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NICHOL'S SERIES OF STANDARD DIVINES.
PURITAN PERIOD.

With General Preface

BY JOHN C. MILLER, D.D.,

LINCOLN COLLEGE; HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER; RECTOR OF ST MARTIN'S, BIRMINGHAM.

THE
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VOL. III.

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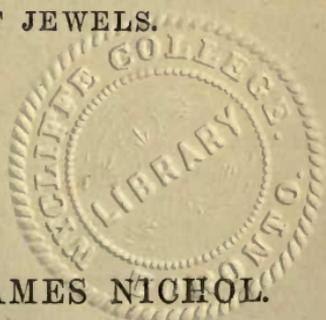
THOMAS BROOKS.

Edited, with *Memoir*,
BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART,
LIVERPOOL.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING :

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.
A CABINET OF JEWELS.



EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

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THOMAS BLOOM

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NOTE

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ, was originally published in 1856. A second edition followed in 1857; a third, corrected and enlarged, in 1861; and a fourth in 1871. All the four editions are given below.

A COMPANION TO THE GOSPEL

THE

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES

OF

CHRIST

OR

WHAT A STRONG ARM

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

Half bound in Leather.

BIRMINGHAM

FROM

AT THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

THE THOMAS BROTHERS, LONDON, &c.

in London.

The First Edition of this work was published

in 1856, and has since been reprinted several times.

It is now reprinted, and is the most complete and useful

edition yet published, and is highly recommended by

LONDON: Printed by R. E. for the Proprietors at the Sign of the

Cross, in the Strand.

1881.

NOTE.

The 'Unsearchable Riches of Christ' was originally published in 1655. A second edition followed in 1657; a third, 'corrected and amended,' in 1661; and a fourth in 1671—all 4to. Our text is the third edition, and its title-page is given below.*—G.

* Ἀνεξίχνιαστοὶ πλοῦτοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

THE
Unsearchable Riches
OF
CHRIST.
OR,
MEAT *for* STRONG MEN,
And
MILKE *for* BABES.

Held forth in Twenty-two
SERMONS
FROM
Ephesians III. VIII.

By THOMAS BROOKS, Preacher of the word
in *London*.

The Third Edition Corrected and Amended.

Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia, Aug.

*It pleased the father, that in him should all fullness dwell. Col. 1. 19.
In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Chap. 2. 3.*

LONDON: Printed by M.S. for John Hancock at the first Shop in
Popes head-Alley, next to Cornhill.

1661.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To all true Israelites, in whom there is no guile, Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

DEAR HEARTS, my design in appearing once more in print is not to please the captious critic, or the sullen cynic, but to heighten your 'fellowship with the Father and the Son,' 1 John i. 3, 4, and to further you in a closer walking with God, and to ripen you more and more for reigning with God when you shall be here no more.

'Beloved in our Lord,' there are two sad and great evils—oh that there were no more!—among the saints this day. The strong are very apt, yea, they make little of offending the weak; and the weak are as apt, and make as little of judging and condemning the strong, Rom. xiv. 1-10. The serious and conscientious perusal of this treatise may, by the blessing of the Lord, contribute much to the preventing of those sad evils. You that are weak may, in this treatise, as in a glass, see your weakness, your mercies, your graces, your duties, your privileges, and your comforts.¹ You that are weak in grace, may here find many questions answered and doubts resolved, that tend to the satisfying, quieting, settling, and establishing of your precious souls in peace, joy, and assurance. You that are weak in grace, may here find a staff to support you, a light to direct you, a sword to defend you, and a cordial to strengthen you, &c. And you that are strong in grace, may here see what is your way, what is your work, and what at last shall be your reward. Here you will find that which tends to the discovery of spirits, the sweetening of spirits, the uniting of spirits, the healing of spirits, and the making up of breaches, &c.

Here you will find 'meat for strong men,' and 'milk for babes.' Here you will find who is more motion than notion; more heart than head; more spirit than flesh; more inside than outside, &c.

Here you will find 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,'—which of all boxes of precious ointment is the most precious—opened; and oh how

¹ *Invalidum omne natura querulum*, weak spirits are ever quarrelling and contending.—*Seneca*. [*De Animi Tranquillitate*.—G.]

sweet must he be, that is the sweetest of sweets! In Christ are riches of justification; in Christ are riches of sanctification, riches of consolation, and riches of glorification. And this following treatise may serve as a key, I say not as a golden one, to open the door, that you may come where these treasures lie. Christ's riches are like the eternal springs of the earth, that cannot dry up, but are and shall be diffused by his Spirit and gospel, until his whole house be filled with them.

The excellency and usefulness of the riches of Christ, and answers to many weighty queries about his unsearchable riches, is more than hinted at in this tract. In this tract much is spoken concerning the nature, properties, and excellencies of humility, which is both the beautifier and preserver of all other graces.

Here you may see that those that are lowest in their own esteem, are highest in God's esteem. Here you may see that humble souls are not so low and contemptible in the eyes of the world, as they are honourable in the eyes of God.¹

And if ever there were an age since Christ was on earth, wherein it was needful to preach, press, and print this great doctrine of humility, of self, of soul abasement, this is the age wherein we live. Oh the pride, the stateliness of the professors of this age! But because this point is largely spoken to in this tract, I shall satisfy myself with this touch.

There are many other weighty things treated on, which for brevity's sake I shall omit, only give me leave to acquaint you with a few things about this ensuing tract, and then I shall draw to a close.

First, That it is the substance of twenty-two sermons, preached by me about three years ago, on the lecture nights at this place where now I preach.

Secondly, That there are in it several other things of no small concernment to your souls, that I did not then deliver, but have been given in since, from that fountain that fills all in all.

Thirdly, That though I have been much pressed to print these sermons, yet I should never have yielded, had I not been thoroughly convinced and persuaded in my judgment and conscience, that they may, by the blessing of the Lord upon them, prove many ways useful and serviceable to all those honest Nathanaels into whose hands they may fall, else they had been buried in the dark, and never come to public light.²

I have only a few requests to make to you, and then I shall take my leave of you.

And my *first* request is this, that you would meditate and dwell upon what you read; otherwise your pains (I say not your souls) and mine will be lost.

It is a law among the Parsees in India, to use premeditation in what they are to do, that if it be bad, to reject it; if good, to act it. The application is easy.³ The more any man is in the contemplation of truth, the more fairer and firmer impression is made upon his heart by truth.

¹ Humility is *conservatrix virtutum*, saith Bernard: that which keeps all graces together. . . . *Humilitas animi, sublimitas Christiani*. [Serm.: on Canticles, as before.—G.]

² A sermon preached serveth but an auditory, a sermon printed may serve many auditories.

³ *Lectio sine meditatione arida est, meditatio sine lectione erronea est, oratio sine meditatione tepida est.*—Augustine, finely.

Christians must be like the clean beasts, that parted the hoof and chewed the cud; they must by heavenly meditation chew truths and concoct truths, or else they will never taste the sweetness that is in divine truths.

Mary 'pondered the sayings of the shepherds in her heart,' Luke ii. 19.¹ Not they that eat most, but they that digest most, are the most healthful. Not they that get most, but they that keep most, are richest. So not they that hear most, or read most, but they that meditate most, are most edified and enriched.

My *second* request to you is this, that you will make conscience of living out those truths you read.²

To read much and practise nothing, is to hunt much and catch nothing.

Suetonius reports of Julius Cæsar, 'That seeing Alexander's statue, he fetched a deep sigh, because he at that age had done so little.'³

Ah! what cause have most to sigh, that they have heard so much, and read so much, and yet done so little! Surely it is more honourable to do great things, than to speak or read great things! It is the doer that will be most happy at last, John xiii. 17. *In vitæ libro scribuntur qui quod possunt faciunt, etsi quod debent, non possunt*, they are written in the book of life, that do what good they can, though they cannot do as they would [Bernard.]⁴

I have read of a good man coming from a public lecture, and being asked by one whether the sermon was done, answered, with a sad sigh, 'Ah! it is said, but not done.'⁵

My *third* request is this, that you will pray over what you read.

Many read much, and pray little, and therefore get little by all they read.

Galen writes of a fish called *Uranoscopos*, that hath but one eye, and yet looks continually up to heaven.⁶ When a Christian has one eye upon his book, the other should be looking up to heaven for a blessing upon what he reads.

When one heard what admirable victories Scanderbeg's sword had wrought, he would needs see it; and when he saw it, says he, This is but an ordinary sword; alas! what can this do? Scanderbeg sent him word, I have sent thee my sword, but I have the arm that did all by it.

Alas!⁷ what can Christ's sword, Christ's word, do without his arm? Therefore look up to Christ's arm in prayer, that so his sword, his word, may do great things in your souls.

Luther professeth 'that he profited more by prayer in a short space than by study in a longer;' as John, by weeping, got the sealed book open.

My *fourth* request to you is this, That if, by the blessing of the Lord upon my weak endeavours, any leaf or line should drop myrrh or mercy,

¹ The angels are much in meditation.

² Your actions, in passing, pass not away; for every good work is a grain of seed for eternal life.

³ *Historiæ Cæsarum*, Julius Cæsar.—G.

⁴ It was a saying of Augustine, one thousand two hundred years ago, that we must take heed lest, whilst we fear our exhortation being cooled, prayer be not damped, and pride inflamed.

⁵ Philip Goodwin's 'Evangelical Communicant.' 1649.—G.

⁶ See Index under 'Galen' for other references to the *ὐρανοσκοπός*.—G.

⁷ See Glossary for other uses of 'alas' in this way, and cf. Sibbes, *sub voce*.—G.

marrow or fatness, upon your spirits, that you will give all the glory to the God of heaven, for to him alone it does belong.

Through grace I know I am a poor worm; I am nothing, I have nothing but what I have received. The crown becomes no head but Christ's. Let him who is our all in all have the honour and the glory of all, and I have my end.¹

Pliny tells of some in the remote parts of India that have no mouths, and yet live on the smell of herbs and sweet flowers; but I hope better things of you, even such as accompany salvation.²

My *fifth* request to you is this, That you would let me lie near your hearts, when you are in the mount especially.

Oh pray, pray hard for me, that the Spirit of the Lord may be redoubled upon me; that his word may prosper in my mouth; that it may 'run, and be glorified;' and that I may be high in my communion with God, and holy and unblameable in my walkings with God; and that it may be still day with my soul; that I may live and die in the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost; and that when my sun is set, my glass out, my work done, my race run, I may rest in the everlasting arms of divine love, &c.³

My *last* and least request to you is this, That you will please to cast a mantle of love over the mistakes of the press, and do me that right, and yourselves the courtesy, as, before you read, to correct any material faults that you shall find pointed at in the errata.⁴

God's easy passing over the many and daily erratas of your lives, cannot but make you so ingenuous as readily to pass over the erratas in this book.

You are choice jewels in my eye; you lie near unto my heart; I am willing to spend and be spent for your sakes. My earnest and humble desire is, that my service and labour of love may be accepted by you, Rom. xv. 31, and that it may work much for your internal and eternal welfare; and that 'an abundant entrance may be administered to you' into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2 Pet. i. 11, and i. 8; and that you may be filled 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' and with that 'peace that passes understanding.' This is, and by grace shall be, the prayer of him who desires to approve himself faithful to Christ, his truths, his interests, and his people, and who is your souls' servant in all gospel engagements.

THOMAS BROOKS.

¹ Ingratitude, say some, is a monster in nature, a solecism in manners, and a paradox in grace, damming up the course of donations, divine and human.

² See our Index under *Psylli*, as before.—G.

³ 1 Thes. v. 25; 2 Thes. iii. 1; Heb. iii. 18; Col. iv. 3; Philip. i. 19; 2 Cor. i. 11; Acts xii. 5; Rev. xiv. 13.

⁴ In every pomegranate there is at least one rotten kernel to be found, said Crates the philosopher. [Suidas, s. v. *Κράτης*; —G.]

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—EPh. III. 8.

‘UNTO me, who am *less than the least* of all saints.’

The Greek is a comparative made of a superlative. ‘Less than the least of all saints,’ is a double diminutive, and signifies lesser than the least, if lesser might be.¹ Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility. Great Paul is least of saints, last of the apostles, and greatest of sinners.² The choicest buildings have the lowest foundations, the best balsam sinks to the bottom; those ears of corn and boughs of trees that are most filled and best laden, bow lowest. So do those souls that are most loaden with the fruits of paradise. ‘Unto me who am *less than the least* of all saints.’

‘Is this *grace* given.’

In the Greek, or ‘was this grace given.’³ The word that is here rendered *grace*, is taken in Scripture not only for the favour of God, but also for his gracious gifts; and so you are to understand it in this place. Grace is taken for the gifts of grace; and they are twofold, common or special. Some are common to believers and hypocrites, as knowledge, tongues, a gift of prayer, &c.; some are special and peculiar to the saints, as fear, love, faith, &c. Now Paul had all these, the better to fit him for that high and noble service to which he was called.

‘That I should *preach*.’

That is, declare good news or glad tidings. The Greek word answers to the Hebrew word, which signifies good news, glad tidings, and a joyful message.⁴

‘That I should preach *among the Gentiles*.’

Sometimes this Greek word is generally used for all men, or for all nations. Sometimes the word is used more especially for the people of

¹ ελαχιστοτέρω, *minimissimus*.—Estius. [Commentaria in omnes S. Pauli Epist., *in loco*. 2 vols. folio, 1709.—G.]

² *Qui parvus est in reputatione propria, magnus est in reputatione divina*.—Gregory [Nazianzen]. He that is little in his own account is great in God’s esteem.

³ ἰδὲν ἡ χάρις αὐτῆ. *χάρισμα* is always taken in Scripture for a free gift, a grace gift but *χάρις* is taken not only for the favour of God, but also for his gracious gifts.

⁴ ἴθυσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, Mat. xxviii. 19; John xi. 48, 50, 51; Acts x. 22.

the Jews. Sometimes it is used for the Gentiles distinguished from the Jews. So it is used Mat. vi. 32, 'For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' And so it is used here. Those that are 'without God in the world,' that stand in arms against God, that are ignorant of those riches of grace that are in Christ; this grace is given to me, that I should preach among the poor heathens, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

'That I might preach among the Gentiles.' What, myself? No, but 'the *unsearchable riches of Christ*.'¹

The Greek word signifies, not to be traced out.² Here is rhetoric indeed! Here is riches, unsearchable riches, unsearchable riches of Christ. Riches always imply two things: 1, abundance; 2, abundance of such things as be of worth. Now in the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest riches, the best riches, the choicest riches; in Christ are riches of justification, Titus ii. 14; in Christ are riches of sanctification, Philip. iv. 12, 13; in Christ are riches of consolation, 2 Cor. xii. 9; and in Christ are riches of glorification, 1 Pet. i. 2, 3. But of these glorious unsearchable riches of Christ, we shall speak hereafter.

I shall begin at this time with the first words, 'Unto me who am *less than the least* of all saints.' There are these two observations that naturally flow from these words.

Obs. 1. That the most holy men are always the most humble men.

None so humble on earth, as those that live highest in heaven.

Or if you will, take the observation thus:

That those that are the most highly valued and esteemed of by God, are lowest and least in their own esteem.

'Unto me, who am *less than the least* of all saints,' &c.

Obs. 2. The second observation is,

That there are weak saints as well as strong; little saints as well as great.

Or thus,

All saints are not of an equal growth or stature.

I. I shall begin with the first observation, *That the most holy men are always the most humble men.* Souls that are the most highly esteemed and valued by God, do set the least and lowest esteem upon themselves. 'Unto me who am *less than the least* of all saints,' &c.

In the handling of this point, I shall do these three things:

I. I shall prove that the most holy souls are always the most humble souls.

II. I shall shew you the properties of souls truly humble.

III. I shall shew you the reasons why those that are the most highly prized and esteemed of God, do set so low a price upon themselves.

IV. And then the use.

I. For the first, That this is so, I shall give you most clear proofs, and open them to you.

¹ *Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia*: one Christ will be to thee instead of all things else, because in him are all good things to be found.—*Augustine*.

² Gal. i. 16. ἀνεγκλίπτου. *Nec Christus nec cælum patitur hyperbolem*, a man cannot hyperbolize in speaking of Christ and heaven. *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good.

See it in Job.¹ No man ever received a fairer or a more valuable certificate under the hand of God, or the broad seal of heaven, for his being a soul famous in grace and holiness, than Job, as you may see, Job i. 8, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?' And yet no man could speak more undervaluingly of himself than Job did. Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.'² This expression is the deepest act of abhorrency. Abhorrency strictly taken, is hatred wound up to the height. 'I *abhor* myself.' The word that is rendered *abhor* signifies to reject, to disdain, to contemn, and to cast off.³ Ah! says Job, I abhor myself, I reject myself, I disdain myself, I cast off myself, I have a vile esteem of myself.⁴ So our blessed apostle, who had been 'caught up into the third heavens, and had such glorious revelations as could not be uttered,' yet he accounted himself less than the least of all saints.⁵ Not that anything can be less than the least; the apostle's holy rhetoric doth not cross Aristotle's philosophy; but the original word being a double diminutive, his meaning is that he was as little as could be; therefore he put himself down so little as could not be, less than the least.

Another proof you have, Isa. vi. 1, 5, 6. As Paul among the apostles was the greatest, so Isaiah among the prophets was the clearest and choicest gospel preacher, and holds out more of Christ and of his kingdom and glory, than all the other prophets do. Isa. vi. 1, He sees the glory of the Lord in a vision, and this makes him cry out, verse 5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts; I am undone.' The Hebrew is, 'I am cut off,' I am a forlorn man! Why? 'For I have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'⁶ Here you have the highest and choicest among the prophets, as you had Paul before among the apostles, abasing and laying low himself.

So Peter. Luke v. 8, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'⁷ When he saw that glorious miracle wrought by the Lord Jesus, he cries out as one very sensible of his own weakness and sinfulness. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' Ah! I am not worthy to be near such majesty and glory, who am a mere bundle of vice and vanity, of folly and iniquity.

Take another clear instance: Gen. xviii. 27, 'And Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' Here you have the father of the faithful, the

¹ Job was a non-such in regard of those perfections and degrees of grace that he had attained to beyond any other saints on earth.

² Job was high in worth and humble in heart; *humilitas animi, sublimitas Christiani.*

³ דָּנָה.

⁴ *A me, me salva Domine*: deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man, myself.—*Augustine.* [Confessions.—G.]

⁵ 2 Cor. xii. 1-7. Vide *Bezam.* [Nov. Test., Exp. *in loco.*—G.] ἄρρητα ἴσηματα, wordless words, such as words are too weak to utter.

⁶ The clearest sight and vision of God does always give a man the fullest sight of his own emptiness, sinfulness, and nothingness. כִּי־נִרְמִיתִי, I am cut off.

⁷ Ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλός, a man, a sinner, a very mixture and compound of dirt and sin.

greatest believer in the world, accounting himself dust and ashes.¹ Dust notes the baseness of his original, and ashes notes his deserving to be burnt to ashes, if God should deal with him in justice rather than in mercy. The nearer any soul draws to God, the more humble will that soul lie before God. None so near God as the angels, nor none so humble before God as the angels.

So Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant,' &c.² Jacob, a man eminent in his prevailing with God, a prince that had the honour and the happiness to overcome the God of mercy, yet judges himself unworthy of the least mercy. Ah! how low is that soul in his own eyes, that is most honourable in God's eyes!

David, you know, was a man after God's own heart, 1 Kings xv. 5; a man highly honoured, much beloved, and dearly prized by the Lord; yet 1 Sam. xxvi. 20, he counts himself a flea; and what is more contemptible than a flea? In Ps. xxii. 6, 'I am a worm,' saith he, 'and no man.' The word that is there rendered *worm*, is a word that signifies a very little worm which breedeth in scarlet, a worm that is so little that a man can hardly see or perceive it. A worm is the most despicable creature in the world, trampled under foot by every one. Says he, I am a despicable worm in my own eyes, and in my enemies' eyes.³

And thus you see the point proved, that the most holy men have been always the most humble men.

II. The second thing that I am to do is, *to shew you the properties of humble souls*. I confess, when I look abroad in the world, and observe the carriage of all sorts of men, my heart is stirred to speak as fully and as home to this point as Christ shall help me. It is very very sad to consider, how few humble souls there be in these days. Ah! the damnable pride that reigns and rules in the hearts and lives of most men. I think it is far greater than hath been known in the generations before us. Ah, England! England! what folly, what damnable wickedness is this, that thou shouldst be a-lifting thyself up in pride, when God is a-staining the pride of all glory, and bringing into contempt the honourable of the earth, and a-setting his feet upon the neck of pride.⁴

[1.] Now the first property that I shall lay down of an humble soul is this:

An humble soul under the highest spiritual discoveries, and under the greatest outward mercies, forgets not his former sinfulness and his former outward meanness. Paul had been taken up into the third heavens, and had glorious revelations and manifestations of God, 2 Cor. xii. 1-4; he cries out, 'I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious,' 1 Tim. i. 13. Under the choicest discoveries, he remembers his former blasphemies. So Rom. vii. 23, 'I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.' He had been at this time about

¹ עפר ואפר, *gnaphar vorphar*, dust and ashes; *i.e.* base, vile, worthless. Solemnly think that thou art dust and ashes, and be proud if thou canst, Isa. vi. 1, 2.

² קטנתי מכל החסדים, I am less than all mercies, to wit, in worth or weight, &c.

³ תולעת, *tolagnath*, an humble soul is a little, little nothing in his own eyes.

⁴ God loves to hear this as a parcel of his praise, *parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*, to spare the lowly and strike down the proud.

fourteen years converted, as some judge. He was a man that lived at as high a rate in God, as any we read of; a man that was filled with glorious discoveries and revelations, and yet under all discoveries and revelations, he remembers that body of sin and death that made him cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?' Who shall ease me of my burden, who shall knock off these chains that make my life a hell? I will by a few instances prove the other branch: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,' says Jacob, 'for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.' I remember, saith he, when I went over Jordan, I was as a footman that carried all his wealth with him. Under his outward greatness he forgets not his former meanness. An humble soul is good at looking back upon his former low estate, upon his threadbare coat that was his best and only robe.²

So David, 1 Chron. xvii. 16, 17, 'And David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, What am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the state of a man of high degree. Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house?' David remembered the meanness of his birth; he remembered his shepherd's crook, as Jacob did his travelling staff.³ Mercies make an humble soul glad, but not proud. An humble soul is lowest when his mercies are highest; he is least when he is greatest; he is lowest when he is highest; he is most poor when he is most rich. Nothing melts like mercy, nothing draws like mercy, nothing humbles like mercy. Mercy gives the humble soul such excellent counsel, as Placilla the empress gave her husband Theodosius, 'Remember, O husband,' saith she, 'what lately you were, and what now you are; so shall you govern well the empire, and give God his due praise for so great an advancement.'⁴ The voice of mercy is, Remember what lately thou wert, and what now thou art, and be humble. Now proud men that are lifted up from the dunghill, that abound in worldly wealth, ah! how does their blood rise with their outward good! The more mercies they have, the more proud they are; mercies do but puff and swell such souls. In a crowd of mercies, they cry out in the pride of their hearts: 'Depart from us, O God, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?' Ps. lxxiii. 3-13; Job xxi. 7-16, xiv. 15.

[2.] A second property of an humble soul is this, *He overlooks his*

¹ Chrysostom observes it of Paul, as his greatest honour, that although he had obtained pardon of God for his sins, yet he is not ashamed to reckon them up to the world. The spouse of Christ, under all the kisses and embraces of Christ, acknowledges herself to be black: Cant. i. 2, 5, compared.

² *Omnia mea mecum porto*, all my goods I carry with me, said Bias, one of the seven wise men of Greece. [*As before.*—G.]

³ Iphicrates, that noble captain, cried out, From how small to how great an estate am I raised! [Son of Timotheus, a shoemaker.—G.] So does the humble soul, when God turns his brass into silver, his iron into gold, his pence into pounds. Agathocles, who, of a potter's son, was made king of Sicily, would always be served in earthen vessels. [*A. was himself a 'potter.'*—G.]

⁴ Rather Placilla, sometimes Flacilla and Placidia. Cf. Tillemont, *as before.*—G.

own righteousness, and lives upon the righteousness of another, to wit, the Lord Jesus. So the apostle, Philip. iii. 8-10, overlooks his own righteousness, and lives wholly upon the righteousness of Christ: 'I desire to be found in him,' saith he, 'not having mine own righteousness.' Away with it, it is dross, it is dung, it is dog's meat! It is a rotten righteousness, an imperfect righteousness, a weak righteousness, 'which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,'¹ that is a spotless righteousness, a pure righteousness, a complete righteousness, an incomparable righteousness; and, therefore, an humble soul overlooks his own righteousness, and lives upon Christ's righteousness. Remember this, all the sighing, mourning, sobbing, and complaining in the world, doth not so undeniably evidence a man to be humble, as his overlooking his own righteousness, and living really and purely upon the righteousness of Christ. This is the greatest demonstration of humility that can be shewn by man, Mat. vi. 8. Men may do much, hear much, pray much, fast much, and give much, &c., and yet be as proud as Lucifer, as you may see in the Scribes, Pharisees, Mat. xxiii., and those in Isa. lviii. 3, who in the pride of their hearts made an idol of their own righteousness: 'Wherefore have we fasted,' say they, 'and thou seest it not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge? Oh! but for a man now to trample upon his own righteousness, and to live wholly upon the righteousness of another, this speaks out a man to be humble indeed. There is nothing that the heart of man stands more averse to than this, of coming off from his own righteousness. Man is a creature apt to warm himself with the sparks of his own fire, though he doth lie down for it in eternal sorrow, Isa. l. 11. Man is naturally prone to go about to establish his own righteousness, that he might not subject to the righteousness of Christ; he will labour as for life, to lift up his own righteousness, and to make a saviour of it, Rom. x. 4. Ay, but an humble soul disclaims his own righteousness: 'All our righteousness is as filthy rags.' 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,' Ps. cxliii. 2. So Job, 'Though I were righteous, yet I would not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge,' Job ix. 15. Proud Pharisees bless themselves in their own righteousness: 'I thank God I am not as this publican; I fast twice in the week,' &c., Luke xviii. 11, 12. Ay, but now a soul truly humbled blushes to see his own righteousness, and glories in this, that he has the righteousness of Christ to live upon.² Rev. iv. 10, 11, the twenty-four elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ. By their crowns you may understand their gifts, their excellencies, their righteousness; they throw down these before Christ's throne, to note to us, that they did not put confidence in them, and that Christ was the crown of crowns and the top of all their royalty and glory. An humble soul looks upon Christ's righteousness as his only crown.

[3.] Thirdly, *The lowest and the meanest good work is not below an humble soul.* An humble David will dance before the ark: he enjoyed

¹ Ver. 8, *σκίβαλα*, dogs' meat: *i. e.* coarse and contemptible, Isa. lxiv. 6; Cant. iv. 2; Rev. xiv. 5; Col. ii. 10.

² A proud heart eyes more his seeming worth than his real want. *Non decet Christianum in hac vita coronari*, said the Christian soldier.

so much of God in it, that it caused him to leap and dance before it ; but Michal his wife despised him for a fool, and counted him as a simple vain fellow, looking upon his carriage as vain and light, and not becoming the might, majesty, and glory of so glorious a prince. Well ! says this humble soul, if this be to be vile, I will be more vile.

Great Paul, yet being humble and low in his own eyes, he can stoop to do service to the least and meanest saint. 1 Cor. ix. 19–21, 'For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means gain some.'¹ Here you have an humble soul bowing and stooping to the meanest saint, and the lowest services, that he might win souls. So the Lord Jesus himself was famous in this, John xiii. 4. Though he was the Lord of glory, and one that thought it no robbery to be equal with God, one that had all perfection and fulness in himself, yet the lowest work is not below this King of kings. Witness his washing his disciples' feet and wiping them with a towel, 1 Cor. ii. 8 ; Philip. ii. 6 ; Col. i. 19.

Bonaventure, though he was born of great parentage, and a great scholar, yet to keep his mind from swelling, he would often sweep rooms, wash vessels, and make beds.

So that famous Italian marquess,² when God was pleased by the ministry of his word to convert him, the lowest work was not below him. Though he might have lived like a king in his own country, yet having tasted of that life and sweet that was in Jesus, he was so humble that he would go to market, and carry home the meanest and the poorest things the market yielded. There was nothing below him, when God had changed him, and humbled him.³

It was recorded to the glory of some ancient generals, that they were able to call every common soldier by his own name, and were careful to provide money, not only for their captains and soldiers, but litter also for the meanest beast.⁴ There is not the lowest good that is below the humble soul. If the work be good, though never so low, humility will put a hand to it ; so will not pride.

¹ Ver. 19. *κρηδύσω* signifies to gain with joy and delight of heart. Ah, says Paul, it is my greatest joy, my greatest delight, to gain souls to Christ. The word also signifies craft, or guile. Ah ! humble Paul will use a holy craft, a holy guile, to win souls. To know the art of alms is greater than to be crowned with the diadem of kings, and yet to convert one soul is greater than to pour out ten thousand talents into the baskets of the poor.—*Chrysostom*.

² Galeacius Carraciolus, *as before*. Cf. Sibbes, vol. i. pp. 184, 289, *seq.*—G.

³ Proud hearts cannot stoop to low services ; they say this work and that is below their parts, place, parentage, and employments.

⁴ Cirijs [Cyrus?] and Scipio. These heathens will rise in judgment against many proud professors in these days, who scorn to stoop to mean services, &c. *Veniat, veniat verbum Domini, et submittemus illi sexcenta etsi nobis essent colla*, said Baldassar, a German minister. So it is with all that are high in worth and humble in heart. Lev. x. 2, 3, God will be sanctified either actively or passively ; *aut à nobis aut in nos*, either in us or upon us.

[4.] A fourth property of an humble heart is this, *An humble heart will submit to every truth of God, that is made known to it; even to those divine truths that are most cross to flesh and blood.* 1 Sam. iii. 17, Eli would fain know what God had discovered to Samuel concerning him; Samuel tells him that he must break his neck, that the priesthood must be taken away from him, and his sons must be slain in the war; why 'it is the Lord,' saith he, 'let him do what seemeth him good.' So in Lev. x. 3, the Lord by fire from heaven destroys Aaron's two sons. 'Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified; and Aaron held his peace.' If God miss of his honour one way, he will rain hell out of heaven, but he will have it another way. This Aaron knew, and therefore he held his peace, when God shewed himself to be 'a consuming fire.' The Hebrew word¹ that is here rendered *peace*, signifies the quietness and silence of his mind. He did not hold his tongue only, for many a man may hold his tongue, and yet his mind and heart may kick and swell against God, but his very mind was quiet and still; there was a heavenly calm in his spirit; he was dumb and silent, because the Lord had done it. So in Acts x. 33, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' We are not here to hear what may tickle our ears, or please our fancies, or satisfy our lusts. No; but we are here to hear what God will say. Our hearts stand ready pressed to subject themselves to whatever God shall declare to be his will. We are willing to hear what we may do, that we may obey sincerely and universally the good pleasure of our God, knowing that it is as well our dignity as our duty so to do.

There are three things in an humble soul that do strongly incline it to duty.

The *first* is divine love.

The *second* is divine presence.

The *third* is divine glory.

The dove made use of her wings to fly to the ark; so doth an humble soul of his duties to fly to Christ. Though the dove did use her wings, yet she did not trust in her wings, but in the ark. So though an humble soul does use duties, yet he does not trust in his duties, but in his Jesus. But now proud hearts they hate the truth, they cry out, 'Who is the Lord, that we should obey him?' And what are his commandments, that we should submit to them? Ay, but an humble soul falls under the power of truth, and counts it his greatest glory to be obedient to all truth.

[5.] A fifth property of an humble soul is this: *An humble soul lives not upon himself, nor upon his own actings, but upon the Lord Jesus,*

¹ וידי. The word often signifies a modest quietness of mind, the troubled affections being allayed; so here. In Lam. iii. 27-29 it signifies to submit unto God, and to be patient in affliction; and so it may be taken here. *Nunquam nimis dicitur, quid nunquam satis discitur*, we can never hear that too often that we can never learn too well. *Militi multa agenda, patienda plura*, the Christian soldier must do many things, and suffer more. If Seneca said of his wise man, *Majore parte illic est, unde descendit*, he is more in heaven than in earth, this is much more true of humble, holy souls. [Seneca: *De Constantia Sapientis*.—G.] *Dulce nomen Christi*, sweet is the name of Christ. Christ may well be compared to the trees of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii. 12, which were both for meat and medicine.

and his actings. Poor men, you know, they do not live upon themselves, they live upon others; they live upon the care of others, the love of others, the provision of others. Why! thus an humble soul lives upon the care of Christ, the love of Christ, the promise of Christ, the faithfulness of Christ, the discoveries of Christ. He lives upon Christ for his justification, Philip. iii. 7-10; he lives upon Christ for his sanctification. Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;' and he lives upon Christ for his consolation: Cant. ii. 3, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste;' and he lives upon Christ for the performance of all holy actions: Philip. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;' Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' An humble soul sees in Christ a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundancy, and here his soul lives and feeds. An humble soul sees that all his stock is in the hands of Christ. His stock of graces, his stock of comforts, his stock of experiences are in the hands of Jesus Christ, who is the great Lord-keeper of all a believer's graces, and of all his comforts; and therefore, as children live upon them in whose hand their stock is, be it a brother or a friend, why, so an humble soul sees its stock is in the hand of the Lord Jesus, and therefore he lives upon Christ, upon his love, and his provision, and his undertakings, &c. But now proud hearts live not upon the Lord Jesus Christ; they live upon themselves, and upon their own duties, their own righteousness, their own actings, as the Scripture evidences. Christ dwells in that heart most eminently that hath emptied itself of itself. Christ is the humble man's manna, upon which he lives, and by which he thrives, Isa. lviii. 2, 7; Luke vii. 47.

[6.] A sixth property of an humble soul is this, *He judges himself to be below the wrath and judgments of God.*² An humble soul looks upon himself as one not worthy that God should spend a rod upon him, in order to his reformation, edification, or salvation. As I am unworthy, saith an humble soul, that God should smile upon me, so I am unworthy that he should spend a frown upon me. Job xiii. 25, 'Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?' Why, I am but a leaf, I am but a little dry stubble, I am below thy wrath; I am so very, very bad, that I wonder that thou shouldst so much as spend a rod upon me. What more weak, worthless, slight, and contemptible than a leaf, than dry stubble? Why, Lord, says Job, I am a poor, weak, and worthless creature, I wonder that thou shouldst take any pains to do me good, I can't but count and call everything a mercy that is less than hell.

So David, in 1 Sam. xxiv. 14, 'After whom is the King of Israel come

¹ *Plenitudo abundantiae* and *plenitudo redundantiae*. *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good. Christ is *quicquid appetibile*, as Origen speaks, whatever we can desire.

² A proud heart resists, and is resisted: this is *duro durum*, flint to flint, fire to fire. An humble soul blesses God as well for crosses as mercies, as well for adversity as for prosperity, as well for frowns as for smiles, &c., because he judges himself unworthy of the least rebukes from God.

out? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog, after a flea.' The language of an humble soul, when God begins to be angry, is this: Lord, I can bless thee that thou wilt take any pains with me; but I humbly acknowledge that I am below the least rod, I am not worthy that thou shouldst frown upon me, threaten me, strike me, or whip me, for my internal and eternal good. But proud hearts think themselves wronged when they are afflicted, they cry out with Cain, 'Our punishment is greater than we can bear,' Gen. iv. 13.

[7.] A seventh property of an humble soul is this, *An humble soul doth highly prize the least of Christ.* The least smile, the least good word, the least good look, the least truth, the least mercy, is highly valued by an humble soul.

The Canaanitish woman in the fifteenth of Matthew sets a high price upon a crumb of mercy.¹ Ah, Lord, says the humble soul, if I may not have a loaf of mercy, give me a piece of mercy; if not a piece of mercy, give me a crumb of mercy. If I may not have sun-light, let me have moon-light; if not moon-light, let me have star-light; if not star-light, let me have candle-light; and for that I will bless thee.

In the time of the law, the meanest things that were consecrated were very highly prized, as leather or wood, that was in the tabernacle. An humble soul looks upon all the things of God as consecrated things. Every truth of God is a consecrated truth; it is consecrated to holy use, and this causes the soul highly to prize it; and so every smile of God, and every discovery of God, and every drop of mercy from God, is very highly prized by a soul that walks humbly with God. The name of Christ, the voice of Christ, the footsteps of Christ, the least touch of the garment of Christ, the least-regarded truth of Christ, the meanest and least-regarded among the flock of Christ, is highly prized by humble souls that are interested in Christ, Song i. 3; John x. 4, 5; Ps. xxvii. 4; Mat. ix. 20, 21; Acts xxiv. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 22. An humble soul cannot, an humble soul dares not, call anything little that has Christ in it; neither can an humble soul call or count anything great wherein he sees not Christ, wherein he enjoys not Christ.² An humble soul highly prizes the least nod, the least love-token, the least courtesy from Christ; but proud hearts count great mercies small mercies, and small mercies no mercies; yea, pride does so unman them, that they often call mercy misery, &c.

[8.] The eighth property of an humble soul is this, *It can never be good enough, it can never pray enough, nor hear enough, nor mourn enough, nor believe enough, nor love enough, nor fear enough, nor joy enough, nor repent enough, nor loathe sin enough, nor be humble enough, &c.*

Humble Paul looks upon his great all as nothing at all; he forgets those things that are behind, and reaches forth to those things which are before, 'that if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,' Philip. iii. 11-14; that is, that perfection of holiness which

¹ Ver. 27. Faith will pick an argument out of a repulse, and turn discouragements into encouragements. Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible; such a price he set upon it, from the sweet that he found in it.

² Austin loved Tully before his conversion, but not so much after, *quia nomen Jesu non erat ibi*, because the name of Christ was not there. [Confessions, b. iii., iv. 7.—G.]

the dead shall attain unto in the morning of the resurrection, by a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct.¹

No holiness below that matchless, peerless, spotless, perfect holiness that saints shall have in the glorious day of Christ's appearing, will satisfy the humble soul. An humble heart is an aspiring heart; he cannot be contented to get up some rounds in Jacob's ladder, but he must get to the very top of the ladder, to the very top of holiness. An humble heart cannot be satisfied with so much grace as will bring him to glory, with so much of heaven as will keep him from dropping into hell; he is still crying out, Give, Lord, give; give me more of thyself, more of thy Son, more of thy Spirit; give me more light, more life, more love, &c. Cæsar in warlike matters minded more what was to conquer than what was conquered; what was to gain than what was gained. So does an humble soul mind more what he should be than what he is, what is to be done than what is done. Verily heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that sets up for his mark the perfection of holiness. Poor men are full of desires; they are often a-sighing it out, Oh that we had bread to strengthen us, drink to refresh us, clothes to cover us, friends to visit us, and houses to shelter us, &c.; so souls that are spiritually poor they are often a-sighing it out, Oh that we had more of Christ to strengthen us, more of Christ to refresh us, more of Christ to be a covering and shelter to us, &c. I had rather, says the humble soul, be a poor man and a rich Christian, than a rich man and a poor Christian. Lord, says the humble soul, I had rather do anything, I had rather bear anything, I had rather be anything, than to be a dwarf in grace, Rev. iii. 17, Isa. lxxv. 5, Luke xviii. 11, 12. The light and glory of humble Christians rises by degrees: Cant. vi. 1, (1.) Looking forth as the morning, with a little light; (2.) Fair as the moon, more light; (3.) Clear as the sun, *i.e.* come up to a higher degree of spiritual light, life, and glory. Lord, says the humble soul, give me much grace, and then a little gold will serve my turn; give me much of heaven, and little of earth will content me; give me much of the springs above, and a little of the springs below will satisfy me, &c.

[9.] The ninth property of an humble soul is this, *It will smite and strike for small sins as well as for great, for those the world count no sin, as well as for those that they count gross sins.*

When David had but cut off the lap of Saul's garment, his heart smote him as if he had cut off his head. The Hebrew word signifies to smite, wound, or chastise.² Ah! his heart struck him, his heart chastised him, his heart wounded him for cutting off Saul's skirt, though he did it upon noble grounds, viz., to convince Saul of his false jealousies, and to evidence his own innocency and integrity: and

¹ *ἐκτετασμένους*; it signifies the straining of the whole body, a stretching out head and hands, as runners in a race do to lay hold on the mark or prize proposed, Ps. x. 17. Desires, *Iaavath*, from *Avah*, that signifies so to desire and long after a thing as to have one's teeth water at it; so in Micah vii. 1. But proud hearts sit down and pride themselves, and bless themselves, as if they had attained to much, when they have attained to nothing that can raise them above the lowest step of misery.

² 1 Sam. xxiv. 5, *וַיִּכּוּ*. A good man's heart, when kindly awakened, may smite him for those actions that at first he judged very prudent and politic. How great a pain, not to be borne, comes from the prick of this small thorn! Little sins have put several to their wits' ends, when they have been set home upon their consciences.

so, at another time, his heart smote him for numbering the people, as if he had murdered the people: 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, 'And David's heart smote him, after that he had numbered the people; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.' An humble soul knows that little sins, if I may so call any, cost Christ his blood, and that they make way for greater; and that little sins multiplied become great, as a little sum multiplied is great; that they cloud the face of God, wound conscience, grieve the Spirit, rejoice Satan, and make work for repentance, &c. An humble soul knows that little sins, suppose them so, are very dangerous; a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump; a little staff may kill one; a little poison may poison one; a little leak in a ship sinks it; a little fly in the box of ointment spoils it; a little flaw in a good cause mars it; so a little sin may at once bar the door of heaven and open the gates of hell; and therefore an humble soul smites and strikes itself for the least as well as the greatest. Though a head of garlic be little, yet it will poison the leopard, though he be great. Though a mouse is but little, yet it will kill an elephant, if he gets up into his trunk. Though the scorpion be little, yet it will sting a lion to death; and so will the least sin, if not pardoned by the death of Christ.

A proud heart counts great sins small, and small sins no sins, and so disarms conscience for a time of its whipping and wounding power; but at death, or in hell, conscience will take up an iron rod, with which it will lash the sinner for ever; and then, though too late, the sinner shall acknowledge his little sins to be very great, and his great sins to be exceeding grievous and odious, &c.

[10.] The tenth property of an humble soul is this, *It will quietly bear burdens, and patiently take blows and knocks, and make no noise.* An humble soul sees God through man; he sees God through all the actions and carriages of men: 'I was dumb,' saith the prophet, 'I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.'¹ An humble soul looks through secondary causes, and sees the hand of God, and then lays his own hand upon his mouth. An humble soul is a mute soul, a tongue-tied soul, when he looks through secondary causes to the supreme cause. So Aaron, when he saw his sons suddenly surprised by a dreadful and doleful death, he held his peace, he bridled his passions; he sits silent under a terrible stroke of divine justice, because the fire that devoured them went out from the Lord. So when Samuel had told Eli that God would judge his house for ever, and that he had sworn that the iniquity of his house should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever, &c., 'It is the Lord,' says Eli, 'let him do what seemeth him good.' Eli humbly and patiently lays his neck upon the block; it is the Lord; let him strike, let him kill, &c., says Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 11, 13.

So David, when Shimei manifested his desperate fury and folly, malice and madness, in raving and raging at him, in cursing and reproaching of him, says he, 'Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him,' 2 Sam. xvi. 5, 14. God, says he, will, by his wise provi-

¹ Ps. xxxix. 9, נְחֹמֵתִי, from *alam*, which signifies to be mute, or tongue-tied. Lev. x. 1-3, *vaidem* from *Damā*, which signifies the quietness of the mind, the troubled affections being allayed.

dence, turn his cursing into blessing. I see the justice of God in his cursing, therefore let him alone, let him curse, says David.¹

Cassianus reports, that when a certain Christian was held captive by the infidels, and tormented by divers pains and ignominious taunts, being demanded, by way of scorn and reproach, Tell us what Christ has done for you, answered, He hath done what you see, that I am not moved at all the cruelties and contumelies you cast upon me.²

So that blessed martyr, Gyles of Brussels, when the friars, sent to reduce him, did at any time miscall him, he ever held his peace, inso-much that those wretches would say abroad that he had a dumb devil in him.³ Full vessels will bear many a knock, many a stroke, and yet make no noise. So Christians that are full of Christ, that are full of the Spirit, will bear many a knock, many a stroke, and yet make no noise.

An humble soul may groan under afflictions, but he will not grumble in calms. Proud hearts discourse of patience, but in storms humble hearts exercise patience. Philosophers have much commended it, but in the hour of darkness it is the humble soul that acts it. I am afflicted, says the humble soul, but it is mercy I am not destroyed. I am fallen into the pit; it is free grace I am not fallen into hell. God is too just to wrong me, and too gracious to harm me; and therefore I will be still and quiet, let him do what he will with me, says the humble soul. But proud souls resist when they are resisted, they strike when they are stricken, Isa. lviii. 1-3: 'Who is the Lord,' says lofty Pharaoh, 'that I should obey him?' and Cain cries out, 'My punishment is greater than I am able to bear.' Well! remember this: though it be not easy in afflictions and tribulations to hold our peace, yet it is very advantageous; which the heathens seemed to imitate in placing the image of Angerona [goddess of silence], with the mouth bound upon the altar of Volupia [of pleasure], to shew that those that do prudently and humbly conceal their sorrows and anxieties by patience, shall attain comfort and refreshment.⁴

[11.] The eleventh property of an humble soul is this: *in all religious duties and services, he trades with God upon the credit of Christ.*⁵ Lord, says the humble soul, I need power against such and such sins: give it me upon the credit of Christ's blood. I need strength to such and such services: give it me upon the credit of Christ's word. I need such and such mercies for the cheering, refreshing, quickening, and strengthening of me: give them into my bosom upon the credit of Christ's intercession. As a poor man lives and deals upon the credits of others, so does an humble soul live and deal with God for the strengthening of every grace, and for the supply of every mercy, upon the credit

¹ Galliesius observes upon Exod. xxii. 28, the exceeding patience of those three emperors, Theodosius, Honorius, and Arcadius, towards those that spoke evil of them. [Qu. 'Gallasius?'—G.]

² [Foxe.] Acts et Mon. fol. 811. [By Townsend, *sub nomine*.—G.]

³ By long soothing our own wills, we have forsaken, as Cassian saith, the very shadow of patience. [Voes and Esch, *not* Gyles. Foxe, as above, vol. iv. 349-50.—G.]

⁴ *Non sic Deos coluimus aut sic vivimus, ut ille nos vinceret*, said the emperor [Marcus A.] Antoninus Philosophus. ['Meditations.'—G.]

⁵ John xiv. 13, and xv. 16, and xvi. 23, 26. The name of Jesus hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it, saith Chrysostom; and is therefore used by Paul five hundred times, as some have reckoned.

of the Lord Jesus. An humble soul knows that since he broke with God in innocency, God will trust him no more, he will take his word no more; and therefore when he goes to God for mercy, he brings his Benjamin, his Jesus, in his arms, and pleads for mercy upon the account of Jesus.

Plutarch reports that it was wont to be the way of the Molossians, when they would seek the favour of their prince, they took up the king's son in their arms, and so went and kneeled before the king, and by this means overcame him.¹ So do humble souls make a conquest upon God with Christ in their arms. The Father will not give that soul the repulse that brings Christ in his arms.² The humble soul knows that God out of Christ is incommunicable, that God out of Christ is incomprehensible, that God out of Christ is very terrible, and that God out of Christ is inaccessible; and therefore he still brings Christ with him, and presents all his requests in his name, and so prevails, &c. Oh! but proud souls deal with God upon the credit of their own worthiness, righteousness, services, prayers, tears, fastings, &c., as the proud Pharisees and those wrangling hypocrites in Isa. lviii. 1-3.

It was a very proud saying of one, *Cœlum gratis non accipiam*, I will not have heaven but at a rate; and therefore well did the father call vain-glory a pleasant thief, and the sweet spoiler of spiritual excellencies.

[12.] The twelfth property of an humble soul is this: *it endeavours more how to honour and glorify God in afflictions, than how to get out of afflictions.* So Daniel, the three children, the apostles, and those worthies of whom this world was not worthy. They were not curious about getting out of affliction, but studious how to glorify God in their afflictions.³ They were willing to be anything, and to bear anything, that in everything God might be glorified. They made it their business to glorify God in the fire, in the prison, in the den, on the rack, and under the sword, &c. Lord, says the humble soul, do but keep down my sins, and keep up my heart in a way of honouring of thee under all my troubles, and then my troubles will be no troubles, my afflictions will be no afflictions. Though my burdens be doubled, and my troubles be multiplied, yet do but help me to honour thee by believing in thee, by waiting on thee, and by submitting to thee, and I shall sing care away, and shall say, It is enough.⁴

When Valens the emperor sent messengers to win Eusebius to heresy by fair words and large promises, he answered, Alas, sir! these speeches are fit to catch little children that look after such things, but we that are taught and nourished by the holy Scriptures are readier to suffer a thousand deaths than to suffer one syllable or tittle of the Scripture to be altered. And when the emperor threatened to confiscate his goods,

¹ So Themistocles did when he sought the favour of king Admetus. [Plutarch, *sub nomine*.—G.]

² The name of a Saviour, saith Bernard, is honey in the mouth, and music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. [Serm. on Canticles, *as before*.—G.] The boy that was a monitor cried aloud to him that rode in triumph, *Memento te esse hominem*, remember thyself to be a man.

³ Dan. iii.; Acts v. 41, 42, and iv. 29; Heb. xi.; Eph. vi. 19, 20; Philip. i. 13, 19.

⁴ *Prorsus Satan est Lutherus, sed Christus vivit et regnat*, Amen, said Luther, in writing to his friend Spalatinus. [During Diet of Augsburg.—G.]

to torment him, to banish him, or to kill him, he answered, He need not fear confiscation that hath nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven only is a country; nor torments, when his body will be dashed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow.¹ Oh! but when a proud man is under troubles and afflictions, his head and heart are full of plots and projects how to get off his chains, and to get out of the furnace, &c. A proud heart will say anything, and do anything, and be anything, to free himself from the burdens that press him, as you see in Pharaoh, &c.; but an humble soul is willing to bear the cross as long as he can get strength from heaven to kiss the cross, to bless God for the cross, and to glorify God under the cross, &c., John i. 20, 21.

[13.] The thirteenth property of an humble soul is this: *it seeks not, it looks not, after great things.* A little will satisfy nature, less will satisfy grace; but nothing will satisfy a proud man's lusts.² Lord, says the humble soul, if thou wilt but give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, thou shalt be my God, Gen. xxviii. 20–22. Let the men of the world, says the humble soul, take the world in all its greatness and glory, and divide it among themselves.³ Let me have much of Christ and heaven in my heart, and food convenient to support my natural life, and it shall be enough: Job xxii. 29, 'When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person;' or as the Hebrew hath it, *ne shakh gneaim*, him that hath low eyes, noting to us that an humble soul looks not after high things.⁴ So in Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty.' But how do you know that, David? Why, says he, 'I do not exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high, or too wonderful for me. Heb. וּבְנַפְלְאוֹת מַמְנִי Surely I behaved and quieted myself.' 'My soul is as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul is even as a weaned child.' As a great shoe fits not a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger, so a great estate fits not a humble soul.

It was a prudent speech of that Indian king Taxiles to the invading Alexander:⁵ What should we need, said he, to fight and make war one with another, if thou comest not to take away our water and our necessities by which we must live? As for other goods, if I be richer than thou, I am ready to give thee of mine; and if I have less, I will not think scorn to thank thee if thou wilt give me some of thine. Oh! but proud Absalom can't be content to be the king's son, unless he may have the crown presently from his father's head. Caesar can abide no superior, nor Pompey an equal. A proud soul is content with nothing.

A crown could not content Ahab, but he must have Naboth's vineyard, though he swim to it in blood. Diogenes had more content with his tub to shelter him from the injuries of the weather, and with his wooden dish to eat and drink in, than Alexander had with the conquest of half the world, and the fruition of all the treasures, pleasures, and glories of Asia.⁶ So an humble soul is more contented and satisfied

¹ Happy is that soul, and to be equalled with angels, who is willing to suffer, if it were possible, as great things for Christ as Christ hath suffered for it, said Jerome.

² Galen.

³ *Vir bonus paucis indiget.*

⁴ Ps. iv. 6, 7; Prov. xxx. 8. Luther made many a meal of a herring, and Junius of an egg. [Francis Junius, the noble-born coadjutor of Tremellius. Died 1602.—G.]

⁵ Plutarch [*Alexander*, 59, 65.—G.]

⁶ Plutarch, &c., as before.—G.

with Daniel's pulse and John's coat than proud princes are with their glistering crowns and golden sceptres.

[14.] The fourteenth property of an humble soul is this: *it can rejoice in the graces and gracious actings of others, as well as in its own.* An humble Moses could say when Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them,' Num. xi. 26-30. So humble Paul in Acts xxvi. 29, 'And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except those bonds.'¹ I heartily wish and pray for thine own sake that not only in a low but in an eminent, degree, both thou and all that are here present, were as far Christians as I am; only I would not wish them imprisoned as I am. An humble soul is no churl. There is no envy in spiritual things; one may have as much of spirituals as another, and all alike. So in 1 Thes. i. 2, 3, 'We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.' So in the 2 Epistle i. 2-4, 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth: so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.' Ezekiel can commend Daniel, his contemporary, matching him with Noah and Job, for his power in prayer; and Peter highly praises Paul's epistles, though he had been sharply reprov'd in one of them, Ezek. xiv. 14, 2 Peter iii., &c. Oh! but proud souls will be still a-casting disgrace and contempt upon those excellencies in others that they want in themselves.

A proud cardinal, in Luther's time, said, Indeed, a reformation is needful, and to be desired, but that Luther, a rascally friar, should be the man should do it, is intolerable.² Pride is like certain flies, called *cantharides*, who light especially upon the fairest wheat and the most blown roses.³

Though Licinius, who was joined with Galerius in the empire, was so ignorant that he could not write his own name, yet as Eusebius reports, he called the liberal arts a public poison.⁴

This age is full of such monsters that envy every light that outshines their own, and that throw dirt upon the graces and excellencies of others, that themselves may only shine. Pride is notable both at subtraction and at multiplication. A proud heart always prizes himself above the market; he reckons his own pence for pounds, and others' pounds for pence; he looks upon his own counters as gold, and upon others' gold as counters. All pearls are counterfeit but what he wears.

¹ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ: a little and a great way. The ancient church had her diptychs, or public tables, wherein the persons most noted for piety were recorded. Plato called Aristotle the intelligent reader, and Aristotle set up an altar in honour of Plato.

² Attributed to Cardinal Cajetan. Cf. Sibbes, vol. vii. p. 464.—G.

³ Cæsar Borgias, emulating and imitating Julius Cæsar, did use to say, *Aut Cæsar, aut nullus*; but not long after he was slain in the kingdom of Navarre.

⁴ As before: see Index, *sub nomine*.—G.

[15.] The fifteenth property of an humble soul is, *he will rather bear wrongs than revenge wrongs offered.* The humble soul knows that vengeance is the Lord's, and that he will repay, &c., Ps. xciv. 1. The humble soul loves not to take the sword in his own hand, Rom. xii. 19; he knows the day is a-coming, wherein the Lord will give his enemies two blows for one, and here he rests. An humble soul, when wrongs are offered, is like a man with a sword in one hand and a salve in the other; could wound but will heal: Ps. xxxv. 11-16, 'False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother,' &c. The Scripture abounds in instances of this nature.

Dionysius having not very well used Plato at the court, when he was gone, fearing lest he should write against him, he sent after him to bid him not to write against him. Says he, 'Tell Dionysius that I have not so much leisure as to think of him.' So humble wronged souls are not at leisure to think of the wrongs and injuries that others do them.²

Mr Foxe, that wrote the Book of Martyrs, would be sure to do him a kindness that had done him an injury: so that it used to be a proverb, 'If a man would have Mr Foxe do him a kindness, let him do him an injury.' An humble soul is often in looking over the wrongs and injuries that he has done to God, and the sweet and tender carriage of God towards him notwithstanding those wrongs and injuries; and this wins him, and works him to be more willing and ready to bear wrongs, and forgive wrongs, than to revenge any offered wrongs.

[16.] The sixteenth property of an humble soul is this, *An humble soul, though he be of never so rare abilities, yet he will not disdain to be taught what he knows not, by the meanest persons,* Isa. xi. 6. A child shall lead the humble soul in the way that is good; he cares not how mean and contemptible the person is, if a guide or an instructor to him.

Apollos, 'an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scripture,' a master in Israel, and yet sits by an Aquila, a tent-maker, and Priscilla his wife, to be instructed by them, Acts xviii. 24-26.³ Sometimes the poorest and the meanest Christian may, for counsel and comfort, be a god to another, as Moses was to Aaron. As an humble soul knows that the stars have their situation in heaven, though sometimes he sees them by their reflection in a puddle, in the bottom of a well, or in a stinking ditch; so he knows that godly souls, though never so poor, low, and contemptible, as to the things of this world, are fixed in heaven, in the region above; and therefore their poverty and meanness is no bar to hinder him from learning of them, Eph. ii. 6.

¹ I may truly say of the humble soul what Tully said of Cæsar, *Nihil oblivisci soles, nisi injurias*, that he forgot nothing but injuries. Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, bid Catullus, the railing poet, to supper, to shew that he had forgiven him. [Rather *Julius Cæsar*: Suetonius, *Jul.* 73.—G.]

² Cf. Tytetztes, *Chil.* v. 182-185.—G.

³ *Vide* Beza on the words. [Annot., as before.—G.]

Though John was poor in the world, yet many humble souls did not disdain, but rejoice in his ministry. Christ lived poor and died poor, Mat. viii. 20. As he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb. Austin observes, when Christ died he made no will; he had no crown-lands, only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them; and yet those that were meek and lowly in heart counted it their heaven, their happiness, to be taught and instructed by him.¹

[17.] The seventeenth property of an humble soul is this: *an humble soul will bless God, and be thankful to God, as well under misery as under mercy; as well when God frowns as when he smiles; as well when God takes as when he gives; as well under crosses and losses, as under blessings and mercies:*² Job i. 21, 'The Lord gives and the Lord takes, blessed be the name of the Lord.' He doth not cry out upon the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, but he looks through all secondary causes, and sees the hand of God; and then he lays his hand upon his own heart, and sweetly sings it out, 'The Lord gives, and the Lord takes, blessed be the name of the Lord.' An humble soul, in every condition, blesses God, as the apostle commands, in the 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In every thing give thanks to God.' So 1 Cor. iv. 12, 'Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer.' The language of an humble soul is, If it be thy will, saith an humble soul, I should be in darkness, I will bless thee; and if it be thy will I should be again in light, I will bless thee; if thou wilt comfort me, I will bless thee; and if thou wilt afflict me, I will bless thee; if thou wilt make me poor, I will bless thee; if thou wilt make me rich, I will bless thee; if thou wilt give me the least mercy, I will bless thee; if thou wilt give me no mercy, I will bless thee. An humble soul is quick-sighted; he sees the rod in a Father's hand; he sees honey upon the top of every twig, and so can bless God; he sees sugar at the bottom of the bitterest cup that God doth put into his hand; he knows that God's house of correction is a school of instruction; and so he can sit down and bless when the rod is upon his back. An humble soul knows that the design of God in all is his instruction, his reformation, and his salvation.³

It was a sweet saying of holy Bradford, If the queen will give me my life, I will thank her; if she will banish me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her; if she will condemn me to perpetual imprisonment, I will thank her.⁴ Ay, this is the temper of an humble heart. An humble soul knows, that to bless God in prosperity is the way to increase it; and to bless God in adversity is the way to remove it. An humble soul knows, that if he blesses God under mercies, he hath paid his debt; but if he blesses God under crosses, he

¹ On John xiv. 27.—G.

² Tully calls gratitude *Maximam, imo matrem, omnium virtutum reliquarum*, the greatest, yea, the mother of all virtues.

³ The Jews have a proverb, that we must leap up to mount Gerizim, which was a mount of blessings; but creep into mount Ebal, which was a mount of curses: to shew that we must be ready to bless, but backward to curse. An humble soul can extract one contrary out of another, honey out of the rock, gold out of iron, &c. Afflictions to humble souls are the Lord's plough, the Lord's harrow, the Lord's flail, the Lord's drawing-plaster, the Lord's pruning knife, the Lord's potion, the Lord's soap; and therefore they can sit down and bless the Lord, and kiss the rod.

⁴ Foxe, *sub nomine*, and his own Letters.—G.

hath made God a debtor. But oh the pride of men's hearts, when the rod is upon their backs! You have many professors that are seemingly humble, while the sun shines, while God gives, and smiles, and strokes; but when his smiles are turned into frowns, when he strikes and lays on, oh the murmurings! the disputings! the frettings! and wranglings of proud souls! they always kick when God strikes.

[18.] The last property of an humble soul is this: *an humble soul will wisely and patiently bear reproof*: Prov. xxv. 12, 'As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.' A seasonable reproof falling upon an humble soul hath a redoubled grace with it. It is an ear-ring of gold, and as an ornament of fine gold, or as a diamond in a diadem.

An humble David can say, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head,' Ps. cxli. 5. David compares the faithful reproof of the righteous, to the excellent oil that they used about their heads. Some translate it, 'Let it never cease from my head.' That is, let me never want it, and so the original will bear too, I would never want reproofs, whatsoever I want: 'But yet my prayer shall be in their calamities.' I will requite their reproofs with my best prayers in the day of their calamity, saith David. Whereas a proud heart will neither pray for such nor with such as reprove them, but in their calamities will most insult over them.¹

Some translate it more emphatically: 'The more they do, the more I shall think myself bound unto them.' And this was Gerson's disposition,² of whom it is recorded, that he rejoiced in nothing more than if he were freely and friendly reprov'd by any: Prov. ix. 8, 9, 'Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee; give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser.' Prov. xix. 25, 'Reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.' You know how sweetly David carries it towards Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33; she wisely meets him, and puts him in mind of what he was going about, and he falls a-blessing of her presently: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood.' I was resolved in my passion, and in the heat of my spirit, that I would not leave a man alive, but blessed be God, and blessed be thy counsel! An humble soul can sit down and bless God under reproofs. An humble soul is like the Scythian king, that went naked in the snow, and when Alexander wondered how he could endure it, he answered, 'I am not ashamed, for I am all forehead.' An humble soul is all forehead, able to bear reproofs with much wisdom and patience. Oh! but a proud heart cannot bear reproofs, he scorns the reprover and his reproofs too.³

¹ אֶלְיָי רָאשִׁי. Oil is here metaphorically taken for words of reproof, which may be said figuratively to break the head. *Vide* Job x. 2.

² In vit. Jo. Gerson. So Alypius loved Austin for reproving him [Confessions, b. vi., vii. 12.—G.] So did David Nathan, 1 Kings i.; 2 Sam. xii. 12, 13, and xxiv. 13, 14. That is a choice and tender spirit that can meekly and humbly embrace reproofs, and bless God for reproofs.

³ Manasseh, king of Judah, being reprov'd by the aged princely prophet Isaiah, caused him, near to the fountain of Siloa, to be sawn in sunder with a wooden saw, in the eightieth year of his age; for which cruel act, amongst other of his sins, he was sorely

Prov. xv. 12, 'A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him, neither will he go unto the wise.' Amos v. 10, 'They hate him that reproveth in the gate;' as Ahab did good Micaiah, and John Baptist did Herod, and our Saviour the Pharisees,¹ Luke xvi. 13. Christ being to deal with the covetous Scribes and Pharisees, he lays the law home, and tells them plainly that they could not serve God and mammon. Here Christ strikes at their right eye; but how do they hear this? Mark in the 14th verse, 'The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.' The Pharisees did not simply laugh at Christ, but gave also external signs of scorn in their countenance and gestures. They blew their nose at him, for that is the meaning of the original word.² By their gestures they demonstrated their horrid deriding of him; they feared and jeered, when they should have feared and trembled at the wrath to come: Isa. xxviii. 10, 'For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.' One observes, that that was a scoff put upon the prophet, and is as if they should say, Here is nothing but precept upon precept, line upon line. And, indeed, the very sound of the words in the original carries a taunt, *zau le zau, kar lakau*, as scornful people, by the tone of their voice and rhyming words, scorn at such as they despise. Pride and passion, and other vices, in these days go armed; touch them never so gently, yet, like the nettle, they will sting you; and if you deal with them roundly, roughly, cuttingly, as the apostle speaks, they will swagger with you, as the Hebrew did with Moses: 'Who made thee a judge over us?' Exod. ii. 13, 14. And thus much for the properties of an humble soul.

III. I come now to the next thing, and that is, to shew you the reasons why the best men are the most humble men.

[1.] First, *Because they see themselves the greatest debtors to God for what they do enjoy.*

There is no man on earth that sees himself such a debtor to God as the humble man. Every smile makes him a debtor to God, and every good word from heaven makes him a debtor to God. He looks upon all his temporals, as health, wealth, wife, child, friend, &c., and sees himself deeply indebted for all. He looks upon his spiritual mercies, and sees himself a great debtor to God for them; he looks upon his graces, and sees himself a debtor for them; he looks upon his experiences, and sees himself a debtor for them; he looks upon all his privileges, and sees himself a debtor for them; he looks upon his in-comes, and sees himself a debtor for them.³ The more mercy he hath received, the more he looks upon himself indebted and obliged to pay duty and tribute to God; as you may see in Ps. cxvi. 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 verses compared. In the 6th, 7th, 8th verses, he tells you of the mercies he punished by God, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. So Cambyses, king of Persia, hated Praxaspes, one of his nobles that was familiar with him, for reproving his drunkenness.

¹ The meaning is plain, though the sentence is inaccurate.—ED.

² They blowed their nose at him, manifesting thereby their scorning at what he said.

³ When a knight died at Rome that was much in debt, Augustus the emperor sent to buy his bed, conceiving there must needs be some extraordinary virtue in it, if he that was so much in debt could take any rest upon it. An humble soul sees himself so much in debt for mercies in hand, and mercies in hope, that he cannot sleep without blessing and admiring of God.

had received from God, and in the 12th and 13th verses, says he, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' I see myself, saith he, wonderfully indebted; well, what then? why, 'I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, in the presence of all his people.' The same you have in the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses of the same psalm.

So David, Ps. ciii. 1-4, casts his eyes upon his temporal and his spiritual mercies, and then calls upon his soul: 'O my soul, bless the Lord; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases,' &c. An humble soul knows, that it is a strange folly to be proud of being more in debt than another. It is true, saith he, I have this and that mercy in possession, and such and such mercies in reversion; but by all, I am the more a debtor to God.¹

- Cæsar admired at that mad soldier, who was very much in debt and yet slept so quietly. So does an humble soul wonder and admire, to see men that are so much indebted to God for mercies, as many are, and yet sleep so quietly, and be so mindless and careless in blessing and praising of God. There is nothing, saith one, that endures so small a time, as the memory of mercies received; and the more great they are, the more commonly they are recompensed with ingratitude.

[2.] *Secondly*, It is *because in this life they have but a taste of God*.

In the 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' The best men on this side heaven have but a taste; he is but in a tasting, desiring, hungering, thirsting, and growing condition: Job xxvi. 14, 'These are part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him!' So in 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12, 'We know but in part, and we prophesy but in part; now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.' The Lord gives out but little of himself here, we have but a taste of divine sweetness here, we see but the back-parts of God, the day is not far off when we shall see his face. The best of Christ is behind, as the sweetest honey lies in the bottom. Our greatest knowledge here is to know that we know nothing.

The Rabbins in their comments upon Scripture, when they meet with hard knots that they cannot explicate, they salve all with this, *Elias cum venerit solvet omnia*, 'When Elias comes, he will resolve all things.' The best men are in the dark, and will be in the dark, till the Lord comes to shine forth upon them in more grace and glory. The best men on this side heaven are narrow vessels: they are able to receive and take in but little of God. The best men are so full of the world, and the vanities thereof, that they are able to take in but little of God. Here God gives his people some tastes, that they may not faint; and he gives them but a taste, that they may long to be at home, that they may keep humble, that they may sit loose from things below, that they may not break and despise bruised reeds, and that heaven may be the more sweet to them at last, &c.

¹ I have read of a stork that cast a pearl into the bosom of a maid, which had healed her of a wound. So humble souls cast the pearl of praise into the bosom of God for all his favours towards them.—*Guc. Hist.*, lib. iv. [Guicciardini.—G.]

[3.] A *third* reason why the best men are the most humble, and that is, *because the best men dwell more upon their worser part, their ignoble part, than they do upon their noble part, their better part.*

In Isa. vi. 5, 'I am a man of unclean lips,' saith that humble soul. So humble Job cries out of the iniquity of his youth; and says he, 'Once have I spoken foolishly, yea, twice, but I will do so no more,' Job xiii. 26, xl. 15. Humble David, Ps. li. 3, sighs it out, 'My sin is ever before me.' So humble Paul, Rom. vii. 22, 23, complains, that he 'hath a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and leading him captive to the law of sin;' and that, 'when he would do good, evil was present with him.' An humble soul sees that he can stay no more from sin than the heart can from panting, and the pulse from beating; he sees his heart and life to be fuller of sin, than the firmament is of stars; and this keeps him low.¹ He sees that sin is so bred in the bone, that till his bones, as Joseph's, be carried out of the Egypt of this world, it will not out. He every day finds that these Jebusites and Canaanites be as thorns in his eyes, and as goads in his sides. He finds sin an ill inmate, that will not out, till the house fall on the head of it; as the fretting leprosy, in the walls of the house, would not out till the house itself was demolished.² Though sin and grace were never born together, and though they shall not die together; yet while the believer lives, these two must live together; and this keeps them humble.

As the peacock, looking upon his black feet, lets fall his plumes, so the poor soul, when he looks upon his black feet, the vanity of his mind, the body of sin that is in him, his proud spirit falls low.

Epaminondas, an Athenian captain, being asked why he was so sad the day after a great victory, answered, 'Yesterday I was tickled with much vain-glory, therefore I correct myself for it to-day.'³ That is the temper of an humble soul. It is very observable, that the saints are pressed to take notice of their better part: Cant. i. 15, 'Behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair.'⁴ And so, chap. iv. 1, 'Behold thou art fair, behold thou art fair.'⁴ God hath much ado to get a gracious heart to mind his spiritual beauty; to take notice of the inward excellency that he hath wrought in it. Though 'the king's daughter be all glorious within,' yet God hath much ado to bring her to see and take notice of her inward beauty and glory. The humble soul is more set to eye and dwell upon its deformity, than it is upon that beauty and glory that God hath stamped upon it. And this makes the man little and low in his own eyes.

[4.] *Fourthly, Because they have the clearest sight and vision of God, and have the nearest and highest communion with God.* None on earth are so near to God, and so high in their communion with God, as humble souls. And as they have the clearest visions of God, so those actions of God give them the fullest sight and knowledge of their own sinfulness and nothingness. So in Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of

¹ *Teneo in memoria, scribo in charta, sed non habeo in vita.*—Augustine.

² As Hagar would dwell with Sarah till she beat her out of doors, so will sin dwell with grace till death beat it out of doors.

³ Plutarch: Epam.—G.

⁴ This duplication, as well as the *ecce*, is full of attention and admiration, and Christ by praising perfects his own work; for *locutio verbi infusio doni*, to call her fair is to make her so, &c.

thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye hath seen thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' Isa. vi. 1, 5, In a vision the Lord discovers his glory to the prophet, then verse 5, 'Woe is me!' saith he, 'for I am undone;' or 'I am cut off,' why? Because 'I am a man of unclean lips; and have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'¹ Oh, the vision that I have had of the glory of God hath given me such a clear and full sight of my own vileness and baseness, that I cannot but loathe and abhor myself. When Abraham draws near to God, then he accounts himself but dust and ashes, Gen. xviii. 26, 27. The angels that are near God, that stand before him, they cover their faces with two wings, as with a double scarf, in the 6th of Isaiah ver. 2.

[5.] The *fifth* and last reason why those are most humble that are most holy is, *because they maintain in themselves a holy fear of sinning.*²

And the more this holy fear of falling is maintained, the more the soul is humbled. Prov. xiv. 16, 'A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil;' and chap. xxviii. 14, 'Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.' And this keeps the holy soul humble.

I have known a good old man, saith Bernard, who when he had heard of any that had committed some notorious offence, was wont to say with himself, *Ille hodie, et ego cras*, he fell to-day, so may I to-morrow. Now, the reason why humble souls do keep up in themselves a holy fear of falling, is because this is the best to keep them from falling. Job fears and conquers on the dunghill; Adam presumes, and falls in paradise; Nehemiah fears, and stands, Neh. v. 15; Peter presumes, and falls, Mat. xxvi. 69, *seq.*; Mr Sanders the martyr, in Queen Mary's days, fears and stands; Dr Pendleton presumes, and falls from a professor to be a papist.³

When Agamemnon said, What should the conqueror fear? Casander presently answered, *Quod nihil timet*, He should fear this most of all, that he fears not at all.

And so I have done with the reasons of the point. I shall now come to

IV. The uses of it: and the first is this.

[1.] Is it so, that the most holy souls are the most humble souls? Then this shews you, *that the number of holy souls is very few.* Oh, how few be there that are low in their own eyes! The number of souls that are high in the esteem of God, and low in their own esteem, are very few. Oh, the pride of England! Oh, the pride of London! Pride in these days has got a whore's forehead; yet pride cannot climb so high but justice will sit above her.

Bernard saith, that pride is the rich man's cousin. I may add, and the poor man's cousin, and the profane man's cousin, and the civil man's cousin, and the formal man's cousin, and the hypocrite's cousin; yea, all men's cousin; and it will first or last cast down and cast out all the Lucifers and Adams in the world.⁴

¹ *DNEN*, from *DNEN*, which signifies to reject, to despise, to cast off, to contemn.

² As one fire, so one fear drives out another. As the sunshine puts out fire, so doth the fear of God the fire of lusts.

³ Clarke, as before.—G.

⁴ A proud heart resists, and is resisted; this is *duro durum*, flint to flint, fire to fire, yet down he must.

[2.] Secondly, *As you would approve yourselves to be high in the account of God, as you would approve yourselves to be not only good, but eminently good, keep humble.* Since England was England, since the gospel shined amongst us, there was never such reason to press this duty of humility, as in these days of pride wherein we live; and therefore I shall endeavour these two things:

First, To lay down some motives that may work you to be humble.

Secondly, To propound some directions that may further you in this work.

First, For the motives, Consider,

(1.) *First, How God singles out humble souls from all others, to pour out most of the oil of grace into their hearts.*

No vessels that God delights to fill, like broken vessels, like contrite spirits: James iv. 6, 'He resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.' The Greek word signifies, to set himself in battle array. God takes the wind and hill of a proud soul, but he gives grace to the humble. The silver dews flow down from the mountains to the lowest valleys. Abraham was but dust and ashes in his own eyes; ay, but saith God, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I will do?' Gen. xviii. 17. No; I will not. An humble soul shall be both of God's court and his counsel too. Humble Jacob, that was in his own eyes less than the least of all mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10, what a glorious vision had he of God, when the ground was his bed, and the stone his pillow, and the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy; then he saw angels ascend and descend, Gen. xxviii. An humble soul that lies low, oh what sights of God hath he! What glory doth he behold, when the proud soul sees nothing! God pours in grace to the humble, as men pour in liquor into an empty vessel. He does not drop in grace into an humble heart, but he pours it in.¹

The altar under the law was hollow, to receive the fire, the wood, and the sacrifice; so the hearts of men, under the gospel, must be humble, empty of all spiritual pride and self-conceitedness, that so they may receive the fire of the Spirit, and Jesus Christ, who offered himself for a sacrifice for our sins.

Humility is both a grace, and a vessel to receive grace. There is none that sees so much need of grace as humble souls. There is none prizes grace like humble souls. There is none improves grace like humble souls. Therefore God singles out the humble soul to fill him to the brim with grace, when the proud is sent empty away.

(2.) A second motive is, *of all garments humility doth best become Christians, and most adorn their profession.*

Faith is the champion of grace, and love the nurse, but humility the beauty of grace: 1 Peter v. 5, 'Be clothed with humility.' The Greek word *εγκομωσασθε* imports, that humility is the ribbon or string that ties together all those precious pearls, the rest of the graces. If this string break, they are all scattered.

The Greek word that is rendered *clothed*, comes of another Greek word *κνυκος*, that signifies to *knit*, and *tie knots*, as delicate and curious women used to do, of ribbons, to adorn their heads and bodies, as if

¹ He that is in the low pits and caves of the earth sees the stars in the firmament, when they who are upon the tops of the mountains discern them not.

humility were the knot of every virtue, the grace of every grace. Chrysostom calls humility the root, mother, nurse, foundation, and band of all virtue.' Basil calls it 'the storehouse and treasury of all good.' For what is the scandal and reproach of religion at this day? Nothing more than the pride of professors. Is not this the language of most? They are great professors, Oh but very proud! They are great hearers, they will run from sermon to sermon, and cry up this man, and cry up that man, Oh but proud! They are great talkers, Oh but as proud as the devil! &c. Oh that you would take the counsel of the apostle, 'Be clothed with humility'; and that Col. iii. 12, 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.' No robes to these.¹

(3.) The third motive is this, *humility is a loadstone that draws both the heart of God and man to it.*

In Isa. lvii. 15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.' The Lord singles out the humble soul of all others, to make him an habitation for himself. Here is a wonder! God is on high; and yet the higher a man lifts up himself, the farther he is from God; and the lower a man humbles himself, the nearer he is to God. Of all souls, God delights most to dwell with the humble, for they do most prize and best improve his precious presence.

In Prov. xxix. 23, 'A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Prov. xxii. 4, 'By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour,' &c. The Hebrew is, 'The heel of humility.' Riches and honour follow humility at the very heels. One of the ancients used to say that humility is the first, second, and third grace of a Christian.² Humility is a very drawing grace; it draws men to think well and speak well of Christ, the gospel, and the people of God; it makes the very world to say, Ay, these are Christians indeed; they are full of light, and yet full of lowliness; they are high in worth, and yet humble in heart. Oh, these are the crown and the glory of religion.³

A humble soul is like the violet, that by its fragrant smell draws the eye and the hearts of others to him. Mat. xviii. 4, 'They are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' He that is least in his own account is always greatest in God's, and in good men's account.

(4.) The fourth motive is this, *consider all the world cannot keep him up, that doth not keep down his own spirit.*

One asked a philosopher, what God was a-doing? He answered, 'That his whole work was to lift up the humble, and to cast down the proud.'⁴ That man cannot possibly be kept up, whose spirit is not kept down, as you may clearly see in Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, and Nebuchadnezzar; all the world could not keep them up, because their spirit was not kept down.

¹ It is reported of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and beauty upon them. So does humility put a lustre upon every grace.

² Augustine. Cf. our Index under *Humility* for other references.—G.

³ *Vis magnus esse? incipe ab imo*, wilt thou be great? begin from below, saith the father.

⁴ *Totam ipsius occupationem esse in elevatione humilium, et superborum dejectione.*

Prov. xxix. 27, 'A man's pride shall bring him low;' for it sets God against him, and angels against him, and men against him; yea, even those that are as proud as himself. It is very observable, that whereas one drunkard loves another, one swearer loves another, and one thief loves another, and one unclean person loves another, &c., yet one proud person cannot endure another, but seeks to undermine him, that he alone may bear the bell, and carry the commendations, the praise, the promotion. It is storied of the Romans, that were the proudest people on the earth, that they reckoned it as a parcel of their praise, that they brought down the proud. All the world, sirs, will not keep up those persons that do not keep down their spirits.¹

Proud Valerian, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, king of Persia, as oft as he took horse.

Henry the Fourth, emperor, in sixty-two battles, had generally the better, and yet was deposed, and driven to that misery, that he desired only a clerkship in a house at Spira, that himself had built. And oh! that professors would think of this in these days in which we live. All the world shall not keep up those which do not keep down their own spirits. The very design of God is to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt the honourable of the earth. Therefore now if men in our days shall grow proud and high, under mercies and divine appearances, justice will be above them, and turn their glory into shame, and lay their honour in the dust. If your blood rises with your outward good, you will certainly fall, and great will be your fall.

(5.) The fifth consideration to provoke us to be humble is this: *let us have always our eye fixed upon the example of Jesus Christ, and his humble and lowly carriage.*

Christ by his example labours to provoke his disciples to keep humble, and to walk lowly: in John xiii. 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15 verses compared. He rises and washes his disciples' feet, &c., and mark what he aims at in that carriage of his, verse 12-14: 'Know ye what I have done unto you,' saith he; 'Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' I have given you an example, saith Christ, and I would have you to imitate my example. Example is the most powerful rhetoric; the highest and noblest example should be very quickening and provoking. Oh! here you have the greatest, the noblest example of humility, that was ever read or heard of. Upon consideration of this great and eminent example of Christ's humility, Guericus, a good man, cried out, Thou hast overcome me, O Lord! thou hast overcome my pride. This example of thine hath mastered me. Oh that we could say with this good man, Thou hast overcome, O Lord! thou hast overcome our proud hearts, by this example thou hast overmastered our lofty spirits.

This example of Christ's humility you have further set forth, Philip. ii. 6-8, 'Who being in the form of God,' that is, in the nature and essence of God, being very God, clothed with divine glory and majesty as God, 'thought it no robbery,' it being his right by nature, 'to be

¹ Dionysius, a proud king of Sicily, fell from a king to a schoolmaster. History is full of such instances.

equal with God.' The Greek words that are rendered, 'he thought it no robbery,' do import, he made it not a matter of triumph or ostentation to be equal with God, it being his right by nature, and therefore the challenging of it could be no usurpation of another's right, of taking to himself that which was not his own. 'He thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' The Greek is *equals*, that is, every way, equal, not a secondary and inferior God, as the Arians would have him. 'But made himself of no reputation,' verse 7. The Greek is 'emptied himself,' that is, he suspended and laid aside his glory and majesty, or dis-robed himself of his glory and dignity, and became a sinner, both by imputation and by reputation, for our sakes.

And verse 8, 'he humbled himself.' This Sun of righteousness went ten degrees back in the dial of his Father, that he might come to us with healing under his wings. 'And became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' In these words there is a kind of gradation; for it is more to become obedient than to humble himself; and more to yield unto death than to become obedient; and yet more to be crucified than simply to die; for it was to submit himself to a most painful, ignominious, and cursed death. 'He became obedient.' That is, saith Beza, 'to his dying day,' his whole life being nothing but a continual death.¹

I have read of an earl called Eleazarus, that being given to immoderate anger, was cured of that disordered affection by studying of Christ and his patience; he still dwelt upon the meditation of Christ and his patience, till he found his heart transformed into the similitude of Jesus Christ. And oh! that you would never leave pondering upon that glorious example of Christ's humility, till your hearts be made humble, like the heart of Christ. Oh! that that sweet word of Christ, Mat. xi. 29, might stick upon all your hearts, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest to your souls.'

Bonaventure engraved this sweet saying of our Lord, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' in his study; and oh that this saying was engraven upon all your foreheads, upon all your hearts! Oh that it was engraven upon the dishes you eat in, the cups you drink in, the seats you sit on, the beds you lie on, &c.²

Jerome having read the religious life and death of Hilarion, folding up the book, said, Well! Hilarion shall be the champion whom I will imitate. Oh! when you look upon this glorious example of Christ, say, The Lord Jesus his example shall be that that my soul shall imitate.

(6.) Sixthly, consider *Humility will free a man from perturbations and distempers.*

When there are never such great storms without, humility will cause a calm within. There are a great many storms abroad, and there is nothing will put the soul into a quiet condition but humility. An humble soul saith, Who am I, that I may not be despised? Who am I,

¹ Annot. *in loco*, as before.—G.

² It was a good law that the Ephesians made, that men should propound to themselves the best patterns, and ever bear in mind some eminent man.

that I may not be reproached, abused, slighted, neglected? That which will break a proud man's heart, will not so much as break a humble man's sleep. In the midst of a storm, an humble soul is still in a calm. When proud hearts are at their wit's ends, stamping, swearing, and swaggering at God, and man, and providence, an humble soul is quiet and still, like a ship in a harbour. Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi. 6, 13, comes railing and cursing of David, and calls him a bloody man, and a man of Belial, that is, a runnagado, one who being desperately wicked had shaken off the yoke of government, and would be under no law. So the Hebrew word *Jagnat*, signifies men without yoke, or lawless. Therefore the Septuagint commonly translate it *παράνομος*, altogether *irregular*. It signifies most flagitious men, and notorious and desperately wicked, stigmatized villains, even incarnate devils; and yet David holds his peace, though provoked by his mighty men to revenge himself. Oh! how would this cursing and railing have maddened and broken many a proud man's heart; and yet it stirs not David.

Fulgentius, after he was extremely persecuted, he had an advantage to seek revenge, but he would not; for, saith he, *plura pro Christo toleranda*, we must suffer more for Christ than so. What though I am thus and thus wronged? What though I have an opportunity for revenge? yet I must suffer more than so for Christ, says the humble soul. An humble soul, when wrongs are offered him, is like a man with a sword in one hand and salve in another; he could kill but will cure.

One wondering at the patience and humble carriage of Socrates, towards one that reviled him, Socrates said, If we should meet one whose body were more unsound than ours, should we be angry with him, and not rather pity him? Why then should we not do the like to him whose soul is more diseased than ours? An humble soul, when he meets with this and that wrong from men, he knows that their souls are diseased, and that rather moves him to pity than to revenge wrongs offered. A proud heart swells and grows big, when in the least wronged, and is ready to call for fire from heaven, and to take any opportunity for revenge of wrongs offered. No man so abused as I, no man thus styled as I, says the proud soul. Oh, but an humble soul in patience possesses himself in all trials and storms.

Gallasius observes upon Exod. xxii. 28, the patience and humble carriage of those three emperors, Theodosius, Honorius, and Arcadius, towards those that spake evil of them; they would have them subject to no punishment; for they said, If it come from lightness of spirit, it is to be contemned; if from madness, it is worthy of pity; if from injury, it is to be forgiven; for injuries and wrongs are to be pardoned.¹ And this is the true temper of an humble soul, and by this he enjoys peace and quiet in the midst of all earthquakes and heartquakes.

(7.) The seventh consideration is this, consider *humility exalteth*.

He that is most humble, is and shall be most exalted and most honoured. No way to be high, like this of being low. Moses was the meekest man on earth, and God made him the honourablest, calling of him up unto himself into the mount, making known his glory to him, and making of him the leader of his people Israel. Gideon was very

¹ Willet on Exodus xxviii. Qu. 51. [1618, folio.—G.]

little in his own eyes; he was the least of his father's house in his own apprehension, and God exalts him, making him the deliverer of his Israel.

It was a good saying of one, Wilt thou be great? begin from below. As the roots of the tree descend, so the branches ascend. The lower any man is in this sense, the higher shall that man be raised. Mat. xxiii. 12, 'And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' God, that is wisdom itself, hath said it, and he will make it good, though thou seest no ways how it should be made good. The lowest valleys have the blessing of fruitfulness, while the high mountains are barren; Prov. xviii. 12, 'Before destruction, the heart of man is lofty, and before honour is humility.'

David came not to the kingdom till he could truly say, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lifted up,' Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2. Abigail was not made David's wife till she thought it honour enough to wash the feet of the meanest of David's servants, 1 Sam. xxv. Moses must be forty years a stranger in Midian, before he became king in Jeshurun; he must be struck sick to death in the inn, before he goes to Pharaoh on that noble embassy.

It was a sweet observation of Luther, 'That for the most part when God set him upon any special service for the good of the church, he was brought low by some fit of sickness or other.'¹ Surely, as the lower the ebb, the higher the tide; so the lower any descend in humility, the higher they shall ascend in honour and glory. The lower this foundation of humility is laid, the higher shall the roof of honour be overlaid. If you would turn spiritual purchasers of honour, or of whatsoever else is good, no way like this of humility. We live in times wherein men labour to purchase honour; some by their money, others by their friends; others by making themselves slaves to the lusts of men; others by being prodigal of their blood, and many by giving themselves up to all manner of baseness and wickedness, whereby their carnal ends may be attained, and themselves exalted; but these men and their honour will quickly be laid in the dust. Oh! but the readiest, the surest, the safest, the sweetest way to attain to true honour, is to be humble, to lie low. Humility makes a man precious in the eye of God. He that is little in his own account, is great in God's esteem.²

(8.) The eighth and last consideration that I shall propound is this, consider *humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading.*

As you may see in the three children in Daniel, and in those worthies in the 11th of the Hebrews, 'of whom this world was not worthy.' As the lowest shrubs are freed from many violent gusts and blasts of wind, which shake and rend the tallest cedars; so the humble soul is free from a world of temptations, that proud and lofty souls are shaken and torn in pieces with. The devil hath least power to fasten a temptation upon an humble soul. He that hath a gracious measure of humility, is neither affected with Satan's proffers, nor terrified with

¹ In 'Table Talk,' as before, often.—G.

