man, when he is once deposed from his throne and authority? When men have no better judge than the flesh, or when the joys of heaven go no further than their fantasies, no wonder if they work but as common things. Sweet things to the eye, and beautiful things to the ear, will work no more than bitter and deformed; every thing worketh in its own place, and every sense hath its proper object. Now, it is spiritual reason, excited by meditation, and not the fantasy or fleshly sense, which must savour and judge of these superior joys. Consideration exalteth the objects of faith, and disgraceth comparatively the objects of sense. The most inconsiderate men are the most sensual men. It is too easy and ordinary to sin against knowledge; but against sober, strong, continued consideration, men do more seldom offend.

Sect. VII. 5. Meditation also putteth reason into his strength. Reason is at the strongest, when it is most in action. Now, meditation

produceth reason into act. Before, it was a standing water, which can move nothing else when itself moveth not, but now it is as the speedy stream which violently bears down all before it. Before, it was as the still and silent air, but now it is as the powerful motion of the wind, and overthrows the opposition of the flesh and the devil. Before, it was as the stones which lie still in the brook; but now, when meditation doth set it to work, it is as the stone out of David's sling, which smites the Goliath of our unbelief in the forehead. As wicked men continue wicked, not because they have not reason in the principle, but because they bring it not into act and use; so godly men are uncomfortable and sad, not because they have no causes to rejoice, nor because they have not reason to discern those causes, but because they let their reason and faith lie asleep, and do not labour to set them a-going, nor stir them up to action by this work of meditation. You know that our very dreams will deeply affect. What fears, what sorrows, what joy, will they stir up! How much more, then, would serious meditation affect us!

Sect. VIII. 6. Meditation can discontinue this discursive employment. That may be accomplished by a weaker motion continued, which will not by a stronger at the first attempt. A plaster that is never so effectual to cure, must yet have time to do its work, and not be taken off as soon as it is on. Now, meditation doth hold the plaster to the sore: it holdeth reason and faith to their works, and bloweth the fire till it thoroughly burn. To run a few steps will not get a man heat, but walking an hour together may. So, though a sudden occasional thought of heaven will not raise our affections to any spiritual heat, yet meditation can continue our thoughts, and lengthen our walk till our hearts grow warm.

And thus you see what force meditation or consideration hath for the effecting of this great elevation of the soul, whereto I have told you it must be the instrument.

CHAP. IX

What Affections must be acted, and by what Considerations and Objects, and in what Order

SECT. I. Thirdly, To draw the heart yet nearer to the work. The third thing to be discovered to you is, what powers of the soul must here be acted; what affections excited; what considerations of their objects are necessary thereto, and in what order we must proceed. I join all these together, because, though in themselves they are distinct things, yet, in the practice they all concur to the same action.

The matters of God which we have to think on, have their various qualifications, and are presented to the soul of man in divers relative and modal considerations. According to the several considerations of the objects, the soul itself is distinguished into its several faculties, powers, and capacities; that as God hath given man five senses to partake of the five distinct excellences of the objects of sense, so he hath diversified the soul of man, either into faculties, powers, or ways of acting, answerable to the various qualifications and considerations of himself and the inferior objects of this soul. And, as if there be more sensible excellences in the creatures, yet they are unknown to us who have but these five senses to discern them by; so whatever other excellences are in God and our happiness, more than these faculties or powers of the soul can apprehend, must needs remain wholly unknown to us, till our souls have senses, as it were, suitable to those objects, even as it is known to a tree or a stone, what sound, and light, and sweetness are, or that there are any such things in the world at all.

Now, these matters of God are primarily diversified to our consideration, under the distinction of true and good: accordingly, the primary distinction concerning the soul, is into the faculties of understanding and will: the former having truth for its object, and

the latter goodness. This truth is sometimes known by evident demonstration, and so it is the object of that we call knowledge, which also admits of divers distinctions, according to several ways of demonstration, which I am loth here to puzzle you with. Sometimes it is received from the testimony of others, which receiving we call belief. When anything else would obscure it, or stands up in competition with it, then we weigh their several evidences, and accordingly discover and vindicate the truth; and this we call judgment. Sometime by the strength, the clearness, or the frequency of the understanding's apprehensions, this truth doth make a deeper impression, and so is longer retained: which impression and retention we call memory. And as truth is thus variously presented to the understanding, and received by it; so also is the goodness of the object variously represented to the will, which doth accordingly put forth its various acts. When it appeareth only as good in itself, and not good for us, or suitable, it is not the object of the will at all; but only this enunciation, "It is good," is passed upon it by the judgment, and withal it raiseth an admiration at its excellency. If it appear evil to us, then we nill it: but if it appear both good in itself, and to us, or suitable, then it provoketh the affection of love. If the good thus loved do appear as absent from us, then it exciteth the passion of desire. If the good so loved and desired do appear possible and feasible in the attaining, then it exciteth the passion of hope, which is a compound of desire and expectation: when we look upon it as requiring our endeavour to attain it, and as it is to be had in a prescribed way, then it provokes the passion of courage or boldness, and concludes in resolution. Lastly, If this good be apprehended as present, then it provoketh to delight or joy. If the thing itself be present, the joy is greatest. If but the idea of it, either through the remainder or memory of the good that is past, or through the fore-apprehension of that which we expect, yet even this also exciteth our joy. And this joy is the perfection of all the rest of the affections, when it is raised on the full fruition of the good itself.

Sect. II. So that by this time, I suppose you see, both what are the objects that must move our affections, and what powers of the soul

apprehend these objects. You see, also, I doubt not, what affections you must excite, and in what order it is to be done: yet, for your better assistance, I will more fully direct you in the several particulars.

1. Then you must, by cogitation, go to the memory, which is the magazine or treasure of the understanding; thence you must take forth those heavenly doctrines which you intend to make the subject of your meditation: for the present purpose, you may look over any promise of eternal life in the Gospel; any description of the glory of the saints, or the very articles of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Some one sentence concerning those eternal joys, may afford you matter for many years' meditation; yet it will be a point of wisdom here, to have always a stock of matter in our memory, that so when we should use it, we may bring forth out of our treasury things new and old. For a good man hath a good treasury in his heart, from whence he bringeth forth good things; (Luke 6:45;) and out of this abundance of his heart he should speak to himself as well as to others. Yea, if we took things in order, and observed some method in respect of the matter, and did meditate, first on one truth concerning eternity, and then another, it would not be amiss. And if any should be barren of matter through weakness of memory, they may have notes or books of this subject for their furtherance.

Sect. III. 2. When you have fetched from your memory the matter of your meditation, your next work is to present it to your judgment. Open there the case as fully as thou canst, set forth the several ornaments of the crown, the several dignities belonging to the kingdom, as they are partly laid open in the beginning of this book. Let judgment deliberately view them over, and take as exact a survey as it can. Then put the question, and require a determination: Is there happiness in all this, or not? Is not here enough to make me blessed? Can he want any thing who fully possesseth God? Is there any thing higher for a creature to attain? Thus urge thy judgment to pass an upright sentence, and compel it to subscribe to the perfection

of thy celestial happiness, and to leave this sentence as under its hand upon record. If thy senses should here begin to mutter, and to put in a word for fleshly pleasure or profits, let judgment hear what each can say. Weigh the arguments of the world and flesh in one end, and the arguments for the pre-eminence of glory in the other end, and judge impartially which should be preferred. Try whether there be any comparison to be made; which is more excellent, which is more manly, which is more satisfactory, and which more pure, which freeth most from misery, and advanceth us highest. And which dost thou think is of longer continuance? Thus let deliberate judgment decide it, and let not flesh carry it by noise and by violence: and when the sentence is passed and recorded in thy heart, it will be ready at hand to be produced upon any occasion, and to silence the flesh in its next attempt, and to disgrace the world in its next competition.

Thus exercise thy judgment in the contemplation of thy rest; thus magnify and advance the Lord in thy heart, till a holy admiration hath possessed thy soul.

Sect. IV. 3. But the great work, which you may either premise, or subjoin to this as you please, is, to exercise thy belief of the truth of thy rest; and that, both in respect of the truth of the promise, and also the truth of thy own interest and title. As unbelief cloth cause the languishing of all our graces, so faith would do much to revive and actuate, them, if it were but revived and actuated itself, especially our belief of the verity of the Scripture, I conceive as needful to be exercised and confirmed, as almost any point of faith. But of this I have spoken in the second part of this book, whither I refer thee for some confirming arguments. Though few complain of their not believing Scripture, yet I conceive it to be the commonest part of unbelief, and the very root of bitterness, which spoileth our graces. Perhaps thou hast not a positive belief of the contrary, nor dost not flatly think that Scripture is not the word of God: that were to be a downright infidel indeed. And yet thou mayest have but little belief that Scripture is God's word, and that both in regard of the habit and the act. It is one thing not to believe Scripture to be true,

and another thing positively to believe it to be false. Faith may be idle, and suspend its exercise towards the truth, though it do not yet act against the truth. It may stand still, when it goes not out of the way. It may be asleep, and do you but little service, though it do not directly fight against you. Besides, a great deal of unbelief may consist with a small degree of faith. If we did soundly believe that there is such a glory, that within a few days our eyes shall behold it; Oh, what passions would it raise within us, were we thoroughly persuaded that every word in the Scripture, concerning the inconceivable joys of the kingdom, and the inexpressible blessedness of the life to come, were the very word of the living God, and should certainly be performed to the smallest tittle! O, what astonishing apprehensions of that life would it breed! What amazing horror would seize upon our hearts, when we found ourselves strangers to the conditions of that life, and utterly ignorant of our portion therein! What love, what longings, would it raise within us! Oh, how it would actuate every affection! How would it transport us with joy upon the least assurance of our title! If I were as verily persuaded that I shall shortly see those great things of eternity promised in the word, as I am that this is a chair that I sit in, or that this is paper that I write on, would it not put another spirit within me? Would it not make me forget and despise the world, and even forget to sleep, or to eat, and say, as Christ, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." (John 4:32.) O sirs! you little know what a thorough belief would work. Not that every one hath such affections who hath a true faith; but thus would the acting and improvement of our faith advance us.

Therefore let this be a chief part of thy business in meditation. Produce the strong arguments for the truth of Scripture; plead them against thy unbelieving nature; answer and silence all the cavils of infidelity; read over the promises; study all confirming providences; call forth thine own recorded experiences; remember the Scriptures already fulfilled both to the church and saints in former ages, and eminently to both in this present age, and those that have been fulfilled particularly to thee; get ready the clearest and most convincing arguments, and keep them by thee, and frequently thus

use them. Think it not enough that thou wast once convinced, though thou hast now forgot the arguments that did it. No; nor that thou hast the arguments still in thy book, or in thy brain. This is not the acting of thy faith; but present them to thy understanding in thy frequent meditations, and urge them home till they force belief. Actual convincing, when it is clear and frequent, will work those deep impressions on the heart, which an old, neglected, forgotten conviction will not. Oh, if you would not think it enough that you have faith in the habit, and that you did once believe, but would be daily setting this first wheel a-going; surely, all the inferior wheels of the affections would more easily move. Never expect to have love and joy move when the foregoing grace of faith stands still.

And as you should thus act your assent to the promise, so also your acceptation, your adherence, your affiancing, and your assurance. These are the four steps of application of the promise to ourselves. I have said somewhat among the helps to move you to get assurance, but that which I here aim at is, that you would daily exercise it. Set before your faith the freeness and the universality of the promise. Consider of God's offer, and urging it upon all; and that he hath excepted from the conditional covenant no man in the world: nor will exclude any from heaven who will accept of his offer. Study also the gracious disposition of Christ, and his readiness to entertain and welcome all that will come. Study all the evidences of his love, which appeared in his sufferings, in his preaching the Gospel, in his condescension to sinners, in his easy conditions, in his exceeding patience, and in his urgent invitations. Do not all these discover his readiness to save? Did he ever yet manifest himself unwilling? Remember also his faithfulness to perform his engagements. Study also the evidences of his love in thyself; look over the works of his grace in thy soul; if thou do not find the degree which thou desirest, yet deny not that degree which thou findest; look after the sincerity more than the quantity. Remember what discoveries of thy state thou hast made formerly in the work of self-examination; how oft God hath convinced thee of the sincerity of thy heart. Remember all the former testimonies of the Spirit, and all the sweet feelings of the

favour of God, and all the prayers that he hath heard and granted, and all the rare preservations and deliverances, and all the progress of his Spirit in his workings on thy soul, and the disposals of providence, conducing to thy good; the vouchsafing of means, the directing thee to them; the directing of ministers to meet with thy state; the restraint of those sins that thy nature was most prone to. And though one of these considered alone, may be no sure evidence of his special love, which I expect thou shouldst try by more infallible signs, yet lay them all together, and then think with thyself whether all these do not testify the good-will of the Lord concerning thy salvation, and may not well be pleaded against thine unbelief. And whether thou mayest not conclude with Sampson's mother, when her husband thought they should surely die, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received an offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these." (Judges 13:22, 23.)

Sect. V. 2. When thy meditation has thus proceeded about the truth of thy happiness, the next part of the work is to meditate of its goodness, that when the judgment hath determined, and faith hath apprehended, it may then pass on to raise the affections.

1. The first affection to be acted is love; the object of it, as I have told you, is goodness. Here, then, here, Christian, is the soul-reviving part of thy work: go to thy memory, thy judgment, and thy faith, and from them produce the excellences of thy rest; take out a copy of the record of the Spirit in Scripture, and another of the sentence registered in thy spirit, whereby the transcendent glory of the saints is declared; present these to thy affection of love; open to it the cabinet that contains the pearl; show it the promise, and that which it assureth. Thou needest not look on heaven through a multiplying glass; open but one casement, that love may look in; give it but a glimpse of the back parts of God, and thou wilt find thyself presently in another world; do but speak out, and love can hear; do but reveal these things, and love can see. It is the brutish love of the world that is blind; divine love is exceeding quicksighted. Let thy faith, as it

were, take thy heart by the hand, and show it the sumptuous buildings of thy eternal habitation, and the glorious ornaments of thy Father's house; show it those mansions which Christ is preparing, and display before it the honours of the kingdom. Let faith lead thy heart into the presence of God, and draw as near as possibly thou canst, and say to it, 'Behold the Ancient of days; the Lord Jehovah, whose name is, I AM. This is he who made the worlds with his word; this is the Cause of all causes, the Spring of action, the Fountain of life, the First Principle of the creature's motions, who upholds the earth, who ruleth the nations, who disposeth of events, and subdueth his foes; who governeth the depths of the great waters, and boundeth the rage of her swelling waves; who ruleth the winds, and moveth the orbs, and causeth the sun to run its race, and the several planets to know their courses. This is he that loved thee from everlasting, that formed thee in the womb, and gave thee this soul; who brought thee forth, and showed thee the light, and ranked thee with the chiefest of his earthly creatures; who endued thee with thy understanding, and beautified thee with his gifts; who maintaineth thee with life, and health, and comforts; who gave thee thy preferments, and dignified thee with thy honours, and differenced thee from the most miserable and vilest of men. Here, O here, is an object, now, worthy of thy love; here shouldst thou even put out thy soul in love; here thou mayest be sure thou canst not love too much. This is the Lord that hath blessed thee with his benefits; that hath spread thy table in the sight of thine enemies, and caused thy cup to overflow. (Psal. 23.) This is he that angels and saints do praise, and the host of heaven must magnify for ever.'

Thus do thou expatiate in the praises of God, and open his excellences to thine own heart, till thou feel the life begin to stir, and the fire in thy breast begin to kindle: as gazing upon the dusty beauty of flesh doth kindle the fire of carnal love; so this gazing on the glory and goodness of the Lord will kindle this spiritual love in thy soul. Bruising will make the spices odoriferous, and rubbing the pomander will bring forth the sweetness. Act therefore thy soul upon this delightful object; toss these cogitations frequently in thy heart, rub

over all thy affections with them, as yon will do your cold hands till they begin to warm; what, though thy heart be rock and flint, this often striking may bring forth the fire; but if yet thou feelest not thy love to work, lead thy heart further, and show it yet more; show it the Son of the living God, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace; (Isa. 9:6;) show it the King of saints on the throne of his glory, who is the First and the Last, who is, and was, and is to come; who liveth and was dead, and behold, he lives for evermore; who hath made thy peace by the blood of his cross, and hath prepared thee, with himself, a habitation of peace: his office is to be the great peace-maker; his kingdom is a kingdom of peace; his Gospel is the tidings of peace; his voice to thee now is the voice of peace; draw near and behold him: dost thou not hear his voice? (Luke 24:36–39.) He that called Thomas to come near, and to see the print of the nails, and to put his finger into his wounds, He it is that calls to thee, Come near and view the Lord thy Saviour, and be not faithless, but believing. (John 20:27.) Peace be unto thee, fear not, it is I. (John 20:19–21.) He that calleth, Behold me, behold me, to a rebellious people that calleth not on his name, (Isa. 59:1,) doth call out to thee a believer to behold him; he that calls to them who pass by, to behold his sorrow in the day of his humiliation, (Lam. 1:12,) doth call now to thee to behold his glory in the day of his exaltation; look well upon him; dost thou not know him? Why, it is He that brought thee up from the pit of hell: it is He that reversed the sentence of thy damnation; that bore the curse which thou shouldst have borne, and restored thee to the blessing that thou hast forfeited and lost, and purchased the advancement which thou must inherit for ever: and yet dost thou not know him? Why, his hands were pierced, his head was pierced, his sides were pierced, his heart was pierced, with the sting of thy sins, that by these marks thou mightest always know him. Dost thou not remember when he found thee lying in thy blood, and took pity on thee, and dressed thy wounds, and brought thee home, and said unto thee, "Live?" (Ezek. 16:6–9; Luke 10:30, &c.) Hast thou forgotten since he wounded himself to cure thy wounds, and let out his own blood to stop thy bleeding? Is not the passage to his heart yet

standing open? If thou know him not by the face, the voice, the hands, if thou know him not by the tears and bloody sweat, yet look nearer, thou mayest know him by the heart; that broken-healed heart is his; that dead-revived heart is his; that soul-pitying, melting heart is his; doubtless, it can be none's but his. Love and compassion are its certain signatures; this is He, even this is He, who would rather die than thou shouldst die, who chooses thy life before his own, who pleads his blood before his Father, and makes continual intercession for thee. If he had not suffered, O what hadst thou suffered! What hadst thou been, if he had not redeemed thee! Whither hadst thou gone, if he had not recalled thee? There was but a step between thee and hell, when he stepped in, and bore the stroke; he slew the bear, and rescued the prey, lie delivered thy soul from the roaring lion. And is not here yet fuel enough for love to feed on? Doth not this loadstone snatch thy heart unto it, and almost draw it forth of thy breast? Canst thou read the history of love any further at once? Doth not thy throbbing heart here stop to ease itself? And dost thou not, as Joseph, seek for a place to weep in? Or do not the tears of thy love bedew these lines? Go on then, for the field of love is large, it will yield thee fresh contents for ever, and be thine eternal work to behold and love: thou needest not then want work for thy present meditation. Hast thou forgotten the time when thou wast weeping, and he wiped the tears from thine eyes? when thou wast bleeding, and he wiped the blood from thy soul? when pricking cares and fears did grieve thee, and he did refresh thee, and draw out the thorns? Hast thou forgotten when thy folly did wound thy soul, and the venomous guilt did seize upon thy heart? when he sucked forth the mortal poison from thy soul, though therewith he drew it into his own? I remember it is written of good Melancthon, that, when his child was removed from him, it pierced his heart to remember, how he once sat weeping with the infant on his knee, and how lovingly it wiped away the tears from his father's eyes; how then should it pierce thy heart to think how lovingly Christ hath wiped away thine! O how oft hath he found thee sitting weeping, like Hagar, while thou gavest up thy state, thy friends, thy life, yea, thy soul for lost; and he opened to thee a well of consolation, and opened thine eyes also that thou

mightest see it! (Gen. 21:15–19.) How oft hath he found thee in the posture of Elias, sitting down under the tree forlorn and solitary, and desiring rather to die than to live; and he hath spread thee a table of relief from heaven, and sent thee away refreshed, and encouraged to his work! (1 Kings 19:9.) How oft hath he found thee in the trouble of the servant of Elisha, crying out, "Alas! what shall we do, for an host doth compass the city?" (2 Kings 6:15–17;) and he hath opened thine eyes to see more for thee than against thee, both in regard of the enemies of thy soul and thy body. How oft hath he found thee in such a passion as Jonas, in thy peevish frenzy, weary of thy life! and he hath not answered passion with passion, though he might, indeed, have done well to be angry, but hath mildly reasoned thee out of thy madness, and said, "Dost thou well to be angry, or to repine against me?" How oft hath he set thee on watching and praying, on repenting and believing, and when he hath returned, hath found thee fast asleep; (Mark 14:37; Luke 22:45, 46;) and yet he hath not taken thee at the worst, but instead of an angry aggravation of thy fault, he hath covered it over with the mantle of love, and prevented thy over-much sorrow with a gentle excuse, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!" (Mt 26:41.) He might have done by thee as Epaminondas by his soldier, who, finding him asleep upon the watch, ran him through with his sword, and said, "Dead I found thee, and dead I leave thee:" but he rather chose to awake thee more gently, that his tenderness might admonish thee, and keep thee watching. How oft hath he been traduced in his cause, or name, and thou hast like Peter denied him, (at least by thy silence,) whilst he hath stood in sight! Yet all the revenge he hath taken, hath been a heart-melting look, and a silent remembering thee of thy fault by his countenance. (Luke 22:61.) How oft hath law and conscience hailed thee before him, as the Pharisees did the adulterous woman, and laid the most heinous crimes to thy charge! And when thou hast expected to hear the sentence of death, he hath shamed away thy accusers, and put them to silence, and taken on him he did not hear thy indictment, and said to thee, "Neither do I accuse thee; go thy way, and sin no more."

And art thou not yet transported and ravished with love? Can thy heart be cool when thou thinkest of this? or can it hold when thou rememberest those boundless compassions? Rememberest thou not the time when he met thee in thy duties; when he smiled upon thee, and spake comfortably to thee? when thou didst sit down under his shadow with great delight, and when his fruit was sweet to thy taste? when he brought thee to his banquetting-house, and his banner over thee was love? when his left-hand was under thy head, and with his right-hand he did embrace thee? And dost thou not yet cry out, "Stay me, comfort me, for I am sick of love?" (Cant. 2:3–5.) Thus, reader, I would have thee deal with thy heart; thus hold forth the goodness of Christ to thy affections. Plead thus the case with thy frozen soul, till thou say as David in another case, "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned." (Psalm 39:3.) If these forementioned arguments will not rouse up thy love, thou hast more, enough of this nature at hand. Thou hast all Christ's personal excellencies to study; thou hast all his particular mercies to thyself, both special and common; thou hast all his sweet and near relations to thee, and thou hast the happiness of thy perpetual abode with him hereafter: all these do offer themselves to thy meditation, with all their several branches and adjuncts. Only follow them close to thy heart, ply the work, and let it not cool. Deal with thy heart, as Christ did with Peter when he asked thrice over, "Lovest thou me?" till he was grieved, and answers, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:15–17.) So say to thy heart, Lovest thou thy Lord? and ask it the second time, and urge it the third time, Lovest thou thy Lord? till thou grieve it, and shame it out of its stupidity, and it can truly say, Thou knowest that I love him.

And thus, I have showed you how to excite the affection of love.

Sect. VI. 2. The next grace or affection to be excited, is desire. The object of it is goodness, considered as absent, or not yet attained. This being so necessary an attendant of love, and being excited much by the same forementioned objective considerations, I suppose you need the less direction to be here added, and therefore I shall touch

but briefly on this; if love be hot, I warrant your desire will not be cold.

When thou hast thus viewed the goodness of the Lord, and considered of the pleasures that are at his right-hand, then proceed on with thy meditation thus: think with thyself, 'Where have I been; what have I seen? O the incomprehensible astonishing glory! O the rare transcendent beauty! O blessed souls that now enjoy it; that see a thousand times more clearly what I have seen but darkly at this distance, and scarce discerned through the interposing clouds! What a difference is there betwixt my state and theirs! I am sighing, and they are singing: I am sinning, and they are pleasing God: I have an ulcerated cancerous soul, like the loathsome bodies of Job or Lazarus, a spectacle of pity to those that behold me; but they are perfect and without blemish: I am here entangled in the love of the world, when they are taken up with the love of God: I live indeed amongst the means of grace, and I possess the fellowship of my fellow-believers; but I have none of their immediate views of God, nor any of that fellowship that they possess. They have none of my cares and fears; they weep not in secret; they languish not in sorrows; these tears are wiped away from their eyes. O happy, a thousand times happy souls! Alas! that I must dwell in dirty flesh, when my brethren and companions do dwell with God! Alas! that I am lapt in earth, and tied as a mountain down to this inferior world, when they are got above the sun, and have laid aside their lumpish bodies! Alas! that I must lie, and pray and wait, and wait and pray, as if my heart were in my knees; when they do nothing but love and praise, and joy and enjoy, as if their hearts were got into the very breast of Christ, and were closely conjoined to his own heart. How far out of sight and reach and hearing of their high enjoyments do I here live, when they feel them, and feed and live upon them! What strange thoughts have I of God! what strange conceivings! what strange affections! I am fain to superscribe my best services, as the blind Athenians to the unknown God, when they are as well acquainted with him as men that live continually in his house; and as familiar in their holy praises, as if they were all one with him! What a

little of that God, that Christ, that Spirit, that life, that love, that joy, have I! And how soon doth it depart and leave me in sadder darkness! Now and then a spark doth fall upon my heart, and while I gaze upon it, it straight goes out; or rather, my cold-resisting heart doth quench it: but they have their light in his light, and live continually at the spring of joys. Here are we vexing each other with quarrels, and troubling our peace with discontents, when they are one in heart and voice, and daily sound forth their hallelujahs to God with full delightful harmony and consent. O what a feast hath my faith beheld; and O what a famine is yet in my spirit! I have seen a glimpse into the court of God, but, alas! I stand but as a beggar at the doors, when the souls of my companions are admitted in. O blessed souls! I may not, I dare not envy your happiness: I rather rejoice in my brethren's prosperity, and am glad to think of the day when I shall be admitted into your fellowship; but I cannot but look upon you as a child doth on his brother, who sits in the mother's lap while himself stands by, and wish that I were so happy as to be in your place; not to displace you, but to rest there with you. Why must I stay, and groan, and weep, and wait? My Lord is gone, he hath left this earth, and is entered into his glory. My brethren are gone; my friends are there; my house, my hope, my all is there? And must I stay behind to sojourn here? What precious saints have left this earth! of whom I am ready to say as Amerbachius, when he heard of the death of Zuingerus, "*Piget me vivere post tantum virum, cujus magna fuit doctrina, sed exigua si cum pietate conferatur;*" "It is irksome to me to live after such a man whose learning was so great, and yet compared with his godliness, very small." If the saints were all here, if Christ were here, then it were no grief for me to stay; if the Bridegroom were present, who would mourn? But when my soul is so far distant from my God, wonder not what aileth me if I now complain; an ignorant Micah will do so for his idol, and shall not then my soul do so for God? (Judg. 18:14.) And yet if I had no hope of enjoying, I would go and hide myself in the deserts, and lie and howl in some obscure wilderness, and spend my days in fruitless wishes. But seeing it is the promised land of my rest, and the state that I must be advanced to myself, and my soul draws near, and is almost

at it, I will love and long; I will look and desire; I will breathe out blessed Calvin's motto, "Usquequo, Domine." How long, Lord, how long! how long, Lord, holy and true, wilt thou suffer this soul to pant and groan: and wilt not open and let him in, who waits and longs to be with thee?

Thus, christian reader, let thy thoughts aspire: thus whet the desires of thy soul by these meditations; till thy soul long, as David's for the waters of Bethlehem, and say, O that one would give me to drink of the wells of salvation! (2 Sam. 23:15;) and till thou canst say as he, "I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord." (Psal. 119:174.) And as the mother and brethren of Christ, when they could not come to him because of the press, sent to him, saying, "Thy mother and brethren stand without, desiring to see thee;" send thou up the same message; tell him thou standest here without, desiring to see him; he will own thee even in these near relations; for he hath said, they that hear his word, and do it, are his mother and his brethren. (Luke 8:20, 21.) And thus I have directed you, in the acting of your desire after your rest.

Sect. VII. 3. The next affection to be acted is hope. This is of singular use to the soul. It helpeth exceedingly to support it in sufferings; it encourageth to adventure upon the greatest difficulties; it firmly establisheth it in the most shaking trials; and it mightily enlivens the soul in duties; and is the very spring that sets all the wheels a-going: who would preach, if it were not in hope to prevail with poor sinners for their conversion and confirmation; who would pray, but for the hope to prevail with God; who would believe, or obey, or strive, or suffer, or do any thing for heaven, if it were not for the hope that he hath to obtain it? Would the mariner sail, and the merchant adventure, if they had not hope of safety and success? Would the husbandman plough, and sow, and take pains, if he had not hope of increase at harvest? Would the soldier fight, if he hoped not for victory? Surely no man doth adventure upon known impossibilities. Therefore is it that they who pray merely from custom, or merely from conscience, considering it as a duty only, but looking for no

great matters from God by their prayers, are generally formal and heartless therein; whereas the Christian that hath observed the wonderful success of prayer, and as verily looks for benefit by it, and thriving to his soul in the use of it, as he looks for benefit by his labours, and thriving to his body in the use of his food, how faithfully doth he follow it; and how cheerfully go through it! O how willingly do we ministers study; how cheerfully do we preach; what life doth it put into our instructions and exhortations, when we have but hope that our labour will succeed! When we discern a people attend to the word, and regard the message, and hear them inquire what they shall do as men that are willing to be ruled by God, as men that would fain have their souls to be saved; you would not think how it helpeth us, both for invention and expression! Oh! who can choose but pray heartily for, and preach heartily to, such a people? As the sucking of the young one doth draw forth the milk, so will the people's desires and obedience draw forth the word: so that a dull people make dull preachers, and a lively people make a lively preacher. So great a force hath hope in all our duties. As hope of speeding increaseth, so doth diligence in seeking increase; beside the great conducement of it to our joy. Even the false hope of the wicked doth much support, and maintain a kind of comfort answerable to their hope; though, it is true, their hope and joy will both die with them: how much more will the saints' hopes refresh and support them! All this I have said, to show you the excellency and necessity of this grace, and so to provoke you to the more constant acting of it. If your hope dieth, your duties die, your endeavours die, your joys die, and your souls die. And if your hope be not acted, but lie asleep, it is next to dead, both in likeness and preparation.