² *Qui parvus est in reputatione propria, magnus est in reputatione divina.*—Gregory [of Nyssa.—G.]

Satan's threatenings. The golden chain does not allure him, nor the iron chain does not daunt him.

I have read of one who, seeing in a vision many snares of Satan spread upon the earth, he sat down and mourned, and said with himself, 'Who shall pass through these?' whereunto he heard a voice answering, 'Humility shall pass through them.' A proud heart is as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted. But the humble soul, when tempted, says with that worthy convert, 'I am not the man that I was.'¹ There was a time when my heart was proud and lifted up, and then thou couldst no sooner knock but I opened; no sooner call but I answered; no sooner tempt but I did assent. Oh! but now the Lord taught me to be humble; I can resist, though I cannot dispute; I can fight, but not yield.

Mistress Katherine Bretterge, an humble precious soul, being once in a great conflict with Satan, said thus to him, 'Satan, reason not with me, I am but a weak woman; if thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ; he is my advocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall plead for me.'² An humble soul is good at turning Satan over to the Lord Jesus, and this increases Satan's hell. It is reported of Satan, that he should say thus of a learned man, *Tu me semper vincis*, thou dost always overcome me; when I would throw thee down, thou liftest up thyself in assurance of faith; and when I would exalt and promote thee, thou keepest thyself in humility; and so thou art too hard for me. The only way to avoid cannon-shot, as they say, is to fall down flat; no such way to be freed from temptations as to keep low.

And so I have done with the first head; namely, the motives that should move and provoke us to keep humble, to be base, to be nothing in our own eyes.

I shall now come to some helps and directions that may be useful to keep us humble and low in our own eyes. And the first is this:

[1.] *Dwell much upon the greatness of God's mercy and goodness to you.*

Nothing humbles and breaks the heart of a sinner like mercy and love. Souls that converse much with sin and wrath may be much terrified; but souls that converse much with grace and mercy will be much humbled. Luke vii., the Lord Jesus shews mercy to that notorious sinner, and then she falls down at his feet, and loves much and weeps much, &c.³ In the 1 Chron. xvii., it was in the heart of David to build God a house. God would not have him to do it, yet the messenger must tell David that God would build him a house, and establish his Son upon the throne for ever. Look into the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses, and there you shall find that David lets fall such an humble speech, which he never did before that God had sent him that message of advancement. 'And David the king came, and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for

¹ *Quis pertransiet ista?* The answer was, *Humilitas pertransiet. . . . Ego non sum ego.*

² As before: see our Index under Bretterge.—G.

³ It is said of Adam, that he turned his face to the garden of Eden, and wept sore. [Query, by the Rabbins? or is it a tacit allusion to Milton's description? Par. Lost, b. xii. 645.—G.]

a great while to come,' &c., 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19. And this sweetly and kindly melts him, and humbles him, before the Lord. Oh, if ever you would have your souls kept low, dwell upon the free grace and love of God to you in Christ.¹ Dwell upon the firstness of his love, dwell upon the freeness of his love, the greatness of his love, the fulness of his love, the unchangeableness of his love, the everlastingness of his love, and the activity of his love. If this do not humble thee, there is nothing on earth will do it. Dwell upon what God hath undertaken for you. Dwell upon the choice and worthy gifts that he has bestowed on you; and dwell upon that glory and happiness that he has prepared for you, and then be proud if you can.

[2.] Secondly, *Keep faith in continual exercise, upon Christ as crucified, and upon Christ as glorified.*

There are two special sights of Christ, that tend much to humble and abase a soul.

The one is a sight of Christ in his misery, in the 12th of Zech. ver. 10.

And the other is a sight of Christ in his glory (Rev. i. 7, Isa. vi. 1, 3, 5, compared). It is dangerous to be more notion than motion; to have faith in the head and none in the heart; to have an idle and not an active faith. It is not enough for you to have faith, but you must look to the acting of your faith, upon Christ as crucified, and upon Christ as glorified. Souls much in this will be very little and low in their own eyes. The great reason why the soul is no more humble is because faith is no more active.²

[3.] Thirdly, *Study your own natures more, and whatever evil you behold in other men's practices, labour to see the same in your own nature.*

There is the seed of all sins, of the vilest and worst of sins, in the best of men. When thou seest another drunk, thou mayest see the seed of that sin in thy own nature. When thou seest another unclean, the seeds of uncleanness thou mayest see in thy own nature. And in that thou dost not act uncleanness as others, it arises not from the goodness of thy nature, but from the riches of God's grace.³ Remember this, there is not a worse nature in hell than that that is in thee, and it would discover itself accordingly; if the Lord did not restrain it, it would carry thee to those horrid acts that are against the very light of nature.⁴

There was one that was a long time tempted to three horrid sins: to be drunk, to lie with his mother, and to murder his father. Being a

¹ As honey flows naturally from the bee, so does mercy flow naturally from God.

² As one scale goes up, the other goes down; so as faith goes up, the heart goes down.

³ Imibria sued Scenola, for that he received not his weapon deep enough into his body.—*Augustine*. [Qu. Scavola?—G.]

⁴ I have read of an Italian monster, who, taking his enemy upon an advantage, set his dagger to his heart, and made him to abjure and blaspheme the Lord, that so he might save his life; which being done, he thrust him through, and with a bloody triumph, insulting over him, said, Oh, this is right noble and heroic revenge, which doth not only deprive the body of temporal life, but bringeth also the immortal soul to endless flames everlastingly. See what natures you carry with you. It was a good saying of one of the fathers: Other vices are in sins, saith he; but pride and high confidence is most apt to creep in upon duties well done. [Related in Wanley's *Wonders*, with authority, book iv. c. xi.—G.]

long time followed with these horrid temptations, at last he thought to get rid of them, by yielding to that he judged the least, and that was to be drunk; but when he was drunk, he did both lie with his mother and murder his father.¹ Why, such a hellish nature is in every soul that breathes! and did God leave men to act according to their natures, men would be all incarnate devils, and this world a perfect hell. Such is the corruption of our nature, that propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water; but propound any evil, and it is like fire to straw. It is like the foolish satyr that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter, which the naturalists say that it sucks and snatches the fire to it with which it is consumed. There was a holy man that rarely heard of other men's crimson sins, but he usually bedewed the place with his tears, considering that the seeds of those very sins was in his own nature. In thy nature thou hast that that would lead thee with the pharisees to oppose Christ; and with Judas, to betray Christ; and with Pilate, to condemn Christ; and with the soldiers, to crucify Christ, &c. Oh, what a monster, what a devil wouldst thou prove, should God but leave thee to act suitable to that sinful and woful nature of thine!

[4.] Fourthly, *Dwell much upon the imperfection that follows and cleaves to thy best actions.*

Oh the wanderings! Oh the deadness, the dulness, the fruitlessness of thy spirit in religious duties! Man is a creature apt to hug himself in religious services, and to pride himself in holy duties; and to stroke himself after duties, and to warm himself by the sparks of his own fire, his own performances, though he does lie down in sorrow for it, Isa. l. 11. Whenever thou comest off from holy services, sit down, and look over the spots, blots, and blemishes that cleave to your choicest services. The fairest day has its clouds, the richest jewels their flaws, the finest faces their spots, the fairest copies their blots, and so have our finest and fairest duties.

Plutarch tells of a private soldier of Julius Cæsar's, who fought so valiantly in Britain, that by his means he saved the captains, which otherwise were in great danger to be cast away, being driven into a bog, then marching with great pain through the mire and dirt: in the end he got to the other side, but left his shield behind him. Cæsar, wondering at his noble courage, ran to him with joy to embrace him; but the poor soldier, hanging down his head, the water standing in his eyes, fell down at Cæsar's feet, and besought him to pardon him, for that he had left his shield behind him.² You know how to apply it. He had done gallantly, yet he falls down at Cæsar's feet, after his brave service, with tears in his eyes, upon the sense of his leaving his shield behind him. When we have done our best, we have cause to fall down at Jesus's feet, and with tears in our eyes sue out our pardon.

[5.] Fifthly, *In the day of thy prosperity, forget not thy former poverty.*

In the day of thy present greatness, forget not thy former meanness. Humble Jacob, in the day of his prosperity, remembers his former poverty: 'With my staff I passed over Jordan, and now I am become

¹ Given in 'Precious Remedies.' Cf. Vol. I. p. 20, and note.—G.

² Plutarch. [*Julius Cæsar*: Britain.—G.]

two bands,' Gen. xxxii. 10. And so David, in his prosperity, remembered that his sheep-hook was changed into a sceptre, and his seat of turf into a royal throne, Ps. lxxviii. 71, 1 Chron. xvii. And when Joseph was a royal favourite, he remembered that he had been an imprisoned slave. And when Gideon was raised to be a saviour to Israel, he remembered how God took him from the threshing-floor, Judges vi. 11, and how God changed his threshing instrument of wood into one of iron, to thresh the mountains, as God himself phraseth it, Isa. xli. 15.

Primislaus, the first king of Bohemia, kept his country shoes always by him, to remember from whence he was raised.

Agathocles, by the furniture of his table, confessed that from a potter he was raised to be a king of Sicily.

We live in times wherein many a man hath been raised from the dunghill to sit with princes; and oh that such were wise to remember their former low and contemptible beings, and to walk humbly before the Lord! otherwise who can tell but that greater contempt shall be poured forth upon them, than that which they have poured upon princes.

[6.] Sixthly, *Look upon all that you have received, and all that you shall hereafter receive, as the fruit of free grace.*

Look upon thy adoption, and write this motto, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon thy justification, and write this motto, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon all thy graces, and write, These are the fruits of free grace. Look upon thy experiences, and write, These are the fruits of free grace. Look upon thy strength to withstand temptations, and write, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon divine power to conquer corruptions, and write, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon the bread thou eatest, the beer thou drinkest, the clothes thou wearest, &c., and write, These are the fruits of free grace. 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as though thou hadst not received it?' Who maketh thee to differ? Episcopius, a great insolent Arminian, answered, *Ego me ipsum discerno*, I make myself to differ, to wit, by the improvement of nature.

This age is full of such proud monsters; but an humble soul sees free grace to be the spring and fountain of all his mercies and comforts; he writes *free grace* upon all his temporals, and upon all his spirituals, &c.

[7.] The seventh direction is, *Meditate much upon these two things: First, The great mischief that sin hath done in the world.*

It cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise. It hath lain the first corner-stone in hell, and ushered in all the evils and miseries that be in the world. It hath threw down Abraham, the best believer in the world; and Noah, the most righteous man in the world; and Job, the uprightest man in the world; and Moses, the meekest man in the world; and Paul, the greatest apostle in the world. Oh, the diseases, the crosses, the losses, the miseries, the deaths, the hells, that sin hath brought upon the world!

Basil wept when he saw the rose, because it brought to his mind the

first sin, from whence it had the prickles, which it had not while man continued in innocency, as he thought! Oh, when he saw the prickles his soul wept; so when we see, hear, or read of the blood, misery, wars, and ruins that sin has brought upon us, let us weep and lie humble before the Lord.

Secondly, Meditate much on this, *that many wicked men take more pains to damn their souls and go to hell, than thou dost to save thy soul and to get to heaven*, Mat. xxii. 15.

Oh, what pains do wicked men take to damn their souls and go to hell! Lactantius saith of Lucian, that he spared neither God nor man. He took pains to make himself twice told a child of wrath.¹

It is said of Marcellus, the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, *nec victor, nec victus*, neither conquered nor conqueror. Such restless wretches are wicked men. The drunkard rises up in the morning, and continues till midnight, till wine inflame him, Isa. v. 11. The unclean person wastes his time, and strength, and estate, and all to ruin his own soul.

Theotimus, being told by his physician, that if he did not leave his lewd courses, he would lose his sight, answered, *Vale lumen amicum*, then farewell, sweet light.² What a deal of pains does the worldling take! He rises up early, and goes to bed late, and leaves no stone unturned, and all to make himself but the more miserable in the close.

Pambus, in the Ecclesiastical History, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell, and partly because he had not been so careful to please God as she had been to please a wanton lover.³ Oh, sirs! what reason have you to spend your days in weeping? When you look abroad, see what pains most men take to damn their souls and go to hell, and then consider what little pains you take to escape hell, to save your souls, and go to heaven.

[8.] Eighthly, *Get more internal and experimental knowledge and acquaintance with God.*

If ever you would keep humble, no knowledges humbles and abases like that which is inward and experimental. We live in days wherein there is abundance of notional light. Many professors know much of God notionally, but know nothing of God experimentally; they know God in the history, but know nothing of God in the mystery. They know much of God in the letter, but little or nothing of God in the Spirit; and therefore it is that they are so proud and high in their own conceits, whenas he that experimentally knows the Lord is a worm and no man in his own eyes. As the sun is necessary to the world, the eye to the body, the pilot to the ship, the general to the army, so is experimental knowledge to the humbling of a soul. Who more experimental in their knowledge than David, Job, Isaiah, and Paul? And who are more humble than these worthies?⁴

¹ Such a mad devil was Catiline.

² Socrates, Eccl. Hist., lib iv. cap. 28.

³ Ambrose, as before.—G.

⁴ It is a sad thing to be often eating of the tree of knowledge, but never to taste of the tree of life. [The 'History' and 'Mystery' is a favourite distinction of the Puritan divines, and is elaborately carried out by Roberts in his extraordinary and exceedingly rare folio, entitled, 'The Mystery and Marrow of the Bible,' (1657); and also by Ness in

Seneca observed of the philosophers, that when they grew more learned, they were less moral,¹ so a growth in notions will bring a great decay in humility and zeal, as it is too evident in these days. Well, remember this, a drop of experimental knowledge will more humble a man than a sea of notional knowledge.

[9.] Ninthly, *Look up to a crucified Christ for special power and strength against the pride of your hearts.* It is sad in these knowing times to think how few there are that know the right way of bringing under the power of any sin. Most men scarce look so high as a crucified Christ for power against their powerful sins. One soul sits down and complains, Such a lust haunts me, I will pray it down; another saith, Such a sin follows me, and I will hear it down, or watch it down, or resolve it down: and so a crucified Christ is not in all their thoughts. Not but that you are to hear, pray, watch, and resolve against your sins; but above all, you should look to the acting of faith upon a crucified Christ.² As he said of the sword of Goliath, 'None like to that,' so I say, None like to this for the bringing under the pride of men's hearts. The weaker the house of Saul grew, the stronger the house of David grew. The weakening of your pride will be the increase and strengthening of your humility, and therefore what the king of Syria said unto his fifty captains, 'Fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel,' so say I, If you would keep humble, if you will lie low, draw forth your artillery, place your greatest strength against the pride of your souls. The death of pride will be the resurrection of humility. And that this may stick upon you, I shall lay down several propositions concerning pride; and I am so much the more willing to fall upon this work, and to make it the subject of our discourse at this time, because this horrid sin doth appear so boldly and impudently, and that not only among profane persons, but professors also. There are ten propositions that I shall lay down concerning pride.

[1.] And the first is this, *Of all sins pride is most dangerous to the souls of men.*

Pride is a sin that will put the soul upon the worst of sins. Pride is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague. It is the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the moth of holiness, the blinder of hearts, the turner of medicines into maladies, and remedies into diseases. It is the original and root of most of those notorious vices that be to be found among the children of men. It was pride that put Herod upon seeking the blood of Christ. It was pride that put the Pharisees upon the persecuting of Christ. It was pride that made Athaliah destroy all the seed-royal of the house of Judah, that he might reign, 2 Chron. xxi. 10. It was pride that put Joab upon murdering perfidiously, under colour of friendship, Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 27, and Amasa, 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10. Zimri, out of ambition to reign, murdered Elah his lord, 1 Kings xvi. 8-10. Omri, out of pride and ambition to reign, rose up against Zimri, and enforced him to burn his not less remarkable and equally rare work, 'History and Mystery' of the Bible, 4 vols. folio, 1696.—G.]

¹ *De Constantia Sapientis et Epistolæ.*—G.

² Ps. x. 4. It was the blood of the sacrifice and the oil that cleansed the leper in the law, and that by them was meant the blood of Christ and the grace of his Spirit, is agreed by all.

himself in the king's palace, 1 Kings xvi. 18. It is pride that hath ushered in all the contentions that be in towns, cities, countries, families, and pulpits throughout the world. It was pride and ambition to reign that put Absalom upon pursuing his father's life, from whom he had received life.¹

It is very remarkable, that the pride and ambition of Nebuchadnezzar did usher in the destruction of the Assyrian monarchy; and the ambition and pride of Cyrus that did usher in the overthrow of the Babylonian monarchy; and the ambition and pride of Alexander was the cause of the annihilation of the Persian monarchy; and it was the pride and ambition of the Roman commanders that was the cause of the utter subversion of the Grecian monarchy. There is no tongue that can express, nor heart that can conceive, the horrid sins and miseries that pride hath ushered in among the children of men. All sin will down with a proud heart that is resolved to rise. Great sins are no sins with such a soul; he makes nothing of those very sins that would make the very heathen to blush.

[2.] The second proposition that I shall lay down concerning pride is this,

Where pride hath possessed itself thoroughly of the soul, it turns the heart into steel, yea, into a rock.

As you may see in Pharaoh. Pride turned his heart into steel, yea, into a very rock. God strikes again and again; he sends plague upon plague; and yet the more he is plagued, the more he is hardened. His pride turned his soul into a rock: he is no more sensible of the frowns of God, the threatenings of God, the plagues, the strokes of God, than a rock. Pride had hardened his heart; he stirs not, he yields not.²

It was the pride of Saul that turned his heart into steel: 'I have sinned,' saith he, 'yet honour me before the people,' 1 Sam. xv. 30. God gave him many a blow, many a knock, and many a check, and yet, after all, 'Honour me before the people.' Oh how desperately was his heart hardened in pride! In Dan. v. 18, Nebuchadnezzar's mind, saith the text, 'was hardened in pride.' He saw the vengeance of the Almighty upon his predecessors, and God took him up, and lashed him till the blood came, and yet he made nothing of it, because his heart was hardened in pride. Pride sets a man in opposition against God. Other sins are aversions from God, but this sin is a coming against God. In other sins a man flies from God, but in this sin a man flies upon God: James iv. 6, 'God resisteth the proud.' A man doth not resist another till he is set upon; the traveller doth not resist until such time as the thief sets upon him. Saith the text, 'God resisteth the proud.' It intimates thus much to us, that the proud heart sets upon God himself, and therefore God resists him. The Greek word is ἀντιτάσσεται; he places himself in battle array against the proud. God brings forth his *battalia* against the proud, and they bring forth their *battalia* against God. A proud heart resists, and is resisted; this is *duro durum*,

¹ A world of instances out of histories might be given, if it were needful, further to evidence this truth.

² Proud souls are of his mind that said, *Non persuadebis, etiam si persuaseris*, though you do convince me, yet will I not be convinced.

flint to flint, fire to fire; yet in the day of God's wrath the proud shall be burnt up as stubble, both branch and root, Mal. iv. 1.

[3.] The third proposition concerning pride is this,

Pride is a sin that shales forth and shews itself not one way, but many ways.

For instance,

First, Sometimes it shews itself in the looks, Prov. vi. 17: he tells you of seven things that the Lord hates, and one is a proud look. The Hebrew word there is, 'The haughty eye.' The haughty eye God hates. Men's hearts usually shew themselves in their eyes: Ps. cxxxi. 1, 'Mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eye lofty.' There be such who shew pride in their very looks, but the Lord looks aloof at them, Ps. cxxxviii. 6.¹

Secondly, Sometimes pride shews itself in words: Dan. iv. 30, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' and in chap. iii. 15, 'Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?' It was a very proud saying of one, *Cœlum gratis non accipiam*, I will not have heaven but at a rate; and of another, 'We have not so lived and deserved of God that the enemy should vanquish us.' These were the proud ones, that spake loftily, and that set their mouths against the heavens, as the psalmist speaks, Ps. lxxiii. 6, 8, 9, compared. And such a one was Henry the Second. Hearing that his city Mentz was taken, he used this proud blasphemous speech, 'I shall never love God any more, that suffered a city so dear to me to be taken away from me.' Such a proud wretch, both in words and actions, was Sennacherib, as you may see in Isa. xxxvii., from ver. 8 to 18.

Thirdly, Sometimes pride shews itself in the habit of the body; so Herod's pride appeared: Acts xii. 21, Herod was 'arrayed in royal apparel.' In cloth of silver, saith Josephus,² which, being beaten upon by the sunbeams, dazzled the people's eyes, and drew from them that blasphemous acclamation, 'It is the voice of God, and not of man.' The people being most commonly like the Bohemian curs, that used to fawn upon a good suit; so the rich man, Luke xvi. 19, was clothed in purple, *καὶ βύσσου*, and in silk. He was commonly so clothed; it was his every-day's wear, as the Greek word *ἐνεδιδύσκετο* implieth.

Quest. But here a question may be asked, May not persons habit themselves according to their dignities, ranks, and places that God hath put them in in the world?

Ans. I answer, They may, and ought so to do. If God hath lifted them up in the world above others, they may wear better apparel than others, Gen. xli. 42, Esther vi. 8, Ps. xlv. 13, 14, 2 Sam. xiii. 18, Lam. iv. 5, Mat. xi. 8, Gen. xxvii. 15, Isa. lii. 1, Hosea ii. 13, Exod. xxviii. 40. I cite these scriptures so much the rather, because some, through weakness and peevishness, stumble and are not satisfied herein. There is nothing in the law of God or nature against it.

Quest. But you may say, May not persons sin in their apparel?

Ans. I answer, Yes, and that in four cases.

[1.] When it is not modest, but carries with it provocation to lust

¹ *Profecto oculis animus inhabitat.*—Pliny. [Cf. Nat. Hist., lib xi. cap. 54, *et alibi.*—G.]

² *Antiq.*, xix. 8, 2.—G.

and wantonness: Prov. vii. 10, 'There met the young man a woman in the attire of an harlot.' The Hebrew word signifies a habit or ornament finely set and fitted to the body; and saith the text, 'She was subtle of heart,' or trussed up about the breasts, with her upper parts naked; so Levi-Ben-Gersom reads the words, 'She met him with her naked breasts,' at this day too commonly used by such as would not be held harlots. Oh what a horrid shame and reproach is it to religion, the ways of God, and the people of God, that professors should go so! One saith 'that superfluous apparel is worse than whoredom, because whoredom only corrupts chastity, but this corrupts nature.' Another saith, 'If women adorn themselves so as to provoke men to lust after them, though no ill follow upon it, yet those women shall suffer eternal damnation, because they offered poison to others, though none should drink of it.'¹

[2.] Persons sin in their apparel whenas they exceed their degree and rank in costly apparel, which is that which is condemned by the apostle, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 1 Pet. iii. 3. The apostle doth not simply condemn the wearing of gold, but he condemns it in those that go above their degree and rank. The words are rather an admonition than a prohibition.

[3.] It is sinful when it is so expensive as that it hinders works of mercy and charity. Oh how many proud souls be there in these days that lay so much upon their backs, that they can spare nothing to fill the poor's bellies. 'Silk doth quench the fire of the kitchen,' saith the French proverb. The meaning is, that it doth hinder works of charity and mercy. Surely those that put on such costly ornaments upon their backs as close up the hand of charity, will at last share with Dives in his misery.

[4.] When persons habit themselves in strange and foreign fashions, which is the sin, shame, and reproach of many among us in these days. Now that is strange apparel which is not peculiar to the nations where men live. The Lord threatens to punish such, Zeph. i. 8, that are clothed with strange apparel. There are too many women and men in our days that are like the Egyptian temples, very gypsies, painted without and spotted within; varnish without and vermin within.

Mercury being to make a garment for the moon, as one saith, could never fit her, but either the garment would be too big or too little, by reason she was always increasing or decreasing. May not this be applied to the vain curiosity of too too many professors in these days, whose curiosity about their clothes can never be satisfied?

I shall conclude this head with this counsel: Clothe yourselves with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity, and with the purple of modesty, and God himself will be a suitor to you. Let not the ornaments upon your backs speak out the vanity of your hearts.

Fourthly, Sometimes pride shews itself by the gesture and carriage of the body. Isa. iii. 16, The daughters of Sion 'were haughty, and walked with stretched out necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a tinkling with their feet.' Oh earth! earth! dost thou not groan to bear such monsters as these?

¹ These and even more vehement rebukes will be found in Thomas Hall's 'Loathsomeness of Long Hair,' &c. 1654.—G.

Fifthly, And sometimes pride shews itself in contemptuous challenges of God; as Pharaoh, 'Who is the God of the Hebrews, that I should obey him?'

Sixthly, Sometimes pride shews itself by bragging promises, 'I will arise, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, and my lusts shall be satisfied,' Exod. xv. 9.

[4.] The fourth proposition that I shall lay down is this:

Pride is a sin that of all sins makes a man or woman most like to Satan.

Pride is *morbus Satanicus*, Satan's disease. Pride is so base a disease, that God had rather see his dearest children to be buffeted by Satan, than that in pride they should be like to Satan. When Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7, under the abundance of revelations, was in danger of being puffed up, the Lord, rather than he would have him proud like to Satan, suffers him to be buffeted by Satan. Humility makes a man like to angels, and pride makes an angel a devil. Pride is worse than the devil, for the devil cannot hurt thee till pride hath possessed thee. If thou would see the devil limned to the life, look upon a proud soul; for as face answers to face, so doth a proud soul answer to Satan. Proud souls are Satan's apes, and none imitate him to the life like these. And oh that they were sensible of it, before it be too late, before the door of darkness be shut upon them!

[5.] A fifth proposition is this:

Pride cannot climb so high, but justice will sit above her.

One asked a philosopher what God was a-doing? He answered, That his whole work was to exalt the humble and pull down the proud. It was pride that turned angels into devils; they would be above others in heaven, and therefore God cast them down to hell. Pride, saith Hugo, was born in heaven, but forgetting by what way she fell from thence, she could never find the way thither again. The first man would know as God, and the Babel-builders would dwell as God, but justice set above them all. This truth you see verified in the justice of God upon Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, Belshazzar, and Nebuchadnezzar; all these would be very high, but justice takes the right hand of them all, and brings them down to the dust. Yea, pride cannot climb so high in the hearts of saints, but divine justice will be above it. Uzziah his heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, but justice smites him with a leprosy, and so he died, out of grief and sorrow, saith Josephus.¹ David glories in his own greatness, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, *seq.*, and for this seventy thousand fall by the hand of justice. Hezekiah's heart was lifted up, but wrath was upon him, and upon all Judah and Jerusalem for it, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, *seq.* Pride sets itself against the honour, being, and sovereignty of God, and therefore justice will in spite of all sit above her. Other sins strike at the word of God, the people of God, and the creatures of God, but pride strikes directly at the very being of God, and therefore justice will be above her.

Nebuchadnezzar was proud, and God smites his reason, and turns him into a beast. Oh! how many young professors are there in our days, who have been proud of their notions, and proud of their parts and gifts, and justice hath so smitten them, that they have lost that life, that

¹ *Antiq.*, ix. 10, sec. 4.—G.

sweetness, that spiritualness, that quickness that once they had, and are dried and shrivelled up by a hand of justice.¹ They are like the apples of Sodom, glorious without, but rotten and worthless within. Some there are that have been very shining, yet by reason of pride have fallen from a seeming excellency to be naught, and from naught to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught. Isa. xxiii. 9, 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt' (or to make light) 'all the honourable of the earth.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered *purposed*, signifies to consult, or take counsel.² It is consulted and agreed upon in counsel, that he will stain the pride of all glory, and bring into contempt the honourable of the earth; and the counsel of the Lord shall stand, Ps. xxxiii. 11; Isa. ii. 11, 12, 'The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.'

Divine justice will take the right hand of all proud ones on the earth. God bears, as I may say, a special spleen against pride. His heart hates it, Prov. vi. 16, 17; his mouth curses it, Ps. cxix. 21; and his hand plagueth it, as you have seen in the former instances, and as you may see further in these following instances:

The king of Egypt, that Jeremiah prophesied against, in his forty-fourth chapter, was so puffed up with pride, that he boasted his kingdom was so surely settled, that it could not be taken from him either by God or man; not long after he was taken in battle by Amasis, one of his own subjects, and hanged up.³

Dionysius the tyrant said in the pride of his heart, that his kingdom was bound to him with chains of adamant; but time soon confuted him, for he was driven out, and forced to teach a school at Corinth for a poor living.⁴

Cares, a soldier, being proud of his valour, because he had given Cyrus a great wound, shortly after he ran mad. In all ages there are notable instances to prove that pride has not got so high, but justice has set above her.

[6.] The sixth proposition is this,

Of all sins spiritual pride is most dangerous, and must be most resisted.

Spiritual pride is the lifting up of the mind against God; it is a tumor and swelling in the mind, and lies in contemning and slighting of God, his word, promises, and ordinances, and in the lifting up of a man's self, by reason of birth, breeding, wealth, honour, place, relation, gifts or graces, and in despising of others. Of this spiritual pride Habakkuk speaks, chap. ii. 4, 'His heart that is lifted up in him, is not upright.' Prov. xvi. 5, 'Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomi-

¹ Staupicus was proud of his memory, and justice smote it.

² יַעֲצֶה, deliberately to consult and agree upon a thing.

³ Pharaoh-hophra (Jer. xlv. 30, *as above*), called by Herodotus Apries, and by him designated 'proud' (b. ii. 169, *et alibi*); but in contradiction of Amasis having 'hung' him, is the text and Ezek. xxix. 19, and xxxi. 11, 15, 18; whence Josephus (*Antiq.*, b. x. c. 11), and Jerome (in *Jerem. Thren.*, c. 4), make Nebuchadnezzar to have been the slayer of him.—G.

⁴ Plutarch: Dionysius, 7.—G.

nation to the Lord ;' or, that 'lifts up his heart against God,' or his decrees ; as Lewis the Eleventh did, in that proud speech of his, *Si salvabor, salvabor ; si vero damnabor, damnabor*. 'If I shall be saved, I shall be saved ; and if I shall be damned, I shall be damned ; and there is all the care that I shall take.' Like to this, was that proud and wretched speech of one Rufus, who painted God on the one side of his shield, and the devil on the other, with this mad motto : 'If thou wilt not have me, here is one will.' Spiritual pride is a white devil, as one calls it,¹ a gilded poison, by which God is robbed of his honour, a man's own soul of his comfort and peace, and others of that benefit and fruit which otherwise they might receive from us. Satan is subtle ; he will make a man proud of his very graces ; he will make him proud that he is not proud. Pride grows with the decrease of other sins, and thrives by their decay. Other sins are nourished by poisonous roots, as adultery is nourished by idleness, and gluttony and murder by malice and envy ; but this white devil, spiritual pride, springs from good duties and good actions towards God and man. Spiritual pride is a very great enemy to the good and salvation of man. Pride is like a very great swelling, which unfits men for any service.

Again, spiritual pride is a very great enemy to the good and salvation of men. The Greek word signifies *swelleth*, for pride is like a great swelling in the body, which unfits it for any good service. John v. 40, 'You will not come to me, that you may have life ;' and ver. 44, 'How can ye believe in me, which seek honour one of another?' Christ blesses his Father, Mat. xi. 25, that he had 'hid those things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes and sucklings.' It is the pride of men's hearts that makes them throw off ordinances, as poor and low things, when, alas ! in their practices they live below the power, beauty, glory, and holiness of the least and lowest ordinance. There's more holiness, purity, and glory manifested in the lowest administrations of Christ, than is held forth by them, in their highest practices.

[7.] The seventh proposition is this,

Pride un-mans a man ; it makes him do acts that are below a man.

As you may see in Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. It makes men bedlams, to say they know not what, and to do they care not what. It was pride that made Hildebrand to cause Henry the Fourth to stand three days at his gate, with his wife and his child, barefooted. It was pride that made Adonibezek cause three-score and ten kings, with their thumbs and great toes cut off, Judges i. 5-7, to gather their meat under his table. Oh ! what wretched unmanly acts hath the pride of many persons put them upon.

[8.] The eighth proposition is this,

The poorest are oftentimes the proudest.

Pretty is the parable of Jotham : the best trees refused to be king, but the bramble affected it ; and did *sperare et aspirare*, hope and aspire it, Judges ix. 15. So in 2 Kings xiv. 9, 'The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife.' Hagar the kitchen-maid will be proud,

¹ Thomas Adams, whose 'White Devil' is one of his most remarkable sermons. See Works, vol. ii. pp. 221, *et seq.*—G.

and insult over her mistress Sarah, Gen. xxi. The poor sons of Zebedee would sit at Christ's right hand and left, Mat. xx. 20, 21. And those that Job disdains to set with the dogs of his flock, yet contemn him in the day of his sorrow, Job xxx. 1. The foot strives to be equal with the head, the servant as the master, the cobbler as the councillor, and the peasant as the prince, &c.

[9.] The ninth proposition is this,

Pride is a sure fore-runner of a fall.

'Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty mind before a fall,' Prov. xvi. 18, xviii. 12. Herod fell from a throne of gold to a bed of dust. Nebuchadnezzar fell from the state of a mighty king, to be a beast. Adam fell from innocency to mortality. The angels fell from heaven to hell, from felicity to misery.

[10.] The tenth and last proposition is this :

God will by an invincible power carry the day against proud souls.

You that it escape,¹ and ruffle it out, and carry it with a high hand, remember this, God will by an invisible power carry the day against you ; when you think not of it, he will eat you like a moth. Isa. xlvi. 10, 11, 'For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness, thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee. And thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt know not from whence it riseth ; and mischief shall fall upon thee, and thou shalt not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.' Impunity oftentimes causeth impudency, but *quod differtur non aufertur*, forbearance is no acquittance. The longer the hand is lifted up, the heavier will be the blow at last. Of all metals, lead is the coldest, but being melted, it becomes the hottest. Humble souls know how to apply this, and proud souls shall sooner or later experience this.²

II. I shall now proceed to a second observation,

Namely,

That all saints are not of an equal size and growth in grace and holiness.

Some are higher, and some are lower ; some are stronger and some are weaker, in spiritual graces and heavenly excellencies. 'Unto me who am less than the least,' &c.

Among true believers, some may be found to be but weak believers. This point flows as natural from the words as the stream does from the fountain, and no point more clear in all the Scripture than this.

In Rom. xiv. 1, you read of some that are weak in the faith ; 'Them that are weak in the faith receive,' saith the apostle. None are to be rejected in whom *aliquid Christi*, anything of Christ, is to be found. And so Mat. xiv. 31, there is mention made of 'little faith.' I Cor. ix. 22, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.' You read of babes in grace : 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, 'As new-born babes, desire the

¹ Qu. 'You that think to escape'?—G.

² Pope Innocent the Fourth, as he was walking securely in his palace, heard that sorrowful and dreadful summons, *Veni miser in judicium*, come, thou wretch, receive thy judgment ; and soon after he was found dead. Eccles. viii. 11.

sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' 1 John ii. 12-14, there is mention made of 'little children, of young men, and of fathers.' All are not fathers in grace, nor all are not young men in grace; there are some children in grace. A Christian in this life hath his degrees of growth; he is first a child in grace, and then a young man in grace, and then a father in grace.¹

For the further opening of this point, I shall endeavour these four things.

I. I shall endeavour to decipher to you souls weak in grace.

II. I shall endeavour to lay down those things that may encourage, support, and comfort souls that are weak in grace.

III. I shall speak to the duties that lie upon those that are weak in grace.

IV. The duties that lie upon those that are strong in grace, towards those that are weak in grace.

Of these four we shall speak, as the Lord shall assist.

I. I shall begin with the first, *To decipher souls weak in grace.*

The *first* thing by which I shall decipher souls weak in grace is this:

[1.] *Weak Christians are usually carried much out after the poor low things of this world.*

They are much in carking and caring for them, and in pursuing and hunting greedily after them. That is a clear text for this: Mat. vi. 24, to the end. Christ labours by several weighty arguments to fence and fortify his disciples against those diffident, doubtful, carking cares, that divide, distract, distemper, torture, and tear the heart in a thousand pieces. And yet neither these arguments, nor yet the presence of him who was the great landlord of heaven and earth, and whose love and bowels were still yearning towards them, and whose special eye of providence was still over them, could rid their heads and hearts of these worldly cares that do but vex and perplex the souls of men. And it is very observable, that after this smart lecture that Christ had read them, they did strive three several times who should be greatest and highest in worldly enjoyments. Their hearts should have been only in heaven, and yet they strive for earth, as if there were no heaven, or as if earth were better than heaven. All which does clearly evidence, that their graces were very weak, and their corruptions very strong. Men that have little of the upper springs within, are carried out much after the springs below. Baruch was good, but weak in grace; he had but some sips and tastes of the glory of that other world, and that made him, when God was a-pulling down all worldly glory, to seek for earth as if there were no heaven, Jer. xlv. 1-5. Certainly there is but little of Christ and grace within, where the heart is, so strongly carried out after these things without. Where there is such strong love and workings of heart after these poor things, it speaks our soul's enjoyment of God to be but poor and low.

¹ It is with Christians as it is with planets: the moon goes her course in a month, the sun in a year, the rest not in many years; yet at length they finish.

In the Old Testament, the Jews, being babes and infants in grace and holiness, had a world of temporal promises, and very few spiritual promises. But now in the days of the gospel, the Lord is pleased to double and treble his Spirit upon his people, and now you meet with very few temporal promises in the gospel, but the gospel is filled with spiritual promises. The gospel drops nothing but marrow and fatness, love and sweetness; and therefore God looks in these days that men should grow up to a greater height of holiness, heavenliness, and spiritualness, than what they attained to in those dark days, wherein the sun shined but dimly. Men rich and strong in grace look upon the world with a holy scorn and disdain, as Themistocles, when he saw in the dark a thing like a pearl, he scorned to stoop for it himself, saying to another, 'Stoop thee, for thou art not Themistocles.'¹ Abraham, a man strong in grace, looked with a holy scorn and with an eye of disdain upon these poor things. When Melchisedec from God had made him heir of all things, he refused the riches that the king of Sodom offered him, because God was his shield and his exceeding great reward, Gen. xiv. 21, xv. 1. The greatest bargain that a soul rich in grace will make with God for himself is this, 'Give me but bread to eat and clothes to wear, and thou shalt be my God.' So it was with that brave soul, Gen. xxviii. 21, he desires but food and raiment. Mark, he asks food, not junkets;² raiment, not ornaments. A little will serve a man that is strong in grace, much will not serve a man that is weak in grace, nothing will serve a man that is void of grace. Souls weak in grace, have their hearts much working after these poor low things; as you may see, Mat. xviii. 1, 'Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' The question is stated by the disciples, that one would have thought should have had their hearts and thoughts in heaven; but they dreamed of an earthly kingdom, where honours and offices should be distributed, as in the days of David and Solomon. And it is observable in Mark ix. 33, 34, they are at it again: 'And he came to Capernaum; and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace' (they were ashamed to tell him); 'for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be greatest.' Saith one, I'll have this, and saith another, I'll have that, &c.; or as it is in the Greek, 'they disputed who was greatest;' so in Luke ix. 46. Says one, I am greater than thou; No, says another, I am greatest: *τις μείζων*, who was greatest. It is an argument of a childish disposition to be taken more with rattles and baubles than with jewels and pearls. That Christian hath little of the power of grace within him, whose heart is so strongly carried out to these vanities below. Men that are grown up to years of understanding prefer one piece of gold above a thousand new counters. A soul that is strong in grace, that is high in its spiritual enjoyments, prefers one good word from God, one good look from Christ, above all the glory of this world. 'Lord,' saith he, 'lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.' Warm my heart with the beams of thy love, and then a little of these things will suffice. You see Moses and all those worthies in the 11th of the Hebrews, who were men strong in grace, how bravely they trample upon all things below God. They left their families and their countries,

¹ Plutarch, as before.—G.

² 'Dainties.'—G.

where they lived like princes, to wander in a wilderness, upon the bare command of God.¹ So Luther, a man strong in grace, when he had a gown and money given him by the elector, he turned himself about, and said, 'I protest God shall not put me off with these poor low things.' Souls that know by experience what the bosom of Christ is, what spiritual communion is, what the glory of heaven is, will not be put off by God nor man with things that are mixed, mutable, and momentary. And to shame many professors in these days, I might bring in a cloud of witnesses; even from among the very heathen, who never heard of a crucified Christ, and yet were more crucified to things below Christ than many of them that pretend much to Christ. But I shall forbear, only desiring that those that think and speak so scornfully and contemptuously of heathens may not at last be found worse than heathens; yea, be judged and condemned by heathens in the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Secondly, In order to a further deciphering of weak Christians, I shall lay down this :

[2.] *That weak saints do usually overfear troubles before they come; yea, those future evils that, forty to one, may never fall out.*

The very empty thoughts and conceit of trouble is very terrible and perplexing to a weak saint. When it was told the house of David, saying, 'Syria is confederate with Ephraim,' his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind, Isa. vii. 2. Their heart quaked and quivered, as we say, like an aspen leaf. It is an elegant expression, shewing, in their extremity, the baseness of their fears, arguing no courage or spirit at all in them. The very news and conceit of trouble or calamities, oh how doth it perplex, and vex, and grieve, and overwhelm weak Christians!² The very hearing of trouble at a distance makes them to stagger and reel, and ready to say, 'Will God now save? Will he now deliver?' It puts them into those shaking fits, that they know not what to do with themselves, nor how to perform the service they owe to God or man. Now tell me, can you call that a stout spirit, a strong spirit, that is daunted with the very report and thoughts of calamity? Or that does torment men with immoderate fear of a thousand things that happily shall never fall out; as fears of foreign invasions, or fears of home-bred confusions, fears of change of religion, or being surprised with such or such diseases, or being ruined in their outward estate by such and such devices or disadvantages, or by falling under the frowns of such a great man, or under the anger and revenge of such and such a man, and a thousand such like things. Now, this speaks out much weakness in grace. Souls strong in grace are carried above these fears; yea, with the leviathan in Job, they can laugh at the shaking of a spear, chap. xli. 29. They can say with David,

¹ The philosopher preferred the king's countenance before his coin. [Said of Socrates in Plato, as before.—G.]

² The chameleon, saith Pliny, is the most fearful of all creatures, and doth therefore turn into all colours to save itself; and so it is often with weak Christians. . . . Pray for me, said Latimer in his letter to Ridley; for I am sometimes so fearful, that I would creep into a mouse-hole.—[Foze] *Acts et Mon.* 1565. [Rather, 'A Conference had betwixt Master Ridley and Master Latimer in Prison,' &c. Foze, by Townsend, vii. 423. The words are touchingly humble: 'Pardon me, and pray for me; pray for me, I say; pray for me, I say. For I am sometimes so fearful, that I would creep, into a mouse-hole.'—G.]

‘Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil; for thou art with us, thy rod and thy staff do comfort us,’ Ps. xxiii. 4. But weak souls are afraid of their own shadow. The very shadow of trouble will exceedingly trouble such souls, and oftentimes make their lives a very hell.¹

[3.] *Thirdly, Fainting in the day of adversity speaks of a soul to be but weak in grace.*

Weak Christians are overcome with little crosses. The least cross doth not only startle them, but it sinks them, and makes them ready to sit down and to cry out with the church, ‘Behold you that pass by, see whether there be any sorrow like my sorrow,’ Lam. i. 12. Before trouble comes, weak Christians are apt to think that they can bear much and endure much; but, alas! when the day of trial comes upon them, when they are put to it, they prove but men of poor and impotent spirits, and then they roar, and complain, and lie down in the dust, suffering crosses and losses to bind them hand and foot, and to spoil them of all their comforts. And now though they have many comforts for one cross, yet one cross doth so damp and daunt their hearts, that joy and comfort flies away from them, and they sit down overwhelmed. Certainly this speaks out little of Christ within. All Rachel’s comforts were no comforts, because her children were not. This speaks out much weakness within.

Prov. xxiv. 10, ‘If thou faintest in the day of adversity, thy strength is small;’ if thou shrinkest, if thou abatest and slackest, in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. Man hath no trial of his strength till he be in trouble; faintness then discovers weakness. Afflictions try what sap we have, as hard weather tries what health we have. A weak Christian sinks under a little burden; every frown, every sour word, every puff of wind blows him down, and makes him sink under his burden. But now a soul strong in grace bears up bravely against all winds and weather. That is a brave text, and worthy to be written in letters of gold, that you have in Gen. xlix. 23, 24, ‘Joseph’s bow abode in strength, though the archers sorely grieved him, shot at him, and hated him. And the arms of his hands were made strong, by the mighty God of Jacob.’ The archers that sorely grieved him were his barbarous brethren that sold him; his adulterous mistress that, harlot-like, hunted for his precious life; his injurious master, that without any desert of his, imprisoned him; the tumultuating Egyptians, that were pined with hunger, perhaps spake of stoning him; and the envious courtiers and enchanters spake evilly of him before Pharaoh, to bring him out of favour. All these, shot sorely at him. The word that is rendered *archers* in the Hebrew, *בעל*, is arrow-masters, which term implieth cunning and skilfulness in shooting. They were cunning and skilful to hit the mark, and they shot at him, as at a mark; but yet ‘his bow abode in strength.’ When God in the midst of weakness makes a soul strong, that soul will not only face enemies and difficulties, but triumph over them. Those that are strong in grace seldom want courage or counsel when they are at the worst. They always find their hope to be an anchor at sea, and their faith a shield upon land; and therefore they triumph in all storms and dangers. They stand firm

¹ Bucephalus was not afraid of his burden; the shadow only frightened him. So weak Christians are afraid of the shadow of the cross.

when they are under the greatest pressures : 2 Cor. xi. 23, 'In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often,' &c. And yet he triumphs in 2 Cor. i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' Strong Paul rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and therefore often sings it out : 'I, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ;' not 'I Paul, rapt up in the third heaven.' He preferred his crown of thorns before a crown of gold, his prison rags above all royal robes.¹

[4.] *Fourthly, A weak Christian thinks that little to be much that he suffers for Christ.*

In Mat. xix. 27, then 'answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?' Their worldly case in following Christ, was little worse than when they only traded in fishing; and yet, 'we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?' This their all was not worth a speaking of, and yet, for this they look for some great worldly reward and recompence. 'We have forsaken all.' A great all sure! a few broken boats, and a few tattered and torn nets, and a little old household stuff, and Christ maintained them too, upon his own cost and charge; and yet say they, 'We have forsaken all, and followed thee.' Neither is it without an emphasis, that they begin with a *Behold*; 'Behold we have forsaken all,' as if Christ were greatly beholding to them. Let their wills be but crossed a little, by servants, children, friends, &c, or let them but suffer a little in their names or estates, &c., and presently you shall have them a-sighing it out, 'No sorrow like our sorrow,' no loss to our loss, no cross to our cross, &c.² Whereas souls strong in grace suffer much, and yet count that much but little. A soul strong in grace can suffer much, and yet make nothing of it. I am heartily angry, saith Luther, who suffered very much, with those that speak of my sufferings, which if compared with that which Christ suffered for me, are not once to be mentioned in the same day, &c.³

[5.] *Fifthly, Those that are weak in grace dwell more upon what may discourage them in the ways of grace and holiness, than they do upon what may encourage them.*

They dwell more upon their sins than upon a Saviour; more upon their misery, than upon free grace and mercy; more upon that which may feed their fears, than upon that that may strengthen their faith; more upon the cross, than upon the crown; more upon those that are against them, than those that are for them: Isa. li. 12, 13, 'I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?' The same is intimated Rom. iv. 19, 20, 'Abraham, being not weak in faith, he

¹ If we perish, Christ perisheth with us, said Luther. ['Table Talk,' as before.—G.]

² Weak Christians are like children; they look for a great reward for a little work.

³ 'Table Talk,' as before.—G.

considered not his own body being dead, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.' Mark, 'being not weak in faith.' Souls weak in faith are very apt to dwell upon discouragements, but strong Christians look above all discouragements.

'He considered not.' The Greek is *ὁ κατενόησε* he cared not for his own body, he did not mind that; but in the 20th verse, 'he considered him that had promised.' Souls strong in grace dwell more upon their encouragements to holiness and believing, than upon their discouragements. 'He considered him that had promised.' He had an eye fixed upon the faithfulness of God, and the sufficiency and almightiness of God, and this bore up his heart above all discouragements. So in 2 Cor. iv. 16-18, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory; while we look not (mark, they are not doating upon their discouragements) upon things that are seen, but upon things that are not seen: the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.' An eye fixed upon encouragements makes heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet. Those blessed martyrs found it so, that were cast out all night, in a cold frosty night, naked, and were to be burnt the next day, who thus comforted themselves, The winter is sharp, but paradise is sweet; here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of Abraham will make amends for all. Weak Christians have eyes to behold their discouragements, but none to see their encouragements; they look more upon their corruption than upon their sanctification; upon their disobedience than their obedience; upon their distrust than upon their faith; upon the old man than upon the new; and this keeps them low and weak in spirituals, it causes a leanness in their souls.

[6.] *Sixthly, The zeal of weak Christians usually outstrips their wisdom and knowledge.*

Weak Christians are very zealous, but not according to knowledge: Rom. x. 2, 'For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' They were very zealous, but not true zealots, they are very peevish and pettish and censorious; but they want wisdom and knowledge to manage their zeal, to God's glory and their brethren's good. Such zeal had those two rabbins that set upon Charles the Fifth, to persuade him to turn Jew, as judging their religion to be the only religion in the world, and for which they were put to a cruel death, in the year 1530.¹ A great zeal they had to the winning over of him to Judaism, but this zeal was their ruin. Zeal without knowledge is as wild-fire in a fool's hand; it is like the devil in the demoniac, that sometimes cast him into the fire, and sometimes into the water. So the disciples of Christ were weak in their light, and furious in their zeal: Luke ix. 54, 'Let fire come down from heaven, and consume them,' say they. But mark what Christ saith, ver. 55: 'Ye know not what manner of spirits ye are of; that is, ye know not what spirit acts you. You think that you are acted by such a spirit as Elijah of old was acted by, but you err, saith Christ; 'you have a zeal, but not according to knowledge,' therefore it is a human affection and not a divine motion. Zeal is like fire: in the chimney it is one of the best servants, but out of the chimney it is one of the worst masters.

¹ David Rubenita, and Shilomeh Molcha. Alsted. Chr. 426.

Zeal kept by knowledge and wisdom, in its proper place, is a choice servant to Christ and saints; but zeal not bounded by wisdom and knowledge, is the high way to undo all, and to make a hell for many at once.¹

Weak Christians are usually most zealous about circumstances and things that have least of God and Christ and the power of holiness in them; and most cold about substances, as woful experience doth evidence in these days. Zeal ordered by wisdom, feeds upon the faults of offenders, not on their persons. It spends itself and its greatest heat principally upon those things that concern a man's self. It is most exercised about substantials: Tit. ii. 14, but that which is rash, is most exercised about circumstantial; Gal. i. 14, Paul was, in the days of his ignorance, very zealous for the traditions of his fathers, &c.

[7.] *Seventhly, Among all saints, the weakest saints act most like carnal sinners.*

No saint so like a sinner as a weak saint: 1 Cor. iii. 1-5, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For are ye not yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?' They were advanced but very little above the imperfections and passions and sins of mere men, of such which had nothing of the Spirit in them, &c. Do wicked men quarrel with their teachers, as shallow trivial teachers, when themselves are in fault, as being not capable of more mysterious matter? So did these babes here. Do wicked men impute their not profiting to the minister, as he that, having a thorn in his foot, complains of the roughness of the way as the cause of his limping, whenas it was the thorn and not the roughness of the way that hurt him. Or as she, that, being struck with a sudden blindness, bid open the window, whenas it was not the want of light, but want of sight, that troubled her. So did these babes in the text lay the fault of their non-proficiency upon their teachers, when the fault was wholly in themselves.²

Now he calls them *carnal*, partly because the flesh was strong in them, and partly because they followed and relished the things of the flesh, and partly because they did in their actions resemble carnal men. Do carnal and wicked men cry up one good man, and cry down another? Do they lift up one, and abase another? So did they. Are wicked men full of envy, strife, and divisions? So were they. And these overflowings of the gall and spleen, come from a fulness of bad humours, from that abundance of carnality that was in them. But now souls strong in grace are higher than carnal men, as Saul was higher than the people by head and shoulders. Souls strong in grace have their feet where carnal men's heads are: Prov. xv. 24, 'The way of life is above to the

¹ Josephus, in the 11th and 12th chapters of his book, tells you of some that imposed the name of Zelote upon themselves, as if they were zealous for the honour and service of God, and under this pretence committed all riots and imaginable wickedness. It were well if we had no such monsters among us in these days. [Zealots; Antiq., b. iv. 10, *seq.*, *et alibi*.—G.]

² In many things, weak Christians are carnal men's apes.

wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Souls that are strong in grace, do act rather like angels than like carnal men; they do as much resemble the Father of spirits, as carnal men do the Father of lies.

[8.] *Eighthly, Souls weak in grace are easily drawn aside out of the ways of holiness.*

You know a man that hath but a little bodily strength, is easily thrust out of the way; so it is with souls weak in grace: 1 John iii. 7, 'Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.' Saith the apostle, 'Little children, let no man deceive you.' Many in these days, under pretences of high and glorious enjoyments of God, neglect and despise righteousness and holiness, crying up visions and manifestations, when their visions are only the visions of their own hearts and their manifestations are plain delusions. Ah! but says the apostle, 'Little children, let none of these deceive you.' I tell you he, and only he, that doth righteousness, is righteous, as God is righteous. Children, you know, may be easily cozened, and made to take counters for gold, because they are broader and brighter. Children in grace are soon deceived, hence is it that they are so cozened. 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols,' 1 John v. 21.¹ So in Heb. xii. 12, 13, 'Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.' Some think that the apostle alludes to those combats of the heathens, wherein it was a token of yielding, when a man hung down his hands. You are weak, saith the apostle, and by reason of trials you are apt to hang down your hands, and to give up all as lost; therefore, says he, lift up your hands to fight, and your feet to run, take heart and courage, faint not, give not over, turn not aside because of the sharpness of afflictions. But souls strong in grace will hold on in the ways of grace and holiness, in the face of all dangers and deaths, Ps. xlv.

[9.] *Ninthly, Weak Christians are apt to make sense and feeling the judge of their spiritual estates and conditions.*

And, therefore, upon every turn they are apt to judge themselves miserable, and to conclude that they have no grace, because they cannot feel it, nor discern it, nor believe it; and so making sense, feeling, and reason, the judge of their estates, they wrong, and perplex, and vex their precious souls, and make their lives a very hell: as if it were not one thing to be the Lord's, and another thing for a man to know that he is the Lord's; as if it were not one thing for a man to have grace, and another thing to know that he hath grace.

The Canaanite woman had strong faith, but no assurance that we read of, Mat. xv. 22, *seq.* Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Mark, they are first the sons of God, and then the Spirit cries, Abba, Father. 1 John v. 13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.' Mark, they did believe, and they had eternal life, in respect of Christ their head, who, as a public person, was gone to heaven, to represent all his saints. And they had eternal life in respect

¹ The idols that are here mentioned are surely those that the Gnostics used to worship, viz., the images and pictures of Simon Magus and Helena, as might be made evident out of Eusebius.

of the promises, and they had eternal life in respect of the beginnings of it; and yet they did not know it, they did not believe it. Therefore 'these things write I unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God,' saith he, 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that this life is in his Son.' Ponder on Micah vii. 7-9. Much of this you may read in my treatise called *Heaven on Earth, or a well-grounded Assurance of Men's everlasting Happiness and Blessedness in this World*, and to that I refer you.¹

The word shall judge us at last, John xii. 48; and therefore strong saints make only the word of God the judge of their spiritual condition now, as Constantine made it the judge and decider of all opinions.

[10.] *Tenthly, Their thoughts and hearts are more taken with the love-tokens, and the good things they have by Christ, than with the person of Christ.*

Oh their graces, their comforts, their enlargements, their meltings, and their warmings, &c., are the things that most take them. Their thoughts and hearts are so exercised and carried out about these, that the person of Christ is much neglected by them. The child is so taken with babies² and rattles, &c., that the mother is not minded. And such is the carriage of weak Christians towards Christ. But now souls strong in grace are more taken with the person of Christ than they are with the love-tokens of Christ. They bless Christ indeed for every dram of grace, and for every good word from heaven, and for every good look from heaven; ay, but yet the person of Christ, that is more to them than all these.³ This is remarkable in the church, Cant. v. 9, 10, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? &c. My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand,' &c. She doth not say, My beloved is one that I have got so many thousands by, and heaven by, and pardon of sin by, and peace of conscience by. Oh no! but he is white and ruddy. Her soul was taken most with the person of Christ. Not but that every one is to mind the graces of Christ, and to be thankful for them; ay, but it is an argument of weakness of grace, when the heart is more exercised about the bracelets, and the kisses, and the love-tokens of Christ, than it is about the person of Christ.⁴ But now saith one strong in grace, My bracelets are precious, but Christ is more precious; the streams of grace are sweet, but the fountain of grace is most sweet; the beams of the sun are glorious, but the sun itself is most glorious. A naked Christ, a despised Christ, a persecuted Christ, is more valued by a strong Christian, than heaven and earth is by a weak Christian.⁵

[11.] *Eleventhly, Souls weak in grace are easily stopped and taken off from acting graciously and holily, when discouragements face them.*

This you may see in that remarkable instance concerning Peter, in that 26th of Matthew, from the 69th to the end. A silly wench out-faces him; she daunts and dis-spirits this self-confident champion; she easily stops and turns him by saying, 'Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee,'

¹ See Vol. II. p. 301, *seq.*—G.

² 'Dolls.'—G.

³ Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory, &c.

⁴ That wife is but weak in her love that is more taken with her husband's presents than with his person.

⁵ Christ's person, to a strong Christian, is the greatest cordial in all the world.

v. 70. 'But he denied it before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.' He makes as if he did neither understand her words or her meaning; and this false dissembling was a true denying of Christ. Now Mark saith, chap. xiv. 68, that upon the very first denial of Christ, the cock crew, and yet this fair warning could not secure him, but when another maid saw him, and said, 'This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth,' ver. 72, he denied it with an oath, saying, 'I do not know the man.'¹ This was fearful and dreadful, and the worse because his Master, whom he forswore, was now upon his trial, and might say with wounded Cæsar, *καὶ σὺ τέκνον*, What! and thou my son Brutus!² Is this thy kindness to thy friend, to him that has loved thee, and saved thee, and owned thee? &c. Then ver. 73, 'Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.' And ver. 74. 'He began to curse and to swear, I know not the man.

The Greek word that is rendered *curse*, imports a cursing and a damning of himself, an imprecation of God's wrath, and a separation from the presence and glory of God, if he knew the man.³ Some writers say, that he cursed Christ. 'I know not the man,' saith he. Though it were ten thousand times better to bear than to swear, and to die than to lie, yet when discouragement faces him, he is so amazed and daunted, that he tells the most incredible lie that almost could be uttered by the mouth of man. For there was scarce any Jew, saith Grotius, that knew not Christ by sight, being famous for those abundance of miracles that he wrought before their eyes. Neither could Peter allege any cause why he came thither, if he had not known Christ. But, ver. 75, 'He went out, and wept bitterly.' One sweet look of love breaks his heart in pieces, he melts under the beamings forth of divine favour upon him: Once he leapt into a sea of waters to come to Christ, and now he leaps into a sea of tears for that he had so shamefully denied Christ. Clement notes, that Peter so repented, that all his life-time after, every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees and weep bitterly, begging pardon for this dreadful sin.⁴

Others say, that after his lying, cursing, and denying of Christ, he was ever and anon weeping, and that his face was furrowed with continual tears. He had no sooner taken in poison, but he vomits it up again, before it got to the vitals. He had no sooner handled a serpent, but he turns it into a rod to scourge his soul with remorse. This truth is further confirmed by the speech and carriage of the disciples: Luke xxiv. 21, *seq.*, 'We trusted,' say they, 'that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, but now we cannot tell what to say to it.' Here their hope hangs the wing extremely. Weak souls find it as hard to wait for God, as it is to bear evil.⁵ This weakness Christ checks, ver. 25, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken,' &c. And John xvi. 5, the first news Christ tells them, is of

¹ *Cavebis autem, si pavebis.*

² Plutarch, &c., *as before*.—G.

³ *κατανάσσειαίτιν.* Vide Calvin on the text in Rom. vi. 19. There are three *tos* in the expression of the service of sin: to uncleanness, to iniquity, and *unto* iniquity; but in the service of God there are only two *tos*: to righteousness, and *unto* holiness; to note that we are more prone to sin before conversion, than we are to grace and holiness after conversion.

⁴ *In loco*: Epist.—G.

⁵ *Invalidum omne naturâ querulum*, weak spirits are ever quarrelling and contending. [Seneca: *De Animi Tranquillitate*.—G.]

their sufferings and of his leaving of them; and upon the thoughts hereof their hearts were so filled with sorrow, that they could not so much as say, 'Master, whither goest thou?' ver. 6. But now, souls strong in grace will hold on in holy and gracious actings in the very face of the greatest discouragements, as those in Ps. xlv. 19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.' And so the three children, they hold up in the face of all discouragements. And so those brave worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, Heb. xi., their hearts were carried out exceedingly, notwithstanding all discouragements, to hold on in ways of holiness, and in their actings of faith upon God, in the face of all dangers and deaths that did attend them.¹

When Henry the Eighth had spoken and written bitterly against Luther, saith Luther, Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks, and the devil himself, do what they can, we are children of the kingdom, worshipping of the true God, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified.² And of the same spirit and metal were many martyrs. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, that they had so much courage and confidence in their sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal and constancy, turned Christians.

[12.] *Twelfthly, Weak saints mind their wages and veils more than their work.*

Their wages, their veils,³ is joy, peace, comfort, and assurance, &c.; and their work is waiting on God, believing in God, walking with God, acting for God, &c. Now, weak saints' minds are more carried out, and taken up about their wages, about their veils, than they are about their work, as experience doth abundantly evidence.⁴ Ah! Christians, if you don't mind your wages more than your work, what means the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen? 1 Sam. xv. 14. What means those earnest and vehement cryings out and wrestlings for joy, peace, comfort, and assurance, when the great work of believing, of waiting, and of walking with God, is so much neglected and disregarded? But now strong saints are more mindful of their work than they are of their wages. Lord! saith a strong saint, do but uphold me in a way of believing, in a way of working, in a way of holy walking, &c., and it shall be enough, though I should never have assurance, comfort, peace, or joy, till my dying day. If thou wilt carry me forth so as thou mayest have honour, though I have no comfort; so thou mayest have glory, though I have no peace, I will bless thee, Rom. iv. 18-20. I know, says such a soul, though a life of comfort be most pleasing to me, yet a life of believing, abstracted from comfort, is most honourable to thee, and therefore I will be silent before thee. Lord! do but help me in my work, and take thine own time to give me my wages, to give me comfort, joy, peace, assurance. They are none of the best servants that mind their wages more than their work, nor they are none of the

¹ Such a spirit shined in Chrysostom when he bid them tell the enraged empress Eudoxia, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin.

² 'Table Talk,' as before, with reference to Henry 8th's 'Assertio Sacramentorum adversus Lutherum,' 1521, which won for him from the pope his title of 'Defender of the Faith.'—G.

³ 'Presents.'—G.

⁴ Children mind more play-days than they do working-days, or school-days.

best Christians that mind their comforts and their in-comes¹ more than that homage and duty that they owe to God.

Before I come to the second thing premised, give me leave to give you this hint; viz., that there is no such way to joy, peace, and assurance, as this, to mind your work more than your wages. Ah! had many mourning, complaining Christians done thus, their mourning before this had been turned into rejoicing, and their complaining into singings. Christians, the high way to comfort is to mind comfort less, and duty more; it is to mind more what thou shouldst do, than what thou wouldst have, as you may see in Eph. i. 13, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of faith, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.'

The original runs thus, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαυτες, in whom believing, ye were sealed. While faith is busied and exercised about Christ, and those varieties of glories and excellencies that are in him, the Lord comes, and by his Spirit seals up the life, and love, and glory of them.

Thus by divine assistance I have despatched the first thing, viz., the deciphering of weak Christians.

II. The second thing that I propounded for the further opening and clearing of this point was, *to hold forth to you those things that tend to support, comfort, and uphold weak Christians.* And truly I must needs say, that if ever there were a time wherein weak Christians had need of support, I verily believe this is the time wherein we live, for by the horrid profaneness of men on the one hand, and the abominable, loose, and rotten principles of others on the other hand, the hearts of many weak Christians especially are sadded, that God would not have sadded, and their spirits wounded and grieved, that God would have comforted and healed; and therefore I shall dwell the longer upon this second thing,

And the *first* thing that I shall lay down by way of support is this.

*Support 1. That the weakest Christians have as much interest and propriety in Christ, and all the fundamental good that comes by Christ, as the strongest saints in the world have.*²

Weak saints are as much united to Christ, as much justified by Christ, as much reconciled by Christ, and as much pardoned by Christ, as the strongest saints. It is true, weak Christians cannot make so much improvement and advantage of their interest in Christ, as strong saints can; they have not that power, that wisdom, that spiritual skill to make that advantage of their interest and propriety in Christ as strong saints have; yet have they as much interest and propriety in the Lord Jesus, and all the fundamental good that comes by him, as the strongest saint that breathes. The sucking child hath as much interest and propriety in the father, and in what is the father,³ as the child that is grown up to age, though the young child has not that skill, nor that power, nor wisdom to improve that interest to his advantage, as he that is grown up in years hath. It is just so here; a soul weak in grace hath

¹ = 'Incomings' of the Spirit of graces.—G.

² He that looked upon the brazen serpent, though with a weak sight, was healed as thoroughly as he that looked upon it with a stronger sight. A weak faith is a joint possessor, though no faith can be a joint purchaser of Christ.

³ Qu. 'father's'?—Ed.

as much interest in the Lord as the strongest saint hath, though he hath not that skill to improve that interest. And is not this a singular comfort and support? Verily, were there no more to bear up a poor weak saint from fainting under all their sins, and sorrows, and sufferings, yet this alone might do it, &c.

The *second* support and comfort to weak saints is this :

*Support 2. That God doth with an eye of love reflect upon the least good that is in them, or done by them.*¹

And is not this a glorious comfort and support, that the Lord looks with an eye of love upon the least good that is in you, or done by you? You cannot have a good thought, but God looks upon that thought with an eye of love: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I would confess my sin, and thou forgavest mine iniquity.' I said it in my thoughts, that I would confess my sin, and thou presently meeting me with pardoning mercy, forgavest mine iniquity. So in Mal. iii. 16, 'And there was a book of remembrance written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.' They had but some thoughts of God, and God reflects upon those thoughts with an eye of love: Isa. xxxviii. 5, 'I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears.' Tears we look upon but as poor things, and yet God looks upon them as pearls, and therefore he puts them into his bottle, as the psalmist speaks.² There is not a bit of bread, not a drop of drink thou givest, but God casts an eye of love upon it, Mat. xxv. 35, 36.

There is not a desire that arises in thy soul, but the Lord takes notice of it: Prov. x. 17, 'Thou hast heard the desire of the humble.' Weak saints are full of desires, their whole life is a life of desires, they are still a-breathing out holy desires: Lord, pardon such a sin, and give me power against such a sin, and strength, Lord, to withstand such a temptation, and grace, Lord, to uphold me under such an affliction, &c.; and the Lord hears and answers such gracious breathings and longings.

It was holy Jewel's desire, that he might die preaching; and God looked with an eye of love upon his desire, and he had it.

It was Latimer's desire, that he might shed his heart's blood for Christ; and God looked with an eye of love upon the breathings of his heart, and he had it.

The Israelites did but groan, and God looked upon their groans with an eye of love; he comes down, he makes his arm bare, he tramples upon their proud enemies, and by miracles he saved them. O weak Christian! is not this a singular comfort, that the Lord reflects with an eye of love upon your thoughts, upon your desires, upon your tears, and upon your groanings, &c. What though others slight you! what though others take no notice of you! yet the Lord casts an eye of love upon you.

Some think it very strange that God should set down in Scripture the story of Jacob, a poor countryman, Gen. xxxi., that he had a few ewes and lambs, streaked and spotted, and yet take no notice of the

¹ The least star gives light; the least drop moistens.

² So in Ps. vi. 3, one observes that there are two strong things in tears: [1.] *Deorum fluunt, et cælum petunt*, they drop downward, and fall to the earth; yet they reach upwards, and pierce the heavens. [2.] *Mutæ sunt et loquuntur*, they hold their peace, yet cry very loud.

great emperors and kings of the earth, nor of their great actions and warlike designs in the world. But this is to shew that tender love and respect that God bears to his children, above what he does to the great ones of this world. God is more taken with Lazarus's patched coat than with Dives's silken robe, &c.

A *third* thing that I shall propound for the support and comfort of weak saints is this :

Support 3. Consider, the Lord looks more upon your graces than he doth upon your weaknesses.

Or thus,

The Lord will not cast away weak saints, by reason of the weaknesses that cleaves to their persons or services.

In 2 Chron. xxx. 18-20, there came a multitude of people to eat the passover, but they were not prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary ; therefore Hezekiah puts up a prayer for them, and the text saith, that the 'Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.' The Lord looked upon their uprightness, and so passed over all their other weaknesses. He did not cast off Peter for his horrid sins, but rather looks upon him with an eye of love and pity : Mark xvi. 7, 'But go your way, tell his disciples *and Peter*, that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.' O admirable love ! O matchless mercy ! where sin abounds, grace does superabound. This is the glory of Christ, that he carries it sweetly towards his people, when they carry themselves unworthily towards him. Christ looks more upon Peter's sorrow than upon his sin, upon his tears than upon his oaths, &c. The Lord will not cast away weak saints for their great unbelief, because there is a little faith in them. He will not throw them away for that hypocrisy that is in them, because of that little sincerity that is in them. He will not cast away weak saints for that pride that is in them, because of those rays of humility that shine in them. He will not despise his people for their passions, because of those grains of meekness that are in them. We will not throw away a little gold because of a great deal of dross that cleaves to it, nor a little wheat because mixed with much chaff, and will God ? will God ?

We will not cast away our garments because of some spots, nor our books because of some blots, nor our jewels because of some flaws, and do we think that the Lord will cast away his dearest ones, because of their spots, and blots, and flaws ? Surely no. God looks more upon the bright side of the cloud than the dark : James v. 11, 'Remember the patience of Job.' It is not, remember the murmuring of Job, the cursing of Job, the complainings of Job, the impatience of Job ; but, 'Remember *the patience* of Job.' God looks upon the pearl, and not upon the spot that is in it. So in Heb. xi. 30, 31, there is mention made of Rahab's faith, love, and peaceable behaviour towards the spies, but no mention made of her lie. The Lord overlooks her weakness, and keeps his eye upon her virtues. Where God sees but a little grace, he doth as it were hide his eyes from those circumstances that might seem to deface the glory of it. So in 1 Pet. iii. 6, 'Even as Sarah *obeyed* Abraham, calling him lord.' Mark there was but one good word in Sarah's speech to Abraham, she called her husband *lord* ; the speech otherwise was a speech of unbelief, yet the Holy Ghost speaking

of her in reference to that speech, conceals all the evil in it, and mentions only the reverent title she gave to her husband, commending her for it.

He that drew Alexander, whilst he had a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar. So when the Lord comes to look upon a poor soul, he lays his finger upon the scar, upon the infirmity, that he may see nothing but grace, which is the beauty and the glory of the soul. Ah! but weak Christians are more apt to look upon their infirmities than on their graces, and because their little gold is mixed with a great deal of dross, they are ready to throw away all as dross. Well, remember this, the Lord Jesus hath as great and as large an interest in the weakest saints, as he hath in the strongest. He hath the interest of a friend, and the interest of a father, and the interest of a head, and the interest of a husband; and, therefore, though saints be weak, yea, though they be very weak, yet having as great and as large an interest in them as in the strongest saints, he cannot but overlook their weakness, and keep a fixed eye upon their graces.

A fourth support is this:

*Support 4. That the Lord will graciously preserve and strengthen those weak graces that are in you.*¹

Though your graces be as a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean of corruption, yet the Lord will preserve and blow up that spark of fire into a flame. It was the priest's office in the time of the law, to keep the fire in the sanctuary from going out; and it is the office of our Lord Jesus, as he is our high priest, our head, our husband, our mediator, for to blow up that heavenly fire that he hath kindled in any of our souls. His honour, his faithfulness, and his goodness is engaged in it, and therefore he cannot but do it, else he would lose much love and many prayers and praises, did he not cherish, preserve, and strengthen his own work in his own people. The faith of the disciples was generally weak, as I have formerly shewed you, and yet how sweetly doth the Lord Jesus carry it towards them! John xvi., Acts ii. He was still a-breathing out light, life, and love upon them; he was still a-turning their water into wine, their bitter into sweet, and their discouragements into encouragements, and all to raise and keep up their spirits. His heart was much in this thing, therefore says he, 'It is necessary that I leave you, that I may send the Comforter to be a comfort and guide unto you.' I will pour out my Spirit upon you, that a little one may become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation, and that the feeble may be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord, Zech. xii. 8. That is a sweet text, Isa. lxxv. 8, 'Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the clusters, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for my servants' sake,' &c. Oh, saith Christ to the Father, here are a company of weak saints that have some buddings of grace, oh do not destroy it, Father! there is a blessing in it, though it be but weak. The genuine sense of the similitude, I think, is this: when a vine being blasted or otherwise decayed is grown so bad and so barren, that scarce any good clusters of grapes can be discerned on it, whereby it may be deemed to have any life, or of ever becoming fruitful again, and the husbandman is about to grub

¹ The tallest oak was once an acorn, and the deepest doctor was once in his horn-book.

it up or cut it down to the ground, one standing by sees here a cluster, and there a little cluster, and cries out, Oh do not grub up the vine, do not cut down the vine, it hath a little life, and by good husbandry it may be made fruitful. We may look upon the Lord Jesus as thus pleading with his Father's justice: Father, I know thou seest that these souls are dry and barren, and that there is little or no good in them, and therefore thou mightest justly cut them down. But, O my Father! I see here a bunch and there a bunch, here a little grace and there a little grace, surely there is a blessing it. Oh spare it, let it not be stubbed up, let it not be destroyed.

Mat. xii. 27, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, nor smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.'

'A bruised reed shall he not break.' The Jewish commentators carry it thus: he shall not tyrannise over, but nourish and cherish the poor, weak, feeble ones, that are wont to be oppressed by great ones. But men more spiritual carry it thus: Christ will not carry it roughly and rigorously towards poor weak tender souls, whose graces are as a bruised reed and as smoking flax. A reed is a contemptible thing, a tender thing, it will break sometimes before a man is aware; a bruised reed is more tender, it will be broken with a touch, yet Christ will not break such a bruised reed, *i.e.* a soul weak in grace.

'Nor quench the smoking flax.' The wick of a candle is little worth, and yet less when it smokes, as yielding neither light nor heat, but rather smokes, and offends with an ill smell, which men cannot bear, but will tread it out. But the Lord Jesus Christ will not do so. Souls whose knowledge, love, faith, and zeal do as but smoke out, the Lord Jesus will not trample under foot; nay, he will cherish, nourish, and strengthen such to life eternal. Look, what tallow is to the wick, or oil is to the lamp, that will the Lord Jesus be to the graces of weak Christians.

'Till he shall bring forth judgment unto victory.' That is, until the sanctified frame of grace begun in their hearts be brought to that perfection that it prevaieth over all opposite corruption.

Thus you see how sweetly the Lord Jesus carries it to souls weak in grace; therefore let not those that bring forth a hundredfold despise those that bring forth but thirty, nor those that have five talents despise those that have but two.

The *fifth* support is this:

Support 5. That weak saints may be very useful to the strong, and sometimes may do more than strong saints can.

As you may see in 1 Cor. xii. 14 to 28.² The apostle in this Scripture discovers the singular use of the weakest saint in the body of Christ by the usefulness of the weakest and meanest member in the natural body to the strongest: ver. 21, 'The eye cannot say to the hand,

¹ ἰκβαλλω: *to bring forth.* It is the custom of all writers, and very frequent in the sacred dialect, to use phrases whereby they understand much more than they do express: an example whereof you have in this verse, where Christ's not breaking the bruised reed signifies his great mercy and kindness in repairing, and restoring, and curing the bruised weakling. And so his not quenching the smoking flax is his enlivening, quickening, and inflaming that fire or spark of grace or goodness which was almost quenched, &c.

² Others understand the words of Christ setting up the profession of the gospel in the world among the heathens, if the Jews will not receive it.

I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the foot, I have no need of thee.' By the head and by the eye he means such saints as were eminent in gifts and graces, that were adorned more richly and that shined more gloriously in grace and gracious abilities than others. Oh these should not despise those that were not so eminent and excellent as themselves; for God hath so tempered the inequality of the members in the natural body, that the more excellent and beautiful members can in no wise lack the more abject and weak members; therefore slight not the weakest saints, for certainly, at first or last, the weakest will be serviceable to the strongest. A dwarf may be useful to a giant, a child to a man; sometimes a little finger shall do that that a limb in the body cannot do; it is so often in Christ's spiritual body.¹ I will give you a very famous instance for this.

At the council of Nice there was 318 bishops, and by the subtlety of a philosopher disputing against the marriage of ministers, they generally voted against it, that those that were single should not marry. At length up starts Paphnutius, a plain Christian, and in the name of Christ, with the naked word of God, he pleaded against them all in that case; and God so wrought by his arguments, that he convinced the 318 bishops, and carried the cause against them; yea, and so convinced the philosopher of his error, that before all he freely confessed it: 'As long,' saith he, 'as men's words were only pressed, I could repel words with words; but what is weak man to withstand the word of God? I yield; I am conquered.'²

Weak Christians may be of singular use to the strongest; those that know most may learn more even from the weakest saints.³

Junius was converted by discoursing with a ploughman;⁴ and, Acts xviii. 24 to 27, Apollos, though he was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures as the text speaks, yet was he furthered and bettered in the knowledge of Christ's kingdom by Aquila and Priscilla. A poor tent-maker and his wife were instrumental to acquaint him with those things that he knew but weakly. He had not ascended above John's baptism, but they had, and so communicated their light and knowledge to him.

The *sixth* support is this:

Support 6. Where there is but a little grace, there God expects less, and will accept of less, though it be accompanied with many failings.

Thou sayest, Oh! I have but a little grace, a little faith, a little love, a little zeal. Oh know, where there is but a little grace, there God expects less obedience, and will accept of less service: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not.' The two mites cast into the treasury, Luke xxi. 3, by the poor widow, her heart being in the action, were more acceptable than two talents cast in by others. Noah's sacrifice could not be great, and yet it was greatly accepted by God. In the time of the law, God accepted a handful of

¹ It was a saying of General Vere to the king of Denmark, that kings cared not for soldiers, until such time that their crowns hung on the one side of their heads. [See Sibbes, vol. i. 35.—G.]

² Socrates, Eccles. Hist.: [*Sub nomine*.—G.]

³ A little star hath light and influence, though not the glory which is proper to the sun.

⁴ As before, page 21.—G.

meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe of goat's hair for an oblation; and certainly God hath lost none of his affections to poor souls in the time of the gospel: Cant. ii. 14, 'Let me hear thy voice, for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is lovely.' The Hebrew word *ethkolech* signifies any sound such as birds or brutes make. Their chattering is like lovely songs in the ear of God, their mite is a sweet oblation. Parents, that have but some drops of that love and tender affection that is in God to his people, yet accept of a very little service from their weak children; and will not God? In time of strength God looks for much, but in the time of weakness God will bear much, and overlook much, and accept of a little, yea, of a very little.¹

One, writing of the tree of knowledge, saith that 'it bears many leaves, but little fruit.' Though weak saints have a great many leaves, and but little fruit, little grace, yet that little the Lord will kindly accept of.

Artaxerxes, the Persian monarch, was famous for accepting of a little water from the hand of a loving subject; God makes himself famous, and his grace glorious, by his kind acceptation of the weakest endeavours of his people, &c.

The *seventh* support is this:

*Support 7. The least measure of grace is as true an earnest, and as good and sure a pledge of greater measures of grace that the soul shall have here, and of glory that the soul shall have hereafter, as the greatest measure of grace is.*²

'He that hath begun a good work, he will perfect it to the day of Christ,' Philip. i. 6. Christ is called not only the author, but also the finisher of our faith, Heb. xii. 2. In Mal. iv. 2, 3, 'Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, and he shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.' And so in Job xvii. 9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.'³ Zech. xii. 8, 'In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.' So in Hosea xiv. 5-7, I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his fruits as Lebanon: his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.'

The tree in Alcinous's garden had always blossoms, buds, and ripe fruits, one under another. Such a tree will God make every Christian to be. 'The righteous,' though never so weak, 'shall flourish like the palm tree,' Ps. xcii. 12-14. Now the palm tree never loseth his leaf or fruit, saith Pliny.

¹ It is very observable that the eagle and the lion, those brave creatures, were not offered in sacrifice unto God, but the poor lamb and dove: to note that your brave, high, and lofty spirits God regards not; but your poor, meek, contemptible spirits God accepts.

² Though men often lose their earnest, yet God will never lose his. His earnest is very obliging.

³ The Hebrew word *דרכו*, or way, signifies a distinct course from others, as the way from one town differs from the way to another. Here in Job it is taken for a course in plenty.

An old man being asked if he grew in goodness, answered, Yea, doubtless I believe I do, because the Lord hath said, 'They shall still bring forth fruit *in old age*, they shall be fat, and flourishing;' or green, as the Hebrew hath it.¹

In the island of St Thomas, on the back side of Africa, in the midst of it is a hill, and over that a continual cloud, wherewith the whole island is watered. Such a cloud is Christ to weak saints. Though our hearts naturally are like the isle of Patmos, which is so barren of any good as that nothing will grow but on earth that is brought from other places, yet Christ will make them like 'a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not,' Isa. lviii. 11.

The *eighth* support is this:

*Support 8. That the least good that is done by the weakest saint shall not be despised by Christ, but highly esteemed and rewarded.*²

As you may see in Mat. xix. 27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee, and what shall we have?' A great *all!* a great catch indeed, as I have formerly shewed you; they left a few old boats and torn nets and poor household stuff, yet Christ carries it very sweetly and lovingly to them, and tells them in verse 28, that they should 'sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Christ tells them they shall sit as ambassadors or chief councillors and presidents, which have the chief seats in the kingly assembly, yea, they shall sit as kings. They are here but obscure kings, but kings elected; but in that day they shall be kings crowned, kings glorified, kings acknowledged. Then they shall as far outshine the glory of the sun, as the sun now outshines a twinkling star. In that day they shall be 'higher than the kings of the earth,' Ps. lxxxix. 27. So in Mat. x. 42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward, for a cup of cold water.' Water, the common element, and cold water, which cost them not so much as fire to warm it; for that, there is a torrent and a very sea of all pleasures provided for thee to all eternity. God esteems men's deeds by their minds, and not their minds by their deeds. The least and cheapest courtesy that can be shewed shall be rewarded. There is an emphasis in that deep asseveration, 'Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Mercy is as sure a grain as vanity.³ God is not like to break, neither will he forget the least good done by the least saint. The butler may forget Joseph, and Joseph may forget his father's house, but the Lord will not forget the least good done by the weakest saint.⁴

The Duke of Burgundy, being a wise and loving man, did bountifully reward a poor gardener, for offering of him a rape-root, being the best pre-

¹ ורעננים. From *hagnan*, green.

² A dying saint once cried out, 'He is come, he is come!' meaning the Lord, with a great reward for a little work.

³ So in all the editions. Qu. Mercy, typified by 'grain' or seed, [Cf. Ps. xcvi. 11], yields as 'sure' a harvest of 'good' or blessing, as does 'vanity' of 'evil?'—G.

⁴ Agrippa, having suffered imprisonment for wishing Caius [Caligula.—G.] emperor, the first thing Caius did when he came to the empire was to prefer Agrippa [grandson of Herod.—G.] to a kingdom. He gave him also a chain of gold as heavy as the chain of iron that was upon him in prison [whether he had been sent by Tiberius.—G.]. And will not Christ richly reward for all our well-wishes toward him, and for all our gracious actings for him? Surely he will. He has a king's heart, as well as a king's purse.

sent the poor man had; and will not our God, whose very nature is goodness, kindness, and sweetness, &c., do much more? Surely he will reward the least good done by the weakest saint. Therefore be not discouraged, weak Christians, though you should meet with hard measure from the world, though they should reward your weak services with reproaches, &c., for the Lord will reward you; he 'will not despise the day of small things,' Heb. vi. 10. What though, O precious soul, thy language be clipped and broken? what though thou canst but chatter like a crane? what though thou canst not talk so fluently and eloquently for Christ as others? what though thy hand be weak, that thou canst not do so much for Christ as others? nor do so well for Christ as others? yet the Lord, seeing thy heart sincere, will reward thee. Thou shalt have an everlasting rest for a little labour, and a great reward for a little work.

The ninth support is this:

Support 9. That as your graces are weaker than others, so your temptations shall be fewer, and your afflictions lighter than others.

God in much wisdom and love will suit your burdens to your backs, he will suit all your temptations and afflictions to your strength. Your burdens shall not be great, if your strength be but little, as you may see, 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' The Lord, O weak Christian! will suit thy burden to thy back, and his strokes to thy strength. This is most evident in Scripture, that the strongest in grace have always been most tempted, afflicted, and distressed.¹

If Abraham excel others in faith, God will try the strength of Abraham's faith to the uttermost, and put him to that that he never put man to before, Gen. xx. If Moses excel all others in meekness, the Lord will try the strength of that grace, and Moses shall have to do with as proud and as murmuring a generation, as ever man had to do with. If Job carry the day from all others, in point of patience, he shall be exercised with such strange and unheard of afflictions, as shall try not only the truth, but also the strength of his patience to the uttermost. If Paul have more glorious revelations than the rest of the apostles, Paul shall be more buffeted and exercised with temptations, than the rest of the apostles.²

And thus you see it clear by all these instances, that the best and choicest saints have always met with the worst and greatest temptations and afflictions. So when the disciples were in the lowest form, when they were weak in grace, the Lord Jesus exercises them but with light afflictions; but when they had a greater measure of the Spirit poured upon them, then their troubles were increased and multiplied, and their former troubles, in comparison of the latter, were but as scratches of pins to stabs at the heart, Acts ii. 1 to 21. When the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon them, then they were afflicted, opposed, and

¹ When Latimer was at the stake, ready to be burned, he breathed out those sweet words, *Fidelis est Deus*, God is faithful, &c.—[Foxe] *Acts et Mon. fol.* 1579. [By Townsend, *as before*, vii. 550, *et alibi*.—G.]

² Num. xii. 3; Exod. xvi. 7, 8; Num. xiv. 27, 36, and xvi. 11; Exod. xv. 24; James v. 11; read the 1st, 6th, and 7th chapters of Job; 2 Cor. xii. 1–11.

persecuted with a witness; when they had a greater measure of the Spirit, to enable them to bear the hatred, frowns, strokes, and blows of the enraged world, then all of them had the honour to suffer a violent death for Christ, as histories do evidence.

That is a very remarkable scripture, Luke xxiv. 49, 'And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.' The Lord Jesus would not have them go from Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high. By 'the promise of the Father,' is meant the gifts and graces of the Spirit that is promised in Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28; John xiv. 16, and xv. 26. 'Tarry ye here,' says Christ, 'at Jerusalem, till ye be completely armed and fitted for all encounters, till ye be endued with power;' or, as the Greek carries it, 'till ye be clothed,' ἐνδύσασθε. They were as naked persons; they had but a little of the Spirit, so that they were not complete; they were not clothed with the Spirit, till after the ascension of Christ. Now saith Christ, 'Tarry until such time as ye are clothed with the Spirit.' The Lord Jesus knew well enough that they should meet with bitter opposition, terrible afflictions, and dreadful persecution for his and the gospel's sake; therefore 'Tarry,' said he, 'until ye be clothed with the Holy Ghost,' that so nothing may daunt ye, nor sink ye.

The tenth support is this:

Support 10. That your persons stand not before God in your own righteousness, but in the perfect, spotless, and matchless righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

Weak hearts are apt to sit down troubled and discouraged, when they look upon that body of sin that is in them, and those imperfections that attend their chiefest services; they are ready to say, We shall one day perish by the strength of our lusts, or by the defects of our services. Oh but weak souls should remember this, to strengthen them against all discouragements, that their persons stand before God, clothed with the righteousness of their Saviour, and so God owns them and looks upon them as persons wrapped up in his royal robe. Hence it is that he is called, Jer. xxiii. 6, 'JEHOVAH TSIDKENU, the Lord our righteousness.' And so in 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.'¹

Though weak saints have nothing of their own, yet in Christ they have all, for in him is all fulness, Col. i. 19, both repletive and diffusive; both of abundance and of redundance; both of plenty and of bounty. He is made to weak saints wisdom, by his prophetic office; and he is made to weak saints righteousness and sanctification, by his priestly office; and he is made to weak saints redemption, by his kingly office. So in Col. ii. 10, 'And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.'

Varro reports of two hundred and eighty-eight several opinions that were among the philosophers, about the complete happiness of man; but they were out in them all, one judging his happiness lay in this and another in that. They caught at the shadow of happiness, but

¹ The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for an hundred talents, was a mean and beggarly rag to that embroidered mantle that Christ does put upon the weakest saints.

could not come at the tree of life, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is weak saints' complete happiness. Rev. xiv. 5, 'And in their mouths was found no guile, for they were without fault before the throne of God.' Though men may accuse you, judge and condemn you, yet know for your support, that you are acquitted before the throne of God. However you may stand in the eyes of men, as full of nothing but faults, persons made up of nothing but sin, yet are you clear in the eyes of God. So in Cant. iv. 7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.' There is none, such as are the spots of wicked men, nor no spot in mine account. God looks upon weak saints in the Son of his love, and sees them all lovely; they are as the tree of Paradise, Gen. iii. 6, 'fair to his eye, and pleasant to his taste.' Or as Absalom, in whom there was no blemish from head to foot. Ah, poor souls! you are apt to look upon your spots and blots, and to cry out with the leper not only 'Unclean, unclean!' but 'Undone, undone!' Well, for ever remember this, that your persons stand before God in the righteousness of Christ; upon which account you always appear, before the throne of God, without fault; you are all fair, and there is no spot in you.

The eleventh support is this:

Support 11. Your sins shall never provoke Christ, nor prevail with Christ so far, as to give you a bill of divorce.¹

Oh there is much in it, if the Lord would set it home upon your hearts. Your sins shall never prevail so far with Christ, nor never so far provoke him, as to work him to give you a bill of divorce. Your sins may provoke Christ to frown upon you, they may provoke Christ to chide with you, they may provoke him greatly to correct you, but they shall never provoke Christ to give you a bill of divorce: Ps. lxxxix. 30-34, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' That is a great support to a weak saint, that his sin shall never separate him from God nor Christ. Thou art many times afraid that this deadness, this dulness, this earthliness, and these wandering thoughts, &c., that do attend thee, will provoke the Lord Jesus to sue a bill of divorce against thee. But remember this, thy sins shall never so far prevail with Christ, as to work him to give thee a bill of divorce. Mark,

There is nothing can provoke Christ to give thee a bill of divorce but sin:

Now sin is slain; *ergo*,

I shall open this to you in three things:

[1.] *First, Sin is slain judicially*; for it is condemned both by Christ and his people, and so it is dead according to law; which is and may be a singular comfort and support to weak saints, that their greatest and worst enemy, *sin*, is condemned to die, and shall not for ever vex and torment their precious souls. It is dead judicially, it is under the

¹ Read Jer. iii. Out of the most poisonous drugs God distils his glory and our salvation. Galen speaks of a maid, called Nupella, that was nourished by poison. God can and will turn the very sins of his people, which are the worst poison in all the world, into his children's advantage.

sentence of condemnation : 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin,' &c.¹ The apostle here triumphs over it as a thief condemned to death. Sin is sentenced now; though not fully put to death, it is dead judicially. As when the sentence of death is passed upon a malefactor, you say he is a dead man; why? he is judicially dead; so is sin, sin is judicially dead. When a man that hath robbed and wounded another is taken, and sentenced judicially, we say he is a dead man; and it is often a great refreshing and satisfaction to a man that he is so. Sin, O weak soul! is sentenced and judicially slain; and therefore that can never work the Lord Jesus to give thee a bill of divorce. The thoughts of which should much refresh thee and support thee.

[2.] *Secondly, Sin is dead or slain civilly*, as well as judicially. It is civilly dead, because the power of it is much abated, and its dominion and tyranny overpowered. As when a king or tyrant is whipped and stripped of all power to domineer, reign, and play the tyrant, he is civilly dead, even while he lives; so is sin in this sense dead even while it lives, Rom. vi. 14. That text is suitable to our purpose: Hosea xiii. 1, 'When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.'²

What is the meaning of these words? The meaning is this: When the king of Ephraim spake, the people even trembled at his voice, such power once he had; but when he offended in Baal, by serving Baal, by giving himself up to idolatry, he died in respect of obedience not yielded to him as formerly. Time was that he was terrible, but when he fell to idolatry, his strength and glory came down, so that now he became even like a dead carcase.

Adam died civilly the same day that he sinned. The creatures that before lovingly obeyed him, as soon as he renounced obedience to his God, they renounced all obedience to him or his sovereignty, so that he civilly died the very same day that he sinned.

That is a sweet word that you have, Rom. vi. 11, 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.' Therefore Christ will never divorce you for sin. Oh what a support may this be to a weak saint, that sin, that he fears above all other things in the world, is slain judicially and civilly. The Lord hath whipped and stripped it of all its ruling, reigning, domineering, tyrannizing power. Oh, therefore, Christians, look upon sin as dead, that is, as not to be obeyed, as not to be acknowledged, no more than a tyrant that is stripped of all his tyrannizing power. People that are wise, and understand their liberty, look not upon such a one as fit to be obeyed and served, but as one fit to be renounced and destroyed. Do you so look upon your sins, and deal accordingly with them.³

[3.] *Thirdly, Sin is slain naturally*, as well as civilly. Christ hath given it its death's wound by his death and resurrection. He hath given sin such a wound, that it cannot be long-lived, though it may linger

¹ Vide Grotius and Vorstius on the words.

² It is with sin in the saints as it was with those beasts, Dan. vii. 12, who had their dominions taken away, though their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

³ Where sin sits in the soul, as a king sits upon his throne, and commands the heart, as a king commands his subjects, there is reign of sin; but grace frees the soul from this.

awhile in a saint. As a tree that is cut at the root with a sore gash or two, must die within a year, perhaps a month, nay, it may be within a week; though for a time it may flourish, it may have leaves and fruit, yet it secretly dies, and will very shortly wither and perish. The Lord Jesus hath given sin such a mortal wound, by his death and Spirit, and by the communication of his favour and grace to the soul, that sin shall never recover its strength more, but die a lingering death in the souls of the saints. Christ did not die all at once upon the cross, but by little and little; to shew us, that his death should extend to the slaying of sin gradually in the souls of the saints. When our enemy hath a mortal wound, we say he is a dead man, his wound is mortal; so when Jesus Christ hath given sin such a deadly wound, such a mortal blow, that it shall never recover its strength and power more, we may truly say, it is dead, it is slain. Therefore cheer up, O weak souls, for certainly sin that is thus slain can never provoke Jesus Christ to give you a bill of divorce. Ah! that all weak Christians would, like the bee, abide upon these sweet flowers, and gather honey out of them, &c.

To proceed.

The twelfth support is this:

Support 12. Christ and you are sharers.

Know this, weak saints, for your support and comfort,

1. That Christ shares with you, and you share with Christ.

I shall open this sweet truth to you a little.

[1.] *Christ shares with you in your natures.*

In Heb. ii. 16, 'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' And by this he hath advanced fallen man above the very angels. This is the great mystery spoken of, 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh,' &c.

[2.] *The Lord Jesus shares with you in your afflictions.*

In Isa. lxiii. 9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' It is between Christ and his church as between two lute strings, no sooner one is struck but the other trembles.²

[3.] *He shares with you in all sufferings and persecutions, as well as in all your afflictions.*

Acts ix. 4, 5, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' There is such a near union between the Lord Jesus Christ and the weakest saints, that a man cannot strike a saint but he must strike through the very heart of Christ. Their sufferings are held his, Col. i. 24; and their afflictions are his afflictions, and their reproaches are his reproaches,

¹ The notion of *ἰσὶλαυβάνισται* is best expressed by Chrysostom in these words: 'When mankind fled far from Christ, Christ pursued and caught hold of it; and this he did by fastening on our nature in his incarnation,' &c.

² The ancients use to say commonly, that Alexander and Hephastion had but one soul in two distinct bodies, because their joy and sorrow, glory and disgrace, was mutual to them both. [Of Sibbes, vol. i. p. 194, note b.—G.] It is so between Christ and his saints. Their names, that are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register in the book of life, said Prudentius. In my lifetime, said a gracious soul, I have been assaulted with temptations from Satan, and he hath cast my sins into my teeth to drive me to despair; yet the Lord gave me strength to overcome all his temptations.

Heb. xiii. 13; and their provocations are his provocations, Neh. iv. 4, 5; God is provoked more than Nehemiah. So Isa. viii. 18, compared with Heb. ii. 13. 'Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel.' This the apostle applies to Christ, Heb. ii. 13.

[4.] *The Lord Jesus Christ shares with you in all your temptations*, Heb. ii. 17, 18, and iv. 15, 16.

Christ was tempted, and he was afflicted as well as you, that he might be able so succour you that are tempted. As a poor man that hath been troubled with pain and grief, he will share with others that are troubled with pain or grief. Ah, friends! the Lord Jesus Christ hath lost none of his affections by going to heaven; he is still full of compassion, though free from personal passion. When he was on earth, oh! how did he sympathize with his poor servants in all their temptations. 'Satan,' says Christ to Peter, 'hath desired to winnow thee, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32. Luther, in his preaching, met with every man's temptation, and being once asked how he could do so? answered, Mine own manifold temptations and experiences are the cause thereof. Oh! the manifold temptations that the Lord Jesus hath undergone, makes him sensible, as I may say, and willing to share with us in our temptations.

Secondly, As Christ shares with weak saints, so *weak saints share with Christ*. And this I shall shew you briefly in a few particulars.

[1.] *Weak saints share with Christ in his divine nature*. 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' Not of the substance of the Godhead, as the Familists say, for that is incommunicable; but by the divine nature we are to understand those divine qualities, called elsewhere, 'the image of God,' 'the life of God,' that whereby we are made like to God in wisdom and holiness, wherein the image of God, after which man was at first created, consists, Eph. iv. 24, Col. iii. 10.¹ Saints that do partake of this divine nature, that is, of those divine qualities before spoken of, they resemble God, not only as a picture doth a man, in outward lineaments, but as a child doth his father, in countenance and condition. And well may grace be called 'the divine nature,' for as God bringeth light out of darkness, comfort out of sorrow, riches out of poverty, and glory out of shame, so does grace bring day out of night, and sweet out of bitter, and plenty out of poverty, and glory out of shame. It turns counters into gold, pebbles into pearls, sickness into health, weakness into strength, and wants into abundance. 'Enjoying nothing, and yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10, &c.

[2.] *Weak saints share with Christ in his Spirit and grace*.

In Ps. xlv. 7, Christ is 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' They have the anointings of the Spirit, as well as he, though not so richly as he. They have their measure, though not that measure and proportion of the Spirit as the Lord Jesus hath. So in John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have all we received, grace for grace.' There is in Christ not only a fulness of abundance, but also a fulness of redundance.

¹ To be made partakers of the divine nature notes two things: (1.) fellowship with God in his holiness; (2.) a fellowship with God in his blessedness.

There is an overflowing fulness in Christ, as a fountain overflows, and yet still remains full. 'Grace for grace,' or, 'grace upon grace.' Abundance of grace, and the increases of graces, one by another.

'Grace for grace,' that is, as a child in generation receives member for member; or as the paper from the press receives letter for letter; or as the wax from the seal receives print for print; or as the glass from the image receives face for face, so does the weakest saint receive from Jesus Christ.

'Grace for grace,' that is, for every grace that is in Christ, there is the same grace in us, in some measure. There is not the weakest saint that breathes, but has in him some wisdom that answers to the wisdom of Christ, and some love that answers to the love of Christ, and some humility, meekness, and faith, that answers to the humility, meekness, and faith of the Lord Jesus, in truth and reality, though not in degree or quantity, &c.

[3.] Weak saints share with Christ, *in the manifestations and discoveries of his Father.*

The Lord Jesus, that lies in the bosom of the Father, hath the clearest and the fullest manifestations of the Father that can be, and he comes and opens the love and heart of the Father, he unbosoms and unbowels God to the weakest saints, as in John xv. 15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' So in John xvii. 6-8.²

[4.] Weak saints share with Christ *in his honourable titles.*

In the title of sons, 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' And in that of heirs, Rom. viii. 17. Yea, they are priests, and prophets, and kings, as well as he, as you may see by comparing Rev. i. 5, 6, with 1 Peter ii. 9, &c.³

[5.] Weak saints share with Christ *in his conquests.*

In 1 Cor. xv. 55-57, Rom. viii. 37, Christ hath triumphed over sword, famine, death, and devils, &c., and so have they through him also. Over all these we are more than conquerors, we are over and above conquerors. Oh what a blessed thing is this! that weak saints should share with Christ in his conquests. The poor weak soldier shares with his general in all his noble and honourable conquests; so does a poor weak Christian share with his Christ in all his noble and honourable conquests.⁴

[6.] Lastly, They share with Christ *in his honour and glory.*

And what would they have more? John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' 1 Peter v. 1, Eph. ii. 6, 'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in

¹ *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good.

² Plutarch's reasoning is good: *τα τῶν φίλων πάντα κοινά*, friends have all things in common; but God is our friend. *Ergo*, . . . This was a rare speech from a heathen. [*Moralia*, *sub voce*.—G.]

³ The wife shares with her husband in all his titles of honour; so does a Christian with his Christ.

⁴ See 1 Sam. xviii. 17-29; Col. ii. 14, 15; Eph. ii. 13-16; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rom. viii. 37. *ὑπερνικῶμεν*, we do overcome.

heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Believers are already risen in Christ their head, and they do at this instant sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Christ, as a public person, doth represent all believing souls, and they are set down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In Rom. viii. 17, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' And in John xiv. 2, 3, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' So in Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.'¹ Now, what would you have more, weak souls? Christ shares with you, and you share with Christ. You are apt to be discouraged because you do not share with Christ in such measures of grace, comfort, and holiness, as such and such strong saints do. Oh! but remember in how many weighty things Christ and you are sharers; and be dejected if you can! Ah, Christians! what though you do not share in the honours, profits, pleasures, and advantages of the world; yet this should be your joy and crown, that Christ and your souls are sharers in those things that are most eminent and excellent, most precious and glorious; and the serious remembrance hereof should bear up your heads, hopes, and hearts, above all the troubles, temptations, and afflictions that come upon you in this world, &c.

III. The third thing propounded, was *to shew you the duty of weak saints*. Who these weak saints are, you have heard; and what their supports and comforts are, you have heard; and now I shall shew you their duty in the following particulars.

And the *first* duty that I shall press upon weak saints is this:

1. *To be thankful for that little grace they have.*²

Wilt thou be thankful, O Christian, for the least courtesy shewed thee by men? And wilt thou not be thankful for that little measure of grace that is bestowed upon thee by God? Dost thou remember, O weak Christian! that the least measure of grace is more worth than a thousand worlds? that it is more worth than heaven itself? Dost thou remember, O weak Christian! that the greatest number of men have not the least measure or dram of saving grace? Doth free grace knock at thy door, when it passes by the doors of thousands? And doth it cast a pearl of price into thy bosom, when others are left to wallow in their blood for ever? And wilt thou not be thankful? Oh do but consider, weak souls, how notoriously wicked you would have been if the Lord had not bestowed a little grace upon you! Thou lookest, O soul, one way, and there thou hearest some a-cursing, banning, and a-blaspheming God to his very face. Had not the Lord given thee a little grace, ten thousand to one but thou hadst been one in wickedness among these monsters of mankind. And thou lookest another way, and there thou seest persons dicing, carding, drabbing, and drunkenning, &c.; why, had not the Lord vouchsafed to thee some tastes and sips of grace, thou mightst have been as vile as the vilest among them. Ah, weak saints! you do not think what an awakened

¹ Christ is the believer's harbinger, to prepare for them the best mansions, &c.

² The laws of Persia, Macedonia, and Athens, condemned the ungrateful to death; and certainly unthankfulness may well be styled the epitome of all vices.

conscience would give for a little of that little grace that the Lord has given you. Were all the world a lump of gold, and in their hand to give, they would give it for the least spark of grace, for the least drop of mercy.

I have read of a man who, being in a burning fever, professed that if he had all the world at his dispose, he would give it all for one draught of beer. So would an awakened conscience for one dram of grace. Oh! saith such a soul, when I look up and see God frowning, when I look inward and feel conscience gnawing and accusing, when I look downward and see hell open to receive me, and when I look on my right and left hand, and see devils standing ready to accuse me, oh! had I a thousand worlds I would give them all for a little drop of that grace that such and such souls have, whom I have formerly slighted and despised. Oh! what would not a damned soul, that hath been but an hour in hell, give for a drop of that grace that thou hast in thy heart! Think seriously of this and be thankful.¹

Well! remember one thing more, and that is this, viz., that there is no such way to get much grace, as to be thankful for a little grace. He who opens his mouth wide in praises, shall have his heart filled with graces. Ingratitude stops the ear of God, and shuts the hand of God, and turns away the heart of the God of grace, and therefore you had need be thankful for a little grace. Unthankfulness is the greatest injustice that may be; it is a withholding from the great landlord of heaven and earth his due, his debt.

Philip branded his soldier that begged the land of one that had relieved him, and kindly entertained him, with *ingratus hospes*, the ungrateful guest.² O weak saints! give not God an occasion by your ingratitude to brand you, and to write upon your foreheads, ungrateful children. Had it not been for unthankfulness, Adam had been in paradise, the lapsed angels in heaven, and the Jews in their own land of promise. The Jews have a saying, that the world stands upon three things, the law, holy worship, and retribution, and if these things fall the world will fall. You know how to apply it, Isa. i. 3, 4.

But [that] I may in good earnest stir up your souls to thankfulness, will you take home with you these things, that haply have never or seldom been thought of by you?

[1.] *First*, Consider, that there is more need of praises than there is of prayers.

Two things do with open mouth proclaim this truth.

And the *first* is this, our mercies do out-weigh our wants. This is true in temporals, but infinitely more in spirituals and eternal. Thou wantest this and that outward mercy, and what is thy want, O soul! of this and that single mercy, to the multitudes of mercies that thou dost enjoy? And as for spirituals, there is nothing more clear than this, that thy spiritual mercies do infinitely out-weigh thy spiritual wants. Thou wantest this and that spiritual mercy, but what are those wants

¹ One of the kings of England in his straits cried out, 'A kingdom for a horse! a kingdom for a horse!' [Richard III., as before.—G.] So do awakened consciences cry out, A kingdom for a Christ! a kingdom for a Christ, or a little grace!

² Lycurgus, saith Musculus, amongst all his laws, made none against the ungrateful; because that was thought a thing so prodigious, as not to be committed by man.

to that God, that Christ, and all those spiritual blessings in heavenly places, with which thou art blest in Christ Jesus,¹ Eph. i. 4.

Secondly, Consider this, *That all your wants and miseries are deserved and procured by your sins.* Jer. iv. 18, 'Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee: this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thy heart.' And chap. l. 25, 'Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.' But now all your mercies are unmerited and undeserved; they all flow in upon you from the free love and favour of God; and therefore there is more need of praises than of prayers. And oh! that the high praises of God were more in your mouths, upon this very account! And oh that, with David, you would summon all the faculties of your souls to praise the Lord, who hath filled you, and followed you with the riches of mercy all your days,² Ps. cxlix. 2, and ciii. 1-5. But,

[2.] *Secondly*, Consider this, *Thankfulness is a surer and a better evidence of our sincerity, and spiritual ingenuity, than praying or hearing, or such like services, are.*

Thanksgiving is a self-denying grace; it is an uncrowning ourselves and the creatures, to set the crown upon the head of our Creator; it is the making ourselves a footstool, that God may be lifted up upon his throne, and ride in a holy triumph over all; it is a grace that gives God the supremacy in all our hearts, thoughts, desires, words, and works. Self-love, flesh and blood, and many low and carnal considerations, may carry men to pray, and hear, and talk, &c. The whip may work a shame³ to beg, but thankfulness is the free-will offering of a child. There is nothing that so clearly and so fully speaks out your sincerity and spiritual ingenuity, as thankfulness doth. Therefore, weak saints, if you would have a substantial evidence of your sincerity and spiritual ingenuity, be thankful for a little grace. The little birds do not sip one drop of water, but they look up, as if they meant to give thanks, to shew us what we should do for every drop of grace, &c.⁴

The third and last consideration to set this home is this:

[3.] *A thankful soul holds consort with the music of heaven.*

By thankfulness thou holdest a correspondency with the angels, who are still a-singing hallelujahs to him that sits upon the throne, and is blessed for ever, Rev. iv. 6-9, and v. 12-14. In heaven there is no prayers, but all praises. I am apt to think, that there cannot be a clearer nor a greater argument of a man's right to heaven, and ripeness for heaven, than this, being much in the work of heaven here on earth. There is no grace but love, nor no duty but thankfulness, that goes with us to heaven.⁵

Ay, but weak saints may say, Sir! we judge that there is weight in what you say, to provoke us to thankfulness; but did we know that we had

¹ God's favours and mercies seldom or never come single; there is a series or concatenation of them, and every former draws on a future.

² God and Christ are the sole fountain from whence all these streams of living waters flow.

³ Qu. 'slave'?—Ed.

⁴ It is much to be feared that that man is Christless and graceless, that is earnest in craving mercies, but slow and dull in returning praises. It is a sign that the dumb devil hath possessed such a man.

⁵ Epictetus wished he were a nightingale, to be ever singing. And what then should a saint wish? &c.

true grace, though it were never so little, though it were but as the grain of mustard seed, we would be thankful. But this is our condition, we live between fears and hopes; one day hoping we shall to heaven, and be happy for ever, another day we are fearing that we shall to hell, and miscarry for ever; and thus we are up and down, backward and forward. Sometimes we believe we have grace, and at other times we doubt we have none; sometimes we have a little light, and suddenly our sun is clouded; one day we are ready to say with David, 'The Lord is our portion,' and the next day we are ready to complain with Jonah, that we are 'cast out' from the presence of the Lord.

Methinks I hear a weak saint saying thus to me, Sir, I would fain have an end put to this controversy that hath been so long in my soul, viz., whether I have grace or no, and if you please, I will tell you what I find, and so humbly desire your judgment and opinion upon the whole.

Well, speak on, poor soul, and let me hear what thou hast found in thine own soul.

Why, sir, then thus:

[1.] I find, first, *a holy restlessness in my soul, till with old Simeon I have gotten Christ in my arms, yea, till I have gotten Christ in my heart*, Luke ii. 25-33. I go from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, and yet I cannot rest, because 'I cannot find him whom my soul loves,' Cant. v. 10. I am like Noah's dove, that could not rest until he had gotten into the ark. Oh I cannot be quiet till I know that I am housed in Christ. My soul is like a ship in a storm, that is tossed hither and thither, oh! where shall I find him? Oh! how shall I obtain him who is the chiefest of ten thousand? What Absalom said in another case, I can say in this, saith the poor soul; in his banishment he could say, 'What is all this to me, so long as I cannot see the king's face?' And truly the language of my soul is this, What is honour to me? and riches to me? and the favour of creatures to me? so long as I go mourning without my Christ, so long as I see not my interest in my Christ.¹

Well, have you anything else to say, O weak Christian?

Yes sir, I have one thing more to say.

What is that?

Why, it is this.

[2.] I can truly say, *that the poorest, the most distressed and afflicted man in the world, is not fuller of desires, nor stronger in his desires than I am.* The poor man desires bread to feed him, and the wounded man desires a plaster to heal him, and the sick man desires cordials to strengthen him, &c. But these are not fuller of desires after those things that are suitable to them, than I am of holy and heavenly desires.² Oh that I had more of God! oh that I were filled with Christ! oh that I had his righteousness to cover me, his grace to pardon me, his power to support me, his wisdom to counsel me, his loving-kindness to refresh me, and his happiness to crown me, &c.

Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir, I have one thing more to tell you.

What is that?

¹ The child is restless till it be in the mother's arms.

² *Tota vita boni Christiani sanctum desiderium est.*

Why, that is this :

[3.] *Though I dare not say that Christ is mine, yet I can truly say, that Christ, his love, his works, his grace, his word, are the main objects of my contemplation and meditation.* Oh I am always best, when I am most a-meditating and contemplating Christ, his love, his grace, &c. Ps. cxxxix. 17, 'How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God ; how great is the sum of them !'¹

Well, is this all, O weak saint ?

No, sir, I have one thing more to say.

What is that ?

Why, it is this :

[4.] I can truly say, *That the want of Christ's love is a greater grief and burden to my soul, than the want of any outward thing in this world.* I am in a wanting condition, as to temporals ; I want health, and strength, and trading, friends, and money, 'that answereth all things,' as Solomon speaks, Eccles. x. 19. And yet all these wants do not so grieve me, and so afflict and trouble me, as the want of Christ, as the want of grace, as the want of the discoveries of that favour that is better than life, Ps. lxxiii. 3, 4.

Well, is this all, O weak saint ?

No, sir, there is one thing more.

What is that ?

Why, that is this :

[5.] *That I would not willingly nor resolvedly sin against Christ, for a world.* It is true, I dare not say I have an interest in Christ, yet I dare say that I would not willingly and resolvedly sin against Christ for a world.² I can say, through grace, were I this moment to die, that my greatest fear is of sinning against Christ, and my greatest care is of pleasing Christ. I know there was a time, when my greatest care was to please myself and the creature, and my greatest fear was to please³ myself and the creature. I can remember with sorrow and sadness of heart, how often I have displeased Christ to please myself, and displeased Christ to please the creature ; but now it is quite otherwise with me, my greatest care is to please Christ, and my greatest fear is of offending Christ.⁴

Well, is this all, O weak saint ?

No, sir, I have one thing more.

What is that ?

Why, that is this :

[6.] *Though I dare not say that Christ is mine, and that I have an interest in him, yet I can truly say, I dearly love the people of Christ, for the image of Christ that I see stamped upon them.* It is true, I dare not say Christ is mine, and heaven is mine ; I cannot say with such and such, 'The Lord is my portion ;' yet I can say that I dearly love those that have the Lord for their portion. I can truly say, that

¹ Some contemplations have *generationem longam, fruitionem brevem* ; but these are not the contemplations of the saints.

² I will rather leap into a bonfire than wilfully to commit wickedness, wilfully to sin against God.

³ Qu. 'displease' ?—Ed.

⁴ And I, said Anselm, had rather go to hell pure from sin than to heaven polluted with that filth. The primitive Christians chose rather to be thrown to lions without, than left to lusts within. *Ad leonem magis quam leones*, saith Tertullian.

the poorest and the most neglected, and the most despised saint in the world, is more precious in my eye, and more dear to my soul, than the greatest and the richest sinner in the world, Ps. xvi. 3.¹

Well, is this all, O weak saint, that thou hast to say?

No, sir, I have one thing more.

What is that?

Why, that is this:

[7.] Though I dare not say that I have any interest in Christ, or that I love Christ, yet I dare say, *that my soul weeps and mourns in secret for the dishonour that is done to Christ, both by myself and by others also.* I can look the Lord in the face, were I now to die, and say, Lord! thou that knowest all thoughts and hearts, thou dost know, that 'mine eyes run down with rivers of tears, because men keep not thy law,' Jer. ix. 1-3; Ps. cxix. 136.

Well, is this all?

No, sir, I crave your patience to hear me in one thing more.

What is that, O weak Christian?

Why, that is this:

[8.] *That I prize persons and things according to the spiritualness and holiness that is in them; and the more spiritual and holy any man or thing is, the more is that man and thing prized by my soul.* I have often thought of that sweet word, Ps. cxix. 104, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore doth thy servant love it.'² Other men love it because of the profit they get by it, or because of a name, or this, or that; but I love it for the purity, for the holiness, and the cleanness of it. No preaching, saith the weak saint, nor no praying, nor no talking, nor no society that likes me and is sweet to me, but that that is most spiritual, most holy. It is not an exercise tricked and trimmed up with wit, learning, and eloquence; it is not the hanging of truth's ears with counterfeit pearls, that takes me; but the more plainness, spiritualness, and holiness, I see in an exercise, the more is my heart raised to prize it and love it. And therefore, saith the weak saint, because Christ is perfectly and infinitely holy above all other, I prize Christ above all. Ordinances are sweet, but Christ is more sweet to my soul. Saints are precious, but Christ is far more precious. Heaven is glorious, but Christ is infinitely more glorious. The first thing that I would ask, if I might have it, saith the weak saint, is Christ. And the next thing that I would ask, if I might have it, is more of Christ. And the last thing that I would ask, if I might have it, is that I might be satiated and filled with the fulness of Christ. Let the ambitious man take the honours of the world, so I may but have Christ. Let the voluptuous man swim in all the pleasures of the world, so I may have Christ. And let the covetous man tumble up and down in all the gold and silver of the world, so I may have Christ, and it shall be enough to my soul.³

¹ It is reported of Bucer and Calvin, that they loved all them in whom they could espy *aliquid Christi*, anything of Christ. It is just so with these poor hearts that question their present condition.

² Much in the word is wrapped up in a little; it is more to be admired than to have Homer's *Iliads* comprised in a nutshell. The word is like the stone, *garamantides*, that hath golden drops within itself, enriching of the gracious soul.

³ None but Christ, none but Christ, said the martyr. [Sanders and Hudson, *as before*. —G.]

Well, is this all, O weak saint ?

No, sir ; I have one thing more to say,

What is that ?

Why, it is this :

[9.] *I find the same conflict in my soul that Paul found in his soul, after he was converted near upon fourteen years, after he was taken up into as clear and choice enjoyments of God, as any soul that ever I read of. The conflict that is mentioned, Rom. vii. 6, I find in my soul. The whole frame of my soul, understanding, will, and affections, are set against sin. I find that 'I hate the evil that I do, and I find that the good that I would do, I do not, and the evil that I would not do, that do I. I find a law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading of me captive into the law of sin,' and this makes me often to cry out with Paul, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ? Therefore I sometime hope, that those sins that are now my burden, shall never hereafter be my bane.'*¹

Well, and is this all, O weak saint ?

No, sir ; I have one thing more to say.

What is that ?

Why that is this :

[10.] *I can truly say, when the Lord gives me any strength against sin, and any power to serve him, and walk close with him in his ways, it is a greater joy and comfort to my soul, than all the blessings of this life. Though I have not yet seen, he hath 'set me as a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm ;' though I have not yet the clear assurance of his love ; though his spirit hath not yet set up such a light in my soul, whereby I might run and read my right and title to himself and heaven ; yet when he doth give me but a little light through a crevice, when he does but begin to cause his love to dawn upon me, when he gives me but a little strength against sin, and a little power to walk close with himself, &c. ; oh, this doth administer more abiding joy, and more sweet peace, and more solid comfort to my soul, than all the riches, honours, friends, and favours of this world.'*²

Well, is this all, O weak saint ?

No, sir ; I have one thing more to say.

What is that ?

Why, that is this :

[11.] *Though my interest in Christ be not clear to me, yet I can truly say I would not change my condition with the men of this world, for a thousand worlds, Ps. ci. 3 ; cxxxix. 21, 22 ; cxx. 6. It is true, I cannot say that I have 'the seal and witness of the Spirit,' that many talk and boast of, though I fear but a few enjoy ; yet I can truly say, that I would not change my estate with men merely civil, nor with the profane men of this world, for ten thousand worlds, &c.*

Well, is this all, O soul !

¹ The best saints in this world are like the tribe of Manasseh, half on this side Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, and half on that side, in the Holy Land. And though to be kept from sin brings most comfort to a poor soul, yet for a poor soul to oppose sin, and God to pardon sin, that brings most glory to God, 2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

² Sozomen relates of one who was as circumspect to be seen as to be. A gracious soul is as careful that he does not endanger another by a bad life, as he is careful to save his own life.

No, sir ; I have but one thing more, and then I have done.

Well, what is that ?

Why, that is this.

[12.] *I find my soul carried forth to a secret resting, relying, leaning, staying, and hanging upon Christ for life and happiness.* Though I know not how it shall go with me, yet I have thrown myself into his arms ; I lean upon him ; there I will hang, and there I will rest and stay : ' if I must perish, I will perish there,' Job xiii. 15 ; 2 Kings vii. 3-5 ; Esther iv. 16.

And thus, sir, I have opened my state and condition to you ; and now I do earnestly desire your judgment upon the whole.

Well, then, this I shall say, as ' I must answer it in the day of my appearing before God,' that had I as many souls as I have hairs on my head, or as there be stars in heaven, I could freely adventure the loss of them all, if these things do not undeniably speak out, not only the truth, but also the strength of grace, &c. Nay, let me tell you, that he that finds but any of these things really in his soul, though the Lord hath not given him a clear and full manifestation of his love and favour, &c., yet, while breath is in his body, he hath eminent cause to bless God, and to walk thankfully and humbly before him.

The second duty is this,

2. *Live up to that little grace you have.*

Thou sayest, O weak Christian, thou hast but a little light, a little love, a little zeal, a little faith, &c. Well, grant it, but know that it is thy duty to live up to those measures of grace thou hast. And this is the second head that I shall press upon you, live up and live out that grace you have.¹ And if ever there were a season to press this point home upon souls, this is the season in which we live. And considering that it is not a flood of words, but weight of argument, that carries it with ingenuous spirits, I shall therefore propound these following things to their serious consideration.

[1.] *First, Consider this, living up to your graces carries with it the greatest evidence of the truth of grace.*

That man that lives not up to his grace, let him be strong or weak, wants one of the best and strongest demonstrations that can be to evidence the truth of his grace. If you would have a clear evidence that that little love, that little faith, that little zeal you have is true, then live up to that love, live up to that faith, live up to that zeal that you have, and this will evidence it beyond all contradiction, &c.²

[2.] *Secondly, Consider this, God and your own souls will be very great losers, if you live not up to those measures of grace you have.*

God will lose many prayers and many praises ; he will lose much honour, and glory, and service, which otherwise he might have ; and you will lose much peace, much comfort, much rest, quietness, and content that otherwise your souls might enjoy, &c.³

¹ To speak well, saith Isidore Pelusiota, is to sound like a cymtal ; but to do well, is to act like an angel, &c.

² If Seneca said of his wise man, *Majore parte illic est, unde descendit, he is more in heaven than in earth ; may not I say this is much more true of the godly ?* &c. [*De Constantia Sapientis et Epistolæ.*—G.]

³ Of all losses, spiritual losses are the saddest and greatest, and fetched up with the greatest difficulty.

[3.] *Thirdly*, Consider this, *your not living up to that little light and grace you have, will open the mouths of graceless souls against your gracious God, and against his gracious ones, and against his gracious ways.*¹

You think, because of the weakness of your grace, you must be borne with in this, and that, and what not. But remember, it is your duty to live up to the light and grace you have; and nothing below this will effectually stop the mouths of graceless wretches from barking against the ways of God, the truths of God, and the people of God. Vain men will be often a-reasoning thus: though such and such men and women have not such great knowledge, such clear light, such strong love, and such burning zeal as David, Paul, and other worthies, yet they have so much light and knowledge as tells them that they should not carry themselves thus and thus as they do. Their light and knowledge tells them that they should be just and righteous in their dealings, and in all their ways and designs, &c. Though they have not such great measures of spiritual enjoyments as such and such, yet that little grace they have should lead them by the hand to do things worthy of that Christ and the gospel they profess, &c.

Let me a little expostulate the point with you, weak saints; you know that you should not be stirred and heated by every straw that is in your way. Why do not you in this, then, live up to your light? You know that you should not 'be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,' Rom. xii. 21. And why do not you in this live up to your light? You know that you should 'do good to those that do hurt to you,' Mat. v. 44-48. Why do not you in this live up to your light? You know that you should do your duties to others, though they neglect their duties to you. It is not the neglect of a husband's duty that frees the wife from the discharge of hers, nor the neglect of a wife's duty that frees the husband from the discharge of his. You know this, don't you? Yes. Why don't you then live up to your light? Why do you by your contrary actings open the mouths of others against God and his ways? You know that you should be exemplary in your relations, in your generations, and in your conversations; you know that you should be examples of holiness, meekness, sweetness, patience, and contentedness, and why then don't you live up to your knowledge in these things? You know that you should do to others as you would have others to do to you; and why in this don't you live up to your knowledge? Ah! that you that are weak did not cause the mouths of wicked men to be opened against God, his truths and ways, by your living below that light and knowledge that God hath given you! I beseech you, as you tender the honour of God, and as you would stop the mouths of vain men, live up to those measures of grace that the Lord hath given you. No way to comfort like this, no way to the crown like this. He will not be long a babe in grace, who lives out that little grace he hath.

[4.] *Fourthly*, *Living up to your light is the readiest and the only way to fetch up and to recover all that hath been lost by your living below your light.*

¹ 1 Peter ii. 15, ye may put to silence. The Greek word *φραμὴν* signifies to muzzle, to halter up, or button up their mouths, as we say. Oh! there is nothing that will so muzzle and button up the mouths of vain men as Christians living up to that light and grace they have. [Cf. Glossary under 'button' for other references.—G.]

By your living below your light, God, your own souls, and the gospel have lost much, yea, and others also have lost much light, comfort, strength, and quickness, &c., that they might have had, had you but lived up to that little grace you had. Now, there is no way on earth to recover and to fetch up these losses, but by living up to that grace you have. Ah, Christians ! it is not your running from sermon to sermon,—not that I speak against frequent hearing of the word,—nor your crying up this man and that man, or this notion and that, or this way or that, that will recover and fetch up the honour that God hath lost by your living below your graces.¹ It is only your living up to your graces that will make up all the breaches that have been made upon his honour and the gospel, and upon the comfort and peace of your own souls and others'. Well, remember this, all the honour that God hath from you in this life, is from your living up to that light, knowledge, love, fear, and faith that he hath given you. There is nothing that will make up all losses but this; therefore I beg of you, upon the knees of my soul, that you would take this one thing home with you, and go into your closets, and lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, Well, the Lord hath lost much, and my own soul hath lost much, and others have lost much, by my living below that little grace I have; and therefore I will now make it my business, by assisting grace, to live up to those measures of grace that I have received, more than yet I have done all my days. I will, by the strength of Christ, make it more my duty and my work to live out what God hath given in than ever yet I have done, that so the Lord and the gospel may be no further losers but gainers by me.

[5.] The *fifth* and last motive is this, *the readiest and the surest way to get more grace, is to live up to that little grace you have.*

He that lives up to a little light shall have more light; he that lives up to a little knowledge shall have more knowledge; he that lives up to a little faith shall have more faith; and he that lives up to a little love shall have more love, &c.² There is no such way to attain to greater measures of grace as for a man to live up to that little grace he hath. Verily, the main reason why many are such babes and shrubs in grace, is because they do not live up to their attainments. He that wont improve two talents, shall never have the honour to be trusted with five; but he that improves a little, shall be trusted with much: 'The diligent hand maketh rich,' Prov. x. 4. He that is active and agile, that works as well as wishes, that adds endeavours to his desires, will quickly be a cedar in grace. Ah, Christians ! you have a God that is great, a God that is good, a God that is gracious, and a God that is rich, that loves not to see his children to be always weaklings and striplings in grace. The very babe, by drawing the breasts, gets strength and nourishment. Oh you babes in grace, put out that little strength you

¹ Bernard [Serm. on Canticles, *as before*.—G.] paraphrasing on that of Solomon, 'A lily amongst thorns,' saith, The manners, or lives of men, as lilies, have their colours and odours; that which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience hath the colour of a lily, if a good name follow. It is more truly a lily when neither candour nor odour of the lily is wanting. *Non enim passibus ad Deum sed affectibus currimus.*

² Job xvii. 29; Cant. vi. 10; Prov. iv. 18. History reports of a country in Africa where the people's industry hath an abundant reward; for every bushel of seed they sow, they receive one hundred and fifty after.—*Blazacium, Pliuy*, lib. xviii. cap. x. The application is easy.

have, be you still a-drawing at the breasts of Christ, at the breasts of the promises, and strength will come, nourishment will follow, &c.¹

The third duty that I would press upon weak saints is this :

3. *Be sure that you always reflect upon your graces, and whatsoever good is in you, with cautions.*

This is a weighty point, and doth bespeak your most serious attention.

There are six rules or cautions that weak saints should always observe in their looking upon their graces.

And the *first* is this:

[1.] *Look upon all your graces as gifts of grace, as favours given you from above, as gifts dropped out of heaven into your hearts, as flowers that are given you out of the garden of paradise.*

A man should never look upon his grace, but he should look upon it as a flower of paradise, as a gift that God hath cast into his bosom from heaven. 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou hast not received?' &c. 'Of thine own,' saith David, 'have we given thee,' 1 Chron. xxix. 14. Thou talkest of light, of love, of fear, of faith, &c., but what are all these but pearls of glory that are freely given thee by the hand of grace? 'Every good and perfect gift comes down from above.' As all light flows from the sun, and all water from the sea, so all good flows from heaven. The greatest excellencies in us do as much depend upon God, as the light doth upon the sun. When thou lookest upon thy wisdom, thou must say, Here is wisdom, ay, but it is from above; here is some weak love working towards Christ, but it is from above; here is joy, and comfort, and peace, but these are all the flowers of paradise; they never grew in nature's garden. When a soul looks thus upon all those costly diamonds with which his heart is decked, he keeps low, though his graces are high. Where this rule is neglected, the soul will be endangered of being swelled and puffed.

Mr Foxe was used to say, that 'as he got much good by his sins, so he got much hurt by his graces.' When you look upon the stream, remember the fountain; when you look upon the flower, remember the root; when you look upon the stars, remember the sun; and when you look upon your graces, remember the fountain of grace, else Satan will be too hard for you. Satan is so artificial,² so subtle and critical, that he can make your very graces to serve him against your graces; conquering joy by joy, sorrow by sorrow, humility by humility, fear by fear, and love by love, if you do not look upon all your graces as streams flowing from the fountain above, and as fruits growing upon the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. Therefore, when one eye is fixed upon your graces, let the other be always fixed upon the God of grace.

[2] Secondly, *At that time when your eye is upon inherent grace and righteousness, let your heart be fixed upon Christ, and his imputed righteousness.*³

¹ Dionysius gave him his money again, from whom he had taken much, after that he heard he employed a little well. And will God be worse than a heathen?

² 'Artful.'—G.

³ *Aut totam mecum tene, aut totam amitte.*—Gregory Nazienzen. Let us say of Christ, as the heathen once said of his petty gods, *Contemno minutos istos Deos, modo Jovem pro-*

Paul's eye was upon his grace: Rom. vii. 22, 25, 'I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. And with my mind I serve the law of God.' And yet at that very same time, his heart was set upon Christ, and taken up with Christ; ver. 25, 'I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' So in Col. ii. 2, 3, you have one eye fixed upon grace, and at the same time the heart fixed upon Christ. 'That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' His eye is upon grace, his heart is upon Christ. So in Philip. iii. 8, the apostle hath his eye upon the excellent knowledge of Christ, but ver. 9, his heart is set upon the righteousness of Christ. 'That I might be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Here you have his eye upon grace, and his heart upon Christ, in the very presence of his grace. This is your glory, Christians, in the presence and sight of all your graces, to see the free grace of Christ, and his infinite, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness, to be your surest, sweetest, highest, and choicest comfort and refuge.

Peter was not well skilled in this lesson, and that was the very reason that he fell foulest, when his confidence was highest. Grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring; and he that looks more upon the ring than the pearl that is in it, in the hour of temptation will certainly fall. When the wife's eye is upon her rings or jewels, then her heart must be set upon her husband. When grace is in my eye, Christ must at that time be in my arms, yea, he must lie between my breasts: Cant. i. 13, 'My beloved is as a bundle of myrrh, he shall lie all night between my breasts.' Christ, and not grace, must lie nearest to a Christian's heart.

[3.] A *third* thing is this, *When you look upon your grace, you must look upon it as a beautiful creature, that is begotten in the soul by Christ, and that is strengthened, maintained, cherished, and upheld in your souls by nothing below the spiritual, internal, and glorious operations of Christ.*¹

Though grace be a beautiful creature, yet grace is but a creature, and so your souls must look upon it. Grace is a heavenly offspring, it is the first-born of God, as I may say, and does most represent him to the life. Grace is a bud of glory; it is of the blood royal; it is nobly descended, James i. 17. So in Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginner and ender.² In all other things and arts, the same man cannot begin and finish, but Christ doth both. Philip. i. 5, Our graces thrive and are upheld in life and power, in beauty and glory, by the internal operation of Christ in our souls. So in Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' So ver. 29, 'Whereunto I also labour, striving

pitium habeam, so long as he had Jupiter to friend, he regarded them not. So, so long as we have our Jesus to friend, we should not regard others, no, not our very graces, in comparison of Christ.

¹ Gal. ii. 20, Philip. i. 6. *Deus nihil coronat nisi dona sua*, when God crowneth us, he doth but crown his own gifts in us.—*Augustine*.

² ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν, the leader and crowner.

according to his working which worketh in me mightily.' So Philip. iv. 13, 'I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me; I can be high and low, poor and rich, honourable and base, something or nothing, &c., through Christ that strengthens me.'¹ So in Cant. iv. 16, 'Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may send forth a fragrant smell.' We may puff and blow our hearts out, and yet no savoury smell will flow forth, if Christ does not blow. So in Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' Your graces, Christians, are heavenly plants of God's own setting and watering; and certainly the heavenly husbandman will never suffer such plants of renown to wither, for want of heavenly sap; he will look to the strengthening, supporting, and nourishing the work of his own hand. He will cause the desires of his people to bud, and their graces to blossom, and their souls to be like a watered garden, green and flourishing: Isa. lviii. 11, compared with Isa. xxxv. 6, 7.

[4.] Fourthly, *When you look upon your graces, you must look upon them as an earnest of more glorious and unspeakable measures of grace and glory, that your souls shall be filled with at last.*

In Eph. i. 13, 14, 'After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.' That little light and knowledge thou hast, is an earnest to thy soul, that thou shalt at last know, even as thou art known. 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as I am known.' Christians know but little of that they should know, they know but little of that they might know, they know but little of that others know, they know but little of that they desire to know, they know but little of that they shall know, when they shall come to know 'even as they are known.' And yet these weak and imperfect glimpses that they have of God and heaven here, are infallible pledges of that perfect knowledge and full prospect that they shall have of God and heaven hereafter. So that that little spark of joy thou hast, is an earnest of those everlasting joys that shall rest upon thy head, when all sorrow and mourning shall fly away, Isa. xxxv. 10, &c. And those sips of comfort thou hast now, are an earnest of thy swimming in those everlasting pleasures that be 'at God's right hand,' Ps. xvi. 11. The least measures of grace are an earnest of greater measures. God will not lose his earnest, though men often lose theirs. God will not despise 'the day of small things;' he will make those that bring forth but thirty fold, to bring forth sixty fold; and those that bring forth sixty fold, to bring forth a hundred fold, &c. He, his Son and Spirit, are all eminently and fully engaged to carry on the work of grace in his children's souls. Therefore do not sit down and say, My light is but

¹ ἐνεργουμένην ἐν δυνάμει, is wrought in me in power. The word πάντα, all things, though it be an universal, is not to be taken in the utmost extent, but according to the use of the like phrases in all languages, wherein the universal sign affixed, either to persons, or times, or places, or things, signifies a great number, but not all without exception, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together: Ps. xiv. 4, 8, 9; John xiv. 26; 1 Cor. x. 23. So those words are to be understood in Philip. iv. 13.

dim, and my love but weak, and my joy but a spark that will quickly go out, &c. But always remember, that those weak measures of grace thou hast, are a sure evidence of greater measures that God will confer upon thee in his own time and in his own ways, Isa. lxiv. 4, 5.¹

[5.] Fifthly, *When you look upon your graces, be sure that you look more at the truth of your graces, than at the measure of your graces.*

You must rather bring your graces to the touchstone, to try their truth, than to the balance, to weigh their measures. Many weak Christians are weighing their graces, when they should be a-trying the truth of their graces, as if the quantity and measure of grace were more considerable than the essence and nature of grace. And this is that that keeps many weak saints in a dark, doubting, questioning, and despairing condition; yea, this makes their lives a very hell. Weak saints, if you will not observe this rule, this caution, when you look upon your graces, you will go sighing and mourning to your graves. Ah! poor hearts, you should not be more cruel to your own souls than God is. When God comes to a judgment of your spiritual estates, he doth not bring a pair of scales to weigh your graces, but a touchstone to try the truth of your graces; and so should you deal by your own souls. If you deal otherwise, you are more cruel to your souls than God would have you. And if you are resolved that in this you will not imitate the Lord, then I dare prophesy that joy and peace shall be none of your guests, and he that should comfort you will 'stand afar off,' Lam. i. 16. It is good to own and acknowledge a little grace, though it be mingled with very much corruptions; as that poor soul did, Mark ix. 24, 'And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' He had but a little little faith, and this was mixed with abundance of unbelief, and yet notwithstanding he acknowledges that little faith he had, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' His faith was so weak, that he accounts it little better than unbelief; yet, says he, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' The least measure of faith will make thee blessed here and happy hereafter.²

A doctor cried out upon his dying-bed, *Credo languida fide, sed tamen fidei*; much faith will yield unto us here our heaven, and any faith, if true, will yield us heaven hereafter. So the church in Cant. i. 5, 'I am black, but comely.' She had nothing to say for her beautyfulness, yet she acknowledgeth her comeliness. 'I am black, but comely.' Though she could not say she was clear, yet she could say she was comely. As she was free to confess her blackness, so she was ingenuous to acknowledge her comeliness. 'I am black, but comely.' Ah, Christians! will you deal worse with your own souls, than you deal with your children? When you go to make a judgment of your child's affections, you look more to the truth of their affections, than you do to the strength of their affections; and will you be less ingenuous and favourable to

¹ *is aiviyuari*, in a riddle. Enigma is properly *obscura allegoria*, an obscure allegory: it is an allegory with a mask, or it is a cloudy, knotty, intricate speech, sealed and locked up from vulgar apprehensions. That is a riddle.

² Grace is homogeneal. Every twinkling of light is light; every drop of water is water; every spark of fire is fire; every drop of honey is honey. So every drop of grace is grace; and if the least drop or spark of grace be not worth acknowledging, it is worth nothing.

your poor souls? If he deserves to be branded, that feasts his child and starves his wife, what do you deserve, that can acknowledge the least natural good that is in a child, and yet will acknowledge none of that spiritual and heavenly good that is in your souls?

[6.] Sixthly, and lastly, *When you look upon your graces, look that you do not renounce and reject your graces, seen in the light of the Spirit, as a weak and worthless evidence of your interest in Christ, and that happiness that comes by Christ.*

I know in these days many cry up revelations and visions, yea, the visions of their own hearts, and make slight of the graces of Christ in the hearts of his people; yea, they look upon grace as a poor weak thing. Ah, Christians! take heed of this, else you will render null, in a very great measure, many precious scriptures,—especially the Epistles of John,—which were penned for the comfort and support of weak saints.¹

But that this may stick and work, be pleased to carry home with you these three things.

(1.) *First*, Other precious saints that are now triumphing in heaven, have pleaded their interest in God's love, and hopes of a better life, from graces inherent.

I will only point at those scriptures that speak out this truth: 1 John iii. 14, ii. 3, 4; Job xxiii. 10–12; and the whole 31st chapter of Job; Ps. cxix. 6; Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3; 2 Cor. i. 12. All these scriptures, with many others that might be produced, do with open mouth proclaim this truth. And surely to deny the fruit growing upon the tree to be an evidence that the tree is alive, is to me as unreasonable as it is absurd. Certainly, it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to trust in our graces, to make a saviour of our graces. There is a great deal of difference betwixt declaring and deserving; and if this be not granted, it will follow, that the apostle hath sent us aside to a covenant of works, when he exhorts us to 'use all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 5–10.²

(2.) *Secondly*, Carry home this with you, If justification and sanctification be both of them benefits of the covenant of grace, then to evidence the one by the other, is no ways unlawful, nor no turning aside to a covenant of works:

But our justification and sanctification are both of them benefits and blessings of the covenant of grace. *Ergo*. . . .

In Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'I will pardon all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me,' there is your justification; 'and I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me,' there is your sanctification. And therefore to evidence the one by the other can be no ways unlawful, nor no turning aside to a covenant of works.

(3.) *Thirdly*, Carry home this with you, Whatever gift of God in man brings him within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy, that gift must be an infallible evidence of salvation and happiness.

¹ Grace, saith one, is the foundation of all our felicity, and comprehends all blessings, as manna is said to have done all good tastes. John's epistles are a rich treasury for Christian assurance.

² Christians may doubtless look to their graces as evidences of their part in Christ and salvation; and the clearer and stronger they are, the greater will be their comfort; but not as causes.

But such are those gifts mentioned in those scriptures that prove the first head.

Therefore they are infallible evidences of our salvation and eternal happiness.

I confess a man may have many great gifts, and yet none of them bring him within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy. But I say, whatever gift of God in man brings him within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy, that gift must be an infallible evidence of his happiness and blessedness.¹

For the further clearing of this, I will instance in a gift of *waiting*. Where this gift is, it brings a man within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy. And had a man, as in a deserted state it often falls out, nothing under heaven to shew for his happiness, but only a waiting frame, this ought to bear him up from fainting and sinking. When the soul saith, My sun is set, my day is turned into night, my light into darkness, and my rejoicing into mourning, &c., oh, I have lost the comforting presence of God! I have lost the quickening presence of God! I have lost the supporting presence of God! I have lost the encouraging presence of God! &c., and when I shall recover these sad losses, I know not. All that I can say is this, that God keeps me in a waiting frame, weeping and knocking at the door of mercy. Now, I say, this waiting temper brings the soul within the compass of the promise of eternal mercy. And certainly such a soul shall not miscarry. Take three promises for this.

In Isa. xl. 31, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.' The mercy is the waiting man's, but the waiting man must give God leave to time his mercy for him. So in Isa. xxx. 18, 'And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.' So in Isa. lxiv. 4, 'For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.' So in Isa. xlix. 23, 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.'² Men are often ashamed, that wait upon the mountains and hills. Men high and great often frustrate the expectation of waiting souls, and then they blush, and are ashamed and confounded that they have waited, and been deceived; but 'they shall not be ashamed that wait for me,' says God; I will not deceive their expectation, and after all their waiting turn them off, and say, I have no mercy for you.³ Now, I say, where this waiting temper is, which is all that many a poor soul hath to shew for everlasting happiness and blessedness, that soul shall never miscarry. That God that doth maintain and uphold the soul in this heavenly waiting frame, in

¹ Covet rather graces than gifts; as to pray more fervently, though less notionally or eloquently. Stammering Moses must pray rather than well-spoken Aaron. The Corinthians came behind in no gift, 1 Cor. i. 7; yet were babes and carnal, chap. iii. 2, 3.

² Vide Lyra and Junius on the words.

³ That is, they shall be advanced by me to great happiness and glory, to great dignity and felicity; for in the Hebrew dialect, adverbs of denying signify the contrary to the import of that verb whereunto they are joined, as might be shewed by many scriptures.

the appointed season will speak life and love, mercy and glory, to the waiting soul.

And so I have done with the third use, which was to stir you up to look upon your graces with cautions.

The fourth duty is :

4. *To persuade weak saints not to turn aside from the ways of God, nor from the service of God, because of any hardships or difficulties that they meet with in his ways or service.*

There is a very great aptness in weak saints to take offence almost at everything, and to be discouraged by the least opposition, affliction, and temptation, and so to turn aside from the good old way. Now that no difficulties nor hardships may turn you out of the way that is called holy, consider seriously of these few things.

[1.] *First*, Consider this, *the Lord will sweeten more and more his services to you.*

He will make his work to be more and more easy to your souls ; he will suit thy burden to thy back, and thy work to thy hand. O weak soul ! thou shalt find that his grace will be sufficient to hold thee up and carry thee on, notwithstanding any difficulties or discouragements that be in the way. He will shed abroad that love that shall constrain thy soul, both to keep close to his service, and to delight in his service, 2 Cor. xii. 9 ; v. 14. He will make all his services to be easy to thee ; he will vouchsafe to thee that assisting grace that shall keep up thy head and heart from fainting and sinking under discouragements, as you may see in Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28, 'And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' So in Ps. lxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee,' (ay, but how comes this to pass ?) : 'Thy right hand upholds me.' I feel thy hand under me, drawing of my soul off after thee. Oh ! were not thy gracious hand under me, I should never follow hard after thee. The Lord will put under his everlasting arms, O weak Christian ! and therefore though thy feet be apt to slide, yet his everlasting arms shall bear thee up. Therefore be not discouraged, do not turn aside from those paths that drop marrow and fatness, though there be a lion in the way.¹

[2.] *Secondly*, Consider this, O weak saint ! *that there is less danger and hardship in the ways of Christ, than there is in the ways of sin, Satan, or the world.*

That soul doth but leap out of the frying-pan into the fire, that thinks to mend himself by turning out of the way that is called holy. Oh ! the horrid drudgery that is in the ways of sin, Satan, or the world. Thy worst day in Christ's service is better than thy best days, if I may so speak, in sin or Satan's service, Prov. xi. 18, 19, and xxi. 21. Satan will pay the sinner home at last with the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and his soul for ever. 'But in the way of righteousness is life, joy, peace, honour, and in the pathway thereof there is no death,' Prov. xii. 28. 'His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace,' Prov. iii. 17.

¹ The philosopher told his friends when they came into his little low cottage, The gods are here with me. Surely God, and Christ, and the Spirit are, and will be, with weak saints, to aid and assist them in every gracious work.

[3.] *Thirdly*, Remember, O weak saint! *that all those hardships that thou meetest with, do only reach the outward man.*

They only reach the ignoble, the baser part of man; they meddle not, they touch not, the noble part. 'With my mind I serve the law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin,' Rom. vii. 22. And verse 25, 'I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.' And indeed many of the heathen have encouraged themselves in this very consideration, against the troubles and dangers of this life.¹ All the arrows that are shot at a Christian stick in his buckler, they never reach his conscience, his soul. The raging waves beat sorely against Noah's ark, but they touched not him. The soul is of too noble a nature to be touched by troubles. Jacob's hard service under Laban, and his being nipped by the frost in winter, and scorched by the sun in summer, did only reach his outward man; his soul had high communion, and sweet fellowship with God, under all his hardships, Gen. xxxi. 40. Ah, Christian! bear up bravely, for whatever hardships thou meetest with in the ways of God, shall only reach thy outward man; and under all these hardships thou mayest have as high and sweet communion with God, as if thou hadst never known what hardships meant, Hosea ii. 14.

[4.] *Fourthly*, Tell me, O weak saints! *have not you formerly enjoyed such sweet refreshings while you have been in the very service of God, as hath outweighed all the troubles and hardships that your souls have met with?* I know you have, and you know that you have often found that scripture made good upon your hearts, Ps. xix. 11, 'More-over, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.' Mark, he doth not say, '*for* keeping of them there is great reward,' though that is a truth; but, '*in* keeping of them there is great reward. While the soul is at work, God throws in the reward. Do not you remember, O weak Christians! when you have been in the service and way of God, how he hath cast in joy at one time and peace at another; &c. Oh! the smiles, the kisses, the sweet discoveries that your souls have met with, whilst you have been in his ways. Ah, poor souls! do not you know that one hour's being in the bosom of Christ will make you forget all your hardships? Heaven at last will make amends for all; and the more hardships you find in the ways of God, the more sweet will heaven be to you when you come there.² Oh, how sweet is a harbour after a long storm, and a sunshine day after a dark and tempestuous night, and a warm spring after a sharp winter! The miseries and difficulties that a man meets with in this world, will exceedingly sweeten the glory of that other world.

[5.] *Lastly*, consider, *What hardships and difficulties the men of this world run through, to get the world, and undo their own souls.*

They rise early, go to bed late; they go from one end of the world to another, and venture through all manner of dangers, deaths, and miseries, to gain those things that are vain, uncertain, vexing, and dangerous to their souls, Ps. cxxvii. 2, Mat. xvi. 16. And wilt not thou, as 'a good soldier of Christ,' 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4, endure a little hardship for the honour of thy Captain, and thine own internal and eternal good? Thou art

¹ Anaxagoras, Plato, and others.

² Austin saith, If a man should serve the Lord a thousand years, it would not deserve an hour of the reward in heaven, much less an eternity, &c.

listed under Christ's colours, and therefore thou must arm thyself against all difficulties and discouragements. The number of difficulties makes the Christian's conquest the more illustrious. A gracious man should be made up all of fire, overcoming and consuming all oppositions, as fire does the stubble. All difficulties should be but whetstones to his fortitude, as Chrysostom said of Peter.

The fifth duty is this:

5. *You that are weak saints should observe how Christ keeps your wills and affections.*

That man is kept indeed, whose will and affection is kept close to Christ; and that man is lost with a witness, whose will and affections are won from Christ. Weak saints are more apt to observe their own actions than their wills and affections, and this proves a snare unto them; therefore observe your affections, how they are kept; for if they are kept close to Christ, if they are kept faithful to Christ, though thy foot may slide from Christ, all is well. The apostle, Rom. vii. 17, *seq.*, observed, that his will and affections were kept close to Christ even then, when he was tyrannically captivated and carried by the prevalency of sin from Christ: 'With my mind I serve the law of God,' says he, 'and what I do I allow not; therefore it is no more I that doth it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' My will stands close to Christ, and my affections are faithful to Christ, though by the prevalency of corruption I am now and then carried captive from Christ. It is one thing to be taken up by an enemy, and another thing for a man to lay down his weapons at his enemy's feet. I am, saith the apostle, a forced man, 'I do what I hate;' I do what I never intended. The heart may be sound, when more external and inferior parts are not. The heart of a man may be sound God-ward and Christ-ward and holiness-ward, when yet there may be many defects and weaknesses in his conversation. Now, a weak Christian should be very studious to observe how his heart stands God-wards; for the man is as his heart is; if that be right with Christ, then all is well; therefore, says Solomon, Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' The Hebrew runs more fully thus: 'Before all,' or, 'Above all keepings, keep thy heart;' for out of it is the goings forth of lives.' The heart is the spring and fountain of all natural and spiritual actions, it is the *primum mobile*, the great wheel that sets all other wheels agoing; it is the great monarch in the isle of man; therefore keep it with all custody and caution, or else bid farewell to all true joy, peace, and comfort. When the heart stands right towards Christ, Christ will pardon much, and pass by much.¹

If the ravished virgin in the time of the law cried out, she was guiltless; so when a poor soul, ravished by the power of corruption, and strength of Satan's temptations, cries out, 'Lord, I would not, for all the world, sin against thee, I would not distrust thee, I would not be impatient under thy afflicting hand, I would not be proud under thy merciful hand; but, Lord, these sons of Zeruiah, 2 Sam. iii. 39, these corruptions, are too hard for me; they commit a rape upon me; they ravish me of my Jesus, and of my joy, and of my peace; Lord, help me, Lord deliver me!' now these weaknesses shall not be charged upon

¹ The heart is *camera omnipotentis regis*, the presence-chamber of the king of heaven.

the soul. The ravished virgin under the law, if she cried out, was guiltless; and certainly God is not, nor will not be, less merciful and gracious to his people under the gospel, who are still a-crying out against their sins and Satan's assaults. Surely those sins shall never be a Christian's bane, that are now his greatest burden. It is not falling into the water, but lying in the water, that drowns. It is not falling into sin, but lying in sin, that damns. If sin and thy heart be two, Christ and thy heart are one. If thy heart be Christward, thou art so happy that nothing can make thee miserable.

6. *Sixthly, Take heed of making sense and feeling a judge of your condition.* Though there is nothing more dangerous, yet there is nothing more ordinary, than for weak saints to make their sense and feeling the judge of their condition. Ah, poor souls! this is dishonourable to God, and very disadvantageous to yourselves. Sense is sometimes opposite to reason, but always to faith; therefore do as those worthies did, 2 Cor. v. 8, 9, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight.'¹ For a man to argue thus: Surely God is not my God, for I am not enlightened, I am not quickened, I am not melted, I am not raised, I am not enlarged as formerly. Oh! I have not those sweet answers and returns of prayer that once I had! Oh! I cannot find the Lord's quickening presence, nor his enlivening presence, nor his humbling presence, nor his encouraging presence, as once I have; therefore surely my condition is not good. Oh! I am more backward to good than formerly, and more prone to evil than formerly, therefore I am afraid that God is not my God, and that the work of grace is not thorough upon me. Oh! God does not look upon me as in the days of old, nor speak to me as in the days of old, nor carry it towards me as in the days of old, and therefore I am afraid that all is naught.

Verily, if you will make sense and feeling the judge of your estate and condition, you will never have peace nor comfort all your days. Thy estate, O Christian, may be very good, when sense and feeling says it is very bad. That child cannot but be perplexed that thinks his father doth not love him, because he does not always feel him smoothing and stroking of him. Christians, you must remember that it is one thing for God to love you, and another thing for God to tell you that he loves you. Your happiness lies in the first, your comfort in the second. God hath stopped his ear against the prayers of many a precious soul whom he hath dearly loved.² The best of men have at times lost that quickening, ravishing, and comforting presence of God that once they have enjoyed. And verily, he that makes sense and carnal reason a judge of his condition, shall be happy and miserable, blessed and cursed, saved and lost, many times in a day, yea, in an hour. The counsel that I would give to such a soul that is apt to set up reason in the room of faith is this, Whatsoever thy estate and condition be, never make sense and feeling the judge of it, but only the word of God. Did ever God appoint carnal reason, sense, and feeling, to be a judge of thy spiritual estate? Surely no. And why, then, wilt thou subject thy soul to

¹ Sense and reason in spiritual things, says Luther, is *noxia bestia*, an harmful beast, that will destroy and pull down what faith builds up.

² Ps. lxxx. 4; Lam. iii. 34; Ps. cxix. 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159; xlii. 5; Cant. iii. 1-3; Isa. liv. 7, 8.

their judgments? God will judge thee at last by his word: John xii. 48, 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day.' Carnal reason is an enemy to faith; it is still a-crossing and contradicting of faith; it fills the mind full of cavils and prejudices, full of pleas and arguments, to keep Christ and the soul asunder, and the soul and the promises asunder, and the soul and peace and comfort asunder. It will never be well with thee so long as thou art swayed by carnal reason, and reliest more upon thy five senses than the four evangelists. Remember Job was as famous for his confidence as for his patience: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15. As the body lives by breathing, so the soul lives by believing, &c.

IV. *The duties of strong saints to the weak.*

We come now to the last thing propounded, and that is, *the duties of strong saints to those that are weak.* I intend at this time to finish this point, and therefore shall not speak everything that might be spoken, being not of their minds that think a man never speaks enough that speaks not all that may be spoken to an argument. I shall, as near as I can, instance in those duties that are most weighty and worthy. And surely those souls that are serious and conscientious in the discharge of these, cannot, nor will not, be negligent in the discharge of the rest. Now there are eleven duties that strong saints are to perform to those that are weak.

And the *first* is this.

[1.] *Those that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak.*

Rom. xv. 1, 'We then that are strong,' saith the apostle, 'ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' The word that is rendered to *bear* signifies to bear as pillars do bear the weight and burden of the house; to bear as porters do bear their burdens, or as the bones do bear the flesh, or rather as parents bear their babes in their arms.

'*Bear the infirmities.*' Mark, he doth not say the enormities, but the infirmities; he doth not say the wickedness, but the weakness. The strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak. The Lord bears with the weakness of his children. Peter is weak, and sinful through weakness; he will not let the Lord Jesus wash his feet, John xiii.; but the Lord Jesus knowing that this was from weakness, and not from wickedness, he passes it over, and notwithstanding his unkind refusal, he washes his feet. Thomas is very weak: 'I will not believe,' says he, 'except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side,' John xx. 25. Now this Christ bears with much tenderness and sweetness, as you may see in ver. 27, 'Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy fingers, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' The Lord Jesus doth, as it were, open his wounds afresh; he overlooks his weakness. Well, saith he, seeing it is so that thou wilt not believe, I will rather bleed afresh than thou shalt die in thy unbelief. So the three disciples that Christ had singled out to watch with him one hour, Mat. xxvi., they shewed a great deal of weakness to be sleeping when their Lord was a-sorrowing, to be snorting when

their Saviour was sighing, &c. Yet Christ bears this, and carries it sweetly towards them, and excuses their weakness: ver. 41, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Oh how sweetly doth the Lord carry it! Every new man is two men; he hath a contrary principle in him, the flesh and the spirit. The spirit, the noble part, is willing, but the flesh, the ignoble part, is weak and wayward.

Now shall the Lord thus bear with his weak ones, and shall not strong saints bear also? Remember, strong Christians, there was a day when you were as weak as others, as apt to fall as others, as easily conquered as others; and if then the Lord carried it sweetly towards you, let the same spirit be in you towards those that are weak. It will be no grief of heart to you, if in this you act like your Lord and Saviour.

If you do not bear with the infirmities of the weak, who shall? who will? This wicked world cannot, nor will not. The world will make them transgressors for a word, and watch for their halting; and therefore you had need to bear with them so much the more, Isa. xxix. 21, Jer. xx. 10. The world's cruelty should stir up your compassions.

[2.] *Secondly, As it is your duty to bear with them, so it is your duty to receive them into communion with you.*

Rom. xiv. 1, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.'

'Him that is weak in the faith receive,' that is, him that is not thoroughly persuaded of all things pertaining to Christian liberty, about things indifferent. 'Them that are weak in the faith receive;' he doth not say, 'Them that have no faith receive.' For there is no rule for the saints or churches to receive them into communion that have no faith, that have no fellowship with the Father and the Son. But 'him that is weak in the faith,' saith he, 'receive.'

The word that is here rendered *receive*, signifies to receive into our bosom with charitable affection. The Greek word signifies three things.

(1.) It signifies to receive weak saints as our own bowels; to receive them with the greatest tenderness, affection, pity, and compassion that possibly can be. So the same Greek word is used in the Epistle of Philemon, ver. 12, where Paul entreats Philemon 'to receive Onesimus as his own bowels.' The word there is the same word with this in the text. So must the strong receive the weak, even as their own bowels; receive them with the greatest affection, with the greatest compassion that possibly can be.

(2.) The word signifies *patiently to bear with the weak when they are received*; and not to take them into your bosom, into your communion one day and cast them out the next, but patiently to bear with them, as well as affectionately to receive them.

It was a heathen prince [Xerxes] that crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day, &c.

(3.) The word signifies *by fatherly instruction to seek to restore him*. It is not the will of Christ that weak saints should be rejected, or that the door of entrance should be shut against them, till they are stronger, or till they have attained to such heights and such perfections of grace and divine enjoyments of God as others have attained. Remember this, as the weakest faith, if true, gives the soul a right to all that

that internal and eternal worth that is in Christ: so the weakest faith, if true, gives a man a real right unto all the external privileges and favours that come by Christ. In Rom. xv. 7, 'Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.' This is the standing rule for all the saints and churches in the world to go by. It is not their wills, but these two scriptures last cited, that are the standing rules by which all the churches on earth are to go by, in the admission of members.

'Them that are weak in the faith' are to be received by you, because the Lord Jesus hath received them. Christ does not receive the strong to the glory of God, and cast off the weak. No; the Lord Jesus gathers the weak into his bosom, and tenderly dandles them upon his knee. He receives the weak to glory, as well as the strong; therefore saith the apostle, 'As the Lord hath received them, so do you.'

Bucer rejected none in whom he saw *aliquid Christi*, anything of Christ, but gave them the right hand of fellowship. Such persons and churches can never answer it to Christ, that keep the door of admission shut against souls truly gracious, though they are but weak in grace, though they have [not] attained to such a measure of light, or degrees of love, or to such perfections in holiness, as such and such have done. No; the standing rule is, 'Him whom the Lord hath received, receive.'

If weak saints shall desire communion, and be willing to walk in the ways that Jesus Christ hath appointed his saints to walk in, the churches ought to give them the right hand of fellowship. And that is the second duty that lies upon the strong, viz., that they are to receive the weak into communion and fellowship with them, and that with the greatest affection, love, and compassion, that possibly can be.

A *third* duty that lies upon strong saints to the weak is this:

[3.] *They must look more upon their graces than upon their weaknesses.*

It is a sad thing when they shall borrow spectacles to behold their weak brethren's weaknesses, and refuse looking-glasses wherein they may see their weak brethren's graces. Saints that are strong ought to look more upon the virtues of weak saints than upon their miscarriages. When Christ saw but a little moral good in the young man, the text saith that 'He looked upon him, and loved him,' Mark x. 12. And shall not we look upon a weak saint and love him, when we see the love of God and the image of God upon him. Shall moral virtue take the eye, and draw the love of Christ? And shall not supernatural grace in a weak Christian take our eyes and draw our hearts? Shall we eye a little gold in much earth? And shall we not eye a little grace where there is much corruption? ¹

It is an unsufferable weakness, I had almost said, for persons to suffer their affections to run out only to such that are of their judgments, and to love, prize, and value persons according as they suit their opinions, and not according to what of the image of God shines in them. But if this be not far from a gospel spirit, and from that God-like spirit

¹ If moral virtue could be seen with mortal eyes, it would soon draw all hearts to itself, saith Plato. What, then, should grace do? the least dram of which is of more worth than all the moral virtues in the world.

that should be in saints, I know nothing. It speaks out much of Christ within, to own where Christ owns, and love where Christ loves, and embrace where Christ embraces, and to be one with every one that is practically one with the Lord Jesus. Christ cannot but take it very unkindly at our hands, if we should disown any upon whom he hath set his royal stamp. And I bless his grace that hath drawn out my desires and endeavours to love, own, and honour the people of Christ, according to what of the appearances of Christ I see in them. And, if I am not much mistaken, this is the highway to that joy, peace, and comfort, the want of which makes a man's life a hell. God looks more on the bright side of the cloud, than he doth on the dark, and so should we.

It was the honour of Vespasian that 'he was more ready to conceal the vices of his friends, than their virtues.' Surely there is much of God in that soul, that is upon a gospel account more careful and skilful to conceal the vices of weak saints, than their virtues. Many in these days do justly incur the censure which that sour philosopher passed upon grammarians, that 'they were better acquainted with the evil of Ulysses, than with their own.'¹

[4.] Fourthly, *It is the duty of strong saints, in things indifferent to deny themselves, to please the weak.*

1 Cor. viii. 13, 'Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' Strong saints must stand unchangeably resolved neither to give offence carelessly, nor to take offence causelessly. Says the apostle, I will not stand to dispute my Christian liberty, but will rather lay it down at my weak brother's feet, than I will by the use of it offend one for whom Christ hath died. 1 Cor. ix. 22, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' That is, I condescended and went to the uttermost that possibly I could, without sin, to win and gain upon the weak; I displeased myself in things that were of an indifferent nature, to please them. Thou oughtest not, O strong Christian, by the use of thy Christian liberty, to put a stumbling-block before thy weak brother. Rom. xv. 2, 'We then that are strong, ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.' He doth not say, Let every one of us please the lust of his neighbour, but let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. Let us in things of an indifferent nature so yield as to please our neighbour. There were some thought that they might observe days; others thought they might not. Some thought they might eat meat; others thought they might only eat herbs. Why, saith the apostle, in these things that are of an indifferent nature, I will rather displease and deny myself, to profit my neighbour, than I will, by the use of my liberty, occasion my neighbour to offend. Ay, this is true Christian love indeed, for a man to cross himself to please his neighbour, so it may be for his soul's edification. But this heavenly love is driven almost out of the world, which causeth men to dislike those things in others which they flatter in themselves.

A *fifth* duty incumbent upon strong saints is,

¹ Diogenes apud Laertium, lib. vi.

[5.] *To support the weak.*

1 Thes. v. 14, 'Support the weak, be patient towards all men.' Look, what the crutch is to the lame, and the beam of the house is to the ruined house, that ought strong saints to be to the weak. Strong saints are to be crutches to the weak, they are to be, as it were, beams to bear up the weak. Strong saints are to set to their shoulder, to shore up the weak by their counsels, prayers, tears, and examples. Strong saints must not deal by the weak, as the herd of deer do by the wounded deer; they forsake it and push it away. Oh no! When a poor weak saint is wounded by a temptation, or by the power of some corruption, then they that are strong ought to succour and support such an one, lest he be swallowed up of sorrow. When you that are strong see a weak saint staggering and reeling under a temptation or affliction, Oh, know it is then your duty to put both your hands underneath, to support him that he faint not, that he miscarries not in such an hour. Isa. xxxv. 3, 'Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.'¹

'Strengthen the weak hands,' that is, hands that hang down; 'and confirm the feeble knees,' that is, such knees that by reason of feebleness are ready to fall. Strengthen such, that is, encourage them, by casting in a promise, by casting in thy experiences, or by casting in the experiences of other saints, that so they may be supported. It may be his case was once thine: if so, then tell him what promises did support thee, what discoveries of God did uphold thee; tell him what tastes, what sights, and what in-comes thou hadst, and how bravely thou didst bear up, by the strength of his everlasting arms that were under thee, &c.²

A sixth duty that is incumbent upon strong saints is,

[6.] *To take heed of making weak saints halt and go lame in a way of holiness, or of keeping them off from the ways of God, or of turning them out of the ways of God.*

That is the meaning of that scripture, as I conceive, Luke xvii. 2. And of that, Mat. xviii. 10, 'Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones, for their angels do always behold the face of my Father.' You are apt to slight them because they are weak in grace and holiness, and so you are apt to cause them to halt; but take heed of this, they have glistering courtiers that do attend them; therefore take heed that you do not offend them, for their angels, as so many champions, stand ready to right them and fight for them. A man were better offend and anger all the devils in hell, and all the witches in the world, than to anger and offend the least of Christ's little ones. If Cain do but lower upon Abel, God will arraign him for it: 'Why is thy countenance cast down?' Gen. iv. 6. If Miriam do but mutter against Moses, God will spit in her face for it, Num. xii. 14. That is a very dreadful word, Mat. xviii. 6, 'Take heed how ye offend one of these little ones;' you make nothing of it, but saith Christ, take heed, 'for it were better that a millstone,' a huge millstone, as the Greek word signifies, such a one as an ass can but turn about; (this kind of punishment the greatest

¹ Look, what the nurse is to the child, the oak to the ivy, the house to the vine; that should strong saints be to the weak, &c., 2 Cor. ii. 7.

² For a fine example of this, adduced elsewhere by Brooks, see Index under Throgmorton.—G.

malefactors among the Jews were put to in those days, saith Jerome), 'and cast into the middle of the sea;' so it is word for word in the Greek, the middle being deepest and furthest off from the shore, rendering his estate most miserable and irrecoverable.

[7.] Seventhly, *It is the duty of strong saints to suit all things to the capacity of the weak.*

To suit all their prayers and all their discourses to the capacity of the weak. Paul was good at this: 'To the weak became I as weak.' Paul was a man as strong in natural and acquired parts as any living, and he knew how to word it, and to carry it in as lofty strains, as any that breathed, yet who more plain in his preaching than Paul? It hath many a time made my heart sad, to think how those men will answer it in the day of Christ, that affect lofty strains, high notions, and cloudy expressions, that make the plain things of the gospel dark and obscure.

Many preachers in our days are like Heraclitus, who was called '*the dark doctor*;' they affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, uncouth phrases, making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard. 'They darken counsel with words without knowledge,' Job xxxviii. 2. Studied expressions and high notions in a sermon, are like Asahel's carcase in the way, that did only stop men and make them gaze, but did no ways profit them or better them. It is better to present truth in her native plainness, than to hang her ears with counterfeit pearls.

That is a remarkable scripture, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able.' The apostle did not soar aloft in the clouds, and express the mysteries of the gospel in such a dark obscure way as that poor creatures could not be able to pick out the mind of God in it. No; but he suited all his discourses to their capacities; and so must you.

[8.] Eighthly, *It is your duty to labour to strengthen weak saints against sin, and to draw them to holiness argumentatively.*

When a strong saint comes to deal with one that is weak, and would strengthen him against sin, he must do it argumentatively; and when he would draw to holiness, he must do it argumentatively. 1 John ii. 1, 2, compared with chap. i. 7, 9, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.' What things were those he wrote? Mark, chap. i. 7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sins.' Here he fenceth them against sin, by one of the strongest and choicest arguments that the whole book of God affords, by an argument that is drawn from the soul's communion with God. And then in verse 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.' Here the apostle labours to strengthen weak saints argumentatively, even by the strongest arguments that the whole book of God affords. So verses 12, 13, 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's sake,' &c. So in verse 18, 'Little children, it is the last times, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now

are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.' So verse 28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him.' You see in all these scriptures how the apostle labours to strengthen weak saints in a way of holiness, and to fence them against ways of wickedness argumentatively, and so must you; this being the ready way to convince them, and to make a conquest upon them, &c.

The *ninth* duty that lies upon strong saints is,

[9.] *To cast a mantle over the infirmities of the weak.*

Now there is a three-fold mantle that should be cast over the infirmities of the weak. There is a mantle of wisdom, a mantle of faithfulness, and a mantle of compassion, which is to be cast over all the infirmities of weak saints.

First, Strong saints are to cast a mantle of wisdom over the infirmities of weak saints. They are not to present their sins in that ugliness, and with such aggravations, as may terrify, as may sink, as may make a weak saint to despair, or may drive him from the mercy-seat, or as may keep him and Christ asunder, or as may unfit him for the discharge of religious duties. It is more a weakness than a virtue in strong Christians, when a weak saint is fallen, to aggravate his fall to the uttermost, and to present his sins in such a dreadful dress, as shall amaze him, &c. It often proves very prejudicial and dangerous to weak saints, when their infirmities are aggravated beyond Scripture grounds, and beyond what they are able to bear. He that shall lay the same strength to the rubbing of an earthen dish, as he does to the rubbing of a pewter platter, instead of clearing it, shall surely break it all to pieces. The application is easy, &c.¹

Secondly, There is a mantle of faithfulness that is to be cast over the infirmities of weak saints. A man should never discover the infirmities of a weak saint, especially to such that have neither skill nor will to heal and bury them. The world will but blaspheme and blaze them abroad, to the dishonour of God, to the reproach of religion, and to the grief and scandal of the weak, &c. They will with Ham rather call upon others to scoff at them, than bring a mantle to cover them, &c. Ham was cursed for that he did discover his father's nakedness to his brethren, when it was in his power to have covered it. He saw it, and might have drawn a curtain over it, but would not; and for this, by a spirit of prophecy, he was cursed by his father, Gen. ix. 22. This age is full of such monsters, that rejoice to blaze abroad the infirmities of the saints, and these certainly justice hath or will curse.

Thirdly, There is a mantle of compassion that must be cast over the weaknesses and infirmities of weak saints. When a weak man comes to see his sin, and the Lord gives him to lie down in the dust, and to take shame and confusion to himself, that he hath dishonoured God, and caused Christ to bleed afresh, and grieved the Spirit, &c.; oh now

¹ Parisiensis said sometimes concerning trifles: It is, said he, as if a man should see a fly or a flea on a man's forehead, and for that should presently take a beetle to knock him on the head to kill the fly. [Query, Peter Lombard? Cf. Sibbes, vol. i. pp. 55, 101.—G.]

thou must draw a covering, and cast a mantle of love and compassion over his soul, that he may not be swallowed up with sorrow. Now thou must confirm thy love to him, and carry it with as great tenderness and sweetness after his fall, as if he had never fallen. This the apostle presses, 2 Cor. ii. 7, 'Love,' says the wise man, 'covereth all sin.' Love's mantle is very large. Love claps a plaster upon every sore; love hath two hands, and makes use of both, to hide the scars of weak saints. Christ, O strong saints, casts the mantle of his righteousness over your weaknesses, and will not you cast the mantle of love over your brother's infirmities?¹

[10.] Tenthly, *It is the duty of strong saints to sympathize with the weak; to rejoice with them when they rejoice, and to mourn with them when they mourn.*

2 Cor. xi. 29, 'Who is weak, and I am weak? who is *σκανδαλίζεται*, scandalized, offended, and I *πυρούμαι*, am not on fire, burn not?

Thuanus reports of Lodovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, when he was led with other martyrs that were bound with cords, going to execution, and he for his dignity was not bound, he cried, Give me my chains too, let me be a knight of the same order.²

It should be between a strong saint and a weak, as it is between two lute-strings, that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck, but the other trembles; no sooner should a weak saint be struck, but the strong should tremble. 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them,' Heb. xiii. 3.

The Romans punished one that was seen looking out at his window with a crown of roses on his head, in a time of public calamity; and will not God punish those that do not sympathize with Joseph in his afflictions? Surely he will. Amos vi. 1-14.

[11.] *Lastly, It is the duty of the strong to give to the weak the honour that is due unto them.*

1 Peter iii. 7: They have the same name, the same baptism, the same profession, the same faith, the same hope, the same Christ, the same promises, the same dignity, and the same glory with you; therefore speak honourably of them, and carry it honourably towards them. Let not them be under your feet, that Christ has laid near his heart, &c. And so much for this second doctrine.

We come now to the next words.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, &c.—Eph. iii. 8.

We shall speak now to the word *grace*. The Greek word *χάρις*, that is here rendered grace, hath a twofold signification.

First, Sometimes it is taken for the gracious favour and good-will of God, whereby he is pleased of his own free love to accept and own poor sinners in the Son of his love, for his own. This is called the first grace, because it is the fountain of all other graces, and the spring from whence they flow. And it is therefore called grace, because it makes a man gracious with God.

¹ I have known a good old man, said Bernard, who, when he had heard of any that had committed some notorious offence, was wont to say with himself, *Ille hodie, et ego cras, he fell to-day; so may I to-morrow, &c.*

² Thuanus, Hist. [*sub nomine.—G.*]

Secondly, This word χάρις, that is here rendered grace, is taken for the gifts of grace, and they are of two sorts, special or common. Common grace is that which hypocrites may have, and in which they may excel and go beyond the choicest saints, as in a gift of knowledge, a gift of utterance, a gift of prayer, a gift of tongues, &c. A man may have these, and many other excellent gifts, and yet miscarry, yea, fall as low as hell; witness Judas, Demas, the scribes and pharisees, &c., Mat. vii. 21–25. Secondly, There is special grace, as faith, love, humility, meekness, which the apostle reckons up, Gal. v. 22, 23. Now here by grace you may either understand the gracious favour of God, ‘Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this choice favour given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,’ or else you may take it for the gifts of grace, both saving and common, which the apostle had given him, in order to the discharge of his ministerial office, which, by the special favour of God, he was advanced to.

The word grace being thus opened, we may from thence observe, first,

I. *That the Lord gives his best gifts to his best beloved ones.*

‘Unto me,’ saith the apostle, ‘who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.’

For the opening and clearing of this point, I shall premise these four things.

I. To shew you what those best gifts are that God bestows upon his best beloved ones.

II. I shall shew you the manner of his giving the best gifts to his beloved ones, or the difference there is between Christ’s giving and the world’s giving.

III. And then the excellency of those gifts that Christ gives, above all other gifts that the world gives.

IV. And lastly, The reason why Christ gives his best gifts to his best beloved ones.

For the *first*, What are those best gifts that Christ bestows upon his best beloved ones?

I shall not instance in those common gifts that they have in common with others, but rather shew unto you those special gifts that he bestows upon them; and of those I shall single out them that are most choice, and that carry most in them of the glory, favour, and ‘good will of him that dwelt in the bush.’

And the *first* is this:

[1.] *He gives light to his beloved ones;* and ‘light is a pleasant thing to behold,’ as the wise man speaks, Eccles. xi. 7. He gives spiritual light, which is a mercy of mercies. Eph. v. 14, ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ So John i. 7–9, ‘He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.’² He gives that light whereby his people are enabled to see sin to be the greatest evil, and himself to be the chiefest

¹ ἵσχυρα σοι, shine upon thee. Life without light is but a lifeless life.

² Vide Cameron and Augustine on the words.

good. He gives that light that melts the soul, that humbles the soul, that warms the soul, that quickens the soul, that quiets the soul, and that glads the soul. Man is not born with heavenly light in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. Till Christ comes and sets up a light in the soul, the soul lives in darkness, and lies in darkness, yea, is darkness in the very abstract: Eph. v. 8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' Saints are always in the sunshine, therefore they should be like a crystal glass, with a light in the midst, which appeareth in every part.¹

A Christian should be like the lamp in the story, that never went out. Were it not for the sun, it would be perpetual night in the world, notwithstanding all starlight, and torchlight, and moonlight. It is not the torchlight of natural parts and creature-comforts, nor the starlight of civil honesty and common gifts, nor yet the moonlight of temporary faith and formal profession, that can make day in the soul, till the Sun of righteousness rise and shine upon it. And that is the first thing he gives, light.