Therefore, christian reader, when thou art winding up thy affections to heaven, do not forget to give one lift at thy hope; remember to wind up this peg also. The object of hope hath four qualifications; First, It must be good; Secondly, Future; Thirdly, Difficult; Fourthly, Yet possible. For the goodness of thy rest, there is somewhat said before, which thou mayest transfer hither as thou findest it useful; so also of the difficulty and futurity. Let faith then show thee the truth

of the promise, and judgment the goodness of the thing promised; and what then is wanting for the raising of thy hope? Show thy soul from the word, and from the mercies, and from the nature of God, what possibility, yea, what probability, yea, what certainty thou hast of possessing the crown. Think thus, and reason thus, with thine own heart: Why should I not confidently and comfortably hope, when my soul is in the hands of so compassionate a Saviour; and when the kingdom is at the disposal of so bounteous a God? Did he ever manifest any backwardness to my good; or discover the least inclination to my ruin? hath he not sworn the contrary to me in his word, that he delights not in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he should repent and live? (Ezek. 18:32; and 33:11.) Have not all his dealings with me witnessed the same? did he not mind me of my danger, when I never feared it? and why was this, if he would not have me to escape it? Did he not mind me of my happiness, when I had no thoughts of it: and why was this, but that he would have me to enjoy it? How oft hath he drawn me to himself, and his Christ, when I have drawn backward, and would have broken from him! what restless importunity hath he used in his suit: how hath he followed me from place to place; and his Spirit incessantly solicited my heart, with winning suggestions and persuasions for my good! And would he have done all this, if he had been willing that I should perish? If my soul were in the hands of my mortal foes, then, indeed, there were small hopes of my salvation; yea, if it were wholly in my own hands, my flesh and my folly would betray it to damnation. But have I as much cause to distrust God, as to distrust my foes, or distrust myself? surely I have not. Have I not a sure promise to build and rest on, and the truth of God engaged to fulfil it? would I not hope, if an honest man had made me a promise of any thing in his power; and shall I not hope, when I have the covenant and the oath of God? It is true, the glory is out of sight; we have not beheld the mansions of the saints: who hath ascended up to discover it, and descended to tell us what he had seen? Why, but the word is near me: have I not Moses and the prophets; Christ and his apostles? is not the promise of God more certain than our sight? It is not by sight, but by hope, that we must be saved; and hope that is seen is not

hope; for if we see it, why do we yet hope for it? "But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24, 25.) I have been ashamed of my hope in the arm of flesh, but hope in the promise of God maketh not ashamed. (Rom. 5:5.) I will say, therefore, in my greatest sufferings, with the church: "The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him: it is good that I both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. I will sit alone and keep silence, because I have borne it upon me. I will put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. For the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies." (Lam. 3:24, &c.) Though I languish and die, yet will I have hope; for he hath said, "The righteous hath hope in his death." (Prov. 14:32.) Though I must lie down in dust and darkness, yet there "my flesh shall rest in hope." (Psal. 16:9.) And when my flesh hath nothing in which it may rejoice, yet will I keep "the rejoicing of hope firm to the end." (Heb. 3:6.) For he hath said, "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness." (Prov. 10:28.) Indeed, if I had lived still under the covenant of works, and been put myself to the satisfying of that justice, then there had been no hope; but Christ hath taken down these impossibilities, and hath brought in a better hope, by which we may now draw nigh to God. (Heb. 7:19.) Or, if I had to do with a feeble creature, there were small hope, for how could he raise this body from the dust, and lift me up above the sun? But what is it to the Almighty Power, who made the heavens and earth of nothing: cannot the same Power that raised Christ, raise me; and that hath glorified the head, also glorify the members? Doubtless, by the blood of Christ's covenant will God send forth his prisoners from the pit wherein is no water; therefore will I turn to this strong hold, as a prisoner of hope. (Zech. 9:11, 12.)

And thus you see how meditation may excite your hope.

Sect. VIII. 4. The next affection to be acted is courage, or boldness, which leadeth to resolution, and concludeth in action. When you

have thus mounted your love, and desire, and hope, go on, and think further thus with yourselves: And will God indeed dwell with men, and is there such a glory within the reach of hope? Oh! why do I not then lay hold upon it? Where is the cheerful vigour of my spirit? Why do I not gird up the loins of my mind, and play the man for such a prize? Why do I not run with speed the race before me, and set upon mine enemies on every side, and valiantly break through all resistance? Why do I not take this kingdom by force, and my fervent soul catch at the place? Do I yet sit still, and heaven before me? (1 Tim. 6:12, 19; 1 Pet. 1:13; Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:24; Matt. 11:12.) If my beast do but see his provender, if my greedy senses perceive but their delightful objects, I have much ado to stave them off; and should not my soul be as eager for such a blessed rest? Why, then, do I not undauntedly fall to work? What should stop me, or what should dismay me? Is God with me or against me in the work? Will Christ stand by me, or will he not? If it were a way of sin that leads to death, then I might expect that God should resist me, and stand in my way with the drawn sword of his displeasure; or at least overtake me to my grief at last. But is he against the obeying of his own commands? Is perfect good against any thing but evil? Doth he bid me seek, and will he not assist me in it? Doth he set me a-work, and urge me to it, and will he after all be against me in it? It cannot be. And if he be for me, who can be against me? (Rom. 8:31.) In the work of sin all things almost are ready to help us, and God only, and his servants, against us; and how ill doth that work prosper in our hands! But in my course to heaven, almost all things are against me; but God is for me, and how happily still doth the work succeed! Do I set upon this work in my own strength, or rather in the strength of Christ my Lord; and cannot I do all things through him that strengtheneth me? Was he ever foiled, or subdued by an enemy? He hath been assaulted indeed, but was he ever conquered? Can they take the sheep till they have overcome the shepherd? Why then doth my flesh lay open to me the difficulties, and urge me so much with the greatness and troubles of the work? It is Christ that must answer all these objections; and what are the difficulties that can stay his power? Is any thing too hard for the omnipotent God? May not Peter boldly walk on the sea, if Christ

do but give the word of command; and if he begin to sink, is it from the weakness of Christ, or the smallness of his faith? The water, indeed, is but a sinking ground to tread on, but if Christ be by, and countenance us in it; if he be ready to reach us his hand, who would draw back for fear of danger? Is not sea and land alike to him? Shall I be driven from my God, and from my everlasting rest, as the silly birds are frightened from their food with a man of clouts, or a loud noise, when I know before there is no danger in it? How do I see men daily in these wars adventure upon armies, and forts, and cannons, and cast themselves upon the instruments of death; and have not I as fair a prize before me, and as much encouragement to adventure as they? What do I venture? My life at most; and in these prosperous times there is not one of many that ventures that. What do I venture on? Are they not unarmed foes? A great hazard, indeed, to venture on the hard thoughts of the world; or on the scorns and slanders of a wicked tongue! Surely, these serpents' teeth are out; these vipers are easily shaken into the fire; these adders have no stings; these thorns have lost their prickles. As all things below are silly comforters, so are they silly, toothless, enemies; bugbears to frighten fools and children, rather than powerful, dreadful foes. Do I not well deserve to be turned into hell, if the scorns and threats of blinded men; if the fear of silly, rotten earth can drive me thither? Do I not well deserve to be shut out of heaven, if I will be frightened from it with the tongues of sinners? Surely, my own voice must needs condemn me, and my own hand subscribe the sentence, and common reason would say that my damnation were just. What, if it were father, or mother, or husband, or wife, or the nearest friend that I have in the world, if they may be called friends that would draw me to damnation, should I not run over all that would keep me from Christ? Will their friendship countervail the enmity of God; or be any comfort to my condemned soul? Shall I be yielding and pliable to the desires of men, and only harden myself against the Lord? Let men, let angels beseech me upon their knees, I will slight their tears, I will scorn to stop my course to behold them, I will shut mine ears against their cries; let them flatter, or let them frown; let them draw forth tongues and swords against me, I am resolved to break through in the might

of Christ, and to look upon them all as naked dust. If they would entice me with preferment, with the kingdoms of the world, I will no more regard them than the dung of the earth. O blessed rest! O most invaluable, glorious state! Who would sell thee for dreams and shadows? Who would be enticed or affrighted from thee? Who would not strive, and fight, and watch, and run, and that with violence, even to the last breath, so he might but have hope at last to obtain thee? Surely, none but those that know thee not, and believe not thy glory. Thus you see with what kind of meditations you may excite your courage, and raise your resolutions.

Sect. IX. 5. The last affection to be acted is joy. This is the end of all the rest; love, desire, hope, and courage, do all tend to the raising of our joy. This is so desirable to every man by nature, and is so essentially necessary to the constituting of his happiness, that I hope I need not say much to persuade you to any thing that would make your life delightful. Supposing you, therefore, already convinced, that the pleasures of the flesh are brutish and perishing, and that your solid and lasting joy must be from heaven; instead of persuading, I shall proceed in directing.

Well, then, by this time, if thou hast managed well the former work, thou art got within the ken of thy rest; thou believest the truth of it; thou art convinced of the excellency of it; thou art fallen in love with it; thou longest after it; thou hopest for it; and thou art resolved courageously to venture for the obtaining it: but is here any work for joy in this? We delight in the good which we do possess. It is present good that is the object of joy; but thou wilt say 'Alas! I am yet without it!' Well, but yet think a little further with thyself. Though the real presence do afford the choicest joy, yet the presence of its imperfect idea, or image in thy understanding, may afford me a great deal of true delight. Is it nothing to have a deed of gift from God? Are his infallible promises no ground of joy? Is it nothing to live in daily expectation of entering into the kingdom? Is not my assurance of being glorified one of these days a sufficient ground for inexpressible joy? Is it no delight to the heir of a kingdom to think of what he must

hereafter possess, though at present he little differ from a servant? (Gal. 4:1.) Am I not commanded to rejoice in hope of the glory of God? (Rom. 5:2, and 12:12.)

Here, then, reader, take thy heart once again, as it were, by the hand; bring it to the top of the highest mount; if it be possible, to some atlas above the clouds. Show it the kingdom of Christ, and the glory of it. Say to it, 'All this will thy Lord bestow upon thee, who hast believed in him, and been a worshipper of him.' It is the Father's good pleasure to give thee this kingdom. Seest thou this astonishing glory above thee? Why, all this is thy own inheritance; this crown is thine; these pleasures are thine; this company, this beauteous place is thine; all things are thine, because thou art Christ's, and Christ is thine; when thou wast married to him, thou hadst all this with him.

Thus, take thy heart into the land of promise, show it the pleasant hills and fruitful valleys; show it the clusters of grapes which thou hast gathered; and by those convince it that it is a blessed land, flowing with better than milk and honey: enter the gates of the holy city, walk through the streets of the new Jerusalem, walk about Sion, go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that thou mayest tell it to thy soul. (Psal. 48:12, 13.) Hath it not the glory of God, and is not her light like to a stone most precious? See the twelve foundations of her walls, and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb therein. The building of the walls of it are of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as clear as glass. The foundation is garnished with precious stones, and the twelve gates are twelve pearls. Every several gate is of one pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, as it were transparent glass; there is no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. It hath no need of sun or moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. These sayings are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his angels and his own Son, to show unto his servants the things that must shortly be done. (Rev. 21:11–13, &c. to

the end, and 22:6.) What sayest thou now to all this? This is thy rest, O my soul, and this must be the place of thy everlasting habitation. "Let all the sons of Sion then rejoice, and the daughters of Jerusalem be glad: for great is the Lord, and greatly is he praised in the city of our God: beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Sion: God is known in her palaces for a refuge." (Psalm 48:11, 1–3.)

Yet proceed on; "*Anima quæ amat ascendit,*" &c. The soul, saith Austin, that loves, ascends frequently, and runs familiarly through the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, visiting the patriarchs and prophets, saluting the apostles, admiring the armies of martyrs and confessors, &c. So do thou, lead on thy heart as from street to street, bringing it into the palace of the great King; lead it, as it were, from chamber to chamber; say to it, 'Here must I lodge, here must I live, here must I praise, here must I love, and be beloved; I must shortly be one of this heavenly choir; I shall then be better skilled in the music. Among this blessed company must I take my place. My voice must join to make up the melody. My tears will then be wiped away, my groans turned to another tune. My cottage of clay will be changed to this palace, and my prison rags to these splendid robes. My sordid, nasty, stinking flesh shall be put off, and such a sun-like spiritual body put on. For the former things are done away. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." (Psalm 87:3.) There it is that trouble and lamentation ceaseth, and the voice of sorrow is not heard. Oh! when I look upon this glorious place, what a dunghill and dungeon methinks is earth. Oh! what a difference betwixt a man feeble, pained, groaning, dying, rotting in the grave, and one of these triumphant, blessed, shining saints! Here shall I drink of the river of pleasure, "the streams whereof make glad the city of our God." "For the Lord will create a new Jerusalem and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. We shall be glad and rejoice for ever in that which he creates: for he will create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy: and he will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in his people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his

days." (Isa. 65:17–20.) Must Israel, on earth, under the bondage of the law, serve the Lord with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things which they possess? surely, then, I shall serve him with joyfulness and gladness, who shall have another kind of service, and of abundance in glory. (Deut. 28:47.) Did the saints take joyfully the spoiling of their goods? (Heb. 11:34.) And shall not I take joyfully the receiving of my good, and such a full reparation of all my losses? Was it such a remarkable, celebrated day, when the Jews rested from their enemies, because it was turned to them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day? (Esther 9:22.) What a day, then, will that be to my soul, whose rest and change will be so much greater! When the wise men saw but the star of Christ, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy; (Matt. 2:10;) but I shall shortly see the Star of Jacob, even himself who is the bright and morning Star. (Numb. 24:17; Rev. 22:16.) If they returned from the sepulchre with great joy, when they had but heard that he was risen from the dead; (Matt. 28:8;) what joy, then, will it be to me, when I shall see him risen and reigning in his glory, and myself raised to a blessed communion with him? Then shall we have beauty for ashes indeed, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: (Isa. 61:3:) when he hath made Sion an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. (Isa. 60:15.)

Why do I not, then, arise from the dust, and lay aside my sad complaints, and cease my doleful, mourning note? Why do I not trample down vain delights, and feed upon the foreseen delights of glory? Why is not my life a continual joy, and the savour of heaven perpetually upon my spirit? And thus, reader, I have directed thee in acting thy joy.

Sect. 10. Here also, when thou findest cause, thou hast a singular good advantage from thy meditations of heaven, for the acting of the contrary and more mixed passions; as:

1. Of thy hatred and detestation of sin, which would deprive thy soul of these immortal joys.

2. Of thy godly and filial fear, lest thou shouldst either abuse or hazard this mercy.

3. Of thy necessary grief, for such thy foolish abuse and hazard.

4. Of thy godly shame, which should cover thy face for the forementioned folly.

5. Of thy unfeigned repentance for what thou hast done against thy joys.

6. Of thy holy anger or indignation against thyself for such miscarriage.

7. Of the zeal and jealousy over thy heart, lest thou shouldst again be drawn to the like iniquity.

8. And of thy pity toward those who are ignorantly walking in the contrary course, and in apparent danger of losing all this.

But I will confine myself to the former chief affections, and not meddle with these, lest I be too prolix, but leave them to thy own spiritual prudence.

I would here also have thee to understand that I do not place any flat necessity in thy acting of all the forementioned affections in this order at one time, or in one duty. Perhaps thou mayest sometimes feel some one of thy affections more flat than the rest, and so to have more need of exciting: or thou mayest find one stirring more than the rest, and so think it more seasonable to help it forward! or, if thy time be short, thou mayest work upon one affection one day, and upon another the next, as thou findest cause. All this I still leave to thy own prudence.

And so I have done with the third part of the direction, viz. what powers of the soul are here to be acted, what affections excited, by what objective considerations, and in what order.

CHAP. X

By what Actings of the Soul to proceed in this work of Heavenly Contemplation

FOURTHLY, The fourth part of this directory is, to show yon how and by what acts you should advance on to the height of this work.

Sect. I. The first and main instrument of this work is, that cogitation, or consideration, which I before have opened, and which is to go along with us through the whole. But because mere cogitation, if it be not pressed home, will not so pierce and affect the heart; therefore we must here proceed to a second step, which is called soliloquy, which is nothing but a pleading the case with our own souls. As in preaching to others, the bare propounding and opening of truths and duties, doth seldom find that success as the lively application; so it is also in meditating and propounding truths to ourselves. The moving, pathetic pleadings with a sinner, will make him deeply affected with a common truth, which before, though he knew it, yet it never stirred him. What heart-meltings do we see under powerful application, when the naked explication did little move them? If any where there be a tender-hearted, affectionate people, it is likely, under such a moving, close-applying ministry. Why, thus must thou do in thy meditation to quicken thine own heart: enter into a serious debate with it: plead with it in the most moving and affecting language: urge it with the most weighty and powerful arguments: this soliloquy, or self-conference, hath been the practice of the holy men of God in all times: (Gen. 49:6; Judges 5:21; Psal. 16:2; and Jer. 4:19.) How doth David plead with his soul against its dejections, and argue it into a holy confidence and comfort! "Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou so disquieted within me? Trust in God, for I shall yet give him thanks, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." (Psal. 42:5, 11, and 43:5.) So in Psal.

103:1, 2, &c. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," &c. So doth he also end the Psalm, and so doth he begin and end Psal. 104; so Psal. 146:1; and 116:7, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." The like you may see in the meditations of holy men of latter times, as Austin, Bernard, &c.: so that this is no new path which I persuade you to tread, but that which the saints have ever used in their meditation.

Sect. II. This soliloquy hath its several parts, and its due method wherein it should be managed. The parts of it are according to the several affections of the soul, and according to the several necessities thereof, according to the various arguments to be used, and according to the various ways of arguing. So that you see if I should attempt the full handling hereof, it would take up more time and room than I intend or can allow it. Only thus much in brief: As every good master and father of a family is a good preacher to his own family, so every good Christian is a good preacher to his own soul. Soliloquy is a preaching to one's self; therefore the very same method which a minister should use in his preaching to others, should a Christian use in speaking to himself. Dost thou understand the best method for a public preacher? Dost thou know the right parts and order of a sermon; and which is the most effectual way of application? Why then I need to lay it open no further; thou understandest the method and parts of this soliloquy. Mark the most affecting, heart-melting minister; observe his course, both for matter and manner; set him as a pattern before thee for thy imitation; and the same way that he takes with the hearts of his people, do thou also take with thy own heart. Men are naturally addicted to imitation, especially of those whom they most affect and approve of: how near do some ministers come in their preaching to the imitation of others, whom they usually hear, and much reverence and value; so mayest thou in this duty of preaching to thy heart. Art thou not ready sometime when thou hearest a minister, to remember divers things which thou thinkest might be moving and pertinent, and to wish that he would have mentioned and pressed them on the hearers? Why,

remember those when thou art exhorting thyself, and press them on thy own heart as close as thou canst.

As, therefore, this is accounted the most familiar method in preaching, so it is for thee in meditating: First, Explain to thyself the subject on which thou dost meditate, both the terms and the subject matter; study the difficulties, till the doctrine is clear. Secondly, Then confirm thy faith in the belief of it, by the most clear, convincing scripture reasons. Thirdly, Then apply it according to its nature and thy necessity. As in the case we are upon, that there is a rest remaining for the people of God.

1. Consider of the useful conseqences, or conclusions, that thence arise, for the clearing and confirming of thy judgment, which is commonly called a use of information. Here thou mayest press them also by other confirming arguments, and adjoin the confutation of the contrary errors.

2. Proceed then to consider of the duties which do appear to be such from the doctrine in hand, which is commonly called a use of instruction, as also the reprehension of the contrary vices.

3. Then proceed to question, and try thyself, how thou hast valued this glory of the saints; how thou hast loved it; and how thou hast laid out thyself to obtain it. This is called a use of examination. Here thou mayest also make use of discovering signs, drawn from the nature, properties, effects, adjuncts, &c.

4. So far as this trial hath discovered thy neglect, and other sins against this rest, proceed to the reprehension and censuring of thyself; chide thy heart for its omissions and commissions, and do it sharply till it feel the smart; as Peter preached reproof to his hearers, till they were pricked to the heart and cried out: and as a father or master will chide the child till it begin to cry and be sensible of the fault; so do thou in chiding thy own heart: this is called a use of reproof. Here also it will be very necessary that thou bring forth all

the aggravating circumstances of the sin, that thy heart may feel it in its weight and bitterness; and if thy heart do evade or deny the sin, convince it by producing the several discoveries.

5. So far as thou discoverest that thou hast been faithful in the duty, turn it to encouragement to thyself, and to thanks to God; where thou mayest consider of the several aggravations of the mercy of the Spirit's enabling thee thereto.

6. So, as it respects thy duty for the future, consider how thou mayest improve this comfortable doctrine, which must be by strong and effectual persuasion with thy heart. First, By way of dehortation from the fore-mentioned sins. Secondly, By way of exhortation to the several duties. And these are either, first, internal, or secondly, external. First, therefore, admonish thy heart of its own inward neglects and contempts; Secondly, And then of the neglects and trespasses in thy practice against this blessed state of rest. Set home these several admonitions to the quick; take thy heart as to the brink of the bottomless pit; force it to look in, threaten thyself with the threatenings of the word; tell it of the torments that it draweth upon itself; tell it what joys it is madly rejecting; force it to promise thee to do so no more, and that not with a cold and heartless promise, but earnestly with most solemn asseverations and engagements. Secondly, The next and last is, to drive on thy soul to those positive duties, which are required of thee in relation to this rest: as First, To the inward duties of thy heart, and there First, To be diligent in making sure of this rest: Secondly, To rejoice in the expectation of it: this is called a use of consolation. It is to be furthered by first laying open the excellency of the state; and secondly, the certainty of it in itself; and thirdly, our own interest in it; by clearing and proving all these, and confuting all saddening objections that may be brought against them: Thirdly, so also for the provoking of love, of hope, and all other the affections in the way before more largely opened.

And, Secondly, Press on thy heart also to all outward duties that are to be performed in thy way to rest, whether in worship or in civil

conversation, whether public or private, ordinary or extraordinary: this is commonly called a use of exhortation. Here bring in all quickening considerations, either those that may drive thee, or those that may draw; which work by fear, or which work by desire; these are commonly called motives; but above all, be sure that thou follow them home; ask thy heart what it can say against the duty; Is there weight in them, or is there not? And then, what it can say against the duty, Is it necessary; is it comfortable; or is it not? When thou hast silenced thy heart, and brought it to a stand, then drive it further, and urge it to a promise, as suppose it were to the duty of meditation, which we are speaking of; force thyself beyond these lazy purposes; resolve on the duty before thou stir; enter into a solemn covenant to be faithful; let not thy heart go, till it have, without all halting and reservations, flatly promised thee, that it will fall to the work; write down this promise, show it to thy heart the next time it loiters; then study also the helps and means, the hinderances and directions, that concern thy duty. And this is in brief the exercise of this soliloquy, or the preaching of heaven to thy heart.

Sect. III. Object. But perhaps thou wilt say, Every man cannot understand this method; this is for ministers and learned men; every man is not able to play the preacher. I answer thee, First, There is not that ability required to this, as is to the work of public preaching: here thy thoughts may serve the turn, but there must be also the decent ornaments of language: here is needful but an honest, understanding heart, but there must be a good pronunciation, and a voluble tongue: here if thou miss of the method, thou mayest make up that in one piece of application which thou hast neglected in another: but there thy failings are injurious to many, and a scandal and disgrace to the work of God. Thou knowest what will fit thy own heart, and what arguments take best with thy own affections; but thou art not so well acquainted with the dispositions of others. Secondly, I answer further, Every man is bound to be skilful in the Scriptures as well as ministers: kings, and magistrates; (Deut. 17:18–20; Josh. 1:8;) and the people also. (Deut. 6:6–8.) Do you think, if you did as is there commanded, write it upon thy heart, lay them up

in thy soul, bind them upon thy hand, and between thine eyes, meditate on them day and night: I say, if you did thus, would you not quickly understand as much as this? (See Psal. 1:3; Deut. 11:18, and 6:6–8.) Doth not God command thee to teach them diligently to thy children; and to talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up? And if thou must be skilled to teach thy children, much more to teach thyself; and if thou canst talk of them to others, why not also to thine own heart? Certainly, our unskilfulness and disability, both in a methodical and lively teaching of our families, and of ourselves, is for the most part merely through our own negligence, and a sin for which we have no excuse: you that learn the skill of your trades and sciences, might learn this also, if you were but willing and painful.

And so I have done with this particular of soliloquy.

Sect. IV. 2. Another step to arise by in our contemplation, is, from this speaking to ourselves, to speak to God: prayer is not such a stranger to this duty, but that ejaculatory requests may be intermixed or added, and that as a very part of the duty itself. How oft doth David intermix these in his psalms, sometime pleading with his soul, and sometime with God, and that in the same psalm, and in the next verses? The apostle bids us speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns; and no doubt we may also speak to God in them; this keeps the soul in mind of the divine presence, it tends also exceedingly to quicken and raise it: so that as God is the highest object of our thoughts, so our viewing of him, and our speaking to him, and pleading with him, doth more elevate the soul, and actuate the affections, than any other part of meditation can do. Men that are careless of their carriage and speeches among children and idiots, will be sober and serious with princes or grave men; so, though while we do but plead the case with ourselves, we are careless and unaffected, yet when we turn our speech to God, it may strike us with awfulness; and the holiness and majesty of him whom we speak to, may cause both the matter and words to pierce the deeper. Isaac went forth to pray, the former translation saith; to meditate, saith the latter; the Hebrew verb, saith

Paræus in loc., signifieth both ad orandum et meditandum. The men of God, both former and latter, who have left their meditations on record for our view, have thus intermixed soliloquy and prayer; sometime speaking to their own hearts, and sometime turning their speech to God: and though this may seem an indifferent thing, yet I conceive it very suitable and necessary, and that it is the highest step that we can advance to in the work.

Object. But why then is it not as good to take up with prayer alone, and to save all this tedious work that you prescribe us?

Answ. 1. They are several duties, and therefore must be performed both. Secondly, We have need of one as well as the other, and therefore shall wrong ourselves in the neglecting of either. Thirdly, The mixture, as in music, doth more affect; the one helps on, and puts life into the other. Fourthly, It is not the right order to begin at the top, therefore meditation and speaking to ourselves, should go before prayer, or speaking to God; want of this, makes prayer with most to have little more than the name of prayer, and men to speak as lightly and as stupidly to the dreadful God, as if it were to one of their companions, and with far less reverence and affection than they would speak to an angel, if he should appear to them, yea, or to a judge or prince, if they were speaking for their lives: and consequently their success and answers are often like their prayers. Oh! speaking to the God of heaven in prayer, is a weightier duty than most are aware of.

Sect. V. The ancients had a custom, by apostrophes and prosopopœias, to speak, as it were, to angels and saints departed, which, as it was used by them, I take to be lawful; but what they spoke in rhetorical figures, was interpreted by the succeeding ages to be spoken in strict propriety; and doctrinal conclusions for praying to saints and angels were raised from their speeches; therefore I will omit that course, which is so little necessary, and so subject to scandalize the less judicious readers.

And so much for the fourth part of the direction, by what steps or acts we must advance to the height of this work: I should clear all this by some examples, but that I intend shall follow in the end.

CHAP. XI

Some Advantages and Helps, for raising and affecting the Soul by this Meditation

SECT. I. Fifthly: The fifth part of this directory is, to show you what advantages you should take, and what helps you should use, to make your meditations of heaven more quickening, and to make you taste the sweetness that is therein. For that is the main work that I drive at through all; that you may not stick in a bare thinking, but may have the lively sense of all upon your hearts; and this you will find to be the most difficult part of the work: and that it is easier barely to think of heaven a whole day, than to be lively and affectionate in those thoughts one quarter of an hour. Therefore let us yet a little further consider what may be done, to make your thoughts of heaven to be piercing, affecting, raising thoughts.

Here, therefore, you must understand, that the mere pure work of faith hath many disadvantages with us, in comparison of the work of sense. Faith is imperfect, for we are renewed but in part; but sense hath its strength, according to the strength of the flesh: faith goes against a world of resistance, but sense doth not. Faith is supernatural, and therefore prone to declining, and to languish both in the habit and exercise, further than it is still renewed and excited; but sense is natural, and therefore continueth while nature continueth. The object of faith is far off; we must go as far as heaven for our joys; but the object of sense is close at hand. It is no easy matter to rejoice at that which we never saw, nor ever knew the man that did see it: and this upon a mere promise which is written in the Bible: and that when we have nothing else to rejoice in, but all our sensible comforts do fail us; but to rejoice in that which we see and

feel, in that which we have hold of, and possession already, this is not difficult. Well, then, what should be done in this case? why, surely it will be a point of our spiritual prudence, and a singular help to the furthering of the work of faith, to call in our sense to its assistance: if we can make us friends of these usual enemies, and make them instruments of raising us to God, which are the usual means of drawing us from God, I think we shall perform a very excellent work. Surely it is both possible and lawful, yea, and necessary too, to do something in this kind: for God would not have given us either our senses themselves, or their usual objects, if they might not have been serviceable to his own praise, and helps to raise us up to the apprehension of higher things: and it is very considerable, how the Holy Ghost doth condescend to the phrase of Scripture, in bringing things down to the reach of sense; how he sets forth the excellencies of spiritual things in words that are borrowed from the objects of sense; how he describeth the glory of the New Jerusalem, in expressions that might take even with flesh itself: as that the streets and buildings are pure gold, that the gates are pearl, that a throne doth stand in the midst of it, &c. (Rev. 21:22.) That we shall eat and drink with Christ at his table in his kingdom; that he will drink with us the fruit of the vine new; that we shall shine as the sun in the firmament of our Father: these, with most other descriptions of our glory, are expressed as if it were to the very flesh and sense; which, though they are all improper and figurative, yet doubtless if such expressions had not been best, and to us necessary, the Holy Ghost would not have so frequently used them: he that will speak to man's understanding, must speak in man's language, and speak that which he is capable to conceive. And, doubtless, as the Spirit doth speak, so we must hear; and if our necessity cause him to condescend in his expressions, it must needs cause us to be low in our conceivings. Those conceivings and expressions which we have of spirits, and things merely spiritual, they are commonly but second notions, without the first; but mere names that are put into our mouths, without any true conceivings of the things which they signify; or our conceivings which we express by those notions or terms, are merely negative: what things are not, rather than what they are; as, when we

mention spirits, we mean they are not corporal substances, but what they are, we can tell no more, than we know what is Aristotle's 'Materia Prima.' It is one reason of Christ's assuming and continuing our nature with the Godhead, that we might know him the better, when he is so much nearer to us; and we might have more positive conceivings of him, and so our minds might have familiarity with him, who before was quite beyond our reach.

But what is my scope in all this? is it that we might think heaven to be made of gold and pearl; or, that we should picture Christ as the papists do, in such a shape; or, that we should think saints and angels do indeed eat and drink? No; not that we should take the Spirit's figurative expressions to be meant according to strict propriety; or have fleshly conceivings of spiritual things, so as to believe them to be such indeed: but thus to think, that to conceive or speak of them in strict propriety, is utterly beyond our reach and capacity; and therefore we must conceive of them as we are able; and that the Spirit would not have represented them in these notions to us, but that we have no better notions to apprehend them by; and therefore that we make use of these phrases of the Spirit to quicken our apprehensions and affections, but not to prevent them; and use these low notions as a glass, in which we must see the things themselves, though the representation be exceeding imperfect, till we come to an immediate perfect sight; yet still concluding, that these phrases, though useful, are but borrowed and improper. The like may be said of those expressions of God in Scripture, wherein he represents himself in the imperfections of creatures, as anger, repenting, willing what shall not come to pass, &c. Though these be improper, drawn from the manner of men, yet there is somewhat in God which we can see no better yet, than in this glass, and which we can no better conceive of, than in such notions, or else the Holy Ghost would have given us better.

Sect. II. 1. Go to, then, when thou settest thyself to meditate on the joys above, think on them boldly, as Scripture hath expressed them; bring down thy conceivings to the reach of sense. Excellency without

familiarity doth amaze more than delight us; but love and joy are promoted by familiar acquaintance. When we go about to think of God and glory in proper conceivings, without these spectacles we are lost, and have nothing to fix our thoughts upon. We set God and heaven so far from us, that our thoughts are strange, and we look at them as things beyond our reach, and beyond our line, and are ready to say, That which is above is nothing to us; to conceive no more of God and glory, but that we cannot conceive them, and to apprehend no more, but that they are past our apprehension, will produce no more love but this,—to acknowledge that they are so far above us that we cannot love them; and no more joy but this,—that they are above our rejoicing. And therefore put Christ no further from you than he hath put himself, lest the divine nature be again inaccessible. Think of Christ as in our own nature glorified; think of our fellow-saints as men there perfected; think of the city and state as the spirit hath expressed it, only with the cautions and limitations before mentioned. Suppose thou wert now beholding this city of God, and that thou hadst been companion with John in his survey of its glory; and hadst seen the thrones, the majesty, the heavenly hosts, the shining splendour which he saw; draw as strong suppositions as may be from thy sense for the helping of thy affections. It is lawful to suppose we did see for the present, that which God hath in prophecies revealed, and which we must really see in more unspeakable brightness before long. Suppose, therefore, with thyself thou hadst been that apostle's fellow-traveller into the celestial kingdom, and that thou hadst seen all the saints in their white robes, with palms in their hands; suppose thou hadst heard those songs of Moses and of the Lamb; or didst even now hear them praising and glorifying the living God. If thou hadst seen these things, indeed, in what a rapture wouldst thou have been! And the more seriously thou puttest this supposition to thyself, the more will the meditation elevate thy heart. I would not have thee, as the papists, draw them in pictures, nor use such ways to represent them. This, as it is a course forbidden by God, so it would but seduce and draw down thy heart; but get the liveliest picture of them in thy mind that possibly thou canst; meditate of them as if thou wert all the while beholding them,

and as if thou wert even hearing the hallelujahs, while thou art thinking of them; till thou canst say, Methinks I see a glimpse of the glory; methinks I hear the shouts of joy and praise; methinks I even stand by Abraham and David, Peter and Paul, and more of these triumphing souls; methinks I even see the Son of God appearing in the clouds, and the world standing at his bar to receive their doom; methinks I hear him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," and even see them go rejoicing into the joy of their Lord. My very dreams of these things have deeply affected me, and should not these just suppositions affect me much more? What, if I had seen, with Paul, those unutterable things, should I not have been exalted, and that, perhaps, above measure, as well as he? What, if I had stood in the room of Stephen, and seen heaven opened, and Christ sitting at the right-hand of God? Surely that one sight was worth the suffering his storm of stones. Oh, that I might but see what he did see, though I also suffered what he did suffer! What, if I had seen such a sight as Micaiah saw: the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing on his right-hand and on his left? Why, these men of God did see such things; and I shall shortly see far more than ever they saw till they were loosed from this flesh, as I must be. And thus you see how the familiar conceiving of the state of blessedness, as the Spirit hath in a condescending language expressed it, and our strong raising of suppositions from our bodily senses will further our affections in this heavenly work.

Sect. III. 2. There is yet another way by which we may make our senses here serviceable to us, and that is, by comparing of the objects of sense with the objects of faith; and so forcing sense to afford us that medium, from whence we may conclude the transcendent worth of glory, by arguing from sensitive delights as from the less to the greater. And here for your further assistance, I shall furnish you with some of these comparative arguments.

And First, You must strongly argue with your hearts, from the corrupt delights of sensual men. Think, then, with yourselves when you would be sensible of the joys above: Is it such a delight to a

sinner to do wickedly, and will it not be delightful, indeed, then to live with God? Hath a very drunkard such a delight in his cups and his companions, that the very fears of damnation will not make him forsake them? Hath the brutish whoremaster such delight in his whore, that he will part with his credit, and estate, and salvation, rather than he will part with her? Surely, then, there are high delights with God. If the way to hell can afford such pleasure, what are the pleasures of the saints in heaven? if the covetous man hath so much pleasure in his wealth, and the ambitious man in power and titles of honour, what then have the saints in the everlasting treasure? and what pleasure do the heavenly honours afford, where we shall be set above principalities and powers, and be made the glorious spouse of Christ? What pleasure do the voluptuous find in their sensual courses? How closely will they follow their hunting, and hawking, and other recreations, from morning to night! How delightfully will they sit at their cards and dice, hours and days and nights together! O the delight that must needs then be in beholding the face of the living God, and in singing forth praises to him and the Lamb, which must be our recreation when we come to our rest!

Sect. IV. 2. Compare also the delights above with the lawful delights of moderated senses. Think with thyself, How sweet is food to my taste when I am hungry, especially, as Isaac said, that which my soul loveth, that which my temperature and appetite do incline to! What delight hath the taste in some pleasant fruits; in some relished meats, and in divers junkets! Oh, what delight, then, must my soul needs have in feeding upon Christ, the living bread, and in eating with him at his table in his kingdom! Was a mess of pottage so sweet to Esau, in his hunger, that he would buy them at so dear a rate as his birth-right? How highly then should I value this never-perishing food! How pleasant is drink in the extremity of thirst! The delight of it to a man in a fever, or other drought, can scarcely be expressed. It will make the strength of Sampson revive. Oh, then, how delightful will it be to my soul to drink of that fountain of living water, which whoso drinks shall thirst no more! So pleasant is wine, and so refreshing to the spirits, that it is said to make glad the heart of man:

how pleasant, then, will that wine of the great marriage be; even that wine which our water was turned into; that best wine, which will be kept till then! How delightful are pleasing odours to our smell! How delightful is perfect music to the ear! How delightful are beauteous sights to the eye; such as curious pictures, sumptuous, adorned, well-contrived buildings; handsome, necessary rooms, walks, prospects; gardens stored with variety of beauteous and odoriferous flowers; or pleasant meadows, which are natural gardens! O, then, think every time thou seest or rememberest these, what a fragrant smell hath the precious ointment which is poured on the head of our glorious Saviour, and which must be poured on the heads of all his saints, which will fill all the room of heaven with its odour and perfume! How delightful is the music of the heavenly host! How pleasing will be those real beauties above, and how glorious the building not made with hands, and the house that God himself doth dwell in, and the walks and prospects of the city of God, and the beauties and delights in the celestial paradise! Think seriously what these must needs be. The like may be said of the delight of the sense of feeling, which, the philosopher saith, is the greatest of all the rest.

Sect. V. 3. Compare also the delights above with the delights that are found in natural knowledge. This is far beyond the delights of sense, and the delights of heaven are further beyond it. Think, then, can an Archimedes be so taken up with his mathematical invention, that the threats of death cannot take him off, but he will die in the midst of these his natural contemplations? Should I not much more be taken up with the delights of glory, and die with these contemplations fresh upon my soul? especially when my death will perfect my delights; but those of Archimedes die with him. What a pleasure is it to dive into the secrets of nature; to find out the mysteries of arts and sciences; to have a clear understanding in logic, physic, metaphysics, music, astronomy, geometry, &c.! If we make but any new discovery in one of these, or see a little more than we saw before, what singular pleasure do we find therein! why, think then what high delights there are in the knowledge of God, and Christ, his Son. If the face of human learning be so beautiful, that sensual pleasures are to it but

base and brutish, how beautiful then is the face of God! When we light on some choice and learned book, how are we taken with it; we could read and study it day and night; we can leave meat and drink and sleep to read it. What delights then are there at God's right-hand, where we shall know in a moment all that is to be known.

Sect. VI. 4. Compare also the delight above with the delights of morality, and of the natural affections. What delight had many sober heathens in the rules and practice of moral duties! so that they took him only for a honest man who did well through the love of virtue, not only for fear of punishment. Yea, so highly did they value this moral virtue, that they thought the chief happiness of man consisted in it. Why think, then, what excellency there will be in that rare perfection which we shall be raised to in heaven; and in that uncreated perfection of God which we shall behold? What sweetness is there in the exercise of natural love, whether to children, to parents, to yokefellows, or to friends? The delight which a pair of special, faithful friends do find in loving and enjoying one another, is a most pleasing, sweet delight. It seemed to the philosophers to be above the delights of natural or matrimonial friendship, and I think it seemed so to David himself; so he concludes his lamentation for him: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Sam. 1:26.) Yea, the soul of Jonathan did cleave to David. Even Christ himself, as it seemeth, had some of this kind of love; for he had one disciple whom he especially loved, and who was wont to lean on his breast. Why think, then, if the delights of close and cordial friendship be so great, what delight we shall have in the friendship of the most high; and in our mutual amity with Jesus Christ; and in the dearest love and comfort with the saints! Surely this will be a closer and stricter friendship than ever was betwixt any friends on earth. And these will be more lovely, desirable friends than any that ever the sun beheld; and both our affections to our Father and our Saviour, but especially his affection to us, will be such as here we never knew; as spirits are so far more powerful than flesh, that one angel can destroy a host, so also are their affections more

strong and powerful. We shall then love a thousand times more strongly and sweetly than now we can; and as all the attributes and works of God are incomprehensible, so is the attribute and work of love. He will love us many thousand times more than we even at the perfectest are able to love him. What joy, then, will there be in this mutual love!

Sect. VII. 5. Compare also the excellencies of heaven with those glorious works of the creation which our eyes do now behold. What a deal of wisdom, and power, and goodness, appeareth in and through them to a wise observer! What a deal of the majesty of the great Creator doth shine in the face of this fabric of the world! Surely, his works are great and admirable, sought out of them that have pleasure therein. This makes the study of natural philosophy so pleasant, because the works of God are so excellent. What rare workmanship is in the body of a man, yea, in the body of every beast, which makes the anatomical studies so delightful! What excellency in every plant we see! in the beauty of flowers; in the nature, diversity, and use of herbs; in fruits, in roots, in minerals, and what not! But especially if we look to the greater works; if we consider the whole body of this earth, and its creatures, and inhabitants; the ocean of waters, with its motions and dimensions; the variation of the seasons, and of the face of the earth; the intercourse of spring and fall, of summer and winter; what wonderful excellency do these contain! Why think, then, in thy meditations, if these things, which are but servants to sinful man, are yet so full of mysterious worth; what, then, is that place where God himself doth dwell, and is prepared for the just who are perfected with Christ! When thou walkest forth in the evening, look upon the stars how they glisten, and in what number they bespangle the firmament. If, in the daytime, look up to the glorious sun; view the wide-expanded, encompassing heavens, and say to thyself, What glory is in the least of yonder stars; what a vast, what a bright resplendent body hath yonder moon, and every planet! Oh, what an inconceivable glory hath the sun! Why, all this is nothing to the glory of heaven. Yonder sun must there be laid aside as useless, for it would not be seen, for

the brightness of God. I shall live above all yonder glory; yonder is but darkness to the lustre of my Father's house. I shall be as glorious as that sun myself; yonder is but as the wall of the palace-yard; as the poet saith,

"If in heaven's outward courts such beauty be,

What is the glory which the saints do see!"

So think of the rest of the creatures. This whole earth is but my Father's footstool: this thunder is nothing to his dreadful voice: these winds are nothing to the breath of his mouth. So much wisdom and power as appeareth in all these; so much, and far much more greatness, and goodness, and loving delights, shall I enjoy in the actual fruition of God. Surely, if the rain which rains, and the sun which shines on the just and unjust, be so wonderful; the sun, then, which must shine on none but saints and angels, must needs be wonderful and ravishing in glory.

Sect. VIII. 6. Compare the things which thou shalt enjoy above, with the excellency of those admirable works of providence which God doth exercise in the church and in the world. What glorious things hath the Lord wrought! and yet we shall see more glorious than these. Would it not be an astonishing sight to see the sea stand as a wall on the right-hand and on the left, and the dry land appear in the midst, and the people of Israel pass safely through, and Pharaoh and his people swallowed up? What, if we should see but such a sight now! If we had seen the ten plagues of Egypt, or had seen the rock to gush forth streams, or had seen manna or quails rained down from heaven, or had seen the earth open, and swallow up the wicked, or had seen their armies slain with hailstones, with an angel, or by one another; would not all these have been wondrous, glorious sights? But we shall see far greater things than these: and as our sights shall be more wonderful, so also they shall be more sweet: there shall be no blood nor wrath intermingled. We shall not then cry out as David, "Who can stand before this holy Lord God?" Would it not have been

an astonishing sight to have seen the sun stand still in the firmament, or to have seen Ahaz's dial go ten degrees backward? Why, we shall see when there shall be no sun to shine at all: we shall behold for ever a sun of more incomparable brightness. Were it not a brave life, if we might still live among wonders and miracles; and all for us, and not against us: if we could have drought or rain at our prayers, as Elias; or if we could call down fire from heaven to destroy our enemies; or raise the dead to life, as Elisha; or cure the diseased, and speak strange languages, as the apostles? Alas! these are nothing to the wonders which we shall see and possess with God; and all those wonders of goodness and love. We shall possess that pearl and power itself, through whose virtue all these works were done: we shall, ourselves, be the subjects of more wonderful mercies than any of these. Jonas was raised but from a three days' burial, from the belly of the whale in the deep ocean; but we shall be raised from many years' rottenness and dust; and that dust exalted to a sun-like glory, and that glory perpetuated to all eternity. What sayest thou, Christian? Is not this the greatest of miracles or wonders? Surely, if we observe but common providences; the motions of the sun, the tides of the sea, the standing of the earth, the warming it, the watering it with rain as a garden, the keeping in order a wicked, confused world, with multitudes the like: they are all very admirable. But then to think of the Sion of God, of the vision of the divine majesty; of the comely order of the heavenly host: what an admirable sight must that needs be! O what rare and mighty works have we seen in Britain: what clear discoveries of an almighty arm; what magnifying of weakness; what casting down of strength; what wonders wrought by most improbable means; what bringing to hell, and bringing back; what turning of tears and fears into safety and joy; such hearing of earnest prayers, as if God could have denied us nothing that we asked! All these were wonderful, heart-rising works. But, oh! what are these to our full deliverance; to our final conquest; to our eternal triumph; and to that great day of great things?

Sect. IX. 7. Compare also the mercies which thou shalt have above, with those particular providences which thou hast enjoyed thyself,

and those observable mercies which thou hast recorded through thy life. If thou be a Christian indeed, I know thou hast, if not in thy book, yet certainly in thy heart, a great many precious favours upon record: the very remembrance and rehearsal of them is sweet: how much more sweet was the actual enjoyment! But all these are nothing to the mercies which are above. Look over the excellent mercies of thy youth and education, the mercies of thy riper years or age, the mercies of thy prosperity, and of thy adversity: the mercies of thy several places and relations, are they not excellent and innumerable? Canst not thou think on the several places thou hast lived in, and remember that they have each had their several mercies: the mercies of such a place, and such a place; and all of them very rich and engaging mercies? O! how sweet was it to thee, when God resolved thy last doubts; when he overcame and silenced thy fears and unbelief; when he prevented the inconveniences of thy life, which thy own counsel would have cast thee into; when he eased thy pains; when he healed thy sickness, and raised thee up as from the very grave and death; when thou prayedst, and wept as Hezekiah, and saidst, "My days are cut off; I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed and removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off, like a weaver, my life. He will cut me off with pining sickness: from day to day wilt thou make an end of me, &c. Yet did he, in love to thy soul, deliver it from the pit of corruption, and cast thy sins behind his back, and set thee among the living, to praise him as thou dost this day: that the fathers to the children might make known his truth. The Lord was ready to save thee, that thou mightest sing the songs of praise to him in his house all the days of thy life." (Isa. 38:10–20.) I say, were not all these most precious mercies? Alas! these are but small for thee in the eyes of God: he intended thee far greater things than these, even such as these are scarce a taste of. It was a choice mercy, that God hath so notably answered thy prayers; and that thou hast been so oft and evidently a prevailer with him. But, oh! think, then, are all these so sweet and precious, that my life would have been a perpetual

misery without them? Hath his providence lifted me so high on earth, and his merciful kindness made me great? How sweet, then, will the glory of his presence be; and how high will his eternal love exalt me; and how great shall I be made in communion with his greatness! If my pilgrimage and warfare have such mercies, what shall I find in my home, and in my triumph! If God will communicate so much to me while I remain a sinner, what will he bestow when I am a perfect saint! If I have had so much in this strange country, at such a distance from him; what shall I have in heaven in his immediate presence, where I shall ever stand about his throne!

Sect. X. 8. Compare the comforts which thou shalt have above, with those which thou hast here received in the ordinances. Hath not the written word been to thee as an open fountain, flowing with comforts day and night? When thou hast been in trouble, there thou hast met with refreshing; when thy faith hath staggered, it hath there been confirmed. What suitable scriptures hath the Spirit set before thee! what seasonable promises have come into thy mind, so that thou mayest say with David, "If thy word had not been my delight, I had perished in my trouble." Think, then, if the word be so full of consolations, what overflowing springs shall we find in God! If his letters are so comfortable, what are the words that flow from his blessed lips, and the beams that stream from his glorious face! If Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible, what would he take for the joys which it revealeth! If the promise be so sweet, what is the performance! If the testament of our Lord, and our charter for the kingdom, be so comfortable, what will be our possession of the kingdom itself! Think further, what delights have I also found in this word preached, when I have sat under a heavenly, heart-searching teacher; how hath my heart been warmed within me; how hath he melted me, and turned my bowels! methinks I have felt myself almost in heaven: methinks I could have been content to have sat and heard from morning to night; I could even have lived and died there. How oft have I gone to the congregation troubled in spirit, and returned home with quietness and delight! How oft have I gone doubting, concluding damnation against my own soul; and God

hath sent me home with my doubts resolved, and satisfied me, and persuaded me of his love in Christ? How oft have I gone with darkness and doubtings in my judgment, and God hath opened to me such precious truths, and opened also my understanding to see them, that his light hath been exceeding comfortable to my soul! What cordials have I met with in my saddest afflictions! What preparatives to fortify me for the next encounter! Well then, if Moses's face do shine so gloriously, what glory is in the face of God! If the very feet of the messengers of these tidings of peace be beautiful, how beautiful is the face of the Prince of Peace! If the word in the mouth of a fellow-servant be so pleasant, what is the living Word himself! If this treasure be so precious in earthen vessels, what is that treasure laid up in heaven! Think with thyself, If I had heard but such a divine prophet as Isaiah, or such a persuading, moving prophet as Jeremy, or such a worker of miracles as Elijah or Elisha; how delightful a hearing would this have been! If I had heard but Peter, or John, or Paul, I should rejoice in it as long as I lived; but what would I give, that I had heard one sermon from the mouth of Christ himself? Surely, I should have felt the comfort of it in my very soul: why, but, alas! all this is nothing to what we shall have above. O blessed are the eyes that see what there is seen, and the ears that hear the things that there are heard: there shall I hear Elias, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, John, not preaching to an obstinate people in imprisonment, in persecutions, and reproach, but triumphing in the praises of him that hath advanced them. Austin was wont to wish these three wishes: First, That he might have seen Christ in the flesh: Secondly, That he might have heard Paul preach: Thirdly, That he might have seen Rome in its glory. Alas! these are small matters all, to that which Austin now beholds: there we see not Christ in the form of a servant, but Christ in his kingdom, in majesty and glory; not Paul preach in weakness and contempt, but Paul with millions more rejoicing and triumphing; not persecuting Rome in a fading glory, but Jerusalem which is above, in perfect and lasting glory.

So also think, what a joy it is to have access and acceptance in prayer; that when any thing aileth me, I may go to God, and open my case,

and unbosom my soul to him, as to the most faithful friend; especially knowing his sufficiency and willingness to relieve me! Oh, but it will be a more surpassing, unspeakable joy, when I shall receive all blessings without asking them, and when all my necessities and miseries are removed, and when God himself will be the portion and inheritance of my soul.

What consolation also have we oft received in the supper of the Lord! What a privilege is it to be admitted to sit at his table; to have his covenant sealed to me by the outward ordinance, and his special love sealed by his Spirit to my heart! Why, but all the life and comfort of these, is their declaring and assuring me of the comforts hereafter: their use is but darkly to signify and seal those higher mercies: when I shall indeed drink with him the fruit of the vine renewed, it will then be a pleasant feast indeed. O the difference between the last supper of Christ on earth, and the marriage supper of the Lamb at the great day! Here he is in an upper room, accompanied with twelve poor selected men, feeding on no curious dainties, but a paschal lamb with sour herbs, and a Judas at his table ready to betray him: but then his room will be the glorious heavens, his attendants all the host of angels and saints: no Judas nor unfurnished guest comes there; but the humble believers must sit down by him, and the feast will be their mutual loving and rejoicing. Yet further, think with thyself thus: The communion of the saints on earth is a most delectable mercy: what a pleasure is it to live with understanding and heavenly Christians! Even David saith, they were all his delight. (Psal. 16.) O, then, what a delightful society shall I have above! The communion of saints is there somewhat worth, where their understandings are fully cleared, and their affections so highly advanced. If I had seen but Job in his sores upon the dunghill, it would have been an excellent sight to see such a mirror of patience: what will it be then to see him in glory, praising that power which did uphold and deliver him! If I had heard but Paul and Silas singing in the stocks, it would have been a delightful hearing: what will it be then to hear them sing praises in heaven! If I had heard David sing praises on his lute and harp, it would have been a pleasing melody;

and that which drove the evil spirit from Saul, would surely have driven away the dulness and sadness of my spirit, and have been to me as the music was to Elisha, that the Spirit of Christ in joy would have come upon me; why, I shall shortly hear that sweet singer in the heavenly choir advancing the King of saints; and will not that be a far more melodious hearing? If I had spoke with Paul when he was new come down from the third heavens, and he might have revealed to me the things which he had seen; O what would I give for an hour's such conference! how far would I go to hear such a narration! Why, I must shortly see those very things myself; yea, and far more than Paul was then capable of seeing; and yet I shall see no more than I shall possess. If I had but spoken one hour with Lazarus when he was risen from the dead, and heard him describe the things which he had seen in another world, if God would permit and enable him thereto, what a joyful discourse would that have been! How many thousand books may I read, before I could know so much as he could have told me in that hour! If God would have suffered him to tell what he had seen, the Jews would have more thronged to hear him, than they did to see him: O, but this would have been nothing to the sight itself, and to the fruition of all that which Lazarus saw.

Once again, think with thyself what a soul-raising employment is the praising of God, especially in consort with his affectionate saints! What, if I had been in the place of those shepherds, and seen the angels, and heard the multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men;" (Luke 2:13, 14;) what a glorious sight and hearing would this have been! But I shall see and hear more glorious things than this. If I had stood by Christ when he was thanking his Father, (John 17,) I should have thought mine ears even blessed with his voice; how much more when I shall hear him pronounce me blessed! If there were such great joy at the bringing back of the ark, (2 Sam. 6:15,) and such great joy at the re-edifying the material temple, (Neh. 12:43,) what joy will there be in the New Jerusalem! Why, if I could but see the church here in unity and prosperity, what an unspeakable joy to my soul would it be! If I could see the congregations provided

with able teachers, and the people receiving and obeying the Gospel, and longing for reformation in life and manners: O what a blessed place were England! If I could see our ignorance turned into knowledge, and error turned into soundness of understanding, and shallow professors into solid believers; and brethren living in amity and in the life of the Spirit; O what a fortunate island were this! Alas, alas! what is all this to the reformation in heaven, and to the blessed condition that we must live in there? There is another kind of change and glory than this; what great joy had the people, and David himself, to see them so willingly offer to the service of the Lord; and what an excellent psalm of praise doth David thereupon compose! (1 Chron. 29:9, 10, &c.) When Solomon was anointed king in Jerusalem, the people rejoiced with so great joy, that the earth rent at the sound of them; (1 Kings 1:40;) what a joyful shout will there be, then, at the appearing of the King to the church! If when the foundations of the earth were fastened, and the corner-stone thereof was laid, the morning-stars did sing together, and all the sons of God did shout for joy; (Job 38:6, 7;) why then, when our glorious world is both founded and finished, and the corner-stone appeareth to be the top-stone also, and the holy city is adorned as the bride of the Lamb; O sirs, what a joyful shout will then be heard!

Sect. XI. 9. Compare the joy which thou shalt have in heaven, with that which the saints of God have found in the way to it, and in the foretastes of it; when thou seest a heavenly man rejoice, think what it is that so affects him. It is the property of fools to rejoice in toys, and to laugh at nothing; but the people of God are wiser than so, they know what it is that makes them glad: when did God ever reveal the least of himself to any of his saints, but the joy of their hearts was answerable to the revelation? Paul was so lifted up with what he saw, that he was in danger of being exalted above measure, and must have a prick in the flesh to keep him down: when Peter had seen but Christ in his transfiguration, which was but a small glimpse of his glory, and had seen Moses and Elias talking with him; what a rapture and ecstasy is he cast into! "Master," saith he, "it is good for us to be here; let us here build three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for

Moses, and one for Elias:" as if he should say, O let us not go down again to yonder persecuting rabble; let us not go down again to yonder drossy, dirty world; let us not return to our mean and suffering state: is it not better that we stay here, now we are here; is not here better company, and sweeter pleasures? But the text saith, "He knew not what he said." (Matt. 17:4.) When Moses had been talking with God in the mount, it made his visage so shining and glorious, that the people could not endure to behold it, but he was fain to put a veil upon it: no wonder then if the face of God must be veiled, till we are come to that state where we shall be more capable of beholding him when the veil shall be taken away, and we all beholding him with open face, shall be turned into the same image from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3:16–18.) Alas! what are the back parts which Moses saw from the clefts of the rock, to that open face which we shall behold hereafter? what is that revelation to John in Patmos, to this revelation which we shall have in heaven? How short doth Paul's vision come of the saints' vision above with God. How small a part of the glory which we must see, was that which so transported Peter in the mount! I confess these were all extraordinary foretastes, but little to the full beatifical vision. When David foresaw the resurrection of Christ, and of himself, and the pleasures which he should have for ever at God's right-hand; how cloth it make him break forth and say, "Therefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope!" (Psal. 16:9.) Why, think, then, if the foresight can raise such ravishing joy, what will the actual possession do! How oft have we read and heard of the dying saints, who, when they had scarcely strength and life enough to express them, have been as full of joy as their hearts could hold; and when their bodies have been under the extremities of their sickness, yea, ready to feel the pangs of death, have yet had so much of heaven in their spirits, that their joy hath far surpassed their sorrows. And if a spark of this fire be so glorious, and that in the midst of the sea of adversity; what then is that Sun of glory itself! O the joy that the martyrs of Christ have felt in the midst of the scorching flames! Surely they had life and sense as we, and were flesh and blood as well as we; therefore it must needs be some excellent thing that must so

rejoice their souls, while their bodies were burning: when Bilney can burn his finger in the candle, and Cranmer can burn off his unworthy right-hand; when Bainham can call the papists to see a miracle, and tell them that he feels no more pain than in a bed of down, and that the fire was to him as a bed of roses; when Farrier can say, If I stir, believe not my doctrine: think then, reader, with thyself in thy meditations; surely it must be some wonderful foretasted glory that can do all this, that can make the flames of fire easy, and that can make the king of fears so welcome. O what then must this glory itself needs be; when the very thoughts of it can bring Paul into such a strait, that he desired to depart and be with Christ, as best of all! when it can make men never think themselves well, till they are dead! O what a blessed rest is this! Shall Sanders so delightfully embrace the stake, and cry out, "Welcome cross!" and shall not I more delightfully embrace my blessedness, and cry, "Welcome crown!" Shall blessed Bradford kiss the faggot, and shall not I then kiss the Son himself. Shall the poor martyr rejoice that she might have her foot in the same hole of the stocks that Mr. Philpot's foot had been in before her; and shall not I rejoice, that my soul shall live in the same place of glory, where Christ and his apostles are gone before me? Shall fire and faggot, shall prisons and banishment, shall scorns and cruel torments, be more welcome to others, than Christ and glory shall be to me? God forbid. What thanks did Lucius the martyr give them, that they would send him to Christ from his ill masters on earth! how desirously did Basil wish, when his persecutors threatened his death the next day, that they might not change their resolution, lest he should miss of his expectation! What thanks then shall I give my Lord, for removing me from this loathsome prison to his glory! and how loth should I be to be deprived thereof! When Luther thought he should die of an apoplexy, it comforted him, and made him more willing, because the good Duke of Saxony, and, before him, the apostle John, had died of that disease: how much more should I be willing to pass the way that Christ hath passed, and come to the glory where Christ is gone! If Luther could thereupon say, "Feri, Domine, feri clementer; ipse paratus sum, quia verbo tuo à peccatis absolutus;" "Strike, Lord,

strike gently, I am ready; because by thy word I am absolved from my sins;" how much more cheerfully should I cry, "Come, Lord, and advance me to this glory, and repose my weary soul in rest!"