Now, the *second* thing he gives is,

[2.] *Repentance.* Repentance is not a flower that grows in nature's garden. Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God the Father exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' So in 2 Tim. ii. 25, 'The servant of the Lord must in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.' By these scriptures, it is clear that repentance is no flower that grows in nature's garden, though Arminians teach and print, that if men will put out their power and their strength they may repent, &c.² But several that have been of this opinion, have experienced the falseness of it when it hath been too late: 'The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots,' Jer. xiii. 23. And certainly, if there were such a power in man to repent, as some would make the world believe, man would never miscarry everlastingly for his not repenting. Oh, is it good dwelling with everlasting burnings, with a burning fire? Is it good being for ever shut out from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? Certainly, if there were such a power in vain man to repent, no man would go to hell for not repenting; and many that have boasted much of their abilities to repent, when they have been upon a dying bed, would have given a thousand worlds, were there so many in their power, that they could but repent.³

Luther confesses, that before his conversion, he met not with a more displeasing word in all the study of divinity than this word *repent*; but after the Lord had converted him, and manifested himself to him, he delighted in this work; then he could sorrow for his sins, and rejoice in his sorrow.⁴

¹ When Telemachus saw a great light, that guided him and his father in a dark room, Surely, said he, there is some god in it. Mal. iv. 2.

² 2 Cor. iii. 5. If there be such a power in fallen man to repent and believe, &c., to what purpose was the coming of Christ into the world? 1 John ii. 9; iii. 8. And why do natural men, when their consciences are awakened, so cry out, that they are as able to stop the sun in his course, to raise the dead, and to make a world, as they are able of themselves to repent? &c.

³ *Aut pœnitendum aut pereundum.*

⁴ *Homo ipsius pœnitentiæ pœnitere debet.*—Salvian. *Pœnitens de peccato dolet, et de dolore gaudet.*—Luther.

Repentance strips the soul stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as the shirt behind. In this rotten building there is not one stone left upon another. As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, as well as strangers, so true repentance drowns all darling lusts. True repentance is the cutting off the right hand, and the pulling out of the right eye; and is this such an easy thing? Surely no. True repentance is a gift that is from above, and if the Lord doth not give it, man will eternally perish for the want of it. You may read much more of this in my treatise called *Heaven on Earth*.¹

[3.] *Thirdly*, Christ gives *his Spirit*. Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' So in 1 John iii. 24, 'And hereby we know that he abideth in us.' How? 'By the Spirit which he hath given us.' So in chap. iv. 13. The Spirit that the Lord Christ gives is an enlightening Spirit, it is the candle of the Lord set up in the hearts of the saints, to guide them in the way everlasting.² It is a sanctifying Spirit, a Spirit of burning, Isa. iv. 4. He is a fire to enlighten the soul, and a fire to enliven the soul, and a fire to warm the soul, &c. Whatsoever is of the Spirit is spirit.³ It is nimble, and lively, and active, and full of life and motion, as the Spirit is. A man without the Spirit of the Lord is a dull, dromish⁴ creature. As the Latins call a dull, dromish man, a fireless man, so we may call a man that hath not the Spirit, a spiritless man. The Spirit that Christ gives is a sealing Spirit, Eph. i. 13; and a leading Spirit, Rom. viii. He leads from sin, he leads from wrath, he leads from the curse; he leads to God, he leads to Christ, he leads to the promises, he leads to glory, &c.

Again, this Spirit is a comforting Spirit, John iv. 16; and a pleading Spirit, Rom. viii. 26. Every Christian has three advocates pleading for him: the first is, that divine love that is in the bosom of the Father; the second is, the Lord Jesus that is at the right hand of the Father; and the third is, the Holy Spirit that is one with the Father.⁵

[4.] *Fourthly*, He gives *his blood*. The blood of Christ is a gift of Christ to his beloved ones. Mat xx. 28, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' So in John x. 11, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.' His blood was the purest blood, his human nature being most pure. His blood was the noblest blood, and therefore called in Scripture, 'the blood of God,' Rom. iii. 25 and Acts xx. 28, by reason of the conjunction of the divine nature with the human. It was his life-blood, his heart-blood that he gave. It was not the blood of his finger, but the blood of his heart; it was precious blood.

Three things are called precious in the Scripture.

- (1.) Faith is called precious faith, 2 Peter i. 1.
- (2.) The promises are called precious promises, ver. 4.
- (3.) The blood of Christ is called precious blood, 1 Peter i. 19.

¹ In Vol. II. p. 301, *seq.*—G.

² *Spiritus Sanctus est res delicata*, John xiv. 26.

³ *Nil nisi sanctum a Sancto Spiritu prodire potest.*

⁴ Query, 'dronish'? which is found in Barrow = lazy.—G.

⁵ There is no gainsaying Demosthenes's words, said one. So there is no gainsaying of the pleadings of the Spirit.

All your precious mercies swim to you in precious blood, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.¹

It was an excellent saying of Luther, speaking of this blood of Christ, *Una guttula plus valet quam cælum et terra*, one little drop of this blood, saith he, is more worth than heaven and earth. Your pardon swims to you in blood; your peace swims to you in blood; your reconciliation is made by blood; your acceptance is wrought by blood, &c. *Sanguis Christi clavis cœli*, Christ's blood is heaven's key; Christ's blood is a preservative against the greatest evils; Christ's blood, as Pliny saith of *polium*, is a preservative against serpents, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Christ gives *pardon of sin*. And do you know what a mercy that is? Ask the troubled soul, ask the soul that knows what it is to lie under the wrath of the Almighty, and he will tell you that pardon of sin is a gift more worth than a thousand worlds. Now that pardon of sin is a gift of God, you may see in Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.'² So in Acts xxvi. 18. Ah, souls! of all mercies pardoning mercy is the most necessary mercy. I may to heaven without honours, and without riches, and without the smiles of creatures; but I can never to heaven without pardoning mercy. A man may be great and graceless, he may be rich and miserable, he may be honourable and damnable, &c.,³ but he cannot be a pardoned soul, but he must be a very blessed soul,⁴ Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. It entitles souls to all blessedness, it puts the royal crown upon their heads. Of all mercies pardoning mercy is the most sweetening mercy; it is a choice jewel, and swims to the soul in blood, Heb. ix. 22. It is a mercy that makes all other mercies to look like mercies, and taste like mercies, and work like mercies; and the want of it takes off the glory and beauty of all a man's mercies, and makes his life a very hell. Pardon of sin is a voluminous mercy, a mercy that has many, many precious mercies in the womb of it. You may well call it *Gad*, Gen. xxx. 11, for it ushers in troops of mercy. When you can number the sands of the sea, and tell the stars of heaven, then, and not till then, shall you be able to recount the mercies that attend pardoning mercy. He that has this mercy cannot be miserable, and he that wants it cannot be happy: get this and get all, miss this and miss all. This is a gift conferred only upon Christ's favourites: 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,' Mat. ix. 2. No mercy will make a man everlastingly merry below pardoning mercy. He hath no reason to be sad that hath his pardon in his bosom, nor he hath no reason to be glad, who is upon the last step of the ladder, ready to be turned off without his pardon. And this is the fifth gift that Christ gives to his, viz. pardon of sin.

[6.] *Sixthly*, Christ gives *precious promises*: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises,' &c. The promises are a precious book; every leaf drops myrrh and mercy. The promises are golden vessels, that are laden with the choicest jewels that

¹ Rom. v. 9; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 20; Heb. ix. 7, 26, x. 19; 1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5, &c.

² τῆ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, to his right hand; that is, to honour and dignity, &c.

³ As Ahab, Haman, Dives, &c.

⁴ בְּרָכָה, blessednesses. In the plural, pardon of sin includes a plurality of mercies, a chain of pearls, a chain of blessings.

heaven can afford or the soul desire. All our spiritual, temporal, and eternal good is to be found in the belly of the promises.¹ Promises are big-bellied mercies. There is nothing you can truly call a mercy but you will find it in the belly of a promise. Under all changes they are the comfort, support, and relief of the soul: Ps. cxix. 49, 50, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' If the soul groan under the power of sin, then that promise relieves it: Rom. vi. 14, 'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' If the soul groan under the guilt of sin, then that promise relieves it: Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned against me,' &c. And that promise, Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins. I, even I, am he, blotting out thy transgression;' 'I, even I,' whom thou hast offended; 'I, even I,' whom thou hast provoked; 'I, even I,' whose glorious name thou hast profaned; 'I, even I,' whose righteous law thou hast violated; 'I, even I,' whose holy covenant thou hast transgressed; 'I, even I,' whose mercies thou hast despised; 'I, even I, whose chastisements thou hast slighted,' will blot out thy transgressions for my own sake.'

'I, even I,' is a passionate and emphatical expression. God's goodness runs over to sinful creatures; and 'where sin abounds, there grace doth superabound.'

If the creditor himself blot out the debt, and cross the book, surely it shall never be remembered more.² Our sins are debts, which God, who hath the power of life and death, of heaven and hell, of condemning and absolving, hath engaged himself to blot out as a thick cloud: Isa. xli. 22, 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.' An under-officer may blot out an indictment, and yet the offender may be never the better for it; but if the king, who is the supreme judge, shall blot it out, then the offender is safe. The application is easy. If the soul be deserted, then that promise relieves it: Micah vii. 18, 19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us,' &c. If the soul be sliding and ready to fall, then that promise supports and upholds it: Ps. xxxvii. 24, 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'the Lord upholding him with his hand;' Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27. The Hebrew particle *סמך* notes a continued act of God. God hath still his everlasting arms under his people, so that they shall never totally nor finally fall. And the root *samach*, from whence this word is derived, signifies to sustain or uphold, as the tender mother doth the little babe. The safety and security of the child lies not so much in the child's hanging about the mother's neck, as in the mother's holding it fast in her arms. So our safety and security lies not so much in our weak holding upon Christ, but in Christ's holding of us fast in his everlasting arms. This is our glory and our safety, that Christ's 'left hand

¹ The promises are precious beds of spices; they are *utres cœlestes*, bottles filled with those heavenly dews that will never fail, like that of Hagar's, but will cherish and nourish the soul to life eternal, &c.

² Mat. vi. 12, 14, 15, and xviii. 24, 27, 33; Luke vii. 41-48.

is always under us, and his right hand does always embrace us,' Cant. ii. 6. If the soul be forsaken by friends, then that promise relieves it, Heb. xiii. 5, 6, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

There are five negatives in the Greek to assure God's people that he will never forsake them. Five times this precious promise is renewed in the Scripture, that we might have the stronger consolation, and that we may press and oppress it till we have gotten all the sweetness out of it. And verily many precious souls have sucked much sweetness out of the breasts of this promise, when their nearest relations and their dearest friends have forsaken them and forgotten them. God loves that his people should put his bonds, his promises in suit; and he that doth shall find God near him, though friends should leave him, and the world be in arms against him, &c. If the soul be tempted, then that word of promise relieves it, 1 Cor. x. 13, 'But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able,' &c. The promises are a Christian's *magna charta*; they are his chief evidences for heaven. Men highly prize their charters and privileges, and carefully keep the conveyances and assurances of their lands. Oh! how should saints then treasure up and keep these precious promises which the Lord hath given them, and which are to them, instead of all assurances, for their protection, maintenance, deliverance, comfort, and everlasting happiness! And thus much for the sixth gift the Lord gives, viz. the promises.

[7.] *Seventhly*, The Lord gives *grace*: 'Of his fulness we all have received grace for grace,' John i. 16. The Lord gives that grace, the least dram of which is more worth than heaven and earth.

It was an excellent saying of one of the ancients [Jerome], 'I had rather have St Paul's coat with his heavenly graces, than the purple robes of kings with their kingdoms.' Grace is that which truly ennobles the soul; it raises the soul up to converse with the highest and with the noblest objects, and every man is as the objects are with which he converses. If the objects are noble, the man is so; if the objects are base with which a man converses, the man is base.¹ A man may better know what he is by eyeing the objects with which his soul does mostly converse, than by observing his most glorious and pompous services: 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26. Abraham was a prince of God among the Hittites, Gen. xxiii. 6. The Jews say that those seventy persons that went down with Jacob into Egypt were more worth than the seventy nations of the world. Indeed, it is only grace that makes a man truly noble.

When one heard the king of Persia styled 'the Great King,' saith he, I acknowledge none more excellent than myself, unless more righteous; nor none greater, unless better. Grace, as it is bred by the noblest means, so it is preserved and maintained in the soul by the choicest means, viz. union and communion with God, &c.; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; grace makes a man all glorious within and without; grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring.

[8.] *Eighthly*, He gives *peace*: John xiv. 27, 'My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto

¹ A good symbol was attributed to Æmilian, the Roman emperor, *Non gens sed mens, non genus sed genius*, not race or place, but grace, truly sets forth a man.

you.' Christ gives peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with the creatures. *Dulce nomen pacis*, the very name of peace is sweet, Rom. v. 1, Hosea ii. 21-23, Job v. 19-25.

The Hebrews, when they wished all happiness to any, used but this one word, 'Peace be with you;' and the ancients were wont to paint peace in the form of a woman, with a horn of plenty in her hand, all blessings. Ask a soul that hath been under terrors of conscience, and he will tell you, that of all gifts, inward peace is the most princely gift, &c.¹

[9.] *Ninthly*, He gives *glory*: John x. 28, 'My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life.' Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.'

Now the glory that Christ gives is real glory: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory.' The Greek word ἀποκρίταις signifies two things: 1, a designation of a crown; 2, a reservation and safe keeping of it for him until the coronation day.

Again, the glory he gives the soul is soul-filling glory; glory that fills the understanding with the clearest and the brightest light; glory that fills the will with the greatest freedom; glory that fills the affections with the choicest joy and delight,² Ps. xvi. 11, and xvii. 15, 2 Cor. xii. 1-6.

Again, the glory he gives is incomparable glory: Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' The Greek word λογίζομαι, that is here rendered *I reckon*, is not a word of doubting, but a word of concluding. I conclude by arguments, that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to that illustrious and glorious glory 'that is ready to be revealed on us,' as it is in the Greek.³ I have cast up the account, saith the apostle, as wise merchants use to cast up theirs, and I find in the balancing of the account, that there is nothing to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

Again, the glory he gives is unmoveable glory. All worldly glory is tottering and shaking. Princes' crowns hang now but upon one side of their heads. 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed it to stain' (or pollute) 'the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth,' Isa. xxiii. 9. 'The Lord hath purposed it,' or as it is in the Hebrew [עצה], 'The Lord hath consulted it; and the counsel of the Lord shall stand.' It is agreed upon in heaven, that the pride of all glory shall be stained and polluted, or thrown down, as some polluted filthy thing that is trampled under foot. Oh! but this glory that Christ gives is unmoveable glory, it is permanent glory; it is glory that cannot be changed, stained, or polluted, Heb. xii. 28.

Again, the glory he gives is suited glory. It is glory that is suited to the backs, hearts, hopes, desires, and capacities of his servants, John xiv. 1-3.

Again, the glory he gives is never-fading glory; it is glory that fadeth not away.⁴ When a man hath been in heaven as many millions of

¹ Martinus the emperor's motto was, *Pax bello potior*, give me peace, and let others quarrel.

² *Pericula non respicit martyr, coronas respicit*, saith Basil.

³ μίλλοῦσαι, ready to be eis ἡμᾶς, on us.

⁴ 1 Peter i. 3, 4. ἀμάραντος is the proper name of a flower which is still fresh and green, Isa. xl. 6-8.

years as there be stars in heaven, his glory shall be as fresh and as green as it was at his first entrance into heaven. All worldly glory is like the flowers of the field; but the glory that Christ gives is lasting and durable like himself, &c.

[10.] *Tenthly*, and lastly, He gives *himself*, and verily this is a gift of gifts indeed, John vi. 51, 63; so in Eph. v. 20. A saint may say, Methinks I hear Christ saying to me as Æschines said to Socrates, 'Others,' said he, 'give thee silver and gold, and precious jewels, but I give thee myself.' So the soul may say, One friend gives me bread, and another gives me clothes, and another gives me house-room, &c. Oh! but thou givest me thyself. Christ put into the balance will outweigh all other gifts that he bestows upon the sons of men. Christ is the richest gift. Oh! there are unsearchable riches in Christ, as hereafter I shall shew you.¹ He is the choicest and the rarest gift; he is a gift given but to a few. Rich and rare jewels are not commonly, but more rarely given; so is Christ. Though Israel be 'as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant only shall be saved,' Rom. ix. 17. 'A garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, is my well-beloved,' Cant. iv. 12. 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom,' Luke xii. 32. Christ is a drawing gift, a gift that draws all other gifts along with him. 'If he have given us his Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. Christ is a drawing gift. When God the Father hath cast this incomparable jewel into a man's bosom, he cannot deny him anything. Such a soul may well say, Hath he given me a Christ? and will he not give me a crumb? Hath he given me his Son, which is the greatest mercy? and will he stand with me for lesser mercies? Surely no. In a word, Christ is of all gifts the sweetest gift. As the tree, Exod. xv. 25, sweetened the bitter waters, so this gift, the Lord Jesus, of whom that tree was a type, sweetens all other gifts that are bestowed upon the sons of men. He turns every bitter into sweet, and makes every sweet more sweet.

And so I come to the second thing propounded, and that was,

II. *The difference between Christ's giving and the world's giving.*

And this I shall shew you in the following particulars:

[1.] First, *The world gives, but they give grudgingly; but when Christ gives, he gives freely*: Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come, and buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' So in Rev. xxi. 6, 'I will give to every one that is athirst of the water of life freely.' To do good, and not to do it freely, handsomely, is nothing. A benefit given with grudging is a stony loaf, only taken for necessity.²

[2.] Secondly, *The world they give, but they give poorly, niggardly, but Christ gives plenteously, richly*: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.'³

¹ Austin prays: Lord, saith he, whatever thou hast given, take all away; only give me thyself. [Confessions, often.—G.]

² 2 Cor. ix. 7; 1 Peter iv. 9. No offerings to free-will offerings.

³ Saul had but fivepence to give the seer; the seer, after much good cheer, gives him no less than the kingdom, 1 Sam. ix. 8, 10. So God deals with his.

When Cæsar gave one a great reward, 'This,' saith he, 'is too great a gift for me to receive;' 'But,' says Cæsar, 'it is not too great a gift for me to give.' So, though the least gift that Christ gives, in some sense, is too much for us to receive, yet the greatest gifts are not too great for Christ to give.

It is said of Araunah, that noble Jebusite, renowned for his bounty, that 'he had but a subject's purse, but a king's heart.' But the Lord Jesus hath not only a king's heart, but he hath also a king's purse, and gives accordingly.

[3.] Thirdly, *The world give, but they give tauntingly, they give upbraidingly; they hit men in the teeth with the gifts they give. Ay, but the Lord Jesus Christ gives, and he gives willingly, he upbraids none with the gifts he gives:* James i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that gives liberally, and upbraideth no man.' Where Christ gives, there he won't upbraid, neither with present failings nor former infirmities. Christ is not wont to reproach those to whom he gives the best gifts; he will not cast it in their dish, that he hath been thus and thus kind to them, but will always 'rejoice over them to do them good.' But the world gives, and then reproaches the receiver for receiving, and this turns all into gall and wormwood, &c.²

[4.] Fourthly, *The world gives, but they give more rarely, but Christ gives, and he gives frequently.* He is every day, every hour, yea, every moment, a-giving of royal favours to his people. Here is peace for you that are in trouble, says Christ; and here is pardon for you that groan under guilt, says Christ; and here is comfort for you that are mourners in Zion, says Christ, &c. His hand is ever in his purse, he is still a-scattering pearls of glory, ay, the very jewels of his crown, among the beloved of his soul.³

[5.] Fifthly, *The world gives, but they give the worst, and keep the best; ay, but Christ gives the best, he gives the best of the best.* He gives the best joy; the best comfort, the best peace, the best love, the best assistance, &c., he gives adoption, remission, justification, sanctification, acceptation, reconciliation, and glorification, &c. He gives the best; as that king in Plutarch said of a groat, 'it is no kingly gift;' and of a talent, 'it is no base bribe.' The world gives groats, ay, but Christ gives talents, 2 Cor. ix. 15, 1 Peter i. 8, Philip. iv. 7, Ps. lxxxviii. 10, 11.

[6.] Sixthly, *The world gives a little, that they may give no more; ay, but Christ gives that he may give.* He gives a little grace that he may give grace upon grace. He gives a little comfort that he may give fulness of comfort, John i. 16. He gives some sips that he may give full draughts, he gives pence that he may give pounds, and he gives pounds that he may give hundrêds.

The third particular that I am to shew you is,

III. *The excellency of those gifts that Christ gives, above all other gifts that the world gives.*

¹ Query, Alexander: Plutarch?—G.

² Jer. xxxii. 40, 41; Prov. i. 20-25; viii. 1-13; and ix. 1-7.

³ Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave gold to some, and trifles to others. The Lord gives the gold, the best things, to his own; but the trifles of this world to the men of the world. [Suetonius, Octavius, cap. 75.—G.]

In this I shall mind brevity, and,

[1.] First, *The gifts that Christ gives to his are spiritual and heavenly gifts*, as is most clear by what hath been already said, and the spirituality of them doth demonstrate the excellency of them. And doubtless the more spiritual any gift, any promise, any truth, any prayer, or any service is, the more excellent is that gift, &c. All Christ's gifts are like himself, spiritual and heavenly.

[2.] Secondly, *They are pure gifts*. Christ gives wine without water, light without darkness, gold without dross, and sweet without bitter, Rev. xxii. 1, James iii. 17. There is much dross and poison in the gifts that the world gives, but there is none in the gifts that Christ gives. The streams are as the fountain is; the fountain is pure, and so are the streams. The branches are as the root is; the root is pure, and so are the branches.

[3.] Thirdly, *The gifts that Christ gives are soul-satisfying gifts*. They are such as are suitable to the soul, and therefore they satisfy the soul. Things satisfy as they suit. There is a good, and there is a suitable good. Now, it is only the suitable good that satisfies the soul of man. A pardon is most suitable to a condemned man, and therefore it best satisfies him. Health is most suitable to the sick, and therefore it satisfies when it is attained, &c. As bread satisfies the hungry soul, and drink the thirsty soul, and clothing the naked soul, so do the precious gifts that Christ bestows upon the soul satisfy the soul. The light, the love, the joy, the peace, the fellowship, &c., that Christ gives, doth abundantly satisfy the soul, Jer. xxxi. 15, 16; Ps. xc. 14, xxxvi. 8, lxiii. 5, lxxv. 4. Oh, but the gifts that this world gives can never satisfy the soul: Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase.' A man may as soon fill a chest with grace, or a quart-pot with virtue, as a heart with wealth. If Alexander conquer one world, he will wish for another to conquer.¹

[4.] Fourthly, *The gifts that Christ gives are most permanent and lasting gifts*. The grace he gives is called 'an immortal seed,' 1 John iii. 9; and the glory he gives is called 'everlasting glory,' Rom. ii. 7. The gifts of the world are fading, 2 Peter i. 11. A false oath, a spark of fire, a storm at sea, a treacherous friend, brings all to nothing in a moment. Sad experience doth every day confirm this.

[5.] Fifthly, and lastly, *The gifts that Christ gives are the most useful gifts.*² They are useful to the strengthening of the soul against temptations, and to the supporting of the soul under afflictions, and to the sweetening of all changes; health and sickness, strength and weakness, plenty and poverty, honour or disgrace, life or death. Oh, but worldly gifts cannot bear up the spirits of men from fainting and sinking when trials come, when troubles come.

Our modern stories relate of Queen Mary, that she should say, 'If they did open her when she was dead, they should find Calais lying at her heart;' the loss of which, it seems, hastened her end.

¹ The creature is all shadow and vanity; it is *filia noctis*, like Jonah's gourd; it is now flourishing, and now dying, &c.

² The golden crown cannot cure the headache, nor the chain of pearl cannot cure the toothache.

The prior in Melanethon rolled his hands up and down in a basin full of angels,¹ thinking to have charmed his gout, but it would not do. The precious gifts that Christ gives his, will bear up their heads above all waters, &c. Of all gifts, they are the most useful for the producing of the most noble effects. There are no gifts produce such effects as the precious gifts that Christ gives. They raise men up to much life and activity; they make souls strong to do for God, to bear for God, to suffer for God; to be anything, to be nothing, that God may be 'all in all.' They raise the strongest joy, the most lasting comfort, and the purest peace. There is no gifts draw out that thankfulness, and raise up to that fruitfulness, as the gifts that Jesus Christ gives. And so much for that third head, viz., the excellency of those gifts that Christ gives above all other gifts whatsoever.

I come now to the fourth head, and that is,

IV. *The reasons why God gives his best gifts to his dearest ones.*

I shall only give you these six :

[1.] First, *Because he loves them with the dearest, with the choicest, and with the strongest love; therefore he gives them the best gifts.*

Christ doth not love believers with a low, flat, dull, common love, with such a love as most men love one another with, but with a love that is like himself. Now, men will give as they love: 1 Sam. i. 4, 5, 'And Elkanah gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all his sons and daughters, portions, but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved her.' In the Hebrew it is, 'he gave her a gift of the face;' that is, a great, an honourable gift. Men look upon great and honourable gifts with a sweet and cheerful countenance; so the gifts that Jesus Christ gives to believers are the gifts of the face, that is, they are the greatest gifts, the honourablest gifts, the choicest gifts, gifts fit for none but a king to give.

Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some, but gold to others. The Lord Jesus scatters the trifles of this world up and down; as Luther well speaks, 'The whole Turkish empire is but a crust that God throws to a dog.' God scatters giftless gifts, viz., the honours, riches, and favours of this world, up and down among the worst of men;² but as for his gold—his Spirit, his grace, his Son, his favour—these are jewels that he only casts into the bosom of saints, and that because he dearly loves them.

[2.] Secondly, *Christ gives the best gifts to his people, because they are best principled and fitted to make a divine improvement of them.*

There is no men on earth that are principled and fitted for the improvement of the special gifts that Christ gives but his own people.³ None have such principles of wisdom, love, holiness, and faithfulness to make an improvement of the joy, the peace, the comfort, that the Lord gives as his people; ergo. . . . Abraham gave unto 'the sons of the con-

¹ 'Coin,' so-called.—G.

² *Mundus cadaver est, et venantes eum sunt canes*; the world is a carcase, and those that hunt after it are dogs, is an Arabic proverb.

³ Wicked men are only principled to abuse mercy, which occasions God so often to rain hell out of heaven upon them, as he did once upon Sodom and Gomorrah for abusing of mercy.

cubines gifts, and sent them away; but unto Isaac he gave all that he had,' Gen. xxv. 5. As Isaac was better beloved than the concubines' sons, so Isaac was better principled to improve love than they were. The application is easy.

[3.] Thirdly, He doth it upon this account, *that he may the more endear the hearts of his people to him.*

The greatest design of Christ in this world is mightily to endear the hearts of his people; and indeed it was that which was in his eye and upon his heart from all eternity. It was this design that caused him to lay down his crown and to take up our cross, to put off his robes and to put on our rags, to be condemned that we might be justified, to undergo the wrath of the Almighty that we might for ever be in the arms of his mercy. He gives his Spirit, his grace, yea, and his very self, and all to endear the hearts of his people to himself. When Isaac would endear the heart of Rebekah, then the bracelets, the jewels, and the earrings are cast into her bosom, Gen. xxiv. 53. So the Lord Jesus casts his heavenly bracelets, jewels, and earrings into the bosoms, into the laps, of his people, out of a design to endear himself unto them: Prov. xvii. 8, 'A gift is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.' In the Hebrew it is thus, 'a gift is as a stone of grace,' אבן חן, that is, it makes a man very acceptable and gracious in the eyes of others. A gift is like that precious stone *panturbe*, that hath a marvellous conciliating property in it; or like the wonder-working loadstone, that, as some writers observe, hath among other properties this, that it makes those that have it well-spoken men and well accepted of princes. Certainly the gifts that Jesus Christ gives to his do render him very acceptable and precious in their eyes. Christ to them is the crown of crowns, the heaven of heavens, the glory of glories; he is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory: Prov. xviii. 16, 'A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.' The gifts that Jesus Christ gives widen the heart and enlarge the soul of a believer to take in more of himself. Naturally we are narrow-mouthed heavenward and wide-mouthed earthward; but the Lord Jesus, by casting in his jewels, his pearls, his precious gifts, into the soul, doth widen the soul, and enlarge the soul, and make it more capacious to entertain himself. Christ by his gifts causes all doors to stand open, that 'the King of glory may enter in,' Ps. xxiv. 7-10.

4. Now the *fourth* reason of the point is, *because Christ expects more from his people, than he doth from all the world besides, therefore he gives them the best gifts.*¹

Where the Lord expects and looks for most, there he gives most. Though believers are but 'a little flock,' though they are but 'a remnant,' though they are but 'a fountain sealed, a spring shut up, a garden enclosed,' yet Christ looks for more from them, than from all the world besides. He looks for more love from them, than from all the world besides; and he expects more service from them, than from all the world besides; and he looks for more honour from them than from all the world besides: Mal. i. 6, 'A son honoureth his father, and a

¹ It was a good saying of Justin Martyr, *Non in verbis, sed in factis res nostra religionis consistunt.* God loves, saith Luther, *curistas*, not *queristas*, the runner, not the questioner, &c.

servant his master : If I am your father, where is my honour ? and if I am your master, where is my fear ? He looks for more fear from them than from all the world besides, and for more honour from them than from all the world besides, and for more prayers and praises from them than from all the world besides.

[5.] Fifthly, *The Lord Jesus gives the best gifts to his own people, that he may fence and strengthen them against the worst temptations.*

There are no men on earth that lie open to temptations, as saints. The best men have been always the most tempted. The more excellent any man is in grace and holiness, the more shall that man be followed with temptations, as you may see in David, who was tempted by Satan to number the people ; and Job, to curse God and die ; and Peter, to deny Christ ; and so Paul was buffeted, yea, and Christ himself most grievously assaulted. The Lord knows well enough that Satan hath a cruel eye, an envious eye, a malicious eye upon his beloved ones, and therefore he is pleased, by his precious gifts, to strengthen them against his assaults. What Paul once said concerning bonds and afflictions, that they attended him 'in every place,' that may believers say concerning temptations, that they attend them in 'every place,' in every calling, in every condition, in every company, in every service, &c. As now, that the hearts of his people and temptations may not meet, the Lord is pleased to give them the best and choicest gifts.¹

Austin thanked God for this, that his heart and the temptations did not meet. The Lord hath on purpose given these glorious gifts into the hearts of his saints, that their souls and temptations may be kept asunder ; that though they be tempted, yet they may not be conquered ; though they be assaulted, yet they may not be vanquished.² Basil, Luther, Vincentius, and that famous marquis Galeacius [Carraciolus], &c., met with very strange and strong temptations, but the precious gifts that the Lord had cast into their bosoms made them triumph over all.³ Oh that grace, that peace, that life, that love, that communion with which the Lord had crowned them, made them too great, too noble, and too glorious to yield to any temptations with which they were beset. It was their pleasure to overcome offered pleasure, their honour to overcome offered honour, their greatness to overcome offered greatness. When one of them was tempted with money and preferment, he scorned the offers, saying, Give me money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish.⁴

Jerome tells a story of a Christian soldier,⁵ whom when the prætor could not by any torments remove from Christianity, he commanded to be laid on a bed in a pleasant garden, among the flourishing and fragrant flowers ; which done, all others withdrawing, a most beautiful harlot came to him, and used all art to destroy his soul ; but the Christian soldier being filled with the royal gifts of the Spirit, bit off his tongue

¹ Some say that the panther will leap three times after his prey, but if he miss it the third time, he will leap no more. It were well for saints if Satan would do so. &c., 1 Chron. xxi. 1 ; Job ii. 9 ; Mat. xxvi. 41 ; 2 Cor. xii. 7 ; Mat. iv. 1-12 ; Acts xx. 23.

² *Vigilat diabolus et tu dormis ?* the devil watcheth, and dost thou sleep ?

³ *Ego non sum ego*, said that noble convert when he met with a temptation.

⁴ *Pecuniam da quæ permaneat ac continuo duret, gloriam quæ semper floreat.*—Basil.

⁵ Jerome in *vita Pauli*.

with his teeth, and spat it in her face as she was tempting him, and so got victory over all her temptations.

The precious favours God confers upon his, make them temptation-proof; they make believers trample upon the most amiable baits. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God,' says Joseph. Joseph's sense of Potiphar's favours heaped upon him, strengthened him against the impudent solicitations of his wanton mistress, Gen. xxxix. And shall not the singular favours that God confers upon his dearest ones strengthen them against Satan's assaults? Surely gracious hearts are wrought more upon, and bettered and strengthened more by spirituals than by temporals; by eternal than by external; and if Satan do not find it so, I am much mistaken.

Well, remember this, Satan's overcoming the saints gives him the greatest advantage to boast and triumph over Christ.¹

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own; He is not thine, Lord Jesus, saith he, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but he is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks with thee, but sells thy blood to me. So when Satan prevails over the saints, look, O Christ, says he, are these the price of thy blood? are these the objects of thy love? are these the delight of thy soul? what, are these thy jewels? are these the apple of thy eye? are these thy pleasant portion? Why, lo how I lead them! lo how I triumph over them! they seem rather to be mine than thine. Ah, Christians! resist as for life, that Satan may never have occasion thus to insult and triumph over Christ, &c.

[6.] *Sixthly* and lastly, *Christ gives the best gifts to his dearest ones, that they may be an honour and a praise unto him in the glorious day of his owning of them, and marriage to them before all the world.*

Believers in this life are but betrothed to Christ: 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness,' Hosea ii. 19, 20. Their marriage-day is put off till the glorious day of Christ's appearing; the great day of his glory will be the day of solemnity; Rev. xxi. 2, 9, 10, compared.² It would not be for the honour and glory of Christ, that his spouse in that day should be clothed with rags; therefore he hath given them the bracelets, the ear-rings, and the jewels before-hand, that they may be a praise and an honour to him in the marriage day. Oh! when the saints shall appear with all those glorious jewels about them, that Christ hath bequeathed to them, how will their splendid glory darken all other glory, and make the very sun to hide its face. This is our betrothing day, that will be our marriage day.

Bishop Ridley, the night before he suffered, invited his hostess and the rest at table to his marriage, 'for,' said he, 'to-morrow I must be married.'³ so several other martyrs went as merrily to die, as to dine; knowing that their dying day did but make way for their marriage day. The Lord doth by his rich and royal favours trick and trim up his bride beforehand, that she may be an honour and a praise to him in the day

¹ The devil marcheth well armed and in good array, saith Luther.

² The good things of eternal life are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they are above all estimation.—*Augustine, de Triplici habitu*, cap. 4.

³ Foxe, as before.—G.

of coronation, in the day of marriage, in the day of solemnity, when he will own her before devils, angels, and all reprobates; when he will say, 'Lo, here am I, and the bride, O Father! that thou hast given me.'

And thus you have a brief account of the reasons of the point, why the Lord gives the best gifts to his own people.

We shall make some short but sweet uses of this point.

And, *first*,

[1.] Doth the Lord give the best and greatest gifts to his people? *Then you that are his people, sit down and wonder at this condescending love of God.*

Oh! what is in thy soul or in my soul, that should cause the Lord to give such gifts to us as he hath given? We were all equal in sin and misery; nay, doubtless, we have actually outsinned thousands, to whom these precious gifts are denied. Let us therefore sit down and wonder at this condescending love of God. Oh! we were once poor wretches sitting upon the dunghill, yea, wallowing in our blood, and yet behold the King of kings, the Lord of lords, hath so far condescended in his love, as to bestow himself, his Spirit, his grace, and all the jewels of his royal crown upon us. Oh! what heart can conceive, what tongue can express, this matchless love! I will be thine for ever, says Christ, and my Spirit shall be thine for ever, and my grace thine for ever, and my glory thine for ever, and my righteousness thine for ever; all I am and all I have, shall be thine for ever. O sirs! what condescending love is this. Oh! what a Christ is this.¹

[2.] But then, *secondly*, *Be greatly thankful, oh be greatly thankful for the great gift that Christ hath bestowed upon you.*

It is not a little thankfulness that will answer and suit to the great gifts that the Lord Jesus hath bestowed upon you. Oh say with the psalmist, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his favours, and great benefits. I will take the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord,' Ps. cxvi. 13, 14. Yea, say again with the psalmist, 'I will praise thee more and more.' Or as it is in the Hebrew, 'I will add to thy praise,' Ps. lxxi. 14. Oh when thou lookest upon the jewels, the pearls that Christ hath given thee, say, Lord, I will praise thee more and more, I will rise higher and higher in thy praises, I will be still a-adding to thy praise. The very law of nature bespeaks great thankfulness, where great favours are given; and the law of custom bespeaks it, and doth not the law of grace bespeak it much more?²

When Tamerlane had taken Bajazet, among other questions he asked him 'if ever he had given God thanks for making him so great an emperor?' He confessed immediately, that 'he never thought of that;' to whom Tamerlane replied, 'It is no wonder so ungrateful a man should be made a spectacle of misery.'³ Oh! what do they then deserve that are unthankful for spiritual favours. Tell me, O Christians, are not the gifts that Christ hath conferred upon you, peculiar gifts? And will you not be thankful for them? Were they but common gifts, you

¹ O Lord Jesus, saith Bernard, breaking forth into an admiration of Christ's love, I love thee *plusquam mea, plusquam meos, plusquam me*, more than all my goods, more than all my friends, yea, more than my very self, &c. [Sermons on Canticles, as before.—G.]

² Injuries shall be writ in the dust, but our mercies on marble, that our hearts may be the better provoked to praise and thankfulness.

³ Turk. Hist. 220, &c. [Knolles, as before.—G.]

ought to be thankful for them; how much more then for peculiar gifts, for right-handed favours? Tell me, are not the gifts that Christ hath given thee rare gifts? What hadst thou been if Christ had not made a difference between thee and others, by those glorious gifts that he hath conferred upon thee? Thou lookest upon some, and seest they are very ignorant. Oh! what hadst thou been if God had not bestowed that grace of knowledge upon thee? Thou lookest upon other persons that are unclean, profane, and filthy. Why! such a wretch wouldst thou have been, if the Lord had not made a difference between thee and them, by bestowing himself, his grace, and Spirit upon thee.¹

It was long since determined in the schools, that 'penitents had more reason to be thankful than innocent; sin giving an advantage to mercy to be doubly free in giving and in pardoning;' and so the greater obligation is left upon us to thankfulness.

Luther hath a very famous story, in his writing upon the fourth commandment, in the time of the council of Constance. He tells you of two cardinals, that as they were riding to the council, they saw a shepherd in the field weeping. One of them being affected with his weeping, rode to him to comfort him; and coming near to him he desired to know the reason of his weeping. The shepherd was unwilling to tell him at first, but at last he told him, saying, 'I looking upon this toad considered that I never praised God as I ought, for making me such an excellent creature as a man, comely and reasonable. I have not blessed him that he made me not such a deformed toad as this.' The cardinal hearing this, and considering that God had done far greater things for him than for this poor shepherd, he fell down dead from his mule; his servants lifting him up, and bringing him to the city, he came to life again, and then cried out, 'O St Austin! how truly didst thou say, the unlearned rise and take heaven by force, and we with all our learning wallow in flesh and blood.'² The application is easy.

Thirdly, The next use is,

[3.] *If the Lord hath given the best gifts to his people, then oh that his people would not give God the worst, but the best of everything.*³

Oh! give the Lord the best of your strength, the best of your time, the best of your mercies, and the best of your services, who hath given to your souls the best of gifts: Num. xviii. 29, 'Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of the Lord, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof, out of it.' So I say, of all thy offerings offer God the best, who hath given to thee the best and greatest gifts. So in Exod. xxxv. 22, 'For the service of the tabernacle they brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and tables, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord.' They gave the best of the best, and so must we. Oh do not offer to God the worst of your time, the worst of your strength, the worst of your mercies, the

¹ There are but few upon whom God bestoweth his love. It was always a principle in morality, that sweet and intimate friendship cannot be extended to many. Friends usually go by pairs.

² Augustine, Confessions, b. viii. c. 8. 'Surgunt indocti et cœlum rapiunt, et nos cum doctrinis nostris sine corde, ecce ubi volutamur in carne et sanguine.'—G.

³ It is the most wicked avarice to defraud God of the oblation of ourselves, saith Chrysostom.

worst of your services. That same is a very dreadful text : Mal. i. 8, 13, 14, compared, 'And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with it, and accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.' Saith God, Will men be put off thus? No, I know they won't; and why then should you deal worse with me than with men? Thy governors will have the best, ay, the best of the best; and will you deal worse with me, saith God, than with your governors? Will you thus requite me for all my favours, O foolish people and unwise? is this your kindness to your friend? Ver. 13, 14, 'Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord.' Oh! that God had not cause to complain thus of many of your souls, to whom he hath shewn much love. But mark what follows: ver. 14, 'But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.' If you have better in your hands, and yet shall go to put off God with the worst, the curse will follow. Think of it and tremble, all you that deal fraudulently and false-heartedly with God. Ah, Christians! you must say, World, stand behind; sin and Satan, get you behind us, for the best gifts, the choicest favours that ever were given, we have received from the Father of lights; and therefore by his gifts he hath obliged our souls to give him the best of our time, strength, and services; and therefore we will not be at your call or beck any longer. Oh, say, the Lord hath given us the best gifts, and 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.'

[4.] *Fourthly, This should bespeak the people of God to trust and lean upon God for lesser gifts.*

Hath God given thee a crown, and wilt thou not trust him for a crumb? 2 Tim. iv. 8. Hath he given thee a house that hath 'foundations, whose builder and maker is God?' Heb. xi. 15. Hath he given thee 'a kingdom that shakes not'? Heb. xii. 28. And wilt thou not trust him for a cottage, for a little house-room in this world? Hath he given thee himself, his Son, his Spirit, his grace; and wilt thou not trust him to give thee bread, and friends, and clothes, and other necessary mercies that he knows thou needest? Rom. viii. 32, Mat. vi. 32. Hath he given thee the greater, and will he stand with thee for the lesser? Surely no. Wilt thou trust that man for much, that hath given thee but a little? And wilt thou not trust that God for a little, that hath given thee much? Wilt thou not trust him for pence, that hath given thee pounds? O sirs! hath the Lord given you himself, the best of favours; and will not you trust him for the least favours? Hath he given you pearls, and will not you trust him for pins? &c. Doth not the apostle argue sweetly? Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared

¹ If a man should serve the Lord a thousand years, saith Austin, it would not deserve an hour of the reward in heaven; no, not a moment, much less an eternity. And therefore, says he, we had need do as much as we can, and do all that we do as well as we can, &c.

not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? What! says the apostle, hath he given us his Son, his only Son, his bosom Son, his beloved Son, the Son of his joy, the Son of his delights? Oh how can he then but cast in all other things, as paper and pack-thread, into the bargain? Oh! that Christians would learn to reason themselves out of their fears, and out of their distrusts, as the apostle doth. Oh! that Christians would no longer rend and rack their precious souls with fears and cares, but rest satisfied in this, that he that hath been so kind to them in spirituals, will not be wanting to them in temporals,¹ Prov. viii. 23-32.

[5.] Fifthly, *If the Lord hath given the best gifts to his people, this should then bespeak his people, not to envy the men of the world for those lesser favours that God hath conferred upon them.*

It was horrid wickedness in Ahab to envy poor Naboth, because of his vineyard; and is it a virtue in you that are Christians to envy others, because their outward mercies are greater or sweeter than yours? Should the prince upon whose head the royal crown is set, and about whose neck the golden chain is put, envy those whose hands are full of sugar-plums, and whose laps are full of rosemary, &c. Hath not God, O Christians! put a royal crown of glory upon your heads, and a golden chain of grace about your necks, and his Son's glorious robe upon your backs? and why then should your hearts rise against others' mercies? O! reason yourselves out of this sinful temper.²

I would have every Christian thus to argue: Hath not the Lord given me himself? Is not one dram of that grace that God hath given me, more worth than ten thousand worlds? and why then should I envy at others' mercies?

There was a soldier which, for breaking his rank in reaching after a bunch of grapes, was condemned to die by martial law, and as he went to execution, he went eating of his grapes; upon which, some of his fellow-soldiers were somewhat troubled, saying, 'He ought then to mind somewhat else;' to whom he said, 'I beseech you, sirs, do not envy me my grapes, they will cost me dear; you would be loath to have them at the rate that I must pay for them.' So say I, O saints! do not envy the men of this world because of their honours, riches, &c., for you would be loath to have them at that rate that they must pay for them. Oh! there is a day of reckoning a-coming, a day wherein all the nobles and brave gallants in the world must be brought to the bar, and give an account how they have improved and employed all the favours that God hath conferred upon them; therefore envy them not. Is it madness and folly in a great favourite at court, to envy those that feast themselves with the scraps that come from the prince's table? Oh! then, what madness and folly is it that the favourites of heaven should envy the men of the world, who at best do but feed upon the scraps that come from God's table! Spirituals are the choice meat, temporals are but the scraps. Temporals are the bones, spirituals are the marrow.

Is it below a man to envy the dogs because of the bones? And is it

¹ *Tantum possumus, quantum credimus.*—Cyprian.

² David three several times gave himself this counsel, not to envy at others. Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7, 8, compared. So Ps. lxxiii. 21.

not much more below a Christian to envy others for temporals, when himself enjoys spirituals?

[6.] Sixthly, *Be not troubled for the want of lesser gifts.*

It is to me a sad thing to see gracious souls, that have some comfortable satisfaction in their own hearts that the Lord hath given Christ and grace to them, John xiv. 1-3, &c., go up and down whining and weeping because they have not health, or wealth, or child, or trade, &c., when the Lord hath bestowed upon them such choice, spiritual blessings, the least of which will outweigh all temporal blessings. Well, Christians, remember this, you act below your spiritual birth, your holy calling, when you suffer your hearts to be troubled and perplexed for the want of temporal things. Can you read special love in these? Doth your happiness lie in the enjoyment of them? Are not the angels happy without them? Was not Lazarus more happy than Dives? Yes. Oh! then, let not the want of those things trouble thee, the enjoyment of which can never make thee happy. Should the child be troubled for want of a rattle or a baby,¹ that is proclaimed heir of a crown? And why then should a Christian, that is heir-apparent to a heavenly crown, be troubled upon the want of worldly toys? &c.

Jerome tells us of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, coming to him, asked him whether he was not sore troubled and afflicted for want of his sight? 'Oh yes,' said Didymus, 'it is a great affliction and trouble to me.' Then Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given you the excellency of an angel, of an apostle, and are you troubled for that which rats and mice and brute beasts have?²

It is great folly, it is double iniquity for a Christian to be troubled for the want of those things that God ordinarily bestows upon the worst of men. Oh the mercies that a Christian hath in hand, oh the mercies that a Christian hath in the promises, oh the mercies that a Christian hath in hope, are so many, so precious, and so glorious, that they should bear up his head and heart from fainting and sinking under all outward wants.

There goes a story among scholars of Æsop's deceiving Mercury, he having promised him one part of his nuts, keeps all the meat to himself, and gives the other the shells. Ah, Christians! God hath given you the meat, but the world the shells; why then should you be troubled for want of the shells, when God hath given you the kernel? &c.³

[7.] Seventhly, *If the Lord hath given his people the best gifts, oh then, let not them leave off that God that hath bestowed such choice and noble favours on them.*

Jer. ii. 11-13, 'Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit: Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord.' Why? 'For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,' &c. This was that aggravated the Israelites' sin, Ps. cv. and cvi., that

¹ 'Doll.'—G.

² Socrates, H. E., lib. iv. cap. xx.

³ Cyprian, in his sermon *de lapsis*, reports of divers who, forsaking the Lord, were given over to evil spirits, and died fearfully. A backslider may say, *Opera et impensa perit*, all my pains and charge is lost.

they forsook that God that had conferred upon them many rich and royal favours. But oh! then, what madness and folly is it in you, that you should forsake that God that hath done such mighty things for your souls? I may say, to keep you close to God, as Saul said to his servants, to keep them close to him, 1 Sam. xxii. 7, 'Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?' Ah, Christians! can the world give you spiritual life? Can the world give you peace of conscience, pardon of sin, the favour of God, the hopes of glory? No. Oh then! never leave nor forsake that God that hath given you all these royal favours, which none can give nor take, but himself. He that forsakes God forsakes his own mercies; he forsakes his life, his joy, his crown, his all in all.

No evil to this, of forsaking the greatest good. It makes a man's life a very hell. 'Such shall be written in the dust,' Jer. xvii. 13.

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, *Be not impatient nor froward, when God shall take away some lesser mercies from you.*¹

Hath God given you the best and the greatest gifts that your souls can beg or himself can give? And will you be froward or impatient when he shall come to take away lesser mercies? What? wilt thou be an impatient soul, when God comes and writes death upon such a near mercy, and passes the sentence of death upon such and such desirable mercies? Verily this is the way to provoke God to strip thee naked of thy choicest ornaments, and to put thee in chains, or else to turn thee a-grazing among the beasts of the field, as he did Nebuchadnezzar. God gives the best, and takes away the worst; he gives the greatest, and takes away the least; the sense of which made Job bless God when stripped of all. If a man should give you a pearl and take away a pin; if he should give you a bag of gold and take away a bag of counters, would it not be a madness in you to be impatient, and froward? Doth God take away a pin, and hath he not given you a pearl for it? He hath given thee a pound, O Christian! for every penny that he hath taken from thee; therefore be not froward, nor impatient. Remember, Christians, how many in the world there be that sit sighing and mourning under the want of those very favours that you do enjoy. 'Why does the living man complain?' What! out of the grave, and complain! What! out of hell, and complain! This is man's sin, and God's wonder.

But now some poor sinners may say, Here is good news for saints, but what is all this to us all this while?

Why, I will tell you; I have something to say for the comfort and encouragement of poor sinners. Ah, sinners! Christ is willing to bestow the best gifts upon the worst sinners. Take one text for all; it is a sweet one, and full to the point in hand: Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received

¹ *Diis proximus ille est, quem ratio non ira movet*, he is next to God whom reason, and not anger, moveth.—*Seneca*. [*De Ira et De Animi Tranquillitate*—G.] Did an impatient soul but see himself in a glass, he would loathe himself; for, saith Homer, his eyes sparkle like fire, his heart swells, his pulse beats, &c. In a word, an impatient soul is a bedlam, a monster, a devil, &c.

gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.’¹

Christ hath received gifts, as a steward, from the hand of the Father, to dispense them among men, yea, among the rebellious, the worst of men. If there be here at this time any rebellious sinner, or rebellious Sabbath-breaker, or rebellious drunkard, or rebellious curser, &c., let such rebellious sinners know that Christ hath received gifts ‘even for the rebellious.’

‘That the Lord God might dwell amongst them.’² That is, that the Lord God might have sweet fellowship and communion with them: ‘Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’

‘Behold I stand at the door and knock.’ I, that have heaven to give, and peace to give, and pardon to give, and grace to give, and myself to give; I, that have tried gold to enrich you, and white raiment to clothe you, and eye-salve to anoint you, ‘I stand at the door and knock; if *any man* will open the door,’ let him be never so guilty, never so filthy, never so unworthy, &c., ‘I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.’

Lord, at whose door dost thou stand knocking? Is it at the rich man’s door, or at the righteous man’s door, or at the humbled man’s door, or at the weary and heavy-laden man’s door, or at the mourner’s door, or at the qualified or prepared man’s door? No, says Christ, it is at none of these doors. At whose then, O blessed Lord? At the lukewarm Laodicean’s door; at their door that are neither hot nor cold, that are ‘wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ These, says Christ, are the worst of the worst; and yet if any of these wretches, these monsters of mankind, will open the door, ‘I will come in, and will sup with them, and they with me.’

I have read a remarkable story of a great rebel that had raised a mighty party against a Roman emperor. The emperor upon this being much provoked and stirred in spirit, made a proclamation, that whosoever brought in the rebel, dead or alive, should have a great sum of money. The rebel, hearing of this, comes and presents himself unto the emperor, and demanded of him the sum of money; whereupon the emperor reasons thus, ‘If I should now cut him off, the world would say I did it to save my money;’ and so he pardoned him, and gave him the great sum of money, notwithstanding all his former rebellion.³

Oh! shall a heathen emperor do thus to a rebel that was in arms against him, and will not God do as much for poor rebellious sinners? Surely he will. What though thou hast been in arms against God, and mustered up all the strength and force thou couldst, even all the members of thy body, and faculties of thy soul, against God, and Christ, and holiness, yet know that the King of Israel is a merciful king; he is a God of pardons; he delights to make his grace glorious, and there-

¹ Read also Prov. i. 20–29, chap. viii. 1–8, and chap. ix. 1–7; Isa. xliiii. 22–25; Jer. li. 5. None so faithful as Christ, Heb. iii. 5, 6.

² Rev. iii. 20, 2 Cor. vi. 16, ‘I will dwell in them.’ The words are very significant in the original: *ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς*, *I will indwell in them*. There are two *ins* in the original, as if God could never have enough communion with them.

³ Bodin relates this story. [As before. See Index, *sub nomine*.—G.]

fore is very willing to shew mercy to the greatest rebels, to the worst of sinners. Witness Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, the thief, Paul, and others.¹ The greatness of man's sins do but set off the riches of free grace. Sins are debts, and God can as easily blot out a debt of many thousands as he can a lesser debt; therefore let not the greatest rebel despair but believe, and he shall find that 'where sin hath abounded, there grace shall superabound,' &c.

And thus much for this observation. We shall now proceed to the next words, viz.,

'That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'—Eph. iii. 8.

A little to open the words.

'That I should preach.'

That is, declare good news, or the glad tidings of salvation that is brought by Jesus Christ to sinners. The Greek word *εὐαγγέλιον*, in the New Testament, answers to the Hebrew word *Bessorah* in the Old Testament, both signifying good news, glad tidings, or a joyful message.²

'That I should preach among the Gentiles.'

The word *ἔθνεσιν*, that is here rendered Gentiles, is sometimes used generally for all men, or all nations. So it is used in Mat. xxv. 32, and xxviii. 19. Sometimes this Greek word is used more especially for the people of the Jews; so in John xi. 48, 50–52, and Acts x. 22; and sometimes it is used for the Gentiles, distinguished from the Jews; so in Mat. vi. 32.

By the Gentiles here you are to understand those poor heathens that were without God in the world, that never had heard of Christ, nor those unsearchable riches that be in him; as you may clearly see by comparing this text with that, Gal. i. 15, 16, 'But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach among the heathen,' saith he, 'immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood.'

1. The first observation that I shall speak of, from these words thus opened, is this:

That the gifts and graces that God bestows upon his people should be improved, employed, and exercised by his people.

The Greek word *χαρίς*, that is here rendered *grace*, we shewed you, hath a three-fold signification in the Scripture. Sometimes it denotes the favour of God, sometimes the common gifts of the Spirit, and sometimes the saving graces of the Spirit. Now, says Paul, that singular favour that God hath conferred upon me, and all those common gifts and special graces with which he has enriched me, they are all to be employed and exercised. 'Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

So that there is nothing more clear than this, viz.: That the gifts and graces that God bestows upon his people, should be employed, improved, and exercised by his people.

'To me is this grace given.' Not that I should be idle, but active;

¹ Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 21; Rom. vi. 13, 16, 19, 20.

² *Εὐαγγελίσασθαι*, from *εὐαγγελίζω*.

not that I should be negligent, but diligent; not that I should hide my talents, but improve them.

I shall touch upon a few scriptures that speak out this truth, and then open it to you. 2 Tim. i. 6, 'Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee.' As the fire is increased and preserved by blowing, so are our graces. Some think that it is a metaphor taken from a spark kept in ashes, which, by gentle blowing, is stirred up, till it take a flame. Others say, it is an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning.¹ We get nothing by dead and useless habits. Talents hid in a napkin gather rust. The noblest faculties are imbedded, when not improved, when not exercised. Philip. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' The Greek is, *καταργάζεσθε*, 'Work till you get the work through.' The reason why many men's hearts tremble, and are so full of fears and doubts, is because their salvation is not wrought out; they do not make thorough work in their souls, they put not that question home, Whether they have grace or no? an interest in Christ or no? They do not rise with all their strength against sin, nor with all their power to serve the Lord; and therefore fears and doubts do compass them round about. So in 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

'Be steadfast.' It is a metaphor taken from a foundation, on which a thing stands firmly; or a seat or chair, wherein one sits fast.

'Unmoveable' signifies one that will not easily move his place or opinion.

'Abounding,' or excelling 'in the work of the Lord.'

'Knowing that your labour is not in vain.' The Greek is 'labours unto weariness.' The apostle would have them labour unto weariness; 'For,' saith he, 'it is not in vain.' It will turn to a good account; it will yield you much of heaven here, and make you high in heaven hereafter.²

There are only two things that I shall endeavour to do, for the opening of the point.

I. To shew you why persons must improve, employ, and exercise the graces and gifts that God hath bestowed upon them. And then,
II. The end to which they are to exercise those graces and gifts.

I. For the *first*, There are these twelve reasons why gracious souls should exercise and improve their gifts and graces. Friends, this point is a point of as singular use and of as great concernment to you, as any that I know the Scripture speaks of, and therefore I desire you to lend your most serious and solemn attentions.

[1.] *First*, They must exercise and improve their graces,

Because the exercise and improvement of their graces is the ready way to be rich in grace.

As sin is increased in the soul by the frequent actings of it, so grace is nourished and strengthened in the soul by its frequent actings. The exercise of grace is always attended with the increase of grace. Prov.

¹ Calvin and others.

² Grace is bettered and made more perfect by acting. Neglect of our graces is the ground of their decrease and decay. Wells are the sweeter for drawing.

x. 4, 'The diligent hand maketh rich;' or, the nimble hand; the hand that is active and agile, that will see nothing lost for looking after, that hand maketh rich. Ruth ii, how did Boaz follow the business himself! his eyes were in every corner, on the servants and on the reapers, yea, on the gleaners too.¹

It is recorded of Severus, that his care was not to look what men said of him, or how they censured him, but to look what was to be done by him. He will rise in judgment against those professors that look more what this man and the other man saith of them, than what is to be done by them. The heart of a Christian is to be taken up with what is to be done by him, and not with what this man thinks, or the other judges of him.

Pacunius hath an elegant saying; 'I hate,' saith he, 'the men that are idle in deed, and philosophical in word.' God loves, saith Luther, *curristas*, not *quæristas*, the runner, not the questioner.² Grace grows by exercise and decays by disuse. Though both arms grow, yet that which a man most useth is the stronger and the bigger; so it is both in gifts and graces. In birds, their wings which have been used most are sweetest; the application is easy. Such men as are contented with so much grace as will bring them to glory, with so much grace as will keep hell and their souls asunder, will never be rich in grace, nor high in comfort or assurance. Such souls usually go to heaven in a storm. Oh how weather-beaten are they before they can reach the heavenly harbour!

[3.] *Secondly*, They must exercise their gifts and graces, because it is the main end of God's giving gifts and graces to them.

Grace is given to trade with; it is given to lay out, not to lay up.³ Grace is a candle that must not be put under a bushel, but set upon a candlestick. Grace is a golden treasure that must be improved, not hoarded up, as men do their gold. Grace is a talent, and it is given for this very end, that it should be employed and improved for the honour and advantage of him that gave it. The slothful servant, in God's account, is an evil servant, and accordingly God has denoted him, and doomed him for his ill husbandry, to destruction, Mat. xxv. 24-31.

'What a shame is it,' saith one [Jerome], 'that faith should not be able to do that which infidelity hath done! What! not better fruit in the vineyard, in the garden of God, than in the wilderness? What! not better fruit grow upon the tree of life, than upon the root of nature? &c.

[3.] And then thirdly, *Because grace, exercised and improved, will do that for us that all the means in the world can never do for us.*⁴

I shall evidence this truth in some remarkable instances.

¹ Our graces are like Gideon's army, but a handful in comparison; but our sins are like the Midianites, innumerable as grasshoppers.

² One day God will require of men, *Non quid legerint, sed quid egerint, nec quid dixerint, sed quomodo vixerint.*

³ The reason, say some, why Christ cursed the fig tree, though the time of bearing fruit was not come, was because it made a glorious show with leaves, and promised much, but brought forth nothing.

⁴ No Israelite that was bit or stung with the fiery serpent could be healed but by looking up to the brazen serpent. Those spots a Christian finds in his own heart can only, by a hand of faith, be washed out in the blood of the Lamb.

Suppose the guilt of sin to be upon a man's soul, even as a heavy mountain, there is nothing but the exercise of grace now that can remove this guilt. The man prays, and yet guilt sticks upon him; he hears, and yet guilt as a mountain lies heavy upon him; he mourns, he sighs, he groans, and yet guilt sticks upon him; he runs from ordinance to ordinance, and from ordinary service to extraordinary, and yet guilt follows him; he runs from man to man, Sir, was ever any man's case like mine? I have prayed thus long, I have heard thus long, I have mourned thus long, &c., and yet guilt lies as a mountain upon my soul! There is nothing now below the exercise of grace that will remove this. It is only faith in the promises of remission that will remove the guilt of sin that lies so heavy upon the soul. It is only faith's application of the righteousness of Christ that can take off this burden that sinks the soul, even as low as hell. Faith must make a plaster of the blood of Christ, and apply it to the soul, or the soul will die under its guilt. There is nothing below this can do it. Faith's application of the blood of Christ takes off the guilt, and turns the storm to a calm: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Again, suppose that the power and prevalency of sin hinders the soul's sweet communion with God, so that the soul cannot sport itself, and joy and delight itself in God, as in the days of old; it cannot see God smiling, stroking, and speaking kindly, as in former days. Now, there is nothing in all the world that can ease the soul of this burden of sin below the exercise of grace. Oh, saith such a poor soul, I pray, sir, and yet I sin; I resolve against sin, and yet I sin; I combat against sin, and yet I am carried captive by sin; I have left no outward means unattempted, and yet after all, my sins are too hard for me; after all my sweating, striving, and weeping, I am carried down the stream. There is nothing now but the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ that will take off this burden from the soul of man.¹ Now, you must make use of your graces to draw virtue from Christ; now faith must touch the hem of Christ's garment, or thou wilt never be healed. It is just with a soul in this case as it was with the poor widow, Luke viii. 43-49, that had the bloody issue; she leaves no means unattempted whereby she might be cured; she runs from one physician to another, till she had spent all she was worth, till she had brought a noble to nimpence, and now says she, 'If I could but touch the hem of his garment, I should be whole.' Hereupon she crowds through the crowd to come to Christ, and being got behind him, she touches the hem of his garment, 'and immediately she was made whole.' The cure being thus wrought, Christ uncrowns himself to crown her faith: 'And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.' He doth not say, Woman, thy trembling hath made thee whole; or, Woman, thy sweating and struggling in a crowd to come to me, hath made thee whole; or, Woman, thy falling down and abasing thyself, though she did all this; but, 'Woman, *thy faith* hath made thee whole.' Ah, Christians! it is not your trembling, or your falling down, or your sweating in this and that service, that will stop the bloody issue of your

¹ Much less, then, can the papists' purgatories, watchings, whippings, &c., or Saint Francis his kissing or licking of lepers' sores, cleanse the fretting leprosy of sin, &c.

sins, but believing in Christ.¹ It is sad to consider how few professors in these days have attained the right way of mortifying of sin. They usually go out against their sins in the strength of their own purposes, prayers, and resolutions, &c., and scarce look so high as a crucified Christ; they mind not the exercise of their faith upon Christ; and therefore it is a righteous thing with Christ that after all they should be carried captive by their sins. Nothing eats out sin like the actings of grace; nothing weakens and wastes the strength of sin like the exercise of grace. Oh! did men believe more in Christ, sin would die more; did they believe the threatenings more, sin would die more; did they believe the promises more, sin would die more; did they believe reigning with Christ more, sin would die more: 'He that hath this hope purifies himself, even as Christ is pure,' 1 John iii. 3.

Again, Suppose that the soul be followed with black, dismal, fiery temptations, there is nothing now in all the world that can divinely strengthen and fence the soul against these temptations but the exercise of grace, the improvement of grace. It is true you are to hear, read, pray, meditate, &c.; but all these without the exercise of grace in them, will never make you victorious over Satan's temptations. Nothing puts Satan to it like the exercise of grace.²

It is said of Satan, that he should say to a holy man who was much in the exercise of grace, *Tu me semper vincis*, thou dost always overcome me: Eph. vi. 16. 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil.' Whatsoever piece of armour you neglect, be sure that you neglect not the shield of faith. The Greek word that is here rendered a shield, *θυρεός α θυρα*, comes from another word that signifies a door or a gate, to note that as a door or a gate doth secure our bodies, so will the shield of faith secure our souls against the fiery darts of the devil: 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.' The apostle alludes to the custom of the Scythians, who used to dip the heads of their arrows or darts in the gall of asps and vipers, the venomous heat of which, like a fire in their flesh, killed the wounded with torments, the likeliest hell of any other. But the soldiers then had generally shields of raw neats' leather, as several writers testify,³ and when the fiery darts lighted upon them, they were presently quenched. So these fiery darts of Satan, when they light upon the shield of faith, they are presently quenched; and there is no other way to do it. Till the Lord draw out a man's faith to act upon the promises and upon Christ, these fiery darts will not be quenched.

Again, Suppose that the world, the smiling world or the frowning world, the tempting world or the persecuting world, should lie as a heavy stone or burden upon your hearts, as it doth upon the hearts of thousands in these days—witness their attempting anything to get the favours, honours and riches of this world! Ah! how many have turned their

¹ A touch of faith cureth the woman, as well as a full hold. It is the exercise of the graces of the Spirit by which we mortify the deeds of the flesh, Rom. viii. 13. It is not our strong resolutions or purposes that will be able to overmaster these enemies. A foul sore will run till it be indeed healed, though we say it shall not.

² Luther said, I am without set upon by all the world, and within by the devil and all his angels; and yet, by the exercise of grace, he became victorious over them all, &c.

³ Polybius and Vegetius, &c.

backs upon God, and Christ, and truth, &c., to gain the world! How will you get off this burden? No way in the world like to the exercise and actings of grace. Many men hear much, and yet remain worldly; and pray like angels, and yet live as if there were no heaven nor hell. They will talk much of heaven, and yet those that are spiritual and wise do smell their breath to stink strong of earth; and all the arts, and parts, and gifts in the world can never cure them of this soul-killing disease; but the exercise of grace, till faith break forth in its glorious actings. A man may hear and pray many years, and yet be as carnal, base, and worldly as ever. There is no way under heaven to remove this stone, this burden, but the exercise of faith and love, &c.: Cant. viii. 6, 7; 1 John iv. 5, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'¹

Not that the habit of faith overcometh the world, but faith in the exercise of it conquers the world, and that it does these three ways.

(1.) First, *Faith in the exercise of it presents the world to the soul under all those notions that the Scripture holds forth the world unto us by.*

The Scripture holds forth the world as an impotent thing, as a mixed thing, as a mutable thing, as a momentary thing.² Now faith comes and sets this home with power upon the soul, and this takes the soul off from the world.

(2.) Secondly, *Faith doth it by causing the soul to converse with more glorious, soul-satisfying, soul-delighting, and soul-contenting objects.*

2 Cor. iv. 16-18, 'Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.' How comes this to pass? 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.'³ Now when faith is busied and exercised about soul-ennobling, soul-greatening, soul-raising, and soul-cheering objects, a Christian tramples the world under his feet; and now heavy afflictions are light, and long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, unto him, &c. Now, stand by world! welcome Christ! &c.

So in Heb. xi. It was the exercise of faith and hope upon noble and glorious objects that carried them above the world, above the smiling world, and above the frowning world, above the tempting world, and above the persecuting world, as you may see by comparing several verses of that chapter together: ver. 9, 10, 'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Ver. 24-26, 'And by faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer

¹ Faith is a better engineer than *Dædalus*, and yet he made wings with which he made an escape over the high walls within which he was imprisoned. This world is the soul's prison, yet faith is such an engineer that it can make wings for the soul to fly out, &c.

² *Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ sunt*, earthly riches are full of poverty, saith Austin. [*Confessions*, b. i, xii. 19.—G.]

³ σκοπούμενον. Whiles we look upon eternal things as a man looks upon the mark that he aims to hit.

afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompence of reward.' Ver. 27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' And in ver. 35, 'They refused deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.'¹

So in Heb. x. 34, 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,' (upon what account?) 'knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance.'

(3.) Thirdly and lastly, *Faith doth it by assuring the soul of enjoying of better things.* For my part I must confess, so far as I understand anything of the things of God, I cannot see how a soul under the power of a well-grounded assurance can be a servant to his slave, I mean the world. I confess men may talk much of heaven, and of Christ, and religion, &c.; but give me a man that doth really and clearly live under the power of divine assurance, and I cannot see how such a one can be carried out in an inordinate love to these poor transitory things. I know not one instance in all the Scripture that can be produced to prove that ever any precious saint that hath lived in the assurance of divine love, and that hath walked up and down this world with his pardon in his bosom, have ever been charged with an inordinate love of the world.² That is a sad word, 1 John ii. 15.

[4.] Now a *fourth* reason of this point, why persons are to exercise their graces, is, *because it is the best way to preserve their souls from apostasy and backsliding from God.* 2 Pet. i. 5 to 11, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, &c.; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.' 'Add to your faith virtue.' The Greek word *επιχορηγησατε*, that is here rendered *add*, hath a great emphasis in it. It is taken from dancing round. Link them, saith the apostle, hand in hand, as in dancing, virgins take hands; so we must join hand to hand in these measures of graces, lead up the dance of graces, as in the *galliard*³ every one takes his turn. So in chap. iii. 17, 18, 'Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things, beware lest ye also, being led aside with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.' There are many turn aside, and shake hands with God, and Christ, and truth, and the words of righteousness; and therefore you had need to take heed that you fall not as others have fallen before you.⁴

But how shall we be kept from apostatising? Why, 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' It is a growth in grace, it is the exercise of grace, that will make a man stand when others fall, yea, when cedars fall, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, *All other exercises without the exercise of grace will profit nothing.*

Or if you will, take it thus:

All other exercises will be loss to us, without the exercise of grace; therefore we had need to improve our graces. When the house is on

¹ Every man is as the objects are about which his soul is most conversant, &c.

² In my treatise called 'Heaven on Earth,' you may find many considerations to evince this, and to that I refer you, &c. [Vol. II. p. 301, seq.—G.]

³ French dance.—G.

⁴ *Pulchrior in praelio occisus miles quam fugâ salvus.*

fire, if a man should only pray, and cry, &c., he may be burnt for all that; therefore he must be active and stirring; he must run from place to place, and call out for help, and must work even in the fire, and bestir himself as for life, in the use of all means, whereby the fire may be quenched. So if grace be not acted, it is not all a man's praying and crying, &c., that will profit him or better him. Grace must be exercised or all will be lost; prayers lost, tears lost, time lost, strength lost, soul lost, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'But *refuse* profane and old wives' fables.'¹ Shift them off, as the word is, set them by, say thou art not at leisure to attend them, make a fair excuse, as the word notes, 'tell them thou hast business of an eternal concernment to look after, and 'exercise thyself rather unto godliness;' or lay aside thy upper garments, as runners and wrestlers do, to which the apostle alludes, and bestir thyself lustily; for says he, verse 8, 'Bodily exercise *profits little*, but godliness is profitable unto all things, and hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come.'² The Babylonians are said to make three hundred and sixty several commodities of the palm tree; but what are those hundred commodities to those thousands that attend holiness, that attend the exercise of grace? Nothing makes a man rich in spirituals, like the frequent and constant actings of grace. In Heb. iv. 2, 'The word did not profit them that heard it, because it was not mixed with faith.' He doth not speak there of unbelievers, but of those that had grace in the habit, but not in the exercise; and therefore the word did not turn to their accounts; they heard, and were never the better. And what was the ground of it? Why, it was because they did not exercise faith upon the word. The words that fell from the preacher's lips into their ears were a sweet potion, but they did not work kindly, because there wanted the ingredients of faith. Faith is one of those glorious ingredients, that must make every sermon, every truth, work for their souls' advantage. Nothing will work for a believer's good, for his gain, if his graces be asleep.

[6.] Sixthly, *Because it is the end of all the dignity and glory that God hath conferred upon his people*; therefore they must exercise and improve their grace. In 1 Pet. ii. 9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye may shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

'Ye are a chosen generation.' That is, a picked people; the dearly beloved of his soul; such as he first chose for his love, and then loves for his choice.

'A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.' The Greek is, 'a people of purchase,' such as comprehendeth, as it were, all God's gettings, his whole stock, that he makes any reckoning of, *λαδ̄ εις περιποίησιν*.

'That ye may shew forth,' or, as it is in the Greek, 'that ye may preach forth,' that ye may publicly declare the virtues of him that hath 'called

¹ *παραιτού*, make a fair excuse.

² *γυμνασια προς ὀλίγον* is not to be taken in a sense wherein little signifies nothing at all, but as when it is set in comparison and opposition to some greater matter, as here in opposition to *προς πάντα*, for all things. Let the patient take such or such a potion that in itself is good, yet, if it want such or such a particular ingredient, it works not; it does no good. It is so here.

you out of darkness into his marvellous light;’ that ye may so hold forth the virtues of him that hath conferred all this dignity and glory upon you, as to excite others, to ‘glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ You know the picture of a dear friend is not to be thrust in a corner, but in some conspicuous place of the house. Why, our graces are the very image of Christ, they are his picture; and therefore to be held forth to open view. These candles must not be put under a bushel, but set up in a candlestick. Jewels are to wear, not to hide; so are our graces.¹

It was a capital crime in Tiberius’s days, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin, into any sordid place; and shall not Christians be more mindful and careful, that their graces, which are Christ’s image, be no ways obscured, but that they be kept always sparkling and shining? Christ’s glory and thy comfort, O Christian! lies much in the sparkling of thy graces. Pearls are not to be thrust in mud walls, or hung in swines’ snouts, but to be hung on the breasts.

[7.] Seventhly, *Gracious souls must exercise their grace, because the more grace is exercised and improved, with the more ease and delight will all religious services be performed*, Ps. xl. 7, 8; cxix. 97–112. When grace is improved and exercised, gracious services are easily performed. As the more natural strength is exercised and improved, with the more ease and pleasure are all bodily services performed; so the more grace is acted and improved, with the more ease and delight all Christian services are performed. Such souls find wages in their very work, they find not only *for* keeping, but also ‘*in* keeping of his commands there is great reward.’ ‘All the ways of the Lord are ways of pleasantness to them,’ and they find ‘that all his paths drop marrow and fatness,’ Rom. vi. 22; Ps. xix. 11; Prov. iii. 17; Ps. lxxv. 11. Ah, Christians! as ever you would have the services of God to be easy and delightful to your souls, look to the exercise and improvement of your graces, and then your work will be a joy.

[8.] Eighthly, *You must exercise and improve your gifts and graces, because the more grace is improved, the more God will be honoured*. Rom. iv. 19–21, ‘And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither 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 able to perform.’²

‘He gave glory to God.’ But how did he give glory to God? Was it a dead habit of faith that set the crown of honour upon the head of God? No! It was the lively actings of his faith upon the promise and the promiser, that gave glory to God. All the honour and glory that God hath from believers in this life, is from the actings of their grace. It was Abraham’s acting of faith that was his high honouring of God. Christians! I would entreat this favour of you, that you would be often in the meditation of this truth, viz.: That all the honour that God hath

¹ God himself is wronged by the injury that is done to his image. The contempt is done to the king himself that is done to his image or coin, as Suetonius writes.

² Abraham’s faith made him rejoice and obey, Heb. xi. Faith is as the spring in the watch, that moves the wheels. Not a grace stirs till faith sets it on work, Rom. iv. 3, &c.

from believers in this life, is from the actings and exercise of their graces. When thou goest to prayer, then think thus with thyself: Is it so, that all the honour that God shall have from my soul in prayer, will be from the actings of grace in prayer? Oh then, what cause have I to stir up myself to lay hold on God, and to blow up all those sparks of grace that be in me!¹ As a body without a soul, much wood without fire, a bullet in a gun without powder, so are words in prayer without the Spirit, without the exercise of the graces of the Spirit. Jonah acted his faith when he was in the belly of hell; and Daniel acted faith when he was in the lions' den; and the thief acted faith when he was on the cross; and Jeremiah acted faith when he was in the dungeon; and Job acted faith when he was on the dunghill; and David acted faith when he was in his greatest distress; and so did Moses in Exod. xiv. And you know the issue of all was, much glory to God, and much good to them. His heart will never be long a stranger to joy and peace, who is much in the exercise and actings of grace.²

[9.] Ninthly, Because the more grace is improved, the more afflictions and tribulations will be lessened and sweetened to us: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 'Though our outward man decreases, yet our inward man is renewed day by day,' or day and day. [*ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα.*]

When Peter Martyr was dying, he said, 'My body is weak, but my mind is well, well for the present, and will be better for ever hereafter.' This is the godly man's motto, 'For afflictions there is glory, for light afflictions a weight of glory, for momentary afflictions eternal glory.' So in Heb. x. and xi. O friends! if your graces were more exercised and improved, afflictions would be more sweet. This would turn the cross into a crown; this would turn bitter into sweet, and long winter nights into summer days. It would make every condition to be a paradise to you, &c.

[10.] Tenthly, *If grace be not exercised and improved, the soul may be easily surprised, conquered, and vanquished by a tempting devil and an enticing world.* When the sword is in the scabbard, the traveller is easily surprised, and when the guard is asleep, the city is quickly conquered. The strongest creature, the lion, and the wisest creature, the serpent, if they be dormant, are as easily surprised as the weakest worms. So the strongest and wisest saints, if their graces be asleep, if they be only in the habit, and not in the exercise, they may be as easily surprised and vanquished as the weakest Christians in all the world, as you may see in David, Solomon, Samson, Peter. Every enemy insults over him that hath lost the use of his weapons, &c.³

[11.] Eleventhly, *We must improve our graces, because decays in grace are very great losses to us.* By decaying in grace, we come to lose our strength, our best strength, our spiritual strength; our strength

¹ It is reported in the life of Luther, that when he prayed, it was *Tanta reverentia ut si Deo, et tanta fiducia ut si amico, &c.*

² So did the publican; he prayed much, though he spake little, *oratio brevis penetrat celum*; the hottest springs send forth their waters by ebullitions. Augustine cries out against them that did not profit by afflictions, *Perdidistis utilitatem calamitatis*—August. de Civit. lib. ii. c. xxxiii.

³ Saints should be like the seraphim, beset all over with eyes and lights, as Bassarian said. The fearful hare, they say, sleepeth with her eyes open. Oh, how watchful, then, should a Christian be!

to do for God; our strength to wait on God, and walk with God; our strength to bear for God; our strength to suffer for God.¹ By decaying in grace, we come to lose that 'joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,' and that comfort and 'peace that passes understanding,' and to lose the sense of that 'favour that is better than life.' Now our faith will be turned into fear, our dancing into mourning, our rejoicing into sighing; and when, O Christian! thou beginnest to fall, and to decay, who knows how far thou mayest fall, how much thy graces may be impaired, and how long it may be before thy sun rise when once it is set; therefore you had need to exercise and improve your graces.

[12.] *Twelfthly*, and lastly, You are to improve your graces, *because souls truly gracious have a power to do good.* I do not say that a man in his natural estate—though Arminians do—hath power in himself to do supernatural acts, as to believe in God, to love God, and the like, &c., for I think a toad may as well spit cordials as a natural man do supernatural actions, 1 Cor. ii. 14; Jer. xiii. 23; James i. 17; Eph. ii. 1-3. No; I do not say that all the grace we have is not from God, nor that man in his natural estate is not dead God-ward, and Christ-ward, and holiness-ward, and heaven-ward. But this I say, that souls truly gracious have a power to do good. It is sad to think how many professors do excuse their negligence by pretending an inability to do good, or by sitting down discouraged, as having in their hands no power at all. What can we do, say they, if the Lord do not breathe upon us, as at first conversion? We can do nothing.² I think in my very conscience, that this is one reason of much of that slightness, neglect, and omission of duties, that is among professors in these days, so that God may complain, as he doth, Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is no man that stirreth up himself to take hold of me, they are as men asleep,' that sit still and do nothing. But certainly they that are truly united to Christ, are not acted as dead stocks, as if every time and moment of their acting God-wards and holiness-ward they received new life from the Spirit of Christ, as at first conversion they did. And I am confident, for want of the knowledge and due consideration of this truth, many professors take such liberty to themselves, as to live in the neglect of many precious duties of godliness, for which, first or last, they will pay dear. But remembering that it is not a flood of words, but weighty arguments, that convince and persuade the souls and consciences of men, I shall give you four reasons to demonstrate, that believers have a power to do good; and the first is this.

First, *because they have life; and all life is a power to act by.*³ Natural life is a power to act by; spiritual life is a power to act by; eternal life is a power to act by. The philosopher saith, 'That a fly is more excellent than the heavens, because the fly hath life, which the heavens have not,' &c.

Secondly, *Else there is no just ground for Christ to charge the guilt*

¹ Spiritual losses are hardly recovered. A man may easily run down the hill, but he cannot so easily get up. Philosophers say that the way from the habit to privation is easier than the way from the privation to the habit; as a man may soon put an instrument out of tune, but not so soon put it in again.

² When Charles Langius had excited Lipsius to the study of true wisdom, My mind is to it, said Lipsius; and then he falls to wishing. What, said Langius, art thou purposing when thou shouldst be doing?—*Just. Lip. de Constan. lib. ii. cap. v.*

³ *Omnis vita est propter delectationem.*

of sins upon them ; as neglect of prayer, repentance, mortification ; nor the guilt of carelessness and slothfulness, &c., which he doth. If they can act no further, nor no longer than the Holy Ghost acts them, as at their first conversion, notwithstanding their union with Christ, and that spiritual principle of life that at first they received from Christ,¹ certainly if it be so, it will not stand with the unspotted justice of God to charge the guilt of sins of omission upon believing souls, if they have no power to act, but are as stocks and stones, &c., as some dream.

A third ground is this : if there be not some power in believers to do good, then *we should not have as much benefit by the second Adam as we had by the first.* The first Adam, if he had stood, would have communicated a power to all his sons and daughters to have done good, as being corrupted he doth communicate power to sin, as all his children find by sad and woful experience ; and shall not Christ much more communicate a power to us to do good in our measure ? Surely he doth, though few mind it, and fewer improve it as they should.² If there be not such a power in believers, how have they gained more by the second Adam than they lost by the first ? and wherein lies the excellency of the second above the first ?

Fourthly and lastly, *All those exhortations are void, and of none effect, if there be not some power in souls truly gracious to do good ;* as all those exhortations to watchfulness, to stir up 'the grace of God that is in us,' and to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,' and that also, 'give all dilligence to make your calling and election sure.' To what purpose are all these precious exhortations, if the regenerate man have no power at all to act anything that is good ? Nay, then, believers under the covenant of grace should be in no better a condition than unregenerate men that are under a covenant of works, who see their duties discovered, but have no power to perform ; which is contrary, as to other scriptures, so to that Ps. xl. 7-9, 'Then said I, Lo I come : in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart,' or, 'thy law is in the midst of my bowels,' as the Hebrew reads it ; and to that of Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27, &c. A soul truly gracious can sincerely say, 'Thy law, O Lord, is in the midst of my bowels, and I delight to do thy will, O Lord.' I confess I cannot do as I should, nor I shall never do it as I would, till I come to heaven ; but this I can say in much uprightness, that 'Thy law is in my heart, and I delight to do thy will, O Father.' And so Paul, 'With my mind I serve the law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin,' Rom. vii. 25.

And we have many promises concerning divine assistance, and if we did but stir up the grace of God that is in us, we should find the assistance of God, and the glorious breakings forth of his power and love, according to his promise, and the work that he requires of us, Isa. xxvi. 12 ; lxiv. 5, &c. Though no believer doth what he should do, yet doubtless every believer might do more than he doth do, in order to God's glory, and his own and others' internal and eternal good, Isa. xli. 10 ; Heb. xiii. 5, 6, &c. Affection without endeavour is like Rachel, beautiful but

¹ Omission of diet breeds diseases, so doth omission of duty, and makes work either for repentance, hell, or the physician of souls.

² *Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia.*—Augustine.

barren. They are blessed that do what they can, though they cannot but underdo.¹

When Demosthenes was asked what was the first part of an orator, what the second, what the third, he answered, *Action*; the same may I say, if any should ask me what is the first, the second, the third part of a Christian, I must answer, *Action*. Luther saith, 'He had rather obey than work miracles.' 'Obedience is better than sacrifice.'

But, sir, you will say, what is the meaning of that text, that is so often in the mouths of professors, 'Without me you can do nothing'? John xv. 5.

I answer, All that that text holds forth is this, that if a man hath not union with Christ, if he be not implanted into Christ, he can do nothing. 'Without me,' that is, separate from me, or apart from me, as the words may be read, 'you can do nothing.'² If you are not implanted into me, if by the Spirit and faith you are not united unto me, you can do nothing. The arm may do much; it may offend an enemy, and it may defend a man's life, by virtue of its union with the head; but if you separate the arm from the head, from the body, what can it do? Certainly the soul, by virtue of its union with Christ, may do much, though such as are separated from Christ can do nothing, at least as they should. Ah, Christians! if you would but put out yourselves to the utmost, you would find the Lord both ready and willing to assist you, to meet with you, and to do for you above what you are able to ask or think.³

Cæsar, by continual employment, overcame two constant diseases, the headache and the falling sickness. Oh the spiritual diseases that the active Christian overcomes! Among the Egyptians, idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucani,⁴ he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it. Among the Corinthians, the slothful were delivered to the *carnifex*, saith Diphilus. Oh! the deadly sins, the deadly temptations, the deadly judgments, that idle and slothful Christians are given up to. Therefore be active, be diligent, be abundant in the work of the Lord. Idleness is the very source of sin. Standing pools gather mud, and nourish and breed venomous creatures; and so do the hearts of idle and slothful Christians, &c.

2. Now the second thing that we are to do for the further opening of this point is, to shew you

The special ends that the gifts and graces that God hath bestowed upon believers should be exercised and improved to.

And they are these that follow:

[1.] *First*, They are to be improved and exercised to the honour of God, to the lifting up of God, and to the keeping up of his name and glory in the world, 1 Cor. x. 31.

He that improves not his gifts and graces to this end, crosses the grand end of God's bestowing such royal favours on him. Graces and gifts are talents that God hath given you to trade with, and not to hide in a napkin, Mat. xxv. The idle servant, in Christ's account, was an

¹ *Beati sunt qui præcepta faciunt, etiamsi non perficiunt.*—Augustine.

² *χωρὶς ἐμοῦ* is *seorsim a me*. Vide Beza, Cameron, and Piscator.

³ Union with Christ is that wherein the strength, comfort, and happiness of the soul does consist.

⁴ As before, 'Lucaniani.'—G.

evil servant. The idle soul, in Christ's account, is an evil soul, and accordingly Christ will deal with him.

Seneca calls sloth 'the nurse of beggary, the mother of misery;' and slothful Christians find it so. Christians, God hath given you grace, that you should give him glory. His honour should be dearer to you than your jewels, than your crowns, than your lives, ay, than your very souls. Thou livest no longer than thou livest to his praise.

It is recorded of Epaminondas, the commander-in-chief of the Thebans, that he did not glory in anything but this, 'That his father, whom he dearly loved and honoured, was living when he won three famous battles against the Lacedæmonians,'² that were then held for their valour to be invincible; regarding more the honour and content his father should receive of it, than his own. Shall a heathen thus strive to honour his earthly father? And shall not Christians strive more to honour their heavenly Father with all the gifts and graces that he hath conferred upon them.

But you will say, How should we honour the Lord?

I answer,

(1.) *By a free and frequent acknowledgment that all your graces flow from the Lord Jesus, the fountain of grace:* John i. 16, 'Of his fulness we all receive grace for grace.' James i. 17, 'Every good and perfect gift comes down from above,' &c. Thou must say, O Christian, I have nothing but what I have received; I have no light, no life, no love, no joy, no peace, but from above, 1 Cor. iv. 7. The jewels that hang in my breasts, and the chains of pearl that be about my neck, and the golden crown that is upon my head, and all the sparkling diamonds in that crown, are all from above, Ezek. xvi. 11-15, Ps. xlv. 8, *seq.* All those princely ornaments by which I am made more beautiful and lovely than others, and all those beds of spices and sweet flowers, by which I am made more desirable and delectable, is from above. Say, I am nothing. I have nothing of my own; all I am, and all I have, is from on high. 'We have given thee of thine own,' says David, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. So do thou say, Lord, the love with which I love thee, is thine own; and the faith by which I hang upon thee, is thine own; and the fear by which I fear before thee, is thine own; and the joy which I rejoice before thee with, is thine own; and the patience with which I wait upon thee, is thine own.³ And therefore say, as David did, upon the receipt of mercy, 'Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.'