Sect. XII. 10. Compare also the glory of the heavenly kingdom with the glory of the imperfect church on earth, and with the glory of Christ in his state of humiliation, and you may easily conclude, if Christ under his Father's wrath, and Christ standing in the room of sinners, were so wonderful in excellencies, what then is Christ at the Father's right-hand?r And if the church, under her sins and enemies, have so much beauty, something it will have at the marriage of the Lamb. How wonderful was the Son of God in the form of a servant! When he is born, the heavens must proclaim him by miracles; a new star must appear in the firmament, and fetch men from remote parts of the world to worship him in a manger; the angels and heavenly host must declare his nativity, and solemnize it with praising and glorifying God. When he is but a child, he must dispute with the doctors, and confute them. When he sets upon his office, his whole life is a wonder: water turned into wine; thousands fed with five loaves and two fishes; multitudes following him to see his miracles; the lepers cleansed; the sick healed; the lame restored; the blind receive their sight; the dead raised. If we had seen all this, should we not have thought it wonderful? The most desperate diseases cured with a touch, with a word speaking; the blind eyes with a little clay and spittle; the devils departing by legions at command; the winds and the seas obeying his word; are not all these wonderful? Think, then, how wonderful is his celestial glory! If there be such cutting down of boughs, and spreading of garments, and crying, "Hosanna," to one that comes into Jerusalem riding on an ass, what will there be when he comes with his angels in his glory! If they that hear him preach the Gospel of the kingdom, have their hearts turned within them, that they return and say, "Never man spake like this man," then surely they that behold his majesty in his kingdom will say, 'There never was glory like this glory.' If when his enemies come to apprehend him, the word of his mouth doth cast them all to the ground; if, when he is dying, the earth must tremble, the veil of the

temple rend, the sun in the firmament must hide its face, and deny its light to the sinful world, and the dead bodies of the saints arise, and the standers-by be forced to acknowledge, "Verily this was the Son of God;" O then, what a day will it be when he will once more shake, not the earth only, but the heavens also, and remove the things that are shaken; when this sun shall be taken out of the firmament, and be everlastingly darkened with the brightness of his glory; when the dead must all arise, and stand before him, and all shall acknowledge him to be the Son of God, and every tongue confess him to be Lord and King! If, when he riseth again, the grave and death have lost their power, and the angels of heaven must roll away the stone, and astonish the watchmen till they are as dead men, and send the tidings to his dejected disciples; if the bolted doors cannot keep him forth; if the sea be as firm ground for him to walk on; if he can ascend to heaven in the sight of his disciples, and send the angels to forbid them gazing after him; O what power, and dominion, and glory, then, is he now possessed of; and must we for ever possess with him! Yet think further: Are his very servants enabled to do such miracles, when he is gone from them? Can a few poor fishermen, and tent-makers, and the like mechanics, cure the lame, and blind, and sick; open their prisons; destroy the disobedient; raise the dead; and astonish their adversaries? O then, what a world will that be, where every one can do greater works than these, and shall be highlier honoured than by the doing of wonders! It were much to have the devils subject to us, but more to have our names written in the book of life. If the very preaching of the Gospel be accompanied with such power, that it will pierce the heart, and discover its secrets, bring down the proud, and make the stony sinner tremble; if it can make men burn their books, sell their lands, bring in the price and lay it down at the preacher's feet; if it can make the spirits of princes stoop, and the kings of the earth resign their crowns, and do their homage to Jesus Christ; if it can subdue kingdoms, and convert thousands, and turn the world thus upside down; if the very mention of the judgment, and life to come, can make the judge on the bench to tremble, when the prisoner at the bar doth preach this doctrine; O what then is the glory of the kingdom

itself! What an absolute dominion have Christ and his saints! And if they have this power and honour in the day of their abasement, and in the time appointed for their suffering and disgrace, what then will they have in their full advancement!

Sect. XIII. 11. Compare the mercies thou shalt have above with the mercies which Christ hath here bestowed on thy soul, and the glorious change which thou shalt have at last with the gracious change which the Spirit hath wrought on thy heart; compare the comforts of thy glorification, with the comforts of thy sanctification. There is not the smallest grace in thee which is genuine and sincere, but is of greater worth than the riches of the Indies; not a hearty desire, and groan after Christ, but is more to be valued than the kingdoms of the world. A renewed nature is the very image of God. Scripture calleth it by the name of "Christ dwelling in us," and, "the Spirit of God abiding in us." It is a beam from the face of God himself; it is the seed of God remaining in us; it is the only inherent beauty of the rational soul; it ennobleth man above all nobility; it fitteth him to understand his Maker's pleasure, to do his will, and to receive his glory: why think, then, with thyself, if this grain of mustard-seed be so precious, what is the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God! If a spark of life, which will but strive against corruptions, and flame out a few desires and groans, be so much worth, how glorious, then, is the fountain and end of this life! If we be said to be like God, and to bear his image, and to be holy as he is holy, when, alas! we are pressed down with a body of sin; surely we shall be much liker God, when we are perfectly holy, and without blemish, and have no such thing as sin within us! Is the desire of heaven so precious a thing, what then is the thing itself which is desired? Is the love so excellent, what then is the Beloved? Is our joy in foreseeing and believing so sweet, what will be the joy in the full possessing? O the delight that a Christian hath in the lively exercise of some of these affections! What good doth it to his very heart, when he can feelingly say he loves his Lord! What sweetness is there in the very act of loving! Yea, even those troubling passions of sorrow and fear, are yet delightful, when they are rightly exercised. How glad is a

poor Christian when he feeleth his heart begin to melt, and when the thoughts of sinful unkindness will dissolve it! Even this sorrow doth yield him matter of joy. O what will it then be, when we shall do nothing but know God, and love, and rejoyce, and praise, and all this in the highest perfection! What a comfort is it to my doubting soul, when I have a little assurance of the sincerity of my graces; when, upon examination, I can but trace the Spirit in his sanctifying works! How much more will it comfort me to find that the Spirit hath safely conducted me, and left me in the arms of Jesus Christ! What a change was it that the Spirit made upon my soul, when he first turned me from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; to be taken from that horrid state of nature, wherein myself and my actions were loathsome to God, and the sentence of death was passed upon me, and the Almighty took me for his utter enemy; and to be presently numbered among his saints, and called his friend, his servant, his son; and the sentence revoked which was gone forth; O what a change was this! To be taken from that state wherein I was born, and had lived delightfully so many years, and was riveted in it by custom and engagements, when thousands of sins did lie upon my score, and if I had so died I had been damned for ever; and to be justified from all these enormous crimes, and freed from all these fearful plagues, and put into the title of an heir of heaven, O what an astonishing change was this! Why, then, consider, how much greater will that glorious change then be; beyond expressing; beyond conceiving! How oft, when I have thought of this change in my regeneration, have I cried out, 'O blessed day, and blessed be the Lord that I ever saw it!' Why, how then should I cry out in heaven, 'O blessed eternity, and blessed be the Lord that brought me to it!' Was the mercy of my conversion so great, that the angels of God did rejoyce to see it? Sure, then, the mercy of my salvation will be so great, that the same angels will congratulate my felicity. This grace is but a spark that is raked up in the ashes. It is covered with flesh from the sight of the world, and covered with corruption sometimes from mine own sight; but my everlasting glory will not be so clouded, nor my light be under a bushel, but upon a hill, even upon Sion, the mount of God.

Sect. XIV. 12. Lastly, Compare the joys which thou shalt have above, with those foretastes of it, which the Spirit hath given thee here. Judge of the lion by the paw, and of the ocean of joy by that drop which thou hast tasted. Thou hast here thy strongest refreshing comforts, but as that man in hell would have had the water to cool him, a little upon the tip of the finger for thy tongue to taste, yet by this little thou mayest conjecture at the quality of the whole. Hath not God sometimes revealed himself extraordinarily to thy soul, and let a drop of glory fall upon it? Hast thou not been ready to say, 'Oh, that it might be thus with my soul continually, and that I might always feel what I feel sometimes! Dist thou never cry out with the martyr after thy long and doleful expectations, 'He is come; he is come?' Didst thou never, in a lively sermon of heaven, nor in thy retired contemplations on that blessed state, perceive thy drooping spirits revive, and thy dejected heart to lift up the head: and the light of heaven to break forth to thy soul, as a morning star, or as the dawning of the day? Didst thou never perceive thy heart in these duties, to be as the child that Elisha revived? to wax warm within thee, and to recover life? Why, think with thyself, then, what is the earnest to this full inheritance? Alas! all this light that so amazeth and rejoiceth me, is but a candle lighted from heaven, to lead me thither through this world of darkness! If the light of a star in the night be such, or the little glimmering at the break of the day, what then is the light of the sun at noontide? If some godly men that we read of, have been overwhelmed with joy, till they have cried out, 'Hold, Lord, stay thy hand; I can bear no more!' like weak eyes that cannot endure too great a light; O what will then be my joys in heaven, when, as the object of my joy shall be the most glorious God, so my soul shall be made capable of seeing and enjoying him. And though the light be ten thousand times greater than the sun's, yet my eyes shall be able for ever to behold it.

Or, if thou be one that hast not felt yet these sweet foretastes, (for every believer hath not felt them), then make use of the former delights which thou hast felt, that thou mayest the better discern what hereafter thou shalt feel.

And thus I have done with the fifth part of this directory, and showed you on what grounds to advance your meditations, and how to get them to quicken your affections, by comparing the unseen delights of heaven with those smaller which you have seen and felt in the flesh.

CHAP. XII

How to manage and watch over the Heart through the whole Work

SECT. 1. Sixthly: The sixth and last part of this directory is, to guide you in the managing of your hearts through this work, and to show you wherein you have need to be exceeding watchful. I have showed before what must be done with your hearts in your preparations to the work, and in your setting upon it; I shall now show it you in respect of the time of performance. Our chief work will here be, to discover to you the danger, and that will direct you to the fittest remedy. Let me therefore here acquaint you beforehand, that whenever you set upon this heavenly employment, you shall find your own hearts your greatest hinderer, and they will prove false to you in one or all of these four degrees. First, They will hold off, that you will hardly get them to the work. Secondly, Or else they will betray you by their idleness in the work, pretending to do it, when they do it not. Or, Thirdly, They will interrupt the work by their frequent excursions, and turning aside to every object. Or, Fourthly, They will spoil the work by cutting it short, and be gone before you have done any good on it. Therefore I here forewarn you, as you value the invaluable comfort of this work, that you faithfully resist these four dangerous evils, or else all that I have said hitherto is in vain.

1. Thou shalt find thy heart as backward to this, I think, as to any work in the world. O what excuses it will make; what evasions it will find out; and what delays and demurs, when it is never so much convinced! Either it will question whether it be a duty or not; or if it

be so to others, yet whether it be so to thee. It will take up any thing like reason to plead against it; it will tell thee that this is a work for ministers that have nothing else to study on; or for cloisterers or persons that have more leisure than thou hast. If thou be a minister, it will tell thee, This is the duty of the people; it is enough for thee to meditate for the instructing of them, and let them meditate on what they have heard; as if it were thy duty only to cook their meat, and serve it up, and perhaps a little to taste the sweetness, by licking thy fingers while thou art dressing it for others; but it is they only that must eat it, digest it, and live upon it. Indeed, the smell may a little refresh thee, but it must be digesting it that must maintain thy strength and life. If all this will not serve, thy heart will tell thee of other business; thou hast this company stays for thee, or that business must be done. It may be, it will set thee upon some other duty, and so make one duty shut out another; for it had rather go to any duty than to this. Perhaps it will tell thee that other duties are greater, and therefore this must give place to them, because thou hast not time for both. Public business is of more concernment; to study, to preach for the saving of souls, must be preferred before these private contemplation: as if thou hadst no time to see to the saving of thine own soul, for looking after others; or thy charity to others were so great, that it draws thee to neglect thy comfort and salvation; or, as if there were any better way to fit us to be useful to others, than to make this experience of our doctrine ourselves! Certainly heaven, where is the Father of lights, is the best fire to light our candle at, and the best book for a preacher to study; and, if they would be persuaded to study that more, the church would be provided of more heavenly lights; and when their studies are divine, and their spirits divine, their preaching will then be also divine, and they may be fitly called divines indeed: or if thy heart have nothing to say against the work, then it will trifle away the time in delays, and promise this day and the next, but still keep off from the doing of the business: or lastly, If thou wilt not be so baffled with excuses or delays, thy heart will give thee a flat denial, and oppose its own unwillingness to thy reason; thou shalt find it come to the work as a bear to the stake, and draw back with all the strength it hath. I speak

all this of the heart so far as it is carnal, (which in too great a measure is in the best) for I know so far as the heart is spiritual, it will judge this work the sweetest in the world.

Well, then, what is to be done in the forementioned case? Wilt thou do it, if I tell thee? Why, what wouldst thou do with a servant that were thus backward to his work: or to thy beast that should draw back when thou wouldst have him go forward? Wouldst thou not first persuade, and then chide, and then spur him, and force him on; and take no denial, nor let him alone till thou hadst got him closely to fall to his work? Wouldst thou not say, 'Why, what should I do with a servant that will not work; or with an ox or horse that will not travel or labour? Shall I keep them to look on?' Wilt thou then faithfully deal thus with thy heart? If thou be not a lazy, self-deluding hypocrite, say, 'I will, by the help of God, I will.' Set upon thy heart roundly, persuade it to the work, take no denial; chide it for its backwardness; use violence with it; bring it to the service, willing or not willing. Art thou the master of thy flesh, or art thou a servant to it? Hast thou no command of thy own thoughts? Cannot thy will choose the subject of thy meditations, especially when thy judgment thus directeth thy will? I am sure God once gave thee mastery over thy flesh, and some power to govern thy own thoughts; hast thou lost thy authority? art thou become a slave to thy depraved nature? Take up the authority again which God hath given thee; command thy heart; if it rebel, use violence with it; if thou be too weak, call in the Spirit of Christ to thine assistance. He is never backward to so good a work, nor will deny his help to so just a cause. God will be ready to help thee, if thou be not unwilling to help thyself. Say to him, 'Why, Lord, thou gavest my reason the command of my thoughts and affections; the authority I have received over them is from thee, and now, behold they refuse to obey thine authority. Thou commandest me to set them to the work of heavenly meditation, but they rebel and stubbornly refuse the duty. Wilt thou not assist me to execute that authority which thou hast given me? Oh, send me down thy Spirit and power, that I may enforce thy commands, and effectually compel them to obey thy will.'

And thus doing, thou shalt see thy heart will submit; its resistance will be brought under, and its backwardness will be turned to a yielding compliance.

Sect. II. 2. When thou hast got thy heart to the work, beware lest it delude thee by a loitering formality; lest it say, 'I go,' and go not; lest it trifle out the time, while it should be effectually employed meditating. Certainly, the heart is as likely to betray thee in this, as in any one particular about the duty; when thou hast perhaps but an hour's time for thy meditation, the time will be spent before thy heart will be serious. This doing of duty as if we did it not, doth undo as many as the flat omission of it. To rub out the hour in a bare, lazy thinking of heaven, is but to lose that hour, and delude thyself. Well, what is to be done in this case? Why, do here also as you do by a loitering servant; keep thine eye always upon thy heart; look not so much to the time it spendeth in the duty, as to the quantity and quality of the work that is done. You can tell by his work whether your servant hath been painful; ask, 'What affections have yet been acted; how much am I yet got nearer heaven?' Verily, many a man's heart must be followed as close in this duty of meditation, as a horse in a mill, or an ox at the plough, that will go no longer than you are calling or scourging. If you cease driving but a moment, the heart will stand still; and perhaps the best hearts have much of this temper.

I would not have thee of the judgment of those, who think that while they are so backward, it is better let it alone: and that if mere love will not bring them to the duty, but there must be all this violence used to compel it, that then the service is worse than the omission. These men understand not, First, That this argument would certainly cashier all spiritual obedience, because the hearts of the best being but partly sanctified, will still be resisting so far as they are carnal: Secondly, Nor do they understand well the corruptness of their own natures: Thirdly, Nor, that their sinful undisposedness will not baffle or suspend the commands of God: Fourthly, Nor one sin excuse another: Fifthly, Especially they little know the way of God to excite their affections; and that the love which should compel them, must

itself be first compelled, in the same sense as it is said to compel. Love, I know, is a most precious grace, and should have the chief interest in all our duties: but there are means appointed by God to procure this love; and shall I not use those means, till I can use them from love? That were to neglect the means, till I have the end. Must I not seek to procure love, till I have it already? There are means also for the increasing of love where it is begun; and means for the exciting of it where it lieth dull; and must I not use these means, till it is increased and excited? Why this reasoning considering-duty that we are in hand with, is the most singular means, both to stir up thy love, and to increase it; and therefore stay not from the duty till thou feel thy love constrain thee, that were to stay from the fire till thou feel thyself warm; but fall upon the work till thou art constrained to love, and then love will constrain thee to further duty.

My jealousy, lest thou shouldst miscarry by these sottish opinions, hath made me more tedious in the opening of their error. Let nothing therefore hinder thee while thou art upon the work, from plying thy heart with constant watchfulness and constraint, seeing thou hast such experience of its dulness and backwardness: let the spur be never out of its side; and whenever it slacks its pace, be sure to give it a remembrance.

Sect. III. 3. As thy heart will be loitering, so will it be diverting. It will be turning aside like a careless servant, to talk with every one that passeth by. When there should be nothing in thy mind but the work in hand, it will be thinking of thy calling, or thinking of thy afflictions, or of every bird, or tree, or place, thou seest, or of any impertinency, rather than of heaven. Thy heart in this also will be like the husbandman's ox or horse: if he drive not, he will not go; and if he guide not, he will not keep the furrow; and it is as good stand still as to go out of the way. Experience will tell thee thou wilt have much ado with thy heart in this point, to keep it one hour to the work, without many extravagances and idle cogitations. The cure here is the same with that before, to use watchfulness and violence with your own imaginations, and as soon as they step out to chide

them in. Say to thine heart, 'What! did I come hither to think of my business in the world; to think of places, and persons, of news, or vanity, yea, or of any thing but heaven, be it never so good?' What! canst thou not watch one hour? Wouldst thou leave this world, and dwell in heaven with Christ for ever? And canst thou not leave it one hour out of thy thoughts, nor dwell with Christ in one hour's close meditation? Ask thy heart, as Absalom did Hushai, 'Is this thy love to thy friend? Dost thou love Christ, and the place of thy eternal, blessed abode, no more than so?' When Pharaoh's butler dreamed that he pressed the ripe grapes into Pharaoh's cup, and delivered the cup into the king's hand, it was a happy dream, and signified his speedy access to the king's presence: but the dream of the baker, that the birds did eat out of the basket on his head, the baked meats prepared for Pharaoh, had an ill omen, and signified his hanging, and their eating of his flesh. (Gen. 40:10, 11, &c.) So when the ripened grapes of heavenly meditation are pressed by thee into the cup of affection, and this put into the hands of Christ by delightful praises, if thou take me for skilful, this is the interpretation, that thou shalt shortly be taken from this prison where thou liest, and be set before Christ in the court of heaven, and there serve up to him that cup of praise, but much fuller and much sweeter, for ever and ever. But if the ravenous fowls of wandering thoughts do devour the meditations intended for heaven, I will not say flatly, it signifies thy death; but this I will say, that so far as these intrude, they will be the death of that service; and if thou ordinarily admit them, that they devour the life and the joy of thy thoughts; and if thou continue in such a way of duty to the end, it signifies the death of thy soul, as well as of thy service. Drive away these birds of prey, then, from thy sacrifice, and strictly keep thy heart to the work thou art upon.

Sect. IV. 4. Lastly, Be sure also to look to thy heart in this, that it cut not off the work before the time, and run not away through weariness, before it have leave. Thou shalt find it will be exceeding prone to this, like the ox that would unyoke, or the horse that would be unburdened, and perhaps cast off his burden, and run away. Thou mayest easily perceive this in other duties; if in secret thou set thyself

to pray, is not thy heart urging thee still to cut it short; dost thou not frequently find a motion to have done; art thou not ready to be up as soon almost as thou art down on thy knees? Why, so it will be also in thy contemplations of heaven: as fast as thou gettest up thy heart, it will be down again; it will be weary of the work; it will be minding thee of other business to be done, and stop thy heavenly walk, before thou art well warm. Well, what is to be done in this case also? Why, the same authority and resolution which brought it to the work, and observed it in the work, must also hold it to it, till the work be done. Charge it in the name of God to stay: do not so great a work by the halves: say to it, Why, foolish heart! if thou beg a while, and go away before thou hast thy alms, dost thou not lose thy labour? if thou stop before thou art at the end of thy journey, is not every step of thy travel lost? Thou camest hither to fetch a walk to heaven, in hope to have a sight of the glory which thou must inherit; and wilt thou stop when thou art almost at the top of the hill; and turn away before thou hast taken thy survey? Thou camest hither in hope to speak with God, and wilt thou go before thou hast seen him? Thou camest to bathe thyself in the streams of consolation, and to that end didst unclothe thyself of thy earthly thoughts: and wilt thou put a foot in, and so be gone? Thou camest to spy out the land of promise; O go not back with the bunch of grapes, which thou mayest show to thy brethren, when thou comest home, for their confirmation and encouragement, till thou canst tell them by experience, that it is a land flowing with wine and oil, with milk and honey. Let them see that thou hast tasted of the wine, by the gladness of thy heart; and that thou hast been anointed with the oil, by the cheerfulness of thy countenance: (Psal. 104:15:) let them see that thou hast tasted of the milk of the land, by thy feeding, and by thy mild and gentle disposition: and of the honey, by the sweetness of thy words and conversation. The views of heaven would heal thee of thy sinfulness, and of thy sadness; but thou must hold on the plaster, that it may have time to work: this heavenly fire would melt thy frozen heart, and refine it from the dross, and take away the earthly part, and leave the rest more spiritual and pure; but then thou must not be presently gone, before it have time either to burn or warm. Stick,

therefore, to the work, till something be done; till thy graces be acted, thy affections raised, and thy soul refreshed with the delights above; or if thou canst not obtain these ends at once, ply it the closer the next time, and let it not go till thou feel the blessing. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing." (Matt. 24:46.)

CHAP. XIII

The Abstract, or Sum of all, for the Use of the Weak

SECT. I. Thus I have, by the gracious assistance of the Spirit, directed you in this work of heavenly contemplation, and lined you out the best way that I know for your successful performance; and led you into the path where you may walk with God. But because I would bring it down to the capacity of the meanest, and help their memories who are apt to let slip the former particulars, and cannot well lay together the several branches of this method, that they may reduce them to practice, I shall here contract the whole into a brief sum, and lay it all before you in a narrower compass. But still, reader, I wish thee to remember, that it is the practice of a duty that I am directing thee in, and therefore, if thou wilt not practise it, do not read it.

The sum is this,—As thou makest conscience of praying daily, so do thou of the acting of thy graces in meditation; and more especially in meditating on the joys of heaven. To this end, set apart one hour or half an hour every day, wherein thou mayest lay aside all worldly thoughts, and with all possible seriousness and reverence, as if thou wert going to speak with God himself, or to have a sight of Christ, or of that blessed place; so do thou withdraw thyself into some secret place, and set thyself wholly to the following work; if thou canst, take Isaac's time and place, who went forth into the field in the evening to meditate: but if thou be a servant, or poor man, that cannot have that

leisure, take the fittest time and place that thou canst, though it be when thou art private about thy labours.

When thou settest to the work, look up toward heaven; let thine eye lead thee as near as it can: remember that there is thine everlasting rest: study its excellency, study its reality, till thy unbelief be silenced, and thy faith prevail. If thy judgment be not yet drawn to admiration, use those sensible helps and advantages which were even now laid down. Compare thy heavenly joys with the choicest on earth, and so rise up from sense to faith; if yet this mere consideration prevail not (which yet hath much force, as is before expressed), then fall a-pleading the case with thy heart: preach upon this text of heaven to thyself; convince, inform, confute, instruct, reprove, examine, admonish, encourage, and comfort, thy own soul from this celestial doctrine: draw forth those several considerations of thy rest, on which thy several affections may work, especially that affection or grace which thou intendest to act. If it be love which thou wouldst act, show it the loveliness of heaven, and how suitable it is to thy condition: if it be desire, consider of thy absence from this lovely object: if it be hope, consider the possibility and probability of obtaining it: if it be courage, consider the singular assistance and encouragements which thou mayest receive from God, the weakness of the enemy, and the necessity of prevailing: if it be joy, consider of its excellent ravishing glory, of the interest in it, and of its certainty, and the nearness of the time when thou mayest possess it. Urge these considerations home to thy heart; whet them with all possible seriousness upon each affection. If thy heart draw back, force it to the work: if it loiter, spur it on; if it step aside, command it in again: if it would slip away, and leave the work, use thine authority; keep it close to the business, till thou have obtained thine end: stir not away, if it may be, till thy love do flame, till thy joy be raised, or till thy desire or other graces be livelily acted. Call in assistance also from God; mix ejaculations with thy cogitations and soliloquies; till having seriously pleaded the case with thy heart, and reverently pleaded the case with God, thou hast pleaded thyself from a clod to a flame; from a forgetful sinner to a mindful lover; from a lover of the world, to a

thirster after God; from a fearful coward, to a resolved Christian; from an unfruitful sadness, to a joyful life. In a word, what will not be done one day, do it the next, till thou have pleaded thy heart from earth to heaven; from conversing below, to a walking with God; and till thou canst lay thy heart to rest, as in the bosom of Christ, in this meditation of thy full and everlasting rest.

And this is the sum of these precedent directions.

CHAP. XIV

An Example of this Heavenly Contemplation, for the Help of the Unskilful

There remaineth a Rest for the People of God

SECT. I. Rest; how sweet a word is this to mine ears! Methinks the sound doth turn to substance, and having entered at the ear, doth possess my brain; and thence descendeth down to my very heart: methinks I feel it stir and work, and that through all my parts and powers, but with a various work upon my various parts. To my wearied senses and languid spirits it seems a quieting, powerful opiate; to my dulled powers it is spirit and life; to my dark eyes it is both eye-salve and a prospective; to my taste it is sweetness; to mine ears it is melody; to my hands and feet it is strength and nimbleness. Methinks I feel it digest as it proceeds, and increase my native heat and moisture; and, lying as a reviving cordial at my heart, from thence doth send forth lively spirits, which beat through all the pulses of my soul. Rest,—not as the stone that rests on the earth, nor as these clods of flesh shall rest in the grave; so our beasts must rest as well as we: nor is it the satisfying of our fleshly lusts, nor such rest as the carnal world desireth: no, no; we have another kind of rest than these: rest we shall from all our labours, which were but the way and means to rest, but yet that is the smallest part. O blessed rest, where we shall never rest day or night, crying "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of sabbaths:" when we shall rest from sin, but not from worship; from suffering and sorrow, but not from solace! O blessed day, when I shall rest with God; when I shall rest in the arms and bosom of my Lord; when I shall rest in knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praising; when my perfect soul and body together, shall in these perfect things perfectly enjoy the most perfect God; when God also, who is love itself, shall perfectly love me; yea, and rest in his love to me, as I shall rest in my love to him, and rejoice over me with joy and singing,

(Zeph. 3:17,) as I shall rejoice in him! How near is that most blessed, joyful day! It comes apace; even that comes will come, and will not tarry. Though my Lord do seem to delay his coming, yet a little while and he will be here. What is a few hundred years when they are over! How surely will his sign appear, and how suddenly will he seize upon the careless world! Even as the lightning that shines from east to west in a moment, he who has gone hence will even so return. Methinks I even hear the voice of his foregoers; methinks I see him coming in the clouds, with the attendance of his angels, in majesty and in glory. O poor, secure sinners, what will you now do? Where will you hide yourselves, or what shall cover you? Mountains are gone; the earth and heavens that were, are passed away; the devouring fire hath consumed all except yourselves, who must be the fuel for ever. Oh, that you could consume as soon as the earth, and melt away as did the heavens! Ah, these wishes are now but vain; the Lamb himself would have been your friend; he would have loved you and ruled you, and now have saved you; but you would not then, and now is too late. Never cry, 'Lord, Lord:' too late, too late, man; why dost thou look about? Can any save thee? Whither dost thou run? Can any hide thee? O wretch, that hast brought thyself to this! Now blessed saints that have believed and obeyed, this is the end of faith and patience; this is it for which you prayed and waited; do you now repent your sufferings and sorrows; your self-denying, and holy walking? Are your tears of repentance now bitter or sweet? Oh, see how the Judge doth smile upon you; there is love in his looks; the titles of Redeemer, Husband, Head, are written in his amiable, shining face. Hark, doth he not call you? He bids you stand here on his right-hand; fear not, for there he sets his sheep. O joyful sentence pronounced by that blessed mouth: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world." See how your Saviour takes you by the hand; go along you must, the door is open, the kingdom is his, and therefore yours. There is your place before his throne; the Father receiveth you as the spouse of his Son; he bids you welcome to the crown of glory: never so unworthy, crowned you must be. This was the project of free redeeming grace, and this was the purpose of eternal love. O blessed

grace! O blessed love! Oh, the frame that my soul will then be in! Oh, how love and joy will stir! But I cannot express it; I cannot conceive it.

This is that joy which was procured by sorrow: this is that crown which was procured by the cross. My Lord did weep, that now my tears might be wiped away; he did bleed, that I might now rejoice; he was forsaken, that I might not now be forsaken; he did then die, that I might now live. This weeping, wounded Lord shall I behold; this bleeding Saviour shall I see, and live in him that died for me. Oh, free mercy, that can exalt so vile a wretch! Free to me, though dear to Christ; free grace that hath chosen me, when thousands were forsaken; when my companions in sin must burn in hell, and I must here rejoice in rest. Here must I live with all these saints: O comfortable meeting of my old acquaintance, with whom I prayed, and wept, and suffered; with whom I spake of this day and place. I see the grave could not contain you; the sea and earth must give up their dead; the same love hath redeemed and saved you also. This is not like our cottages of clay, nor like our prisons, or earthly dwellings; this voice of joy is not like our old complainings, our groans, our sighs, our impatient moans; nor this melodious praise like our scorns and revilings, nor like the oaths and curses which we heard on earth; this body is not like the body we had, nor this soul like the soul we had, nor this life like the life that then we lived. We have changed our place, we have changed our state, our clothes, our thoughts, our looks, our language; we have changed our company for the greater part, and the rest of our company is changed itself. Before, a saint was weak and despised, so full of pride, and peevishness, and other sins, that we could scarcely oftentimes discern their graces; but now how glorious a thing is a saint! Where is now their body of sin which wearied themselves and those about them? Where are now our different judgments, our reproachful titles, our divided spirits, our exasperated passions, our strange looks, our uncharitable censures? Now we are all of one judgment, of one name, of one heart, of one house, and of one glory. O sweet reconcilment! O happy union! which makes us first to be one with Christ, and then

to be one among ourselves. Now, our differences shall be dashed in our teeth no more, nor the Gospel reproached through our folly or scandal. O my soul, thou shalt never more lament the sufferings of the saints, never more condole the church's ruins, never bewail thy suffering friends, nor lie wailing over their deathbeds, or their graves; thou shalt never suffer thy old temptations from Satan, the world, or thy flesh; thy body will no more be such a burden to thee; thy pains and sicknesses are all now cured; thou shalt be troubled with weakness and weariness no more; thy head is not now an aching head, nor thy heart now an aching heart; thy hunger, and thirst, and cold, and sleep, thy labour and study, are all gone. O what a mighty change is this: from the dunghill to the throne; from persecuting sinners to praising saints; from a body as vile as the carrion in the ditch, to a body as bright as the sun in the firmament; from complainings under the displeasure of God, to the perfect enjoyment of him in love; from all my doubts and fears of my condition to this possession which hath put me out of doubt; from all my fearful thoughts of death to this most blessed, joyful life! O what a blessed change is this! Farewell, sin and suffering, for ever; farewell, my hard and rocky heart; farewell, my proud and unbelieving heart; farewell, atheistical, idolatrous, worldly heart; farewell, my sensual, carnal heart: and now welcome most holy, heavenly nature, which, as it must be employed in beholding the face of God, so is it full of God alone, and delighteth in nothing else but him. Oh, who can question the love which he doth so sweetly taste, or doubt of that which with such joy he feeleth! Farewell, repentance, confession, and supplication; farewell, the most of hope and faith, and welcome love, and joy, and praise. I shall now have my harvest without ploughing or sowing, my wine without the labour of the vintage, my joy without a preacher, or a promise, even all from the face of God himself. That is the sight that is worth the seeing; that is the book that is worth the reading. Whatever mixture is in the streams, there is nothing but pure joy in the fountain. Here shall I be encircled with eternity, and come forth no more; here shall I live, and ever live, and praise my Lord, and ever, ever, ever praise him. My face will not wrinkle, nor my hair be gray; but this mortal shall have put on immortality, and

this corruptible, incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. O death! where is now thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The date of my lease will no more expire, nor shall I trouble myself with thoughts of death, nor lose my joys through fear of losing them. When millions of ages are past, my glory is but beginning; and when millions more are past, it is no nearer ending. Every day is all noontide, and every month is May or harvest, and every year is there a jubilee, and every age is full manhood; and all this is one eternity. O blessed eternity! the glory of my glory! the perfection of my perfection!

Ah, drowsy, earthy, blockish heart, how coldly dost thou think of this reviving day! Dost thou sleep, when thou thinkest of eternal rest? Art thou hanging earthward, when heaven is before thee? Hadst thou rather sit thee down in dirt and dung, than walk in the court of the palace of God? Dost thou now remember thy worldly business; art thou looking back to the Sodom of thy lusts; art thou thinking of thy delights and merry company? Wretched heart! is it better to be there, than above with God; is the company better; are the pleasures greater? Come away, make no excuse, make no delay, God commands, and I command thee, come away; gird up thy loins; ascend the mount, and look about thee with seriousness and with faith. Look thou not back upon the way of the wilderness, except it be when thine eyes are dazzled with the glory, or when thou wouldst compare the kingdom with that howling desert, that thou mayest more sensibly perceive the mighty difference. Fix thine eye upon the sun itself, and look not down to earth as long as thou art able to behold it; except it be to discern more easily the brightness of the one, by the darkness of the other. Yonder, far above yonder, is thy Father's glory; yonder must thou dwell when thou leavest this earth; yonder must thou remove, O my soul, when thou departest from this body; and when the power of thy Lord hath raised it again, and joined thee to it, yonder must thou live with God for ever.^z There is the glorious New Jerusalem, the gates of pearl, the foundations of pearl, the streets and pavements of transparent gold. Seest thou that sun which lighteth all this world? Why, it must be taken down as

useless there, or the glory of heaven will darken it, and put it out: even thyself shall be as bright as yonder shining sun. God will be the sun, and Christ the light, and in his light shalt thou have light.

What thinkest thou, O my soul, of this most blessed state? What! dost thou stagger at the promise of God through unbelief? Though thou say nothing, or profess belief, yet thou speakest so coldly and so customarily, that I much suspect thee. I know thy infidelity is thy natural vice. Didst thou believe indeed, thou wouldst be more affected with it. Why, hast thou not it under the hand, and seal, and oath of God? Can God lie; or he that is the truth itself, be false? Foolish wretch! What need hath God to flatter thee, or deceive thee; why should he promise thee more than he will perform? Art thou not his creature, a little crumb of dust, a crawling worm; ten thousand times more below him, than this fly or worm is below thee? Wouldst thou flatter a flea, or a worm? What need hast thou of them? If they do not please thee, thou wilt crush them dead, and never accuse thyself of cruelty: why, yet they are thy fellow-creatures, made of as good metal as thyself, and thou hast no authority over them but what thou hast received: how much less need hath God of thee; or why should he care, if thou perish in thy folly? Cannot he govern thee without either flattery or falsehood? Cannot he easily make thee obey his will, and as easily make thee suffer for thy disobedience? Wretched, unbelieving heart! tell a fool, or tell a tyrant, or tell some false and flattering man, of drawing their subjects by false promises, and procuring obedience by deceitful means; but do thou not dare to charge the wise, almighty, faithful God with this. Above all men, it beseems not thee to doubt, either of this Scripture being his infallible word, or of the performance of this word to thyself. Hath not argument convinced thee; may not thy own experience utterly silence thee? How oft hath this Scripture been verified for thy good! how many of the promises have been performed to thee! hath it not quickened thee, and converted thee; hast thou not felt in it something more than human? Would God perform another promise; or would he so powerfully concur with a feigned word? if thou hadst seen the miracles that Christ and his apostles wrought, thou wouldst

never surely have questioned the truth of their doctrine: why, they delivered it down by such undoubted testimony, that it may be called divine as well as human. Nay, hast thou not seen its prophecies fulfilled; hast thou not lived in an age wherein such wonders have been wrought, that thou hast now no cloak for thy unbelief; hast thou not seen the course of nature changed, and works beyond the power of nature wrought; and all this in the fulfilling of the Scripture? Hast thou so soon forgotten since nature failed me, and strength failed me, and blood, and spirits, and flesh, and friends, and all means did utterly fail; and how art and reason had sentenced me for dead: and yet how God revoked the sentence; and at the request of praying, believing saints, did turn thee to the promise which he verified to thee: and canst thou yet question the truth of this Scripture? Hast thou seen so much to confirm thy faith, in the great actions of seven years past, and canst thou yet doubt? Thou hast seen signs and wonders, and art thou yet so unbelieving? O wretched heart! hath God made thee a promise of rest, and wilt thou come short of it, and shut out thyself through unbelief? Thine eyes may fail thee, thy ears deceive thee, and all thy senses prove delusions, sooner than a promise of God can delude thee. Thou mayest be surer of that which is written in the word, than if thou see it with thine eyes, or feel it with thy hands. Art thou sure thou livest, or sure that this is earth which thou standest on? Art thou sure thine eyes do see the sun? As sure is all this glory to the saints, as sure shall I be higher than yonder stars, and live for ever in the holy city, and joyfully sound forth the praise of my Redeemer, if I be not shut out by this evil heart of unbelief, causing me to depart from the living God.

And is this rest so sweet, and so sure? O, then, what means the careless world? Do they know what it is they so neglect; did they ever hear of it, or are they yet asleep, or are they dead! Do they know for certain that the crown is before them, while they thus sit still, or follow trifles? Undoubtedly they are quite beside themselves, to mind so much their provision in the way, and strive, and care, and labour for trifles, when they are hasting so fast to another world, and their eternal happiness lies at stake. Were there left one spark of wit or

reason, they would never sell their rest for toil, or sell their glory for worldly vanities, nor venture heaven for the pleasure of a sin. Ah, poor men! that you would once consider what you hazard, and then you would scorn these tempting baits. O blessed for ever be that love that hath rescued me from this mad, bewitching darkness!

Draw nearer yet, then, O my soul, bring forth thy strongest burning love; here is matter for it to work upon; here is something truly worth thy loving. O see what beauty presents itself! is it not exceeding lovely? is not all the beauty in the world contracted here? is not all other beauty deformity to it? dost thou need to be persuaded how to love? Here is a feast for thine eyes; a feast for all the powers of thy soul: dost thou need to be entreated to feed upon it; canst thou love a little shining earth; canst thou love a walking piece of clay; and canst thou not love that God, that Christ, that glory, which is so truly and unmeasurably lovely? Thou canst love thy friend, because he loves thee: and is the love of thy friend like the love of Christ? Their weeping or bleeding for thee, doth not cease thee, nor stay the course of thy tears or blood: but the tears and blood that fell from thy Lord, have all a sovereign healing virtue, and are waters of life, and balsam to thy faintings and thy sores. O my soul, if love deserve and should procure love, what incomprehensible love is here before thee! Pour out all the store of thy affections here; and all is too little. O that it were more! O that it were many thousand times more! Let him be first served, that served thee first. Let him have the first-born and strength of thy love, who parted with strength and life in love to thee. If thou hast any to spare when he hath his part, let it be imparted then to standers-by. See what a sea of love is here before thee; cast thyself in, and swim with the arms of thy love in this ocean of his love. Fear not lest thou shouldst be drowned or consumed in it. Though it seem as the scalding furnace of lead, yet thou wilt find it but mollifying oil: though it seem a furnace of fire, and the hottest that ever was kindled upon earth, yet it is the fire of love and not of wrath; a fire most effectual to extinguish fire; never intended to consume, but to glorify thee: venture into it, then, in thy believing meditations, and walk in these flames with the Son of God: when

thou art once in, thou wilt be sorry to come forth again.^c O my soul! what wantest thou here to provoke thy love? Dost thou love for excellency? Why, thou seest nothing below but baseness, except as they relate to thy enjoyments above. Yonder is the Goshen, the region of light; this is a land of palpable darkness. Yonder twinkling stars, that shining moon, the radiant sun, are all but as the lanterns hanged out at thy Father's house, to light thee while thou walkest in the dark streets of the earth: but little dost thou know (ah, little indeed!) the glory and blessed mirth that is within! Dost thou love for suitableness? Why, what person more suitable than Christ? His godhead, his manhood, his fulness, his freeness, his willingness, his constancy; do all proclaim him thy most suitable friend. What state more suitable to thy misery, than that of mercy; or to thy sinfulness and baseness, than that of honour and perfection? What place more suitable to thee than heaven? Thou hast had a sufficient trial of this world. Dost thou find it agree with thy nature or desires; are these common abominations, these heavy sufferings, these unsatisfying vanities, suitable to thee? Or dost thou love for interest and near relation? Why, where hast thou better interest than in heaven; or where hast thou nearer relation than there? Dost thou love for acquaintance and familiarity? Why, though thine eyes have never seen thy Lord, yet he is never the further from thee; if thy son were blind, yet he would love thee his father, though he never saw thee. Thou hast heard the voice of Christ to thy very heart; thou hast received his benefits: thou hast lived in his bosom, and art thou not yet acquainted with him? It is he that brought thee seasonably and safely into the world: it is he that nursed thee up in thy tender infancy, and helped thee when thou couldst not help thyself: he taught thee to go, to speak, to read, to understand: he taught thee to know thyself and him: he opened thee that first window whereby thou sawest into heaven. Hast thou forgotten since thy heart was careless, and he did quicken it; and hard and stubborn, and he did soften it, and make it yield; when it was at peace, and he did trouble it; and whole, till he did break it; and broken, till he did heal it again? Hast thou forgotten the time, nay, the many, very many times, when he found thee in secret all in tears; when he heard thy dolorous sighs

and groans, and left all to come and comfort thee; when he came in upon thee, and took thee up, as it were in his arms, and asked thee, Poor soul, what aileth thee? Dost thou weep, when I have wept so much? Be of good cheer; thy wounds are saving, and not deadly. It is I that have made them, who mean thee no hurt: though I let out thy blood, I will not let out thy life.

O methinks I remember yet his voice, and feel those embracing arms that took me up: how gently did he handle me! how carefully did he dress my wounds, and bind them up! Methinks I hear him still saying to me, Poor sinner, though thou hast dealt unkindly with me, and cast me off, yet will not I do so by thee; though thou hast set light by me and all my mercies, yet both I and all are thine; what wouldst thou have, that I can give thee; and what dost thou want that I cannot give thee? If any thing I have will pleasure thee, thou shalt have it: if any thing in heaven or earth will make thee happy, why it is all thine own. Wouldst thou have pardon? thou shalt have it; I freely forgive thee all the debt. Wouldst thou have grace and peace? thou shalt have them both. Wouldst thou have myself? why, behold I am thine, thy friend, thy lord, thy brother, thy husband, and thy head. Wouldst thou have the Father? why I will bring thee to him; and thou shalt have him in and by me. These were my Lord's reviving words: these were the melting, healing, raising, quickening passages of love. After all this, when I was doubtful of his love, methinks I yet remember his overcoming and convincing arguments. Why, sinner, have I done so much to testify my love, and yet dost thou doubt! Have I made thy believing it the condition of enjoying it, and yet dost thou doubt! Have I offered thee myself and love so long, and yet dost thou question my willingness to be thine! Why, what could I have done more than I have done; at what dearer rate should I tell thee that I love thee; read yet the story of my bitter passion, wilt thou not believe that it proceeded from love? Did I ever give thee cause to be so jealous of me, or to think so hardly of me, as thou dost? Have I made myself in the Gospel a lion to thine enemies, and a lamb to thee: and dost thou so overlook my lamb-like nature? Have I set mine arms and heart there open to thee, and wilt thou not believe

but they are shut? Why, if I had been willing to let thee perish, I could have done it at a cheaper rate. What need I then have done and suffered so much; what need I follow thee with so long patience, and entreating? What dost thou tell me of thy wants; have I not enough for me and thee; and why dost thou so foolishly tell me of thy unworthiness, and thy sin? I had not died, if man had not sinned; if thou wert not a sinner, thou wert not for me; if thou wert worthy thyself, what shouldst thou do with my worthiness? Did I ever invite the worthy and the righteous; or did I ever save or justify such; or is there any such on earth? Hast thou nothing; art thou lost and miserable; art thou helpless and forlorn? Dost thou believe that I am a sufficient Saviour, and wouldst thou have me? Why then take me; lo! I am thine; if thou be willing, I am willing, and neither sin nor devils shall break the match.

These, O these were the blessed words which his Spirit from his Gospel spoke unto me, till he made me cast myself at his feet, yea, into his arms, and to cry out, 'My Saviour and my Lord, thou hast broke my heart, thou hast revived my heart, thou hast overcome, thou hast won my heart; take it, it is thine: if such a heart can please thee, take it; if it cannot, make it such as thou wouldst have it.' Thus, O my soul, mayest thou remember the sweet familiarity thou hast had with Christ; therefore, if acquaintance will cause affection, O then let out thy heart unto him; it is he that hath stood by thy bed of sickness, that hath cooled thy heats, and cased thy pains, and refreshed thy weariness, and removed thy fears; he hath been always ready, when thou hast earnestly sought him; he hath given thee the meeting in public and in private; he hath been found of thee in the congregation, in thy house, in thy chamber, in the field, in the way as thou wast walking, in thy waking nights, in thy deepest dangers. Oh, if bounty and compassion be an attractive of love, how unmeasurably, then, am I bound to love him! All the mercies that have filled up my life do tell me this; all the places that ever I did abide in, all the societies and persons that I have had to deal with, every condition of life that I have passed through, all my employments, and all my relations, every change that hath befallen

me, all tell me that the fountain is overflowing goodness. Lord! what a sum of love am I indebted to thee, and how doth my debt continually increase! How should I love again for so much love! But what! shall I dare to think of making thee requital; or of recompensing all thy love with mine? Will my mite requite thee for thy golden mines; my seldom wishes for thy constant bounty; or mine which is nothing, or not mine, for thine which is infinite, and thine own? Shall I dare to contend in love with thee; or set my borrowed, languid spark, against the element and sun of love? Can I love as high, as deep, as broad, as long as love itself! As much as he that made me, and that made me love, that gave me all that little which I have: both the heart, the hearth where it is kindled, the bellows, the fire, the fuel, and all were his; as I cannot match thee in the works of thy power, nor make, nor preserve, nor guide the world, so why should I think any more of matching thee in love. No, Lord, I yield, I am unable, I am overcome. O blessed conquest! go on victoriously, and still prevail, and triumph in thy love; the captive of love shall proclaim thy victory when thou leadest me in triumph from earth to heaven, from death to life, from the tribunal to the throne. Myself, and all that see it, shall acknowledge that thou hast prevailed, and all shall say, "Behold, how he loved him!" yet let me love thee in subjection to thy love, as thy redeemed captive, though not thy peer. Shall I not love at all, because I cannot reach thy measure? Or at least, let me heartily wish to love thee. O that I were able! O that I could feelingly say, 'I love thee,' even as I feel I love my friend and myself! Lord, that I could do it, but, alas! I cannot; fain I would, but, alas! I cannot. Would I not love thee, if I were but able? Though I cannot say, as thy apostle, 'Thou knowest that I love thee,' yet can I say, 'Lord, thou knowest that I would love thee.' But I speak not this to excuse my fault; it is a crime that admits of no excuse, and it is my own; it dwelleth as near me as my very heart; if my heart be my own, this sin is my own, yea, and more my own than my heart is. Lord, what shall this sinner do; the fault is my own, and yet I cannot help it. I am angry with my heart that it doth not love thee, and yet I feel it love thee never the more; I frown upon it, and yet it cares not; I threaten it, but it doth not feel; I chide it, and yet it doth not mend;

I reason with it, and would fain persuade it, and yet I do not perceive it stir: I rear it up as a carcass upon its legs, but it neither goes nor stands. I rub and chafe it in the use of thine ordinances, and yet I feel it not warm within me. O miserable man that I am! Unworthy soul! is not thine eye now upon the only lovely object? and art thou not beholden to the ravishing glory of the saints? and yet dost thou not love? and yet dost thou not feel the fire break forth? Why, art thou not a soul; a living spirit? And is not thy love the choicest piece of thy life? Art thou not a rational soul? and shouldst thou not love according to reason's conduct? And doth it not tell thee that all is dirt and dung to Christ; that earth is a dungeon to the celestial glory? Art thou not a spirit thyself, and shouldst thou not love spiritually; even God, who is a Spirit, and the Father of spirits? Doth not every creature love their like? Why, my soul, art thou like to flesh, or gold, or stately buildings! Art thou like to meat and drink, or clothes? wilt thou love no higher than thy horse or swine? Hast thou nothing better to love than they? What is the beauty that thou hast so admired? Canst thou not even wink or think it at all into darkness or deformity? When the night comes, it is nothing to thee; while thou hast gazed on it, it hath withered away; a botch or scab, the wrinkles of consuming sickness, or of age, do make it as loathsome as it was before delightful. Suppose but that thou sawest that beautiful carcass lying on the bier, or rotting in the grave, the skull dug up, and the bones scattered, where is now thy lovely object? Couldst thou sweetly embrace it when the soul is gone; or take any pleasure in it, when there is nothing left that is like thyself! Ah! why then dost thou love a skinful of dirt, and canst love no more the heavenly glory? What thinkest thou? Shalt thou love when thou comest there; when thou seest; when thou dost enjoy; when the Lord shall take thy carcass from the grave, and make thee shine as the sun in glory, and when thou shalt everlastingly dwell in the blessed presence? Shalt thou then love, or shalt thou not? Is not the place a meeting of lovers? Is not the life a state of love? Is it not the great marriage-day of the Lamb, when he will embrace and entertain his spouse with love? Is not the employment there the work of love, where the souls with Christ do take their fill? Oh, then, my soul, begin it here. Be sick of

love now, that thou mayest be well with love there; (Cant. 5:8; Rom. 8:35;) keep thyself now in the love of God, (Jude 21,) and let neither life nor death nor any thing separate thee from it, and thou shalt be kept in the fulness of love for ever, and nothing shall embitter or abate thy pleasure; for the Lord hath prepared a city of love, a place for the communicating of love to his chosen, and those that love his name shall dwell there. (Psalm 107:36.)

Awake, then, O my drowsy soul! Who but an owl or mole would love this world's uncomfortable darkness, when they are called forth to live in light? To sleep under the light of grace is unreasonable, much more in the approach of the light of glory. The night of thy ignorance and misery is past, the day of glorious light is at hand; this is the day-break betwixt them both. Though thou see not yet the sun itself appear, methinks the twilight of promise should revive thee. Come forth, then, O my dull, congealed spirits, and leave these earthly cells to dumpish sadness, and hear thy Lord that bids thee rejoice, and again rejoice! Thou hast lain here long enough in thy prison of flesh, where Satan hath been thy gaoler, and the things of this world have been the stocks for the feet of thy affections; where cares have been thy irons, and fears thy scourge, and the bread and water of affliction thy food; where sorrows have been thy lodging, and thy sins and foes have made the bed; and a carnal, hard, unbelieving heart have been the iron gates and bars that have kept thee in, that thou couldst scarce have leave to look through the lattices, and see one glimpse of the immortal light. The Angel of the covenant now calls thee, and strikes thee, and bids thee arise and follow him. Up, O my soul, and cheerfully obey, and thy bolts and bars shall all fly open. Do thou obey, and all will obey; follow the Lamb which way soever he leads thee. Art thou afraid because thou knowest not whither? Can the place be worse than where thou art? Shouldst thou fear to follow such a guide? Can the sun lead thee to a state of darkness; or can he mislead thee, that is the light of every man that cometh into the world? Will he lead thee to death, who died to save thee from it; or can he do thee any hurt, who for thy sake did suffer so much? Follow him, and he will show thee the paradise of God; he will give thee a

sight of the New Jerusalem; he will give thee a taste of the tree of life. Sit no longer, then, by the fire of earthly, common comforts, whither the cold of carnal fears and sorrows did drive thee; thy winter is past, and wilt thou house thyself still in earthly thoughts, and confine thyself to drooping and dulness? Even the silly flies will leave their holes when the winter is over, and the sun draws near them; the ants will stir, the fishes rise, the birds will sing, the earth look green, and all with joyful note will tell thee the spring is come. Come forth, then, O my drooping soul, and lay aside thy winter mourning robes; let it be seen in thy believing joys and praise, that the day is appearing, and the spring is come, and as now thou seest thy comforts green, thou shalt shortly see them white and ripe for harvest; and then thou who art now called forth to see and taste, shalt be called forth to reap, and gather, and take possession. Shall I suspend and delay my joys till then? Should not the joys of the spring go before the joys of harvest? Is title nothing before possession? Is the heir in no better a state than the slave? My Lord hath taught me to rejoice in hope of his glory, and to see it through the bars of a prison; and even when I am persecuted for righteousness' sake, when I am reviled and all manner of evil sayings are said against me falsely for his sake, then he hath commanded me to rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because of this my great reward in heaven. (Rom. 5:2; Matt. 5:10–12.) How justly is an unbelieving heart possessed by sorrow, and made a prey to cares and fears, when itself doth create them, and thrust away its offered peace and joy! I know, it is the pleasure of my bounteous Lord, that none of his family should want for comfort, nor live such a poor and miserable life, nor look with such a famished, dejected face. I know, he would have my joys exceed my sorrows; and as much as he delights in the humble and contrite, yet doth he more delight in the soul as it delighteth in him. I know, he taketh no pleasure in my self-procured sadness; nor would he call on me to weep and mourn but that it is the only way to these delights. Would I spread the table before my guest, and bring him forth my best provision, and bid him sit down and eat and welcome, if I did not unfeignedly desire he should do so? Hath my Lord spread me a table in this wilderness, and furnished it with the promises of everlasting glory, and set

before me angels' food, and broached for me the side of his beloved Son, that I might have a better wine than the blood of the grape? Doth he so frequently, importunately invite me to sit down, and draw forth my faith, and feed, and spare not; nay, hath he furnished me to that end with reason, and faith, and a rejoicing disposition; and yet is it possible that he should be unwilling of my joys? Never think it, O my unbelieving soul, nor dare to charge him with thy uncomfortable heaviness, who offered thee the foretaste of the highest delight that heaven doth afford, and God can bestow. Doth he not bid thee delight thyself in the Lord, and promise to give thee then the desires of thy heart? (Psal. 37:4.) Hath he not charged thee to rejoice evermore; (1 Thess. 5:16;) yea, to sing aloud and shout for joy? (Psalm 32:11; 47:1.) Why should I then draw back discouraged? My God is willing, if I were but willing. He is delighted in my delights. He would fain have it my constant frame and daily business, to be near to him in my believing meditations, and to live in the sweetest thoughts of his goodness, and to be always delighting my soul in himself. O blessed work; employment fit for the sons of God!

But, ah! my Lord, thy feast is nothing to me without an appetite; thou must give a stomach as well as meat. Thou hast set the dainties of heaven before me, but alas! I am blind, and cannot see them; I am sick, and cannot relish them; I am so benumbed, that I cannot put forth a hand to take them. What is the glory of sun and moon to a clod of earth? Thou knowest I need thy subjective grace, as well as thine objective, and that thy work upon mine own distempered soul, is not the smallest part of my salvation; I therefore humbly beg this grace, that as thou hast opened heaven unto me in thy blessed word, so thou wouldest open mine eyes to see it, and my heart to affect it; else heaven will be no heaven to me. Awake, therefore, O thou Spirit of life, and breathe upon thy graces in me; blow upon the garden of my heart, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits; (Cant. 4:16;) and take me by the hand, and lift me up from earth thyself; that I may fetch one walk in the garden of glory, and see by faith what thou hast laid up for them that love thee and wait for thee.

Away, then, you soul-tormenting cares and fears! Away, you importunate heart-vexing sorrows! At least forbear me a little while; stand by, and trouble not my aspiring soul; stay here below whilst I go up, and see my rest. The way is strange to me, but not to Christ. There was the eternal dwelling of his glorious deity, and thither hath he also brought his assumed glorified flesh. It was his work to purchase it; it is his work to prepare it, and to prepare me for it, and to bring me to it. The eternal God of truth hath given me his promise, his seal, and his oath to assure me, that believing in Christ, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16.) Thither shall my soul be speedily removed, and my body very shortly follow. It is not so far but he that is everywhere can bring me thither; nor so difficult and unlikely, but omnipotency can effect it. And though this unbelief may diminish my delights, and much abate my joys in the way, yet shall it not abate the love of my Redeemer, nor make the promise of none effect. And can my tongue say, that I shall shortly and surely live with God, and yet my heart not leap within me? Can I say it believingly, and not rejoicingly? Ah! faith, how sensible do I now perceive thy weakness! Ah! unbelief, if I had never heard or known it before, yet how sensibly now do I perceive thy malicious tyranny? But though thou darken my light, and dull my life, and suppress my joys, yet shalt thou not be able to conquer and destroy me. There shall I and my joys survive when thou art dead; and though thou envy all my comforts, yet some in despite of thee I shall even here receive; but were it not for thee, what abundance might I have! The light of heaven would shine into my heart, and I might be as familiar there as I am on earth.