(2.) You must honour him, *by acknowledging the dependency of your graces upon the fountain of grace.* And that your strength to stand lies not so much in your graces, as in their dependency upon the

¹ Epist. 56—G.

² Plutarch, in his Morals [*sub nomine*; Epaminondas.—G.].

³ *Deus nihil coronat nisi dona sua.*—Augustine.

fountain of grace, as in their conjunction with the God of grace. A man by his arm may do much, but it is mainly by reason of its union and conjunction with the head. It is so between a Christian's graces and Christ. The stream doth not more depend upon the fountain, nor the branch upon the root, nor the moon upon the sun, nor the child upon the mother, nor the effect upon the cause, than our graces do depend upon the fountain of grace, Ps. cxxxviii. 3, Philip. iv. 12, 13.

Now that our very graces do thus depend upon the fountain of grace, and that our strength to stand lies not so much in our graces as in Christ, is clear by this, that the graces of the saints may and do most fail them when they have most need of them: Mark iv. 40, 'And he said, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?' When the wind was high, their faith was low; when the storm was great, their faith was little; so Luke viii. 25, 'And he said unto them, Where is your faith?' Are you now to seek it, when you should use it? Peter denied Christ, when he had need by faith to have confessed Christ. Moses's faith failed him, when it should have been most serviceable to him, Num. xx. 12. And David's courage failed him, when it should have been a buckler to him, 1 Sam. xxi. 13, 14. And the disciples' love failed them, when it should have been most useful to them, John xiv. 28. And Job's wisdom and patience failed him, when they should have been greatest supporters to him. By all which it is most clear, that not only ourselves, but also our very graces, must be supported by the God of grace, the fountain of grace, or else they will be to seek when we most need them.¹ Though grace is a glorious creature, it is but a creature, and therefore must be upheld by its Creator. Though grace be a beautiful child, yet it is but a child, that must be upheld by the Father's arms. This, Christians, you must remember, and give glory to God.

(3.) You must honour him *by uncrowning your graces, to crown the God of your graces*. By taking the crown off from your own heads, and putting it upon his, or by laying it down at his feet, as they did theirs, in Rev. iv. 10, Acts iii. 11, 12, 16, and iv. 7-10. These scriptures are wells of living waters; they are bee-hives of living honey; see and taste.² The Lord hath often uncrowned himself, to crown his people's graces, as you may see in these following scriptures, Mat. ix. 22, and xv. 28, Mark x. 52, Luke vii. 50. And why, then, should not his people uncrown their graces to crown him? Cant. v. 10, *seq.* That which others attribute to your graces, do you attribute to the God of grace. You must say, Though our graces are precious, yet Christ is more precious; though they are sweet, yet Christ is most sweet; though they are lovely, yet Christ is altogether lovely. Your graces are but Christ's picture, Christ's image; and therefore do not you worship his image, and in the mean while neglect his person. Make much of his picture, but make more of himself. Let his picture have your eye, but let himself have your heart, John i. 39, *seq.* Your graces are but Christ's

¹ Though our graces be our best jewels, yet they are imperfect; and as the moon shines by a borrowed light, so do our graces. If it were not for the Sun of righteousness all our graces would give no light.

² *Certum est nos facere quod facimus, sed ille facit, ut faciamus*, saith Augustine. True it is that we do what we do, but it is as true that Christ makes us to do what we do.

hands, by which he works ; be you therefore careful that you do not more mind the workman's hands than the workman himself. Your graces are but Christ's servants, therefore do not smile upon the servant, and look asquint upon the Master. Your graces are but Christ's favourites ; therefore do not so stare upon them, and be taken with them, as to forget the Prince on whom they wait, &c. All I drive at is this, that not your graces but Christ, may be all in all unto you, &c.

[2.] The *second* end to which you must improve your gifts and graces, is *to the good of others* : Ps. lxxvi. 16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul ;' Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him ;' Isa. ii. 3 ; Acts v. 26-29. *Bonum est communicativum.* God hath given you gifts and grace, to that very end, that you should improve them for others' good. It is the very nature of grace to be diffusive and communicative. Grace cannot be long concealed. The better anything is, the more communicative it will be. Grace is as fire in the bones, as new wine in the bottles ; you cannot hide it, you must give vent to it : Acts iv. 28, 'We cannot but speak the things that we have heard and seen ;' as Cræsus his dumb son did for his father.¹ Can the fire cease to turn all combustible matter into fire ? can the candle, once thoroughly lighted, cease to spend itself for the enlightening of others ? Then may the precious sons of Zion cease to give light to others, by their examples, counsels, and communicating their experiences. No way to honour God, no way to win souls, nor no way to increase your own gifts and graces, than to exercise them for the good of others. Grace is not like to worldly vanities, that diminish by distribution ; nor like candles which keep the same light, though a thousand are lighted by them. Grace is like the widow's oil, which multiplied by pouring out, 2 Kings iv ; and like those talents which doubled by employment, Mat. xxv.

It was a good saying of one, 'For insensible riches those who pay their money do diminish their substance, and they who receive are made richer,² but these not so, but both he who numbereth doth much increase his substance, and doth add much to the riches of the receiver.

Again, by how much more we pour out of these flowing spiritual things, by so much those spreading in abundance are greater to us ; for in this case it doth not happen as in money, for there they who tell out to their neighbour diminish their own substance, and by how much the more he spendeth, by so much the less money he possesseth ; but in spirituals it is quite otherwise.³

No way to advance the kingdom of Christ in the world like this, of improving your gifts and graces to the advantage and profit of others ; no love nor pity to the precious souls of men like this ; no way to abound in grace, to be rich in grace like this ; nor no way to be high in heaven like this.⁴ Art thou, O Christian, bound to do good to others, by communicating earthly things ? And art thou not much more bound to do

¹ As before. See Index under Cræsus.—G.

² Chrysost. Hom. Gen. xv.

³ Chrysost. [Hom. in Gen. viii.—G.]

⁴ Rom. i. 11, 12 ; 2 Cor. ix. 6. Suetonius tells of Augustus, that in reading all sorts of good authors, he skillfully picked out the prime precepts and patterns of valour and virtue, and sent the same to such of his servants and under-officers for tokens, as he thought they might do most good unto. [Historiæ Cæsarum : Augustus.—G.]

them good by communicating of spiritual things? Surely thou art. Why are Christians so often in Scripture compared to trees, but because of their fruitfulness and usefulness to others? And why are they called 'stewards of the manifold gifts of God,' but to note to us, that their gifts are not to be enclosed, but employed for the good of others? And why hath Christ put a box of precious ointment into every Christian's hand, but that it should be opened for the benefit of others? Certainly, he that is good is bound to do good; for gifts and graces are given, not only to make us good, and keep us good, but also to make us, yea, to provoke us to do good. *Lilmod lelammed*, 'We therefore learn that we may teach,' is a proverb among the rabbins. 'And I do therefore lay in, and lay up,' saith the heathen, 'that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.' I think they are no good Christians that shall scorn to learn this good lesson, though of a heathen. And oh that all that write themselves Christians, were so good as to imitate the good that shined in many heathens! To me it is very sad, that Christians that live and act below the very heathens, should be offended to hear now and then of those excellencies that sparkled in the very heathens. I think that is a very evil spirit, that cannot endure to hear of those excellencies in others that he wants himself. Certainly he is a brave Christian, and hath much of Christ within, that accounts nothing his own that he doth not communicate to others. The bee doth store her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit, and why then in this should not every Christian be like a bee?

Synesius speaks of some, who having a treasure of rare abilities in them, would as soon part with their hearts as their corruptions. I think they are rather monsters than real Christians, that are of such a spirit.

[3.] The *third* and last thing to which you are to improve your gifts and graces is, *to the benefit and profit of your own souls*. Not to improve them to your own internal and eternal good, is with a high hand to cross the main end of God's conferring them upon you. Ah, Christians! you must improve them to the strengthening of you against temptations, to the supporting of you under afflictions, to the keeping under of strong corruptions, to the sweetening of all mutations, and to the preparing and fitting of you for the days of your dissolution.¹

I shall content myself with giving you this hint, because I have before spoken more fully to this head.

And thus we have done with the doctrinal part.

We shall come now to make some use and application of this point to ourselves.

If this be so, that it is the duty of Christians to improve and exercise the gifts and graces that the Lord hath given them,

Then, in the *first* place, *this looks very sourly and wishly upon all lazy, idle, negligent Christians, that do not stir up themselves to lay hold on God, that do not stir up the grace of the Lord in them*. It is sad to consider how many Christians can stir up themselves to lay hold on all opportunities to make themselves great and rich in the world, and yet suffer their golden gifts and graces even to grow rusty for want of

¹ The good of the soul is specially to be minded: (1.) because it is the most notable part of man; (2.) because the image of God is most fairly stamped upon it; (3.) because it is first converted; (4.) because it shall be first glorified.

exercise.¹ It is sad to see how busy many men are to exercise and improve a talent of riches, who yet bind up their talents of gifts and grace in a napkin. By these God loses much honour and praise, and themselves lose much comfort and content, and others lose much profit and benefit, and the gospel loses much credit and glory.

But the main use that I shall make of this point, shall be to exhort and stir you all up, to make a blessed improvement of your graces.

And indeed it is a point of most singular use to us all our days, a truth that is every day of very great concernment to our souls.

Now there are seven considerations that I shall propound by way of motive, to stir up your souls to make a blessed improvement of the grace and gifts you have received.

[1.] And the *first* is this: seriously consider, *that the exercise and improvement of grace in your souls, will be more and more the death and ruin of sin in your souls.*

Take it from experience; there is not a choicer way than this for a man to bring under the power of his sin, than to keep up the exercise of his grace. Sin and grace are like two buckets at a well, when one is up the other is down; they are like the two laurels at Rome, when one flourishes the other withers. Certainly, the readiest and the surest way to bring under the power of sin, is to be much in the exercise of grace: Rom. viii. 10, 'And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' The life and activity of Christ and grace in the soul, is the death and destruction of sin in the soul. The more grace acts in the soul, the more sin withers and dies in the soul. The stronger the house of David grew, 2 Sam. iii., the weaker the house of Saul grew. As the house of David grew every day stronger and stronger, so the house of Saul every day grew weaker and weaker. So the activity of the new man is the death of the old man. When Christ began to bestir himself in the temple, the money-changers quickly fled out, Mat. xxi. 12-14. So when grace is active and stirring in the soul, corruption quickly flies. A man may find out many ways to hide his sin, but he will never find out any way to subdue his sin, but by the exercise of grace. Of all Christians, none so mortified as those in whom grace is most exercised. Sin is a viper that must be killed, or it will kill you for ever; and there is no way to kill it but by the exercise of grace.

[2.] *Secondly*, Consider this by way of motive to provoke you to exercise and improve your graces. *The exercise and improvement of your graces will provoke others to bless and admire the God of grace.* 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,'² Mat. v. 16,—the light of your conversation, and the light of your graces. Oh how many thou-

¹ Cupid complained he could never fasten upon the muses, because he could never find them idle. No Christians so free from Satan's assaults as active Christians are, nor none so tempted as idle Christians. The Jewish Rabbins report, that the same night that Israel departed out of Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols and idolatrous temples in Egypt, by lightning and earthquakes, were broken down. So when grace and holiness is set up in the heart, all the idols of Satan, which are men's lusts, are thrown down.

² The exercise of virtue will draw love from a man's very enemies. Tilligny, for his rare virtues, was reserved from death by his greatest enemies at the massacre of Paris; as you may see in the French history in the Life of Charles the Ninth.

sand souls be there now triumphing in heaven, whose gifts and graces shined gloriously when they were on earth. And ah! how many thousands are there now on earth, that bless and admire the Lord for the shine of their graces who are now in heaven; that bless the Lord for the faith of Abraham, and the zeal of David, and the meekness of Moses, and the patience of Job, and the courage of Joshua, &c. Ah, Christians! as you would stir up others to exalt the God of grace, look to the exercise and improvement of your graces. When poor servants shall live in a family, and see the faith of a master, and the love of a master, and the wisdom of a master, and the patience of a master, and the humility of a master, &c., shining like so many stars of heaven, oh how doth it draw forth their hearts to bless the Lord, that ever they came into such a family! It is not a profession of religion, but the exercise and improvement of grace, that contributes so much to the lifting up the glory of the Lord, and to the greatening of his praise in the world. Many saints have had their hearts warmed and heated by sitting by other saints' fires, by eyeing and dwelling upon other saints graces. Ah! when men's graces shine as Moses his face did, when their lives, as one speaketh of Joseph's life, is a very heaven, sparkling with variety of virtues, as with so many bright stars; ah! how are others stirred up to glorify God, and to cry out, These are Christians indeed! These are an honour to their God, a crown to their Christ, and a credit to their gospel. Oh! if they were all such, we would be Christians too. It is a very great stumbling-block to many poor sinners, to see men that make a very great and large profession of Christ, never to exercise and shew forth the virtues of Christ. They profess they know him, and yet by the non-exercise of his virtues they deny him.¹

It was one of Machiavel's principles, that the appearance of virtue was only to be sought, because the use of it, saith he, is a trouble, but the credit of it a help. I am afraid that this cursed soul-damning principle is the best flower that grows in many men's gardens in these days. Though there is no virtue but is as a bright stone in a dark night, it shines and shews its clearness and beauty; it is as pure gold, the brighter for passing through the fire; yet how do most covet rather the name of virtue, than to be really virtuous! Such, I believe, shall have the hottest and the lowest place in hell.² Well, Christians, remember this, it is not a show of grace, but the exercise of grace, that will provoke others to glorify the fountain of grace. That is a very remarkable scripture, 1 Thes. i. 2, 3, 8, compared, 'We give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.' In this eighth verse you have an elegant metaphor, which signifies, that their faith was so lively, that with its sound, as it were, it stirred up other nations. The Greek word is to sound as with the sound of a

¹ Those in whom virtue is extinguished are like unto painted and printed papers, which ignorant men honour and worship instead of Christ.—*Raleigh*.

² *Hypocritis nihil est crudelius, impatientius et vindicta cupidius*, there is no more cruel creature, more impatient and vindictive, than an hypocrite, saith Luther, who had the experience of it; therefore trust not to the Machiavels of the times.

trumpet, to make to sound afar off. Says the apostle, your graces made a noise like a trumpet; they stirred up others to be gracious and active, as the trumpet stirs up men to war. So in 2 Peter i. 3, 4, 'We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth. So that we ourselves glory in you the churches of God, for your patience and faith, in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.' *Hoc enim angelicum*, this is the character of the angelical nature, to rejoice in the graces and gracious actings of others. He that acts otherwise holds forth the image of the devil, and declares himself a native of hell.¹

[3.] *Thirdly*, Consider that the exercise and improvement of grace, may be a special means to stir up the exercise of grace in others.²

Your improvement of grace may be a special means to stir up others to improve their graces also. 1 Thes. i. 7, 'So that we were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' Or as the Greek is, 'you were types, moulds,' *τύποις*, patterns of piety to them that were in Christ long before you. So in 2 Cor. ix. 2, 'For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many.' I knew you were forward, and this I boasted of; I made it my glory to tell how grace shined in your souls. 'And,' saith he, 'your zeal hath provoked many.' When they saw how warm and lively, and active, how open-handed and open-hearted you were to the poor saints, their hearts were stirred up to acts of charity also. Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The highest examples are very quickening and provoking.³

That this may stick upon your souls, I beseech you bed and board, rise and walk with this one consideration, viz., that all the good you provoke others to by counsel or example, shall be put down to your account. It shall certainly turn to your internal and eternal advantage. In the great day, Christ will make honourable mention of all the good that thou hast stirred and provoked others to, and will reward thee for it before angels and men. The faith, the love, the hope, the charity, the patience, &c., that thou hast provoked others to, shall be put down to thy account, as if thou hadst been the only actor of them, &c. As all the sins that men provoke or stir up others to by their counsel or example, shall be put down to their accounts, as you may see in David. David did but send a letter concerning the death of Uriah, and yet the charge cometh, 'Thou hast slain Uriah with the sword,' 2 Sam. xii. 9. As whatsoever is done by letter, counsel, or example, to provoke others to sin, shall certainly be charged upon men's accounts at last, so what-

¹ Pliny tells of some in the remote parts of India, that they have no mouths. We have many such monsters among us, that have no mouths to bless God for the good that shines in others. [The *Psylli*, as before.—G.]

² The complaint is ancient in Seneca, that commonly men live not *ad rationem*, but *ad similitudinem*.—Seneca, *de vita beati*, cap. 1.

³ *Præcepta docent, exempla movent*, precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. [A reminiscence of St Leo, 'Validiora sunt exempla, quam verba' (*De Jejun*); or Bernard, 'Validior operis quam oris vox—vox oris sonat, vox operis tonat.' (Serm. on Canticles, as before, 5.—G.)]

soever good thou dost stir up others to, that shall be set upon thy score, and shall turn to thy eternal account in the day of Christ. Oh! who would not then labour with all their might, even day and night, to stir up the grace of the Lord in themselves and others, seeing it shall turn to such a glorious account in that day wherein Christ shall say to his Father, 'Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me,' &c.¹

[4.] Fourthly, consider this, *the exercise and improvement of grace, contributes very much both to the stopping the mouths of your enemies, and to the rendering of you lovely in the very eyes of your enemies.* Oh! there is nothing in all the world that contributes so much to the stopping of the mouths of your enemies, and to the rendering of your souls lovely in the eyes of your enemies, as the exercise and improvement of your graces. As you may see in David, David improved his grace to a glorious height, and says Saul, 'Thou art more righteous than I,' 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. John improved his grace to a glorious height, and was much in the exercise of it, and what follows? why, 'Herod feared and revered him, knowing that he was a just and a holy man,' Mark vi. 20. Oh! how did the wisdom, faith, and holiness of Joseph, Daniel, and the three children silence their most enraged adversaries! yea, what a deal of honour did the exercise of their graces cause those heathen princes to put upon them?² 1 Peter ii. 15, 'For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' It is not all the talking and profession in the world that can stop the mouths of foolish men; it must be well-doings, grace improved, grace exercised and manifested in ways of holiness, that must work so great a wonder as to stop the mouths of wicked men.

The Greek word that is here translated *well-doing*, ἀγαθοποιῶντας is a participle of the present tense, and notes the continual custom of well-doing. And indeed, nothing but a continual course of well-doing will be able to stop the mouths of wicked persons. It is not a fit of holiness, but a course, that can produce so great a miracle as to stop the mouths of wicked men: 'That ye might stop the mouths of ungodly men.'

The Greek is, 'that ye may muzzle,' or, 'halter up,' φημοῦν, from φημός. There is no way in the world to button, muzzle, or halter up the mouths of wicked men, but by the exercise of your graces in ways of well-doing. Oh! this will cause you to be well thought of, and well spoken of; this is that that will make even wicked men to say, These are Christians indeed! these are they that have not only a name to live, but are alive; that have not only a form of godliness, but the power. A Christian's exercise of faith in times of wants, and of patience in times of affliction, and of courage in times of temptation, and of contentation³ in times of opposition, &c., doth mightily silence and stop the mouths of the worst of men.

Henry the Second of France, being present at the martyrdom of a certain tailor burnt by him for religion, was so terrified by beholding the wisdom, courage, faith, and constancy of the said martyr, that he

¹ They shall shine as so many suns in heaven, who are much in stirring and provoking of others to the exercise of grace and holiness, Dan. xii. 3, vi. 1, 2.

² So what a deal of respect and honour did Alexander the Great put upon Judas the high priest, Theodosius upon Ambrose, and Constantine upon Paphnutius, kissing that eye of his that was bored out for the cause of Christ, &c. ³ Qu. 'contestation'?—Ed.

swore at his going away, 'that he would never be any more present at such a sight.'¹

[5.] *Fifthly, Dwell much upon the sweet nature of grace, if you would have your souls carried out to the exercise and improvement of grace.*

The name of grace and the nature of grace is very sweet. The Hebrew word that is rendered *grace* signifies favour and mercy; and it answers to the Greek word *χάρις*, that signifies favour and mercy; and some derive the Greek word from a word that signifies *joy*,² because grace begets the greatest joy and sweetness in the spirits of men that possibly can be.³

Grace is compared to the sweetest things; to sweet spices, to wine and milk. Grace is a beam of the Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is a sweet flower of paradise, a spark of glory, &c. It is cherished and maintained by that sweet word, that is sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb, and by sweet union and communion with the Father and the Son.⁴ It is exercised about the sweetest objects, viz., God, Christ, promises, and future glory. It sweetens all your services and duties. Your best performances are but stinking sacrifices, if they are not attended with the exercise of grace. Grace is that heavenly salt that makes all our services savoury and sweet in the nostrils of God. Grace is of the greatest and sweetest use to the soul; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield at land; it is a staff to uphold the soul, and a sword to defend the soul; it is bread to strengthen the soul, and wine to cheer the soul; it is physic to cure all diseases, and a plaster to heal all wounds, and a cordial to strengthen the soul under all faintings, &c. Grace is thy eye to see for Christ, thy ear to hear for Christ, thy head to contrive for Christ, thy tongue to speak for Christ, thy hand to do for Christ, and thy feet to walk with Christ. Grace makes men of the forwardest, sourest, crabbedest natures, to be of a sweet, lovely, amiable, pleasing temper, Isa. xi. 7-9. It turns lions into lambs, wolves into sheep, monsters into men, and men into angels, as you may see in Manasseh, Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, and others. Yet sometimes grace, in a rugged unhewn nature, is like a gold ring on a leprous hand, or a diamond set in iron, or a jewel in a swine's snout, &c.⁵

[6.] *Sixthly, By way of motive, consider this, that wicked men do exercise and improve to the uttermost, all those principles of wickedness that be in them, against the ways of God, the honour of God, and the comforts of the saints.*

Now shall wicked men improve all their principles to the uttermost against God, his truth, and saints, &c.; and shall not saints improve their graces to the honour of God, the advancement of truth, and the joy and benefit one of another? You may see the activity of wicked men's spirits in Prov. iv. 16, 'They sleep not unless they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.'

¹ Epit. Hist. Gal. 82.

² Cf. Sibbes, note e, vol. iii. p. 529, on *χάρις* and *χάρμα*.—G.

³ Grace is a panoply against all troubles, and a paradise of all pleasures.

⁴ Cant. iv. 10, 14, 16, vi. 2; Isa. lv. 1, 2; Ps. cxix. 103; 1 John i. 3, 4.

⁵ Latimer told the clergy and the bishops, that if they would not learn diligence and vigilance of the prophets and apostles, they should learn it of the devil, who goes up and down his diocese.

Oh, they cannot rest ! ‘The wicked are like the troubled sea,’ as Isaiah speaks, ‘when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,’ Isa. lvii. 20, 21.¹ So in 2 Pet. ii. 14, ‘Having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls.’ An heart they have, exercised with covetous practices ; cursed children,’ they break all promises and covenants with God and man, as Samson did the new ropes. So in Prov. xix. 19, ‘A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment, for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.’ The Hebrew word *tosiph* signifies to add. Saith he, Thou must add deliverance to deliverance, for he will still be a-adding sin to sin. So the Radix, *jasaph*, is used, Deut. xxix. 19, and in several other scriptures. Such sinners make God a god of clouts, one that will not do as he saith. Ahab, after he was threatened with utter rooting out, begat fifty sons, as it were to cross God, and to try it out with him. Let God thunder in his judgments, yet he will add sin to sin, he will proceed from evil to evil, till he comes to the very top of evil, viz., to be hardened in sin, and to scoff at holiness, &c., Jer. ix. 3.

The old Italians were wont, in time of thunder, to shoot off their greatest ordnance, and to ring their greatest bells, to drown the noise of the heavens. So let God thunder from heaven, yet wicked men will so improve their wicked principles, that their consciences may not hear the noise of the thunder-claps of divine displeasure.² The covetous man will improve his earthly principles, and the ambitious man his ambitious principles, and the voluptuous man his voluptuous principles, and the unchaste man his unclean principles, and the erroneous man his erroneous principles, and the blasphemous man his blasphemous principles, &c. Ah sirs ! shall wicked men thus improve their wicked principles to the uttermost against God, Christ, and religion, and against the prosperity, peace, joy, and happiness of the saints ? And shall not saints improve their graces to the uttermost for the honour of the Lord, the advancement of religion, and the mutual profit and benefit of each other ?

[7.] *Seventhly, The more high and excellent any man is in grace, the more highly he shall be exalted in glory.*

Oh ! therefore, exercise your grace, improve your grace. As you would be high in heaven, labour to improve your graces much while you are here on earth ; for glory will be given out at last according to the exercise and improvement of your grace.

The more high and improved a man’s graces be, the more that man will do for God ; and the more any man doth for God, the more at last shall he receive from God : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ So Gal. vi. 7, *seq.*, ‘He that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly ; but he that sows liberally shall reap liberally.’³ The more any man hath im-

¹ The Hebrew word רשף, *rashang*, signifies properly *αρονός*, a laborious sinner, a practitioner in sin. The verb *rashang* signifies to make a stir, to be exceeding busy, unquiet, or troublesome, &c.

² Witness Ahab, Haman, Jehu, Jeroboam, the fool in the Gospel, and those in Mat. xxiii. 14–16.

³ Darius, before he came to the kingdom, received a garment for a gift of one Syloson, and when he became king, he rewarded him with the command of his country, Samos, &c. [As before. See Index, *sub nomine*.—G.]

proved his grace, the more that man will be able to bear and suffer for God; and the more any man bears and suffers for God, the more glory shall that man have at last from God: Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad,' or 'leap and dance for joy, leap and skip for joy,' &c. Why so? 'For great is your reward in heaven.' God is a liberal paymaster, and no small things can fall from so great and so gracious a hand as his. The more excellent any man is in grace, the more he is the delight of God. Ps. xvi. 3, 4, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' Now this is spoken in the person of Christ, for the apostle applies these words to Christ, Acts ii. 25. Now saith Christ, 'My goodness reaches not to thee, O Father! 'but to the saints, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' And doubtless, they that are his greatest delight on earth, shall be possessed of the greatest glory in heaven. If fathers give the greatest portions to those children in whom they delight, why should not Christ? Is it equity in the one, and iniquity in the other? Surely no. Christ may do with his own as he pleases.¹

Again, the more any man improves his grace, the clearer, sweeter, fuller, and richer is his enjoyments of God here. There is no man in all the world that hath such enjoyments of God, as that man hath that most improves his graces. It is not he that knows most, nor him that hears most, nor yet he that talks most, but he that exercises grace most, that hath most communion with God, that hath the clearest visions of God, that hath the sweetest discoveries and manifestations of God. Now certainly if they that improve their graces most, have most of God here, then without controversy, they shall have most of God hereafter. Doubtless a man may as well plead for equal degrees of grace in this world, as for equal degrees of glory in the other world.

Again, if those who are most graceless and wicked shall be most tormented, then certainly they that are most gracious shall be most exalted in the day of Christ. But the more wicked any man is, the more shall he be tormented in the day of vengeance: 'Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shall receive the greater damnation,' Mat. xxiii. 14, Luke xii. 47, 48. The darkest, the lowest, the hottest place in hell is provided for you; therefore it roundly follows, that those that are most gracious shall at last be most glorious.

And thus much for the motives that tend to provoke all the precious sons of Zion, to make a thorough improvement of the gifts and graces that the Lord hath bestowed upon them.

I shall now come to the resolution of a weighty question, and so conclude this point, which I have been the longer upon, by reason of its very great usefulness in these days, wherein men strive to exercise anything, yea, everything, but grace and holiness, &c.

Now this question is this,

Quest. When may a soul be said to be excellent in grace, or to have highly improved grace?

Now to this question I shall give these following answers:

¹ The father delights in all his children, yet sometimes he delights more in one than in another, &c.

[1.] *First*, A soul that is high and excellent in grace, that hath improved his graces to a considerable height, *will keep humble and unspotted under great outward enjoyments*. It is said of Daniel, that he had 'an excellent spirit;' and herein did his excellent spirit appear, in that he was holy and humble in heart, though high in place and worth, &c., Dan. vi. 3-7. Daniel keeps humble and holy when he is lifted high, yea, made the second man in the kingdom. Malice itself could not find anything against him, but 'in the matter of his God.'¹ It is much to be very gracious when a man is very great, and to be high in holiness when advanced to high places. Usually men's blood rises with their outward good. Certainly, they are worthy ones, and shall walk with Christ in white, whose garments are not defiled with greatness or riches, &c., Rev. iii. 4.

[2.] *Secondly*, They that have highly improved their graces, *will comply with those commands of God that cross nature, that are contrary to nature*. And doubtless that man hath improved his graces to a very high rate, whose heart complies with those commands of God that are cross and contrary to nature; as for a man to love them that loathe him, to bless them that curse him, to pray for them that persecute him, &c., Mat. v. 44. It is nothing to love them that love us, and to speak well of them that speak well of us; and to do well, and carry it well towards them, that carry it well towards us. Oh, but for a man to love those that hate him, to be courteous to them that are curish to him, to be sweet to them that are bitter to him, &c., this strongly demonstrates a high improvement of grace.² Certainly that man is very, very good, who hath learned that holy lesson of 'overcoming evil with good,' Rom. xii. 21. Such a one was Stephen, Acts vii. 55, xx. 9. He was a man full of the Holy Ghost, that is, of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; he was much in the exercise of grace, he can pray and sigh for them, yea, even weep tears of blood for them, who rejoiced to shed his blood. So did Christ weep over Jerusalem, so did Titus, so did Marcellus over Syracuse, so did Scipio over Carthage; but they shed tears for them, whose blood they were to shed, but Christ shed tears for them who were to shed his blood. So Abraham 'being strong in faith gave glory to God,' Rom. iv. 20. How? Why, by complying with those commands of God that were contrary to flesh and blood, as the offering up of his son, his only son, his beloved son, his son of the promise, and by leaving his own country, and his near and dear relations, upon a word of command. The commands of God so change the whole man and make him new, that you can hardly know him to be the same one, saith one.³ Well, sirs, remember this, it is a dangerous thing to neglect one of his commands, though it be never so cross to flesh and blood, who by another is able to command you into nothing or into hell. 'Let Luther hate me, and in his wrath call me a thousand times devil, yet I will love him, and acknowledge him to be a most precious servant of God,' saith Calvin.⁴

¹ Many are seemingly good till they come to be great, and then they prove stark nought, like the monk in the fable. [See Index under 'monk.'—G.]

² They use to say, If any man would have Mr Foxe do him a good turn, let him do him an injury, &c. [The Martyrologist, as before.—G.]

³ Lactant. *de falsa sapient*, lib. iii. cap. 27.

⁴ One of the precious *m. morabilia* of Calvin's Letters, and of every Life of him.—G.

[3.] *Thirdly*, Consider this, *such souls will follow the Lord fully, that have made an improvement of their graces.* Oh, this was the glorious commendations of Caleb and Joshua in Numb. xiv. 24, that 'they followed the Lord fully,' in the face of all difficulties and discouragements. 'They had another spirit in them,' says the text, they would go up and possess the land; though the walls were as high as heaven, and the sons of Anak were there, they made no more of it than to go, see, and conquer.¹

'They followed the Lord fully.' In the Hebrew it is, 'They fulfilled after me.' The Hebrew word is a metaphor taken from a ship under sail, that is carried with a strong wind, as fearing neither sands, nor rocks, nor shelves, &c. Such have little if anything of Christ within, who follow him by halves or haltingly.

I remember Cyprian brings in the devil triumphing over Christ thus: 'As for my followers, I never died for them as Christ did for his; I never promised them so great reward as Christ hath done to his, and yet I have more followers than he, and they do more for me than his do for him.' Oh, where is that spirit in these days that was upon those worthies? Ps. xlv. 7, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.'

[4.] *Fourthly*, *Such souls that have improved their graces to a considerable height, will bless God as well when he frowns as when he smiles.*

As well when he takes as when he gives, when he strikes as when he strokes, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² When the Lord had stripped Job of all, and had set him naked upon the dunghill, why then says Job, 'The Lord gives, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' Where grace is improved to a considerable height, it will work a soul to sit down satisfied with the naked enjoyment of God, without other things: John xiv. 8, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' The sight of the Father, without honours, the sight of the Father, without riches, the sight of the Father, without men's favour, will suffice the soul. As Jacob said, 'It is enough that Joseph is alive;' so says the soul that is high in grace, 'It is enough that Jesus is alive, &c.'³

[5.] *Fifthly*, *Souls that have improved their graces to a considerable height, will be good in bad times and in bad places.*

Such souls will bear up against the stream of evil examples, in the worst of times and in the worst of places.⁴ Abraham was righteous in Chaldea; Lot was just in Sodom; Daniel holy in Babylon; Job upright and fearing God in the land of Uz, which was a profane and most abominable superstitious place; Nehemiah zealous in Damascus. Oh, take me a man that hath improved his grace, and the worsen the times

¹ *Veni, vidi, vici*, I came, I saw, I overcame, said that emperor. [Julius Cæsar.—G.]

² Job i. 21; Lev. x. 3; 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26; Isa. lxiii. 14, 15.

³ *Christus est mihi pro omnibus*, says a Christian; as he said, *Plato est mihi pro omnibus*.

⁴ Though the fishes live in the salt sea, yet they are fresh. So though souls eminently gracious live among the wicked, yet they retain their spiritualness, freshness, and life.

are the better that man will be ; he will bear up bravely against the stream of evil examples, he will be very good when times and all round about him are very bad.

Some say that roses grow the sweeter when they are planted by garlic. Verily, Christians that have gloriously improved their graces are like those roses, they grow sweeter and sweeter, holier and holier, by wicked men. The best diamonds shine most in the dark, and so do the best Christians shine most in the worst times.

[6.] Sixthly, *Such turn their principles into practice.* They turn their speculations into power, their notions into spirit, their glorious inside into a golden outside, Ps. xlv. 13.

[7.] Seventhly, *Such as have made a considerable improvement of their gifts and graces, have hearts as large as their heads ;* whereas most men's heads have outgrown their hearts, &c.

[8.] Eighthly, *Such are always most busied about the highest things,* viz., God, Christ, heaven, &c., Philip. iii. ; 2 Tim. iv. 8 ; 2 Cor. iv. 18 ; Rom. viii. 18.

[9.] Ninthly, *Such are always a-doing or receiving good.* As Christ went up and down doing good, Mat. iv. 23 ; chap. ix. 35 ; Mark vi. 6.

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, *Such will mourn for wicked men's sins as well as their own.* Oh the tears, the sighs, the groans, that others' sins fetch from these men's hearts ! Pambus, in the ecclesiastical history, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell, and partly because he had not been so careful to please God, as she had been to please a wanton lover, Jer. ix. 1, 2 ; 2 Pet. ii. 7-9.¹

I have at this time only given you some short hints, whereby you may know whether you have made any considerable improvement of that grace the Lord hath given you. I do intend, by divine permission, in a convenient time to declare much more of this to the world, I shall follow all what hath been said with my prayers, that it may help on your internal and eternal welfare.

' *The unsearchable riches of Christ.*'—Eph. iii. 8.

Now, the next observation that we shall begin with is this :

That the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich.

And the second will be this :

That the great business and work of the ministry is to hold forth to the people the riches of Christ.

We shall begin with the first point at this time, namely, *that the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich.*

For the opening of this point, we shall attempt these three things :

I. To demonstrate this to be a truth, that the Lord Jesus is very rich.

II. The grounds why he is thus held forth in the word, to be one full of unsearchable riches.

III. To shew you the excellency of the riches of Christ, above all other riches in the world.

IV. And then the use of the point.

I. For the first, that the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich.

[1.] First, *Express scripture speaks out this truth.* He is rich in

¹ Socrates : H. E. iv. 28.--G.

goodness: Rom. ii. 4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness,' his 'native goodness,' &c., that is ready to be employed for thy internal and eternal good, &c.

Again, He is rich in wisdom and knowledge: Col. ii. 3, 'In whom,' speaking of Christ, 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' Christ was content that his riches should be hid from the world; therefore do not thou be angry that thine is no more known to the world. What is thy one mite to Christ's many millions? &c.¹

Again, He is rich in grace: Eph. i. 7, 'By whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.'

Again, He is rich in glory: Eph. i. 18, 'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' So in chap. iii. 16, 'That he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' So in Philip. iv. 19, 'But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.' The riches of glory are unconceivable riches. Search is made through all the bowels of the earth for something to shadow it by. The riches of this glory is fitter to be believed than to be discoursed of, as some of the very heathens have acknowledged.²

[2.] But, *secondly*, as express scripture speaks out this truth, that Christ is very rich, *so there are eight things more that do with open mouth speak out Christ to be very rich.*

(1.) *First*, You may judge of his riches, *by the dowry and portion that his Father hath given him.* In Ps. ii. 7, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' He is the heir of all things; all things above and below, in heaven and earth, are his. Heb. i. 2, 'God hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.' Christ is the richest heir in heaven and earth. Men cry up this man to be a good match and that; and why so, but because they are great heirs? Ah! but what are all the great heirs of the world to this heir, the Lord Jesus? Joseph gave portions to all his brethren, but to Benjamin a portion five times as good as what he gave the residue. So the Lord scatters portions among the sons of men. He gives brass to some, gold to others; temporals to some, spirituals to others; but the greatest portion of all he hath given into the hands of Christ, whom he hath made the heir of all things: Rev. xi. 15, 'And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' So in chap. xix. 11, 12, 'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns.' Mark that! What are princes' single crowns, and the pope's

¹ As man is an epitome of the whole world, so is Christ of all wisdom and knowledge &c.

² *Nec Christus nec cœlum patitur hyperbolem*, neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolised. [Augustine.—G.]

triple crown, to Christ's many crowns? Certainly he must be very rich, that hath so many kingdoms and crowns. Wait but a while, and you shall see these scriptures made good, &c.

(2.) *Secondly*, You may judge of his riches, *by his keeping open house for the relief and supply of all created creatures, both in heaven and in earth.*

You look upon those as very rich that keep open house for all comers and goers; why, such a one is the Lord Jesus Christ; he keeps open house for all comers and goers, for all created creatures both in heaven and earth. Ps. civ. 24, 'The earth is full of thy riches, so is the great and wide sea, where are things creeping innumerable, both small and great.' 'He opens his hand, and he satisfies every living creature,' says the Psalmist, Ps. cxlv. 16. So Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come and buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore dost thou lay out thy money for that which is not bread, and thy strength for that which doth not profit?'¹ All creatures, high and low, honourable and base, noble and ignoble, blessed and cursed, are fed at the cost and charge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are all fed at his table, and maintained by what comes out of his treasury, his purse. All angels and saints above, and all saints and sinners below, are beholden to Christ for what they enjoy. Oh! the multitudes, the numberless number of those that live upon the cost and charge of Christ. Can you number the stars of heaven? can you number the sands upon the sea-shore? then may you number the multitudes, the millions of angels and men that are maintained upon the cost and charge of the Lord Jesus. In Col. i. 16, 17, 'For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.'

(3.) *Thirdly*, You may judge of the riches of Christ *by the time that he hath fed and clothed, cherished and maintained, so many innumerable millions of angels and men.*

He hath maintained his court above and below, upon his own cost and charge, for almost six thousand years. Oh, to keep such a multitude, if it were but for a day, would speak him out to be richer than all the princes in the world; but to keep so many millions, and to keep them so long, what doth this speak out, but that Christ is infinitely rich, rich in goodness and mercy? It would beggar all the princes on earth, to keep but one day the least part of those that Christ maintains every day, &c.

(4.) But, *fourthly*, you may judge of the riches of Christ by this, *that he doth not only enrich all the saints, but all of the saints.*

That is, he enriches all the faculties of their souls; he enriches their understandings with glorious light; their consciences with quickness, pureness, tenderness and quietness; and their wills with holy intentions and heavenly resolutions; and their affections of love, joy, fear, &c., with life, heat, and warmth, and with the beauty and glory of the most soul-enriching, soul-delighting, soul-ravishing, and soul-contenting objects

¹ Crassus was so rich, that he maintained a whole army with his own revenues. But what is this to what Jesus doth? &c. [As before. See Index, *sub nomine*.—G.]

&c. All saints' experiences seal to this truth, and therefore a touch shall suffice, &c.

(5.) *Fifthly*, Judge of the riches of Christ by this, *that notwithstanding all the vast expense and charge that he is at, and hath been at for so many millions of thousands, and that for near six thousand years, yet he is never the poorer; his purse is never the emptier.*

There is still in Christ a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundancy, notwithstanding all that he hath expended. It were blasphemy to think that Christ should be a penny the poorer by all that he hath laid out for the relief of all those that have their dependence upon him. Col. i. 19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' Not stay or abide a night or a day and away, but should dwell. The sun hath not the less light for filling the stars with light. A fountain hath not the less for filling the lesser vessels. There is in Christ *plenitudo fontis*, the fulness of a fountain. The overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet remains full. Why, the Lord Jesus is such an overflowing fountain; he fills all, and yet remains full. Christ hath the greatest worth and wealth in him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies scattered abroad in the creature are united to Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomised in him, &c.¹

(6.) *Sixthly*, The Lord Jesus *is generally rich*, and that speaks him out to be rich indeed. He is generally rich. You have few persons that are generally rich. That is a rich man indeed, that is generally rich; that is, that is rich in money and rich in land, and rich in commodities, and rich in jewels, &c. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is one that is generally rich; he is rich in all spirituals; he is rich in goodness, rich in wisdom and knowledge; he is rich in grace, and rich in glory.² Yea, he is generally rich in respect of temporals. 'He is the heir of all things.' He is the heir of all the gold in the world, and of all the silver, and of all the jewels, and of all the land, and of all the cattle in the world, as you may see by comparing some scriptures together. Hos. ii. 5, 8, 9, 'For their mother hath played the harlot, she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers that gave me my bread and my water, and my wool, and my flax, and my oil, and my drink.' But mark what follows: verses 8, 9, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal; therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax, given to cover her nakedness.' So in Ps. xxiv. 1, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the round world, and all that dwell therein.' All others are either usurpers or stewards; it is the Lord Jesus that is the great landlord of heaven and earth. So in Ps. l. 8-10, 'I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings; I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds: for every

¹ They say it is true of the oil at Rhemes that, though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never wastes. I am sure, though all creatures spend continually, on Christ's stock, yet it never wasteth.

² The philosopher once said, *Solus sapiens dives*, only the wise man is the rich man, &c.

beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.' It is all mine, saith the Lord.

Thus you see that the Lord is generally rich, rich in houses, in lands, in gold, in silver, in cattle, &c., in all temporals as well as in spirituals; but where will you find a man that is generally rich either in spirituals or temporals? It is true, you may find one Christian rich in one grace, and another Christian rich in another; but where will you find a Christian that is generally rich, that is rich in every grace: that is rich in knowledge, in faith, in love, in wisdom, in humility, in meekness, in patience, in self-denial? Abraham was rich in faith, and Moses was rich in meekness, and Job was rich in patience, and Joshua was rich in courage, and David was rich in uprightness, &c. But where will you find a saint that is rich in all these graces? Or where will you find a man that is generally rich, in respect of temporals, as to be rich in lands, and rich in moneys, and rich in wares, and rich in jewels, &c. But now the Lord Jesus Christ is generally rich, both in respect of spirituals and temporals. 'In having nothing I have all things,' saith one, 'because I have Christ; having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward,'¹ &c.

(7.) *Seventhly*, You may judge of the riches of Christ, *by the tribute and rent that is due to him.*

He is the great landlord and owner of all that angels and men possess above and below.² All created creatures are but tenants-at-will to this rich landlord, the Lord Jesus. He puts out and puts in as he pleases; he lifts up one, and casts down another; he throws down the mighty, and sets up the needy, according to the pleasure of his own will. 'Whom he will he destroys, and whom he will he saves alive,' Ps. cxliii. 7; cxlviii. 14; Luke i. 52. Whom he will he binds, and whom he will he sets at liberty; whom he will he exalts, and whom he will he abases; whom he will he makes happy, and whom he will he makes miserable, &c. The psalmist, Ps. cxlviii., upon this account, calls upon all celestial and terrestrial creatures, to pay their tribute of praise to the Lord. He hath given them all their beings, and he maintains them all in the beings that he hath given them.

The ancient Hebrews, as Josephus relates, set marks and tokens sometimes on their arms, sometimes at their gates, to declare to all the world the tribute and praise that was due to the Lord, for all his benefits and favours shewed unto them. Bernard saith, 'We must imitate the birds, who morning and evening, at the rising and setting of the sun, omit not to pay the debt of praise that is due to their creator.'³

(8.) *Eighthly* and lastly, judge of the riches of Christ *by the multiplicity and variety of temporal and spiritual gifts and rewards that he scatters among the children of men.*⁴

¹ Gregory the Great was wont to say that he was poor whose soul was void of grace, not whose coffers were empty of money.

² *Quicquid es, debes creanti, quicquid petis, debes redimenti.*—Bernard.

³ Serm. on Cantic.—G.

⁴ Christ saith to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1 Kings xx. 4. This is *alvearium divini mellis*, an hive full of divine comfort.

He gives honours to thousands, and riches to thousands, and peace to thousands, and pardon to thousands, and the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost to thousands. There is not a moment that passes over our head, but he is a-scattering of jewels up and down the world; he throws some into one bosom, and others into others, but the best into the bosom of his saints. Oh, the abundance of peace, the abundance of joy and comfort! Oh, the fear, the faith, the love, the kindness, the goodness and sweetness, that the Lord Jesus Christ scatters up and down among the precious sons and daughters of Zion, besides all temporal favours. There is not a saint that receives so much as a cup of cold water, but Christ rewards it abundantly into the bosom of the giver, Mat. x. 42. By all which you may well judge, that certainly the Lord Jesus is very rich, for if he were not, he could never hold out in scattering of rich rewards among so many millions, and for so many thousand years, as he hath done.¹

And so much for the proof of the point, viz, that the Lord Jesus is very rich.

We come now in the second place to discover to you,

II. The grounds and reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ is held forth in the word to be so very rich.

And they are these that follow:

[1.] First, *To encourage poor sinners to look after, and to be willing to match with him.*²

Poverty hinders many a match. The Lord did foresee from eternity, that fallen man would never look after Christ, if there were not something to be gotten by Christ. The Lord hath therefore in his wisdom and goodness to fallen man, thus presented him as one exceeding rich, that so poor sinners might fall in love with him, and be willing to give up themselves to him: Prov. viii. 34, 35, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors;' as princes' guards do at princes' gates and doors. Now, the arguments to draw out the soul thus to wait upon the Lord, lie in the next words, 'For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.' The Hebrew runs thus, 'For finding me he shall find lives, and shall draw forth the favour of the Lord.' Divine favour is as it were a jewel locked up; ay, but by finding Christ, by getting Christ, the soul gets this jewel, that is more worth than a world; yea, by gaining him, the soul gains lives; to wit, a life of grace, and a life of glory, and what would the soul have more?

A second ground of this is,

[2.] *Because he is ordained by the Father to convey all riches of grace to his chosen and beloved ones.*

John i. 16, 'Of his fulness we all receive grace for grace;' and this we receive by divine ordination. John vi. 27, 'Labour not,' saith

¹ The Duke of Burgundy gave a poor man a great reward for offering him a rape root, being the best present the poor man had. And surely so will God bountifully reward the least favours shewed to his.

² Abraham's servant, to win over the heart of Rebekah to Isaac, brings forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and acquaints her what a rich match she should have by matching with Isaac, and so overcame her, Gen. xxiv. And so does God deal with poor sinners, &c.

Christ, 'for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.' God the Father hath sealed Christ;¹ he hath designed Christ, he hath set Christ apart for this very work, that he might give grace unto us. God hath ordained to convey all fulness of light to the air by the sun, and therefore hath put a greater fulness of light into the sun. God hath ordained all fulness of nourishment to the branches by the roots, and therefore hath put a fulness of juice into the roots. So the Lord hath ordained that all the riches of grace, of peace, of glory, &c., that believers shall enjoy here and in heaven, they shall have from the Sun of righteousness, from this blessed root the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore the Father hath filled this Sun with light, this root with heavenly juice, because he is by divine ordination to convey all spiritual and glorious riches into the hearts of his chosen and beloved ones, John xv. 21, 22.

A third ground is,

[3.] *To take away all excuse from ungodly and wicked men, and that they may be found speechless in the day of vengeance, when the Lord shall come to reckon with them.*²

Ah, sinners! how will you that have turned your backs upon Christ, who is thus rich, be able to answer it in the day when God shall reason the case with you? When God shall say, Sinners, hath it not been often told you that Christ is rich in mercy, and rich in goodness, and rich in grace, rich in pardons, rich in loves, and rich in glory, rich in spirituals, rich in temporals, and rich in eternal, and yet you have slighted this Christ, you have turned your backs upon this Christ, you have preferred your lusts, and the world, and the service of the devil, above this Christ. Oh! how dumb, how speechless will sinners be, when the Lord shall thus plead with them. Oh! how will their countenances be changed, their thoughts troubled, and their joints loosed, their consciences enraged, and their souls terrified, when they shall see what a rich match they have refused, and thereupon how justly they are for ever accursed, &c.

[4.] *Lastly, It is upon this account,*

That he may be a complete Redeemer to us, and that nothing may hinder our souls closing with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We stand in need of one that is rich; rich in grace to pardon us, rich in power to support us, and rich in goodness to relieve us, and rich in glory to crown us. There is none but such a Christ can serve our turns. We stand in need of one that is rich, that is generally rich, one that is rich in money to pay all our debts. We have run much upon the score with God, and none can pay this score but Christ. Our sins are debts that none can pay but Christ. It is not our tears but his blood, it is not our sighs but his sufferings, that can satisfy for our sins. We are much in debt to God for the ground we tread on, the air we breathe in, the beds we lie on, the bread we eat, the clothes we wear, &c.; and none can pay this debt but Christ. Angels and saints

¹ *Sealed*, that is, made his commission authentic, as men do their deeds by their seal.

² Sirens are said to sing curiously while they live, but to roar horribly when they die. So will all those that have rejected so rich a Jesus as hath been tendered to them, when the Lord Jesus shall plead with them, &c.

may pity us, but they cannot discharge the least debt for us, &c. Christ must pay all, or we are prisoners for ever, &c.¹ We stand in need of one that is rich in goodness. We are a needy people, and are still in want. Christ must be still a-giving, or we shall be still a-languishing. If he shut his hand, we perish and 'return to dust. Our temporal wants are many, our spiritual wants are more, and if Christ do not supply them, who will? who can? Nay, our wants are so many and so great, that Christ himself could not supply them, were he not very, very rich.

And thus I have given you a brief account of the reasons of the point, why the Lord Jesus is held forth by the Scripture to be so very rich.

We shall now come to the third thing proposed, and that is,

III. The excellency of the riches of Christ above all other riches in the world.

I shall briefly run over this third branch, and so come to the application, which is most in my eye, and upon my heart.

[1.] *First*, The riches of Christ are *incomparable riches*: Prov. iii. 13-15, 'Happy is the man that findeth Wisdom,' that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, 'and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.' One grain of grace is far beyond all the gold of Ophir and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth. We may say of the riches of this world, compared with the riches of Christ, as Gideon sometime said of the vintage of Abiezer, 'The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer.' So the gleanings, the smallest gatherings of the riches of Christ, are far better, more excellent, more satisfying, more contenting, more ravishing than all the riches of this world.²

'The whole Turkish empire,' saith Luther, 'is but a crust that God throws to a dog.' The wise merchant, Mat. xiii. 44, 45, parts with all to gain this pearl of price; the truth is, other riches are but a burden. Gen. xiii. 2, 'Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. The Hebrew word *chabbedh* is, 'He was very heavy in cattle, in silver, and in gold'; to signify, that riches are but heavy burdens. A little will serve nature, less will serve grace, but nothing will serve men's lusts.

Pheraulus, a poor man, on whom Cyrus bestowed so much, that he knew not what to do with his riches, being wearied out with care in keeping of them, he desired rather to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before, than to possess all those riches with discontent; therefore he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might supply his necessities.³ Let worldly professors think seriously of this story and blush, &c.

[2] *Secondly*, The riches of Christ are *inehaustible riches*. As I have shewed you, Christ can never be drawn dry.⁴

¹ We may say of Christ, as writers say of the jasper, it is easier to admire than declare it, and far more easier to say what he is not than what he is.

² Riches are called thick clay, Hab. ii. 6, which will sooner break the back than lighten the heart, &c.

³ Xenophon, Cyrop. ii. 3, sec. 7, and viii. 3.—G.

⁴ Earthly riches are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial

The Spanish ambassador coming to see the treasury of St Mark, in Venice, which is cried up throughout the world, fell a-groping whether it had any bottom, and being asked why, answered, 'In this among other things, my great master's treasure differs from yours, in that his hath no bottom, as I find yours to have,' alluding to the mines of Mexico and Potosi, &c. Certainly Christ's treasures have no bottom, all his bags are bottomless; but Scripture, history, and experience, do abundantly testify that men's bags, purses, coffers, and mines, may be exhausted or drawn dry, but Christ's can never. Millions of thousands live upon Christ, and he feels it not; his purse is always full, though he be always giving, &c.

[3.] *Thirdly*, The riches of Christ are *soul-satisfying riches*. Oh those riches of grace and goodness that be in Christ, how do they satisfy the souls of sinners! A pardon doth not more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread the hungry man, nor drink the thirsty man, nor clothes the naked man, nor health the sick man, than the riches of Christ do satisfy the gracious man. John iv. 13, 14, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up to everlasting life.' Grace is a perpetual flowing fountain. Grace is compared to water. Water serves to cool men when they are in a burning heat, so grace cools the soul when it hath been scorched and burned up under the sense of divine wrath and displeasure. Water is cleansing, so is grace; water is fructifying, so is grace; and water is satisfying, it satisfies the thirsty, and so doth grace. 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,' John xiv. 8. But now earthly riches can never satisfy the soul; but as they said once of Alexander, 'that had he a body suitable to his mind, he would set one foot upon sea, and the other upon land;' he would reach the east with one hand, and the west with the other. And doubtless the same frame of spirit is to be found in all the sons of Adam. In Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity.' If a man be hungry, silver cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him, much less then is it able to satisfy him. Oh! but the riches of Christ are soul-satisfying riches. A soul rich in spirituals, rich in eternal, says, I have enough, though I have not this and that temporal good, &c.¹

[4.] *Fourthly*, The riches of Christ are *harmless riches*. They are riches that will not hurt the soul, that will not harm the soul. Where is there a soul to be found in all the world that was ever made worse by spiritual riches? Oh but earthly riches have cast down many, they have slain many. If poverty, with Saul, hath killed her thousands, riches, with

flowers surrounded with many briars, &c. 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?' saith God to Job. Now, Gregory [of Nyssa] saith that the treasures of the snow are worldly riches, which men rake together as children do snow, which the next shower washeth away, and leaves nothing in the room but dirt; and can dirt satisfy? Surely no. No more can worldly riches.

¹ *Anima rationalis cæteris omnibus occupari potest, impleri non potest*, the reasonable soul may be busied about other things, but it cannot be filled with them, &c.—Bernard. [Sermons on Canticles, as before.—G.]

David, hath killed her ten thousands.¹ Eccles. v. 13, 'There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' Earthly riches are called thorns, and well they may; for as thorns, they pierce both head and heart; the head with cares in getting them, and the heart with grief in parting with them. Oh the souls that riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! Oh the minds that riches have blinded! Oh the hearts that riches have hardened! Oh the consciences that riches have benumbed! Oh the wills that riches have perverted! Oh the affections that riches have disordered and destroyed! Earthly riches are very vexing, very defiling, very dividing, and to multitudes prove very ruining.²

It was a wise and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the Duke of Venice, who, when he had shewed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, only returned him this grave and serious memento, *Hæc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, these are the things which make us unwilling to die, &c.³

[5.] *Fifthly*, The riches of Christ are *unsearchable riches*. This is plain in the text, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' There are riches of justification, riches of sanctification, riches of consolation, and riches of glorification in Christ. All the riches of Christ are unsearchable riches. A saint with all the light that he hath from the Spirit of Christ, is not able to search to the bottom of these riches. Nay, suppose that all the perfections of angels and saints in a glorified estate should meet in one noble breast, yet all those perfections could not enable that glorious glorified creature for to search to the bottom of Christ's unsearchable riches. Doubtless when believers come to heaven, when they shall see God face to face, when they shall know as they are known, when they shall be filled with the fulness of God, even then they will sweetly sing this song, 'Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ!' As there is no Christ to this Christ, so there are no riches to his riches, &c. Oh but such are not the riches of this world, they may be reckoned, they may be fathomed, &c.⁴

[6.] *Sixthly*, The riches of the Lord Jesus Christ are *permanent and abiding riches*; they are *lasting, they are durable riches*. That is a choice scripture, Prov. viii. 18, 'Riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness.' The Hebrew word that is rendered '*durable riches*' signifies old riches. All other riches are but new, they are but of yesterday as it were. Oh! but with me are old riches, durable riches. All other riches, in respect of their fickleness, are as a shadow, a bird, a ship, an arrow, a dream, a post, &c.⁵ This Valerian,

¹ *Da Domine ut sic possideamus temporalia ut non perdamus æterna.*—Bernard.

² Some say where gold grows, no plant will prosper; so no truth, no good, &c., will have any heart-room where the love of money bears the bell, &c.

³ By a long time thus anticipating a saying ascribed to Dr Johnson and many others.—G.

⁴ The philosophers seeing to the very bottom of earthly riches, contemned them, and preferred a contemplative life above them. *Omnia mea mecum porto*, said Bias, one of the seven wise men of Greece, &c.

⁵ It is reported of one Myrogenes, when great gifts were sent him, he sent them back, saying, I only desire this one thing at your master's hands, to pray for me, that I may be saved for eternity, &c.

Valens, and Bajazet, three proud emperors, found by experience, and so have many kings, and generals, and nobles, as Scripture and history do abundantly evidence. Earthly riches are very uncertain, 1 Tim. vi. 17. They are ever upon the wing; they are like tennis balls, which are banded¹ up and down from one to another. As the bird hops from twig to twig, so do riches from man to man. This age can furnish us with multitudes of instances of this nature, &c.

[7.] *Seventhly* and lastly, They are *the most useful riches, to sweeten all other riches, mercies, and changes, &c.*, which speaks out the excellency of these riches above all other riches. The more useful anything is, the more excellent it is. Now the riches of Christ are of all things the most useful to poor souls. When the soul is under the guilt of sin, nothing relieves it like the riches of Christ. When the soul is surrounded with temptations, nothing strengthens it like the riches of Christ. When the soul is mourning under afflictions, nothing comforts it like the riches of Christ. When state, friends, and trading fails, nothing makes a Christian sing care away like the riches of Christ, &c. The riches of Christ sweeten all other riches that men enjoy.² If a man be rich in parts, or rich in grace, rich in faith, rich in knowledge, rich in wisdom, rich in joy, rich in peace, &c.; or if a man be rich in temporals, rich in money, rich in wares, rich in jewels, rich in lands, &c., the glorious and unsearchable riches of Christ sweeten all his riches, and the want of these riches embitters all the riches that men enjoy. When men's consciences are enlightened and awakened, then they cry out, what are all these worldly riches to us, except we had an interest in the riches of Christ? As Absalom once said, 'What are all these to me, except I see the king's face?'

I have read of one that, upon his dying bed, called for his bags, and laid a bag of gold to his heart, and then cried out, 'Take it away, it will not do, it will not do.' There are things that earthly riches can never do.

They can never satisfy divine justice;
They can never pacify divine wrath;
Nor they can never quiet a guilty conscience.

And till these things are done, man is undone. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the honourable garter cannot cure the gout, nor the chain of pearls about the neck cannot take away the pain of the teeth. Oh but the unsearchable riches of Christ give ease under all pains and torments.

Nugas, the Scythian king, despising the rich presents and ornaments that were sent unto him by the emperor of Constantinople (Michael Paleologus), asked him that brought them, 'Whether those things could drive away calamities, diseases, or deaths?' looking upon all those presents as no presents, that could not keep off calamities from him. Verily, all the riches and glories of this world cannot keep off the least calamity, neither can they make up the want of the least mercy. But the riches of Christ do both keep off calamities, and make up the want of all mercies that the soul craves or needs. All which speak out the

¹ 'Banded,' = tossed.—G.

² Earthly riches cannot enrich the soul, nor better the soul. Oftentimes under silk and satin apparel there is a threadbare soul.

excellency of the riches of Christ above all other riches. We come now unto,

IV. *The uses of this point.*

And the first use that we shall make, is a use of exhortation, to exhort you all, seeing Christ is so rich, *to labour to be spiritually rich.* Oh labour to be rich in grace. In the handling of this use I shall propound this method.

[1.] I shall lay down some considerations that may provoke your souls to labour to be rich in grace.

[2.] I shall propound some directions or helps, to help you to be rich in grace, which is as much a mercy as a duty, &c.

[3.] I shall lay down some propositions concerning the soul's being rich in grace.

[4.] I shall shew you how you may know whether you are the persons that are rich in grace, or no.

I shall begin with the first, and be a little the more large upon it, because it is a point of mighty weight and concernment; and then be the more brief in the three following particulars.

For the first, by way of motive, I shall only propound these following considerations, to provoke your souls to labour to be rich in grace. *Laborandum* was one of the emperors' motto, and must be every Christian's.

[1.] *First, Consider that the more rich the soul is in grace, the higher the soul will be in joy and comfort.*¹

It is the greatest measures of grace that usher in the greatest measure of joy and comfort into a believing heart. Christians, have you tasted of the consolations of God? Have you at times sat down and drank of these wells of salvation? Are your hearts carried out for more of those waters of life? Then labour to be rich in grace. A little star yields but a little light, and a little grace will yield but a little comfort, but great measures of grace will yield a man not only a heaven hereafter, but also a heaven of joy here. Divine comfort is a choice flower, a precious jewel, and only to be found in their bosoms that are rich in grace. Spiritual comforts are such strong waters, that weak Christians are not able to bear them. Great measures of grace carry with them the greatest evidence of the truth of grace; and the clearer evidence there is in the soul of the truth of grace, the higher will joy and comfort spring. The soul is apt to hang her comforts on every hedge, to shift and shank in every by-corner for comfort; but as air lights not without the sun, and as fuel heats not without fire, so neither can anything soundly comfort a Christian without the God of grace, without his being rich in grace. Great measures of grace carry with them the greatest evidence of a man's union and communion with God, and the more a man's union and communion with God is evidenced, the more will the soul be filled with that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and with that comfort and peace that passes understanding.² In great measures of grace a man may read most of the love and favour of God; and the more a man sees of the love and favour of God to him, the more high the springs of comfort rise in him. In great mea-

¹ Oh the joys, the joys, the unconceivable joys! cried out Mistress Katharine Bretterge, who had attained to a great measure of grace, &c. [As before: see Index, *sub nomine*. —G.]

² *Æterna erit exultatio, quæ bono letatur æterno, &c.*

asures of grace, as in a crystal glass, the soul sees the glorious face of God shining and sparkling, and this fills the soul with joy : Acts ix. 31, 'Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.' The more their graces were increased, the more their comforts were augmented.

'If one drop of the joy of the Holy Ghost should fall into hell, it would swallow up all the torments of hell,' saith Austin. Oh ! who would not then labour to increase in grace, that he may abound in joy ? The promise lies most fair before their eyes that are rich in grace. Their interest in it is most clear, and rarely that they go without it, unless it is by taking part sometimes with Satan against their interest in Christ, or sometimes through the power of unbelief, which indeed cuts off all the comfort of the soul, or by looking after other lovers, or by not hearkening to the voice of the Comforter, &c. Christians, you often complain of the want of joy and comfort. Oh ! do but abound in grace, and you won't complain of the want of comfort. 'Without delight the soul cannot live,' saith one ; 'take away all delight, and the soul dies.' Let this that hath been spoken, provoke every Christian to labour to be rich in grace.

[2.] But, *secondly*, consider this, *you have singular opportunities and choice advantages to be rich in grace.*

There is a price put into your hands, but where are your hearts ? In former times God gave our grace by drops, but now by flagons, Cant. ii. 5. Opportunities, if not improved, will, as that sword that Hector gave Ajax, be turned into your own bowels. This will be a sword in thy bowels, that there hath been soul-enriching opportunities, and thou hast neglected them, and turned thy back upon them. The thoughts of this will one day be the scorpions that will vex thee, the rod that will lash thee, the thorns that will prick thee, and the worm that will gnaw thee. 'The stork,' saith the prophet, 'knows his appointed times ; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming ; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord,' Jer. viii. 7. The market for your souls is open ; slip not your season, lest with the foolish virgins you go to buy when it is too late, Mat. xxv. The merchant will not slip his opportunity of buying, nor the sailor his of sailing, nor the husbandman his of sowing, and why should you slip yours of growing rich in grace ? Many men lose their souls, as Saul lost his kingdom, by not discerning their time to be spiritually rich.

Tamerlane at first hung out a white flag, but if they slipped that opportunity, then a red, and so death and destruction followed, &c. The Lord Jesus hangs out the white flag of mercy in these days, to entice souls to come in, and to share with him in his glorious and unsearchable riches, in the riches of his grace and mercy ; but if you stand out, Christ hath a red flag, and if that be once put out, you are lost for ever. Thrice happy are those that take the first opportunity of closing with Christ, and of subjecting themselves to Christ.¹

Plutarch writes of Hannibal, 'That when he could have taken Rome

¹ Such there have been who, by giving a glass of water opportunely, have obtained a kingdom, as you may see in the story of Thaumastus and king Agrippa, &c. [Cf. Index s. n.—G.]

he would not, but when he would have taken Rome he could not.¹ When many men may have mercy, they won't, and when they would have mercy, they shan't, Prov. i. 24, *seq.* Mercy and grace are sometimes upon the bare knee. Christ stands knocking at sinners' doors; he is willing to come in and make sinners rich and happy for ever; he calls upon souls to open to him, Rev. iii. 20, *seq.* 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,' Ps. xxiv. 7, 8. The King of glory comes not *vacuis manibus*, empty-handed; no, he comes with his hands and heart full of rich and royal presents, and blessed and enriched for ever are those that open to this King of glory, &c.

[3.] *Thirdly*, Consider this, *souls rich in grace shall have their names immortal.*

Every man naturally would have, if it were possible, his name immortal. Now there is no way in the world to have your names immortal, like this of growing rich in grace. A man that is spiritually rich shall live, and his name shall live when he is dead. In Neh. vii. 2, it is said of Hananiah, that 'he was a faithful man, and feared God above many;' or, 'he feared God above multitudes,' as the Hebrew hath it: *merabbim*, from *rahab*. His name lives, though his body for many hundred years hath been turned to dust. So in Acts vii. 55, 'Stephen was a man full of the Holy Ghost.' Though Stephen was stoned, yet his name lives, his memorial is precious among the saints to this very day. So in Heb. xi. 38, they were such 'of whom this world was not worthy.' And in the third Epistle of John, the six first verses, compared with ver. 12, Gaius and Demetrius, who were rich in grace, have crowns of honour set upon their heads, their names live, and are a sweet savour to this very day, &c. So in Ps. cxii. 6, 'The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, but the name of the wicked shall rot.' The great man's name, and the rich man's name, shall rot, saith he, but 'the name of the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.'²

The Persians use to write their kings' names in golden characters; so the Lord writes the names of souls rich in grace in golden characters. Their names are always heirs to their lives. Believe it, there is no such way in the world to have immortal names, like this of growing rich in grace. One man thinks to make his name immortal, by making himself great; another by heaping up silver and gold as the dust of the earth or the stones of the street, and another by doing some strange exploits, &c. But for all this the Lord will make good his word, 'the name of the wicked shall rot.' If God be God, his name must rot; but 'the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance;' they leave their names behind for a blessing, Isa. lxv. 15. It is sad to consider what many poor carnal creatures have done and suffered to make their names immortal. The Romans' desires of praise and a name, made them bountiful of their purses, and prodigal of their lives.³

¹ In 'Lives' of Fabius Maximus and T. Quinctius Flaminius.—G.

² *Ego si bonam famam servasso, sat dives ergo*, if I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough, said Plautus.

³ A good name yields a fragrant smell over town and country; it puts a shining lustre

Erostratus set the temple of Diana on fire, on that night that Alexander was born, only that he might be talked of when he was dead.¹

Calvin observes, that Servetus in Geneva, in the year 1555, gave all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and all for a name, for a little glory among men. But these poor creatures have all missed the mark. There is no way, Christians, to have your names immortal, like this, of growing rich in grace. Satan nor the world shall never be able to bury such men's names, who are rich in grace; their names shall rise in glory here, as well as their bodies hereafter.

[4.] But then, *fourthly* and mainly, consider, *that spiritual riches will enable you to live up to your principles.*

That man that hath but so much grace as will keep hell and his soul asunder, will never live up to his principles. Souls weak in grace are too apt to deny, and in their practices to contradict, their own principles; and oh that this age could not furnish us with too many instances of this nature! Oh! what is that that is the reproach of religion, and the dishonour of God and the gospel, but this, that professors live below their principles, that they live not up to their principles? And let me tell you, Christians, there is nothing but a rich measure of grace that will enable a soul to live up to his principles. A man that is not rich in grace will never be able to live up to his own principles, but will upon every occasion and temptation be ready to wound two at once; the honour of God and his own soul. Yea, men that are not rich in grace, will be ready to deny their own principles, as many weak Christians did in persecuting times.

But you will say to me, *What are those gracious and holy principles, that a rich measure of grace will enable a man to live up to?*

I will instance only in those that have most worth and weight in them, and they are worthy of all your thoughts.

(1.) *First*, It is your principle, that *you must rather suffer than sin.*

It is your principle rather to undergo the greatest calamities, than willingly to commit the least iniquity. Now, pray tell me, what will enable a Christian to live up to this principle? Will a little grace, a little knowledge of God, a little faith in God, a little love to God, a little zeal for God, a little communion with God? Will this do it? Surely no. It must be much grace that must enable the soul to live up to this principle.² When sin and suffering have stood in competition, many weak Christians have chosen rather to sin, than to suffer, which hath opened many a mouth, and sadded many a heart, and wounded many a conscience. Yea, such by their not suffering, have suffered more than ever they could have suffered from the wrath and rage of man. Oh! but now spiritual riches will enable a man to live up to this principle, as you may see in Daniel, who had an excellent spirit in him, who was rich in grace, and filled with the Holy Ghost; he lives up to his principles; he lives out his principles, when he was put hard to it; when he must either neglect the worship of his God and make a god of his king, or to the lions' den. Now, Daniel upon the countenance; it fitteth to any public employment, in ministry or magistracy; it stops many a foul mouth, and it makes men live when they are dead.

¹ As before: Index, *sub nomine*—G.

² It is better for me to be a martyr than a monarch, said Ignatius when he was to suffer, &c.

chooses rather to be cast into the lions' den than not to do homage to his God; he had rather suffer much, than that God should lose a dram of his glory. Of the same spirit and metal were those worthies, Heb. xi., who, when they were put to it, did rather choose to suffer the very worst of miseries, than they would in the least dishonour the Lord, wound their own consciences, and make work for repentance, &c. And so did Jovinian, Eusebius, Galeacius [Carraciolus], Basil, Vincentius, Bolilas, &c. By all which you see, that Christians that are spiritually rich, live up to this principle, viz., to suffer rather than sin, when sin and suffering stand in competition; which babes in grace cannot do.¹

(2.) *Secondly*, It is your principle, *that grace and virtue are to be pursued after, for their own worth, beauty, and excellency.*

But pray, tell me, what will carry a Christian out to this principle? Will a little grace carry a man out to pursue after grace, for the beauty, holiness, excellency, and spirituality that is in it? Alas! we see by daily experience that it will not do it. All other considerations put together, are little enough to draw men on to pursue after grace for its native beauty and excellency. Many seek Christ, but it is for loaves more than for love, John vi. 26; and they pursue after the means of grace, not for the beauty, excellency, and glory that is stamped upon the means, but one to maintain his honour, and another to keep up his name, and another to bring in credit or custom, and another to please his friends, and another to silence his conscience, &c., but few there be, if any, but those that are rich in grace, that are true to this principle, that pursue after grace for its own beauty and excellency. It was a notable expression of David, who was a man rich in grace, Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' Oh! for a soul to love grace, and the word of grace, for its own interest, for the holiness, purity, and glory of it. This speaks out the soul to be rich in grace. So Paul, a man rich in grace, pursues after grace for its own interest, for the beauty and excellency of it. He forgets 'what is behind, and presses forward after the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Philip. iii. 13, 14. That is, to that perfection that the dead shall reach to in the morning of the resurrection, &c.

The young philosophers were very forward to get the precepts of their sect, and the rules of severity, that they might discourse with kings and nobles, not that they might reform their own manners. Many professors in this age are like those philosophers; they are very industrious to get knowledge, that they may be able to discourse, and that they may be eyed, owned, and honoured among others, for their knowledge and understanding.² But now souls that are rich in grace, they labour after greater measures of grace, out of love to grace, and because of an excellency that they see in grace. Grace is a very sparkling jewel, and he that loves it, and pursues after it for its own native beauty, hath much of it within him, &c.

(3.) *Thirdly*, It is your principle, *that men must subject themselves, and square all their actions by the word of God.*

¹ Of the very same spirit were the primitive Christians: they chose rather to be thrown to lions without than left to lusts within. *Ad leonem magis quam lenonem*, saith Tertullian.

² There may be *malum opus in bona materia*, as in Jehu's zeal, &c.

Now, what will make a man live up to this principle? Will a little grace? Surely no, Isa. viii. 10. But great measures of grace will. Zacharias and Elizabeth were rich in grace, and they lived up to this principle: Luke i. 5, 'They walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.' The apostles were rich in grace, and they lived up to this principle: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.' So in 1 Thes. ii. 10, 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblameably, we have behaved ourselves among you that believe.' Oh! here are souls that live up to their principles. A Christian that is rich in grace is excellent all over.

George, prince of Anhalt his family is said to have been *ecclesia*, *academia*, *curia*, a church, a university, and a court. A Christian that is rich in grace hath a heart as large as his head, yea, a heart that is as large as the whole will of God: Acts xiii. 22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.' In the Greek it is, *all my wills*, *δεληματα*, to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience. Souls rich in grace practise that themselves which they prescribe to others. Lessons of music and copies must not be read only, but acted also. Souls rich in grace are good at this, and they will be good in all places and cases. They are as good at the particular duties of religion, as at those that are more general; they are good fathers, and good masters, and good husbands, as well as good Christians, in a more general sense. But now souls that have but a little grace, they are much in the general duties of religion, but very defective in the particular duties of religion, as sad experience doth abundantly evidence. Those that have a blemish in their eye, think the sky to be ever cloudy; and nothing is more common to weak spirits, than to be criticising and contending about other duties, and to neglect their own. But such that are rich in grace, make it their glory to subject themselves to the rule of righteousness; as Baldasser, a German minister, cried out, Let the word of the Lord come, let it come, saith he, and we will submit to it, if we had many hundred necks to put under. It must be much grace that must enable a man freely, fully, and sweetly to subject himself and his actions to the word of the Lord.

(4.) *Fourthly*, It is your principle, that you must deny yourselves, your own profit, ease, pleasure, &c., for a public good.

And this the Scripture requires. It is your principle to deny yourselves, your own honour, pleasure, profit, &c., for a public advantage, when your particular advantages stand in competition with the public. Now self must be laid by, and the public must carry the day. Oh, but will a little grace enable a man to live up to this principle! Woful experience shews the contrary. Ay, but now, take me a man that is rich in grace, and he will live up to this golden principle, as you may see in Nehem. v. 14-18. Nehemiah was a man eminent in grace, and he chose rather to live upon his own purse than upon the public purse: 'Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. Behold the

former governors that had been before me, were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants did bear rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. Moreover, there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came in to us from among the heathen. And yet for all this, saith he, 'I required not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people.' Oh, here was a brave spirit indeed; he was far from enriching himself by others' ruins, from emptying others' purses to fill his own. But he is dead, and it seems this brave spirit is buried with him. There are few of his name, and fewer of his spirit, if any in this world, and therefore well might he pray, 'Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.' And accordingly God did think upon him for good, and made him very famous and glorious in his generation.¹ And that is a remarkable passage concerning Moses: Num. xiv. 12-21, 'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a great nation, and mightier than they,' saith God to Moses. 'Therefore let me alone to destroy them and cut them off, for they are a rebellious generation. And I will make thee a mightier nation for honour, riches, and power, than they. Nay,' saith Moses, 'this may not be, Lord.' Oh, the people must be spared, the people must be pardoned, and the people must have thy presence with them, and rather than it should be otherwise, let my name, Lord, be blotted out of the book of life. Lord! I care not how ill it goes with my particular, so they may live. Can the self-seekers of our age think seriously of this and not blush?

So Mordecai was a man of a brave public spirit: Esther x. 3, 'Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people.' Or as the Hebrew hath it, 'Seeking good for his people;' that is, he made it his business to seek their good. Christ also was full of grace, and had a brave public spirit; he laid out himself and laid down himself for a public good; and so did Paul, &c. Few in our days are of his opinion and mind, who was rather willing to beautify Italy than his own house.² 'That pilot dies nobly,' saith Seneca, 'who perisheth in the storm with the helm in his hand.' Such that seek themselves more than the public good must be served as Æsop did his fellow-servant; he gave him warm water to drink, by which means he vomited up the stolen figs. Friends, it is not a little grace that will make a man prefer the public good, above his own particular good, but much grace will; therefore labour to be rich in grace.³

(5.) *Fifthly*, It is your principle, that you are to do the duties that God requires of you, and quietly leave the issues and events of all to the wise dispose of God.

¹ It is a base and unworthy spirit for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say, A man's country and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him.

² Lorenzo the Magnificent.—G.

³ Christ healed others, but was hurt himself; he fed and filled others, but was hungry himself, &c.

But pray tell me, will a little grace enable a man to live up to this principle, to do his duty, and to leave issues and events to him to whom they belong? Surely no. Eccles. ix. 10, '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. Mark, he doth not say, what thy head finds to do, for that may find a thousand things; nor what thy heart finds to do, for that may find ten thousand things; but what thy hand finds to do; that is, look what work God cuts out to thy hand to do, that do with all thy might, for there is no working in the grave. We are to do much good in a little time; we are made here, and set to be a-doing something that may do us good a thousand years hence, yea, that may stand us in stead to eternity. Our time is short, our task is great, the devil knows that his time is but short, and that is the reason why he is so active and stirring, why he does outwork the children of light, in a quick despatch of the deeds of darkness. Christians, do not deceive yourselves; it is not shows of grace, nor little measures of grace, that will enable a man to live up to this principle, but great measures of grace will, as you may see in the three children, 'We are not careful to answer thee, O king, in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' We know our duty, and that we will keep to, whatever the issue and event be. So those worthies, Ps. xlv. 19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.' Here was much of Christ and grace within. So in Acts xxi., when Paul was to go up to Jerusalem to suffer, his friends, by many tears and arguments, laboured to dissuade him, for fear of some sad issue and event that would follow. But Paul, rich in grace, answered, 'What mean ye to weep, and break my heart, for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.' I will go up to Jerusalem, and I am willing to go up, though I die for it. Ay, here is a soul that lives up to his principle, Ay, but now souls that are weak in grace, as we have had large experience of it in our times, they are more taken up and busied about the events and issues of things, than they are with their own duties.¹ When they should be a-praying, a-believing, a-waiting, and acting for God, they have been a-questioning and fearing what the issue and event of this, and that, and the other thing would be. And indeed they have been high and low, as secondary causes have wrought, which hath made many of their lives a very hell. But now those that are rich in grace, they say as once he did, 'Let us be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good,' 2 Sam. x. 10-12. Let us do our duties, and let the Lord do as pleaseth him, &c.

(6.) *Sixthly*, It is your principle, *that men are to be prepared, and to stand fast against all sudden assaults and invasions that may be made upon them.*

Many a valiant person dares fight in a battle or a duel, who yet will

¹ Many of the English have in this been like the Israelites, &c.

be timorous and fearful if suddenly surprised in a midnight alarm. Many precious souls, when they have time to consider of the evil of sin, the holiness of God, the eye of God, the honour of God, the glory of the gospel, the joys of the saints, and the stopping of the mouths of sinners, will rather die than sin; they will rather suffer anything than do the least thing that may be a reproach to Christ. Oh! but when a sudden occasion or temptation is presented, why, then they often fall; as David, by chance, spied Bathsheba washing herself, and falls before the temptation; he is conquered and carried captive by that sudden occasion. But that is a more comfortable and considerable passage that you have concerning Joseph, in Gen. xlix 23, 24, 'The archers sorely grieved him,' saith the text, 'and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.' Joseph never wanted counsel nor courage when he was at the worst. Souls rich in grace usually stand firm under the greatest and suddenest pressures, assaults, and invasions, as you may see in Paul, 2 Cor. i. 9-12; and so the three children; and so Daniel; and so those worthies, Heb. xi. 35, 'They would not accept of deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' Many sudden assaults and attempts were made upon them; their enemies would fain have stormed them, and overcome them; sometimes by golden offers, sometimes by terrible threats, but they are invincible; nothing stirs them, nothing takes them. Really, friends, it must be much grace that will make a man live up to this principle; and there is nothing that speaks out more the strength of grace in a man, than his standing against sudden assaults and invasions that by the devil and the world are made upon him. You may talk of this, but without much grace you will never be able to do it, &c.

(7.) *Seventhly* and lastly, It is your principle, *that your hearts are to be ready for every work that God shall impose upon you.*

You are not to choose your employment, neither are you to refuse any employment that God shall put upon you. You are always to have an open ear, a ready hand, an obedient heart, and a willing cheerful soul to fall in with what work or service soever it is that God shall put upon you; this is your principle. Ay, but tell me, Christians, will a little grace enable a man to live up to this principle? I judge not. You are to stand ready to change your employment from better to worse, if the Lord shall be pleased to order it so. You are to be ready to change your crown for a cross; to change that employment that is honourable, for that that is mean and low; and that which is more profitable, for that which is less profitable: as it were from the ruling of a province, to the keeping of a herd; from being a lord, to be a servant; from being a servant to great men; to be a servant to the meanest servant, yea, to the poorest beast. Certainly a little grace will never enable a man bravely and sweetly to live up to this principle. Their hearts that are poor in grace, are like a wounded hand or arm, which being but imperfectly cured, can only move one way, and cannot turn to all postures and all natural uses.

Weak Christians are very apt to three things, to choose their mercies, to choose their crosses, and to choose their employments.

They are often unwilling that God himself should choose out their way

or their work. But now souls that are rich in grace, they are at God's beck and check ; they are willing that God shall choose their work and their way ; they are willing to be at his dispose ; to be high or low ; to serve or to be served ; to be something or to be nothing, &c. Now I beseech you, Christians, that you would seriously and frequently remember this, that there is nothing in all the world that is such an honour to God, and a glory to the gospel, as for Christians to live up to their principles ; nor nothing such a reproach to God and his ways, as this, for men to live below their principles, and to act contrary to their principles. And you will never be able to live up to your principles, nor to live out your principles, except you grow rich in grace ; therefore labour, I say, labour as for life, to abound in grace, &c.

[5.] Now the fifth motive is this, consider *that souls rich in grace are a mighty blessing to the land and place where they live.*

There are no such blessings in the world to parishes, cities, and nations, as those souls are, that are rich in grace. Oh they are great blessings to all places where they come ; they are persons that are fit for the highest and noblest employments. There is not the highest work that is too high for a man that is rich in grace ; nor the hottest work that is too hot for a man rich in grace ; nor the lowest work below a man rich in grace. Such a man will not say, I would do it, but that it is below my place, my blood, my parts, my education. May Christ have honour ? may others have good ? If so, I will do it, saith the soul that is rich in grace, whatever comes of it, and bless God for the opportunity : Dan. vi. 3, 'Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him ; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.' Why was Daniel set upon the throne, but because there was a glorious excellent spirit in him, that fitted him for the highest employment ? So Joseph was a blessing to his master's family, and the people among whom he lived. No such blessings to people and places, as souls rich in grace. So in Neh. vii. 2, 'I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem ;' and why he ? 'for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.' Oh the wisdom, the prudence, the zeal, the courage, the compassion, the patience, the self-denial, that should be in magistrates ! There is a truth in that old maxim, *magistratus virum indicat*, magistracy will try a man. None fit to rule, but such that are rich in grace ; such a one will be *pater patriæ*, father of his country. What a world of good may a man do with worldly riches, in a parish, in a city, in a nation ! but that is nothing to the good that a man may do that is rich in grace. Oh the sins that he may prevent ! Oh the judgments that he may divert ! Oh the favours and blessings that he may draw down upon the heads and hearts of people ! I presume you forget not what a blessing Moses, Joseph, Job, Nehemiah, Mordecai, and Daniel, proved to the people among whom they lived ; and these were all rich in grace. A man rich in wisdom, rich in faith, rich in goodness, &c., oh what a blessing may he prove to ignorant souls, to staggering souls, to wandering souls, to tempted souls, to deserted souls, &c. Look, what the sun is to us, that may a soul rich in grace be to others, &c. O friends ! would you be blessings to your families ? would you be blessings to the city, to the nation ? Oh then

labour to be rich in grace, and do not think it enough that you have so much grace as will keep you from dropping into hell, and that will bring you to heaven ; but labour to be rich in grace, and then you will prove indeed a blessing to the place and nation where you live.

The Romans, when they did perceive any natural excellency to be in any persons, though they were never so poor and mean, they would take them from their dinners of turnips and water-cresses, to lead the Roman army.¹ It is true, that natural and moral endowments will enable men to do much ; but grace will enable men to do ten thousand times more. There is no work too high nor too hard for souls rich in grace ; and therefore, as you would be choice instruments in the Lord's hand, and eminently serviceable in your generations, oh labour to be rich in grace ! It is not he that hath most wit in his head, but he that hath most grace in his heart, that is most fit for generation-work.

[6.] Sixthly, *A rich measure of grace will bear out your souls in several cases, therefore labour to be rich in grace.*

A rich measure of grace will bear out the soul under great means of grace. When a soul is spiritually rich, this will bear him out under great means. Such a one will be able to look God in the face with joy and comfort ; he can say, It is true, Lord, I have had more means than others, and lo ! I am grown richer than others. Thou hast taken more pains with me than with others, and lo ! I bring forth more fruit than others : my five talents are become ten. But a little grace will not bear men out under much means of grace.²

Again, A great measure of grace will bear the soul out under a great name, as well as under great means. For a man to have a great name to live, and yet to have but a little life, is a stroke of strokes ; to be high in name and little in worth, is a very sad and sore judgment.³ To have a name to be an eminent Christian, and yet to be poor in faith, in love, in wisdom, in knowledge, &c., is the greatest unhappiness in the world. This stroke is upon many in these days. But that which is saddest of all is this, they feel it not, they observe it not. But now he that is rich in grace, hath something within that will bear him out under a great name in the world.

Again, a great measure of grace will bear you out under great desires, as well as under a great name. A man that is rich in grace may ask what he pleases ; he is one much in with God, and God will deny him nothing. The best of the best is for this man ; he may have anything ; he may have everything that heaven affordeth. He is able to improve much, and therefore he may ask much, and have it.

It was a sweet saying of one, ' O Lord, I never come to thee but by thee, I never go from thee without thee.'⁴

Sozomen saith of Apollonius, that he never asked anything of God, but he had it.

And another, speaking of Luther, saith, *Hic homo potuit apud Deum quod voluit*, He could have what he would of God. Rich men may

¹ As those that were called among the Romans the *Curii* [Curiatii?—G.] and *Fabricii*, &c.

² The golden name of Christians is but as an ornament to swine, saith Salvian. He means such as content themselves with an empty name.

³ *Quid tibi prodest nomen, ubi res non invenitur?* what will the name avail, where the thing is wanting? saith Augustine.

⁴ Ambrose, *as before*.—G.

long for this and that, and have it; they have something that will fetch it, but poor men may not. Oh! now, who would not labour as for life, to be rich in grace? Oh! this will bear you out under great means, and under great names, and under great desires; therefore, rest not satisfied with a little grace.