Come away, my soul, then, stop thine ears to the ignorant language of infidelity. Thou art able to answer all its arguments, or if thou be not, yet tread them under thy feet. Come away, stand not looking on that grave, nor turning those bones, nor reading thy lesson now in the dust. Those lines will soon be wiped out, but lift up thy head and look to heaven, and read thy instructions in those fixed stars. Or yet look higher than those eyes can see, into that foundation which standeth sure, and see thy name in golden letters, written before the

foundations of the world, in the book of life, of the slain Lamb. What if an angel from heaven should tell thee that there is a mansion prepared for thee; that it shall certainly be thine own, and thou shalt possess it for ever, would not such a message make thee glad; and dost thou make light of the infallible word of promises, which were delivered by the Spirit, and by the Son himself? Suppose thou hadst seen a fiery chariot come for thee, and fetch thee up to heaven like Elias, would not this rejoice thee? Why, my Lord hath acquainted me, and assured me, that the soul of a Lazarus, a beggar, goes not forth of its corrupted flesh, but a convoy of angels are ready to attend it, and bring it to the comforts in Abraham's bosom. Shall a drunkard be so merry among his cups; and a glutton in his delicious fare; and the proud in his bravery and dignity; and the lustful wanton in the enjoyment of his mate? And shall not I rejoice who must shortly be in heaven? How glad is voluptuous youth of their playtimes and holidays? Why, in heaven, I shall have an everlasting holiday of pleasure. Can meat and drink delight me when I hunger and thirst? Can I find pleasure in walks, and gardens, and convenient dwellings? Can beauteous sights delight mine eyes, and odours my smell, and melody mine ears? and shall not the forethought of the celestial bliss delight me? My beast is glad of his fresh pasture, and his liberty, and his rest; and shall not I? What delight have I found in my private studies, especially when they have prospered to the increase of my knowledge? Methinks I could bid the world farewell, and immure myself among my books, and look forth no more (were it a lawful course) but, as Heinsius, in his library at Leyden, shut the doors upon me, and as in the lap of eternity, among those divine souls, employ myself in sweet content, and pity the rich and great ones who know not this happiness. Sure then it is a high delight indeed which in the true lap of eternity is enjoyed. If Lipsins thought, when he did but read Seneca, that he was even upon Olympus' top, above mortality and human things; what a case shall I be in, when I am beholding Christ? If Julius Scaliger thought twelve verses in Lucan better than the whole German empire, what shall I think mine inheritance worth? If the mathematics alone are as delectable as their students do profess, that they should think it sweet to live and

die in those studies, how delectable, then, will my life be, when I shall fully and clearly know those things which the learned do not know but doubtfully and darkly? In one hour shall I see all difficulties vanish; and all my doubts in physics, metaphysics, politics, medicine, &c. shall be resolved; so happy are the students of that university! Yea, all the depths of divinity will be uncovered to me, and all difficult knots untied, and the book unsealed, and mine eyes opened. For in knowing God, I shall know all things that are fit or good for the creature to know. There Commenius's attempt is perfected, and all the sciences reduced to one. Seneca thought that he who lived without books, was buried alive: but had he known what it is to enjoy God in glory, he would have said indeed, that to live without him is to be buried alive in hell.

If Apollonius travelled into Ethiopia and Persia to consult with the learned there; and if Plato and Pythagoras left their country to see those wise Egyptian priests; and if, as Hierom saith, many travelled a thousand miles to see and speak with eloquent Livy; and if the Queen of Sheba came from Ethiopia to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and see his glory; O how gladly should I leave this country, how cheerfully should I pass from earth to heaven, to see the glory of that eternal Majesty; and to attain myself that height of wisdom, in comparison of which the most learned on earth are but silly, brutish fools and idiots! If Bernard were so ravished with the delights of his monastery, where he lived in poverty, without the common pleasures of the world, because of its green banks and shady bowers, and herbs, and trees, and various objects to feed the eyes, and fragrant smells, and sweet and various tunes of birds, together with the opportunity of devout contemplations, that he cries out in admiration, 'Lord! what abundance of delights dost thou provide, even for the poor!' how then shall I be ravished with the description of the court of heaven, where, instead of herbs and trees and birds and bowers, I shall enjoy God and my Redeemer, angels, saints, and inexpressible pleasures: and therefore should, with more admiration, cry out, 'Lord, what delights hast thou provided for us miserable and unworthy wretches that wait for thee!' If the heaven of glass, which

the Persian emperor framed, were so glorious a piece; and the heaven of silver, which the emperor Ferdinand sent to the great Turk, because of their rare artificial representations and motions; what will the heaven of the heavens then be, which is not formed by the art of man, nor beautified like these childish toys, but is the matchless palace of the great King, built by himself for the residence of his glory, and the perpetual entertainment of his beloved saints! Can a poor deluded Mahometan rejoice in expectation of a feigned, sensual paradise; and shall not I rejoice in expectation of a certain glory? If the honour of the ambitious or the wealth of the covetous person do increase, his heart is lifted up with his estate, as a boat that riseth with the rising of the water. If they have but a little more land or money than their neighbours, how easily you may see it in their countenance and carriage! How high do they look; how big do they speak; how stately and lofty do they demean themselves! and shall not the heavenly loftiness and height of my spirit discover my title to this promised land? Shall I be the adopted son of God, and co-heir with Christ of that blessed inheritance, and daily look when I am put into possession; and shall not this be seen in my joyful countenance? What if God had made me commander of the earth? What if the mountains would remove at my command? What if I could heal all diseases with a word or a touch? What if the infernal spirits were all at my command? Should I not rejoice in such privileges and honours as these? Yet is it my Saviour's command not to rejoice that the devils are subject to us; but in this to rejoice, that our names are written in heaven.

I cannot here enjoy my parents, or my near and beloved friends, without some delight; especially when I did too freely let out my affections to my friend, how sweet was that very exercise of my love! O, what will it then be to live in the perpetual love of God! For brethren here to live together in unity, how good and pleasant a thing is it! To see a family live in love; husbands, wife, parents, children, servants, doing all in love to one another. To see a town live together in love, without any envyings, brawlings, heart-burnings, or contentions, scorns, law-suits, factions, or divisions: but every man

loving his neighbour as himself, and thinking they can never do too much for one another, but striving to go beyond each other in love. Oh! how happy and delectable a sight is this! O, sweetest hands, saith Seneca, which bind so happily, that those who are so bound do love their binders, and desire still to be bound more closely, and even reduced into one! Oh! then, what a blessed society will be the family of heaven, and those peaceable inhabitants of the New Jerusalem; where is no division, nor dissimilitude, nor differing judgments, nor disaffection, nor strangeness, nor deceitful friendship; never an angry thought or look, never a cutting, unkind expression; but all are one in Christ, who is one with the Father, and live in the love of Love himself. Cato could say that the soul of a lover dwelleth in the person whom he loveth: and therefore we say, The soul is not more where it liveth and enliveneth, than where it loveth. How near, then, will my soul be closed to God, and how sweet must that conjunction be, when I shall so heartily, strongly, and incessantly love him. As the bee lies sucking and satiating herself with the sweetness of the flower; or rather, as the child lies sucking the mother's breast, inclosed in her arms, and sitting in her lap; even so shall my loving soul be still feeding on the sweetness of the God of love. Ah! wretched, fleshly, unbelieving heart, that can think of such a day, and work, and life as this, with so low, and dull, and feeble joys, but my enjoying joys will be more lively.

How delectable is it to me to behold and study these inferior works of God! to read those anatomical lectures of Du Bartas, upon this great dissected body! What a beautiful fabric is this great house which here we dwell in! The floor so dressed with various herbs, and flowers, and trees, and watered with springs, and rivers, and seas! The roof so wide expanded, so admirably adorned, such astonishing workmanship in every part! The studies of an hundred ages more, if the world should last so long, would not discover the mysteries of divine skill, which are to be found in the narrow compass of our bodies. What anatomist is not amazed in his search and observations! What wonders, then, do sun, and moon, and stars, and orbs, and seas, and winds, and fire, and air, and earth, &c. afford us!

And hath God prepared such a house for our silly, sinful, corruptible flesh, and for a soul imprisoned! And doth he bestow so many millions of wonderful rarities, even upon his enemies! O, then, what a dwelling must that needs be, which he prepared for pure, refined, spiritual, glorified ones; and which he will bestow only upon his dearly beloved children, whom he hath chosen out, to make his mercy on them glorified and admired! As far as our perfected glorified bodies will excel this frail and corruptible flesh, so far will the glory of the New Jerusalem exceed all the present glory of the creatures. The change upon our mansion will be proportionable to the change upon ourselves. Arise, then, O my soul, by these steps in thy contemplation, and let thy thoughts of that glory, were it possible, as far in sweetness exceed thy thoughts of the excellencies below. Fear not to go out of this body, and this world, when thou must make so happy a change as this; but say as Zuingerus, when he was dying, "I am glad, and even leap for joy, that at last the time is come, wherein that, even that mighty Jehovah, whose majesty, in my search of nature, I have admired; whose goodness I have adored; whom in faith I have desired, whom I have sighed for; will now show himself to me face to face:" and let that be the unfeigned sense of my heart, which Camerarius left in his will should be written on his monument, "Vita mihi mors est, mors mihi vita nova est;" "Life is to me a death, death is to me a new life."

Moreover, how wonderful and excellent are the works of Providence, even in this life! To see the great God to engage himself, and set a-work his attributes, for the safety and advancement of a few humble, despicable praying persons! O what a joyful time will it then be, when so much love, and mercy, and wisdom, and power, and truth, shall be manifested and glorified in the saint's glorification!

How delightful is it to my soul, to review the working of Providence for myself, and to read over the records and catalogues of those special mercies wherewith my life hath been adorned and sweetened! How oft have my prayers been heard! and my tears regarded, and my groaning, troubled soul relieved, and my Lord hath bid me be of

good cheer! He hath healed me when in respect of means I was incurable. He hath helped me when I was helpless. In the midst of my supplications hath he eased and revived me. He hath taken me up from my knees, and from the dust where I have lain in sorrow and despair: even the cries which have been occasioned by distrust, hath he regarded; what a support are these experiences to my faithful unbelieving heart! These clear testimonies of my Father's love, do put life into my afflicted, drooping spirit.

Oh, then, what a blessed day will that be, when I shall have all mercy, perfection of mercy, nothing but mercy, and fully enjoy the Lord of mercy himself! When I shall stand on the shore, and look back upon the raging seas which I have safely passed! When I shall, in safe and full possession of glory, look back upon all my pains and troubles, and fears and tears, and upon all the mercies which I here received; and then shall behold the glory enjoyed there, which was the end of all this. O, what a blessed view will that be! O glorious prospect which I shall have on the celestial Mount Zion! Is it possible that there should be any defect of joy; or my heart not raised, when I am so raised? If one drop of lively faith were mixed with these considerations, Oh! what work would they make in my breast; and what a heaven-ravished heart should I carry within me! Fain would I believe; "Lord, help my unbelief."

Yet further, consider, O my soul, how sweet have the very ordinances been unto thee; what raptures hast thou had in prayer, and under heavenly sermons; what gladness in days of thanksgiving, after eminent deliverances to the church, or to thyself; what delight do I find in the sweet society of the saints; to be among my humble faithful neighbours and friends; to join with them in the frequent worship of God; to see their growth and stability, and soundness of understanding; to see those daily added to the church which shall be saved! O then what delight shall I have to see the perfected church in heaven, and to join with these and all the saints in another kind of worship than we can here conceive of! How sweet is it to join in the high praises of God in the solemn assemblies! How glad have I been

to go up to the house of God, especially after long restraint by sickness, when I have been as Hezekiah released, and re-admitted to join with the people of God, and to set forth the praises of my great Deliverer! How sweet is my work in preaching the Gospel, and inviting sinners to the marriage-feast of the Lamb, and opening to them the treasures of free grace? Especially when God blesseth my endeavours with plenteous success, and giveth me to see the fruit of my labours; even this alone hath been a greater joy to my heart, than if I had been made the lord of all the riches on earth.

O how can my heart then conceive that joy, which I shall have in my admittance into the celestial temple, and into the heavenly host, that shall do nothing but praise the Lord for ever! when we shall say to Christ, "Here am I, and the children thou hast given me;" and when Christ shall present us all to his Father, and all are gathered, and the body completed! If the very word of God were sweeter to Job than his necessary food, (Job 23:12;) and to Jeremy, was the very joy and rejoicing of his heart, (Jer. 15:16;) and to David, was sweeter than the honey and honeycomb, so that he crieth out, O how I love thy law; it is my meditation continually: and if thy law had not been my delight, I had perished in my troubles, (Psal. 119:97; 92, 70, 77, &c.) O then how blessed a day will that be, when we shall fully enjoy the Lord of this word; and shall need these written precepts and promises no more; but shall, instead of these love-letters, enjoy our Beloved, and instead of these promises, have the happiness in possession, and read no book but the face of the glorious God! How far would I go to see one of those blessed angels, which appeared to Abraham, to Lot, to John, &c., or to speak with Enoch, or Elias, or any saint, who had lived with God; especially if he would resolve all my doubts, and describe to me the celestial habitations! How much more desirable must it needs be to live with these blessed saints and angels, and to see and possess as well as they! It is written of Erastus, that he was so desirous to learn, that it would be sweet to him even to die, so he might but be resolved of those doubtful questions wherein he could not satisfy himself. How sweet then should it be to me to die, that I may not only be resolved of all my doubts, but also know what I

never before did think of, and enjoy what before I never knew! It was a happy dwelling that the twelve apostles had with Christ; to be always in his company, and see his face, and hear him open to them the mysteries of the kingdom: but it will be another kind of happiness to dwell with him in glory. It was a rare privilege of Thomas to put his fingers into his wounds to confirm his faith; and of John to be called the disciple whom Jesus loved, on whose breast at supper he was wont to lean. But it will be another kind of privilege which I shall enjoy when I shall see him in his glory, and not in his wounds; and shall enjoy a fuller sense of his love than John then did; and shall have the most hearty entertainment that heaven affordeth. If they that heard Christ speak on earth, were astonished at his wisdom and answers, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth; how shall I be affected then to behold him in his majesty!

Rouse up thyself, O my soul, and consider; can the foresight of this glory make others embrace the stake, and kiss the faggot, and welcome the cross, and refuse deliverance? And can it not make thee cheerful under lesser sufferings; can it sweeten the flames to them; and can it not sweeten thy life, or thy sickness, or natural death? If a glimpse could make Moses's face to shine, and Peter on the mount so transported, and Paul so exalted, and John so wrapt up in the Spirit, why should it not somewhat revive me with delight? Doubtless it would, if my thoughts were more believing: is it not the same heaven which they and I must live in; is not their God, their Christ, their crown and mine, the same? Nay, how many a weak woman, or poor despised Christian have I seen, mean in parts, but rich in faith, who could rejoice and triumph in hope of this inheritance: and shall I look upon it with so dim an eye; so dull a heart; so dejected a countenance? Some small foretastes also I have had myself, though indeed small and seldom, through mine unbelief, and how much more delightful have they been than ever was any of these earthly things? The full enjoyment then will sure be sweet. Remember then this bunch of grapes which thou hast tasted of, and by them

conjecture the fruitfulness of the land of promise. A grape in a wilderness cannot be like the plentiful vintage.

Consider also, O my soul, what a beauty is there in the imperfect graces of the Spirit here; (Col. 3:10;) so great that they are called the image of God. And can any created excellency have a more honourable title? Alas, how small a part are these of what we shall enjoy in our perfect state! O how precious a mercy should I esteem it, if God would but take off my bodily infirmities, and restore me to any comfortable measure of health and strength, that I might be able with cheerfulness to go through his work! How precious a mercy then will it be, to have all my corruptions quite removed, and my soul perfected, and my body also raised to so high a state as I now can neither desire nor conceive! Surely, as health of body so health of soul doth carry an inexpressible sweetness along with it. Were there no rewards besides, yet every gracious act is a reward and comfort. Never had I the least stirring of loving God, but I felt a heavenly sweetness accompany it; even the very act of loving was inexpressibly sweet. What a happy life should I here live, could I but love as much as I would, and as oft, and as long as I would! Could I be all love, and always loving, O my soul, what wouldst thou give for such a life! O had I such true and clear apprehensions of God, and such a true understanding of his word as I desire; could I but trust him as fully in all my straits; could I have that life which I would have in every duty; could I make God my constant desire and delight; I would not then envy the world their honours or pleasures; nor change my happiness with a Cæsar or Alexander. O my soul, what a blessed state wilt thou shortly be in, when thou shalt have far more of these than thou canst now desire! and shalt exercise all thy perfect graces upon God in presence and open sight, and not in the dark, and at a distance, as now!

And as there is so much worth in one gracious soul, so much more in a gracious society, and most of all in the whole body of Christ on earth: if there be any true beauty on earth, where should it be so likely as in the spouse of Christ? It is her that he adorneth with his

jewels, and feasteth at his table; and keepeth for her always an open house and heart: he revealeth to her his secrets, and maintaineth constant converse with her: he is her constant guardian, and in every deluge incloseth her in his ark: he saith to her, Thou art all beautiful, my beloved! And is his spouse, while black, so comely? Is the afflicted, sinning, weeping, lamenting, persecuted church so excellent? O what then will be the church, when it is fully gathered and glorified; when it is ascended from the valley of tears to Mount Sion; when it shall sin no more, nor weep, nor groan, nor suffer any more? The stars, or the smallest candle, are not darkened so much by the brightness of the sun, as the excellencies of the first temple will be by the celestial temple. The glory of the old Jerusalem will be darkness and deformity, to the glory of the New. It is said in Ezra 3:12, that when the foundations of the second temple were laid, many of the ancient men who had seen the first house, did weep, i. e. because the second did come so far short of it: what cause then shall we have to shout for joy, when we shall see how glorious the heavenly temple is, and remember the meanness of the church on earth!

But, alas! what a loss am I at in the midst of my contemplation! I thought my heart had all this while followed after; but I see it doth not: and shall I let my understanding go on alone, or my tongue run on without affections? What life is in empty thoughts and words! neither God nor I find pleasure in them.

Rather let me run back again, and look, and find, and chide this lazy, loitering heart, that turneth off from such a pleasant work as this; where hast thou been, unworthy heart, while I was opening to thee the everlasting treasures? Didst thou sleep, or wast thou minding something else: or, dost thou think that this is all but a dream or fable, or as uncertain as the predictions of a presumptuous astrologer; or, hast thou lost thy life and rejoicing power? Art thou not ashamed to complain so much of an uncomfortable life, and to murmur at God for filling thee with sorrows, when he offereth thee in vain the delights of angels, and when thou treadest under foot these transcendent pleasures? Thou wilfully pinest away in grief, and art

ready to charge thy Father with unkindness for making thee only a vessel of displeasure, a sink of sadness, a skin-full of groans, a snow-ball of tears, a channel for waters of affliction to run in, the fuel of fears, and the carcass which cares do consume and prey upon, when in the mean time thou mightest live a life of joy; hadst thou now but followed me close, and believingly applied thyself to that which I have spoken, and drunk in but half the comfort which those words hold forth, it would have made thee revive and leap for joy, and forget thy sorrows and diseases, and pains of the flesh: but seeing thou judgest thyself unworthy of comfort, it is just that comfort should be taken from thee.

Lord, what is the matter that this work doth go on so heavily; did I think my heart had been so backward to rejoice? If it had been to mourn and fear, and despair, it were no wonder: I have been lifting at this stone, and it will not stir; I have been pouring aqua vitæ into the mouth of the dead: I hope, Lord, by that time it comes to heaven, this heart, by thy Spirit, will be quickened and mended, or else even those joys will scarcely rejoice me.

But besides my darkness, deadness, and unbelief, I perceive there is something else that forbids my full-desired joys. This is not the time and place where so much is given: the time is our winter, and not our harvest; the place is called the valley of tears. There must be great difference betwixt the way and the end, the work and wages, the small foretastes and full fruition.

But, Lord, though thou hast reserved our joys for heaven, yet hast thou not so suspended our desires; they are most suitable and seasonable in this present life; therefore, O help me to desire till I may possess; and let me long when I cannot as I would rejoice. There is love in desire as well as in delight; and if I be not empty of love, I know I shall not long be empty of delight.

Rouse up thyself once more, then, O my soul, and try and exercise thy spiritual appetite; though thou art ignorant and unbelieving, yet

art thou reasonable, and therefore must needs desire a happiness and rest: nor canst thou surely be so unreasonable as to dream of attaining it here on earth. Thou knowest, to thy sorrow, that thou art not yet at thy rest, and thy own feeling doth convince thee of thy present unhappiness; and dost thou know that thou art restless, and yet art willing to continue so; art thou neither happy in deed nor in desire; art thou neither well nor wouldst be well? When my flesh is pained and languisheth under consuming sickness, how heartily and frequently do I cry out, Oh! when shall I be eased of this pain? when shall my decaying strength be recovered? There is no dissembling or formality in these desires and groans. How then should I long for my final, full recovery! There is no sickness, nor pain, nor weeping, nor complaints. O when shall I arrive at that safe and quiet harbour, where is none of these storms and waves, and dangers; when I shall never more have a weary, restless night or day! Then shall not my life be such a medley or mixture of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow, as now it is; nor shall flesh and spirit be combating within me, nor my soul be still as a pitched field, or a stage of contention, where faith and unbelief, affiance and distrust, humility and pride, do maintain a continual distracting conflict: then shall I not live a dying life for fear of dying, nor my life be made uncomfortable with the fears of losing it. O when shall I be past these soul-tormenting fears, and cares, and griefs, and passions! when shall I be out of this frail, this corruptible, ruinous body! this soul-contradicting, ensnaring, deceiving flesh! when shall I be out of this vain and vexatious world, whose pleasures are mere deluding dreams and shadows; whose miseries are real, numerous, and incessant! How long shall I see the church of Christ lie trodden under the feet of persecutors; or else, as a ship in the hands of foolish guides, though the supreme Master doth moderate all for the best! Alas! that I must stand by and see the church and cause of Christ, like a foot-ball in the midst of a crowd of boys, tossed about in contention from one to another; every one running and sweating with foolish violence, and labouring the downfall of all that are in his way, and all to get it into his own power, that he may have the managing of the work himself, and may drive it before him which way he pleaseth; and when all is done, the best usage he may expect

from them, is but to be spurned about in the dirt, till they have driven it on to the goal of their private interests, or deluded fancies. There is none of this disorder in the heavenly Jerusalem; there shall I find a government without imperfection, and obedience without the least unwillingness or rebellion; even a harmonious consent of perfected spirits, in obeying and praising their everlasting King. O how much better is it to be a door-keeper there and the last in that kingdom, than to be the conqueror or commander of this tumultuous world! There will our Lord govern all immediately by himself, and not put the reins in the hands of such ignorant readers, nor govern by such foolish and sinful deputies, as the best of the sons of men now are. Dost thou so mourn for these inferior disorders, O my soul, and yet wouldst thou not be out of it! How long hast thou desired to be a member of a more perfect reformed church, and to join with more holy, humble, sincere souls, in the purest and most heavenly worship! Why, dost thou not see that on earth thy desires fly from thee? Art thou not as a child that thinketh to travel to the sun, when he seeth it rising or setting, as it were close to the earth; but as he travelleth toward it, it seems to go from him; and when he hath long wearied himself, it is as far off as ever? for the thing he seeketh is in another world. Even such hath been thy labour in seeking for so holy, so pure, so peaceable a society, as might afford thee a contented settlement here. Those that have gone as far as America for satisfaction, have confessed themselves unsatisfied still. When wars, and calamities attending them, have been over, I have said, Return now, my soul, unto thy rest: (Psal. 116:) but how restless a condition hath next succeeded! When God had given me the enjoyment of peace and friends, and liberty of the Gospel; and had also done even as my own heart desired; I have been ready to say, Soul, take thy case and rest; but how quickly hath Providence called me fool, and taught me to call my state by another name! When did I ever begin to congratulate my flesh on its felicity, but God did quickly turn my tune, and made almost the same breath to end in groaning, which did begin in laughter! I have thought oftentimes on the folly of my prosperity, Now I will have one sweet draught of solace and content, but God hath dropped in the gall, while the cup was at my mouth. We

are still weary of the present condition, and desire a change, and when we have it, it doth not answer our expectation; but our discontent and restlessness is still unchanged. In time of peace we thought that war would deliver us from our disquietments, and when we saw the iron red-hot, we caught it inconsiderately, thinking that it was gold, till it burnt us to the very bone, and so stuck to our fingers, that we scarcely know yet whether we are rid of it or not. In this our misery we longed for peace; and so long were we strangers to it, that we had forgotten its name, and began to call it rest, or heaven; but as soon as we are again grown acquainted with it, we shall better bethink us, and perceive our mistake. O why am I then no more weary of this weariness! and why do I forget my resting place! (Jer. 50:6.) Up, then, O my soul, and thy most raised and fervent desires! stay not till this flesh can desire with thee; its appetite hath a lower and baser object. Thy appetite is not sensitive, but rational; distinct from its; and therefore look not that sense apprehend thy blessed object, and tell thee what and when to desire. Believing reason in the glass of Scripture may discern enough to raise the flame; and though sense apprehend not that which must draw thy desires, yet that which may drive them it doth easily apprehend. It can tell thee that thy present life is filled with distress and sorrows, though it cannot tell thee what is in the world to come. Thou needest not Scripture to tell thee, no faith to discern that thy head acheth, and thy stomach is sick, thy bowels griped, and thy heart grieved, and some of these, or such-like, are thy daily case. Thy friends about thee are grieved to see thy griefs, and to hear thy dolorous groans and lamentations, and yet art thou loth to leave this woful life! Is this a state to be preferred before the celestial glory; or is it better to be thus miserable from Christ, than to be happy with him; or canst thou possibly be so unbelieving, as to doubt whether that life be any better than this! O my soul, doth not the dulness of thy desires after rest, accuse thee of most detestable ingratitude and folly? Must thy Lord procure thee a rest at so dear a rate, and dost thou no more value it! Must he purchase thy rest by a life of labour and sorrow, and by the pangs of a bitter, cursed death! And when all is done, hadst thou rather be here without it! Must he go before to prepare so blessed a

mansion for such a wretch, and art thou now loth to go to possess it! Must his blood, and care, and pains be lost! O unthankful, unworthy soul! Shall the Lord of glory be willing of thy company, and art thou unwilling of his? Are they fit to dwell with God, that had rather stay from him? Must he crown thee, and glorify thee against thy will; or must he yet deal more roughly with thy darling flesh, and leave thee never a corner in thy ruinous cottage for to cover thee, but fire thee out of all, before thou wilt away? Must every sense be an inlet to thy sorrows; and every friend become the scourge, and Job's messengers be the daily intelligencers, and bring thee the currantos of thy multiplied calamities, before that heaven will seem more desirable than this earth? Must every joint be the seat of pain; and every member deny thee a room to rest in, and thy groans be indited from the very heart and bones, before thou wilt be willing to leave this flesh? Must thy heavy burdens be bound upon thy back; and thy sointolerable paroxysms become incessant; and thy intermittent aguish woes be turned into continual burning fevers; yea, must earth become a very hell to thee, before thou wilt be willing to be with God? O impudent soul, if thou be not ashamed of this! What is loathing, if this be love? Look about thee, O my soul; behold the most lovely creature, or the most desirable state, and tell me where wouldst thou be if not with God! Poverty is a burden, and riches a snare. Sickness is little pleasing to thee, and usually health as little safe; the one is full of sorrow, and the other of sin. The frowning world doth bruise thy heel, and the smiling world doth sting thee to the heart. When it seemeth ugly, it causeth loathing; when beauteous, it is thy bane. When thy condition is bitter, thou wouldst fain spit it out, and when delightful, it is but sugared misery and deceit; the sweetest poison doth often bring the surest death. So much as the world is loved and delighted in, so much it hurteth and endangereth the lover; and if it may not be loved, why should it be desired? If thou be applauded, it proves the most contagious breath; and how ready are the sails of pride to receive such winds: so that it frequently addeth to thy sin, but not one cubit to the stature of thy worth; and if thou be vilified, slandered, or unkindly used, methinks this should not entice thy love. Never didst thou sit by the fire of

prosperity and applause, but thou hadst with it the smoke that drew water from thy eyes; never hadst thou the rose without the pricks: and the sweetness hath been expired, and the beauty faded, before the fears which thou hadst in gathering it were healed. Is it not as good to be without the honey, as to have it with so many smarting stings? The highest delight thou hast found in anything below, hath been in thy successful labours and thy godly friends; and have these indeed been so sweet, as that thou shouldst be so loth to leave them? If they seem better to thee than a life with God, it is time for God to take them from thee. Thy studies have been sweet, and have they not been also bitter? My mind hath been pleased, but my body pained, and the weariness of the flesh hath quickly abated the pleasures of the spirit. When by painful studies I have not discovered the truth, it hath been but a tedious way to a grievous end; discontent and trouble purchased by toilsome, wearying labours. And if I have found out the truth by divine assistance, I have found but an exposed, naked orphan, that hath cost me much to take in, and clothe, and keep, which, though of noble birth, yea, a divine offspring, and amiable in mine eyes, and worthy I confess of better entertainment, yet, from men that know not its descent, hath drawn upon me their envy and furious opposition; and hath brought the blinded Sodomites, with whom I lived at some peace before, to crowd about me, and assault my doors, that I might prostitute my heavenly guests to their pleasure, and again expose them, whom I had so gladly and lately entertained; yea, the very tribes of Israel have been gathered against me, thinking that the altar which I built for the interest of truth, and unity, and peace, had been erected to the introduction of error and idolatry; and so the increase of knowledge hath been the increase of sorrow. My heart, indeed, is ravished with the beauty of naked truth, and I am ready to cry out 'I have found it,' or, as Aquinas, 'Conclusum est contra,' &c.; but when I have found it, I know not what to do with it. If I confine it to my own breast, and keep it secret to myself, it is as a consuming fire, shut up in my heart and bones. I am as the lepers without Samaria, or as those that were forbidden to tell any man of the works of Christ: I am weary of forbearing, I cannot stay. If I reveal it to the world, I can expect but

an unwelcome entertainment, and an ungrateful return; for they have taken up their standing in religious knowledge already, as if they were at Hercules' pillars, and had no further to go, nor any more learn. They dare be no wiser than they are already, nor receive any more of truth than they have already received, lest thereby they should accuse their ancestors and teachers of ignorance and imperfection, and themselves should seem to be mutable and inconstant, and to hold their opinions in religion with reserves. The most precious truth not apprehended, doth seem to be error and fantastic novelty: every man that readeth what I write, will not be at the pains of those tedious studies to find out the truth as I have been, but think it should meet their eyes in the very reading. If the mere writing of truth, with its clearest evidence, were all that were necessary to the apprehension of it by others, then the lowest scholar in the school might be quickly as good as the highest. So that if I did see more than others, to reveal it to the lazy, prejudiced world, would but make my friends turn enemies, or look upon me with a strange and jealous eye: and yet truth is so dear a friend itself, and he that sent it much more dear, that whatsoever I suffer I dare not stifle or conceal it. O what then are these bitter sweet studies and discoveries to the everlasting views of the face of the God of truth! The light that here I have is but a knowing in part, and yet it costeth me so dear, that in a temptation I am almost ready to prefer the quiet, silent night before such a rough tempestuous day. But there I shall have light and rest together, and the quietness of the night without its darkness. I can never now have the lightning without the thunder, which maketh it seem more dreadful than delightful. And shouldst thou be loth, then, O my soul, to leave this for the eternal perfect light; and to change thy candle for the glorious sun; and to change thy studies, and preaching, and praying, for the harmonious praises and fruition of the blessed God.

Nor will thy loss be greater in the change of thy company than of thine employment. Thy friends here have been indeed thy delight; and have they not been also thy vexation and thy grief? They are gracious, and are they not also sinful; they are kind and loving, and

are they not also peevish, froward, and soon displeased? They are humble, but withal, alas! how proud! They will scarce endure to hear plainly of their disgraceful faults; they cannot bear undervaluing or disrespect; they itch after the good thoughts and applause of others; they love those best that highest esteem them. The missing of courtesy; a supposed slighting or disrespect; the contradicting of their words or humours; a difference in opinion, yea, the turning of a straw, will quickly show thee the pride and the uncertainty of thy friend. Their graces are sweet to thee, and their gifts are helpful, but are not their corruptions bitter, and their imperfections hurtful? Though at a distance they seem to thee most holy and innocent, yet when they come nearer thee, and thou hast thoroughly tried them, alas! what silly, frail, and froward pieces are the best of men! Then the knowledge which thou didst admire, appeareth clouded with ignorance, and the virtues that so shined as a glow-worm in the night, are scarcely to be found when thou seekest them by daylight. When temptations are strong, how quickly do they yield! what wounds have they given to religion by their shameful falls! Those that have been famous for their holiness, have been as infamous for their notorious, heinous wickedness; those that have been thy dearest bosom friends, that have prayed and conferred with thee, and helped thee toward heaven, and by their fervour, forwardness, and heavenly lives, have shamed thy coldness, and earthliness, and dulness; whom thou hast singled out as the choicest from a world of professors, whom thou madest the daily companions and delights of thy life, are not some of them fallen to drunkenness, and some to whoredom, some to pride, perfidiousness, and rebellion, and some to the most damnable heresies and divisions?h And hath thy very heart received such wounds from thy friends, and yet art thou so loth to go from them to thy God? Thy friends that are weak, are little useful or comfortable to thee; and those that are strong, are the abler to hurt thee; and the best, if not heedfully used, will prove the worst. The better and keener the knife is, the sooner and deeper will it cut thy fingers, if thou take not heed. Yea, the very number of thy friends is a burden and trouble to thee. Every one supposeth he hath some interest in thee; yea, the interest of a friend, which is not little; and

how insufficient art thou to satisfy all their expectations, when it is much if thou canst answer the expectations of one! If thou wert divided among so many, as each could have but little of thee, so thyself and God, who should have most, will have none. And almost every one that hath not more of thee than thou canst spare for all, is ready to censure thee as unfriendly, and a neglecter of the duty or respects which thou owest them; and shouldst thou please them all, the gain will not be great, nor art thou sure that they will again please thee.

Awake then, O my drowsy soul, and look above this world of sorrow. Hast thou borne the yoke of thy afflictions from thy youth, and so long felt the smarting rod, and yet canst no better understand its meaning? Is not every stroke to drive thee hence; and is not the voice of the rod like that to Elijah, What doest thou here? Up and away. Dost thou forget that sure prediction of thy Lord, "In the world ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall have peace." The first thou hast found true by long experience, and of the latter thou hast had a small foretaste, but the perfect peace is yet before, which, till it be enjoyed, cannot be clearly understood.

Ah! my dear Lord, I feel thy meaning. It is written in my flesh: it is engraven in my bones. My heart thou aimest at; thy rod doth drive, thy silken cord of love doth draw, and all to bring it to thyself. And is that all, Lord? is that the worst? Can such a heart be worth thy having? Make it so, Lord, and then it is thine; take it to thyself, and then take me. I can but reach it toward thee, and not unto thee. I am too low, and it is too dull. This clod hath life to stir, but not to rise; legs it hath, but wings it wanteth. As the feeble child to the tender mother, it looketh up to thee, and stretcheth out the hands, and fain would have thee take it up. Though I cannot so freely say, My heart is with thee, my soul longeth after thee; yet can I say, I long for such a longing heart. The twins are yet a striving in my bowels: the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; the spirit longs, the flesh is loth. The flesh is unwilling to lie rotting in the earth; the soul desires to be with thee. My spirit crieth, Let thy kingdom come; or else, let me come

unto thy kingdom: but the flesh is afraid lest thou shouldst hear my prayer, and take me at my word. What frequent contradictions dost thou find in my requests! because there is such contradiction in myself. My prayers plead against my prayers, and one part begs a denial to the other. No wonder if thou give me such a dying life, when I know not whether to ask for life or death. With the same breath do I beg for a reprieve and removal; and the same groan doth utter my desires and my fears. My soul would go, my flesh would stay. My soul would fain be out, my flesh would have thee hold the door. O, blessed be the grace that makes advantages of my corruptions, even to contradict and kill themselves. For I fear my fears, and sorrow for my sorrows, and groan under my fleshly groans: I loathe my lothness, and I long for greater longings. And while my soul is thus tormented with fears and cares, and with the tedious means for attaining my desires; it addeth so much to the burden of my troubles, that my weariness thereby is much increased, which makes me groan to be at rest. Indeed, Lord, my soul itself also is in a strait, and what to choose I know not well, but yet thou knowest what to give: to depart, and be with thee, is best; but yet to be in the flesh seems needful. Thou knowest I am not weary of thy work, but of sorrow and sin I must needs be weary: I am willing to stay while thou wilt here employ me, and to dispatch the work which thou hast put into my hands, till these strange thoughts of thee be somewhat more familiar, and thou hast raised me into some degree of acquaintance with thyself: but I beseech thee, stay no longer when this is done. Stay not till sin shall get advantage, and my soul grow earthly by dwelling on this earth, and my desires and delights in thee grow dead: but while I must be here, let me be still amending and ascending; make me still better, and take me at the best. I dare not be so impatient of living, as to importune thee to cut off my time, and urge thee to snatch me hence unready; because I know my everlasting state doth so much depend on the improvement of this life. Nor yet would I stay when my work is done; and remain here sinning, when my brethren are triumphing. I am drowning in tears, while they swim in joys; I am weeping, while they are singing; I am under thy feet, while they are in thy bosom: thy footsteps bruise and

break this worm, while those stars do shine in the firmament of glory. Thy frowns do kill me, while they are quickened by thy smiles: they are ever living, and I am daily dying: their joys are raised by the knowledge of their endlessness; my griefs are enlarged by still expecting more: while they possess but one continued pleasure, I bear the successive assaults of fresh calamities. One billow falls in the neck of another; and when I am rising up from under one, another comes and strikes me down. Yet I am thy child, as well as they; Christ is my head, as well as theirs: why is there then so great a distance? How differently dost thou use us, when thou art Father to us all! They sit at thy table, while I must stand without the doors. But I acknowledge the equity of thy ways. Though we are all children, yet I am the prodigal, and therefore meeter in this remote country to feed on husks; while they are always with thee, and possess thy glory. Though we are all members, yet not the same; they are the tongue, and fitter to praise thee; they are the hands, and fitter for thy service; I am the feet, and therefore meeter to tread on earth, and move in dirt; but unfit to stand so near the head as they. They were once themselves in my condition, and I shall shortly be in theirs: they were of the lowest form, before they came to the highest; they suffered, before they reigned: they came out of great tribulation, who now are standing before thy throne: and shall not I be content to come to the crown as they did; and to drink of their cup, before I sit with them in the kingdom? The blessed souls of David, Paul, Austin, Calvin, &c. with all the spirits of the just made perfect, were once on earth, as I am now; as far from the sight of thy face and glory, as deep in sorrows, as weak, and sick, and full of pains, as I. Their souls were longer imprisoned in corruptible flesh: I shall go but the way that they did all go before me: their house of clay did fall to dust, and so must mine. The world they are now in, was as strange to them before they were there as it is to me. And am I better than all these precious souls? I am contented, therefore, O my Lord, to stay thy time, and go thy way; so thou wilt exalt me also in thy season, and take me into thy barn when thou seest me ripe. In the mean time I may desire, though I am not to repine; I may look over the hedge, though I may not break over; I may believe and wish, though not make any sinful

haste; I am content to wait, but not to lose thee. And when thou seest me too contented with thine absence, and satisfying and pleasing myself here below, O quicken up then my dull desires, and blow up the dying spark of love; and leave me not till I am able unfeignedly to cry out, As the hart panteth after the brooks, and the dry land thirsteth for the water-streams, so thirsteth my soul after thee, O God: when shall I come and appear before the living God? (Psal. 42:1, 2:) "till my daily conversation be with thee in heaven, and from thence I may longingly expect my Saviour:" (Phil. 3:19–21:) till my affections are set on things above, where Christ is reigning, and my life is hid: (2 Cor. 5:1–8:) "till I can walk by faith, and not by sight; willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." (Col. 3:1–4.) What interest hath this empty world in me? and what is there in it that may seem so lovely, as to entice my desires and delight from thee, or make me loth to come away? When I look about me with a deliberate, undeceived eye, me-thinks this world is a howling wilderness, and most of the inhabitants are untamed hideous monsters. All its beauty I can wink into blackness, and all its mirth I can think into sadness; I can drown all its pleasures in a few penitent tears, and the wind of a sigh will scatter them away. When I look on them without the spectacles of flesh, I call them nothing, as being vanity, or worse than nothing, as vexation. O let not this flesh so seduce my soul, as to make it prefer this weary life before the joys that are about thy throne: and though death of itself be unwelcome to nature, yet let thy grace make thy glory appear to me so desirable, that the king of terrors may be the messenger of my joy. O let not my soul be ejected by violence, and dispossessed of its habitation against its will, but draw it forth to thyself by the secret power of thy love, as the sunshine in the spring draws forth the creatures from their winter cells; meet it half way, and entice it to thee, as the loadstone doth the iron, and as the greater flame doth attract the less; dispel therefore the clouds that hide from me thy love, or remove the scales that hinder mine eyes from beholding thee: for only the beams that stream from thy face, and the foresight or taste of thy great salvation, can make a soul unfeignedly to say, Now let thy servant depart in peace; reading and hearing will not serve. My meat is not sweet to

my ear or my eye; it must be a taste or feeling that must entice away my soul: though arguing is the means to bend my will, yet if thou bring not the matter to my hand, and by the influence of thy Spirit make it not effectual, I shall never reason my soul to be willing to depart. In the winter, when it is cold and dirty without, I am loth to leave my chamber and fire; but in the summer, when all is warm and green, I am loth to be so confined; show me but the summer fruits and pleasures of thy paradise, and I shall freely quit my earthly cell. Some pleasure I have in my books, my friends, and in thine ordinances: till thou hast given me a taste of something more sweet, my soul will be loth to part with these: the traveller will hold his cloak the faster when the winds do bluster, and the storms assault him; but when the sun shines hot, he will cast it off as a burden; so will my soul, when thou frownest, or art strange, be lother to leave this garment of flesh; but thy smiles would make me leave it as my prison. But it is not thy ordinary discoveries that will here suffice; as the work is greater, so must be thy help. O turn these fears into strong desires, and this lothness to die into longings after thee! While I must be absent from thee, let my soul as heartily groan under thine absence, as my pained body doth under its want of health: and let not those groans be counterfeit, or constrained, but let them come from a longing, loving heart, unfeignedly judging it best to depart, and be with Christ: and if I have any more time to spend on earth, let me live as without the world in thee, as I have sometime lived as without thee in the world. O suffer me not to spend in strangeness to thee another day of this my pilgrimage! While I have a thought to think, let me not forget thee; while I have a tongue to move, let me mention thee with delight; while I have a breath to breathe, let it be after thee, and for thee; while I have a knee to bend, let it bow daily at thy footstool; and when by sickness thou confinest me to my couch, do thou make my bed, and number my pains, and put all my tears into thy bottle. And as when my spirit groaned for my sins, the flesh would not second it, but desired that which my spirit did abhor; so now, when my flesh doth groan under its pains, let not my spirit second it, but suffer the flesh to groan alone, and let me desire that day which my flesh abhorreth, that my friends may not with so much

sorrow wait for the departure of my soul, as my soul with joy shall wait for its own departure; and then let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be as his, even a removal to that glory that shall never end. Send forth thy convoy of angels for my departing soul, and let them bring it among the perfect spirits of the just, and let me follow my dear friends that have died in Christ before; and when my friends are weeping over my grave, let my spirit be reposed with thee in rest, and when my corpse shall lie there rotting in the dark, let my soul be in the inheritance of the saints in light. And O thou that numberest the very hairs of my head, do thou number all the days that my body lies in the dust: and thou that writest all my members in thy book, do thou keep an account of all my scattered bones. And hasten, O my Saviour, the time of thy return; send forth thine angels, and let that dreadful, joyful trumpet sound: delay not, lest the living give up their hopes: delay not, lest earth should grow like hell, and lest thy church by division be crumbled all to dust, and dissolved by being resolved into individual units: delay not, lest thine enemies get advantage of thy flock, and lest pride, and hypocrisy, and sensuality, and unbelief, should prevail against thy little remnant, and share among them thy whole inheritance, and when thou comest thou find not faith on the earth: delay not, lest the grave should boast of victory; and having learned rebellion of its guest, should plead prescription, and refuse to deliver thee up thy due. O hasten that great resurrection-day! when thy command shall go forth, and none shall disobey; when the sea and earth shall yield up their hostages, and all that sleep in the grave shall awake, and the dead in Christ shall first arise; when the seed that thou sowest corruptible, shall come forth incorruptible; and graves that received but rottenness, and retained but dust, shall return thee glorious stars and suns: therefore dare I lay down my carcass in the dust, entrusting it, not to a grave but to thee, and therefore my flesh shall rest in hope, till thou raise it to the possession of the everlasting rest. Return, O Lord; how long? O let thy kingdom come! Thy desolate bride saith, Come; for thy Spirit within her saith, Come, who teacheth her thus to pray with groanings after thee which cannot be expressed: the whole creation saith,

Come, waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: thyself hath said, Surely I come; Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

THE CONCLUSION

THUS, reader, I have given thee my best advice for the attaining and maintaining a heavenly conversation. The manner is imperfect, and too much mine own, but, for the main matter, I dare say I received it from God. From him I deliver it to thee, and his charge I lay upon thee that thou entertain and practise it. If thou canst not do it methodically and fully, yet do it as thou canst; only, be sure thou do it seriously and frequently. If thou wilt believe a man that hath made some small trial of it, thou shalt find it will make thee another man, and elevate thy soul, and clear thine understanding, and polish thy conversation, and leave a pleasant savour upon thy heart; so that thy own experience will make thee confess that one hour thus spent will more effectually revive thee than many in bare external duties; and a day in these contemplations will afford thee truer content than all the glory and riches of the earth. Be acquainted with this work, and thou wilt be, in some remote sort, acquainted with God. Thy joys will be spiritual, and prevalent, and lasting, according to the nature of their blessed object; thou wilt have comfort in life, and comfort in death. When thou hast neither wealth nor health nor the pleasures of this world, yet wilt thou have comfort. Comfort, without the presence or help of any friend, without a minister, without a book; when all means are denied thee, or taken from thee, yet mayest thou have vigorous, real comfort. Thy graces will be mighty, and active, and victorious, and the daily joy which is thus fetched from heaven, will be thy strength. Thou wilt be as one that standeth on the top of an exceeding high mountain; he looks down upon the world as if it were

quite below him. How small do the fields, and woods, and countries, seem to him? cities and towns seem but little spots. Thus despicably wilt thou look on all things here below. The greatest princes will seem below thee but as grasshoppers, and the busy, contentious, covetous world, but as a heap of ants. Men's threatenings will be no terror to thee, nor the honours of this world any strong enticement. Temptations will be more harmless, as having lost their strength, and afflictions less grievous, as having lost their sting; and every mercy will be better known and relished.

Reader, it is under God in thine own choice now, whether thou wilt live this blessed life or not, and whether all this pains which I have taken for thee, shall prosper or be lost. If it be lost through thy laziness, which God forbid, be it known to thee thou wilt prove the greatest loser thyself. If thou value not this heavenly, angelical life, how canst thou say that thou valuest heaven? And if thou value it not, no wonder if thou be shut out. The power of godliness lieth in the actings of the soul; take heed that thou stick not in the vain, deluding form. O man, what hast thou to mind but God and heaven! Art thou not almost out of this world already? Dost thou not look every day, when one disease or other will let out thy soul? Doth not the bier stand ready to carry thee to the grave; and the worms wait to feed upon thy face and heart? What, if thy pulse must beat a few strokes more; and what, if thou have a few more breaths to fetch before thou breathe out thy last; and what, if thou have a few more nights to sleep before thou sleep in the dust? Alas! what will this be when it is gone; and is it not almost gone already? Verily, shortly thou wilt see thy glass run out, and say to thyself, 'My life is done; my time is gone; it is past recalling; there is nothing now but heaven or hell before me. Oh, where then should thy heart be now but in heaven!' Didst thou but know what a dreadful thing it is to have a strange and doubtful thought of heaven when a man lies a dying, it would surely rouse thee up. And what other thoughts, but strange, can that man have, that never thought seriously of heaven till then? Every man's first thoughts are strange about all things; familiarity and acquaintance comes not in a moment, but is the consequent of

custom, and frequent converse: and strangeness naturally raiseth dread, as familiarity doth delight. What else makes a fish or a wild beast flee from a man, when domestic creatures take pleasure in his company? So wilt thou flee from God, if thou knowest how, who should be thy only happiness, if thou do not get this strangeness removed in thy lifetime. And is it not pity that a child should be so strange to his own father, as to fear nothing more than to go into his presence; and to think himself best when he is furthest from him; and to flee from his face as a wild creature will do from the face of a man? Alas! how little do many godly ones differ from the world, either in their comforts or willingness to die! and all because they live so strange to the place and fountain of their comforts. Besides a little verbal or other outside duties, or talking of controversies and doctrines of religion, or forbearing the practice of many sins, how little do the most of the religious differ from other men, when God hath prepared so vast a difference hereafter! if a word of heaven fall in now and then in their conference, alas! how slightly is it, and customary, and heartless! And if their prayers or preaching have heavenly expressions, they usually are fetched from their mere invention, or memory, or books, and not from the experience or feeling of their hearts. O what a life might men live if they were but willing and diligent! God would have our joys to be far more than our sorrows, yea, he would have us to have no sorrow but what tendeth to joy, and no more than our sins have made necessary for our good. How much do those Christians wrong God and themselves, that either make their thoughts of God the inlet of their sorrows, or let these offered joys lie by, as neglected or forgotten! Some there be that say it is not worth so much time and trouble, to think of the greatness of the joys above; so we can make sure they are ours, we know they are great. But as these men obey not the command of God, which requireth them to have their conversation in heaven, and to set their affections on things above, so do they wilfully make their own lives miserable, by refusing the delights that God hath set before them. And yet, if this were all, it were a smaller matter; if it were but loss of their comforts, I would not say so much, but see what

abundance of other mischiefs do follow the absence of these heavenly delights.

First, It will damp, if not destroy, our very love to God: so deeply as we apprehend his bounty and exceeding love to us, and his purpose to make us eternally happy, so much will it raise our love: love to God, and delight in him, are still conjunct. They that conceive of God as one that desireth their blood and damnation, cannot heartily love him.

Secondly, It will make us have seldom and displeasing thoughts of God, for our thoughts will follow our love and delight. Did we more delight in God than in any thing below, our thoughts would as freely run after him, as now they run from him.

Thirdly, And it will make men to have as seldom and displeasing speech of God; for who will care for talking of that which he hath no delight in? What makes men still talking of worldliness, or wickedness, but that these are more pleasant to them than God?

Fourthly, It will make men have no delight in the service of God, when they have no delight in God, nor any sweet thoughts of heaven, which is the end of their services. No wonder if such Christians complain that they are still backward to duty; that they have no delight in prayer, in sacraments, or in Scripture itself. If thou couldst once delight in God, thou wouldst easily delight in duty, especially that which bringeth thee into the nearest converse with him. But, till then, no wonder if thou be weary of all, further than some external excellency may give thee a carnal delight. Doth not this cause many Christians to go on so heavily in secret duties? Like the ox in the furrow, that will go no longer than he is driven, and is glad when he is unyoked.

Fifthly, Yea, it much endangereth the perverting of men's judgments, concerning the ways of God, and means of grace, when they have no delight in God and heaven. Though it be said, "perit omne judicium

cum res transit in affectum," "that judgment perisheth when things pass into affection;" yet, that is but when affection leadeth the judgment, and not when it followeth. Affection holdeth its object faster than bare judgment doth. The soul will not much care for that truth which is not accompanied with suitable goodness; and it will more easily be drawn to believe that to be false which it doth not delightfully apprehend to be good; which doubtless is no small cause of the ungodly's prejudice against the ways of God, and of many formal men's dislike of extemporate prayers, and of a strict observation of the Lord's-day. Had they a true delight in God and heavenly things, it would rectify their judgments better than all the arguments in the world. Lose this delight once, and you will begin to quarrel with the ordinances and ways of God, and to be more offended at the preacher's imperfections than profited by the doctrine.

Sixthly, And it is the want of these heavenly delights in God that makes men so entertain the delights of the flesh. This is the cause of most men's voluptuousness and flesh-pleasing. The soul will not rest without some kind of delights. If it had nothing to delight in, either in hand or in hope, it would be in a kind of hell on earth, vexing itself with continual sorrow and despair. If a dog have lost his master, he will follow somebody else. Men must have their sweet cups, or delicious fare, or gay apparel, or cards, or dice, or fleshly lusts, to make up their want of delight in God. How well these will serve instead of God, our wanton youths will be better able to tell me, when we meet at judgment. If men were acquainted with this heavenly life, there would need no laws against sabbath-breaking and riotousness; nor would men need to go for mirth to an alehouse or a tavern: they would have a far sweeter pastime and recreation nearer hand.

Seventhly, also, This want of heavenly delights will leave men under the power of every affliction; they will have nothing to comfort them, and ease them in their sufferings, but the empty, ineffectual pleasure of the flesh; and when that is gone, where then is their delight?

Eighthly, Also it will make men fearful, and unwilling to die: for who would go to a God or a place that he hath no delight in? or who would leave his pleasure here, except it were to go to a better? Oh, if the people of God would learn once this heavenly life, and take up their delight in God whilst they live, they would not tremble and be disconsolate at the tidings of death.

Ninthly, Yea, this want of heavenly delight doth lay men open to the power of every temptation. A little thing will tice a man from that which he hath no pleasure in.

Tenthly, Yea, it is a dangerous preparative to total apostacy. A man will hardly long hold on in a way that he hath no delight in, nor use the means, if he have no delight in the end; but as a beast, if you drive him in a way that he would not go, will be turning out at every gap. If you be religious in your actions, and be come over to God in your outward conversation, and not in your delight, you will shortly be gone if your trial be strong. How many young people have we known, who by good education, or the persuasion of friends, or for fear of hell, have been awhile kept up among prayers, and sermons, and good company, as a bird in a cage, when, if they durst, they had rather have been in an alehouse, or at their sports, and at last they have broken loose, when their restraint was taken off, and have forsaken the way that they never took pleasure in? You see then, that it is not a matter of indifferency, whether you entertain these heavenly delights or not; nor is the loss of your present comfort all the inconvenience that follows the neglect.

And now, Christian friends, I have here lined you out a heavenly, precious work: would you but do it, it would make you mend indeed. To delight in God is the work of angels, and the contrary is the work of devils. If God would persuade you now to make conscience of this duty, and help you in it by the blessed influence of his Spirit, you would not change your lives with the greatest prince on earth. But I am afraid, if I may judge of your hearts by the backwardness of my own, that it will prove a hard thing to persuade yon to the work, and

that much of this my labour will be lost. Pardon my jealousy; it is raised upon too many and sad experiments. What say you? Do you resolve on this heavenly course or no? Will you let go all your sinful, fleshly pleasures, and daily seek after these higher delights? I pray thee, reader, here shut the book, and consider of it; and resolve on the duty before thou go further. Let thy family perceive, let thy neighbours perceive, let thy conscience perceive, yea, let God perceive it, that thou art a man that hast thy daily conversation in heaven. God hath now offered to be thy daily delight. Thy neglect is thy refusal. What, refuse delight; and such a delight! If I had propounded you only a course of melancholy, and fear, and sorrow, you might better have demurred on it. Take heed what thou dost: refuse this, and refuse all. Thou must have heavenly delights, or none that are lasting. God is willing that thou shouldst daily walk with him, and fetch in consolation from the everlasting fountain. If thou be unwilling, even bear thy loss; and one of these days, when thou liest dying, then seek for comfort where thou canst get it, and make what shift for contentment thou canst. Then see whether thy fleshly delights will stick to thee, or give thee the slip; and then conscience, in despite of thee, shall make thee remember, that thou wast once persuaded to a way for more excellent pleasures, that would have followed thee through death and have lasted thee to everlasting. What man will go in rags, that may be clothed with the best; or feed on pulse, that may feed of the best; or accompany with the vilest, that may be a companion to the best, and admitted into the presence and favour of the greatest? And shall we delight so much in our clothing of the flesh, and feed so much on the vain pleasures of earth, and accompany so much with sin and sinners, when heaven is set open, as it were, to our daily view, and God doth offer us daily admittance into his presence! O how is the unseen God neglected, and the unseen glory forgotten, and made light of! And all because they are unseen, and for want of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things that are not seen. (Heb. 11:1.)

But for you, sincere believers, whose hearts God hath weaned from all things here below, I hope you will value his heavenly life, and

fetch one walk daily in the New Jerusalem. I know God is your love, and your desire; and I know you would fain be more acquainted with your Saviour; and I know it is your grief that your hearts are not more near him; and that they do no more freely and passionately love him, and delight in him. As ever you would have all this mended, and enjoy your desires, O try this life of meditation on your everlasting rest! Here is the Mount Ararat, where the fluctuated ark of your souls must rest. Oh! let the world see, by your heavenly lives, that religion lieth in something more than opinions and disputes, and a task of outward duties; let men see in you, what a life they must aim at. If ever a Christian be like himself, and answerable to his principles and profession, it is when he is most serious and lively in this duty: when as Moses, before he died, went up into Mount Nebo, to take a survey of the land of Canaan; so the Christian doth ascend this mount of contemplation, and take a survey, by faith, of his rest. He looks upon the glorious, delectable mansions, and saith, "Glorious things are" deservedly "of spoken thee, O thou city of God." He heareth, as it were, the melody of the heavenly choir, and beholdeth the excellent employment of those spirits, and saith, "Blessed are the people that are in such a ease; yea, blessed are they that have the Lord for their God." He next looketh to the glorified inhabitants of that region, and saith, "Happy art thou, O the Israel of God, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy strength, the sword of thine excellency." When he looketh upon the Lord himself, who is their glory, he is ready with the rest to fall down and worship him that liveth for ever, and say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power." When he looks on the glorified Saviour of the saints, he is ready to say Amen to that new song, "Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be to him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever; for he hath redeemed us out of every nation by his blood, and made us kings and priests to God." When he looketh back on the wilderness of this world, he blesseth the believing, patient, despised saints; he pitieth the ignorant, obstinate, miserable world; and for himself, he saith, as

Peter, "It is good to be here;" or, as David, "It is good for me to draw near to God:" for all those that are far from him shall perish.

Thus, as Daniel in his captivity did three times a day open his window toward Jerusalem, though far out of sight, when he went to God in his devotions; so may the believing soul, in this captivity to the flesh, look towards Jerusalem which is above: and as Paul was to the Colossians, so may he be, with the glorified spirits, absent in the flesh, but present in spirit, joining in beholding their heavenly order. (Col. 2:5.) And as divine Bucholeer, in his last sermon before his death, did so sweetly descant upon those comfortable words, "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," (John 3:16,) that he raised and ravished the hearts of his otherwise sad hearers; so may the meditating believer do, through the Spirit's assistance, by his own heart. And as the pretty lark doth sing most sweetly, and never ceaseth her pleasant ditty while she hovereth aloft, as if she were there gazing into the glory of the sun, but is suddenly silenced when she falleth to the earth; so is the frame of the soul most delectable and divine while it keepeth in the views of God by contemplation: but, alas! we make there too short a stay, but down again we fall, and lay by our music.

But, O Thou, the merciful Father of spirits, the attractive of love, and ocean of delights, draw up these drossy hearts unto thyself, and keep them there till they are spiritualised and refined, and second these thy servant's weak endeavours, and persuade those that read these lines to the practice of this delightful, heavenly work. And, O suffer not the soul of thy most unworthy servant to be a stranger to those joys which he unfoldeth to thy people, or to be seldom in that way which he hath lined out here to others; but O keep me while I tarry on this earth, in daily serious breathings after thee, and in a believing, affectionate walking with thee: and when thou comest, O let me be found so doing, not hiding my talent, nor serving my flesh, nor yet asleep with my lamp unfurnished, but waiting and longing for my Lord's return: that those who shall read these heavenly directions, may not reap only the fruit of my studies, and the product

of my fancy, but the breathings of my active hope and love: that if my heart were open to their view, they might there read the same most deeply engraven with a beam from the face of the Son of God; and not find vanity, or lust, or pride within, where the words of life appear without; that so these lines may not witness against me; but proceeding from the heart of the writer, may be effectual, through thy grace, upon the heart of the reader; and so be the savour of life to both. Amen.

Glory be to God in the highest;

On earth peace:

Good-will towards men.