But then, seventhly and lastly,

[7.] *Souls rich in grace are the honour of Christ, and the glory of Christianity.*

As it is the glory of the stock, when the grafts grow and thrive in it, even so it is the glory of Christ when those that are ingrafted into him thrive and grow. This declares to all the world that Christ keeps a good house, and that he doth not feed his children with trash, but with the choicest delicacies; that he is open-handed and free-hearted. It is the glory of the father when the child grows rich under him, and the glory of the master when the servant grows rich under him; and so it is the glory of Christ when poor souls grow rich under him. The name of Christ, and the honour of Christ, is kept up in the world by souls that are rich in grace. They are the persons that make others think well and speak well of Christ. You may at your leisure read the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians, and there you shall see what an honour they were to the Lord Jesus and the gospel who abounded in spiritual riches. Such Christians that are like to Pharaoh's lean kine reproach three at once, God, the gospel, and their teachers: and this age is full of such Christians. It is your greatest work in this world to keep up the honour and the glory of the Lord, and this you can never, you will never do, except you labour to be rich in grace. Let others 'labour for the meat that perisheth,' do you 'labour for that which endureth to everlasting life.' When you come to die, and when you come to make up your accounts, it will never be a grief, but a joy unto you, that you have made it your greatest business and work in this world to be rich in grace.

But here you may say,

What means must we use that we may grow rich in grace?

I answer:

[1.] First, *Let no discouragements take you off from labouring to be enriched with spiritual riches.*

A soul that would be spiritually rich must be divinely resolved, that come what can come, he will hold on in the use of means, that he may be rich with the riches of Christ. Joshua was resolute in this point: 'Choose you whom ye will serve, whether the Lord, or those other gods that your fathers served; as for my part, I and my house will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 15; Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' The Greek word signifies, 'to strive with all your might,' with all your strength, to strive even to an agony, to strive as they did for the garlands in the Olympic games. The word here used seemeth to allude to their striving for the garland, where they put out themselves to the utmost. So in John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.'¹

¹ Many men are like Cicero, not thoroughly resolved in themselves whether to follow

I have read of one that did not fear what he did, nor what he suffered, so he might get riches: 'For,' saith he, 'men do not ask how good one is, or how gracious one is, but how rich one is.' Oh, sirs! the day is a-coming when God will ask how rich your souls are; how rich you are, in faith, in wisdom, in knowledge, in fear, &c.; and not how rich you are in money, or in jewels, or in land, or in goods, but how rich are you in grace; which should provoke your souls to strive in the face of all discouragements to be rich in grace. What will not the merchant do, and the mariner do, for these temporal riches? Oh the dangers, the hazards, the tempests, the storms, the deaths that they run through for earthly riches, which are never without their sting! And shall not Christians labour in the face of all oppositions after spiritual riches?

It is reported of Neveſſan the lawyer, that he ſhould ſay, 'He that will not venture his body can never be valiant; and he that will not venture his ſoul will never be rich.' I am ſure that man that will not venture, and venture hard, in the face of all discouragements, to be ſpiritually rich, will never be rich. He may be good in the main, and may go to heaven in a ſtorm; but he will never be rich in ſpirituals, that will not venture himſelf to the uttermoſt for the gain of ſpiritual riches.

[2.] Secondly, *Be fixed under a Chriſt-exalting and a ſoul-enriching miniſtry.*

Under that man's miniſtry that makes it his buſineſs; not a thing by the by but his buſineſs, his work; not to tickle the ear, to pleaſe the fancy, but to enrich the ſoul, to win the ſoul, and to build up the ſoul. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 'For the time will come when they will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts ſhall they heap up to themſelves teachers, having itching ears.' This age, yea, this city is full of ſuch ſlight, light, mad ſouls, that love nor like nothing but what is empty and airy.

Juniuſſus confeſſes, 'that in his time there was one confeſſed that he had ſpent above twenty years in trying religions,' pretending that ſcripture, 'Try all things, and hold faſt that which is good.' It is ſad to ſee how many in our days, under pretences of angelical attainments, make it their buſineſs to enrich men's heads with high, empty, airy notions, inſtead of enriching their ſouls with ſaving truths. If theſe are not ſtrangers to that wiſdom that is from above, I know nothing. Prov. xi. 30, 'He that winneth ſouls is wiſe.' The Hebrew word ſignifies to catch ſouls, by uſing all art and induſtry, as fowlers do to take birds.¹ No wiſdom to that which wins ſouls from ſin and the world, and that wins ſouls to Chriſt and holineſs; no teaching to this. Remember this, you will never be rich in grace if you care not who you hear, nor what you hear. That Chriſt that commands you to take heed how you hear, commands you alſo to take heed who you hear. And every ſoul won to God is a new pearl added to a miniſter's crown, &c.

But you will ſay to me,

How ſhould we know which is a ſoul-enriching miniſtry, that ſo we may wait on it?

Pompey or Cæſar; the riches of this world, or the riches of another world: ſuch men will ſtill be poor.

¹ וּלְקַח. He is the beſt preacher, not that tickles the ear, but that breaks the heart. *Non qui aures tetigerit, ſed qui cor pupugerit.*

Take these three rules:

(1.) *First*, Judge not of the soul-enriching ministry by the voice of the minister, nor by the multitude of hearers that follow him, nor by his affected tone, nor by his rhetoric and flashes of wit, but by the holiness, heavenliness, and spiritualness of the matter.¹

Some preachers affect rhetorical strains; they seek abstrusities, and love to hover and soar aloft in dark and cloudy expressions, and so shoot their arrows over their hearers' heads, instead of bettering their hearers' hearts. Gay things in a sermon are only for men to gaze upon and admire. What are high strains and flashes of wit, new-minted words and phrases, but like gay weeds and blue bottles to the good corn. Truth is like Solomon's spouse, 'all glorious within.'² She is most beautiful when most naked, as Adam was in innocency.

The oracle would have Philip of Macedon use silver lances in winning an impregnable fort, &c., but ministers must not use golden sentences, strong lines, froth of wit. It is iron, and not gold, that killeth in the encounter. It is the steel sword, not the golden, that winneth the field, &c.³

(2.) *Secondly*, Judge of it by its revealing the whole counsel of God, the whole will of God, revealed in his word.⁴

In Acts xx. 27, 'For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.' Some there be that make it their business only to advance the glory of Christ, and to darken the glory of the Father; and some cry up the glory of the Father, and yet cast clouds and darkness upon the glory of the Son. And what dirt and scorn is cast upon the Spirit by many vain, blasphemous persons in these times is notoriously known; and if these men are not far from declaring the whole counsel and will of God, I know nothing. Christ must be held out in all his offices, for they all tend to the enriching of poor souls, to the adding of pearls to a Christian's crown. And clearly it is sad to consider how many there be that cry up one office and cry down another. Some cry up the kingly office of Christ, but mind not his prophetic office; and some cry up his prophetic office, but trample upon his kingly office; and some cry up both his kingly and prophetic office, and yet make slight of his priestly office. Christians, fix yourselves under his ministry that gives the Father his due, the Son his due, and the Spirit his due; that makes it his business to open the treasures and the riches both of the one and the other, and to declare to you the whole will of God; for many there be that 'withhold the word in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18, and that will only acquaint you with some parts of the will of God, and keep you ignorant of other parts, whose condemnation will be great as well as just, &c.⁵

(3.) *Thirdly* and lastly, You may judge of it by its coming nearest to the ministry of Christ and his apostles.⁶

¹ Many ministers are like empty orators, that have a flood of words and a drop of matter. *Multa loquuntur et nihil dicunt.*

² Rather The Spouse, the Church: Ps. xlv. 13.—G.

³ *Non quanta eloquentia sed quanta evidentia.*—Augustine.

⁴ *Optimus textuarius est optimus theologus.*

⁵ Aglutidas never relished any dish better than what was distasted by others. So do serious experienced saints relish those very truths best that such corrupt teachers distaste most, &c.

⁶ *Melius est ut nos reprehendant grammatici quam ut non intelligant populi.*—Augustine in

There was no ministry so soul-enriching and soul-winning as the ministry of Christ and his apostles. Oh! the thousands that were brought in by one exercise! Let men of frothy wits say what they will, there are no preachers to these that come nearest in their ministry to Christ and his apostles. *Loquamur verba Scripture, &c.*, said that incomparable man, Peter Hamus: 'Let us speak the very words of Scripture, for so did Christ, the prophets, and apostles; let us make use of the language of the Holy Ghost, and for ever abominate those that profanely disdain at the stately plainness of God's blessed book, and that think to correct the divine wisdom and eloquence with their own infancy¹ and sophistry.' God's holy things ought to be handled with fear and reverence, rather than with wit and dalliance. Spiritual niceness is the next degree to unfaithfulness. No ministry to that which comes nearest to Christ, &c.

[3.] The *third* direction is this, *If ever you would be rich in grace, be rich in spirituals, then keep humble.*

Ps. xxv. 9, 'The humble he will teach his way, and the meek he will guide in judgment; James iv. 6, 'He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' 'He sets himself in battle-array against the proud,' as the Greek hath it, 'but he gives grace to the humble.' He pours grace into an humble soul, as men do water or wine into an empty vessel. Of all souls, humble souls do most prize spiritual riches; of all souls they most improve spiritual riches; of all souls they are most fearful of losing spiritual riches. In Isa. lvii. 15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, With him will I dwell that is of an humble and contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.' The word there rendered *dwell* is an Hebrew participle, and signifies dwelling. 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, dwelling with him that is of an humble and a contrite spirit.' Humility, as the violet, though the lowest, yet is the sweetest of flowers. The word notes to us thus much: that God will not dwell with an humble man as a wayfaring man dwells with his relations, a few nights and away. Dwelling notes a constant and not a transient act of God. God will for ever keep house with the humble soul; when once they meet, they never part. There is no such way to be rich as to be poor and low in our own eyes. This is the way to enjoy his company in whom all treasures are.

[4.] *Fourthly, Improve the riches that you have.*

Improve that knowledge, that faith, that light, that love that you have. Those that had two talents did, by the improvement of them, gain other two; and those that had five did, by the improvement of them, gain ten: Prov. x. 4, 'The diligent hand maketh rich.' Take hold of all opportunities to enrich your souls with spiritual riches. Men will easily, readily, greedily, and unweariedly close with all opportunities wherein they may get earthly riches; and why should not you be as diligent in taking hold of all opportunities to enrich your precious souls?² Is not the soul more than raiment, more than friends, more

Psalm cxxxviii. Christ and his apostles laboured to make men^r Christians, and not critics. ¹ = 'Childishness': another Shakesperean word: Titus Andron., v. 3.—G.

² The Radix, *Harats*, is to dig in the ground for gold, whence *Harats*, fine precious gold, Prov. xvi. 16 [מחרין]. The neglect of golden, soul-enriching opportunities, hath made many a man's life a hell, yea, many a courtier's life a hell, as all know that know anything of history, &c.

than relations, more than life, yea, more than all? And why, then, do you not labour to enrich your souls? Thou wert better have a rich soul under a thread-bare coat, than a thread-bare soul under a silk or golden coat. If he be a monster among men, that makes liberal provision for his servant, his slave, and starves his wife, what a monster is he that makes much provision for his baser part, but none for his noble part! A slothful heart in the things of God is a heavy judgment: Prov. iv. 31, 'I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'the man that had no heart,' that is, to make use of his vineyard, 'and lo, it was all grown over with thorns and nettles,' &c. Oh the lusts, the wickednesses that will overgrow slothful, sluggish souls! Spiritual sluggards are subject to the saddest strokes. Oh the deadly sins, the deadly temptations, the deadly judgments that spiritual sluggards will unavoidably fall under! None such an enemy to himself, none such a friend to Satan, as the spiritual sluggard. It is sad to think how the riches of Christ, the riches of consolation, the riches of justification, the riches of glorification, are brought to many men's doors, and yet they have no hearts to embrace them: no judgment to this. 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?' Prov. xvii. 16. Well, spiritual sluggards, remember this, when your consciences are awakened, this will be a sword in your souls, that you might have been saved, you might have been spiritually and eternally enriched, but that you have trifled and fooled away golden opportunities and your own salvation. Wealth without wit is ill bestowed, &c.

[5.] *Fifthly, Walk uprightly, holily, and obedientially.*

If ever you would be spiritually rich, look to your walking. It is not the knowing soul, nor the talking soul, but the close-walking soul, the obediential soul, that is in spirituals the richest soul. Others may be rich in notions, but none so rich in spiritual experiences, and in all holy and heavenly grace, as close-walking Christians: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' The upright walker shall be both of his court and council; he shall know anything, and have anything. In John xiv. 21, 23, compared, 'If any man love me, he will keep my commandments, and I will love him, and my Father will love him.' What then? 'We will make our abode with him, and will manifest ourselves to him.' Certainly they cannot be poor that enjoy such guests as these; they must needs be full who enjoy them that are fulness itself. God and Christ are overflowing fountains, and holy souls find it so.¹

[6.] *Sixthly, Be most in with those souls that are spiritually rich.*

Let them be thy choicest companions, that have made Christ their chiefest companion. Do not so much eye the outsides of men, as their inside; look most to their internal worth. Many persons have an eye upon the external garb of this and that professor, but give me a Christian that minds the internal worth of persons, that makes such as are

¹ When my heart is coldest and highest, I present God to my soul under the notions of his greatness; but when my heart is loose and fearing, then I present God to my soul under the notion of his goodness, saith Luther.

most filled with the fulness of God, to be his choicest and his chiefest companions.

In Ps. xvi. 2, 'My goodness extends not to thee,' says David,—now David speaks in the person of Christ,—'but to the saints that are in the earth, in whom is all my delight.' There are saints, and there are excellent saints. Now those are the excellent ones, that are most rich in heavenly treasures; and these you should make your bosom friends, your choicest companions: Prov. xiii. 20, 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise;' that is, he shall be more wise, more humble, more holy, and more abounding in all spiritual riches. The word *הלך*, that is rendered *walk*, is an Hebrew participle, and signifies *walking*; to note to us, that it is not he that talks with the wise, nor he that commends the wise, nor he that takes a step or two or three with the wise, that shall be wise, but he that gives up himself to the society and company of the wise, that shall be more and more wise, more and more gracious, more and more holy. He that cometh where sweet spices or ointments are stirring, doth carry away some of the sweet savour, though himself think not of it. The spouse's lips drop as the honeycomb: Cant. iv. 10, 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver,' he scatters pearls, he throws abroad treasures where he comes: Prov. xv. 7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge.' The Hebrew word, *זרר*, from *zarah*, is a metaphor from scattering abroad with a fan, or from seedsmen scattering abroad of their seed in the furrows of the field. They scatter their light, their love, their experiences, among those with whom they converse, as seedsmen scatter their seed in the field. Christ says his spouse's lips are like a thread of scarlet, with talking of nothing but a crucified Christ; and thin like a thread, not swelled with other vain and wicked discourses.

The old zealous primitive Christians did so frequently, and so effectually mind and talk of the kingdom of heaven, and of the riches and glory of that state, that the Ethnicks¹ began to be a little jealous that they affected the Roman empire; when, alas,² their ambition was of another and a nobler nature: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh judgment; for the law of the Lord is in his heart.' Prov. xii. 28, 'The tongue of the wise is health, his tongue is a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinable.' No way to be rich in spirituals, like being much in with precious souls, whose tongues drop marrow and fatness.³

Utterance is a gift; and dumb Christians are blameworthy, as well as dumb ministers. We should all strive to a holy ability and dexterity of savoury discourse. If Christ should come to many of us, as he did to his two disciples, in that last of Luke, on Sabbath days and other times, and say to us, as to them, 'What manner of communication had ye,' or have ye? oh! with what paleness of face and sadness of countenance should we look! The story of *Loquere ut videam* is common. 'Speak that I may see thee,' said Socrates to a fair boy. When the

¹ 'Heathen.'—G.

² See Index, *sub voce*, for other similar uses of this interjection.—G.

³ The very heathen man could say, *Quando sapiens loquitur aurea animi aperit*, when a wise man speaketh, he openeth the rich treasures and wardrobe of his mind, &c. [Seneca often in the *Epistolæ*.—G.]

heart is full, it overfloweth in speech. We know metals by their tinkling, and men by their talking. Happy was that tongue in the primitive time, that could sound out *Aliquid Davidicum*, anything of David's doing; but much more happy is he that speaks out *Aliquid Christi*, anything of Christ from experience.

[7.] Seventhly, *If ever you would be spiritually rich, then take heed of eating or tasting of forbidden fruit.*

This stripped Adam of his crown, of his jewels, and of all his rich ornaments in a moment, and of the richest and greatest prince that ever breathed, made him the miserablest beggar that ever lived. Oh take heed of tasting of poison, of eating of poison. A person that hath ate poison will not thrive, let him take never such wholesome food. The choicest cordials will not increase blood, and spirits, and strength, but the man will throw up all. Poor souls that have been tasting of poison, are apt to find fault with the minister, and sometimes with this and that, as the cause of their not growing rich in spirituals; when, alas! the only cause is their eating of poison. These are like him in Seneca, that having a thorn in his foot, complained of the roughness of the way as the cause of his limping. Sirs, it is not the minister, nor this, nor that, but your eating of forbidden fruit, that is the cause of your non-thriving in spirituals. Sin is the soul's sickness, and nothing more prejudices growth than sickness. Christians, if ever you would be trees, not only having the leaves of honour, but the fruits of righteousness, then take heed of sin, abhor it more than hell, and fly from it as from your deadliest enemy, &c.¹

[8.] *Eighthly and lastly, Be sure to maintain a secret trade with God.*

You know many men come to be very rich in the world by a secret trade. Though many have not such an open trade as others, yet they have a more secret trade, and by that they gain very great estates, as many of you here in London know by experience.² Take it, friends, as an experienced truth, there is no such way under heaven, to be rich in spirituals, as by driving of a secret trade heaven-wards. It is true, it is good for men to attend upon this, and that, and the other public administration; for in all divine administrations God shews his beauty and glory. Ay, but such that delight to be more upon the public stage than in the closet, will never be rich in spirituals. They may grow rich in notions, but they will never grow rich in gracious experiences, Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3; xxvii. 4; lxxxiv. 10. Oh! God loves to see a poor Christian shut his closet door, Mat. vi. 6, and then to open his bosom, and pour out his soul before him. God hath very choice discoveries for souls that drive a secret trade; the best wine, the best dainties and delicates are for such. And I never knew any man or woman in my life, that was richer in grace, than those that were much in closet communion with God. Much of a Christian's spiritual strength lies in secret prayer, as Samson's did in his hair. Nothing charms Satan³ and weakens sin, like this. Secret prayers are the pillars of smoke wherein the soul ascendeth to God, out of the wilderness of this world. Secret

¹ Becanus tells us that the tree of knowledge was *ficus indica*, and that it bears many leaves and little fruit; and so it with those that taste and eat of forbidden fruit, &c.

² Acts x. 3, 9; Gen. xxi. 33; Exod. xiv. 15; 1 Sam. i. 13.

³ 'Charms away.'—G.

prayer is Jacob's ladder, where you have God descending down into the soul, and the soul sweetly ascending up to God. No way to be rich in spirituals like this. Therefore be sure to maintain and keep up a secret trade between God and your own souls. Oh let God hear often of you in secret. In Cant. vii. 5, 'The king is held in the galleries.' Oh! in the secret walks, the soul meets with the King of glory. Oh! there the soul hangs upon Christ; there the soul sucks and draws virtue from Christ; and there the soul is made rich with the riches of Christ. Christ is much delighted and taken with secret prayer: Cant. ii. 14, 'O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs,' that art got into a hole, 'let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is lovely.' Secret meals are very fattening, and secret duties are very soul-enriching. Christians! set more close to this work, and if you don't thrive by it, trust me no more. And thus you see by what means you may grow rich in grace.

3. The third thing I propounded to speak to was,

Some propositions concerning spiritual riches.

And the first proposition is this:

[1.] *All that do grow rich in grace, they grow rich gradually.*

The sun ascends by degrees; children, plants, and trees they grow by degrees; so do saints in spirituals. It is true, many men as to temporals, by the death of some friend, or this and that providence, grow rich in a sudden; but no soul that is rich in grace, but grows rich gradually. In Prov. iv. 18, 'But the path of the just is like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' He proceeds from virtue to virtue, until at length he shines like the sun in its strength. And so in Mal. iv. 2, 'Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings, and you shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.' Hosea xiv. 5-7, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.' I shall but hint at this now, because I have spoken more fully to it already, &c.

The second proposition is this:

[2.] *Few or none are rich in all graces.*

There are some men in the world that are generally rich, that are rich in money, and rich in land, and rich in goods, but where you have one man that is a general rich man in this sense, you have ten thousand that are only rich in some one thing, as money, goods, or land, &c.; so it is here. It is a hard thing, if possible, to find a soul that is generally rich; that is rich in every grace, that is rich in faith, and rich in wisdom, and rich in love, and rich in patience, &c. Abraham was rich in faith, and Job was rich in patience, and Moses was rich in meekness, and David was rich in zeal, &c; but none of these were rich in every grace. And so in these days you may find one Christian rich in one grace, and another Christian rich in another grace; but where will you find a Christian that is rich in every grace? Such that are rich in some graces, are yet very defective and lame in other graces. The saints

once at Rome were richer in wisdom and knowledge than the saints at Thessalonica, Rom. xv. 14; and the saints at Thessalonica were richer in faith, love, patience, and charity than the saints at Rome, 1 Thes. i. 4, ii. 8, compared with 2 Epistle i. 3, 4. It is with saints as with sinners, one sinner excels in one vice, another in another vice; so one saint excels in one virtue, and another in another virtue. One is rich in joy, in comfort; another is rich in humility, in fear; another in faith and hope; and another in love,¹ &c. And mark how this arises.

It arises sometimes from hence, that every saint doth endeavour to excel in that particular grace that is most opposite to his bosom sin. Now every saint's bosom sin is not alike. It may be pride is one man's bosom sin, and hypocrisy another man's bosom sin, &c. Now it is the very nature of grace to make a man strive to be most eminent in that particular grace that is most opposite to his bosom sin, and upon this account it comes to pass that one is rich in one grace, and another in another.

Again, some saints have frequent occasions to act and exercise such and such graces. Others are called forth to act such and such graces. Now the more any particular grace is acted, the more that particular grace is increased. Frequent acts cause a stronger habit both in graces and in sins. If all Christians should be rich in all graces, what difference would there be between heaven and earth? What need would there be of ordinances? And when would Christians long to be dissolved, and to be with Christ? &c.

The third proposition is this:

[3.] *Souls may be rich in grace, and yet not know it, and yet not perceive it.*

The child is heir to a crown, to a great estate, but knows it not. Moses his face did shine, and others saw it, but he perceived it not. So many a precious soul is rich in grace, and others see it, and know it, and bless God for it, and yet the poor soul perceives it not. Now because a right understanding of this may be of much use to some sadded, dejected souls, I will shew you how this comes to pass.

First, Sometimes it arises from *the soul's strong desires of spiritual riches*. The strength of the soul's desires after spiritual riches, doth often take away the very sense of growing spiritually rich. Many covetous men's desires are so strongly carried forth after earthly riches, that though they do grow rich, yet they cannot perceive it, they cannot believe it. It is just so with many a precious Christian; his desires after spiritual riches are so strong, that they take away the very sense of his growing rich in spirituals.² Many Christians have much worth within them, but they see it not. It was a good man that said, 'The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not,' &c. Gen. xxviii.

Again, This ariseth sometimes from *men's neglecting the casting up of their accounts*. Many men thrive and grow rich, and yet by neglecting the casting up of their accounts, they cannot tell whether they go

¹ No grace grows alike in all saints. In the parable some brought forth thirty, some sixty, some a hundred, &c.

² The sun ascends without perception; and so it is often in this supernatural motion, &c. The Greeks derive their word for desire from a root that signifies to burn. Now, if one should heap never so much fuel upon a fire, it would not quench it, but kindle it the more. The application is easy.

backward or forward. It is so with many precious souls; they grow in grace and are spiritually rich, and yet by neglecting the casting up of their accounts, they do not know it, they do not perceive it, &c.¹

Again, sometimes it ariseth from *the soul's too frequent casting up of its accounts*. If a man should cast up his accounts once a week or once a month, he may not be able to discern that he doth grow rich, and yet he may grow rich; but let him compare one year with another, and he shall clearly see that he doth grow rich. Though most are to blame for neglecting the casting up of their accounts, yet some are to blame for casting up their accounts too often; for by this means they are not able to perceive their spiritual growth, and so can neither be so thankful nor so cheerful as otherwise they might. Let there be some considerable time between your casting up of your accounts, and you will find that your souls are grown rich, though for the present you perceive it not.

But then *again*, sometimes it ariseth from *the soul's mistake in casting up of its accounts*. The soul many times mistakes; it is in a hurry; and there the soul puts down ten for a hundred, and a hundred for a thousand; as sometimes men in hurrying over their books, they slip and make mistakes, and so they think there is nothing got, whereas indeed there is much got, and in the close they shall find it so. Many a gracious soul many times takes a great deal of grace for a little, and little grace for no grace. Look, as hypocrites put down their counters for gold, their pence for pounds, and always prize themselves above the market; so sincere souls do often put down their pounds for pence, their thousands for hundreds, and still prize themselves below the market, &c.

The fourth proposition is this:

[4.] *That saints must endeavour to grow rich in every grace.*

It is the duty and the glory of saints to endeavour to grow rich in every grace. So the apostle, 2 Pet. i. 5 to 12, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,' &c. It is the work, the duty, the glory of a Christian, to be still adding one grace to another. So in chap. iii. 18, 'Grow in grace,' that is, in every grace, but more particularly and specially, 'in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

'Grow in grace.' That is, grow in love, in faith, in humility, in meekness, &c., but especially 'in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour,' because there was a special remedy against the error of those times, &c. All the graces that be in you are weak; and therefore you had need to strengthen them all.

Again, You have the seeds of all corruptions in you; and is there any way to be rid of every sin, but by thriving in every grace?

Again, You have opportunities as well to thrive in one grace as in another.

Again, Will not Satan labour might and main to keep your graces low and poor? You never hurt him less, you never honour Christ less, you never mind your work less, than when grace is weak and low. This he knows, and therefore labours to keep your graces down.

¹ Seneca reports of one Sextius, that he would every night ask himself these three questions: (1). What evil hast thou healed this day? (2). What vice hast thou stood against this day? (3). In what part art thou bettered this day? &c. [Quintus Sextius: in Seneca, Epist. lix. 6; lxiii. 11, 13; lxiv. 2; xxviii. 13; cviii. 17; and *De Ira*, ii. 36; iii. 36.—G.]

Again, are not you liable to several changes in this world? As, to be rich and poor, exalted and abased; now to relieve, and anon to be relieved; now well, and anon sick; now strong, and anon weak; now in storms, and anon in calms; now tempted, and anon delivered; now in one condition, and anon in another condition; now up, now down; now forward, now backward, &c. Now pray tell me, doth not the several changes and variety of providences that we meet with in this world bespeak us to be rich, not in some, but in every grace? Don't a state of prosperity bespeak a man to be rich in wisdom, rich in humility, rich in love, and rich in compassion, that his heart may be kept close to God in that state, and that he may do nothing unworthy of God, who hath done so much for him? And now, when God shall change the manner of his administrations towards such a man, when God shall put out his candle, pull off his robes, and clothe him with rags, and set him with Job upon the dunghill, don't this condition bespeak much patience, much contentation, much self-denial, much faith? How else will this man bravely bear up, when God shall write such bitter things against him, and pass the sentence of death upon his nearest and his dearest comforts? If a man be not rich in one grace as well as in another, when God shall bring changes upon him, and pour him from vessel to vessel, his life will be a burden, a hell to him, &c.¹

Again, consider this: growing rich in every grace renders a Christian most lovely and beautiful in grace; as a growth in all the members of the body renders the body most lovely and beautiful. The perfect beauty and comeliness of the body rises from the symmetry and fitness of the parts unto one another. Rare and excellent beauty ariseth from the comeliness of all parts. If one part be comely, and another deformed, then there is no perfect beauty. Well, remember this, there is no such beautiful Christians as those that grow rich in every grace. Oh! they are the beauty of Christ, the honour of the gospel, and the glory of Christianity.

And so much for the fourth proposition, viz. that we must labour to be rich in every grace.

The fifth proposition that I shall lay down is this,

[5.] *Saints should labour more particularly and more especially to be rich in faith.*

Though it is of concernment to believers to be rich in every grace, yet it is of special concernment to them to labour to be rich in this particular grace of faith. In Jude, ver. 20, 'Building up yourselves in your most holy faith.' It is not enough to have faith, but they must build up themselves and build up one another 'in their most holy faith.'

There are three things that the Scripture calls precious:

First, The blood of Christ: in 1 Peter i. 19, 'Ye are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.'

¹ Whilst Pompey prospered, and Rome flourished, Cato stoutly held and defended a divine providence; but when he saw Pompey overthrown by Cæsar, his body cast upon the shore without honour of burial, and himself exposed to the danger of Cæsar's army, he changed his opinion, denying that there was a divine providence, but that all things fell out by chance, &c.

Secondly, The promises are called precious promises : 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.'

Thirdly, Faith is called precious faith : ver. 1, 'Unto them that have obtained like precious faith with us.' Now, though it be of concernment for every saint to labour to be rich in every grace, yet more especially and more particularly to be rich in this grace of faith ; and that upon this account that follows :

(1.) *First*, Because that faith is *the soul's greatest and choicest fence against her worst enemies.*

In Eph. vi. 16, 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

'Above all, take the shield of faith.' Neglect no part of your armour, but above all, look to the shield of faith. Look, what the shield is to the body, that is faith to a believer's soul, to secure him against all the fierce and fiery darts of Satan.

It is reported of Satan that he should say of a learned man, *Tu me semper vincis*, 'Thou dost always overcome me. When I would exalt and promote thee, thou keepest thyself in humility ; and when I would throw thee down, thou liftest thyself up in assurance of faith.' Faith makes the soul invincible ; it makes the soul victorious ; it leads captivity captive ; it binds Satan in chains ; it foils him at every weapon ; and therefore, above all, labour to be rich in faith.

(2.) *Secondly*, *Growth in faith will advance the growth of all other graces.*

All other graces thrive in the soul as faith thrives, and no otherwise. Be rich in this, and be rich in all ; be weak in this, and be weak in all. Faith hath an influence upon all other graces ; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearls ; it puts strength and vivacity into all other graces. You never knew a man rich in any grace that hath not been rich in faith. Every man's hope, joy, fear, love, humility, patience, &c., is as his faith is. In Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for ;' or, as the Greek hath it, *ὑπόστασις*, 'the substance of things hoped for.' All other graces live upon faith's cost and charge. Look, what the breast is to the child, wings to the bird, oil to the wheels, and the soul to the body, that is faith to all other graces in the soul of man.

It is reported of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and a beauty upon them. I am sure it is true of faith. There is such a divine virtue and power in faith, that it will quicken and cast a lustre and a beauty upon all other graces in the soul of man ; and therefore you should labour as for life to be rich in this particular grace of faith.

(3.) *Thirdly*, consider this, *Of all graces that be in the soul of man, faith is the most useful grace ; and therefore you should, above all, labour to be rich in faith.*

It is a Christian's right eye, without which he cannot see for Christ ; it is his right hand, without which he cannot do for Christ ; it is his tongue, without which he cannot speak for Christ ; it is his very vital spirits, without which he cannot act for Christ.

Some say that king Midas had obtained of the gods, that whatsoever he touched should be turned into gold. I am sure that whatever faith

toucheth, it turneth into gold, that is, into our good. If our faith touches the promises, it turns them into our good; whatsoever faith lays its hand upon, it appropriates to itself, and turns it into the soul's good. If faith looks upon God, it saith, 'This God is my God for ever and ever, and he shall be my guide unto death,' Ps. lxxiii. 1; lxxxix. 26. When it looks upon Christ, it saith with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John xx. 28. When it looks upon the crown of righteousness, it saith, 'This crown is laid up for me,' &c. Faith is bread to nourish us, and wine to cheer us, and a cordial to strengthen us. Faith is a sword to defend us, a guide to direct us, a staff to support us, a plaster to heal us, a friend to comfort us, and a golden key to open heaven unto us. Faith, of all graces, is the most useful grace to the soul of man. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6; iv. 2. All those services are lost, wherein faith hath not a hand. You may write loss upon all the prayers you make, and upon all the sermons you hear, and upon all the tears you shed, and upon all the alms you give, if all be not managed by a hand of faith.

(4.) *Fourthly*, You should labour above all to be rich in faith, *because faith is that princely grace that Christ is most taken with.*

Cant. iv. 9, 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,'—that is, with that piercing eye of faith that looks up to my mercy-seat—'with one chain of thy neck.'

There are two things that with open mouth speak out Christ to be most taken with the faith of his people.

And the *first* is, his uncrowning himself to crown his people's faith. Christ doth often take the crown off his own head, and put it upon the head of faith. Witness such passages as these, which are frequent in Scripture, 'Thy faith hath healed thee,' 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' 'Thy faith hath made thee whole,' &c. Christ takes the crown off his own head, and puts it upon the head of faith; and no wonder; for of all graces, faith takes the crown off a man's own head, and puts it on the head of Christ. Man naturally is apt to crown anything but Christ. He is apt to crown his prayers, and crown his desires, and crown his endeavours, &c. Oh but now faith acts like a king of kings, and uncrowns all, and sets the crown upon the head of Christ.

And then a *second* thing that speaks out Christ to be most taken with the grace of faith is this, that he overlooks all other graces in comparison of faith, as you may see in the Canaanite woman, Mat. xv. 21–29. The poor woman shews a great deal of compassion, a great deal of wisdom, a great deal of humility, a great deal of love, and a great deal of self-denial; but in the close saith Christ, 'O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' He doth not say, O woman, great is thy love; nor, O woman, great is thy wisdom; nor, O woman, great is thy humility and self-denial; nor, O woman, great is thy patience, &c.; but, 'O woman, great is thy faith! He overlooks, as it were, all other graces, and sets the crown upon the head of faith: 'O woman, great is thy *faith*.' So in Mark v., the woman that had a bloody issue twelve years comes to Christ for cure, and in the close of the story saith Christ to her, 'Woman, thy faith hath made thee whole.' He doth not say, Woman, thy pressing hard to come to me hath made thee whole, but 'Thy *faith* hath made thee whole.' He doth not say, Woman,

thy earnest desires and endeavours to be made whole hath made thee whole, but 'Thy *faith* hath made thee whole.' He doth not say, 'Woman, thy fear and trembling hath made thee whole, but 'Thy *faith* hath made thee whole,' &c. So in Luke vii. 50, 'Thy *faith* hath saved thee, go in peace.' Though she wept much, and loved much, yet Christ doth not say, 'Thy tears have saved thee, thy sorrow hath saved thee.' He doth not say, 'Thy humility, thy charity hath saved thee; but 'O woman, thy *faith* hath saved thee.' Christ overlooks all other graces, as it were, and casts a lovely¹ eye upon the grace of faith, &c.

(5.) And then again, in the *fifth* place, you should above all labour to be rich in faith, *because of all graces in the soul of man, faith makes him most lively and active.*

There is no grace, I say, no grace in the soul of man, that makes him so full of life and action, as the grace of faith. Faith is the *primum mobile*, the first pin, the first wheel that moves all the golden wheels of obedience. In Heb. xi., you read what those worthies did; they left their country, their kindred, upon a bare command of God. Faith hath Rachel's eye, but Leah's womb; it makes souls very fruitful in ways of well-doing. Faith is as the spring in the watch, that moves the wheels. Not a grace stirs till faith sets it on work. Faith is like Solomon's virtuous woman, that sets all her maidens on work. Faith sets joy on work. 'Abraham desired to see my day, and saw it, and rejoiced.' Faith sets love on work; it works by love; Gal. v. 6, it sets hope on work, Rom. viii. 24, 25; it sets godly sorrow at work, Zech. xii. 10; it sets patience at work. I believe that God is wise and loving, and what he doth is out of some noble design to do my soul good; this spins out patience. Faith fits a man to do, to suffer, to wait, to walk, &c., therefore labour above all to be rich in faith.²

(6.) And then, *sixthly*, of all graces, faith renders the soul most *invincible*; and therefore you should labour above all to be rich in faith.

It renders the soul invincible and unconquerable under all the hardships and trials it meets with in this world. Faith makes a man triumph in all the changes and conditions of this life. It was their faith that made them invincible in Dan. iii. 16-18, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.' And so Daniel's faith stopped the lion's mouth; it made him too strong for the strongest beasts of prey, as you may see in Dan. vi. Though the enemies of a believer are very subtle, strong, and experienced, and though the battle be hot and long, yet a soul rich in faith shall have the day. Faith will render a believer victorious in the close: 'He may suffer death,' as Cyprian said to Cornelius, 'but never conquest.'³ Faith renders the soul a lion,

¹ 'Loving.'—ED.

² True faith puts forth itself into vital operations. Ferdinand of Arragon believed the story told him by Columbus, and therefore he furnished him with ships, and got the West Indies by his faith in the undertaking. But Henry the 7th of England believed him not, and therefore trusted him not with shipping, and so lost all the purchase of that faith; which purchase may yet be recovered, if the Lord shall please to own and crown the just and noble design of General Pen, &c. ³ *Mori posse, vinci non posse.*—Cyprian.

a rock, &c. It is reported of some of the Roman and Grecian captains, that they proved always victorious, and were never beaten by any. Such is the nature of faith; it renders a soul victorious in all engagements. In all engagements faith brings a man bravely off, and enables him to keep his ground, and triumph.¹ Ps. lx. 6-10, 'God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me,' &c. It is not great resolutions, nor big words, nor high looks, but faith, that will make a man stand fast in shaking times. No hand can put the garland upon a Christian, but the hand of faith, &c. Faith alters the tenses, it puts the future into the present; Gilead is mine, &c.

(7.) And then, *seventhly*, above all labour to be rich in faith, *because Satan will labour might and main to weaken your faith.*

Oh! the great design of Satan is not so much to weaken you in externals, as it is to weaken you in internals. Satan can be contented that men should have their heads full of notions, and their mouths full of religion, and their bags full of gold, and their chests full of silver, and their shops full of wares, so their souls be either void of faith, or but poor and low in faith. Satan's greatest plot is to weaken the faith of Christians. Luke xxii. 31, 32, 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Satan hath an aching tooth at thy faith; his design is upon that; he will labour might and main to weaken that, to frustrate that, and therefore 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not.' Satan knows that *nihil retinet qui fidem perdidit.*

(8.) And then, *eighthly*, consider this, of all graces, faith *contributes most to the bringing down of mercies and blessings upon yourselves and friends*; and therefore you should above all labour to be rich in this particular grace of faith.

Faith contributes to the bringing down of blessings upon ourselves. In Dan. vi. 23, 'Daniel was delivered,' saith the text, 'because he believed in his God.' It was his faith, and not his prayers; it was his faith, and not his tears; it was his faith, and not his sighs that stopt the lion's mouths, and wrought deliverance for him. So in Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' So in 2 Chron. xx. 20, 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper,' and so they did. That is a very famous scripture to this purpose, 2 Chron. xiii. 15-17, 'Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam, and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. And Abijah and his people slew with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.' Here was a great slaughter; no wars, no slaughters comparable to those the Scripture speaks of.

¹ As may be fully seen in the Book of Martyrs, and in Heb. xi. [Foxe and Clarke, as before.—G.]

And the reason is rendered, verse 18, 'Because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.' Were men more rich in faith, they would be more rich in other blessings, &c. And as faith is the only way to bring down a blessing upon ourselves, so faith is the only way to bring down blessings upon our friends and relations. Though another man cannot be saved by my faith, yet he may be blessed with many blessings, upon the account of my faith. In Mat. xv. 22-29, it was the Canaanitish woman's faith that brought a blessing of healing upon her daughter. And so in Mat. viii. 6-14, the centurion's faith healed his servant that was sick of a palsy, 'and from that very hour he was healed.' The servant got well by his master's faith. And so likewise in Mark ix., the faith of the father prevailed for the dispossessing of his son. 'If thou canst believe,' saith Christ, 'all things are possible.' And the poor man said with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' And presently Christ charged the foul spirit to come out of him, &c. A believing husband, a believing wife, a believing child, or a believing servant, may bring down, by the actings of faith, many a blessing upon their relations. Faith hath a happy hand, and never but speeds in one kind or another. It hath what it would, either in money or money's worth.

Apollonius, saith Sozomen, never asked anything of God, either for himself or his friends, but he had it. And one pointing to Luther said, 'There is a man can have anything of God that he will ask.' Faith hath a kind of omnipotency in it, it is able to do all things, &c.

And as faith brings down blessings upon our own heads and the heads of our friends, so it often brings down wrath upon our enemies. There is nothing contributes so much to our enemies' ruin as faith doth. I am confident it hath neither been armies, nor navies, nor parliaments, that have had the chief hand in bringing down the proud and stout enemies of Christ and Zion, in this and other nations, but the faith of his despised people. One enemy may stand before the face of another, but what enemy can stand before the face and power of faith? That is a remarkable scripture, Heb. xi. 33, 'Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens.' Other means were used, but that which did the work, and struck all dead, was faith. Faith engages God in every encounter, and who can stand before a consuming fire?¹

Polybius, speaking of Horatius his keeping of the field against his enemies' forces, saith, 'That his enemies were more afraid of his faith than of his warlike strength.' And truly there is nothing that renders men more dreadful to an understanding enemy than their faith. Oh! it is brave for men to believe down the power of darkness, to believe down those that war against the Lamb, &c. No way to get an enemy down like this; nor no way to keep an enemy down like this; no way to save a kingdom like this; nor no way to keep a kingdom like this. The nation is beholden to none so much as to believing souls. O England! England! thou hadst long before this been a prey to men that

¹ Mary Queen of Scots, that was mother to king James, was wont to say that she feared Master Knox's prayers, who was a man of much faith, more than an army of ten thousand men.

delight in blood, had it not been for the faith of the worm Jacob, &c. Christians! as you would have Christ, go on and do more and more for England; as you would be crowned with the choicest and the chiefest blessings, and as you would have vengeance executed upon all that hate, that wage war against and persecute Christ and the saints, be mighty in believing.

(9.) Ninthly and lastly, *Faith is a root grace; and will the branches flourish if the root wither?*

Oh! therefore, water this root, have an eye to this root. If you have a choice root in any of your gardens, oh how careful are you of it! you will mind it and water it and look to it, &c. Well, of all graces faith is the root grace, and if this die you will find your graces to languish. Your hope, love, fear, patience, humility, joy, &c., can never outlive your faith. These live together and they die together; therefore, above all, labour to be rich in faith, for this is a root grace, and if this flourish all other graces will flourish; but if this decay, all other graces will lose their strength, beauty, glory, &c.

And thus much for the fifth proposition. We come now to the *sixth* proposition, and that is this:

[6.] *That no gracious souls do at all times alike grow and thrive in spiritual riches.*

A child sometimes shoots up more in a month than he doth at other times in many months, and sometimes more in a year than he does afterwards in many years. And do not plants and trees sometimes shoot up more in a week than in many, &c. So, many a Christian thrives more, and gets more spiritual riches in one month than in many, in one year than in many. I appeal to your experiences, Christians! don't you find it so? I know you do. To cite Scripture to prove this would be to cast water into the sea, and to light candles to see the sun at noon. Sin and Satan do sometimes work more violently and more strongly in the souls of saints than at other times. Now, when sin and Satan work most, and prevail most, then grace thrives least. As the life of grace is the death of sin, and the growth of grace the decay of sin, so the increase of sin is the decay of grace, and the strengthening of sin is the weakening of grace.

Again, No saints have at all times alike gales of the Spirit of God, and therefore they do not grow in spiritual riches at all times alike. No ships have at all times the same gales of wind, &c. A man thrives in spiritual riches as the gales of the Spirit of God are upon him, and no otherwise. When the Spirit of the Lord doth blow most sweetly and strongly upon his heart, then his graces thrive and flourish most, then those beds of spices do yield the most fragrant smell; but when the Spirit of the Lord doth withdraw and withhold his influences, how doth the strength and glory of grace wither and decay! Latimer said of the Spirit, that it is coming and going, &c.

The herb *heliotropium* doth turn about, and open and shut, according to the motion of the sun; so do the graces of the saints according to the internal gales, motions, and operations of the Spirit, &c.

Again, no saints have at all times the like external advantages and opportunities of growing rich in spirituals. They have not the word, it may be, in that power and life as formerly; or it may be they enjoy

not the communion of saints as formerly; or if they do, yet perhaps those that have formerly been as fire to warm and inflame them, are now become water to cool them, and deaden them; or it may be they have not those advantages for closet duties as formerly; or it may be, the course of nature is changed; and if so, it is no wonder that they thrive not in spirituals as formerly. When children have not as good food, and as good lodging, and as good looking after as at other times, no wonder if they thrive not as at other times. When men have not the same advantages and opportunities to grow rich in the world as formerly, do we wonder that they thrive not as before? Surely no.

And sometimes this arises from the breaking of some bone by sin. David found it so. Many a man, by breaking a bone, is much hindered from thriving in the world. Oh! this broken arm, this broken leg, hath cost me many a fair pound which otherwise I might have got. Oh friends! sin is the breaking of the bones, the breaking of a man's peace and communion with God; it is the breaking of his hope and confidence in God; it is the disjoining of a man from God; and so it hinders a man's spiritual growth: Isa. lix. 1, 2; chap. lxiv. 7; Gal. vi. 1. Believe it, Christians! if you play and dally with sin, if you fall in with sin, if you make one with sin, you will never grow rich in spirituals. Sin will cause such a breaking of bones, as will undoubtedly hinder the prosperity of your souls. And so much for the sixth proposition.

[7.] The *seventh* and last proposition that I shall propound is this: *A man may grow rich in those graces that are more remote from Christ, that are less conversant about Christ, when he doth not grow rich in those graces, that, as special favourites, stand always at the elbow of Christ, and are most busied and conversant about Christ.* Let me open it thus to you:

You know at court there are some that have the honour to attend always at the prince's elbow, and there are others that appertain to the same prince, but are more remote in their employments for him, &c. So in the soul, there are some graces that are more remote, and not so conversant about the person of Christ, as now humility, self-denial, patience, meekness, temperance, sobriety, and the like. Now, though these graces do appertain to the same prince, though they are all servants of the Lord Jesus, yet notwithstanding they are more remote, and busied about other objects and things. Oh! but now faith and love are choice favourites, that always stand at the elbow of Christ. Faith and love are Christ's greatest favourites in heaven. Now I say, a Christian may grow rich in those graces that are more remote from Christ, that are less conversant about the person of Christ, when he doth not grow rich in those particular graces that are most active about the person of Christ. He may grow rich in humility, in self-denial, in meekness, in temperance, &c., when he doth not grow up in joy and delight and comfort, &c. The tree grows downward, when it doth not grow upward; so a soul may grow rich in some particular graces, when he doth not grow rich in other graces. He may grow rich in those graces that are more remote from Christ, when he doth not grow rich in those graces that are more conversant about the person of Christ. Some limbs and branches of a tree grow more than others.

And so I have done with these propositions; the serious minding of

them may prevent many objections, and to many give satisfaction in several cases, &c.

The fourth and last thing propounded was, to give you,

4. *Some notes of a person that is spiritually rich.*

Clearly, as there are few worldly rich men to those that are poor, so there are few in this professing age, that will be found to be spiritually rich, compared with the multitude of Laodiceans that swarm in these times. We have many that say they are rich, and that think they are rich, when the truth is they have either no grace, or but a very little grace; and these five following things do clearly evidence it, &c.

[1.] First, *Rich men have more variety of objects to delight themselves with, than poor men have.*

They have houses and gardens, and lands and cattle, and silver and gold, and jewels and pearls, and what not, to delight themselves with. Oh! but poor men have not such variety of objects to delight themselves with, as rich men have. It is just thus in spiritual riches. A man that is rich in grace hath more variety of spiritual objects, about which his soul is most conversant, than a man that is poor in grace. He hath more objects of love, of joy, of delight, of content, to busy and exercise his soul about, than others that are weak in grace: 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'Enjoying nothing, and yet possessing all things.' A soul rich in grace possesses and enjoys all things in Christ, and Christ in all things. They enjoy all good in him who is the chiefest good, who is the spring and fountain of good. Joseph, in Pharaoh's court, had more variety of objects to delight him, than his brethren had to delight themselves in their father's house, &c.

I have spoken largely to this already, and therefore shall content myself in giving you this hint. It stands upon you to inquire what variety of objects you have to delight your souls in. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Rich men can reach to those things that poor men cannot reach to.*

I would have such and such things, saith the poor man, as the rich man hath; I would fare as he fares, and wear as he wears, and do as he doth, but my stock will not reach it. So a soul that is spiritually rich can reach to those things that one that is poor in grace cannot reach unto. He can reach to those joys, to those comforts, and to those contents, to those heights of communion with God, and to those visions and apprehensions of God, that a soul that is not rich in grace cannot reach to. Oh! I would fain have that comfort, and that joy, and that peace, and that communion with God, and those visions of God, that such and such souls have, saith a poor Christian; but I cannot; my stock will not reach to it. It is an argument a man is grown higher, when he can reach higher than he could before, whether it be a beam or a pin, &c. So it is an argument, that a soul is grown rich in grace, when he can reach beyond what formerly he could reach unto; when he can reach beyond his enlargements, beyond his in-comes, beyond his comforts, to a Christ; when in duty, he can reach above duty; when in an ordinance, he can reach to Christ, above the ordinance; when under enlargements, he can reach above enlargements, to Jesus Christ. Oh! but now a man that hath but a little grace, he can rarely reach above his duties, above ordinances, above enlargements, to Christ. He

is very apt to sit down and warm himself with the sparks of his own fire, and to feed upon ashes, as the prophet speaks, Isa. l. 11, xlv. 20, &c. But now, a soul that is rich in grace, says, Well! these ordinances are not Christ, these refreshings are not Christ, these meltings are not Christ, these enlargements are not Christ; these are sweet, but he is more sweet; these are very precious, but he is most precious. And thus those that are spiritually rich do out-reach all others, &c.¹

[3.] Thirdly, *Rich men can with more ease and pleasure bear burdens, than poor men can.*

When taxes and burdens are laid upon poor men, they sigh, and shrug, and complain that they are not able to bear them, when rich men make nothing of them. So souls that are rich in grace can bear burdens without a burden; they can bear crosses, afflictions, and persecutions, with abundance of ease, cheerfulness, and contentedness of spirit; they do not shrug, nor grumble, but bear the greatest trials with greatest sweetness, as you may see in Acts v., 'They went out rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.' So Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.' 'I take pleasure.' The Greek word is an emphatical word, εὐδοκῶ; it is the same word that God the Father uses to express his infinite delight in his Son: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' or, 'in whom I am infinitely delighted.' The same word the apostle uses to express the wonderful delight that he took under all his sufferings; he rejoices and leaps under all his burdens. Oh! but now a soul that is poor in grace, he cannot bear a burden without a burden; every light affliction turns him, and sinks him; every molehill is a mountain; every scratch on the hand is a stab at the heart; every wave is a sea, and the poor Christian sighs and groans, and cries out, Oh! no sorrow to my sorrow! no loss to my loss! no cross to my cross! but souls rich in grace act quite contrary, as hath been hinted and proved, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, *Rich men are most envied.*

History and Scripture speak out this, as well as our own experience. The rich man above all others is the greatest object of envy, and it is as true that such that are most rich in spirituals are of all men the most envied. Moses and Aaron were rich in spirituals, and oh, how were they envied by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and other wicked wretches! Ezra, Nehemiah, and Mordecai, were rich in spirituals, and who more envied? Among all the prophets and apostles, those have been most envied, that have most abounded in spiritual worth; and to this very day, none are such objects of scorn and envy, as those that have most of Christ within. Men that have more leaves than fruit, that have a golden outside, but a threadbare inside, are less envied than those that are 'all glorious within.'² Men of greatest excellencies, are the main objects upon which the eye of envy is placed, Ps. xlv. 13. Saul's envious eye was placed upon David, and Cain's upon Abel, and Esau's upon Jacob, and Herod's upon John, and the Pharisees' upon

¹ A tree that is well grown stands it out in the worst storms; it bends not, it breaks not, &c.

² It was said of Cæsar and Pompey, that the one could not endure a superior, nor the other an equal. [Plutarch: Julius Cæsar.—G.]

Christ. Envious souls are like the ravens, that fly over the sweet garden, and light upon the stinking carrion. Envy doth ever ascend; it never descends. An envious man can with more ease die miserably, than see another live happily. An envious heart weeps to see others' mercies, and joys to see others' miseries. An envious heart is like the mermaid,¹ which never sings but in a storm, and never mourns but in a calm. An envious man cannot endure those excellencies in others that he wants in himself; he loves not any light that outshines his own, any crown that outweighs his own, &c. Socrates calls envy *Serram animæ*, the soul's saw, &c.

Cimon, the famous general of the Athenian commonwealth, hearing a friend of his highly commending his martial achievements, answered, 'That they were not worthy of commendations, because they were not envied,' &c.

[5.] Fifthly, *Rich men are most tempted and assaulted.*

Pirates do not use to set upon empty vessels, but those that are most richly laden; and beggars need not fear the thief, though the rich man do. Those that have been most rich in spirituals, have been most assaulted and tempted by Satan. Witness Abraham, Job, Joshua, Peter, Paul, yea, Christ himself. The best men have always been most and worst tempted. None so much in the school of temptation, as those that are most rich in grace. There are none that are such blocks, such mountains in Satan's ways, as these; none do him that mischief as these; none are so active and so resolute in their oppositions against him as they, &c.; and therefore none so assaulted and tempted as they.² And thus by these five things you may know whether you are rich in grace or no.

Use 2. The next use is this:

If the Lord Jesus Christ be so rich, *then do not join anything with him, in the great work of your redemption and salvation.*

There are riches enough in Christ to pay all your debts, and to satisfy divine justice to the utmost farthing, without being beholden to your prayers, tears, or humiliations. Christ will be *Alexander* or *Nemo* on earth. Kings love no consorts; power is impatient of participation.

When Augustus Cæsar desired the senate to join two consuls with him, for the carrying on the government of the state, the senators answered, 'That they held it a diminution to his dignity to join any with so incomparable a man as Augustus Cæsar was.' [Suetonius].

Was it a diminution to his dignity to join others with him in the government of the state? And is it not a diminution of the dignity and glory of Christ, to join your actions and your endeavours with his blood, in the business of your redemption? In Isa. lxiii. 3, 'I have trodden the wine-press *alone*; and of the people there was *none* with me.' And in Isa. xliv. 24, 'Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.' It is a sad reproach to Christ to join anything with him in the great business of your salvation; therefore abhor it

¹ Spelled 'mearmaid.'—G.

² God and Satan will try to the utmost those particular graces wherein any Christian does excel, &c.

more than hell itself : let Christ be all in all. We must say of Christ as it was once said of Cæsar, *Socium habet neminem*, He may have a companion, but he must not have a competitor, &c.

Again, Thirdly,

Use 3. If Christ be so rich, *then take heed of three things.*

(1.) *First*, Take heed of *sitting down dejected and discouraged under any losses or troubles that do befall you, or that have or shall befall you for the name of Christ.*

Christ is generally rich ; he is able to make up all your losses and wants : Philip. iv. 19, 'But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ,' as he did the widow's vessel. The fountain hath not the less water for the vessel it fills, nor the sun the less light for that it gives forth to the stars ; so the Lord Jesus Christ hath never a whit the less for what he gives forth unto his saints.

When Zedislaus, the king of Poland's general, had lost his hand in his service, the king sent him a golden hand. Ah, Christians ! when you lose this or that for him, he will send you a golden hand ; if you lose a penny for him, he will give you a pearl. Christ will not live long in any man's debt ; if he should, he would lose his glory, &c.

(2.) *Secondly*, If the Lord Jesus be very rich, *Oh then take heed of despairing by reason of your sins.*

I confess, the least sin should humble the soul, but certainly the greatest sin should never discourage the soul, much less should it work the soul to despair. Read 1 Tim. i. 13-15, and despair, I had almost said, if thou can'st. Despairing Judas perished, Acts ii, whenas the murderers of Christ, believing on Christ, were saved. Despair is a sin exceeding vile and contemptible ; it is a word of eternal reproach, dishonour, and confusion ; it declares the devil a conqueror ; and what greater dishonour can be done to Christ, than for a soul to proclaim before all the world the devil a crowned conqueror ? A despairing soul is *magor missabib*, a terror to himself ; his heart a hell of horror ; his conscience an *aceldama*, a field of black blood. He hath no rest at home nor abroad, at bed nor board, but is as if infernal devils followed him in fearful shapes, terrifying and tormenting his perplexed soul. Eternity of misery, feared or felt, begets that monster which, like Medusa's head, astonisheth with its very aspect, and strangles hope, which is the breath of the soul. As it is said, *dum spiro, spero*, so it may be inverted, *dum spero, spiro* ; other miseries may wound the spirit, but despair kills it dead, &c.¹

(3.) *Thirdly*, If Christ be so rich, *then take heed of presuming.*

Take heed of taking encouragement to sin upon this account, that Christ is rich in grace and mercy. Christ is a lion as well as a lamb ; he hath a sword as well as a sceptre. To argue from the riches of mercy to sinful liberty is the devil's logic. A soul that thus reasons is a soul left of God, a soul that is upon the last step of the ladder, a soul that Satan hath by the hand ; and the eternal God knows whither he will lead him. What the women sung of Saul and David, that 'Saul had slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,' 1 Sam. xviii.

¹ 'My sin is greater than can be forgiven,' saith Cain. Thou liest, Cain, saith Augustine ; for God's mercy is greater than the sins of all men, and it is a great injury to God to distrust of his mercy. [*In loco.*—G.]

6, 7, that I may say of despair and presumption, 'Despair hath slain her thousand, but presumption hath slain her ten thousand.' 'Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Rom. vi. 1, 2. As the beams of the sun, shining on the fire, put out the fire, so the shinings of God's mercy on us should extinguish sin in us, as the apostle argues, 2 Peter iii. 15, from Paul, Rom. ii. 4. Christ seems to say to souls, as Theseus said once, 'Go,' says he, 'and tell Creon, Theseus offers thee a gracious offer, yet I am pleased to be friends, if thou wilt submit. This is my first message, but if this offer prevail not, look for me to be up in arms.' Ah souls! if you shall abuse the riches of grace to a presumptuous sinning against Christ, Christ will take up arms, and you shall die for it.

The next use is this:

Use 4. If Christ be so rich, Oh! then, open to Christ when he knocks.

Christ knocks by his word, and he knocks by his rod; he knocks by his Spirit, and he knocks by his messengers, and he knocks by conscience. Oh, open to him! for he is very rich. Though you shut the door against a poor man, yet you will open it to one that is rich; and why not then to Christ, who would fain have entrance? Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

'Behold, I stand.' I that am the King of glory, I that am 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' Ps. xxiv. 7-9, Rev. xvii. 14. I that am rich in mercy, rich in goodness, rich in grace, rich in glory, 'I stand at the door and knock.' I that have gold to enrich you, I that have eye-salve to enlighten you, I that have glorious apparel to clothe you, I that have mercy to pardon you, I that have power to save you, I that have wisdom to counsel you, I that have happiness to crown you, 'I stand at the door and knock.'

'If any man open.' If the master will not, yet if the servant will; if the mistress will not, yet if the maid will; if the parent will not, yet if the child will; if the rich man will not, yet if the poor man will; if the pharisee won't, yet if the publican will;

'I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me.' Jesus Christ hath the greatest worth and wealth in him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold, so all the heavenly excellencies that are scattered abroad in angels and men, are united in Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfection which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in Christ.

They say it is true of the oil at Rheems, that though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never wastes. Christ is a pot of manna, a cruse of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comforts and contents that never fail. A saint may say, 'In having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ. Having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward.'

And then again,

Use 5. If Christ be so rich, then sit down and wonder at his condescending love.

That one so rich should fall in love with such that are poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, Rev. iii. 17-21, &c.; that one so high

should look so low as poor we ; that one so great, that one who is the Lord and heir of all, should match with us that have nothing at all. ' O the breadth, the length, the depth, the height ' of Christ's love to unlovely souls ! to such that had neither portion nor proportion ; that had neither external nor internal worth that might in the least draw his love towards them, Heb. i. 2-4, Philip. iii. 17-19, &c., Ezek. vi. 16. You were indebted to God for the clothes you wear, for the bread you eat, for the houses you live in, the air you breathe in, the beds you lie on, the ground you tread on, &c. Now for Christ to love such, and to be willing to bestow himself upon such nothings, oh ! how should this work them to spend their days in admiring and contemplating upon his kindness and goodness !

I have read a story of an elephant, who being fallen down, and unable to help himself or get up again, by reason of the inflexibleness of his legs, a forester coming by helped him up, wherewith the elephant, by the very instinct of nature, was so affected, that he followed this man, would do anything for him, and never left him till his dying day.¹ The application is easy.

The next use that we shall make of this point is this.

Use 6. If Christ be so rich as hath been discovered to you, *then prize Christ above all.*

As the people prized David above themselves, saying, ' Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' 2 Sam. xviii. 3, so should saints lift up Jesus Christ above themselves, and above everything below himself. He that lifts not Christ up above all hath no interest in Christ at all ; he that sets not Christ above all is not a disciple of Christ : Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Surely they do not truly love Christ who love anything more than Christ.²

It was a notable saying of Jerome, ' If my father should hang upon me, my brethren should press round about me, and my mother should stand before me, I would throw down my father, I would break through my brethren, and I would trample upon my mother, to come to Christ.'

Other saints have lifted up Christ above all their lands, relations, and lives, as you may see in Heb. xi. ; and so did a multitude of the martyrs under the ten persecutions, &c. As Pharaoh set up Joseph above all, and made him governor of the land, and as Darius set up Daniel over all, so you must prize Christ, and set up Christ above all.

Remember a few things, that this may the better stick upon your hearts.

[1.] First, *A Christ highly prized will be a Christ greatly delighted in.*

Every soul delights in Christ as he prizes Christ, and no otherwise. The reason of reasons why Christ is no more delighted in, is because he is no more prized among the sons of men : Cant. ii. 5, ' As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my well-beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleasant to my taste.' The seeing of this object delights the eye of a believer,

¹ Love is like fire, very operative. *Si non operatur, non est.*

² Austin saith he would willingly go through hell to Christ. . . . *Certe non amant illi Christum, qui aliquid plus quam Christum amant.*

the hearing of this object delights the ear of a believer, the enjoying, the possessing of this object delights the heart of a believer: 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight.'

The apple-tree is delightful for shadow, so is Christ; he is a shadow to poor souls when they are scorched with troubles within and terrors without: Isa. xxxii. 2, 'And a man,' that is, Christ, 'shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and as a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'

The apple-tree is delightful for pleasantness of fruit, so is the Lord Jesus for those pleasant fruits of righteousness and holiness that grow upon him.

And the apple-tree is delightful for varieties, so is Christ; for there are all varieties of excellencies in himself: Col. i. 19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' We delight in persons and things as we prize them, and no otherwise. Jonathan highly prized David, and delighted in him accordingly. Jacob highly prized Rachel, and delighted in her answerably. You will delight in Christ as you prize him; if you prize him but a little, you will delight in him but a little.

[2.] *Secondly*, Remember this, *a Christ highly prized will be a Christ gloriously obeyed.*

Every man obeys Christ as he prizeth Christ, and no otherwise. The higher price any soul sets upon Christ, the more noble will that soul be in his obedience to Christ. If Christ were more prized in the world, he would be more obeyed in the world. A soul that highly prizeth Christ is better at obeying than at disputing any command of Christ. If Christ will command such a soul to step over the world's crown to take up his cross, the soul will do it, as you may see in Moses, Heb. xi. 24-26. He sets a higher price upon Christ's cross than upon Pharaoh's crown. When Christ's cross and the world's crown stood in competition, upon a bare command of God Moses steps over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross: 'He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' And so Abraham, upon a bare command of God, leaves his country, and his near and dear relations. He wholly resigns up himself to God; he puts his hand into God's, and is willing that God should lead him whither he pleases, and do with him what he pleases.¹

I remember an excellent saying of Luther, *Malletm ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cæsare*, 'I had rather,' saith he, 'fall with Christ than stand with Cæsar.' And indeed every gracious soul that highly prizes Christ will rather choose to fall with Christ than to neglect his obedience to Christ. By obeying Christ we gain more honour than we can give; by kissing the Son we even command him, and make him ours, &c.

[3.] *Thirdly*, Christians, remember this, *all the causes of prizing persons and things are eminently and only in Christ*; which bespeaks you all to set a very, very high price upon the Lord Jesus. Christ's beauty needs no letters of commendation. You prize some for their beauty; why, the Lord Jesus Christ is the fairest among the children

¹ *Non parentum aut majorum autoritas, sed Dei dicentis imperium.* The command of God must outweigh all authority and example of men.—*Jerome.*

of men, Ps. xlv. 1, 2; Cant. v. 10, 'My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest,' or, the standard-bearer, 'among ten thousand.' You prize others for their strength; why, the Lord Jesus Christ hath in him everlasting strength: Isa. xxvi. 4, 'Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength; he is the rock of ages.' You prize others for bearing their father's image; why the Lord Jesus bears the image of his Father: Heb. i. 3, 'He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.'¹ You prize others for their wisdom and knowledge; such a one is a very wise man, you say, and therefore you prize him; and such a one is a very knowing man, and therefore you prize him; why, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ: Col. ii. 3, 'In whom,' saith he, speaking of Christ, 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' The truth is, all those perfections and excellencies that are in all angels and men, they all centre in Christ, they are all epitomised in Christ. All the angels in heaven have but some of those perfections that be in Christ. All wisdom, and all power, and all goodness, and all mercy, and all love, &c., is in no glorified creature, no, not in all glorified creatures put together. But now in Christ all these perfections and excellencies meet, as all water meets in the sea, and as all light meets in the sun. Others you prize for their usefulness; the more useful persons and things are, the more you prize and value them. The Lord Jesus Christ is of universal use to his people; why, he is the right eye of his people, without which they cannot see; and the right hand of his people, without which they cannot do, &c. He is of singular use to all his people. He is of use to weak saints, to strengthen them; and he is of use to doubting saints, to resolve them; and he is of use to dull saints, to quicken them; and he is of use to falling saints, to support them; and he is of use to wandering saints, to recover them. In prosperity he is of use to keep his saints humble and watchful, spotless and fruitful; and in adversity he is of use to keep them contented and cheerful. All which should very much engage our hearts to prize this Christ.²

Again, we prize things as they suit us; why, Christ is not only a good, but a suitable good. Christ is light to enlighten us, John i. 8, 9; and he is life to enliven us, Philip. v. 14. He is riches to supply us, and he is raiment to clothe us; he is a staff to support us, and he is a sword to defend us; he is bread to nourish us, and he is water to refresh us, and wine to cheer us; and what would we have more?

[4.] *Fourthly*, Yet once more, that this may stick upon us, let us consider, *that where we are highly prized there we highly prize.*³

Why, the Lord Jesus Christ doth exceedingly prize every believing soul; yea, even such poor weak saints, that many swelled souls slight and despise as persons of no worth, because they want that light and knowledge, and those parts and gifts, that others have. Well, Christians, remember this, Christ prizes you as the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8; he prizes you as his jewels, Mal. iii. 17; he prizes you as his por-

¹ The character of his subsistence. A comparison from the seal of a ring, the form of which is imprinted in the wax.

² Christ is *quicquid appetibile*, as Origen speaks, whatever we can desire. If we hunger and thirst, he is *pabulum animæ*, the food of the soul.

³ Christ may well be compared to the trees of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvi. 12, which were both for meat and for medicine.

tion, Deut. xxxii. 9, 'The Lord's portion is his people;' he prizes you as his glory, Isa. xlvii. 13; he prizes you as his ornaments, Ezek. vii. 20; he prizes you as his throne, Jer. xl. 21; he prizes you as his diadem, Isa. lxii. 3; he prizes you as his friends, John xiv.; he prizes you as his brethren, Heb. ii. 11, 12; he prizes you as his bride, Isa. lxii. 5; he prizes you above his Father's bosom, for he leaves that to do you service, John xvi. 28; yea, he prizes you above his very life, he lays down his life to save your souls, John x. Now, oh who would not highly prize such a Christ, that sets such an invaluable price upon such worthless souls!

[5.] *Fifthly* and lastly, consider, *That your high prizing of Christ will work you to value the least things of Christ above the greatest worldly good.*

It will make you value the least nod of Christ, the least love-token from Christ, the least good look from Christ, the least good word from Christ, the least truth of Christ, &c., above all the honours, treasures, pleasures, and glories of this world: Ps. cxix. 72, 'The law of thy mouth is better than thousands of gold and silver.' Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible. And oh that a serious consideration of these things might work all your hearts to a high prizing of the Lord Jesus!

Use. 7. The next use that we shall make of this point, is this, If Christ be so rich, *then trust to Christ.*

Who will not trust a rich man? Every one strives to trust a rich man: 'The rich hath many friends,' Prov. xiv. 20. Why, the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich; will you be persuaded to trust him? Oh trust him with your best treasures, with your choicest jewels, with your names, souls, estates, relations! The apostle was excellent at this: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know him,' saith he, 'in whom I have believed, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, until that day.'¹ I have committed my soul to him, and my life to him, and my name to him, and all my mercies and enjoyments to him. The child cannot better secure any precious thing it hath, than by putting it into the father's hands to keep. Our mercies are always safest and surest when they are out of our hands, when they are in the hands of God. We trust as we love, and we trust where we love; where we love much, we trust much. Much trust speaks out much love; if you love Christ much, surely you will trust him much.

That was a notable bold expression of Luther, 'Let him that died for my soul, see to the salvation of it.' I have committed my soul to him, I have given it up into his hands, who is my life, who is my love, and let him look after it, let him take care of it. In securing of that, he secures his own glory. Oh that Christians would trust in this rich Christ for a supply of necessaries! Is Christ so rich, and will you not take his word that he will not see you want? Will you trust a rich man upon his word, and will you not trust a rich Christ upon his word? Do you believe he will give you a crown, and will you not trust him for

¹ Interpreters differ about the pawn or pledge which the apostle committed to God's custody. One saith it was his soul; a second saith it was himself, which is all one; a third saith it was his works; a fourth saith it was his sufferings; a fifth saith it was his salvation. Without doubt, it was all that was near and dear to him.

a crust? Do you believe he will give you a kingdom, and do you doubt whether he will give you a cottage to rest in? Has he given you his blood; and do you think that he will deny you anything that is really for your good? Surely he will not, he cannot.¹

Again, *Trust him for power against all the remainders of sin in you.*

Hath Christ freed you from the damnatory power of sin, and from the dominion of sin, and will not you trust him for deliverance from the remainders of sin? Ps. lxx. 3, 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' Oh excellent faith! Rom. viii. 1, vi. 14.

Again, *Trust him to bring you into the land of rest.*

Do you think that this Joshua is not able to carry you through all difficulties, dangers, and deaths? Do you think that he will leave you to die in the wilderness, who have already had some glimpses of heaven's glory? Oh trust to this Christ for the bringing your souls into the promised land! Christ would lose his glory should you fall short of glory, &c.

Use 8. Again, If Christ be so rich, *then do not forsake him, do not leave, do not turn your backs upon him.*

Is there riches of justification, and riches of sanctification, and riches of consolation, and riches of glorification in Christ? Yes, why then do not depart from him, do not shake hands with him.² That is a sad complaint of God in Jer. ii. 12, 13, 'Be ye astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' It is madness and folly to fly from the fountain to the stream, from the light of the sun to the light of a candle. And is it not greater madness and folly to forsake the Creator to run after the creature? Oh say as Peter, 'Whither should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life,' John vi. 68. To run from Christ, is to run from all life, peace, and joy; it is to run from our strength, our shelter, our security, our safety, our crown, our glory. Crabs, that go backward, are reckoned among unclean creatures, Lev. xi. 10. The application is easy.

Origen coming to Jerusalem, after that he had shamefully turned his back upon Christ and his truth, and being exceedingly pressed to preach, at last he yields, and as he opened the book, he happened to cast his eye upon that place of the psalmist, 'What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my word behind thee?' Ps. l. 16, 17. Now the remembrance of his own folly so reflected upon his conscience, that it made him close the book and sit down and weep. Such as forsake a rich, a full Christ, shall have weeping work enough.

That is a very dreadful scripture, Jer. xvii. 13, 'All you that forsake the Lord, shall come to be ashamed, and they that depart from him,

¹ (1.) Christ's promises are ever performed, 2 Cor. i. 20. (2.) His promises are over-performed, 1 Cor. ii. 9, &c.

² You read of no arms for the back, though you do for the breast, Eph. vi. 11.

shall be written in the dust.' Can you read this text, backsliding souls, and not tremble? &c.

Use 9. Again, If the Lord Jesus Christ be so rich, *Oh! then all you that have an interest in him, labour mightily to clear up your interest, and to be more and more confident of your interest in so rich a Jesus.*

My brethren, it is one thing for a man to have an interest in Christ, and another thing to have his interest cleared up to him. I do speak it with grief of heart, that even among such Christians that I hope to meet in heaven, there is scarce one of forty, nay, one of a hundred, that is groundedly able to make out his interest in the Lord Jesus. Most Christians live between fear and hope, between doubting and believing. One day they hope that all is well, and that all shall be well for ever; the next day they are ready to say that they shall one day perish by the hand of such a corruption, or else by the hand of such or such a temptation; and thus they are up and down, saved and lost, many times in a day.

But you will say unto me, *What means should we use to clear up our interest in Christ?*

I will tell you.

There are six singular¹ means that you should labour after, for the evidencing more and more your interest in Christ. And take it from experience, you will find that they will contribute very much for the evidencing your interest in Christ.

[1.] And the *first* is this, *Faithfully and constantly fall in with the interest of Christ.*

Holiness is the interest of Christ, the gospel is the interest of Christ, the precious ordinances are the interest of Christ, &c. Now the more sincerely and roundly you fall in with the interest of Christ, the more abundantly you will be confirmed and persuaded of your interest in Christ. Such souls as fall in with strange interests, or with base and carnal interests, may justly question whether ever they had any real interest in Christ. Christians! did you more sincerely and fully fall in with Christ's interest, you would less question your interest in Christ; this would scatter many a cloud.²

[2.] *Secondly, Be kind to the Spirit of Christ.*³

Do not grieve him, do not slight him. If you should set this Spirit a-mourning, that alone can evidence your interest, that alone can seal up your interest in Christ, by whom shall your interest in Christ be sealed up? Oh do not grieve the Spirit by acting against light, against conscience, against engagements; do not grieve him by casting his cordials and comforts behind your backs; do not grieve him by slighting and despising his gracious actings in others; do not cast water upon the Spirit, but wisely attend the hints, the items, and motions of the Spirit, and he will clear up thy interest in Christ, he will make thee say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16.

[3.] *Thirdly, Labour more and more after a full and universal conformity to Jesus Christ.*

¹ Distinct.—G.

² The primitive Christians did generally fall in with the interest of Christ, and they generally had an assurance of their interest in Christ.

³ Lam. i. 16, Philip. iv. 30, Isa. lxxiii. 10. *Spiritus sanctus est res delicata*, Ps. lxxvii. 2, 1 Thes. v. 19.

The more the soul is conformable to Christ, the more confident it will be of its interest in Christ: 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.' 'As he, so are we.' The child is not more like the father than we are like our Saviour. The child is the father multiplied, the father of a second edition. Our *summum bonum* consists in our full communion with Christ, and in our full conformity to Christ. Oh! if men were more universally conformable to Christ in their affections, ends, designs, and actings, &c., they would have abundantly more clear, full, and glorious evidences of their interest in Christ. A more full conformity to Christ in heart and life will make your lives a very heaven, &c. As all good orators endeavour to be like Demosthenes, so all good Christians should endeavour to be like Jesus Christ; for therein lies their glory and perfection.

[4.] Fourthly, *Interest Christ in the glory of all you enjoy, and in the glory of all you do.*

This is a precious way to have your interest in Christ more and more evidenced to your own souls, 1 Cor. x. 31. Such as are good at this, as are much in this, will find Christ every day a-clearing up more and more their interest in himself. It is not usually long night with such souls. Oh Christians! interest Christ more and more in the glory of all your graces, interest him in the glory of all your duties, interest him in the glory of all your abilities, as Christ doth interest you in himself, in his Spirit, in his graces, in his riches, in his titles, in his dignities, in his offices. Ah Christians! did you interest Christ more in all you have, in all you are, and in all you do, you would never be so full of fears, and doubts, and questions about your interest in Christ as you are, John i. 16, Rev. i. 5, 6, 1 Peter ii. 9. Your interesting of Christ in all you have and do, will speak out not only the truth of your love, but also the strength and greatness of your love; and where men love much, where they love strongly, there they do not question the truth of their love.¹

The heathen gods were contented to divide their honours amongst themselves, and hence the senate of Rome rejected Christ, from taking him to be a god, after that they had consulted about it; for, said they, if Christ come to be acknowledged a god, he will not share with the rest, he will have all himself; and so upon this reason they refused him.² Christians! Christ will not have any competitor; he will rather part with anything than with his glory: Isa. xlii. 8, 'I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.' Christ will rather part with his life than with his honour; therefore, let every Christian say as David does: 1 Chron. xxix. 11-13, 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.' And clearly, friends,

¹ The mother that strongly loves her child does not question the truth of her love to her child.

² Tertullian, Apolog., c. v.; and cf. Lardner.—G.

the more your hearts are led forth to interest Christ in all you enjoy, and in all you do, the more clear and glorious evidence you will have of your interest in Christ. Let his honour and glory lie nearer and nearer to your hearts, and you shall see that he has set you as a seal upon his arm, as a seal upon his heart.

[5.] The *fifth* means to gain the knowledge of your interest in Christ is, *By cleaving to Christ, and whatsoever is dear to Christ, in the face of all miseries, difficulties, and dangers.*

It is nothing to cleave to Christ in fair weather, when every one cleaves to Christ, when every one professes Christ; but to cleave to him in a storm, when every one runs from him, this speaks out a child-like disposition; it speaks out a Jacob's spirit: Ps. xlv. ; Acts v. ; Heb. xi. ; Dan. iii. ; Acts xxi. 13. Surely he must needs have much of Christ, that nothing can take off from cleaving to Christ. When the soul says to Christ, as Ruth said to Naomi, 'Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me,' Ruth i. 15-18. When neither the frowns of men, nor the reproach of men, nor the contempt of men, nor oppositions from men, can take the soul off from cleaving to Christ, it will not be long before Christ speaks peace to such a soul: Ps. lxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholds me.' In the Hebrew it is, 'My soul cleaveth to thee,' or 'is glued to thee,' as Jonathan's soul cleaved to David, and as Jacob's soul cleaved to Rachel, in the face of all difficulties and troubles. Doubtless, when the soul cleaves to Christ in the face of all afflictions and difficulties, this carries with it very much evidence of its interest in Christ. In temporals men cleave to persons and things, as their interest is in them; and so it is in spirituals also. Christ cannot, Christ will not, throw such to hell that hang about him, that cleave to him.¹

[6.] *Sixthly* and lastly, *If you would know whether you have an interest in Christ, then be very much in observing what interest Christ has in you.*

Observe whether he has the interest of a head, a husband, a father, or no. Christ has a general interest in all creatures, as he is the Creator and preserver of them; and he has a head's interest, a husband's interest, a father's interest, only in them that have a saving interest in him. The interest of the head, the husband, the father, is the greatest interest; it is the sweetest interest, it is a commanding interest, it is a growing interest, it is a peculiar interest, it is a lasting interest; and really, if the Lord Jesus hath such an interest in you, you may be as confident that you have a real and glorious interest in him, as you are confident that you live. And thus much for the means whereby you may come to know your interest in rich Jesus.

Before I close up this discourse, give me leave to speak a few words to poor sinners who, to this very day, are afar off from this Jesus, who is so rich in all excellencies and glories. Ah poor hearts! you have heard much of the riches of the Lord Jesus, and oh that I could persuade with you to get an interest in this Christ! Get this Christ, and you get all; miss him, and you miss all. It is a matter of eternal con-

¹ Shamma, one of David's worthies, stood and defended the field when all the rest fled.

cernment to your souls. Nothing can make that man miserable that hath this rich Christ; nothing can make that man happy that wants this rich Christ. In Prov. iv. 5-7, 'Get wisdom (that is Christ), get understanding, forget it not. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' And so in Prov. xvi. 16, 'How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding, rather to be chosen than silver?' Hadst thou all the power of the world, without an interest in Christ, thou wouldst be but weak, 1 Cor. i. 25-29. Hadst thou all the wit and learning in the world, without an interest in Christ, thou wilt be but a fool. Hadst thou all the honours in the world, yet without an interest in Christ, thou wouldst be but base. Hadst thou all the wealth in the world, yet without an interest in Christ, thou wouldst be but a beggar, Dan. iv. 17; Luke xvi. 22-26, &c. Oh, therefore, labour for an interest in Christ! Oh, turn the wise merchant at last! The wise merchant in the Gospel parts with all to buy the pearl, to get an interest in Christ, Mat. xiii. 45-47. Oh it is your greatest wisdom, it is of an eternal concernment to your souls, to sell all, to part with all, for an interest in the Lord Jesus! Oh do not deal with your own souls, when Christ is tendered and offered to you, as sometimes simple people do when they go to market; they might have a good pennyworth, but that they are loath to part with some old piece of gold that has been given them by a father or a friend; somewhat willing they are to have a good pennyworth, but unwilling they are to part with their gold. It is so with many poor sinners, when the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to their souls as a very glorious pennyworth, somewhat willing they are to have him, but unwilling they are to part with their old good, with some old sweet darling lust. But, sinners, don't you deceive your own souls; sin and your souls must part, or Christ and your souls can never meet. Sin and your souls must be two, or Christ and your souls can never be one. Christ is a most precious commodity; he is better than rubies, Prov. viii. 11, or the most costly pearls; and you must part with your old gold, with your shining gold, your old sins, your most shining sins, or you must perish for ever. Christ is to be sought and bought with any pains, at any price. We cannot buy this gold too dear. He is a jewel more worth than a thousand worlds, as all know that have him. Get him, and get all; miss him and miss all.

Now if ever you would get an interest in Christ, and so by gaining an interest in him, be possessed of all the riches and glory that come by him, then be sure to get your hearts possessed with these nine principles that follow.

[1.] And the first principle is this, *That the great end and design of Christ's coming into the world was the salvation of sinners.*

Get this principle rooted in your spirits. 'I came not to call the righteous,' saith he, 'but sinners to repentance,' Mat. ix. 13, Mark ii. 17. And in 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' Christ lays aside his royal crown; he puts off his glorious robe; he leaves his Father's bosom; he takes a journey from heaven to earth; and all to save poor lost sinners. That which Christ had most in his eye, and

upon his heart, in his coming into the world, was the salvation of sinners. Lay up this truth, feed upon this honey-comb.

[2.] Secondly, Get this principle rooted upon your hearts, viz., *That none ever yet obtained an interest in Christ but unworthy creatures.*

When you are pressed to get an interest in Christ, you are ready to say, Oh 'I am unworthy,' will Christ ever look after such a one as I am?

I answer, yes; for this is a most certain principle, that none ever attained an interest in Christ but unworthy creatures. Was Paul worthy before he had an interest in Christ? What worthiness was in Matthew when Christ called him from the receipt of custom? And what worthiness was in Zaccheus when Christ called him down from the sycamore tree, and told him that this day salvation was come to his house? Was Manasseh or Mary Magdalene worthy before they had an interest in Christ? Surely no. Though you are unworthy, yet Christ is worthy; though you have no merit, yet God has mercy; though there is no salvation for you by the law, yet there is salvation for you by the gospel.

Again, Christ requires no worthiness in any man before he believes; and he that won't believe before he is worthy will never believe.¹ If you look upon God with an evangelical eye, you shall see that he that is most unworthy is most capable of mercy. A real sense of our own unworthiness renders us most fit for divine mercy. This objection, I am unworthy, is an unworthy objection, and speaks out much pride and ignorance of the gospel, and of the freeness and riches of God's grace, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Let this principle dwell in you, viz., *That Christ hath lost none of his affections to poor sinners by going to heaven.*

Oh how did his bowels work toward sinners when he was on earth! And certainly they work as strongly towards them now he is in heaven. His love, his heart, his good-will, is as much towards them as ever. Christ is Alpha and Omega; the phrase is taken from the Greek letters, whereof Alpha is the first, and Omega the last, Rev. i. 8. I am before all, and I am after all. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. [*Vide* Grotius.] Christ is the same before time, in time, and after time. Christ is unchangeable in his essence, in his promises, and in his love to poor sinners.

[4.] Fourthly, Get this principle riveted in your hearts, *That he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him.*

Heb. vii. 25, 'He is able to save to the uttermost;² that is, to all ends and purposes, perfectly and perpetually. He needs none to help him in the great business of redemption; he is thorough Saviour; 'he has trod the wine-press alone,' Isa. lxiii. 3.

[5.] Fifthly, Get this principle riveted in your hearts, *That the want of such preparations or qualifications that many men lay a great stress upon, shall be no impediment to hinder your soul's*

¹ Such as shall go to prove he does, must make a new gospel, a new Bible.

² *εις τὸ παντελὲς.* The original word signifies all manner of perfection.

*interest in Christ, if you will but open to Christ, and close with Jesus Christ.*¹

Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Pray tell me at whose door was this that Christ stood and knocked? Was it not at the Laodiceans' door? Was it not at their door that thought their penny as good silver as any? that said they were rich, and had need of nothing, when Christ tells them to their very faces, 'that they were poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.' None more unprepared, unqualified, and unfitted for union and communion with Christ than these lukewarm Laodiceans; and yet the Lord Jesus is very ready and willing that such should have intimate communion and fellowship with him.

'If any man will open, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' The truth of this you have further evidenced, Prov. i. 20-24, and viii. 1-6, and ix. 1-6. All these scriptures with open mouth speak out the truth asserted, viz., That the want of preparations or qualifications shall not hinder the soul's interest in Christ, if the soul will adventure itself by faith upon Christ. I pray, what qualifications and preparations had they in Ezek. xvi., when God saw them in their blood, and yet that was a time of love, and God even then spread his skirt over them, and made a covenant with them, and they became his. What qualifications or preparations had Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, and Lydia, &c.? And yet these believed in Christ, these had a blessed and glorious interest in Christ, &c.

Ay, but some may object, and say,

Obj. What is the meaning of that text, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest'?

Ans. There is a threefold answer to be given to this objection.

First, Though the invitation be to those that are weary and heavy laden, yet the promise is made to coming, to believing.²

Secondly, This text shews only this, that those that are burdened and bowed down under sin, and under the sense of divine wrath, are to come to Christ, and that there is no way for them to obtain ease and rest but by coming to Christ. But this text doth not shew that only these must come to Christ, or that only these may come to Christ.

Thirdly, and lastly, No one scripture speaks out the whole mind of God;³ and therefore you must compare and consult this scripture with the scriptures, and instances lately cited, and then you will clearly see that souls may believe in Christ, and come to obtain an interest in Christ, though they are not so and so prepared, nor so and so qualified, as some would have them.

[6.] Sixthly, Get this principle rooted in your hearts, *That Christ is*

¹ Some men there be that would have men better Christians before they come to Christ, before they believe in Christ, than usually they prove after they are come to Christ. Surely, did legal preachers seriously weigh the following scriptures, they would not so vehemently, I say not angrily, press the absolute necessity of such and such qualifications before faith in Christ, as they do: Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 34; Heb. xi. 6; Rom. xiv. 28; John v. 12; Mat. vii. 17, 18, xii. 33; Rom. viii. 2; Gal. v. 6.

² The dove found no rest till she returned to the ark. No more will the troubled soul till it returns to Christ.

³ *Adoro plenitudinem Scripturarum.*—Tertullian.

*appointed and anointed by the Father to this very office of receiving and saving poor sinners.*¹

Turn to Isa. lxi. 1-4, John vi. 28, and Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also (what for?), that the Lord God might dwell among them.' Christ has received gifts for rebellious sinners, for rebellious Sabbath breakers, for rebellious swearers, for rebellious drunkards, &c.

'That the Lord God might dwell among them.' That is, that he might have near communion and fellowship with them.