BROUGHTON IN THE CONCLUSION OF HIS 'CONSENT OF SCRIPTURE'

**Concerning the New Jerusalem, and the Everlasting
Sabbatism, meant in my Text, as begun here, and perfected
in Heaven**

THE company of faithful souls called to the blessed marriage of the Lamb, are a Jerusalem from heaven. (Apoc. 3 and 21, Heb. 12.) Though such glorious things are spoken concerning this city of God, the perfection whereof cannot be seen in this vale of tears; yet here God wipeth all tears from our eyes, and each blessing is here begun. The name of this city much helpeth Jew and Gentile to see the state of peace, for this is called Jerusalem, and that in Canaan hath Christ destroyed: this name should clearly have taught both the Hebrews not to look and pray daily for to return to Canaan, and pseudo-

Catholics, not to fight for special holiness there. We live in this by faith, and not by eye-sight, and by hope we behold the perfection; of this city, salvation is a wall, goodly as jasper, clear as crystal: the foundations are in number twelve, of twelve precious stones, such as Aaron wore on his breast, all the work of the Lamb's twelve apostles: the gates are twelve, each of pearl, upon which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, of whose faith all must be which enter in; twelve angels are conductors from east, west, north, and south, even the stars of the churches: the city is square: of burgesses settled for all turns. Here God sitteth upon a stone like jasper and ruby, comfortable and just: the Lamb is the temple, that a third temple should not be looked for to be built. Thrones twice twelve are for all the Christians born of Israel's twelve, or taught by the apostles, who for dignity are seniors, for infinity are termed but four-and-twenty, in regard of so many tribes and apostles. Here the majesty is honourable, as at the delivery of the law, from whose throne, thunder, voices, and lightnings, do proceed: here oil of grace is never wanting, but burning with seven lamps, the Spirits of Messias, of wit and wisdom, of counsel and courage, of knowledge and understanding, and of the fear due to the Eternal: here the valiant, patient, witty, and speedy, with sharp sight, are winged as those seraphims that waited on Christ, when ten calamities and utter destruction was told for the low Jerusalem: they of this city are not as Israel after the flesh, which would not see, for all the wonders that our Lord did; but these redeemed with his precious blood are full of eyes lightened by lamps, the glory of Jehovah, and behold Christ through all the prophets, a Performer of our faith, sealed of God, Sealer of all visions, Opener of the seals or the stories of the church. (John 6; Dan. 9:24; Apoc. 6.) Here is the true light, where the saved walk; (Isa. 60;) hither kingdoms bring their glory; hither the blessed nations carry their jewels. (Apoc. 21.) This is a kingdom uncorrupted, which shall not be given to a strange and unclean people: they must be written in the book of the Lamb, and chosen of eternity, sanctified of God, which here are citizens: (Ephes. 1:4; 2:19;) through this there gusheth a stream better than the four in Eden, a stream of lively waters by belief in Christ, as those waters flowing from Lebanon:

(Cant. 4:15:) here is that Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of God, with leaves to heal the nations that will be cured, while it is said to-day, with twelve fruits to give food continually to such as feed also upon the hidden manna, who after death receive the crown of justice and life, the morning star, white clothing, and the white stone, wherein a name is written equal to all the law. (Deut. 27:2.) The first seat of the first Adam in the first paradise was glorious; this is better; and as Moses began with the terrestrial, so the holy word ends in the celestial; that to wheels full of eyes may the writ of truth be compared: the full consent and melody of prophets and apostles, how their harps are tuned on Mount Sion, (Apoc. 14.) it will fully appear in the full sight of peace, when our bodies are made conformable to Christ's glorious body (Phil. 3:21) in the world to come, and our eyes shall see the Lord in that Sion. For that coming, "O thou whom my soul loveth, be like to the roes upon the mountains." (Cant. 1:7; 2:17.) Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Then shall we in perfect holiness worship thee, to whom the angels always give holy worship, saying, "Praise, and glory, and wisdom, and thanks, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for evermore." Amen.

A POEM OF MASTER G. HERBERT, IN HIS 'TEMPLE'

HOME

COME, Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,

While thou dost ever, ever stay,
Thy long deferrings wound me to the quick;
My spirit gaspeth night and day.
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee.
How canst thou stay, considering the pace
The blood did make which thou didst waste;
When I behold it trickling down thy face,
I never saw thing make such haste.
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee.
When man was lost, thy pity look'd about,
To see what help in th' earth or sky;
But there was none, at least no help without,
The help did in thy bosom lie.
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee.
There lay thy Son; and must he leave that nest,
That hive of sweetness, to remove
Thraldom from those, who would not at a feast

Leave one poor apple for thy love?

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

He did, he came. O my Redeemer dear,

After all this canst thou be strange?

So many years baptis'd, and not appear?

As if thy love could fail or change.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

Yet if thou stayest still, why must I stay?

My God, what is this world to me?

This world of wo. Hence, all ye clouds, away;

Away: I must get up and see.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

What is this weary world? This meat and drink,

That chains us by the teeth so fast?

What is this womankind, which I can wink

Into a blackness and distaste?

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

With one small sigh thou gav'st me th' other day,

I blasted all the joys about me;

And scowling on them as they pin'd away;

Now come again, said I, and flout me.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

Nothing but drought and dearth, but bush and brake,

Which way soe'er I look, I see;

Some may dream merrily, but when they awake,

They dress themselves, and come to thee.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

We talk of harvests; there are no such things,

But when we leave our corn and hay:

There is no fruitful years, but that which brings

The last and Iov'd, though dreadful day.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

O loose this frame; this knot of man untie,

That my free soul may use her wing,
Which is now pinion'd with mortality,
As an entangl'd, hamper'd thing.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

What have I left that I should stay and groan;

The most of me to heaven is fled:

My thoughts and joys are all pack'd up and gone,

And for their old acquaintance plead.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

Come, dearest Lord, pass not this holy season;

My flesh and bones and joints do pray;

And even my verse, when by the rhyme and reason

The word is Stay, says ever, Come.

O show thyself to me,

Or take me up to thee.

AN ADDITION
TO
THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE THIRD PART
OF THE
SAINT'S REST

IT hath seemed meet to Mr. K. to second Mr. Crandon, by an impetuous opposition of my poor labours; and having in his first volume against Mr. G. assaulted my Aphorisms; in the second, to fall upon my 'Method for Peace of Conscience,' and my book of 'Rest;' against the twelfth chapter (misprinted the eleventh) of the Third Part, he hath a copious digression, which I will now not characterise, either as to the intellectuals or morals, the judgment or honesty appearing in it; having reserved that to a second and plain admonition to himself. But because I intended these writings for ordinary capacities, I would have nothing remain in them which may be an occasion of their stumbling: for the sake therefore of such readers as would neither err, nor be puzzled with contentious janglings about mere words, I shall give them this brief advertisement following. It is so far from my desire to teach men to build the peace of their consciences upon any nice philosophical controversies, much less on any errors or singular opinions of mine, that I desire nothing more than to lead them to, and leave them on, the plain, infallible word of God. My own judgment concerning that sincere, saving grace, which we may safely try our estates by, I have as plainly as I could laid down in that chapter, and my 'Directions for Peace;' and in sect. 39, to sect. 53, of my 'Reply to Mr. Blake:' from whence I must desire the reader to fetch it, and not from the interpretations of Mr. K., which so seldom hath the hap to be acquainted with the truth, and who professeth himself that he doth not understand me: whether it be long of me or himself I determine not. To these I shall now add only these few words.

The everlasting enjoyment of God in glory by perfected man, is the felicity which all should desire and seek. This is propounded to us by God in his word, and the necessary mean thereto prescribed; even Jesus Christ, and faith in him, and obedience to him, and to God in and by him. The distempered, sensual appetite, and depraved will of man, do incline to inferior sensual delights. God hath resolved that these shall not be their felicity, and that they shall never be happy in the enjoyment of him, except they take him for their chief good, and so far forsake inferior good which would draw the heart from him: and except also they give up themselves to his Son Jesus Christ, and to his Spirit, to be recovered unto him. Though all men by nature desire to be happy; yet all do not desire God as their happiness. Nor do the regenerate themselves yet perfectly desire him, or perfectly forsake that inferior good; which was their supposed happiness before they were renewed. The understanding is commonly acknowledged to have three kinds of acts: 1. A simple apprehension of the mere entity of a thing, or of a simple term; 2. Judgment, or the conception of a complex term; 3. Discourse. The first alone moves not the will, because it concludes not of the goodness or evil of the thing apprehended. The second, judgment, is either about the end or the means: and either absolute or comparative. Several things are commonly called man's end, how properly I now inquire not. 1. Felicity in general; 2. Himself the subject, commonly called the *finis cui*; 3. The natural and moral perfection of his person; 4. The act of fruition, or perfect complacency in the blessed object upon a full vision; commonly called, our formal felicity: 5. The object itself, that is, the blessed God, commonly called our objective felicity, and our *finis qui*, or *cujus*, whether fitly, we shall better know hereafter. The two first nature hath tied us to; but not to the object, nor to the perfection of the soul in a spiritual suitableness thereto. The first absolute judgment produceth in the will a simple complacency or displacency; this is the first motion of the will. The comparative judgment, where it is necessary, produceth intention and election, or else refusal, and resolves the fluctuating will. Where there is but one good propounded, either one objective end, or one means of absolute necessity, or wherever there is *omnimoda ratio boni*, nothing but

good apparent in the object, there is no work for consultation, or the comparative act of judgment, and consequently for election: but the absolute judgment would proceed to the practical, and carry out the will to intention and prosecution: were not man's soul blinded and depraved, there should be no deliberation about his end, and so no choosing of God as our end, but an absolute intending him, as having no competitor: and it cannot be without great sin for the judgment to make any question or comparison, and so to deliberate, Whether God or the creature be our felicity; and, Whether God or our carnal selves should be our end? But seeing our depraved judgment and will, and vitiated senses, and the tempter's setting the creature in competition with God, do necessitate a comparative judgment and deliberation, even about our end itself; therefore there is a kind of election of God as before the creature, or a consent or resolution so to prefer him, that is necessary, before or with a right intention and prosecution of that end: besides, the election of the new means, that is necessary; seeing Satan and our flesh are so ready to propound wrong means, in competition with the means of God's prescribing. All this being so, I further add, that the same will that hath a complacency in a thing as judged simply good, may yet reject and nill it, or refuse to seek or receive it, if it be judged either a lesser good inconsistent with a greater, or any way to have more evil in it than good: and as the understanding doth at once apprehend it as good absolutely, or in some respect; and evil in other respects, and comparatively less good; so doth the will at once continue to love or will it so far as it is apprehended as good; and to nill and reject it as inconsistent with a greater good, or a hinderer of it. But if it fall out that the inconsistency of these is not discerned or believed, or but imperfectly, then may the will, by a practical volition, will them both.

To apply this. The understanding of the ungenerate may know that God is good, and good to them, and that in very many and weighty respects he is desirable. They may know that worldly things will shortly leave them, and then if they have not God's favour they shall perish. But if they have, they shall attain both perfection of body, (which they may desire,) and perfection of mind, (which they do

desire in general, and may submit to in the particular way of holiness, as more tolerable than hell,) besides some imperfect ineffectual knowledge of a beauty and desirableness in holiness itself, accompanied with an answerable motion of the will: but every unrenewed man hath more prevalent apprehensions of the goodness of the creature, partly by unmastered sense, and partly by perverted reason, and therefore apprehendeth God as evil to him; so far as he would hinder his enjoyment thereof, or would punish him for a sinful adhering to it. So that, 1. His highest practical estimation is of the creature, yet not without some esteem of God: 2. and his prevailing will is to the creature, but not without some will to God. And, ordinarily, such men are so fully convinced of the impossibility of enjoying the creature for ever, and being happy any other way than in God, that, though they could wish an everlasting fulness of the creature, yet, seeing none but fools do intend an end which they know impossible to be attained, they do therefore compound a felicity in their own fancies, of the world for a time, and heaven for everlasting: one part standing in the enjoyment of the delights of the flesh, while they live here, and the other in the deliverance from hell and blessedness in heaven hereafter: hoping that these are not inconsistent, but they may have heaven when they can enjoy the world no longer; because they see that many saints possess abundance of earthly blessings, and persecution is not now so common as it hath been, therefore they suppose they may possess the like: upon which expectation they enjoy what the godly do but use, and so give it the pre-eminence in their hearts: or if they be convinced of the inconsistency of a carnal mind, (in a prevalent degree,) with an interest in the happiness of the life to come, they will either persuade themselves that they are not carnally-minded when they are, or, one way or other, will underprop their hopes of enjoying both: but still their fleshly mind is predominant, and therefore they will cast their salvation upon the adventure of such hopes as have nothing but their own delusions to support them.

On the other side, the regenerate being here imperfect in all their graces, are imperfectly taken off those carnal ends which they

intended in their unsanctified state, and imperfectly inclined to God as their end: so are they also, both in discerning and choosing the fittest means, even Christ himself and obedience to him, so that the best are carnally-minded, in some degree, but not in a prevalent degree, for then they should die. The flesh and world have still some interest in the saints, but not the strongest. As God and the Redeemer may have some interest, though not the chiefest, in the practical judgment and will of the unsanctified. Whether, you will say, that the same man hath two distinct inconsistent ends; one as regenerate, the other so far as he is still carnal; or whether you will give the name of an end only to that good which hath the greatest interest in him, I will not contend about a word. If that only be called our end, which is prevalently intended in the main course of our lives, then it is God only that is our end: but if that may be called a man's end which is intended in his distempers and deviations, then the creature may be called our end so far as we are still carnal; for it is not only as a wrong-chosen means to our right end, that we sinfully adhere to the creature; but it is more as it stands in competition with our right end, and as we will and love our flesh-pleasing for itself. It is true, the sensual appetite may desire it for itself, because it belongs not to carry us higher, and to intend an end: but the rational power must subordinate both creatures, and our natural delight in them to God. And I do not think that it is by the mere brutish irrational motion that the godly adhere too much to the creature.

I did therefore deliver my thoughts on this point thus: that as the act is denominated from the object, and specified by it, so the grace that is saving must, as to the acts, consist not only in the absolute, but comparative judgment, and in that choice or comparative willing that follows thereupon; and though there be forty intricate, philosophical controversies about man's willing the end and means, which stand in their way that would make the most exact discussion of this point, yet every Christian may safely go on these grounds, and conclude that when Christ's interest is predominant, or greatest in the soul, there is saving grace; but where it is not, there is none, though yet he

may have some interest there. Here is a double pre-eminence that Christ must have, or a double prevalency of grace, that it may be saving. 1. The object must be preferred before that which stands in competition with it. 2. The act must be prevalent in degree against its contrary, so far as that the heart and life may be denominated from it. 1. The absolute act of the judgment makes no comparison; therefore in that only the latter must be looked after. Assent to God's word upon his authority, must be prevalent against our dissent; and that will appear in our serious obeying it, &c. 2. In the comparative act of the judgment there must be both. God must be valued and esteemed above all creatures; and our esteem must be prevalent against our slighting and disesteem of him. 3. The main point of trial is in the will, and there must be both these prevalencies before-mentioned. God must be willed as better than all creatures; and our willing of him must be in a prevalent degree against our nilling or unwilling. For there is in the best on earth some remainders of averseness to God, which may be called a hating of him, so far as they are carnal, though they are not therefore fitly to be called haters of God, but lovers of him: because they must be denominated from the prevalent part. The like may be said of all the affections, so far as they are of the rational part; for of the sensitive passions there is not so sure a judgment to be made, as I expressed p. 213, and in my 'Method for Peace of Conscience.' In the choice of means all this is clear, if not much more. Christ must be preferred before all competitors, and all rejected for him; and our willingness must be in a degree that is prevalent against our unwillingness, and our faith as prevalent against unbelief, and our subjection must prevail against our rebellion, and our obedience against our disobedience in the course of our lives. He must have the main bent of our hearts and endeavours, though in a particular act the flesh may prevail. This is it that I have asserted, and with a consent to this I am satisfied. As for the point of specification of our acts, I never look to see the schools agreed about it, how confidently soever Mr. K. talks, as if they all conspired with him. Call the difference gradual or specifical, as you please, so we agree in the sense, I am content. I choose to call it a moral, specifical difference, and in that sense do maintain, that the

faith of the best of the unsanctified is not specifically the same with that of the sanctified, and so of love and other graces. As to that saving faith, all other is but analogically called faith, as I have showed in the section before cited against Mr. Blake. But yet I am not of Mr. K.'s opinion about the natural specification of acts, for all his confidence. I yet think that acts are naturally, and not morally, specified from their objects, considered physically; and are morally specified by those objects, as related to the laws that command, forbid, threaten, promise, and so by the laws themselves; which Dr. Twiss will needs say are no species of acts, though vulgarly so called, 'Vind. Grat.' lib. ii. par. 2. digres. 9. p. 410.

I now desire no more of the reader than to consent, 1. To the express words of Scripture which I cited in that chap. 11. sect. 15, which I desire him to review; 2. And to that which Mr. K. and I are agreed in. I hope you will take this for a reasonable motion, it being unlike that the Cretian pen of so bold a man, so self-conceited, and superciliously scornful, should grant me much more than he needs must. Let us examine his concessions for matter and words. 1. For sense, he confesseth, p. 137, thus: "I am of Mr. Baxter's mind, that no sober divine will tell us, that if we love God never so little without dissembling, yet he will accept it, though we love our lusts before him." So oft he yieldeth that all sincere love to God doth prefer him before all other. Where then is our difference? Why, he thinks that no others believe or love God at all but those that love him above all. I did affirm, that as to that same moral species of faith and love, they do not at all believe and love God, but as to another species they do, and truly do it. How oft doth Scripture say of the unsanctified, that they believe in Christ, at least for a time? But I shall leave it till I speak to Mr. K. himself, to prove that men unrenewed may have faith and love to Christ, though not saving. And whereas, our Doctor, according to the complexion of his conscience, doth prefer me to succeed Pelagius in his chair, for affirming that a carnal man, by the greatest help of common grace, as I opened my meaning, may have weak inclinations to spiritual and superior good, while he hath stronger to inferior, I would have him to review his sobriety, in

making all divines and churches of Christ, since the apostles' days, so far as I am able to discern by my small reading, or by reports, to be Pelagians. I never heard of any that thought so basely of the highest measure of that grace which is not proper to the saints as this man doth. If it no whit lead to God, how is it grace? If this doctor dare warrant his hearers that they shall all be saved that have the least faith, or love, or inclination to God, I dare not imitate him. Except they love him above all, I dare not tell them that they are true disciples. Nor do I think that nature itself is averted from God in the highest degree, nor all the wicked of one degree of sinfulness, nor yet as bad as they shall be in hell. Our divines that tell us how far hypocrites may go, do not talk in the strain of this doctor.

Well, but how far are we yet disagreed even in terms? Why, I said, that it is not a natural, but a moral, specific difference, and so doth he. Page 109, he saith, "But against whom, I pray, do you dispute then? &c. I dare be bold to say there is not one that affirms a natural or physical difference, as you call it, between acts of common and saving grace in this your sense." And is not it a pity that this doctor, that is so well agreed with me for sense and terms, should be put to the trouble of so tedious a digression? Forsooth, I did unhappily express myself, because I used not his term "appretiative," which though I neglected, I think, on sufficient reason, yet, to please him, I will use it when I think on it, and have no better. And so we had best part while we are friends.

TO THE READER

READER,

I AM so loth to leave thee under any mistake of my meaning in this point, that I shall yet make some further attempt for the explaining of it. And whereas I understand that some readers say that this nice

distinguishing doth but puzzle men; and others still fear not falsely to give out, that I make common grace and special to differ only gradually, and not specifically, in despite of my express asserting of the contrary, I entreat the first sort to tear that leaf out of the book which speaks of this subject, that it may not trouble them; or to be patient while we speak a few words to others that understand that which they are but puzzled with. And I desire the second sort once more to remember, 1. That I still affirm, that common grace and special do differ by a moral specific difference, and not a gradual only. 2. But that this moral specific difference doth materially consist in a physical, gradual difference. 3. And it being a moral subject that we have in hand, our terms must be accordingly used and understood; and therefore it is most proper, when we speak of any unsanctified man, to say, that he is not a believer, he hath no faith, he hath no love to God, &c., because we are supposed to speak only of a true christian saving faith, love, &c. 4. But yet, when it is known that we speak of another faith and love, we may well say that an unsanctified man hath these; and when we inquire of the difference, we must be as exact as possible, in showing wherein it lieth, lest we delude the hypocrite, and trouble the regenerate. That the faith, and love, and sanctity of the ungodly are but equivocally, or analogically, so called, in respect to the faith and love of the saints, I have proved in my Fifth Disputation of Right of Sacraments.

That which I shall now add to make my sense as plain as I can, shall be these following distinctions and propositions.

We must distinguish between, 1. Those gracious acts that are about our end, and those that are about their means. 2. Between God considered generally as God, and considered in his several properties and attributes distinctly. And Christ considered personally, and considered fully in the parts of his office, whether the essential or integral parts. 3. Between the goodness of God in himself considered, and as suitable unto us. 4. Between the simple act of the intellect, and the comparing act. 5. Between the simple velleity of the will, and the choice that followeth the compare act of the intellect. 6.

Between the speculative and practical act of the intellect. 7. And between the acts of the will that answer these two. 8. Between an end that is ultimate, but not principal and prevalent, and an end that is ultimate and chief also.

Prop. 1. An unsanctified man may love him that is the true God, and believe in that person who is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. This is past controversy among us.

Prop. 2. An ungodly man may love God as the cause of his prosperity in the world.

Prop. 3. He may know that his everlasting happiness is at the disposal of God, and may believe him to be merciful, and ready to do good, and that to him; and consequently may have some love to him as thus gracious and merciful.

Prop. 4. He may by a simple apprehension know that God is good in himself, and goodness itself, and preach this to others; and consequently may have in his will a consent or willingness hereof, that God be what he is, even infinite goodness.

Prop. 5. He may have a simple apprehension that God should be glorified, and honoured by the creatures: and so may have a simple velleity that he may be glorified.

Prop. 6. He may have a general dim apprehension, that everlasting happiness consists in the sight of the glory of God, and in his love, and favour, and heavenly kingdom, and so may have some love to him as thus apprehended.

Prop. 7. He may compare God and the creature together, and have a speculative or superficial knowledge that God is better than the creature, and better to him; and may write and preach this to others: and so may have an answerable, superficial, ineffectual velleity or love to him, even as thus considered.

Prop. 8. One and the same man may have two contrary ultimate ends of his particular actions; even the pleasing of God, and the pleasing of his flesh: proved.

Argument 1. If the same heart may be partly sanctified, and partly unsanctified (that is, in some degree) then it may have two contrary ends; or, if the same man may have flesh and spirit, then he may have two contrary ultimate ends. But the antecedent is certain; therefore, so far as man is carnal and unsanctified, flesh-pleasing and carnal self is his end.

Argument 2. If the same man might not have two contrary ultimate ends, then the godly should never sin but in the mischoosing of the means, or abating the degrees of love to God: but the consequent is false, and against experience; therefore, Peter did not only mischoose a means to God's glory when he denied his Master. A godly man, when he is drawn to eat or drink too much, doth it not only as a mistaken means to glorify God, but ultimately to please his flesh. Either David, in adultery did desire flesh-pleasing for itself, or for some other end. If for itself, then it was his ultimate end in that act: if for somewhat else, as his end; for what? No one will say his end was God's glory: and there is nothing else to be it.

Prop. 9. There is a continual striving between these two contrary ends where they are; one drawing one way, and the other the other way; and sometimes one, sometimes the other, prevailing in particular acts.

Prop. 10. But yet, every man hath one only prevalent ultimate end, which is to be called *finis hominis*, or is the chief ultimate end of the habitual predominant inclination or disposition of his soul, and of the tenor or bent of his course of life. And that which goes against his habitual bent, is said to be the act, not of him, but of something in him, that is, not of that predominant disposition which should denominate the man to be godly or ungodly, but of some subdued disposition that, by accident, hath got some advantage.

Prop. 11. As godly men have God for their end, as to the predominant habit of their souls and bent of their lives, so all wicked men in the world have the creature and carnal self for their end, as to the predominant habit of their hearts and bent of their lives; so that this is simply to be called their several end which is the ruling end, and hath the greatest interest in them; but yet, as carnal self is a subdued, resisting end in the godly, prevailing in some particular actions, as is too sure, so God and salvation may be a stifled, abused, subjected end of the ungodly that have but common grace, and may prevail against the flesh in some particular outward actions.

This is evident in the foregoing propositions. If a man by common grace may have such a simple and superficial apprehension of God as is before mentioned, knowing him to be good in himself; yea, best, and good and best to him, when yet, at the same time, he hath a more deep, predominant, habitual apprehension that the creature is best for him, then certainly he may have a subdued love to God as best in himself, and to him, that is answerable to this superficial knowledge, and consisteth with a predominant, habitual love to the creature and carnal self. I would desire every divine to beware that he tell not the unsanctified, that whoever hath the least degree of love to God for himself, and not as a means to carnal ends, shall certainly be saved; for he would certainly deceive many thousand miserable souls that should persuade them of this. He that believeth that there is a God, believeth that he is the chief Good, and best for him if he could see his glory, and fully enjoy his love for ever: and many a wicked man doth preach all this, and thinks as he speaks. But it is all but with a superficial, opinionative belief, which is mastered by more strong apprehensions of a contrary good; and so they love but with a superficial love, that is answerable to a mere opinionative belief, and is conquered by a more potent love to the contrary. So that, strictly, if you denominate not that single act, nor the person as thus disposed, but the bent of his affections, or the person, according to what indeed he is in the predominant habit of his soul, so it is fittest to say, that the godly loveth not the world, nor the things of the world, and the wicked loveth not God, nor the things of God, as such.

Prop. 12. The sincere intending of the end doth concur to constitute a sincere choice of the means. And therefore the schoolmen say, that charity, or love to God, informeth all other graces: not being the form of them as such or such acts or habits, but as gracious means. As the means are essentially as means for the end, and so animated by it, so the mediate acts of grace, as mediate, are essentially animated by the love of the end, and participate of it. In this sense their doctrine of the informing of other graces by love, is not only true, but of very great weight, and giveth light to many other points. And thus, as men of common grace have only an abused, subdued will or love to God as their end, that is conquered by the contrary, so they have but an unanswerable faith in Christ as the way to God the Father, and an unanswerable use of all other means, which will never bring them to attain the end that is so superficially and ineffectually apprehended and intended. I desire the learned reader to peruse well the first disputation of Rada for Scotus on this question.

Prop. 13. The acts of love or faith are considerable, 1. Physically. 1. In general, as faith and love. 2. In special, as this faith and love about this object, the Father and Son. And thus, by common grace men may have true faith and love; that is, such as is physically a true or real act. 2. They are considerable morally; and that, 1. Either as duty answering a precept, "Believe and love God;" and thus they have an analogical, defective morality in them, and so are thus far sincere or true; but not that same true love or faith, in specie morali, which the command requireth. For it commandeth us to love God above all, &c. 2. They are considerable as conditions of the promises and evidences of spiritual life in the soul; and thus wicked men, by common grace, are never made partakers of them. They have not the things themselves. Their faith and love is not the same thing which hath the promises made to them in the Gospel, and so are not true or sincere.

Prop. 14. By common grace men may love God under the notion of the chiefest good and most desirable end, and yet not with that love which the chiefest good must be loved with, and therefore it is not morally sincere or saving.

Prop. 15. There is no notion whatsoever that a true Christian hath of God, and no word that he can speak of him, but an unregenerate man may have some apprehension of that same notion, and speak those words, and know every proposition concerning God and Christ, as Redeemer, which a godly man may know; and so may have some love to God, or faith in Christ in that same notion, though not with such a clear effectual apprehension, and lively powerful love, as the sanctified have.

Object. He cannot love God as his end. Answ. I have proved before that he may with a superficial, ineffectual, subdued love.

Object. He cannot love him as the chief good. Answ. I have proved that he may love him under that notion, though not with that love which the chief good must be loved with.

Object. He cannot believe in Christ, or desire him as a Saviour to free him from every sin. Answ. Not with a prevalent faith or desire, for still he hath more love than averseness to that sin, and therefore more averseness than love to Christ as such; but as in general he may wish to be free from all sin, so in particular he may have effectual wishes to be free from his most beloved sin in several respects.

Object. But not to be free from sin as sin, or as against God. Answ. Yes; a man by common grace may know that sin as sin is evil, and therefore may have ineffectual wishes to be freed from it as such; but at the same time he hath stronger apprehensions of the pleasure, profit, or credit that it brings him, and this prevaileth. Indeed, men's carnal interest, which in sin they love, is not its opposition to God, nor the formal nature of sin. Doubtless all men that are ungodly, do not therefore love sin because it is sin, and against God; at least this is not so total in them, but that there may be a subdued mind to the contrary, and dislike of sin as against God. Many a common drunkard I have known, that when he hath heard or talked of sin as sin, and as against God, hath cried out against himself, and wept as if he abhorred it, and yet gone on in it, for the pleasure of the flesh.

Object. But where, then, is man's natural enmity to God and holiness? Answ. 1. It is doubtful whether man naturally have an enmity to God and holiness considered simply, or only considered as being against man's carnal interest. 2. But were the former proved, yet common grace abateth that enmity, and gives men more than corrupted nature doth.

Object. But the experience of the godly telleth them that it is another kind of light and love which they have after conversion than before. Answ. 1. It is not all converts that can judge by experience in this; because all have not had common grace in the highest, or any great observed measure before conversion. 2. It is hard for any to make that experiment, because we know not in our change just when common grace left, and special grace begun. 3. A physical, gradual difference may be as great as that which your experience tells you of. Have you experience of common light and love before conversion, and of another since which differeth from it more than the greatest flame from a spark, and more than the sunshine at noon from the twilight, when you cannot know a man; or more than the sight of the cured blind man, that saw clearly, from that by which he saw men like trees; or more than the pain of the strappado from the smallest prick of a pin?

Object. But it is not common gifts that are worked up to be special grace. One species is not turned into another. Answ. True: imperfection is not turned materially into perfection. The dawning of the day is not materially turned into the greater light at noon; but a greater light superveneth, and is added to the less. The blind man's seeing men like trees, was not it that was the perfect, following sight, but an additional light was it.

Object. But special grace is the divine nature, the image of God, the new creature, &c., and therefore doth differ more from common.

Answ. I easily yield the antecedent, but deny the consequence. The difference is as admirably great as these terms express, though it be

but a moral specific difference.

Reader, I will trouble thee no more but to entreat thee, if thou be of another mind, to differ from me without breach of charity, as I do from thee, and to remember that I obtrude not my explications on any. And if I have done thee wrong, it is but by telling thee my thoughts, which thou hast liberty to accept or reject as thou seest cause. But again I entreat thee, rather lay this by, or tear it out of the book, than it should be any stumbling-block in the way, or hinder thee from profiting by what thou readest. The Lord increase our light, and life, and love.

Jan. 15, 1657.

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ePub and .mobi Editions May 2022 Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism, P.O Box 491, West Linn Or, 97068