[7.] Seventhly, Get this principle rooted in you, *That it is the delight of Christ to give poor sinners an interest in himself.*

He is not only able to do it, but it is his delight to do it. Christ's soul is in nothing more. Witness his leaving his Father's bosom; witness his laying down his crown; witness those many sufferings and deaths that he went through in this world; witness those gospel acclamations, Mark xvi. 16, Rev. xxii. 17; witness those persuasive exhortations and gracious impetrations and entreaties, Ezek. liii. 11, Mat. xi. 28, 2 Cor. v. 20; witness divine injunctions and comminations, 1 John. v. 23, Mat. xi. 21; witness those pathetic lamentations, Mat. xxiii. 37, Luke xix. 42, Ps. lxxxii. 13; and witness the inward motions and secret excitations of his blessed Spirit, Gen. vi. 3, all which speak out his great willingness and delight to save poor sinners; so in Ps. xl. 7, 8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is in my heart;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, בְּחֹךְ מֵעֵי, 'It is in the midst of my bowels.' Now mark, the will of the Father was the salvation of sinners. This was the will of the Father, 'That Jesus Christ should seek and save them that are lost,' Mat. xviii. 11. Now, saith Christ, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God;' it is the joy and rejoicing of my heart to be a-seeking and a-saving lost sinners. When Christ was an hungry, he went not into a victualling house, but into the temple, and taught the people most part of the day, to shew how much he delighted in the salvation of sinners, &c.²

[8.] Eighthly, Get this principle riveted in your hearts, *That as there is nothing in Christ to discourage you from looking after an interest in him, so there is everything in Christ that may encourage you to get an interest in him.*

Look upon his name.³ 'Thy name is an ointment poured out, and therefore do the virgins love thee,' Cant. i. 3. The name of Jesus hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it, saith Chrysostom; and so hath all his other names. If you look upon Christ in his natures, in his offices, in his graces, in his beauties, in his gifts, and in his works, you will find nothing but what may encourage you to believe in him, and to resign up yourselves to him. Ah, poor sinners, what would you have? Is there not power in Christ to support you, and mercy in

¹ Moses was faithful in his office as a servant, but Christ as a Son, Heb. iii. 2-6. Christ had never entered into glory had he not been faithful in his offices, &c.

² Christ did so much delight, and his heart was so much set upon the conversion and salvation of the Samaritans, that he neglected his own body to save their souls, as you may clearly see in John iv.

³ The name of a Saviour is honey in the mouth, and music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart, saith one. [Bernard, as before.—G.]

Christ to pardon you, and grace in Christ to heal you, and goodness in Christ to relieve you, and happiness in Christ to crown you, and what would you have more? Oh that you would believe!

[9.] Ninthly, Let this principle be rooted in you, *That the surest way, and the shortest cut to mercy, and to get an interest in Christ, is by a peremptory casting of the soul by faith on Christ.*

There is no way under heaven to be interested in Christ but by believing. There is no way to get an interest in the riches of Christ but this, 'he that believes shall be saved,' let his sins be never so great; 'and he that believes not, shall be damned,' let his sins be never so little.¹ And so much shall suffice to have spoken concerning this great and weighty point. I shall follow what hath been said with my prayers, that what has been said may work for your internal and eternal welfare, &c.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. iii. 8.

There are other two observations that arise from these words. I shall, by divine assistance, speak something to them, and so finish this text. And the first is this, viz.,

Doct. That it is the great duty of preachers to preach Jesus Christ to the people.

'To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

It is the great duty of ministers to preach the Lord Christ to the people.

I shall prove it, and then open it to you.

I. In Acts v. 42, 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach.' What? Jesus Christ. So in Acts iii. 20, 'And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.' So in 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, and 2 Cor. iv. 5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' So in Acts iv. 2, and ii. 35, and ix. 20. As soon as Paul was converted, straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that he was the Son of God.

Now for the opening of the point, I shall only attempt two things.

(1.) Give you the reasons *why* it is the great duty of ministers to preach Christ to the people.

(2.) Which will be the main, to shew you *how* they are to preach Christ to the people.

I confess this a very useful point in these days, wherein many men preach anything, yea, everything but a crucified Jesus. Well, Christians, remember this, as it is your duty to take heed *how* you hear, so it is as much your duty to take heed *who* you hear. Many there are that count and call themselves the ministers of Christ, and yet have neither skill nor will to preach Jesus Christ, to exalt and lift up Jesus Christ in lip

¹ John iii. 16-18, 36, and viii. 24, and xvi. 9, and iv. 50, 53, and v. 24, and vi. 35, 40, and vii. 38, and xi. 25, 26, and xii. 46; Acts x. 43; Rom. iii. 26; 1 John v. 10-12.

or life, in word or work. A sad reckoning these will have to make up at last.

II. But to come to the reasons of the point, why it is the great work and duty of ministers to preach Jesus Christ to the people.¹

[1.] First, *Because that is the only way to save and to win souls to Jesus Christ.*

There is no other way of winning and saving souls, but by the preaching of Christ to the people. In Acts iv. 10–12 compared, ‘Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ You may preach this and that, and a thousand things to the people, and yet never better them, never win them. It is only preaching of Christ, that allures and draws souls to Christ: John xvii. 3, ‘This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’ Ah, nothing melts the hearts of sinners, nor wins upon the hearts of sinners, like the preaching of the Lord Jesus. It is true, the teaching of this and that opinion, may please many a man’s fancy, but it is only the preaching of Christ that changes the heart, that conquers the heart, that turns the heart, &c. Peter, by preaching of a crucified Christ, converts three thousand souls at once, Acts ii. 14–42. Were Christ more preached, men would be more enamoured with him. He is only precious to them that hear of him, and that believe in him. Christ is in all respects incomparable; and therefore, as you would honour him, and win upon others, make him more and more known to the world, 1 Peter ii. 7, &c.

[2.] Secondly, They are to preach Christ to the people, *because it is the choicest and the chiefest way to ingratiate Christ with poor souls.*

This brings Christ and the soul together, and this keeps Christ and the soul together. Nothing endears Christ to the soul like this. We see, by woful experience, Christ neglected, despised, scorned, and trampled upon by most; and no wonder, for many preach themselves more than Christ, and they preach men more than Christ, and their own notions and impressions more than Christ. Surely Christ is but little beholding to such ministers, and, I think, the souls of men as little; and oh that they were so wise as to consider of it, and lay it to heart! Surely a real Christian cares not for anything that hath not *aliquid Christi*, something of Christ in it. There is a strange and strong energy or forcibleness in hearing Christ and his beauties and excellencies displayed and discovered.²

The daughters of Jerusalem, by hearing the church presenting Christ in so high a character, and by describing and painting him out in such lively colours, are so enchanted and inflamed that, might they but know where to find him, they would be at any pains to seek him. When Christ is set forth in his glories, with much affection and admiration, others fall in love with him, as you may see by comparing Cant. v. 10, *seq.*, with chap. vi. 1.

¹ Jewel, Cowper, and others, had no such pleasure or joy as they had in preaching Christ unto the people. [The ‘Bishops’ of these names.—G.]

² Martian, archbishop of Constantinople, said once of Sabbatius, a wretched and unworthy man, whom he had ordained to be a presbyter, We wish we had rather laid our hands on the briars than on such heads.

[3.] *Thirdly*, It is their great duty to preach Jesus Christ to the people, *because the preaching up of Christ is the only way to preach down antichrist, or whatever makes against Christ.*

Some would have antichrist down, yea, they would have him down root and branch, but there is no such way for his total and final overthrow as the preaching of Christ; for the more the glory, fulness, perfection, and excellency of Christ is discovered, the more the horrid vileness and matchless wickedness of the man of sin will be discovered and abhorred, &c. : 2 Thes. ii. 3, 4, 7-10, 'And then shall that wicked one be revealed.' The Greek word properly signifies a lawless, yokeless, masterless monster; one that holdeth himself subject to no law.¹

Pope Nicholas the First said 'that he was above law,' because Constantine styled the pope God; and of the same opinion were most of the popes.

'Whom he shall consume.' The Greek word signifies to consume by little and little, till a thing come to nothing.

'With the spirit of his mouth.' That is, with the evidence and glory of his word in the mouths of his messengers. The ministers of the word are as a mouth whereby the Lord breatheth out that glorious, mighty, and everlasting gospel which shall by degrees bruise antichrist and all his adherents, and break them in sunder like a rod of iron, &c.

When Christ was born, all the idols that were set up in the world, as historians write, fell down. When Jesus Christ comes to be lifted up in a nation, in a city, in a town, in a family, yea, in any heart, then all idols without and within will fall before the power, presence, and glory of Jesus. Since Luther began to lift up Christ in the gospel, what a deal of ground has antichrist lost! and he does and will lose more and more, as Christ comes to be more and more manifested and lifted up in the chariot of his word. Many in these days that speak much against antichrist, have much of antichrist within them. And certainly there is no such way to cast him out of men's hearts, and out of the world, as the preaching and making known of Christ, as the exalting or lifting up of Christ in the gospel of grace.²

[4.] A *fourth* reason why they are to preach Christ to the people is this, *because else they contract upon themselves the blood of souls.*

There is no other way for them to avoid the contracting of the blood of men and women's souls upon them, but the preaching of Christ unto them.³ Now, a man were better to have all the blood of the world upon him than the blood of one soul. The blood of souls, of all blood, cries loudest and wounds deepest. The lowest, the darkest, and the hottest place in hell will be the sad and dreadful portion of such upon whose skirts the blood of souls shall be found at last. Hence that pas-

¹ In the canon law the pope is said to be *solutus omni lege humana.*

² Bellarmine confesseth, to his great grief, that ever since the Lutherans have declared the pope to be antichrist, his kingdom hath not only not increased, but every day more and more decreased and decayed.—Lib. iii. *de Papa Rom.*, cap. 31.

³ The Germans have this proverb: say they, The pavement of hell is made of the bare skulls of priests and the glorious crests of gallants. Their meaning is, that the more eminent any one is in church or state, and doth not employ his eminency accordingly, the more low shall they lie in hell, Rev. xviii. 11-14.

sage of Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 16, 'Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel.' The motto that should be writ upon preachers' study-doors, and on their walls, and on all the books they look on, on the beds they lie on, and on the seats they sit on, &c., should be this, 'The blood of souls, the blood of souls.' The soul is the better, the noble part of man; it bears most of the image of God; it is capable of union and communion with God. Christ sweat for it, and bled for it; and therefore woe to those merchants that make merchandise of the souls of men. This was a comfort and an honour to Paul, that he kept himself from the blood of souls, Acts xx. 25-27. He appeals to them that they were witnesses that 'he was free from the blood of all men.' Paul had held out Jesus Christ in his natures, in his names, in his offices, and in all his excellencies and perfections, and so frees himself from the blood of all men. And ministers can no way secure themselves from the blood of souls, but by preaching up and living out a crucified Jesus.

[5.] The last reason is this, *because the preaching of Christ contributes most to their comfort here, and to their reward hereafter; therefore they are to preach the Lord Christ to the people.*

When Luther was upon a dying bed, this was no small joy and comfort to his spirit. 'Thee, O Lord,' saith he, 'have I known, thee have I loved, thee have I taught, thee have I trusted, and now into thy hand I commend my spirit.' There can be no greater joy to a minister than, by preaching Christ, to win souls to Christ: 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. Ye are our glory and joy.' They that by preaching Christ win souls to Christ shall shine as the stars in the firmament, Dan. xii. 3. Every soul won to Christ is a glorious pearl added to a preacher's crown: 1 Peter v. 4, 'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory.' A crown imports perpetuity, plenty, and dignity, the height of human ambition.¹

It is the opinion of some that there are three places of exaltation in heaven:

The first and highest is for converting ministers.

The second is for suffering martyrs.

The third is for persevering Christians.

Without doubt, those ministers shall be high in heaven who make it their heaven to hold forth Christ, and to win souls to Christ; who are willing to be anything, to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all to poor souls. And thus I have given you the reasons of the point.

I shall now come to the second thing, which is the main, and that is, to shew you,

II. *How ministers are to preach Christ to the people.*

Many weak and slight spirits in these days think that it is as easy to preach as to play, and so they hop from one thing to another, and those that are not qualified nor fit for the least and lowest employment, yet judge themselves fit enough for the greatest and the weightiest employment in the world, and that which would certainly break the backs, not only of the best and strongest men, but even of the very angels,

¹ Bernard comfortably observes that ministers have their reward *secundum laborem*, not *secundum proventum*.

should not God put under his 'everlasting arms.' No labour to that of the mind, no travail to that of the soul, and those that are faithful in the Lord's vineyard find it so. Luther was wont to say that if he were again to choose his calling, he would dig, or do anything, rather than take upon him the office of a minister.¹ And many other eminent lights have been of the same opinion with him.²

But what are those rules that every preacher is to observe in his preaching of Christ to the people?

I answer, These eleven :

[1.] *First*, Jesus Christ must be preached *plainly, perspicuously, so as the meanest capacity may understand what they say concerning Christ*. They must preach Christ for edification, and not to work admiration, as too many do in these days. Paul was excellent at this kind of preaching, 1 Cor. xiv. 18, 19. He had rather speak five words to edification than ten thousand words to work admiration in ignorant people. So in 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, 'And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God;'³ as if he should say, such preach with little power who come with the excellency of speech, or with the enticing words of man's wisdom. Ah! many there are,—I speak it with grief, and to their shame,—that delight to soar aloft in obscure discourses, and to express themselves in new-minted words and phrases, and to shew high strains and flashes of wit, and all to work admiration in the ignorant. Such kind of preachers are as clouds, and painted glass windows, that hinder the light from shining in upon souls, that hinder the sun of righteousness from breaking forth in his beauty and glory upon the spirits of poor creatures. Woe unto these men in the day when such souls shall plead against them, when they shall say, Lord, here are the persons whose office and work was to make dark things plain, and they have made plain things dark and obscure, that we might rather wonder at them than any ways profit by them.⁴ Aaron's bells were of pure gold. Our whole preaching must be Scripture proof, or we and our works must burn together. The profoundest prophets accommodated themselves to their hearers' capacities.⁵ Holy Moses covers his glistening face with a veil when he was to speak to the people. Yea, it is very observable that the evangelists spake vulgarly many times for their hearers' sake, even to manifest incongruity, as you may see in John xvii. 2, Rev. i. 4. But above all, it is most observable concerning God the Father, who is the great Master of speech, when he spake from heaven, he makes use of three several texts of Scripture in one breath : Mat. xvii. 5, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

¹ Cf. Sibbes, vol. iv. 309, 485.—G.

² 2 Cor. ii. 16, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Almost every upstart in these days thinks himself sufficient. 'Who am I?' says Moses. Who am I not? saith every green-head in these days.

³ Preaching is not a matter of parts, words, or wit; it is Scripture demonstration that works upon the conscience, and that God owns and crowns.

⁴ It was a saying of Luther: From a vain-glorious doctor, from a contentious pastor, and from unprofitable questions, good Lord deliver his church! ['Table Talk,' as before.—G.]

⁵ *Si vis fieri bonus concionator, da operam ut sis bonus Biblicus*. If you will be a good preacher, study to be well acquainted with the Scripture, said one in the monastery.

pleased, hear him; 'This is my beloved Son,' that scripture you have in Ps. ii. 7; 'In whom I am well pleased,' this you have in Isa. xlii. 1; 'Hear him,' this you have in Deut. xviii. 15; all which may bespeak them to blush, who through curious wiseness disdain at the stately plainness of the Scripture! Oh how unlike to God are such preachers, that think to correct the divine wisdom and eloquence with their own infancy, vanity, novelty, and sophistry! Yea, Jesus Christ himself, the great doctor of the church, teaches this lesson: Mark iv. 33, 'And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it;' not as he was able to have spoken. He could have expressed himself at a higher rate than all mortals can! he could have been in the clouds. He knew how to knit such knots that they could never untie, but he would not. He delights to speak to his hearers' shallow capacities. So in John xvi. 12, 'I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.' He that speaks not to the hearers' capacities is as a barbarian to them, and they to him.

'He is the best teacher,' saith Luther, 'that preaches vulgarly, that preaches most plainly.' He is not the best preacher that tickles the ear, or that works upon the fancy, &c., but he that breaks the heart and awakens the conscience. It is sad to consider how many preachers in these days are like Heraclitus, who was called 'the dark doctor,' because he affected dark speeches. Oh how do many in these days affect sublime notions, uncouth phrases, making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard! 'They darken counsel by words without knowledge,' Job xxxviii. 2. But how unlike to Christ, the prophets, and apostles these dark doctors are, I will leave you to judge; nor would I have their accounts to make up for all the world; I will leave them to stand or fall to their own Master. God loves, owns, and crowns plain preaching. Though some account it foolishness, yet 'to them that are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God,' 1 Cor. i. 20-30. I have stayed the longer upon this first direction, because of its great usefulness in these deluding days.

[2.] *Secondly*, As they must preach Christ plainly, so they must preach Christ *faithfully*, Prov. xiii. 17, xxv. 13, Job xxxiii. 23. Ministers are stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 2; and you know it is the duty of a steward to be faithful in his stewardship, to give to every man the portion that is due to him, cheering up those hearts that God would have cheered, and weakening those wicked hands that God would have weakened, and strengthening those feeble knees that God would have strengthened. Ministers are ambassadors; and you know it is the great concernment of ambassadors to be very faithful in their master's messages. God looks more, and is affected and taken more, with a minister's faithfulness than with anything else. A great voice, an affected tone, studied notions, and silken expressions, may affect and take poor weak souls; but it is only the faithfulness of a minister in his ministerial work that takes God, that wins upon God: Mat. xxv. 21-23, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord:' a joy too big to enter into thee, and therefore thou must enter into it. This was Paul's glory, Acts xx. 27, that he 'had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God.' Neither fear nor favour swayed him one way or another, but he was faithful in his Master's work, and usually God

crowns him and his labours most, and sends most fish into his net, that is most faithful, though he be less skilful; that hath more of the heart in the work, though he hath less of the brain.¹

The maid in Plutarch being to be sold in the market, when a chapman asked her, 'Wilt thou be faithful if I buy thee?' 'Ay,' said she, *etiamsi non emeris*, 'that I will though you do not buy me.' So ministers must be faithful, though God should not buy them, though he should not thus and thus encourage them in their work. Their very feet are beautiful who are faithful, and their message most comfortable to those that sigh and mourn, that labour and languish under the sense of sin and fear of wrath, Isa. lii. 7.

[3.] *Thirdly*, They must preach Christ *humbly* as well as faithfully:² 2 Cor. iv. 5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus's sake.' Paul doth not compliment as the men of the world do, 'Your servants, sir,' but he spake as it was, for there are no greater servants than those that are servants to the souls of men for Jesus's sake. So John was very humble in the exercise of his ministry: John iii. 30, 31, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' &c.

Luther used to say, 'that a minister must take heed of bringing three dogs into the pulpit, viz., pride, covetousness, and envy.' The friends of the bridegroom must not woo and sue for themselves, but for the bridegroom. Dispensers of the gospel are the bridegroom's friends, and they must not speak one word for the bridegroom and two for themselves, as hath been the trade of many weak and worthless men. It is the greatest glory of a minister in this world to be high in spiritual work and humble in heart. Vain-glory is a pleasant thief; it is the sweet spoiler of spiritual excellencies. Paul was very humble in the exercise of his ministry: none so high in worth as he, nor none so low nor humble in heart as he. Though he was the greatest among the apostles, yet he accounts himself 'less than the least of all saints;' yea, he counted it not only his duty but his glory, to be a servant to the weakest saints: 'To the weak I became as weak;' 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not,' 1 Cor. ix. 22, 2 Cor. xi. 29.

[4.] *Fourthly*, As they are to preach the Lord Jesus Christ *humbly*, so they are to preach him *wisely*. In Prov. xi. 30, 'He that winneth souls is wise;' and indeed the greatest wisdom in the world is requisite to the winning of souls to Christ. He that wins souls, or he that catcheth souls, as the fowler doth birds, as the Hebrew word imports [*Velokeach, taketh*, from *Lakach*, to take], or fishermen fishes, 'he is wise.' There is a holy and a heavenly craft required in the winning of souls to Christ: 2 Cor. xii. 16, 'Nevertheless being crafty,' saith the apostle, 'I caught you with guile.' He speaks of a holy and heavenly craft.³

It is written of the fox, that when he is very hungry after prey, and can find none, that he lies down and feigneth himself dead, and so the

¹ The office of a minister is the highest office; and if his office be highest, his faithfulness must be answerable, or he will be doubly miserable.

² Gregory Nazianzen, that famous preacher, setteth no other price upon all his Athenian learning, wherein he excelled, than this, that he had something of worth to esteem as nothing in comparison of Christ. [Homil. in Humil.—G.]

³ If one soul is more worth than a world, as he hath told us, who only went to the price of it, Mat. xvi. 26, then they must needs be wise who win souls to Christ.

fowls light upon him, and then he catcheth them. Paul, hungering after the welfare of the Corinthians' souls, makes use of his heavenly craft to catch them. There is a great deal of wisdom required to hold out Christ unto the people, not only as a good, but as the greatest good, as the choicest good, as the chiefest good, as the most suitable good, as an immutable good, as an independent good, as a total good, and as an eternal good. Christ must thus be held forth to draw souls to fall in love with him, and to work their hearts to run out after him. There is wisdom required to answer all cavils and objections that keep Christ and poor souls asunder. There is wisdom required to take souls off from all false bottoms that they are apt to build upon; there is wisdom required to present Christ freely to souls, in opposition to all unrighteousness, and to all unworthiness in man; there is wisdom required to suit things to the capacities and conditions of poor souls, to make dark things plain, and hard things easy. Ministers must not be like him in the emblem¹ that gave straw to the dog and a bone to the ass; but they must suit all their discourses to the conditions and capacities of poor creatures, or else all will be lost: time lost, pains lost, God lost, heaven lost, and souls lost for ever.

[5.] *Fifthly*, They must preach Christ, *zealously, boldly*, as well as wisely, Acts iv. 20. When they had charged them that they should preach no more in the name of Christ, Why, say they! what do you tell us of the whip, or of prisons, or of this and that? 'We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.' So in Jer. xx. 9, 'Thy 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;' Isa. lviii. 1, 'Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sins.'² And Isaiah had his tongue touched with a coal of fire from the altar, chap. vi. 6, 7. And when the disciples were to go and preach the gospel, the fire sat upon their tongues, Acts ii. 34.³ The worst of men are in a dead sleep, and the best of men are too often in a sinful slumber, as the spouse in Cant. v. 2, and the wise virgins in Mat. xxv.; and therefore faithful ministers had need cry aloud; they had need to be courageous and zealous, to awaken both sinners and saints, that none may go sleeping to hell. Every coward is a murderer, as the philosopher well observed.⁴ The cowardice of the minister is cruelty; if he fear the faces of men he is a murderer of the souls of men. Ministers must say, as Hector in Homer, 'I will combat with him, though his hands were as fire, and his strength as iron.' Let men's hands be as fire and their strength as iron, yet ministers must deal with them, and strive to make a conquest on them, Ezek. ii. 3, *seq.*

Luther professed that he had rather be accounted anything than be accused of wicked silence in Christ's cause. 'Let me be accounted,' says he, 'proud, let me be accounted covetous, let me be accounted a murderer, yea, guilty of all vices, so I be not proved guilty of wicked silence for the Lord Jesus Christ.'⁵

¹ The *Emblemata*, as before, one of Brooks's favourite volumes.—G.

² As Cæsus his dumb son did for his father.

³ Heads, *not* tongues.—G.

⁴ Basil, Luther, Latimer, Dering, and multitudes of others, have been very zealous and courageous in their ministry, &c.

⁵ They that write the story of the travels of the apostles report that Simon Zelotes

Themistocles being about to speak to the general of the Greek's army, against Xerxes, he held up his staff, as if he had been about to strike him, 'Strike,' said Themistocles, 'but yet hear.'¹ So should ministers say, strike, but yet hear; rail, but yet hear; despise, but yet hear; censure, but yet hear; oppose, but yet hear; do what you will, but yet hear. *Non amat, qui non zelat*, saith Augustine, 'He is no friend to God that is not zealous for him.'

When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was, saith the history, presented to him in a dream, a pillar of fire with this motto, *Talis est Basilus*, Basil is such a one, all on a-light fire for God. So every minister should be all on a-fire for God.

[6.] *Sixthly*, They are to preach Christ *laboriously, painfully,² frequently.³* A minister must be like the bee, that is still a-flying from one flower to another to suck out honey for the good of others. Should not that dreadful word make every idle shepherd tremble: Jer. xviii. 10, 'Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently;' 1 Cor. xv. *ult.*, 'Be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Oh the dreadful woes that are pronounced in Scripture against idle shepherds! Jer. xxiii. 1; Ezek. xiii. 3, xxxiv. 2; Zech. xi. 17; Mat. xxiii. 13-16, 23, 25, 27. The great Shepherd of our souls, the Lord Jesus, was still a-feeding of his flock, and much in provoking others to the same work: John xxi. 15, 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;' 2 Tim. iv. 2, 'Preach the word in season, and out of season.' Christ wept for souls, and bled for souls, and prayed for souls; and shall not ministers sweat much for souls, and work much for the good of souls? Doubtless they will give but a sad account to Christ that make anything serve to fill up the hour; that spend two or three hours at the end of a week to fit themselves for Sabbath exercises. Idleness is hateful in any, but most abominable and intolerable in ministers; and sooner or later none shall pay so dear for it as such. Witness the frequent woes that are denounced in Scripture against them. Where should a soldier die but in the field? And where should a minister die but in the pulpit?⁴

Pompey, in a great dearth at Rome, having provided store of provisions for his citizens that were ready to perish, and being ready to put to sea, he commanded the pilot to hoist sail and be gone. The pilot told him that the sea was tempestuous, and that the voyage was like to be dangerous. 'It matters not,' said Pompey, 'hoist up sail; it is not necessary that we should live, it is necessary that they should be preserved from ruin and famine.'⁵ So should ministers say, it is not necessary that we should live, but it is necessary that poor souls should live and be happy for ever; it is necessary that they should be acquainted with the things of their peace; it is necessary that they should be de-

preached here in England. If ever there needed some Zelotes it is now; such, as Epiphanius speaks of Elijah, that he sucked fire out of his mother's breast.

¹ Plutarch: Themistocles vi., *et alibi*.—G.

² Painstakingly.—G.

³ The father pays the nurse though the child dies, the doctor has his fee though the patient dies, and the vine-dresser has his reward though the vine wither; so will God deal with faithful ministers, 2 Cor. ii. 15; Isa. xlix. 2-4.

⁴ If a minister had as many eyes as Argus to watch, and as many hands as Briareus to labour, he might find employment enough for them all. [Cf. Vol. I. p. 3, footnote 1.—G.]

⁵ Plutarch: Pompey.—G.

livered from the power of Satan and from wrath to come; and therefore it is necessary that we should be frequent and 'abundant in the work of the Lord,' and not plead storms and tempests, or that a lion is in the way.¹

It was Vespasian the emperor's speech, and may well be applied to ministers, *Oportet imperatorem stantem mori*, an emperor ought to die standing.²

[7.] *Seventhly*, As they are to preach Christ painfully, so they are to preach Christ *exemplarily*:³ 1 Peter v. 3, 'Be thou an example to the flock.' They must preach Christ as well in life as in doctrine. Ministers must not be like the drugs, that physicians say are hot in the mouth and cold in operation; hot in the pulpit, and cold and careless in their lives and conversations. They must say, as Gideon said to his soldiers: Judges xvii. 17, 'Look on me and do likewise;' Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' They are called angels, and they are called stars, because they should shine in righteousness and holiness.

What Cæsar once said of his wife, 'that it was not enough for her to be without fault, but she should be without all suspicion of fault,' may well be applied to ministers, who, of all men in the world, should be most free from the very appearances of evil. The lives of ministers oftentimes do convince more strongly than their words; their tongues may persuade, but their lives command.⁴

Tace lingua, loquere vita, 'Talk not of a good life,' said the heathen, 'but let thy life speak.' God appointed that both the weights and measures of the sanctuary should be twice as large as those of the commonwealth, to shew, that he expects much more of those that wait upon him in the sanctuary than he doth of others. Ministers should be like musk among linen, which casts a fragrant smell, or like that box of spikenard, which being broken open, filled the house with its odour.

Gregory saith of Athanasius, that his life was a continual sermon and wooing men to Christ. Aristotle requires this in an orator, that he be a good man; how much more then should God's orators be good and gracious? When Eli's sons were wicked, the people abhorred the offering of the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 17; and what is that that renders the things of God so contemptuous and odious in the eyes of many people in this nation, but the ignorance, looseness, profaneness, and baseness of those that are the dispensers of them. Unholy ministers pull down instead of building up. Oh the souls that their lives destroy! These, by their loose lives, lead their flocks to hell, where themselves must lie lowermost.⁵

A painter being blamed by a cardinal for putting too much red upon

¹ The angels on Jacob's ladder were some ascending, others descending, none standing or sitting still. Ministers must be like them.

² Suetonius. [Vesp.—G.]

³ A preacher, as Quintilian saith of an orator, should be *vir bonus, dicendi peritus*, a well-spoken and well-deeded person.

⁴ John the abbot professeth that he had never taught others anything which he had not first practised himself.

⁵ The souls of priests, I may say of ministers, must be purer than the sunbeams, saith Chrysostom. Jewel, Bucer, and Bradford, were famous examples for holiness.

the visages of Peter and Paul, tartly replied, that he painted them so, as blushing at the lives of those men who styled themselves their successors. Ah how do the lewd and wicked lives of many that are called and accounted ministers, make others to blush!

Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach some Christians, who by their ungodly lives, made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach: 'Where,' said they, 'is that good law which they do believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostle's writings, and yet are drunk; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they possess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives.'¹ As this is very applicable to many professors in those days, so it is applicable to many preachers also.

I have read of a scandalous minister that was struck at the heart, and converted in reading those words: Rom. ii. 21, 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?' If this treatise should fall into any such hand, oh that it might have the same operation! Wicked ministers do more hurt by their lives than they do good by their doctrine.

I have read of a gentlewoman that turned athiest because she lived under a great learned doctor that preached excellently but lived very licentiously.

The heathen brings in a young man, who hearing of the adulteries and wickedness of the gods, said, 'What! do they so, and shall I stick at it?' So say most, when their teachers and leaders are lewd and wicked, what! do they such and such abominations, and shall we stick at it?

When one deoboist² in life among the Lacedemonians stept up and gave good counsel, they would not receive it; but when another of a better life stept up and gave the same counsel, they presently followed it. The application is easy. Every minister's life should be a commentary upon Christ's life; nothing wins and builds like this.³

[8.] *Eighthly*, Ministers must preach *feelingly, experimentally*, as well as exemplarily. They must speak from the heart to the heart; they must feel the worth, the weight, the sweet of those things upon their own souls that they give out to others: 1 John i. 1-3, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The highest mystery in the divine rhetoric, is to feel what a man speaks, and then speak what a man feels.

Praxiteles exquisitely drew love, taking the pattern from that passion which he felt in his own heart.

It was said of Luther, that he spake as if he had been within a man. Ministers must so speak to the people, as if they lived in the very hearts of the people; as if they had been told all their wants, and all their

¹ Salvianus de G. D. lib. iv.

² Debauched.—G.

³ Chrysostom preached so feelingly and so affectionately that his hearers thought they had as good be without the sun in the firmament as Chrysostom in the pulpit.

ways, all their sins, and all their doubts. No preaching to this, no preachers to these.

Ministers should not be like Cæsar's soldier, that digged a fountain for Cæsar, and himself perished for want of water. Yet many such there be in these days, that dig and draw water out of the wells of salvation for others, and yet themselves eternally perish, by their non-drinking of the waters of life. If they are monsters, and not to be named among men, that feed and feast their servants, but starve their wives, then what monsters are they that feed and feast other men's souls, with the dainties and delicates of heaven, but starve their own? No misery, no hell to this!

[9.] *Ninthly*, As ministers must preach the word feelingly, experimentally, so they must preach the word *rightly*. They must divide and distribute the word according to every one's spiritual estate and condition. They must give comfort to whom comfort belongs, and counsel to whom counsel belongs, and reproof to whom reproof belongs, and terror to whom terror belongs: 2 Tim. ii. 15, 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;' or, word for word, 'Rightly cutting into parts the word of truth,' Isa. xl. 1, 2, 1. 4; 2 Cor. v. 10-12. Some say [Gerhard, Perkins, &c.] the metaphor is taken from the priests of the Old Testament, who having slain the beasts that were to be sacrificed, did joint and divide the same in an accurate manner. Others say [Chrysostom, Bullinger, Theophylact, &c.] it is a metaphor taken from a cutter of leather, who cutteth off that which is superfluous, when he cutteth out reins and thongs. So in the handling of the word, questions that are superfluous and unprofitable, ought to be cut off; and that only is to be held forth that makes for the hearer's instruction, edification and consolation. Others say the metaphor is taken from the cutting and squaring out of the streets and highways, and setting out the bounds of men's lands and possessions. Others by cutting the word of truth aright, understand the raising of right instructions, by following the rule of the word, only as a ploughman that draweth or cutteth a right furrow in the ground.¹

To divide the word aright, is to cut out, saith Calvin and others, to every one his portion, as a parent cutteth out bread to his children, or a cook meat to his guests. A general doctrine not applied, is as a sword without an edge, not in itself, but to the people, who by reason of their own singular senselessness and weakness, are not able to apply it to their own estates and conditions; or as a whole loaf set before children, that will do them no good. A garment fitted for all bodies, is fit for nobody; and that which is spoken to all is taken as spoken to none. Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow, application is the hitting of the mark. How many are wise in generals, but vain in their practical inferences! Such preachers are fitter for Rome than England. Souls may go sleeping and dreaming to hell before such preaching, ere such preachers will awaken them and shew them their danger. Oh that therefore the people were so wise as, that when sin is reprov'd, judg-

¹ And if Galen could say that in anatomising a man's brain, physicians must carry themselves as men do in the temple, how much more must ministers do so in dividing the word of life!

ments threatened, miseries promised, and Christ freely and fully offered, they would apply all to their own souls! This is the misery of many in our days; they come to sermons as beggars come to banquets, carrying nothing but the scraps away with them.

[10.] *Tenthly*, They must preach the word *acceptably*, as well as rightly: Eccles. xii. 10, 'The preacher sought to find out acceptable words;' or words of delight, as the Hebrew has it, 'and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.'¹ Ministers' words should be divinely delectable and desirable; they should divinely please, and divinely profit; they should divinely tickle, and divinely take both ear and heart. A minister should be a weighty speaker; he should clothe his doctrine in such a comely, lovely dress, as that he may by it slide insensibly into his hearers' hearts. Ministers should clothe their matter with decent words. The leaves give some beauty to the tree. Good matter in an unseemly language, is like a bright taper in a sluttish candlestick, or like a fair body in unhandsome clothes, or like a gold ring on a leprous hand. 'Truth,' saith one, 'loves to be plain, but not sluttish.' As she loves not to be clad in gay colours, like a wanton strumpet, so not in lousy rags like a nasty creature. Aaron's bells were golden bells, *dulce sonantes*, sounding pleasantly, and not as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals. Holy eloquence is a gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts xviii. 24, and may doubtless, as well as other gifts of the Spirit, be made prudently useful to the setting forth of divine truth, and the catching of souls by craft, as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. xii. 16. Surely where it is, it may be made use of as an Egyptian jewel to adorn the tabernacle.²

Lactantius [De falsa Sap. lib. v. cap. 1] hath well observed, that philosophers, orators, and poets, were therefore very pernicious, in that they easily ensnared incautious minds with sweetness of speech; therefore his advice is, even in delivering the truth of Christ, to sweeten the speech for the winning of them to Christ, who will neither hear, nor read, nor value, nor regard the truth, except it be polished and trimmed up in a lovely dress.³

[11.] In the last place, and so to add no more, as they must preach the word *acceptably*, so they must preach the word *constantly*.⁴ They must not lay down the Bible, to take up the sword, as some have done for worldly advantages, 1 Cor. vii. 10, 24; they must not leave the word to serve tables, Acts vi. 1, as others have done upon the same account; they must not change their black cloaks, for scarlet cloaks; they must abide and continue in their places and employments; they must neither change their work nor their master: Acts vi. 4, 'But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.' They would not assign their charge to some surrogates or deputies, that themselves might live at ease. No! they were peremptorily resolved to hold on, to continue in these two choice duties, prayer and ministry of

¹ בקש in Pihil, from *Bakash*, signifies an earnest, vehement seeking, &c.

² It was a fine commendation given by Quintilian of Thucydides: Thucydides writes thick and quick, close and clear; he is solid and succinct, sententious and judicious.

³ Basil and Bucer were curt and concise, full and clear, in their discourses.

⁴ The shew-bread stood all the week before the Lord, to shew that preaching is not out of season on any day.

the word. So in chap. xxvi. 22, 'Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.' 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16, 'Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, [*ἐν τοῖς ῥησιν ταύταις*, spend thy time in them], that thy profiting may appear to all, or in all things. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee;' 2 Tim. iii. 14, 'But [*Μένε*, abide, keep thy station, thou wilt be put to it, thou wilt meet with earthquakes] continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;' Eccles. xii. 9, 'And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.'

Hosea was fourscore years a prophet in Israel, and yet did not convert them; yet notwithstanding all discouragements he continued constant, and that with abundance of freshness and liveliness.

Chrysostom compares good pastors to fountains that ever send forth waters, or conduits that are always running, though no pail be put under. [Chrysost. in Mat. Hom. xv.]

Erasmus saith of Jerome, *Minima pars noctis dabatur somno, minor cibo, nulla otio*, He allowed least time for sleep, little for food, none for idleness. It best becomes a minister to die preaching in a pulpit.

Now if this be so, then by way of use let me say, *That this truth looks very sourly and wistly upon all those that preach anything rather than Christ.*

The Lord be merciful to them! How have they forgotten the great work about which their heads and hearts should be most exercised, to wit, the bringing in of souls to Christ, and the building up of souls in Christ. Where do we find in all the Scripture, that Christ, his prophets or apostles, did ever in their preaching meddle with businesses of state, or things of a mere civil concernment? 'My kingdom is not of this world. Who has made me a judge?' says Christ.

I hope it will not be counted presumption in me if I shall propound a few rules for such to observe that are willing to preach Christ to poor souls. I will only propound three.

[1.] And the first is this, *If you would preach Christ to the people, according to the rules last mentioned, then you must get a Christ within you.*

There is nothing that makes a man indeed so able to preach Christ to the people, as the getting a Christ within him; and it is very observable, that the great rabbies and doctors that want a Christ within, they do but bungle in the work of the Lord, in the preaching of a crucified Jesus; and were it not for the help of Austin, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Tertullian, &c., what sad, dead, and pitiful work would they make! Yea, for want of a Christ within, how little of Christ do they understand! How little of Christ do they make known, notwithstanding all their borrowed helps! Paul was a man that had got a Christ within him: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life that I live is by the faith of the Son of God,' &c. Compare

this with Gal. iv. 19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you.' A Christ within, makes him travail in birth. The Greek word translated, 'I travail in birth,' signifies not only the travail of the woman at the birth of the child, but also the painful bearing thereof before the birth. The pains of travail breed not a greater desire to see a man-child born into the world, than Paul's love bred in him, till Christ were anew formed in them, 2 Cor. xi. 23. No man did so much for the winning of souls to Christ as Paul, nor no man had so much of a Christ within him as Paul. Nothing will naturalise a minister's heart to his work like a Christ within; nothing will make him so wise, so painful, so watchful, so careful to win souls, as a Christ within; nothing will make him hold out and hold on in the work of the Lord, in the face of all oppositions, persecutions, dangers, and deaths, as a Christ within; nothing will make a man strive with sinners, and weep over sinners, and wait upon sinners for their return, as a Christ within.¹ Such ministers as have not a Christ within them, will find no comfort, and as little success, in their preaching of Christ. Above all gettings, get a Christ within, or else after all thy preaching, thyself will be a cast-away.

[2.] *Secondly*, They that would preach Christ to the people, must study more Scripture truths, Scripture mysteries, than human histories.

They must study God's book more than all other books. The truth and antiquity of the book of God finds no companion, either in age or authority. No histories are comparable to the histories of the scriptures, for, 1, antiquity;² 2, rariety;³ 3, variety; 4, brevity; 5, perspicuity; 6, harmony; 7, verity.

'Gregory' calls the Scripture, *cor et animam dei*, the heart and soul of God; for in the Scriptures, as in a glass, we may see how the heart and soul of God stands towards his poor creatures. It was the glory of Apollos that he was mighty in the Scripture, Acts xviii. 24; John v. 39, 'Search the Scriptures,' saith Christ. The Greek word signifies to search as men search for gold in mines, *ἔρουνται*. You must search the Scriptures, not superficially but narrowly. The Scriptures are a great depth, wherein the choicest treasures are hid; therefore you must dig deep if you will find: Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you;' or as the Greek hath it, *ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν*. 'Let the word of Christ indwell in you, as an engrafted word, incorporated into your souls.' Let the word be so concocted and digested by you, as that you turn it into a part of yourselves. You must be familiarly acquainted with the word; you must not let it pass by you as a stranger, or lodge and sojourn with you as a wayfaring man; it must continually abide with you, and dwell richly in you: 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God

¹ As nurses to princes' children are fed with the most delicate fare, but not for their own sakes, but for the children's sake to whom they give nurse, so it is with many ministers that want a Christ within, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

² Moses is found more ancient than all those whom the Grecians make most ancient; as Homer, Hesiod, and Jupiter himself, whom the Greeks have seated in the top of their divinity. [Theophilus Gale, as before.—G.]

³ Rarity, = preciousness.—G.

may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' All books and helps are not comparable to the Bible, for the completing and perfecting of a man for the work of the ministry.

That which a papist reports of their sacrament of the mass, that there are as many mysteries in it as there are drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, &c., may be truly asserted of the word of God; no study to the study of the Scripture for profit and comfort. Count Anhalt, that princely preacher, was wont to say, 'That the whole Scriptures were the swaddling bands of the child Jesus,' he being to be found almost in every page, in every verse, in every line.¹

Luther would often say, 'That he had rather that all his books should be burned, than that they should be a means to hinder persons from studying of the Scripture.'

[3.] The third and last rule I shall lay down, is this, Such as would preach Christ aright to the people had need *dwell much upon the vanity of human doctrines.*

The vanity of which doctrines may be thus discovered :

First, They do not discover sin in its ugliness and filthiness as the Scriptures do. They search but to the skin, they reach not to the heart; they do not do as the master did in Jonah's ship, when they were in a storm.

Secondly, Human doctrines have no humbling power in them. They may a little tickle you, but they can never humble you; they cannot cast down Satan's strongholds; they cannot melt nor break the heart of a sinner; they cannot make him cry out with the leper, 'Unclean, unclean.'²

Thirdly, Human doctrines nourish not the noble part, the soul of man. The prodigal was like to starve before he returned to his father's house. A man may study much, and labour much, and lay out much of his time and spirits about human doctrines, and yet after all be like to Pharaoh's lean kine. A man that studies human doctrines doth but feed upon ashes.

Fourthly, Human doctrines cannot cure a wound in the conscience. The diseased woman spent all she had upon physicians, but was not a penny the better. The remedy is too weak for the disease. Conscience, like Prometheus' vulture, will still lie gnawing notwithstanding all that such doctrines can do.

Fifthly, Human doctrines are so far from enriching the soul, that they usually impoverish the soul. They weaken the soul; they expose the soul to the greatest wants and to the greatest weaknesses; they play the harlot with the soul; they impoverish it, and bring it to 'a morsel of bread.' Who so poor in spiritual experiences and heavenly enjoyments as such that sit under the droppings of human doctrines?

Sixthly, Human doctrines make men servants to the humours and corruptions of men; they make men-pleasers of men rather than pleasers of God; yea, they make men set up themselves and others, sometimes in the room of Christ, and sometimes above Christ. I hope

¹ Whiles they burned us, said reverend Du Moulin, for reading the Scriptures, we burned with zeal to be reading of them. But where is this brave spirit now?

² These things had need be seriously minded in these days, wherein human doctrines are so much exalted and admired.

these few short hints may prevail with some to fall in with this counsel, that so they may the better preach the Lord Jesus to the people.

And so much for this doctrine.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. iii. 8.

Having spoken much concerning ministers' duty, I shall now speak a little concerning their dignity, and so finish this text.

'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' This grace, this favour, this honour is given to me, that I should preach, &c. I look not upon it as a poor, low, mean, contemptible thing, but as a very great honour, 'that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

The observation that I shall speak to is this :

Obs. That the office of a minister or preacher is honourable.

For the understanding of this point, premise with me two things :

First, That by a minister, I understand one that is qualified according to gospel rules, and that is internally called by God, and externally called by the people of God, to the ministerial office.

The *second* thing that I would have you premise with me for the understanding of the point is this, that the common appellation of those that are set apart for the preaching of the gospel in the New Testament is *διάκονοι, ministers*. So in 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6, and chap. vi. 4, and chap. xi. 15, 23; 1 Tim. iv. 16, and in divers other places, the word minister is a title of office, service, or administration given frequently to the preachers of the gospel. As for the names of ambassadors, stewards, and the like, wherewith they are often honoured, they are figurative, and given to them by allusion only.

These two things being premised, we shall now proceed to the opening of the point.

1. And, in the first place, I shall prove that the office of a minister is an honourable office.

2. And then, in the second place, I shall shew you what honour is due to them.

3. And then, in the third place, I shall shew you how you are to honour them.

4. And then, in the last place, we shall bring home all by a word of application.

Christians, give me leave to tell you this by the way, that since the gospel hath shined in England, a godly, faithful, painful ministry was never more subtilly and vehemently struck at by men that make a fair show, and by men of corrupt opinions and wicked lives. This age affords many church-levellers as well as state-levellers. Some there be, that under that notion of plucking up corrupt ministers, would pluck up by the very roots the true ministry. But God has and will be still too hard for such men. If they will be monsters, God will be sure to be master. His faithful ministers are stars that he holds in his right hand, Rev. ii. 1; and men shall as soon pull the sun out of the firmament, as pull them out of the hand of God.

Now, considering that there is such a spirit abroad in the world, I hope no sober, serious Christians will be offended at my standing up to vindicate the honour of a godly, faithful ministry. In order to which, I shall first prove that the office of a minister is honourable; and to me these following things speak it out:

[1.] First, *The several names and titles that are given to them in Scripture*, doth speak them out to be honourable. They are called fathers, stewards, ambassadors, overseers, and angels, as you all know that know anything of Scripture. To spend time to prove this, would be to light candles to see the sun at noon.

[2.] Secondly, *Their work is honourable*. Their whole work is about souls, about winning souls to Christ, and about building souls up in Christ; and to these two heads the main work of the ministry may be reduced. The more noble the soul is, the more honour it is to be busied and exercised about it: James v. 20, '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.'¹

'Let him know,' that is, let him take notice that an honourable and glorious work is done by him. The soul is the immediate work of God; the soul is the image of God; the soul is capable of union and communion with God; the soul is worth more than a world, yea, than a thousand worlds. Christ prayed for souls, and wrought miracles for souls, and wept for souls, and left his Father's bosom for souls, and bled out his heart's blood for souls, and is gone to heaven to make provision for souls, yea, he is now a-making intercession for souls. All which speaks out the excellency of their office whose whole work is about souls.

The Jews say of Moses his soul, that it was sucked out of his mouth with a kiss. Souls are dear and sweet to Christ.

[3.] A *third* thing that speaks out this truth is this, *they are fellow-labourers with God*; they are co-workers with God in the salvation of sinners. And this is a mighty honour, to be a fellow-labourer with God, to be a co-worker with God: 1 Cor. iii. 9, 'For we are labourers together with God.' Who would not work hard with such sweet company? Who would not affect, prize, love, and honour such service? Ministers are called the light and salt of the world, because they enlighten blind souls, and season unsavoury souls, and so save them from corruption and perdition, Mat. v. 14; John v. 35; Mat. v. 13; Mark ix. 59, 60. Oh, to be joined in any work with God, is an honour beyond what I am able to express!

The senate of Rome accounted it a diminution of Augustus Cæsar's dignity to join any consuls with him for the better carrying on the affairs of the state. Oh, but our God doth not think it a diminution of his dignity, that even his poor despised servants should be fellow-labourers and co-workers with him in the salvation of souls.

[4.] Fourthly, *The honourable account that the Lord hath of them in this employment*, speaks out this truth, that their office is honourable. In Mat. x. 41, 42, compared, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me; he

¹ *O anima Dei insignita imagine, desponsata fide, donata Spiritu, &c.*, O divine soul, invested with the image of God, espoused to him by faith, &c.—Bernard. [Sermons on Canticles, as before.—G.]

that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;' and Luke x. 16, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that despises you, despises me.' This honourable account God hath of all his faithful servants in this employment. Kings and princes have their ambassadors in very high account: so has God his.

[5.] The *fifth* thing that speaks out this truth is this, *they serve an honourable master*. They serve him that is all ear to hear, all hand to punish, all power to protect, all wisdom to direct, all goodness to relieve, and all mercy to pardon. They serve that God that is *optimum, maximum*, the best and greatest. God hath within himself all the good of angels, men, and universal nature; he hath all dignity, all glory, all riches, all treasure, all pleasure, all delight, all joy, all beatitudes. Mark, abstracts do better express God than concretes and adjectives.¹ God is being, bonity,² beauty, power, wisdom, justice, mercy, and love itself. 'God is love,' saith the apostle, in the very abstract. God is one infinite perfection in himself, which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures. And oh then, what an honour must it be to those that are employed under so honourable a master!³

[6.] Sixthly, *Their very work and service is honourable*. Why else did the apostle cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' There is no such embassy in the world as this is in which they are employed: Eph. vi. 19, 20, 'Pray for me, that I may make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds.'⁴ Faithful ministers do represent the person of the King of kings and Lord of lords; their work is to treat of peace between God and man, or of open hostility between the Creator and the creature, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

[7.] *Seventhly, and lastly, Their reward from God is honourable*. Though the world crown them with thorns, as it did their Lord and master before them, yet God will crown them with honour: Dan. xii. 3, 'They shall shine as the stars in the firmament.' You know ambassadors have not preferments while they are abroad, but when they come home into their own country, then their princes prefer them, and put much honour upon them. So will God deal with his ambassadors: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' So in Isa. xlix. 4, 5, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my reward with my God. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.' So in 2 Cor. ii. 15, 'For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.'⁵ Ministers shall be rewarded according to their faithfulness and diligence, though some perish. It shall be with them as with vine-dressers. You know vine-dressers are rewarded according to their diligence and faithfulness,

¹ *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*, He hath all that hath the haver of all.—*Augustine*.

² Goodness.—G.

³ It is truly said of God that he is *omnia super omnia*.

⁴ Their main work is to treat with sinners about eternity, &c.

⁵ God will at last highly reward those very services that men don't regard, &c.

though some vines never bear, nor bring forth fruit at all. As ministers are diligent and faithful, so the reward, the crown, shall be given forth at last. You know the barber is as much rewarded for trimming a blackamore, though all his pains in rubbing him can never make him white, as he is for trimming and rubbing another man that is white, and by a little pains is made more white. This is many a faithful minister's grief, that he takes a great deal of pains in rubbing and washing, as it were, to make souls white and clean, pure and holy, and yet they remain after all as black as hell; but surely their reward shall be never the less with God.¹ The nurse looks not for her wages from the child, but from the parent. If ministers, like clouds, sweat themselves to death that souls may be brought to life, great will be their reward, though their souls should perish for ever, for whom they have wept, sweat, and bled.

God won't deal by faithful ministers, as Xerxes did by his steerman, who crowned him in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day. No; God will set an everlasting crown upon their heads who remain laborious and faithful to the death. The world for all their pains will crown them with thorns, but God at last will crown them with glory; he will set a crown of pure gold upon their heads for ever. And thus you have the point proved.

The second thing that I am to do is to shew you,

2. *What honour that is which is justly due to faithful ministers.*

Now, this I shall shew you in three things. There is a threefold honour that is due unto them.

[1.] First, *Honourable countenance is due unto them that are in so honourable a place and office as they are in*: 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers² of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;' 1 Thes. v. 12, 13, '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 high in love for their work's sake;' or, 'to esteem them more than exceedingly,' or, more than abundantly, as the Greek will bear, *ὑπερεκπερισσού*. And so in 1 Tim. v. 17, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' The Greek word *κοπιῶντες*, that is here rendered *labour*, signifies not simply to labour, but to labour with much travail and toil, to labour even to lassitude, as he doth that cleaveth wood, or that toileth in harvest, or that goeth a warfare. Preaching is a most painful work, and enfeebleth a man exceedingly; whence the prophet cries out, 'My leanness, my leanness,' Isa. xxiv. 16.³ No pains, no labour, no work to that of the brain, to that of the mind, nor none so worthy of praise as those that are most in that labour, in that work. No men's work is so holy and heavenly as theirs, nor no men's work is so high and honourable as theirs, and therefore none deserve to be more honoured

¹ Latimer, in one of his sermons, speaking of a minister who gave this answer why he left off preaching, Because he saw he did no good. This, saith Latimer, is a very naughty naughty answer.

² *ὑπηρέτας*. Under-rowers to Christ, the master-pilot, helping forward the ship of the church to the haven of heaven.

³ Our Saviour, at little past thirty, was reckoned by the Jews to be towards fifty, John viii. 57, he had so spent himself in preaching. Preaching is a spending, painful work.

than they, though not for their own sakes, yet their work's sake. Shall Turks and papists so highly esteem and honour every hedge-priest of theirs above their merits, and shall not Christians much more honour their faithful ministers? Faithful ministers must have countenance as well as maintenance, they must have reverence as well as recompense. You are not to nod the head and put out the lip, to scoff, and mock, and jeer at them: Gal. iv. 14, 'And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.' When Ehud told the king of Moab, 'I have a message to thee from God, O king,' he arose from his throne and bowed himself, Judges iii. 20. Isa. lii. 7, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.'

'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet!' What is their face then? What is their doctrine then? Their very feet, when dirty, sweaty, and dusty, are yet very beautiful and lovely.

It was a common saying at Constantinople, that it was better the sun should not shine than that Chrysostom should not preach.

I have read of one that said, 'if he should meet a preacher and an angel together, he would first salute the preacher, and then the angel afterward.' If you do not give them honourable countenance, Jews and Turks, papists, and pagans, will in the great day of account rise up against you, and condemn you. I could say much of what I have observed in other nations and countries concerning this thing, but I shall forbear. Should I speak what I have seen, many professors might well blush.

The Grecians used to give far greater respect and honour to their philosophers than to their orators, because that their orators did only teach them to speak well, but their philosophers did teach them to live well. Oh what honour then is due to them that do teach you both to speak well and to live well! both how to be happy here and how to be blessed hereafter. And thus you see that honourable countenance is due to faithful ministers.

[2.] Secondly, *There is an honour of maintenance, as well as an honour of countenance that is due to them:* 1 Tim. v. 17, 18, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward.'¹ It was not the manner in the Eastern countries to thrash out corn as we do, but their oxen trod it out, to which the apostle allegorically compares laborious pastors, who after a sort crush out that corn of which the bread of life is made: Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a man soweth,

¹ Harvest-labourers have meat and drink, and double wages. Some think that the apostle hath respect to the law of the first-born, Deut. xxi. 17, in which a two-fold portion is commanded to be given him. The ancient Christians, as appears by Tertullian, were wont, in their *Agape*, or love-feasts, to give their ministers a double portion. Surely ministers should have such a liberal, honourable, and ingenuous maintenance, as might set them above the vulgar, as the first-born by their double portion were set up above the rest of their brethren.

that shall he also reap.' So in 1 Cor. ix. 7-11, 'Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?' Mat. x. 9, 10, 'Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass, in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat.' God's appointment in all these texts bespeak it.

Again, you may consider *the necessity of it*. How shall they go on in their warfare if they be troubled with the things of this life? Again, they are to *give themselves wholly* to the work of the ministry, 1 Tim. iv. 5. And again, the equity and justice of the duty Christ and the apostle shews in the forenamed scriptures, Mat. x. 10, 1 Cor. ix. 10. The maintenance of the minister should be so free, and so liberal, as may testify that you honour him in your hearts, and as may keep him from contempt and scorn in the world. There are multitudes that grumble at the expense of a penny for the maintenance of those divine candles that waste themselves to give light to them; that will rather die to save charges than spend a little money to save their lives, yea, their souls. They like well of religion without expense, in Basil; and a gospel without charge, but if it grow costly, it is none of their money. The scripture says, 'Buy the truth, sell it not.' You can never overbuy it, whatsoever you give for it; you can never sufficiently sell it, if you had all the world in exchange for it.

It is said of Cæsar that he had greater care of his books than of his royal robes; for swimming through the water to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the water, but lost his robes. But alas! what are Cæsar's books to God's book? The word is the field, and Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field. The word is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring of gold, and is it then worth nothing? Many deal with faithful, painful ministers, as carriers do with their horses, they lay heavy burdens upon them, and exact work enough, and give them but easy commons; and then to recompense this, they hang bells at their ears and necks. They shall be commended and applauded for brave excellent preachers, and for great painstakers, &c.¹ That maintenance that is justly due to the ministers of the gospel is honourable; it ought to be suitable to their condition and dignity. The maintenance that is due to them, is of the same nature with that which is given to princes and magistrates, by those who are under them, and not a common maintenance which superiors give to their inferiors or servants.

[3.] Thirdly, *There is an honour of obedience and service that is due to them*. And indeed, of all honours, this is the greatest honour that can be cast upon a faithful minister, the honour of obedience: Heb.

¹ The minister's maintenance is not to be esteemed of the nature of alms, as some would have it; but is a tribute of honour, such as is given by an inferior to his superior.

xiii. 7, 'Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken to you in the word of God;' and verse 17, 'Obey them that rule over you.' Oh, submit yourselves, for they 'watch for your souls as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.'

'Obey them that have the rule over you.' The word *ἡγουμένοις*, that is rendered 'Rule over you,' in the seventh and seventeenth verses, signifies captains, guides. Faithful ministers are your captains, they are your guides, they are your chieftains, they are your champions that bear the brunt of the battle, the heat of the day; and therefore you must obey them, even as soldiers do their captains. So in 2 Thes. iii. 14, 'And if any man obey not our words, note that man, and have no company with him.' Brand him as infamous, beware of him, let him see a strangeness in you towards him, that all may avoid him as one whose company is dangerous and infectious. Ah Christians! by your submission to their doctrine, you highly honour them, and you make their heavy task to be easy and sweet unto them. Christians! it will be your honour and happiness in the day of Christ, that you have lived out what they have made out to you. I suppose you remember that happiness is not entailed to hearing, or knowing, or talking, but to doing. 'If ye know these things, blessed and happy are you, if you do them,' John xiii. 17. There are some diseases that are called *opprobria medicorum*, the reproaches of physicians; and there are some people that may be truly called *opprobria ministrorum*, the reproach of ministers, and those are they that are great hearers, and talkers, and admirers of ministers, but never obey the doctrines delivered by them.¹ The Corinthians were Paul's honour, they were his living epistles, they were his walking certificates, they were his letters-testimonial, 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. The obedience and fruitfulness of the people is the minister's testimonial, as the profiting of the scholar is the master's commendation. Oh what an honour is it to a minister, when it shall be said of him, as one said once of Octavius, 'When he came into Rome he found the walls all of base materials, but left them walls of marble!' So here is a minister that found the people dark and blind, but left them enlightened; he found them dead, but left them alive; he found them a proud people, but hath left them humble; a profane people, but hath left them holy; a carnal people, but hath left them spiritual; a worldly people, but hath left them heavenly; a wavering people, but hath left them settled and rooted, &c. No honour to a faithful minister like this. And thus you see what honour is due unto them, &c.

Use. And now let me make a word of use. Christians! if their office be so honourable, *then honour them*. Oh, give them the honour that is due unto them. Will you make conscience to give others their due, and will you make no conscience of giving ministers their due? Are there any that are greater blessings to a nation than faithful ministers? Who have stood more in the gap to turn away wrath than they? Who have begotten you to Christ through the gospel but they? Who have

¹ There is no fear of knowing too much, but there is much fear and danger of practising too little. I fear, with Saint Augustine, that many grieve more for the barrenness of their lands than for the barrenness of their lives. The more the cypress is watered, the more it is withered. Oh that it were not so with many in these days!

turned you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God but them? Who have built you up in the light and love of Jesus but them? &c. Oh, do not cast scorn and reproach upon them, but give them that honour that is due unto them!

But you will say to me, *How shall we honour them?*

I answer, you must honour them these five ways:

[1.] *First*, You must honour them *by hearing them, and giving credit to their message.* The want of this honour troubled Jonah too much; 'Who hath believed our report?' Not to believe the report that they make concerning God and Christ, &c., is to cast the greatest dishonour that can be upon them.¹ The wise men, Mat. ii., went many weary hundred miles to find Christ at Jerusalem; some think near a thousand miles. The Queen of Sheba, some say, went 964 miles to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and what was Solomon's wisdom to that wisdom of Christ that is held forth to souls in the ministry of the gospel.² The holy martyrs thought no weather too hot, no winter too cold, no journey too long, nor no torment too great, to enjoy the preaching of the gospel, though darkly. The heathen priests began with *hoc age*; they thought it a very irreligious thing to be remiss and vain, though in a vain religion. Oh that vain professors would remember this, and blush!

[2.] *Secondly*, You may honour them, *by standing fast in the doctrine of the Lord delivered by them:* 1 Thes. iii. 8, 'Ye are our joy, our crown, if ye stand fast in the Lord;' else, saith the apostle, ye kill our very hearts.³ If after all our studying, wrestling, sweating, and preaching, ye shall play apostates, and leave the precious ways of God, and run after notions and vain opinions which cannot profit you, nor better you, you will kill many at once: your own souls and our hearts.

[3.] *Thirdly*, You should honour them, *by being followers of them, so far as they are followers of Christ.* So in 1 Cor. iv. 16, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.' Chap. xi. 11; Heb. xiii. 7; 2 Thes. iii. 7; Phil. iii. 7. All these scriptures bespeak you to be followers of them as they are followers of Christ.⁴

Alexander had somewhat a wry neck, and his soldiers thought it an honour to be like him. Oh, it is an honour to ministers, when their people are like them in knowledge, wisdom, love, humility, holiness!

Plutarch said of Demosthenes that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them. Ah, many in these days are excellent at praising and commending the holy and gracious actings of their ministers, but not so at imitating them!

[4.] *Fourthly*, You must honour them *by bearing them upon your hearts when you appear before the Lord in the mount:*⁵ Eph. vi. 13

¹ Antisthenes, a philosopher, went every day six miles to hear Socrates. [*As before: see Index, sub nomine.—G.*]

² *Nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis discitur*, We can never hear that too often that we can never learn too well.

³ If I forsake my profession, I am sure of a worse death than judge Hailes had, said that martyr. [*Foxe, sub nomine.—G.*]

⁴ *Bonus dux, bonus comes*, A good leader makes a good follower.

⁵ Prayer is *porta celi, clavis paradisi*, The gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. The Jews fable, that our Saviour, by finding out the right pronunciation of the name of God, did all his miracles; but certainly the right invocation of the name of God would even make ministers work miracles indeed.

19; 2 Thes. iii. 1, 2; 1 Thes. v. 25; Col. i. 2, 4; Heb. xiii. 8; Acts xii. 5. All these scriptures do bespeak Christians to bear their faithful ministers upon their hearts when they are a-wrestling with God. None usually are opposed as they. Their wants are many, their weaknesses are more, their work is great, their strength is small. Oh pray, pray more and more for them; yea, pray believingly, pray affectionately, pray fervently, pray unweariedly, that they may speak from the heart to the heart, that they may speak things that are seasonable and suitable to the capacities and conditions of his people. They can tell when they want your prayers, and when they enjoy your prayers; did you pray more for them, they might do more for your internal and eternal good, than now they do.

[5.] *Lastly*, You must honour them by *adhering to them, and abiding with them in all their trials, afflictions, and tribulations that do or shall attend them.* It is brave to own them in a storm, to own them when others disown them, when others oppose them, and act highly against them. Paul looked upon himself as much honoured by Onesiphorus owning of him in his chains: 2 Tim. i. 16, 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.' Chrysostom, in an oration, says of Christians, 'That they would not be kept from visiting the confessors in prison, although it was forbidden with many threatening terrors, and it was great danger to them.'¹

But to draw to a close, you have heard that the office of a faithful minister is honourable, and you have heard what honour is due unto them. Let me therefore desire you all to take heed of scorning, contemning, and despising of those that are faithful, that are qualified according to gospel rules. That is a sad word, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15-18. God sent his messengers early and late to reclaim them, but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy, nor no healing. David never played such a harsh part all his days, as he did to the Ammonites that despitefully used his ambassadors, as you may see at large in 2 Sam. x.

The Romans sacked the famous city of Corinth, and razed it to the ground, for a little discourtesy they offered to their ambassadors.² And they slew many of the Illyrians and the Tarentines for misusing of their ambassadors. And do you think that the Lord is not as tender of the credit and honour of his faithful ministers, and that he will not avenge the affronts, wrongs, and injuries that are done unto them? Surely he will: Jer. xxix. 17-19, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will send unto them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

¹ The saints in the primitive times did so stick and cleave to those that were in bonds, that the very heathen admiringly cried out, 'Look how the Christians love one another.'

² Ambassadors are inviolable by the law of nations, and the least indignity offered to them is to be as severely punished as if it had been offered to the person of that prince whom they represent. [Corinth: 'razed' by L. Mummius—Strabo, viii.; Cicero, *Pro Leg. Man.*, 5, &c., &c.—G.]

And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and I will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach among all nations, whither I have driven them.' But why will God do this? 'Because they have not hearkened to my word, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord,' See 2 Kings xvii. 13-15. Now mark, though these temporal judgments are not visible among us, yet spiritual judgments, which are the worst of judgments, are very visible. Though there be no sword, no famine, no pestilence, yet there is spiritual madness, spiritual drunkenness, spiritual giddiness.¹ Oh the blind minds, the corrupt judgments, the hard hearts, the seared consciences, that are to be found among the professors of this age! As there are no mercies to spiritual mercies, so there are no judgments to spiritual judgments. Jer. xiii. 12; Ezek. xxiii. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 2; Titus i. 15. Oh the slightness, the coldness, the deadness, the barrenness that is abroad in the world! God suits his judgments to men's sins; the greatest sins are always attended with the greatest judgments. In these days men sin against more glorious means, more great love, more clear light, more tender bowels of mercy, &c., than formerly; and therefore God gives men up to more sad and dreadful spiritual judgments than formerly.

They say when Hercules drew up Cerberus from hell, he led him in a chain, and he went quietly till he came to the horizon and saw the peeping of the light, but then he pulled so strongly that he had like to have pulled the conqueror and all back again. Ah it is sad when men had rather live in darkness, and die in darkness, and to hell in darkness, than they will see the light, enjoy the light, and walk in the light! Many fret at the light, and at those that bring it, as the Ethiopians once a year solemnly curse the sun. Such souls stand in much need of pity and prayer.

And thus, according to my weak measure, I have given out what God has given in from this scripture, and shall follow it with my prayers, that it may be a word of life and power both to writer, reader, and hearer. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria in Æternum.

¹ The lamps went out, and Leander was drowned, said he in the history.

NOTE

CABINET

CHOICE JEWELS

A CABINET OF JEWELS.

NOTE.

By a strange whim of public opinion, the 'Cabinet of Jewels' passed through only one edition in the outset—1669 (4to). Its title-page is given below.* See our Preface for remarks on a modern reprint. The Scottish edition of 1762 (Glasgow, 8vo) had an enormous circulation among the peasantry, as shewn by the long list of Subscribers.—G.

* A

C A B I N E T O F C H O I C E J E W E L S

O R, A

Box of precious Ointment.

Being a plain Discovery of, or, what men are worth for Eternity, and how 'tis like to go with them in another world. Here is also a clear and large Discovery of the several rounds in *Jacob's Ladder*, that no Hypocrite under Heaven can climb up to. Here are also such closs, piercing, distinguishing and discovering evidences as will reach and suit those Christians who are highest in Grace and spiritual Enjoyments; and here are many Evidences, which are suited to the Capacities and Experiences of the weakest Christians in Christ's School: And here Christians may see as in a Glass, what a sober Use and Improvement they ought to make of their evidences for Heaven; and how in the use of their gracious evidences they ought to live. First, upon the free grace of God. Secondly, upon the Mediatory righteousness of Christ. Thirdly, upon the Covenant of Grace: With several other Points of grand Importance, &c.

By *Thomas Brooks*, formerly Preacher of the Gospel at
St. Margarets, New-Fishstreet.

Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10. Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobrates? Or, 'Αδόκιμοί, unapproved or rejected.

Omnis anima est aut sponsa Christi, aut adultera Diaboli. *Austin.*

London, Printed and are to be sold by *John Hancock* at the first Shop in *Popes-Head-Alley* in *Cornhill*, at the sign of the three Bibles, or at his Shop in *Bishops-Gate-Street*, near great *St. Hellins*, 1669.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Right Worshipful Sir John Frederick, Knight, and the Lady Mary Frederick, his pious consort. To Mr Nathaniel Herne, and Mrs Judith his virtuous wife ;

All confluence of blessings, both for this life and for that which is to come, from the Father of mercies and God of all consolations.

HONOURED AND BELOVED IN OUR LORD JESUS,

Though I crowd your names together, yet I owe more than an epistle to each of your names ; but the Lord having made you near and dear one to another more ways than one, I take the boldness to present this treatise to you jointly. Here is nothing in this book that relates to government of church or state. The design of this treatise is to shew what men are worth for eternity, and how it is like to go with them in another world. There are none of the sons of men but bear about with them precious and immortal souls, that are more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds. If the soul be safe, all is safe ; if that be well, all is well ; if that be lost, all is lost. The first great work that men are to attend in this world is the eternal safety and security of their souls ; the next great work is to know, to be assured, that it shall go well with their souls for ever.¹ And these are the main things that are aimed at in this discourse. The soul is the better and more noble part of man. Upon the soul the image of God is most fairly stamped. The soul is first converted, and the soul shall be first and most glorified. The soul is that spiritual and immortal substance that is capable of union with God, and of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. Plato, though a heathen, could say that he thought the soul to be made all of eternity, and that the putting the soul into the body was a sign of great wrath from God.

¹ Granctensis tells of a woman that was so affected with souls' miscarryings, that she besought God to stop up the passage into hell with her soul and body, that none might have entrance. *O anima ! Dei insignita imagine, desponsata fide, donata Spiritu, &c.*—Bernard. O divine soul ! invested with the image of God, espoused to him by faith, &c. [Serm. in Cant.—G.]

‘Each living corpse must yield at last to death,
 And every life must lose his vital breath.
 The soul of man, that only lives on high,
 And is an image of eternity.’¹

The Romans, when their emperors and great ones died, and their bodies were buried, they caused an eagle to mount on high, thereby to signify the soul’s immortality and ascent. He gave good counsel who said, ‘Play not the courtier with your soul; the courtier doth all things late, he rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and repents late.’ A Scythian captain, having for a draught of water delivered up his city, cried out, *Quid perdidit, quid prodidit?* What have I lost, what have I betrayed? So many at last will cry out, what have I lost, what have I betrayed? I have lost God, and Christ, and heaven, and have betrayed my precious and immortal soul into the hands of divine justice, and into the hands of Satan! Who these men are that will at last thus cry out, this treatise doth discover. I have read that there was a time when the Romans did wear jewels on their shoes. Most men in this day do worse, for they trample that matchless jewel of their souls under feet; and who these are this treatise does discover. One well observes, [Chrysostom] ‘That whereas God hath given many other things double; two eyes to see with, two ears to hear with, two hands to work with, and two feet to walk with, to the intent that the failing of the one might be supplied by the other; but he hath given us but one soul, and if that be lost, hast thou, saith he, another soul to give in recompense for it?’ Now, who those are whose souls are in a safe estate, and who those are whose souls are in danger of being lost for ever, this treatise does plainly and fully discover. To describe to the life who that man is that is truly happy in this world, and that shall be blest for ever in the other world, is the work of this ensuing treatise, Ps. xv., cxliv. 15. The grace of the covenant in us is a sure evidence of God’s entering into the covenant of grace with us. To be in a gracious state is true happiness, but to know ourselves to be in such a state is the top of our happiness in this world. A man may have grace, and yet, for a time, not know it, 1 John v. 13. The child lives in the womb, but does not know it. A man may be in a gracious state, and yet not see it; he may have a saving work of God upon his soul, and yet not discern it; he may have the root of the matter in him, and yet not be able to evidence it, Ps. lxxvii. 6, lxxxviii. Now to help such poor hearts to a right understanding of their spiritual condition, and that they may see and know what they are worth for another world, and so go to their graves in joy and peace, I have sent this treatise abroad into the world. Will you give me leave to say,

(1.) *First*, Some men of name in their day have laid down such things for evidences or characters of grace, which, being weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, will be found too light. But here a mantle of love may be of more use than a lamp; and therefore,

(2.) *Secondly*, Many, yea, very many there are, whose graces are very weak, and much buried under the earth and ashes of many fears, doubts, scruples, strong passions, prevailing corruptions, and diabolical suggestions, who would give as many worlds as there be men in the world,

¹ Pindar.

had they so many in their hands to give, to know that they have grace, and that their spiritual estate is good, and that they shall be happy for ever. Now this treatise is fitted up for the service of these poor hearts ; for the weakest Christians may turn to many clear and well-bottomed evidences in this treatise, and throw the gauntlet to Satan, and bid him prove if he can, that ever any profane person or cunning hypocrite under heaven, had such evidences, or such fair certificates to shew for heaven, which he has to shew. The generality of Christians are weak ; they are rather dwarfs than giants ; they are rather bruised reeds than tall cedars ; they are rather babes than men, lambs than sheep,¹ &c. Now, for the service of their souls, I have been willing to send this treatise into the world ; for this treatise may speak to them when I may not ; yea, when I cannot ; yea, which is more, when I am not. Famous Mr Dod would frequently say, he cared not where he was if he could but answer these two questions : 1, who am I ? and 2, what do I hear ? am I a child of God ? and am I in my way ? But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, Some there are who are so excessively and immoderately taken up with their signs, marks, and evidences of grace, and of their gracious state, &c., that Christ is too much neglected, and more rarely minded by them. Their hearts do not run out so freely, so fully, so strongly, so frequently, so delightfully towards Christ as they should do, nor as they would do, if they were not too inordinately taken up with their marks and signs. Now, for the rectifying of these mistakes, and the cure of these spiritual maladies, this treatise is sent into the world. We may and ought to make a sober use of characters and evidences of our gracious estates, to support, comfort, and encourage us on our way to heaven, but still in subordination to Christ, and to the fresh and frequent exercises of faith upon the person, blood, and righteousness of Jesus. But oh how few Christians are there that are skilled in this work of works, this art of arts, this mystery of mysteries.² But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, Some there are who in those days are given up to enthusiastical fancies, strange raptures, revelations, and to the sad delusions of their own hearts ; crying down with all their might all discoveries of believers' spiritual estates by Scripture characters, marks, and signs of sanctifications, 2 Thes. ii. 9-11, as carnal and low ; and all this under fair pretences of exalting Christ, and maintaining the honour of his righteousness and free grace, and of denying ourselves and our own righteousness. Though sanctification be a branch of the covenant of grace as well as justification, yet there are a sort of men in the world that would not have Christians to rejoice in their sanctification, under a pretence of reflecting dishonour upon their free justification by Christ, Jer. xxxiii. 8, Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27. There are many who place all their religion in opinions, in brain-sick notions, in airy speculations, in quaint disputations, in immediate revelations, and in their warm zeal for this or that form of worship. Now, that these may be recovered, and healed, and prevented from doing further mischief in the world, I have at this time put to a helping hand. But,

¹ 1 Peter ii. 2, 3 ; 1 John ii. 12-14 ; Isa. xl. 11.

² Where Christ was born, they were all so taken up with their guests, that he was not minded nor regarded ; when others lay in stately rooms, he must be laid in a manger, Luke ii. 7.

(5.) *Fifthly*, No man can tell what is in the breasts, in the womb, of divine Providence. No man can tell what a day, a night, an hour, may bring forth.¹ Who can sum up the many possible deaths that are still lurking in his own bowels, or the innumerable hosts of external dangers which beleaguer him on every side, or how many invisible arrows fly about his ears continually; and how soon he may have his mortal wound given him by one or other of them, who can tell? Now, how sad would it be for a man to have a summons to appear before God in that other world before his heart and life are changed, and his evidences for heaven cleared up to him! The life of a man is but a shadow, a post, a span, a vapour, a flower, &c. Though there is but one way to come into the world, yet there are many thousand ways to be sent out of the world; and this should bespeak every Christian to have his evidences for heaven always ready and at hand, yea, in his hand as well as in his heart, and then he will find it an easy thing to die. The king of terrors will then be the king of desires to him, and he will then travel to glory under a spirit of joy and triumph. We carry about in our bodies the matter of a thousand deaths, and may die a thousand several ways several hours. As many senses, as many members, nay, as many pores as there are in the body, so many windows there are for death to enter in at. Death needs not spend all his arrows upon us; a worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, a stone of a raisin, a kernel of a grape, the fall of a horse, the stumble of a foot, the prick of a pin, the paring of a nail, the cutting out of a corn; all these have been to others, and any of them may be to us, the means of our death within the space of a few days, nay, of a few hours. Does not it therefore highly concern us to have our evidences for heaven cleared, sealed, shining, and at hand? Naturalists tell us that if a man sees a cockatrice first, the cockatrice dieth; but if the cockatrice sees a man first, the man dies. Certainly if we so see death first as to prepare for it, as to get our evidences for heaven ready, we shall kill it; but if death sees us first, and arrests us first before we are prepared, and before our evidences for heaven are cleared, it will kill us everlastingly, it will kill us eternally. Time travaileth with God's decrees, and in their season brings them forth; but little doth any man know what is in the womb of to-morrow till God hath signified his will by the event: 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,' Prov. xxvii. 1. That man that knows what himself intends to bring forth, does not know what the day will bring forth; the next day is not so near the former in time as it may be remote from it in the effects of it. Seneca could say, *Nihil est miserius dubitatione venientium, quo evadant*, There is nothing more miserable than the doubtfulness of things to come, to what they will come.² Providence in this life is the map of changes, the picture of mutability. Who can sum up the strange circumferences, and rare circuits, and labyrinths of providence? Providence is as a wheel in the midst of a wheel, whose motion, and work, and end in turning is not discerned by every common eye, Ezek. i. 16. Three dreadful judgments

¹ The Brachmanni had their graves before their doors. The Sybarites at banquets had a death's head delivered from hand to hand by every guest at the table. The Egyptians, in the midst of their feasts, used to have the anatomy of a dead man set before them, as a memorandum to the guests of their mortality. The poor heathen could say that the whole life of man should be *meditatio mortis*, a meditation of death. Dwell upon that. Deut. xxxii. 29, Prov. xxvii. 1.

² Seneca, epist. cii.

God hath lately visited us with, viz., sword, pestilence, and fire. But who repents; who smites upon his thigh; who finds out the plague of his own heart; who says, What have I done? who ceases from doing evil; who learns to do well; who turns to the Most High; who lays hold on everlasting strength; who makes peace with God; who throws himself into the gap? &c., Isa. i. 16, 17, Ps. cvi. 23. Are not multitudes grown much worse after judgments than they were before? Do not they bid higher defiance to heaven than ever? And, therefore, who can tell what further controversy God may have with such a people, especially considering that terrible scripture, Lev. xxvi. 14th to the 34th verse, with scores of others that sound that way? Were our forefathers alive, how sadly would they blush to see such a horrid, degenerate posterity as is to be found in the midst of us! How is our forefathers' hospitality converted into riot and luxury, their frugality into pride and prodigality, their simplicity into subtilty, their sincerity into hypocrisy, their charity into cruelty, their chastity into chambering and wantonness, their sobriety into drunkenness, their plain-dealing into dissembling, and their works of compassion into works of oppression, &c. And may we not fear that even for these things God may once more visit us? The nations are angry, and we are low in their eyes; our enemies are not asleep abroad, and are not we too secure at home? And what further confusions may be in the world, who can divine? I point at these things only to provoke all those into whose hands this treatise may fall to make sure work for another world, to make sure their evidences for heaven, and to keep their evidences for life and glory always sparkling and shining; and then I am sure the worst of calamities, the sorest of judgments, shall but translate them from earth to heaven, from a wilderness to a paradise, from misery to glory, and from mixed and mutable enjoyments to the pure and everlasting enjoyments of God, Christ, the angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 22-24. But,

(6.) *Sixthly* and lastly, In this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [1.] that their present state and condition is not so safe, nor yet so happy, as they judge it to be. Again, in this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [2.] the happy and blessed state of the people of God, against whom their spirits rise and swell, &c. Again, in this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [3.] what those things are that they need, and that they ought to beg of God. Again, in this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [4.] what those things are without which they can neither be happy here nor hereafter. Now, were there no other reasons for my sending forth this treatise into the world, this alone might justify me.

But, honoured and beloved, before I close up this epistle, give me leave to say, that there are two sorts of men that myself and all the world are bound (1.) highly to prize, (2.) cordially to love, and (3.) greatly to honour above all other men in the world; and they are these: *First*, men of public spirits; *secondly*, men of charitable spirits, men of merciful spirits, men of tender and compassionate spirits.

(1.) *First*, Men of public spirits, myself and all others are bound, 1, highly to prize; 2, cordially to love; and, 3, greatly to honour above all other men in the world; and that,

1. *First*, because a public-spirited man is a common good, a common blessing. All in the family, all in the court, all in the city, all in the country, fare the better for that Christian's sake that is of a public spirit. All in Laban's family did fare the better for Jacob's sake; and all in the city of Zoar did fare the better for Lot's sake; and all Pharaoh's court and the whole country of Egypt did fare the better for Joseph's sake, Gen. xxx. 27, and xix. 21-24, and xli., &c. Sodom was safe while Lot was in it. Elijah was a man of public spirit, and he was 'the chariots and horsemen of Israel,' 2 Kings ii. 12. Moses was a man of public spirit, and he often diverted ruining judgments from falling upon Israel, Ps. cvi. 23. Phinehas was a man of public spirit, and he takes up his censer, and stands between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed, Num. xvi. 46, 49. Men of public spirits are public mercies, public blessings. A man of a public spirit is, *κοῖνον ἀγαθόν*, a public diffusive blessing in the place where he lives. Men of public spirits are the true Atlases both of church and state; they are the pillars on whom all do rest, the props on whom all do lean.¹ Do but overturn these pillars and all will fall about your ears, as the house did about the Philistines when Samson shook it. Rack but these, and kingdoms and commonwealths shall be quickly racked themselves. When Metellus heard of the death of Scipio Africanus, a man of a public spirit, he ran out into the market place and cried out, 'O citizens, come forth and consult what is to be done, for the walls of your city are fallen down.' But,

2. *Secondly*, Because public-spirited Christians are most like to Christ, and to the choicest and most excellent saints.² Christ left his Father's bosom for a public good; he assumed our nature for a public good; he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for a public good; he died for a public good, and he rose for a public good; he ascended to heaven for a public good, and he continues in heaven for a public good. When he was in this world he went up and down doing good. He healed others, but was hurt himself; he fed and filled others, but was hungry himself. Christ was all for a public good: 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;' 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,' Philip. ii. 4, 5. Though self be a great stickler, yet he that will write after Christ's copy must neglect himself to serve others. That Christian acts most like Christ, who prefers the public interest before his own private interest. The stars have their brightness, not for themselves, but for the use of others; and the sun hath her shining light, but not for herself, but for others. In the natural body every member is diffusive; the eye conveys the light, the head spirits, the liver blood, &c. And why should it not be so in the politic body also? And as Christ, so Moses was a man of a public spirit, when God made a very fair

¹ Though I do not, I dare not, say, that every public spirit is a gracious spirit; yet this I must say, that every gracious spirit is a public spirit.

² John i. 7, Heb. ii., Isa. lxiii. 3, Rom. viii. 30-33; Heb. vii. 25; John xiv. 1-4; Acts x. 38; Philip. ii. 4, 5. Christ made himself poor to make others rich, but men of narrow souls make others poor to make themselves rich, 2 Cor. vi. 8, viii. 9.

proffer to him that he would make him a great nation if he would but stand neuter till he had revenged himself upon a rebellious people. But Moses had no mind to preferment upon those terms; he preferred the public good before his own honour, profit, and advancement, and therefore follows God close, and never gives over pleading for them till he had procured their pardon, and turned away the wrath of God from them, Exod. xxxii. 10-12; so Num. xiv. 4, 10, 13, 14. So Joshua was a man of a public spirit: 'When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them,' Joshua xix. 49. Joshua might have served himself first, and he might have taken as large an inheritance as he had pleased, but he preferred the good of the people before his own. He who had divided the land to others, was himself contented with very mean preferment, for his inheritance was among the barren mountains, as some observe [Jerome]. So Jehoiada was a man of a public spirit. You read that they 'buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God and towards his house,' 2 Chron. xxiv. 16. Men of public spirits shall be honoured both living and dying. So Nehemiah was a man of a brave public spirit. He holds on twelve years together in public work upon his own cost and charge, Neh. v. 14, 15. So Esther was one of a public spirit, and therefore she takes her life in her hand, and goes in to the king with an *If I perish, I perish*, Esther iv. 16. And so Mordecai was a man of public spirit. Mordecai the Jew was 'next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed,' Esther x. 3. Mordecai was more mindful and careful of his people's peace, prosperity, and welfare, than he was of his own concerns. And so David was a man of a public spirit, for 'after he had served his own generation, he fell asleep,' Acts xiii. 36. The Spirit of the Lord has put this upon record for David's honour and our imitation. David's soul did not live in a narrow bowling-alley. He was not a man of so poor, low, and narrow a spirit as to make himself the centre of his designs and actions. David was a man of a generous, noble spirit. The public good lay nearest his heart, and to serve his generation he was willing to spend and be spent. The public-spirited man, of all men, is most like to Christ, and to those worthies who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven. The apostle speaks of some who are lovers of themselves, 2 Tim. iii. 2, and who are 'seekers of themselves,' Philip. ii. 21, and who are 'minders of themselves,' Philip. iii. 19. 'They mind earthly things.' Of all these we may say, as God speaks of Israel, 'Israel is an empty vine; he brings forth fruit unto himself,' Hosea x. 1; yea, of all these we may say that light is not more contrary to darkness, heaven to hell, glory to shame, than these are contrary to Christ, and to those precious servants of his who are crowned and chronicled in the blessed Scriptures for their public spiritedness and public usefulness in the world. But,

3. *Thirdly*, Men of public spirits are rare men, excellent men; of all men they most resemble God, who does good to all, Mat. v. 45; there are none so excellent and truly honourable as these.¹ All the instances

¹ *Vir bonus magis aliis prodest quam sibi.*

cited to make good the second particular evidences this : to which I may add that of Daniel, who was a man of a public spirit, and of that excellent spirit, as that he carried the bell from all the presidents and princes of Darius's court, Dan. vi. 3. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because 'an excellent spirit was in him,' and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. I might give you many other instances from the patriarchs and apostles, but what need that, when blind nature speaks so loud in the case. Men of public spirits have been very excellent and honourable in the very eyes of all the heathen. Take a few instances among the many hundreds that might be produced. M. Attilius Regulus was a man of that public spirit, that he valued neither state nor life to serve his country and preserve his own honour ; he got very much for his country, but little for himself ; seven acres of land being all that ever he had. He was a man highly honoured among the Romans.¹

Titus Vespasian was a man of a public spirit. He governed so sweetly, moderately, and prudently, that he was generally termed *delicia humani generis*, the delight of mankind. He was greatly honoured whilst he lived, and when he died the people wept so bitterly for him as if they had been resolved to have wept out their eyes.

Curius Dentatus was a man of public spirit, and very victorious. When his country was settled, he was found at dinner feeding hard on a few parched pease, when the ambassadors were sent to tender him a great sum of gold, which he refused, saying, 'He had rather be at his pease, while they whom he ruled over had the gold, than he to have the gold and they the pease.' When some unworthy persons once accused him for keeping back somewhat from the public, he brought forth a wooden platter, and did swear, that it was all he had reserved to himself of the spoils. He was had in great honour and reputation among the people.

'That pilot dies nobly,' saith Seneca, 'who perisheth in the storm with the helm in his hand.'

Aristides was a man of a public spirit. After the overthrow of the Persians, when there was a mass of treasure, gold, silver, and rich apparel, he would not touch it, nor take so much as one farthing of it to himself. He was in high esteem among the people.

Tully in his book of Scipio's dream, brings in a dead father, now in heaven as he supposed, encouraging his son to do service for his country, wherein himself had given him a most noble and notable example, upon a very high consideration, viz., There is a most sure and certain place in heaven for every man that shall procure the weal of his country, either by freeing it from peril, or increasing the happiness of it any way. To hear a Gentile tell of heaven as of a thing certain ; to hear him tell of certain places provided there for those that should do virtuously ; to have the service of one's country pressed on his soul with so celestial an argument, what matter of wonder and admiration is it !

Another [Cicero], speaking of men of public spirits, saith, 'Such ennobled spirits, they are the dear offspring, the delight and care of God ; a divine race it is ; from the heavens they come down to us, and to the heavens again, whenever they take their leaves of us, shall they triumphantly return.'

¹ In Austin's account he was the gallantest of all the old Romans. [More exactly M. Attilius, M. F. L. N. Regulus : Livy, *Epit.* 18 ; Val. Max. iv. 4, sec. 6.—G.]

A Catiline, says the satirist, a trouble of mankind, grows as the weed, almost everywhere; but a Brutus, a worthy patriot, that bears the welfare of others, the true prosperity of his native land, upon his heart, and sets his eyes perpetually thereon for good; such an one is a rare jewel, worthy of all honour and embraces wherever he is found.¹

Men of public spirits, of all men, do most exalt the Lord, and honour the Lord; and therefore the Lord, first or last, will most exalt them and honour them, 1 Sam. ii. 30. In all the ages of the world, and in all the nations of the world, men of most public spirits have been best beloved, and most highly honoured. A man of narrow spirit is like the hedge-hog, that never goes abroad but to gather what he can for himself, whoever suffers by it; but a man of a public spirit is like the pelican, that draws out her own blood for the good of others; and therefore the light of nature, as well as the law of grace, will lead men by the hand to honour such.

4. *Fourthly*, Men of public spirits do most and best answer to one of the noblest and highest ends of their creation.² By the law of creation every man is bound to serve the public, to serve his generation. A narrow, a private-spirited man is a shame to his creation, because he walks so contrary to the great intendment of God in it. It is a base and unworthy spirit for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say, 'That a man's country, and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him.' That man sins against the very law of his being who is swallowed up in his own private interests. Men of public spirits should not bear the sword of justice in vain, for by the law of creation they are bound so to handle it as to be 'a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well,' Rom. xiii. 3, 4. It is cruelty to the good to spare the bad; it is wrong to the sheep to let the wolves alone; it is the death of the lambs to spare the lions. 'If you will pity Cataline,' says one, 'pity Rome much more;' let the whole have a share in your pity rather than a part. *Pereat unus magis quam unitas*, Better have one injurious person sit mourning than a whole nation languishing, &c. Men of public spirits should be for the ease of all, and the peace of all, and the comfort of all, and the encouragement of all, and the safety of all. But this age is full of drones and ciphers, and of spiritless, lifeless men, who look at nothing, who design nothing, who aim at nothing, and who endeavour nothing, but how to raise themselves, and greaten themselves, and enrich themselves, and build up themselves, though it be upon other's ruins. How many are there who are so swallowed up in their own interests and private concerns, that Gallio-like, Acts xviii. 17, they care not whether the public sink or swim. These put me in mind of Jotham's parable, Judg. ix. 8-11, &c. The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. They go to the olive, to the fig tree, and to the vine. But shall I leave my fatness? saith the olive; shall I leave my sweetness? saith the fig-tree; and shall I leave my wine? saith the vine, and go up and down for other trees? This is the very temper, spirit, and carriage of many in our day. If you go to them and desire them to lay out themselves for the public

¹ Juvenal.

² Doth the bee gather honey for itself? Doth the sheep yield wool for itself? Doth not all creatures serve the community? *Non nobis solum nati*, said the heathen.—[Seneca.—G.]

good, What, say some, shall we leave our ease, our pleasure, our profits? and, say others, shall we run this and that hazard? shall we lose such and such friends, and create to ourselves such and such enemies, to serve other men, to save other men, to advantage other men? We cannot do it, we will never do it. Learned Tully was a zealous patriot and lover of his country; he wished two wishes, though he never saw either of them effected. One was, that he 'might see Rome settled in its just liberties;' and the other was, that he 'might see every man's estate proportionable to his affection and love to the public.' Doubtless if Tully's wish might take place in our times, the purses of many would be more empty, and the public coffers would be more full. But,

5. *Fifthly*, Of all men on earth, there are none that have such a stock of prayers going for them as men of public spirits. Men of public spirits are not only highly prized, and cordially loved, and greatly honoured, but they are also most upon the hearts of all sober and serious Christians, when they are in the mount with God. The lives of such are most desirable, and the deaths of such will be most lamented, who make it their business to serve their generation. Men of public spirits shall never die, as Jehoram did, undesired and unlamented, 2 Chron. xxi. 20. Men of public spirits lie most open to snares, temptations, and oppositions, &c. This all sober Christians well understand, and therefore they cannot but pray hard for such. The names, the lives, the liberties, the estates, and all the concerns of men of public spirits, always lie nearest their hearts, who lie nearest to the heart of Christ. Men of the greatest name, and of the greatest renown, and that have had the greatest stock of prayers going for them all the world over, have been men of public spirits. But,

6. *Sixthly* and lastly, When Christians of public spirits come to die, their public spiritedness and general usefulness will be no small comfort and cordial to them. Nehemiah was a man of a public spirit, and accordingly he pleads it with God. 'Think upon me, oh my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people,' Neh. v. 19. [See chap. xiii. 22.] This was that which sweetened death to Hezekiah, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, to remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight,' 2 Kings xx. 3. And when David had 'served his generation, he fell asleep,' Acts xiii. 36. Sleep is not more welcome and sweet to a labouring man than death is to him who has made it his business, his work, sincerely and faithfully to serve his generation. Such magistrates, ministers, and Christians who have made it their business, according to their different measures, faithfully to serve their generation, have found the king of terrors to be but the king of desires to them, 2 Tim. iv. 7-9; when death to men of narrow, selfish spirits, hath been like the handwriting upon the wall, very terrible, Dan. v. 5, 6. Many score instances might be produced out of history to evidence this. Take one for all. Henry Beaufort, that rich and wretched cardinal, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor of England,—a man swallowed up in self-interest,—in the reign of Henry the Sixth, when he perceived that he must die, and that there was no remedy, oh, how terrible was death to him! and oh, how did he murmur and fret, and vex at death, that his riches could not relieve him till a further time! For, saith he, 'where-

fore should I die, being so rich? if the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it.' 'Fie upon death,' saith he, 'will not death be hired? will money do nothing?'¹ I might instance in men of a higher rank, but then I should exceed the bounds of an epistle.

(2.) The second sort of men, that myself and all others are bound, (1.) highly to prize, (2.) cordially to love, and (3.) greatly to honour, are men of charitable spirits, men of merciful spirits, men of tender and compassionate spirits. The Hebrew word for godly (חסר) signifies *merciful*, to note that the godly man is the merciful man, and the merciful man is the godly man. Loving-kindness is an ingredient unto godliness. The godly man is frequently called *chasicd*, gracious or merciful. It notes one that hath obtained mercy, goodness, grace, piety, and benignity from the Lord, and that is pious, kind, gracious, and merciful to others. Though charity, bounty, is the most compendious way to plenty, and giving to getting, and scattering to increasing, and layings out to layings up:—Prov. xi. 24, 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.' Ver. 25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself,'²—yet how few in our days do honour the Lord with their substance! How few look at this as a duty, to consecrate any part of their gain unto the Lord, or of their substance to the Lord of the whole earth! Prov. iii. 9, Micah iv. 13. Most men now carry it as if God himself had lost his propriety, and as if there were no rent-penny due to his poor. But yet some there are who have liberal hearts and open hands; some there are who do open their hands wide to the poor and needy, Deut. xv. 11. Now, here give me leave to say that these, [1.] Discharge their consciences in the duty of charity, Mat. xxv. 25, *seq.*, Prov. xxxi. 8, 9. [2.] These rightly improve the talents of mercy, with which they are intrusted, Job xxix. 13, 2 Tim. i. 16. [3.] These treasure up a stock of prayers, both for themselves and theirs; the blessing and the prayers of them that were ready to perish will come upon them and theirs. [4.] These evidence the liveliness of their faith: James ii. 17, 'Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.' Ver. 18, 'Yea, a man may say thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.' Ver. 26, 'For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' [5.] These take the surest way, the readiest course, to assure their own souls of God's eternal favours and mercies to them: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 'Charge them that be rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Ver. 19, 'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'³ Charitable Christians are as wise merchants, happy usurers, parting with that which they cannot keep, that they may gain that which they cannot lose. [6.] These take surest way to draw down more outward mercies upon themselves.⁴ The fountain is not diminished, but augmented by giving water to the thirsty. The widow's oil did increase by running. We do not lose, but increase our mercies

¹ [Faxe.] Acts and Mon., fol. 925.

² The Italian form of begging is, 'Do good to yourselves.'

³ *Æterna vita, vera vita.*—Augustine.

⁴ Clemens Alex., Pedagog. lib. iii. cap. 7.

by imparting of them for God's honour, and the comfort and benefit of others. 'Give,' saith Christ, 'and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom,' Luke vi. 38. The Jews wore large and loose garments, so that they could bear away much in their bosoms. Hence this expression, 'into your bosom.' The meaning is, that the Lord will largely reward the beneficence of his people; yea, that he will so reward them that they shall perceive that they are rewarded. 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine,' Prov. iii. 9, 10. God will certainly bless their substance who honour him with their substance. The Jews at this day, though they are not in their own country, and though they have not a Levitical priesthood, yet those who will be reputed religious amongst them, do distribute the tenth of their increase to the poor, being persuaded that God doth bless their increase the more; for they have among them a very elegant proverb to that purpose, *decima ut dives fias*, Pay thy tithes that thou mayest be rich.¹ The poor man's hand is Christ's treasury, and he shall not lose his reward that casts his mites into that treasury.² It is fabled of Midas, that whatever he touched he turned it into gold. But this is most sure, that whatever the hand of charity toucheth, it turneth it into gold,—be it but a cup of cold water,—nay, into heaven itself: Mat. x. 42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Cold water, having not fuel to heat it, cold water which cost not the charge of fire to warm it. A sea of pleasures, a heaven of blessings attends men of charitable minds, though their charity can extend no further than to a cup of cold water; for God measures men's deeds by their minds, and not their minds by their deeds. The Kenites in Saul's time, that were born many ages after Jethro's death, received life from his dust, and favour from his hospitality;³ nay, the very Egyptians, for harbouring and at first dealing kindly with the Israelites, though without any respect to their righteousness, were preserved by Joseph in that sore famine, and kindly dealt with ever after by God's special command. I have read a story of one Evagrius, a rich man, who lying upon his deathbed, and being importuned by Synesius, a pious bishop, to give something to charitable uses, he yielded at last to give three hundred pounds, but first took bond of the bishop that it should be repaid in another world; but before he had been one day dead, he is said to have appeared to the bishop, delivering in the bond cancelled, as thereby acknowledging that what was promised was made good. Whether the relation be fabulous or not, I shall not now stand to determine; but this is certain, that all acts of charity shall be certainly and signally rewarded. Several writers observe that the ground is most barren nearest the golden mines; and experience tell us that many who are enriched with fair estates, are most barren in good works; but this will be bitterness in the end. He

¹ Godwin, Heb. Antiq., 277 [4to., 1616, and often since.—G.].

² The safest chest is the poor man's box. God will never forget your charity to his, Heb. vi. 10. Cicero could say, that to be rich is not to possess much, but to use much. And Seneca could rebuke them that so studied to increase their wealth that they forgot to use it.

³ See 1 Samuel xv. 6.—G.

that shall consult two scriptures, among many others, will conclude that he that hath a withered hand has no honest heart, 2 Chron. xxxi. 10, 1 John iii. 17. The wealth that such men have is but as Aristotle calls it, *felix amentia*, a happy madness, because they are so taken up with their wealth, that they neither know what they are, nor what they do.¹ Josephus, writing of the waters of Egypt, saith, that 'they were blood in the hands of an Egyptian, but water in the hand of an Israelite.' Wealth in the hand of a worldling is like blood in the hand, which is good for nothing; but wealth in the hand of a charitable Christian is like water in the hand, which may be of use both to a man's self and others. By what has been said, there is nothing more evident than this, viz., that men of public spirits, and men of charitable spirits, of all men on earth are, (1.) to be most highly prized; (2.) most cordially loved; and (3.) most greatly honoured, &c.

Gentlemen, Those that shall read what I have writ in this epistle, concerning public spiritedness and charitableness, and know you well, they know how to make the application without any further direction from me. Sir John, I must crave leave to say, that it is and will be your honour and comfort, both in life and death, and in the day of your account, that in all the great places, offices, and employments unto which divine providence has called you for divers years together, you have laid out your time, your strength, your estate, for the public good. When others have been serving themselves upon the public, you have been a-serving of the public. Sir, it is your great mercy and happiness that you can stand forth and say, as once Samuel did, 'Behold, here I am, witness against me, whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?' 1 Sam. xii. 3. Your prudence and moderation before your mayoralty, and in it, when you had many a narrow bridge to go over, and after it, to this day, will never be forgotten by all sober citizens. Sir, the French history tells us, that when an old courtier would needs depart from the court, and retire himself to a private life, the king desired him to leave his advice in some general rules, about the government of his kingdom. Upon this motion of the king, the old courtier took a sheet of white paper, and writ upon the top of the leaf, *Moderation*, and in the middle of the leaf, *Moderation*, and at the bottom of the leaf, *Moderation*, intimating to the king, that the only way to keep his kingdom in peace and prosperity, was to manage his government throughout with a spirit of moderation. When Vespasian asked Apollonius what was the cause of Nero's ruin, he answered, that Nero could tune the harp well, but in government he did always wind up the strings too high, or let them down too low. Both of your staying in London in the time of the last great plague, when death peeped in at every window, and when most magistrates, ministers, and people were fled from their habitations,—the terror of the Lord and of his judgments being very great in that day, upon all sorts and ranks of men,—and that chiefly, mainly, if not only, upon the account of public service, and that nothing might be wanting on your side to preserve poor creatures from perishing. The old Romans, for lesser services than you did in these

¹ Arist. Rhetor., lib. ii. cap. 6.

dismal days, have set up many a statue of brass ; but the Lord is faithful, and will not forget to reward your work, your great work, your hazardous work, and that matchless love and bowels that you shewed to very many that were impoverished for want of trade, and to very many that lay in a sick, languishing, and dying condition. How free, how full, how seasonable, how suitable, how impartial, how constant, and well regulated your charity then was, and since hath been, is very well known to God above, and to some faithful friends still alive ; but all will out in the great day, Mat. xxv. 35, *seq.* I know you don't love that your left hand should know what your right hand doth, Mat. vi. 3, and therefore I shall not provoke you by sounding a trumpet. The angels have their hands under their wings ; they do much good, and yet make no noise, Ezek. i. 8, and x. 8. There are some in the world that are like to them. The violet grows low, and covers itself with its own leaves, and yet of all flowers yields the most fragrant smell to others. There are some charitable Christians that resemble this sweet flower.

Gentlemen and ladies, your respects and undeserved favours, that have been many ways manifested unto me, hath emboldened me to dedicate and present to you this treatise, as a real testimony of my unfeigned love, service, gratitude, and desires to promote the internal and eternal welfare of all your precious and immortal souls. And wherein could I, or any body else, be more truly serviceable to you than in endeavouring to promote your assurance of eternal salvation, which is the grand design and project of this book. 'Now, the God of all grace fill all your hearts with all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, and of faith and hope in this life,' 1 Peter v. 10 ; and at last crown you all, and all yours, with ineffable glory in the life to come,' Gal. v. 22, 23, Heb. x. 22, 23. To the everlasting arms of his protection, and to the perpetual influences of his grace and mercy in Christ, he commends you all, who is to you all,

Your much obliged and affectionate friend and soul's servant in
our dear Lord Jesus,

THO. BROOKS.

A CABINET OF JEWELS.

CHAPTER I.

Containing eighteen special Maxims, Considerations, Rules, and Directions that are seriously to be minded and observed, in order to the clearing up of a man's interest in Christ: the saving work of God upon his own soul; and his title to all the glory of another world.

The first maxim or consideration.

I. First, *Some have made the witness of the Spirit to be the only mark or evidence of our interest in Christ, and deny all signs from the fruit of the Spirit;*¹ *but this is to deny the fruit growing upon the tree to be a sign that the tree is alive, whereas our Saviour expressly tells us, that 'the tree is known by his fruit,' Mat. xii 33. Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to rest on our graces, or to put trust in our graces, or to make a Saviour of our graces. There is a great deal of difference between declaring and deserving. Doubtless, Christians may look to their graces as evidences of their interest in Christ, justification and salvation, though not as causes of their interest in Christ, justification and salvation. O sirs! we must always carefully distinguish betwixt the root and ground of our comfort, and between the testimonies or evidences of our interest in the root of our comfort. Now it must be readily granted that Jesus Christ is the only root and ground of a Christian's comfort and triumph; and, therefore, saith Paul, 'God forbid that I should rejoice in anything, but in the cross of Christ,' Gal. vi. 14; and so in that, 2 Cor. ii. 14, 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ.' So that, if at any time we behold this or that saving grace, or this or that part of holiness shining in our hearts or lives, we take comfort in it, not as the cause, or root, or ground of our comfort or triumph, but as in a testimony or evidence, because it doth manifest our interest in him, who is our comfort, our peace, our joy, our salvation, our 'all in all,' Luke ii. 25; Col. iii. 11. Look, as the*

¹ But this opinion being well laid asleep in these days, I shall not put myself to the trouble of awakening of it afresh, but leave it to sleep with the authors, who are now in their graves.

rainbow is not a cause why God will not drown the world, but a sign that God will not drown the world; and as it is a sign that God will not drown the world, we may and ought to rejoice in it, and to take comfort from it, Gen. ix. 13, 14, 16. So here, &c. It is agreed on all hands, that sanctification is a precious benefit of the covenant of grace, as well as justification; and what crime can it then be to evidence one benefit of the covenant of grace, by another benefit of the same covenant? Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26; Heb. viii. 10, 12, &c. That he that is justified, is also sanctified, and that he that is sanctified is also justified, is so clear, so bright, so sparkling, and so full a truth contained in the covenant of grace, that no man or devil can deny. Now what evil or error can it be for a man to assert, that he that is certainly sanctified, is certainly justified—it being the very language of the covenant of grace—and that therefore he that knows himself to be sanctified, may also know thereby that he is justified. Certainly, those persons that shall deny sanctification to be a most sure, sweet, and comfortable evidence of man's justification, they must not only blot out, and abolish the epistles of James and John, but must also raze out and abolish all those evangelical promises of grace and mercy, of happiness and blessedness, that are made to such persons as are invested, enriched, and bespangled with the several graces of the Holy Spirit. This might be made evident by many hundred scriptures, but take that one for all, Mat. v. where our Saviour himself, who was the most evangelical preacher that ever was in the world, makes eight or nine promises of mercy and blessedness to those very persons that had the graces of the Spirit inherent in them, as poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, &c. O sirs! why should we be so frequently and earnestly called upon to try and examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, if we were not to come to the knowledge of our faith, in a discursive way, arguing from the effect to the cause? Have not the saints of old come to assurance, and the knowledge of the goodness of their estates, this way? Ponder seriously on that: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.' Mark, their joy was founded on the testimony of their conscience, and their conscience gave in this testimony from the sincerity of their conversation in this world. So Paul in that, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.'¹ How plainly, how fully, how with open mouth, as I may say, does he conclude his right to the crown of righteousness,—so called, partly because it is purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and partly because he is righteous that hath promised it, and partly because it is a just and righteous thing with God to crown them with glory at last, who have for the gospel sake, and his glory sake, been crowned with shame and reproach in this world, and partly, if not mainly, because it is a crown that can only be had or obtained in a way of righteousness and holiness,—from his graces and gracious actings in this world:

¹ Τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν καλὸν ἡγώνισμαι. *Certamen illud præclarum certavi.*—Beza. I have fought that excellent fight, by wrestling. The apostle useth the same metaphor also in that 1 Cor. ix. 25.

‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;’ yea, it is further observable, that in the blessed Scripture, we are strongly pressed to do good works, that by them we may make our calling, election, and salvation sure: 2 Peter i. 10, ‘Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, by good works.’ So say all the Latin copies, and so say some Greek copies, though not those that our English translators have been pleased to follow, and that is the reason why those words, ‘by good works,’ are not in our English Bibles; but he that shall seriously weigh the scope of the apostle in this place, he must of necessity grant, that good works are to be understood, though they are not expressed in the text; and that of the apostle in 1 Tim. vi. 16–18, seems plainly and strongly to sound the same way.

The second maxim or consideration.

II. *Secondly*, consider, *that true, sound, solid marks, signs, and evidences, are the best way to prevent delusions.* There is no such deceit in sound and solid evidences, as there is in flashy joys, and in high and strange raptures, by which many glistening professors have been sadly deceived and deluded. Young Samuel, being not acquainted with any extraordinary manifestations of the presence and power of God, took the voice of God from heaven to be the voice of old Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 5. Ah! how many have there been in our days, that have taken the irregular motions of their own hearts, and the violent workings of their own distempered fancies, and imaginations, and Satanical delusions, to be the visions of God, celestial raptures, divine breathings, and the powerful impulses of the Spirit of God; and so have been stirred up to speak, write, and act such things that have been, not only contrary to the holy word of God, but also contrary to the very laws of nature and nations. Satan, by transforming of himself into an angel of light, hath seduced and ruined many professors, against whom, as an angel of darkness, he could never prevail, 2 Cor. xi. 14. Gerson² tells a remarkable story of Satan’s appearing to a holy man, in a most glorious and beautiful manner, professing himself to be Christ; and because he, for his exemplary holiness was worthy to be honoured above others, therefore he appeared unto him; but the good old man readily answered him, that he desired not to see his Saviour in this wilderness; it should suffice him to see him hereafter in heaven; and withal added this pithy prayer, ‘Oh let thy sight be my reward, Lord, in another life, and not in this;’ and so he became victorious over Satan, though he had transformed himself into a glorious angel of light. But such a victorious crown has not been set upon every one’s head to whom Satan hath appeared as angel of glory.³ Certainly, they that stand so much, so mightily, for an immediate testimony, seem to open such a gap to enthusiasm, as will not be easily shut; yea, how will they be ever able to secure to purpose, poor souls from sad delusions? for how easy a thing it is for Satan,—who is the father of lies, John viii. 44; who is an old deceiver, Gen. iii. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 14; who is the grand deceiver, Rev. xii. 9; xiii. 14; xix. 20; xx. 10; who has his devices, 2 Cor. ii. 11; his wiles, Ephes. vi. 11; his snares, 1 Tim. iii. 7; his depths, Rev.

² Gerson in his book, *De probatione spirituum*, Of the trial of spirits.

³ See Dr Casaubon, and Dr Moore concerning Enthusiasm. [More?—G.]

ii. 24.—to find various artifices to counterfeit this immediate testimony, and bear witness in the Spirit's stead; so that, when poor souls think that they have the spirit of grace and truth to assure them that all is well, and shall be for ever well with them, they have none but 'the father of lies' to deceive them, they have none but the devil in Samuel's mantle, to put a soul-murdering cheat upon them. I am not fond of advising any poor souls to lay the stress of their hopes in heaven and salvation merely upon immediate impressions, lest they should subject themselves to infinite delusions. O sirs! the way of immediate revelation is more fleeting and inconstant. Such actings of the Spirit are like those outward motions that came upon Samson, Judges xiii. 25. The Spirit came upon him at times. And so upon every withdrawalment, new doubts and scruples arise; but the trial of a man's estate by grace is more constant and durable, saving grace being a continual pledge of God's love to us. Flashes of joy and comfort are only sweet and delightful whilst they are felt, but grace is that immortal seed that abideth for ever, 1 John iii. 9. But,

The third maxim or consideration.

III. *Thirdly, consider, In propounding of evidences for men to try their spiritual and eternal estates by, there are two special rules for ever to be minded and remembered; and the first is this, That he that propounds evidences of grace, which are only proper to eminent Christians, as belonging to all true Christians, he will certainly grieve and sad those precious lambs of Christ that He would not have grieved and sadded.* Look, as there is a strong faith and a weak faith, so there are evidences that are proper to a strong faith, and evidences that are proper to a weak faith. Now, he that cannot find in himself the evidences of a strong faith, he must not conclude that he has no faith; for he may have in him the evidences of a weak faith when he has not the evidences of a strong faith in him.¹ In Christ's school, house, church, there are several sorts and ranks of Christians, as babes, children, young men, and old men; and accordingly ministers, in their preaching and writing, should sort their evidences that so babes and children may not be found bleeding, grieving, and weeping, when they should be found joying and rejoicing.

Secondly, *No man must make such characters, marks, or evidences of a child of God which may be found in an hypocrite, a formalist, &c.* For this were to lay a stumbling-block before the blind, this were to delude poor souls, and to make them glad whom God would not have made glad; yea, this is the highway, the ready way, to make them miserable in both worlds, Ezek. xiii. 22. The rule or evidence that every Christian is to measure himself by must be neither too long nor too short, but adequate to the state of a Christian; that is, it must not be so long, on the one hand, as that all Christians cannot reach it, nor yet so short, on the other hand, as that it will not reach a true Christian; but the rule or evidence must be such as will suit and fit every sincere believer, and none else. Some Christians are apt to judge of themselves, and to try themselves, by such rules or evidences as are

¹ Mat. xv. 28, and chap. viii. 26. It is one thing to shew you the properties of a man, and another thing to shew you the properties of a strong man, 1 Peter ii. 3, 1 John ii. 1, 12-14.

competent only to those that are strong men in Christ, and that are grown to a high pitch of grace, of holiness, of communion with God, of spiritual enjoyments and heavenly attainments, and sweet and blessed ravishments of soul ; and by this means they come to conclude against the works of the blessed Spirit in them, and to perplex and disquiet their own souls with needless fears, doubts, and jealousies. Others, on the other hand, are apt to judge of themselves, and to try themselves, by such things, rules, or evidences that are too short, and will certainly leave them short of heaven ; as a fair, civil deportment among all sorts and ranks of men ; a good nature, paying every man their due ; charity to the poor ; a good name or fame among men, yea, happily among good men ; outward exercises of religion, as hearing, praying, reading, fasting ; or that they are good negative Christians, that is to say, that they are no drunkards, swearers, liars, adulterers, extortioners, oppressors, Sabbath-breakers, persecutors, &c., Mat. xxiii. 4, *seq.*, Luke xviii. 9-12, Isa. i. 2-5. Thus far Paul attained before his conversion, but if he had gone no further he had been a lost man for ever, Philip. iii. 4-6, Gal. vi. 3, Isa. xxxiii. 14 ; and by this means they flatter themselves into misery, and are still a-dreaming of going to heaven till they drop into hell, and awake with everlasting flames about their ears. And oh that all that preach or print, read or write, would seriously lay this to heart ! Some, in describing the state of a Christian, shew rather what of right it should be than what indeed it is ; they shew what Christians ought to be rather than what they find themselves to be, and so they become a double-edged sword to many Christians. But,

The fourth maxim or consideration.

IV. *Fourthly*, consider, *Where there is any one grace in truth, there is every grace in truth, though every grace cannot be seen.* Look, as a man may certainly know a wicked man by his living under the reign and dominion of any one sin, though he does not live under the power of other sins, because there is not any one sin mortified in that man that hath any one sin reigning in him, and that does not set himself in good earnest against it as his greatest enemy ; so when a Christian can but find any one grace in him, as love to the saints for grace sake, for godliness sake, he may safely conclude that there is in him all other graces. Where there is but one link of this golden chain, there are all the links of this golden chain : John xiii. 35, 'By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' He doth not say if ye work miracles, if ye raise the dead, if ye give eyes to the blind, or ears to the deaf, or tongues to the dumb, or feet to the lame, but 'if ye love one another.'¹ There have been many, yea, very many, precious Christians who have lived and died with a great deal of comfort and peace from the application of that text to their own souls : 1 John iii. 14, 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.' Sincere love to the brethren is a most evident sign of a Christian's being already passed or translated from death to life. Observe,

¹ As they say of the cardinal virtues, *Virtutes sunt inter se connexæ*, The virtues are chained together ; so we may say of the graces of the Spirit, &c. Mark, saith Chrysostom, it is not working of miracles, casting out of devils, but love to our brethren, that is the infallible proof of being a disciple. [On Luke ii. 20, Homil.—G.]

the apostle doth not say, we *think* we have passed from death to life, but we *know* we have passed from death to life; nor he does not say, we *conjecture* we have passed from death to life, but we *know* we have passed from death to life; nor he does not say, we *hope* we are passed from death to life, but we are *assured* that we are passed from death to life, that is, from a state of nature into a state of grace, 'because we love the brethren.' For ever remember this, when all other evidences have failed many gracious Christians, and all other texts of Scripture have afforded them no comfort, here they have anchored, here they have found rest for their distressed souls; and upon this one single plank, this one evidence, they have swam safely and comfortably unto the haven of eternal happiness. Every real Christian hath in some measure every sanctifying grace in him. As a child so soon as it is born is a perfect man for integrity of parts and entireness of limbs, though not for bigness and bulk of body, so every regenerate person, at the very first hour of his conversion, he is in part renewed in all parts; all the habits of grace are infused into the soul by the Spirit at once. At first conversion the soul is bespangled with every grace, though every grace is not then grown up to its full proportion or perfection; so that where there is one grace in truth, there is every grace in truth. That soul that can truly and seriously conclude that he has any one grace in him, that soul ought to conclude that there is every grace in him.¹ Such as diligently search the Scripture shall find that true blessedness, happiness, and salvation is attributed to several signs: sometimes to the fear of God, sometimes to faith, sometimes to repentance, sometimes to love, sometimes to meekness, sometimes to humility, sometimes to patience, sometimes to poverty of spirit, sometimes to holy mourning, sometimes to hungering and thirsting after righteousness; so that if a godly man can find any one of these in himself, he may safely and groundedly conclude of his salvation and justification, though he cannot see all those signs in him.² There is no saint but may perceive one sign in him, when he cannot another. Now, he that can groundedly be persuaded of any one sign of grace, he may safely conclude he hath all the rest, though for the present he can neither see them nor feel them in himself. But,

The fifth maxim or consideration.

V. *Fifthly*, consider, *That the promises of God are a Christian's magna charta, his chiefest evidences for heaven.* Divine promises are God's deed of gift; they are the only assurance which the saints have to shew for their right and title to Christ, to his blood, and to all the happiness and blessedness that comes by him. Look, as Judah³ by pleading and bringing forth the signet, the bracelets, and the staff, saved her life, Gen. xxxviii. 18-27; so we by believing, pleading, and bringing forth the promises, must save our own souls. The promises are not only the food of faith, but also the very life and soul of faith; they are a mine of rich treasures, a garden full of the choicest and sweetest flowers; in them are wrapt

¹ 1 Thes. v. 23; John iii. 5-8, and chap. i. 16; Ps. xlv. 13. The new creature hath all the parts and lineaments, as in the body there is a composition of all the elements, and a mixture of all the humours.

² Mat. v. 3-6, &c. Every child of God hath all the graces of the Spirit in him radically, though not gradually.

³ Qu. 'Tamar'?—Ed.

up all celestial contentments and delights. And this is most certain, that all a Christian's conclusions of interest in any of those choice and precious privileges which flow from the blood of Jesus Christ ought to be bottomed, grounded, and founded upon the rich and free promises of grace and mercy.

Quest. But how may a person come to know whether he has a real and saving interest in the promises, or no? Now, to this great question, I shall give these nine following answers:

[1.] First, *A holy reliance, a holy resting, a holy staying of thy soul upon the promises, makes the promises thine own*; yea, it makes all the good, and all the sweet, and all the happiness and blessedness that is wrapped up in the promises thine. Even as thy staying, relying, and resting on Christ makes Christ thine, and all that is in him, and that comes by him, thine, so thy staying and resting upon the promises makes them thine.

[2.] Secondly, *If thy heart ordinarily, habitually, lies under the word of command, then the word of promise does assuredly belong to thy soul*, Ps. cxix. 6; Acts xiii. 22; Luke i. 5, 6.¹ There is no soul under heaven that commonly lies under the commanding power of the word, but that soul that has an interest in the word of promise. Men that have no interest in the word of promise, commonly live in the neglect of the word of command. If the word of command commonly carries thy soul, then the word of promise, without all peradventure, belongs to thy soul. Many deal with the commands of God as the heathens dealt with the commands of their gods; when their gods called for a man, they offered a candle; or as Hercules offered up a painted man, instead of a living man. Such as deal thus with the commands of God, they have no interest in the promises of God. Flesh and blood looks upon the commands of God as impossible to be obeyed, like the unbelieving spies; 'Oh we cannot conquer the land;' but faith and love, like Caleb and Joshua, conclude the land may be conquered, the commands may be evangelically obeyed; and accordingly they readily undertake it. Now, to such a frame of heart the promises are entailed. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *If in the face of all objections, discouragements, and difficulties, thy soul be kept up in a waiting frame, for the fulfilling of the promises, as Abraham's was*, Rom. iv., then certainly the promises belong to thee.² There are some promises that relate to the subduing of sin, as that, Jer. xxxiii. 8; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; Micah vii. 19; Ps. lxxv. 3. And there are other precious promises that relate to a growth in grace, as that, Malachi iv. 2; Job xvii. 9; Ps. xcii. 12-14; Prov. iv. 18; Hosea xiv. 5-7. Now, if thy heart be kept up in a waiting frame for the accomplishment of these promises, then they do certainly belong to thee. The same I may say of all other promises;

¹ It was a good saying of Augustine, *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*, give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. To such a frame the promises belong, Num. xiii. 28 to the end.

² The longer, said the emperor's son, the cooks are preparing the meat, the better cheer I shall have. His meaning was, that the longer he staid for the empire, the better and greater it would be; so the longer the soul waits for a mercy, the better and greater it will be when it comes, &c.

the waiting soul shall be sure to speed, Ps. xl. 1-3; Isa. xl. 29-31, xxx. 18; Heb. vi. 12, &c. God never did, nor never will, frustrate the expectations of the patient waiter, &c. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *He that hath those divine qualities or supernatural graces in him, to which the promises are made, as faith, repentance, love, fear, hope, uprightness, patience, a waiting frame, &c., he has an undoubted interest in the promises.* He may lay his hand upon any promise, and say, this promise is mine; and all the blessings, the benefits, the heavenly treasure that is laid up in it, is mine. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *He that lives upon the promises as his daily food, he has an unquestionable interest in the promises.* Wicked men may make use of promises as of physic, in some cases, as when they are under anguish of spirit, or gripes of conscience, or in fear of hell; or else when they are under some outward wants or straits, &c., but he that lives upon them as his daily food, he has a most assured interest in them. Our outward man lives not upon kickshaws, though now and then we may taste of them, but we live upon wholesome food; so here, no man lives upon the blessed promises as his appointed food, but he that has a real interest in the promises. Look, as there is a nourishment proper to every animal,—spiders feed on flies, moles on worms, the horse on grass, the lion on flesh, &c.,—so there is food, nourishment, that is proper for men's souls, viz., the precious promises and Christ's 'flesh,' which is meat indeed, and his blood, which is drink indeed, John vi. 53, *seq.*; and he that daily feeds on this food will be happy for ever. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *If you are united and married to Christ by faith, then you have a real, a saving interest in the promises:* Gal. iii. 29, 'And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' The promise is the jointure, and there is no way under heaven to enjoy the jointure but by matching with the person of Christ, Col. iv. 28; Heb. i. 2; Rev. xxi. 7. And faith is the grace of graces, by which the soul gives both its assent and consent to take the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is tendered and offered in the gospel, and is therefore called sometimes a receiving of Christ, John i. 12. The only way to enjoy a lady's jointure, is to marry her person; and so the only way to enjoy the promise of Christ, is to be willing to marry the person of Christ. It is our marriage union with Christ that gives us a right and title to all the promises of Christ: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen.' All absolute and conditional promises, either of grace or unto grace, are made to us in Christ, and only enjoyed by our enjoying of Christ.

[7.] Seventhly, *He that can clear his right to any one promise, he may safely and boldly conclude his interest in every promise.* The promises are a golden chain, and he that has a right in one link of the chain, has a right in every link of the chain, 2 Peter i. 5-7; Eph. v. 22, 23; 2 Peter i. 4. As there is a chain of graces, so there is a chain of promises. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise, and truly say, This is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon every promise, and say, These are mine; he that is an heir to any one promise, he is an heir to every promise. Hence it is they are called 'heirs of promise,' Heb. vi. 17; not heirs of this promise or that, but

of promise; that is, of every promise, or the covenant which comprehends all the precious promises of the gospel in it. Though the promises may be distinguished one from another, yet they may not be severed one from another; he that has a right to any one promise, he may safely infer his right to every promise. The whole covenant, which is a bundle of promises, is certainly thine, if any one promise be thine. The promises by a divine hand are mutually tied and linked together; and those whom God has joined together no man may put asunder. The promises can be no more divided than Christ can be divided, or than heaven can be divided. The promises are not like loose and unstrung pearls, but as pearls made into one entire chain. He that can lay his hand upon that promise, Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied,' and truly say, This promise is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon that promise, ver. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God,' and say, This promise is mine; and the same he may say of the rest of the precious promises that are specified in vers. 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11 of that chapter. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to them that love him, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to them that love him, and say, These are all mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to them that fear him, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may assuredly lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to them that fear him, and say, These are all mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to faith in Christ, to believing in Christ, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to faith in Christ, to believing in Christ, and say, All these promises are mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to the returning sinner, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may securely lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to the returning sinner, the repenting sinner, and say, All these are mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to the waiting soul, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may without all peradventure lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to the waiting soul, and say, All these are mine. Prove but your right in one, and you may safely infer your right to all. But,

[8.] Eighthly, *If in the times of your greatest outward and inward straits and trials, when you are most sadly and sorely put to it, you fly to the precious promises, as to your surest and choicest city of refuge, then certainly you have an interest in them.* Thus Abraham did, Rom. iv. 17-22; and thus Jacob did, Gen. xxxii. 6-12 compared; and thus Sarah did, Heb. xi. 11; and thus Moses did, Num. x. 29; and thus Jehoshaphat did, 2 Chron. xx. 1, 10 compared with the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of that chapter; and this was David's common practice: Ps. xxvii. 12, 13, and Ps. lx. 1-10, compared, and Ps. cxix. 49, 50. Turn to these scriptures, and ponder upon them. And so when a man is under the guilt of sin, he flies to promises of pardon and forgiveness, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge, Num. xiv. 19, Isa. lv. 7; Jer. xxxiii.

8 ; Isa. xl. 1, 2 ; chap. xliii. 25 ; Micah vii. 18 ; Jer. xxxi. 34 ; Exod. xxxiv. 7 ; Dan. ix. 9. And so when a man is under the strength, power, and prevalency of sin, he runs to such promises wherein God has engaged himself to subdue the sins of his people, and to purge and cleanse away the sins of his people, Micah vii. 19 ; Rom. vi. 14 ; Ps. lxxv. 3 ; Isa. i. 25 ; Mal. iii. 3 ; Zech. xiii. 9 ; Isa. xxvii. 9 ; Mat. iii. 12 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 33 ; Jer. xxxiii. 8, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge. And so when a man is deserted, he runs to such promises as are proper to that state, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge, Micah vii. 19 ; Isa. liv. 7-10 ; Ps. v. 12 ; Ps. lxxxiv. 10 ; Ps. xcvi. 11 ; Ps. cxii. 4 ; Isa. xlix. 14-16. And so when a man is tempted, he runs to such supporting, succouring, and encouraging promises as are most suitable to that state, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge, 1 Cor. x. 13 ; Heb. ii. 18 ; Rom. xvi. 20 ; James iv. 7. Now certainly, such as in all their inward and outward straits run thus to the promises, as to their surest and choicest city of refuge, they have an unquestionable interest in the promises. The rich man's wealth is his strong city, Prov. x. 15. Wealthy worldlings, in times of distress and danger, do run to their hoards and heaps of riches, as to a strong city that is able to withstand all sieges and assaults, and to be safety and security to them ; so when once a man makes the precious promises to be his strong city, and runs to them in the day of his distress and dangers, as his only safety and security, then he has doubtless an interest in them. But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, *If you daily present a greater and a choicer good in the promises to your souls than any this world affords, then certainly you have an interest in the promises.* If when honours, or riches, or pleasures, or the applause of men do present themselves unto you, you can readily present to your own souls higher honours in the promise, 1 Sam. ii. 30 ; Luke xii. 32 ; Rev. ii. 17, 26, 27 ; chap. iii. 5, 12, 21 ; chap. v. 10 ; and more durable riches in the promise, Prov. viii. 18 ; 1 Pet. iii. 4 ; and sweeter and choicer pleasures in the promise, Ps. xvi. 11 ; Isa. xii. 3, chap. xxxv. 2, 10 ; Jer. xxxiii. 9, 11 ; Ps. cxxxii. 16 ; and greater applause in the promise, Mat. x. 32, 'Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven ;' ay, and before the angels too, Luke xii. 8 ; Mat. xxv. 31-41 ; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3 ; 2 Thes. i. 6-10 ; Rev. iii. 9 ; Isa. lx. 12-14 ; then certainly you have an interest in the promise. When a man can shew his own heart daily, in the glass of the promises, a greater worth, excellency, and glory, than all this world affords, without all controversy he has an interest in the promises. Thus those worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, Heb. xi., and the martyrs in all ages, did commonly present better, higher, and greater things to their own souls in the promises, than any their adversaries were able to propose to draw them off from Christ, their profession or principles, &c., and by this means they did very courageously and honourably maintain their ground in the face of all the gay and golden temptations that they met withal. *Crudelitas vestra, gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory, said they in Tertullian ;¹ and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven. Basil will tell you, that the most cruel martyrdom is but a crafty trick to escape death, to pass from life to

¹ Apolog.—G.

life, as he speaks.¹ It can be but a day's journey between the cross and paradise. Though the cross be bitter, yet it is but short. 'A little storm,' as one said of Julian's persecution, 'and an eternal calm follows.' Adrianus, seeing the martyrs suffer cheerfully such grievous and dreadful things, asked, Why they would endure such misery, when they might, by retracting, free themselves; upon which one of them alleged that text, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. The naming of the text, and seeing them suffer such hard things cheerfully, did, by a blessing from on high, so really and effectually convert him, that afterwards he became a martyr too.² When we see poor, weak, feeble Christians defying their torments, conquering in the midst of sufferings, singing in prison, as Paul and Silas did, Acts xvi. 25; kissing the stake, as Henry Voes did;³ clapping their hands when they were half consumed with fire, as Hawkes did;⁴ blessing God that ever they were born to see that day, as John Noyes did;⁵ calling their execution day their wedding day, as Bishop Ridley did;⁶ we cannot but conclude that they had an eye to 'the recompence of reward,' and they saw such great, and sweet, and glorious things in the promises, that did so refresh, delight, and ravish their hearts, and transport their souls, that all their heavy afflictions seemed light, and their long afflictions short, and their most bitter afflictions sweet and easy to them. But,

The sixth maxim of consideration.

VI. *Sixthly*, Consider, that it is granted on all hands, that the least degree of grace, if true, is sufficient to salvation; for the promises of life and glory, of remission and salvation, of everlasting happiness and blessedness, are not made over to degrees of grace, but to the truth of grace; not to faith in triumph, but to faith in truth; and therefore the sense and evidence of the least grace, yea, of the least degree of the least grace, may afford some measure of assurance. Grace is the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22; and the tree is known by his fruit, Mat. xii. 33; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 16, 36; Mat. v. 1, *seq.*; John vi. 40. I do not say, that weak grace will afford a strong assurance, or a full assurance, for that rather arises from strength of grace than from truth of grace, but I say, weak grace may afford some assurance.⁷ And oh, that all weak Christians would seriously lay this to heart, for it may serve to relieve them against many fears, doubts, discouragements, and jealousies, which do much disturb the peace and comfort of their precious souls. Though the least measures of grace cannot satisfy a sincere Christian, yet they ought to quiet his conscience, and cheer his heart, and confirm his judgment of his interest in Christ. The least measure of grace is like a diamond, very little in bulk, but of high price and mighty value, and accordingly we are to improve it for our comfort and encouragement. A goldsmith makes reckoning of the least filings of gold, and so should

¹ Mat. v. 10-12. Burn my foot if you will, said that noble martyr S. Basil, that it may dance everlastingly with the angels in heaven.

² See Index for other references to Adrianus.—G.

³ Clark's 'Martyrologie,' as before, p. 194.—G. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 443.—G. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 493.—G.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 442, 465, and Foxe *sub nomine*.—G.

⁷ An eminent minister, who was a famous instrument of converting many to God, was wont to say, that for his own part, he had no other evidence in himself of being in the state of grace, than that he was sensible of his deadness.

we of the least measures of grace. A man may read the king's image upon a silver penny, as well as upon a larger piece of coin. The least dram of grace bears the image of God upon it ; and why then should it not evidence the goodness and happiness of a Christian's estate ?¹ It is a true saying, that the assurance of an eternal life is the life of this temporal life. I have read that Mr Jordain, one of the aldermen of the city of Exeter, would use to ask grown professors, whether they had any assurance ; which if they denied, he would tell them, that he was even ashamed of them ; ' In good earnest,' saith he, I would study the promises, and go into my closet, and lock the door, and there plead them to God, and say, that I would not go forth till he gave me some sense of his love.' He would often mention and try himself by these three marks : *first*, a sincere desire to fear the name of God, which he grounded upon that Neh. i. 11 ; *secondly*, a sincere desire to do the will of God in all things required, which he grounded upon Ps. cxix. 6 ; *thirdly*, a full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord, which he grounded upon Acts xi. 23. These he would often press upon others, and these he frequently tried himself by, and from these he had much assurance and comfort.² Mr Stephen Marshal, in a sermon of his on Isa. ix. 2, saith, ' Look and examine, whether thou dost not loathe thyself as a base creature ; and dost thou make this nothing ? Secondly, Dost thou not in thy heart value and prize the meanest child of God more than the greatest man in the world, that have not the image of God, the image of grace and holiness stamped upon them ? I pray God,' saith Mr Marshal, ' that many of God's people do not want these evidences.' ' If our souls,' saith another, ' shall like of Christ for a suitor, when we find no other jointure but the cross, we may be sure we are Christians. A man may want the feeling of his faith, and cry and call again and again for it, and feel nothing all this while, and yet nevertheless have true and sound faith ; for the feeling of and mourning for the want of faith, and the earnest and constant desire of it, is an infallible sign of faith. For this is a sure rule, that so long as one feeleth himself sick he is not dead ; and the high estimation of faith, joined with a vehement desire of it, is a singular evidence that there is a sound and lively root of faith in our hearts.'³ ' All the elect of God,' saith another,⁴ ' shall have the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon their hearts, sooner or later. I do not press the having of these things perfectly, but sincerely ; an elect person may want many a degree of grace, but if he have them in sincerity, though in the least measure, it is a sufficient evidence of his election.' ' An earnest,' saith Dr Sibbes,⁵ ' is little in regard of the whole ; perhaps we have but a shilling to secure us of many pounds ; so then the point is this, that howsoever we may be assured of our estate in grace, and likewise that we shall hold out, yet the ground of

¹ ' Slight not the lowest, the meanest evidences of grace. God may put thee to make use of the lowest as thou thinkest, even that, 1 John iii. 14, that may be worth a thousand worlds to thee.'—Page 83 of a little piece called ' A Choice Drop of Honey.'

² The discovery of grace in thy heart, though but one grain, and that of mustard-seed, will assure thee of thy election and final salvation. Ford's ' Spirit of Adoption,' p. 248.

³ Mr Dod on the commandments, pp. 313, 314.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 2. Mr Love his ' Zealous Christian,' p. 29, last part.

⁵ Dr Sibbes his commentary on the First Chapter of the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, v. 22, pp. 491, 492.

this assurance is not from any great measure of grace; but though it be little in quantity, it may be great in assurance and security. As we value an earnest, not for the worth that is in itself, but because it assures us of a great bargain; we have an eye more to the consummation of the bargain, than to the quantity of the earnest; so it is here, grace is but an earnest; yet notwithstanding, though it be little, as an earnest is, yet it is great in assurance and validity, answerable to the relation of that it hath to assure us. Though grace be little, yet as little as it is, seeing it is an earnest, and 'the first fruits,' as the apostle saith,—which were but little in regard of the whole harvest,—yet it is of the nature of the whole, and thereupon it comes to secure. A spark of fire is but little, yet it is fire as well as the whole element of fire; and a drop of water is but little, yet it is water as well as the whole ocean. When a man is in a dark place, put the case it be in a dungeon, if he have but a little light shining in to him from a little crevice, that little light discovers that the day is broke, that the sun is risen. Put the case there be but one grape on a vine, it shews that it is a vine, and that the vine is not dead; so put the case that there be but the appearance of a little grace in a Christian, perhaps the Spirit of God appears but in one grace in him at that time, yet that one grace sheweth that we are vines, and not thistles, or thorns, or base plants, and it shews that there is life in the root.' Thus you see how fully this reverend doctor speaks to the case. That friend that writes the life and death of Mr John Murcot, once preacher of the gospel at Dublin, saith,¹ 'That in preparation for the supper ordinance, he would bring himself unto the test, and to say the truth, was very clear in the discovering and making out his own condition, being well acquainted with the way of God's dealing with the soul, and with the way of the soul's closing with Christ. Instance, April 3, 1653. Upon search I find, 1. Myself an undone creature. 2. That the Lord Jesus sufficiently satisfied as mediator the law for sin. 3. That he is freely offered in the gospel. 4. So far as I know my own heart, I do through mercy heartily consent that he only shall be my Saviour; not my works or duties, which I do only in obedience to him. 5. If I know my heart, I would be ruled by his word and Spirit.' 'Behold, in a few words,' saith he that writes his life and death, 'the sum and substance of the gospel.' By these instances we may see that some of the precious servants of God have found a great deal of comfort, support, rest, content, and some measure of assurance, from a lower rank of evidences, than those that many strong Christians do reach unto, &c. But,

The seventh maxim or consideration.

VII. *Seventhly*, Consider, that all men and women that are desirous to know how it will go with them in another world, they must peremptorily resolve to be determined by Scripture in the great matters of their interest in Christ.² This blessed scripture is the great uncontroverted rule, and therefore if a person can prove from Scripture that his graces are true, or that he is in a gracious estate, or that he has an in-

¹ See his Treatises published by Mr Winter, Mr Chambers, Mr Eaton, Mr Caryl, and Mr Manton, pp. 36, 37.

² This we believe, when we first begin to believe, that we ought not to believe anything beyond Scripture.—*Tertullian*.

terest in Christ, or that he has savingly, graciously stricken covenant with God, then he must resolutely and peremptorily resolve to grant so much as unchangeably to acquiesce in it, to stick fast to it, and to hear nothing against it from the world, the flesh, or the devil. God hath plainly told us in his blessed word who shall be saved, and who shall be damned; though not by name, yet by the qualifications by which they are described in the Bible. There are the statute laws of heaven, and the standing rule by which all must be tried. Every man must stand or fall, be eternally blessed or eternally miserable, as his condition is consonant to or various from the infallible characters of saving grace contained in the holy Scripture. Witness that Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (or no morning) in them.' So John xii. 48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' Mat. v. 18, 'For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.' So John x. 35, 'And the Scripture cannot be broken,' or violated, or made void. But though this be an indispensable duty, yet certainly there is, especially in times of great afflictions, temptations, desertions, fears, and doubts, a very great aptness and proneness in Christians to expect strange means rather than right means, and new means rather than old means, and invented means rather than appointed means, and to build their faith upon something beside the word, or that is without the compass of the word, rather than upon the plain and naked word itself; being in this very like to many weak, crazy, distempered, and diseased patients, that are more ready to fancy every new medicine and new doctor they hear of, and to be tampering with them, than to expect a recovery, by going through a course of physic prescribed by the physician that best understands their diseases, and the most proper and effectual means for their recoveries. You know when Naaman the Assyrian came to the prophet Elisha to be cured of his leprosy, he only sent out a messenger to him, who bid him go and wash seven times in Jordan, and his flesh should come again unto him, and he should be clean, 2 Kings v. 10; but Naaman's blood rises, and his heart swells, and he grows very wroth, and all because he did not like the means prescribed by the prophet, and because he thought in his own heart that the prophet would have used more likely means to have wrought the cure, verses 11, 12. So many Christians, when they lie under great agonies and sore perplexities of soul, and are encouraged to act faith upon the promises, and to rest their weary souls upon the word of grace, they are ready to think and say that these things, these means, will never heal them, nor comfort them, nor be a relief or support unto them, unless the Lord does from heaven, by extraordinary revelations, visions, signs, and miracles, confirm his promises to them; and hereupon they make light of the blessed scriptures, which are the springs of life, and the only bottom upon which all our comforts, peace, and happiness is to be built; yea, they relinquish that more sure word of prophecy, which shines as a light in a dark place, 2 Peter i. 19. Certainly the acting of faith on the precious promises, and the cleaving of the soul unto those blessed truths declared in the gospel of grace, is the most sure, ready,

and compendious way of obtaining a blessed assurance, and a full establishment of heart, in all sound, solid, and abiding joy and peace, Eph. i. 13; and therefore Luther,¹ though, as he confesseth, he was often tempted to ask for signs, apparitions, and revelations from heaven to confirm him in his way, yet tells us how strongly he did withstand them, *pactum feci domino Deo meo, &c.* I have, saith he, indented with the Lord my God, that he would never send me dreams, visions, angels, for I am well contented with this gift, that I have the holy Scripture, which doth abundantly teach and supply all necessaries for this life, and that also which is to come. Certainly Austin hit the mark, when he prayed, 'Lord, let thy holy Scriptures be my pure delights, in which I can neither deceive, or ever be deceived.' Certainly the balance of the sanctuary should weigh all the oracles of God, decide all, and the rule of God's word be the square and judge of all. O sirs! dare you venture your souls upon it, that the blessed Scriptures are false, that they are but a fable? dare you stand forth and say, If the Scriptures be not a lie, let us be damned for ever and ever? dare you stand up and say, We are freely contented that the everlasting worm shall gnaw on our hearts for ever, and that our bodies and souls shall for ever and ever lie burning in infernal flames, if the scriptures prove not at last a cheat, a deceit, a mere forgery and imposture? Now, if you dare not thus to say, and thus to venture, then peremptorily resolve to be determined by Scripture, in the great concernments of your precious souls. They that would take their parts in promised comforts, they must follow the voice of the word, and subscribe to the sentence of conscience, following that word. If the word approve of thee, as sound and sincere with God, assuredly thou art so, for that rule cannot err. If the word saith that thy heart is right with God, thou must maintain that testimony against all disputes whatever. Never enter into dispute with Satan, or thine own self, about thy estate, but by taking and making the Scripture the judge of the controversy. When fears rise high, you say you shall never have mercy! But doth the word say so? The Lord never gave himself to me! But doth the word say so? Never was any as I am! But doth the word say so? I cannot see, nor conceive, nor think, that the Lord hath any love for me! But doth the word say so? yea, doth not the word say, that his 'thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor his ways as your ways'? But as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways; and his thoughts than your thoughts,' Isa. lv. 8, 9. I have not that peace and joy that others have, therefore the Lord intends no good towards me! But doth the word say so? Oh! but if my inside were but turned outward, good men would loathe me, and wicked men would laugh at me! But doth the word say so? Oh! but my heart was never right with God! But doth the word say so? Oh! but that which I have taken all this while for saving grace is but common grace! But doth the word say so? Oh! but the face of God is hid from me, my sun is set in a cloud, and will never rise more! But doth the word say so? Oh! but Satan is let loose upon me, and therefore God hates me! But doth the word say so? yea, doth not the word tell you, that those who have been most beloved of God, have been most

¹ Com. on Gen., cap. 38.

tempted by Satan? Witness Christ, David, Job, Joshua, Peter, Paul, &c. Oh! but I am afflicted, so as never was any before me! But doth the word say so? Oh! let the word have the casting voice, and not thine own frail distempered reason. Oh! do not only hear what sin, and Satan, and thine own heart can say against thee, but hear also what the word of the Lord Jesus can say for thee. Let the word of the Lord be judge on both sides, and then all will be well.

I know that the impenitent and unbelieving person, that lives and dies without grace in his heart, and an interest in Christ, shall as certainly be damned, as if I saw him this very moment under everlasting burnings; because God in the Scripture has said it, Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18-36; Rev. xxi. 8; Rom. ii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 19-21; Heb. xii. 14. And I know that the holy, humble, true, penitent, believing, self-denying, and sin-mortifying Christian, shall be as certainly saved, as if at this very time I saw him in actual possession of glory; because God in the Scripture has said it, Mat. v. 3-12; Rom. viii. 1-13; Acts x. 43; John iii. 15, 16, 36; vi. 37-40, &c. O sirs! no man in his wits dares dispute against the authority of Scripture, or deny it, as false and erroneous; and therefore if the Scripture say a man has grace, he ought in conscience to subscribe to it against all objections or temptations to the contrary. For ever remember this, till a man comes to be willing to have his spiritual and eternal estate to be determined by Scripture, he will never enjoy any settled rest or quiet in his spirit. When once the goodness of a man's estate is cleared up to him by the word, he is never to regard what Satan or carnal reason objects against him. Satan is a liar and a deceiver of near six thousand years' standing; he is full of envy, and full of malice, and full of wiles, devices and fetches,¹ and therefore give no credit to any of his reports against the report of the word, but stand by the testimony of the word, and the witness of your own consciences, against all Satan's cavils, temptations, objections and suggestions; and then, and not till then, will you find rest to your souls. He that would hold on cheerfully and resolutely in a Christian course, and go merrily to his grave, and singing to heaven, he must maintain the testimony of the word against all the gainsayings of sense or carnal reason; he must hear nothing, nor believe nothing against the word, nor against the goodness and happiness of his own estate or condition, which has been evidenced to him from the word. Men will not be easily baffled out of their estates. If some great man should come and lay claim to your estates, you will not presently give them up, though your evidences are not at hand, or though they are blotted, or though perhaps you cannot clearly make out your title, yet you will not tamely and quietly give up your estates; and yet how ready are many Christians, upon every clamour of Satan against their souls and spiritual estates, to give up all, and to conclude that they are hypocrites, and have no true grace and spiritual life in them! &c. But,

The eighth maxim or consideration.

VIII. *Eighthly, Consider, that a godly man may not only come to a sure knowledge of his gracious estate, but it is also more easily attain-*

¹ 'Tricks or expedients.'—G.

able than many,—*may I not say, than most,—do apprehend or believe*; for if a gracious man will but argue rationally from Scripture, he shall be forced to conclude that he has grace, and that he has an interest in Christ, and that he shall be saved, unless he be resolved beforehand boldly to deny Scripture truths. Sirs! look in what way the spirit of bondage doth ordinarily work fear, terror, and horror in the hearts of unconverted persons, in the same way the Spirit of adoption doth ordinarily work hope and assurance in the hearts of the saints, Rom. viii. 15; John xvi. 8. Now, the spirit of bondage commonly awakens secure sinners, and fills the heart and consciences of poor sinners with fear, horror, and amazement, by setting home upon their souls such practical syllogisms as these:

'Every liar shall have his portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,' Rev. xxi. 8.

But I am a liar;

Therefore I shall have my portion in that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Or thus:

'He that believeth not is condemned already,' John iii. 18.

I believe not;

Therefore I am condemned already.

Or thus:

'He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and hath not eternal life abiding in him,' 1 John iii. 15.

I hate my brother;

Therefore I am a murderer, and have not eternal life abiding in me.

Or thus:

'Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of his Son,' 2 Thes. i. 7, 8.

I know not God, I obey not the gospel of his Son;

Therefore Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on me.

Or thus:

'The wicked shall be turned into hell,' Ps. ix. 17.

I am wicked;

Therefore I shall be turned into hell.

Now in like manner the Spirit of adoption brings the 'heirs of the promise,' Heb. vi. 17, to the assurance of hope, by setting home such practical syllogisms as these;—

[1.] *First*, Whosoever truly and heartily receives the Lord Jesus Christ, are truly and justly reputed to be the sons of God, John i. 12. But I have received Christ all the ways that the word there can import; I am heartily willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ in all his offices, viz., as a king to rule me, a prophet to teach and instruct me, and a priest to offer and intercede for me; I am willing to receive him as a sanctifier, as well as a Saviour, and to receive him as my Lord, as well as to receive him as my Redeemer, and to receive him upon his own terms, viz., of taking up his cross, denying myself and following of him; therefore I may safely, boldly, plainly and warrantably conclude that I am a son of God, and that I have an interest in God, according to the

scripture last cited ; which scripture cannot be broken, nor cannot fail, nor cannot be unbound or loosed, as the Greek word in that John x. 35 imports, &c.¹

[2.] *Secondly*, A gracious soul may argue thus: All the great and precious promises concerning everlasting happiness and blessedness, are made over to faith and repentance, as the Scriptures do abundantly evidence. Now, he that really finds faith and repentance wrought in his soul, so that he is able to say I am a repenting and a believing sinner, he may truly and safely conclude that he shall be saved ; for all the promises of eternal happiness and blessedness do run out with a full stream to faith and repentance. I readily grant that a strong hope results from the clear evidence it hath of both these. We read in Scripture of a threefold assurance: as, first, an assurance of understanding, Col. ii. 2 ; secondly, an assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22 ; thirdly, an assurance of hope, Heb. vi. 11. And it is a very choice note that acute D. A.² hath upon it, viz., ‘that these three make up one practical syllogism, wherein knowledge forms the proportion,³ faith makes the assumption, and hope draws the conclusion.’ I do, saith the Christian, assuredly know from the word that cannot deceive me, that the believing and repenting sinner shall be saved ; my conscience also tells me that I do unfeignedly believe and repent, therefore I do firmly hope that I shall, however vile and unworthy otherwise, be saved. Now mark, answerable to the evidence that a man hath in his own soul, that faith and repentance is wrought in him, so will his hope and assurance be weaker or stronger, more or less. If a man’s evidence for the truth of his faith and repentance be dark, and weak, and low, and uncertain, his hope and assurance, that is born of these parents, as I may say, must needs partake of its parent’s weakness and infirmities, and be itself weak, and dark, and low, and wavering, and uncertain, as they are from which it results. Hope and assurance ebbs and flows, as the evidence of a man’s faith and repentance ebbs and flows.

Assurance cannot be ordinarily had without a serious examination of our hearts ; for assurance is the certain knowledge of the conclusion drawn from the premises, one out of scripture, the other by a reflect act of the understanding or conscience, thus : He that believes and repents shall certainly be saved, that is the voice of the word of God ; then by the search of a man’s own heart, he must be able to say, But I believe and repent ; and from these two doth result this assurance, that he may safely conclude, Therefore I shall be saved. And oh that all Christians were so wise, as seriously to ponder upon these things !

[3.] *Thirdly*, A godly man may argue thus: He that hath respect unto all God’s commands shall never be ashamed. Ps. cxix. 6, ‘Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.’⁴ He that is so honest and faithful with God, as to do his best, shall find that God will be so gracious as to pardon his worst. And this gospel indulgence David does more than hint at in those words,

¹ Ἐξουσίαν signifies authority. Such as receive the Lord Jesus, have authority to be called the sons of God. Others may call God Father, and themselves sons, but they have not that right and authority to do it as believers have, Mark xvi. 16 ; John iii. 16, 18, 36 ; Mat. iii. 2, 8 ; Luke xxiv. 47 ; Acts v. 31, iii. 19 ; Luke xiii. 3.

² Qu. ‘Dr Ames’?—G.

³ Qu. ‘proposition’?—Ed.

⁴ Shame is both the temporal and eternal fruit of sin, Rom. vi. 21 ; Dan. xii. 2.

‘Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments, or, as the Hebrew hath it, ‘Then shall I not blush when my eye is to all thy commandments.’ The traveller, you know, hath his eye towards the place where he is going; and though he be yet short of it, yet he is putting on and pressing forward all he can to reach it; so when the eye of a saint is to all the commands of God, and he is still a-pressing forwards toward full obedience, such a soul shall never be put to shame; it shall never be put to the blush, but it shall be able, living and dying, boldly to appear in the presence of the Lord. Mark, the psalmist doth not say, when I obey all thy commandments, but ‘when I have *respect* to all thy commandments;’ and that implies an inward awe and reverential eye towards every duty God requires. You know, to have respect unto a thing is this, when that of all others sways most with us, as when a master commands such a business, the servant will do it, because he respects him; and at his command he will go and come, though he will not at the command of any other. But I have respect unto all his commandments, therefore I shall never be ashamed.

[4.] *Fourthly*, A godly man may argue thus: He that loveth the brethren is passed from death to life, and consequently is in Christ, 1 John iii. 18, 19. But I love the brethren, therefore I am passed from death to life, and so consequently am in Christ.

[5.] *Fifthly*, A godly man may argue thus: He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall certainly find mercy, Prov. xxviii. 13. But I confess and forsake my sins, 1, in respect of my sincere desires; 2, in respect of my gracious purposes; 3, in respect of my fixed resolutions; 4, in respect of my faithful and constant endeavours; therefore I shall certainly find mercy.

[6.] *Sixthly*, A godly man may argue thus: He that hath the testimony of a good conscience, he may rejoice in that testimony, 2 Cor. i. 12; Isa. xxxviii. 3. But I have the testimony of a good conscience, therefore I may rejoice in that testimony.

[7.] *Seventhly*, A godly man may argue thus, He over whom presumptuous sins has not dominion is upright: Ps. xix. 13, ‘Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright.’ But presumptuous sins has not dominion over me; therefore I am upright. Mark, unfeigned willingness to part with every sin, and to mortify every sin, is a sure sign of uprightness, a sure sign of saving grace. When a man is sincerely willing to leave every sin, and to indulge himself in none, no, not his darling sin, it is a most certain sign of his integrity and sincerity, as you may evidently see by comparing of these scriptures together, Ps. xvii. 1, 3, 4; cxix. 1, 2, 3, 6; Job i. 8, ii. 3; Ps. xviii. 23. I was upright before him. Oh! but how do you know that? how do you prove that? how are you assured of that? Why, by this, that ‘I have kept myself from mine iniquity.’ Doubtless there is as much of the power of God required, and as much strength of grace required, and as much of the presence and assistance of the Spirit required, to work a man off from his bosom sins, from his darling sins, from his beloved sins, as there is required to work him off from all other sins. A conquest here clearly speaks out uprightness of heart.

[8.] *Eighthly*, A godly man may argue thus : He whose heart doth not condemn him, 1, of giving himself over to a voluntary serving of sin ; or, 2, of making a trade of sin ; or, 3, of allowing of himself in any course or way of sin ; or, 4, of sinning, as wicked men sin, who sin studiously, resolutely, affectionately, delightfully, customarily, wilfully, or with their whole will, or with the full consent and sway of their souls ; or, 5, of indulging, conniving or winking at any known sin ; or, 6, of living in the daily neglect of any known positive duty against light and conscience, or of an ordinary shifting off of any known service that God requires of him in that place or station wherein God has set him, may have confidence, *παρρησίαν*, boldness, liberty of speech towards God, 1 John iii. 21. But my heart does not condemn me, 1, of giving myself over to a voluntary serving of sin ; nor, 2, of making a trade of sin ; nor, 3, of allowing myself in any course or way of sin ; nor, 4, of sinning as wicked men sin, viz., studiously, resolutely, affectionately, delightfully, customarily, wilfully ; nor, 5, of indulging, conniving, or winking at any known sin ; nor, 6, of living in the daily neglect of any known duty against light and conscience ; therefore I may have confidence or boldness towards God ; I may use liberty of speech with God ; I may use the liberty and freedom of a favourite of heaven ; I may open my heart to God, as favourites do to their prince, viz., freely, familiarly, boldly. When Austin was converted, and his heart sincere with God, he could bless God that he could think of his former evil ways, which were very bad, without fear. Oh to what a height of holy boldness and familiarity with God had this man of God arrived to ! But,

[9.] *Ninthly*, A godly man may argue thus, To such who are 'poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven belongs,' Mat. v. 3. By *poor in spirit* is not meant poor in substance, that not being a thing praiseworthy in itself, but the broken and humble in heart, who hath no high thoughts or conceits of himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, as a young child.¹ 'Blessed are the poor in spirit ;' that is, *non habentes infantem spiritum*, who hath no lofty or puffed up spirit. The poor in spirit are those that are lowly, being truly conscious of their own unworthiness. *Nulli pauperes spiritu nisi humiles* ; none are poor in spirit but the humble. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit ;' that is, blessed are they whose spirits are brought into such an humble gracious frame, as willingly, quietly, and contentedly to lie down in a poor low condition, when it is the pleasure of the Lord to bring them into such a condition.² Blessed are the poor in spirit ; that is, blessed are they who are truly and kindly apprehensive and sensible of their spiritual wants, poverty, and misery ;³ that see their need of God's free grace to pardon them ; that see their need of Christ's righteousness to clothe them ; that see their need of the Spirit of Christ to purge, change, and sanctify them ;

¹ Chrysostom *in loc.*

² Augustine, Hilary, Tertullian.

³ There are some that are poor in estate, and others that are poor in spirit ; and there are some that are poor-spirited in the cause of God, Christ, the gospel, and their own souls ; and there are others that are poor in spirit. There are some that are spiritually poor, as all are that are destitute of grace, and others that are poor in spirit ; there are some that are evangelically poor, and others that are superstitiously poor ; as those papists who renounce their estates, and vow a voluntary poverty. The poverty that hath blessedness annexed to it is only an evangelical poverty.

that see their need of more heavenly wisdom to counsel them ; that see their need of more of the power of God to support them, and of the goodness of God to supply them, and of the mercy of God to comfort them, and of the presence of God to refresh them, and of the patience of God to bear with them, &c. ; that see their need of greater measures of faith to conquer their fears, and of greater measures of wisdom to walk holily, harmlessly, blamelessly, and exemplarily in the midst of temptations, snares, and dangers ; and that see their need of greater measures of patience to bear their burdens without fretting or fainting ; and that see their need of greater measures of zeal and courage to bear up bravely against all sorts of opposition, both from within and from without ; and that see their need of greater measures of love to cleave to the Lamb, and to follow the Lamb whither ever he goes ; and that see their need of living in a continual dependence upon God and Christ, for fresh influences, incomes, and supplies of grace, of comfort, of strength, whereby they may be enabled to act for God, and walk with God, and glorify God, and bring forth fruit to God, and withstand all temptations that tend to lead the heart from God ; and that see nothing in themselves upon which they dare venture their everlasting estates, and therefore fly to the free, rich, sovereign, and glorious grace of God in Christ, as to their sure and only sanctuary : Luke xviii. 13, Philip. iii. 9, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit ;' that is, blessed are they that are truly apprehensive and sensible of their spiritual poverty, that see themselves fallen in the first Adam from all their primitive purity, excellency, and glory. There are five things we lost in our fall : 1, our holy image, and became vile ; 2, our sonship, and became slaves ; 3, our friendship, and became enemies ; 4, our communion, and became strangers ; 5, our glory, and became miserable. And that see an utter inability and insufficiency in themselves, and in all other creatures, to deliver them out of their fallen estate. But I am poor in spirit, therefore the kingdom of heaven belongs to me.

[10.] *Tenthly*, A godly man may argue thus, Such as are true mourners are blessed, and shall be comforted, Mat. v. 4 ; that is, such as mourn for sin with an exceeding great mourning ; that mourn for sin with a funeral sorrow, as the word *πενθοῦντες* signifies ; that mourn for sin as a man mourneth for the loss of his only son, Zech. xii. 10, or as Jacob mourned for Joseph, or as David mourned for Absalom, or as the people mourned for the loss of good Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25 ;¹ that mourn for secret sins as well as open, for sins against grace as well as for sins against the law ; that mourn for sin as the greatest evil in the world, that mourn for his own sins, Ezek. vii. 16 ; as David did, Ps. li. ; or as Ephraim did, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19 ; or as Peter did, Mat. xxvi. 75 ; or as Mary Magdalene did, Luke vii. 38 ; and that mourns for the sins of others as well as for his own, as David did, Ps. cxix. 136, 158 ; or as Jeremiah did, Jer. xiii. 17 ; or as Lot did, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8 ; or as they did in that Ezek. ix. 4 ; that mourns under the sense of his spiritual wants ; that mourns under the sense of his spiritual losses, as loss of communion with God, loss of the favour of God, loss of the presence of

¹ *Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες*, *beati lugentes*, blessed are they that mourn. The way to paradise is through the valley of tears. Some report of Mary Magdalene, that she spent thirty years in Galba, weeping for her sins.

God, loss of the exercise of grace, loss of the joys of the Spirit, loss of inward peace, &c. ; or that mourn not only for their own afflictions and miseries, but also for the afflictions and miseries of Joseph, as Nehemiah did, Neh. i. 2-4 ; or as Jeremiah did, Jer. ix. 1, 2 ; or as Christ did when he wept over Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41, 42 ; or that mourns because he cannot mourn for these things, or that mourns because he can mourn no more, or that mourns because God has so little honour in his heart, in his house, in his life, in the world, in the churches. But I am a true mourner, therefore I am blessed, and shall be comforted.

[11.] *Eleventhly*, A godly man may argue thus: They which truly 'hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed, and shall be filled,' Mat. v. 6 ; or they that are hungering and thirsting, as the Greek runs, being the participle of the present tense, intimating, that wherever this is the present disposition of men's souls, they are blessed.¹ He that sees an absolute necessity of the righteousness of Christ to justify him, and to enable him to stand boldly before the throne of God ; he that sees his own righteousness to be but as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 4 ; to be but as dross and dung, Philip. iii. 7, 8 ; he that sees the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his riches and righteousness, clearly and freely offered to poor sinners in the everlasting gospel ; he that in the gospel-glass sees Christ to be made sin for them, that knew no sin, that they may be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21 ; he that in the same glass sees Christ to be made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, to all those that are sincerely willing to make a venture of their immortal souls and eternal estates, upon him and his righteousness ; and he that sees the righteousness of Christ to be a most perfect, pure, complete, spotless, matchless, infinite righteousness ; and under these apprehensions and persuasions is carried out in earnest and unsatisfied hungerings and thirstings, to be made a partaker of this righteousness, and to be assured of this righteousness, and to put on this righteousness as a royal robe, Isa. lxi. 10, he is the blessed soul ; and he that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of Christ imparted, as well as after the righteousness of Christ imputed, after the righteousness of sanctification, as well as after the righteousness of justification, he is a blessed soul, and shall at last be filled.² The righteousness of sanctification, or inherent righteousness, lies in the Spirit's infusing into the soul those holy principles, divine qualities, or supernatural graces, that the apostle mentions in that Gal. v. 22, 23. These habits of grace, which are severally distinguished by the names of faith, love, hope, meekness, &c., are nothing else but the new nature or new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. He that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, out of a deep serious sense of his own unrighteousness ; he that

¹ They are not therefore blessed because they hunger and thirst, but because they shall be filled ; blessedness will be in fulness, not in hunger ; but hunger must go before filling, that we may not loathe the loaves.—*Augustine, De verbis Domini, Serm. v.*

² Some take hungering and thirsting here literally, comparing of it with Luke vi. 21. Others understand the words morally ; by hungering and thirsting they understand a moral hunger and thirst, which is, when men hunger and thirst for justice and judgment to be rightly executed. Ps. cxix. 5, 10, 20, 131 ; Judges xv. 18 ; 1 Chron. xi. 18 Ps. xlii. 1, 2.

hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, as earnestly as hungry men do for meat, or as thirsty men do for drink, or as the innocent person that is falsely charged or accused longs to be cleared and righted, or as Rachel did for children, or as David did after the water of the well of Bethlehem, or as the hunted hart doth after the water brooks; he that hungers and thirsts not after some righteousness only, but he that hungers and thirsts after all righteousness; he that hungers and thirsts not only after some grace, but all grace; not only after some holiness, but all holiness; he that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, out of love to righteousness; he that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, from a sight and sense of the loveliness and excellency that there is in righteousness, Philip. iii. 10-15; he that hungers and thirsts after the highest degrees and measures of righteousness and holiness, Ps. lxxiii. 1, 8; he that primarily, chiefly, hungers and thirsts after righteousness and holiness, Jer. xv. 16; he that industriously hungers and thirsts after righteousness and holiness; he that ordinarily, habitually, constantly, hungers and thirsts after righteousness and holiness: Ps. cxix. 20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' By judgments we are to understand the statutes and commandments of God. Mark that word, 'at all times.' Bad men have their good moods, as good men have their bad moods. A bad man may, under gripes of conscience, a smarting rod, the approaches of death, or the fears of hell, or when he is sermon-sick, cry out to the Lord for grace, for righteousness, for holiness; but he is the only blessed man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness at all times, and that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, according to the other fore-mentioned short hints. He is certainly a blessed man, heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that hungers and thirsts in a right manner after the righteousness of justification, and after the righteousness of sanctification. But I do truly hunger and thirst after righteousness; therefore I am blessed, and shall be filled, &c.

[12.] *Twelfthly*, A godly man may argue thus: Such as are truly and graciously 'merciful, are blessed, and shall obtain mercy,' Mat. v. 7. Mercy is a commiserating of another man's misery in our hearts, or a sorrow for another man's distress, or a heart-grieving for another man's grief, arising out of an unfeigned love unto the party afflicted.¹ Or more plainly thus: mercy is a pitying of another man's misery, with a desire and endeavour to help him to the uttermost of our ability. The Hebrew for godly, חסיד, *chasid*, signifies gracious, merciful. The more godly any man is, the more merciful that man will be. 'Blessed are the merciful,' that is, blessed are they that shew mercy to others, out of a deep sense of the mercy of God to them in Christ. Blessed are such who shew mercy out of love to mercy, out of a delight in mercy; blessed are such as shew mercy out of love and obedience to the God of mercy; blessed are such as shew mercy to men in misery, upon the account of the image of God, the glory of God that is stamped upon them; blessed are such as extend their piety and mercy, not only to men's bodies, but also to their precious and immortal souls. Soul-mercy is the chief of mercies. The soul is the most precious jewel in

¹ Micah vi. 8; Luke vi. 36.—Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*, ix. 13.

all the world ; it is a vessel of honour, it is a spark of glory, it is a bud of eternity, it is the price of blood, it is beautified with the image of God, it is adorned with the grace of God, and it is clothed with the righteousness of God. Such are blessed as shew mercy to others, from gracious motives and considerations, viz., it is free mercy that every day keeps hell and my soul asunder ; it is mercy that daily pardons my sins ; it is mercy that supplies all my inward and outward wants ; it is mercy that preserves, and feeds, and clothes my outward man ; and it is mercy that renews, strengthens, and prospers my inward man ; it is mercy that has kept me many times from committing such and such sins ; it is mercy that has kept me many a time from falling before such and such temptations ; it is mercy that has many a time preserved me from being swallowed up by such and such inward and outward afflictions. Such as shew mercy out of a design to exalt and glorify the God of mercy ; such who shew most mercy to them to whom God shews most mercy : these are blessed, and shall obtain mercy. Now mark, to such who are thus graciously, thus spiritually, thus divinely merciful, do these precious promises belong : Ps. xli. 1, 'Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy.' Prov. xxii. 9, 'He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed ; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.' Prov. xiv. 21, 'He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth : but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.' Prov. xi. 25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat ; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.' That 2 Cor. ix. 8 is very remarkable : 'And God is able to make all grace abound towards you ; that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' Behold, how words are here heaped up to make grace, and all grace, to abound ; and who is it to ? Unto 'the liberal man, the merciful man : Job xxix. 13, 'The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me : and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.' Luke vi. 38, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.' Behold and wonder at the height of these expressions that you have in this text. We account it good measure when it is heaped up ; but when it is heaped up and pressed down, that is more ; but when it is heaped up and pressed down, and then heaped up and running over again, this is as much as possible can be made, this is as much as heart can wish. O sirs ! those that are of merciful spirits, they shall have mercy heaped up, pressed down, and running over. Certainly that man must needs be in a happy and blessed condition, that can be in no condition wherein he shall not have mercy, yea, mercy heaped up and running over, to supply all his necessities : Mat. xxv. 35, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.' Come, ye blessed, that is their estate ; receive the kingdom, that is the issue and reward ; and why so ? 'I was hungry, and you gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink,' &c. But I am truly and graciously merciful ; therefore I am blessed, and shall obtain mercy, &c. But,

[13.] *Thirteenthly*, A godly man may argue thus : They that are 'pure in heart are blessed, and shall see God,' that is, enjoy him, and live for ever with him, Mat. v. 8. But I am pure in heart ; therefore I am blessed,

and shall see God. By the pure in heart, here in the text, we may safely understand the sincere and single-hearted Christian, in opposition to the double-minded Christian, as you may easily perceive by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.¹ Mark, purity is twofold: First, simple and absolute; and in this sense no man is pure in this life, no not one. Secondly, respective and in part, and that is the purity here meant. A pure heart is a plain, simple heart, without fraud or guile, like Nathanael, in whom there was no guile; it is a heart that is evangelically blameless and sincere. But, secondly, purity is opposed to mixture; purity consists in the immixedness of anything inferior. That metal we account pure metal, which hath not any baser than itself mixed with it. If you mix gold with silver, the silver is not made impure by the mixture of gold; but if you mix lead or tin with it, it is made impure. Remember once for all, viz., that a pure heart is such a one as hath cast off and cast out the love and allowance of every known sin, and mingles not with it, though never so small; such a heart as hath renounced every known way of sin. Though there is corruption remaining in it, &c., yet it can solemnly and seriously appeal to God, that there is no known way of sin, but it hates, and abhors, and strives against, and will upon no terms allow of. This heart, in the language of the gospel, is a pure heart; yea, it is such a heart as dares venture upon the trial of God himself. Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,' or any way of pain, or of grief, or of provocation, as the Hebrew hath it, or any course of sin that is grievous to God or man. A gracious heart, a pure heart, can neither allow of any way of wickedness, nor wallow in any way of wickedness, nor make a trade of any way of wickedness, nor give up itself to any way of wickedness. Though sin may cleave to a pure heart, as dross doth to silver, yet a pure heart will not mix nor mingle with sin. 'And lead me in the way everlasting,' or in the way of eternity, or in the way of antiquity, as the Hebrew hath it; that is, that good old way that leads to peace and rest, to heaven and happiness, Jer. vi. 16. Evangelical purity of heart lies in this, that it will not admit any known sin to mingle with the frame and purpose of the heart. A pure heart, like a pure fountain, will still be a-working and a-casting out the mud and filth that is in it. Though sin may cleave to a regenerate man, as dross doth to the silver, yet it mingles not with the regenerate part, nor the regenerate part mingles not with it, no more than oil mingles with the water, or water mingles with the oil. Now you know, though the water and the oil touch one another, yet they do not mingle one with another; so though grace and sin, in a regenerate man, may as it were touch one another, yet they do not mingle one with another. Dear hearts! look, as we truly say, that gold is pure gold that is digged out of the mineral, though much dross may hang about it; and as we truly say, that such and such an air is pure air, though at times there be many fogs and mists within it; and as we truly say, that such and such springs are pure springs, though mud, and dirt, and filth may be lying at the bottom of those springs; and as we truly say, that face is a fair face, though it

¹ 1 Tim. i. 5; James i. 8; 1 Peter i. 22; Prov. xx. 6; Eccles. ii. 21; 1 John i. 8; John iii. 2; Luke i. 5, 6.

hath some freckles in it; so we may as truly say, that such and such a heart is a pure heart, though there may be much sinful dross and filth cleaving to it. The Jews report, that when Noah sent forth his sons to people the world, he delivered to every one of them some relics of old Adam. It may be fabulous for the history, but it is true in the morality; the relics of his sinful corruptions cleaves close to us all. Beloved! the best, the wisest, the holiest, and the most mortified Christians on earth, do carry about with them a body of sin and death, Rom. vii. 22, 23; they have in them a fountain of original corruption, and from this fountain sin will still be arising, bubbling and a-boiling up as the scum in a pot over the fire. But mark, as in wine, or honey, or water, though scum and filth may arise, yet the wine, the honey, the water, will be still a-purging and purifying itself, and a-working and casting it out; so though sin, though corruption, though spiritual filth may, and too often doth, arise in a gracious heart, yet there is a spring of grace, a spring of living water in him, there is a holy cleansing and purifying disposition in a regenerate person, that will still be a-working and casting it out. But now mark, in men of impure hearts and lives, the scum doth not only arise, but it seethes and boils in. Ezek. xxiv. 12, 'She wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her;' notwithstanding all the threatenings of God, and all the judgments of God upon her, yet her scum and filthiness boiled in. Though God boiled Jerusalem in the pot of his judgments, yet her scum and filth stuck to every side of her. Wicked men's scum and filth doth not only arise, but it also seethes and boils in, and mingles together with their spirits; but so doth not the scum and filth that rises in a gracious heart. A sheep may fall into the mire, but a swine delights to wallow in the mire.¹ But,

[14.] *Fourteenthly*, A godly man may argue thus: Such as sin hath not a dominion over, are not under the law, but under grace. Rom. vi. 14, 'But sin hath not a dominion over me, therefore I am not under the law, but under grace.' Sin may rebel in a saint, but it shall never reign in a saint. Look, as those beasts, in that Dan. vii. 12, had their dominion taken away, though their lives were spared and prolonged for a season and a time; so when Christ and grace enters into the soul, they take away the dominion of sin, though they do for a time spare the life of sin. To prevent mistakes, premise with me briefly these few things: *First*, that in every regenerate man there are two men, an old man and a new man; or if you please, flesh and spirit, Rom. vii. *Secondly*, The old man, the fleshly part, will incline the soul, and bias the soul, as well to sins against the gospel, as to sins against the law, and to great sins as well as small sins; witness Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, Asa's oppression, David's murder and adultery, Solomon's idolatry, and Peter's blasphemy. *Thirdly*, The old man, the fleshly part, is as much in the will as in any other part of the regenerate man; and therefore, when he falls into heinous sins, he may fall into them with consent, delight and willingness, so far as his will is unrenewed. Though a real Christian be changed in every part, 1 Thes. v. 23, yet it is but in part and imperfect. *Fourthly*, The old man, the fleshly part, is in a regenerate man's members,

¹ John iv. 14. All resistance of sin in a Scripture phrase is called conquest; for in the resistance of it, there is as much love shewed to God as in the conquest of it, though there be not so much power seen.

as well as in his will, and therefore they may be exercised and employed in and about those sins they have consented unto. *Fifthly*, High sinnings do waste and wound the conscience of a regenerate man, and lay him open to the sore rebukes of God, and call for great repentance, and fresh and frequent applications of the blood of Christ. These things being premised, a question may be propounded, viz. :

Quest. *What does the dominion of sin import, and wherein does it consist?* Now to this considerable question, I shall give these eight following answers :

[1.] First, *Sin is in dominion, when it hath the absolute and sovereign command of the soul, when it hath an uncontradicted power, when it hath such an authority in the soul to command it as a king doth his subjects, or as the centurion did his servants: Mat. viii. 9, 'For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.'* Now when sin has such a universal and easy authority and command over the whole man, body and soul, as that it can use them in the service of sin, when and where and how it pleaseth, then sin is in dominion. Where there is a peaceable, uncontrolled, willing, universal subjection of the whole man unto the commands of sin, there sin reigns, Eph. ii. 2, 3. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Sin is in dominion, when in a course, when ordinarily, there is a quiet, free, willing, and total yielding of subjection to the authority, law, and command of sin.* Mark, it is a full possession, a plenary delight, and a constant content in sin, that speaks out the reign and dominion of sin, Rom. vi. 13-16. Dominion of sin imports a complete and universal resignation of the whole will and man to the obedience of it. That man that is wholly addicted and devoted to the ways of sin, that man is under the reign of sin; that man whose whole heart is universally married to his lusts, that man is under the dominion of his lusts. When a man does as freely, cheerfully, universally, and readily obey his lusts, as a child does his father, or a wife her husband, or a servant his master, or a subject his prince, then sin is in dominion. When a man sins with greediness, when with Ahab he 'sells himself to work wickedness,' 1 Kings xxi. 25, when he commits 'wickedness with both hands,' Micah vii. 3, when he gives himself up or over 'to all uncleanness and filthiness,' Eph. ii. 3, when he freely and voluntarily resigns and surrenders up his body and soul to the obedience of sin, then sin reigns, then it keeps the throne. Where the dominion of sin is erected, there it sits in the heart, as a king in his throne, and gives forth its laws and commands to the soul and body, and those commands are listened and consented to, approved and delighted in, &c.¹ A subject cannot in a course more freely, willingly, universally, and cheerfully obey the commands of his prince, than a sinner doth in a course freely, willingly, universally, and cheerfully obey the commands of his lusts; and wherever this sad temper of spirit is, there is sin in dominion. But now mark, a regenerate man's will riseth against his

¹ A man may be subject, as a captive, in this or that particular tyranny of sin, who is not obedient as a servant to all the government of sin; for that takes in the whole will, and an adequate submission thereof to the peaceable and uncontrolled power of sin, Rom. vii. 15, 19, 23.

sin, even then when he is worsted by sin and led captive by sin. A tyrant is obeyed unwillingly; the wills of his subjects rise up against his commands, and if his power were not superior to their wills, they would never obey him. Sin is no king, but a tyrant in the souls of the saints, and therefore their wills, so far as they are renewed, cannot but rise against it.¹ O sirs! remember this for ever, that the molesting, vexing, and tempting power of sin, does not speak out its dominion; for sin may molest, and vex, and tempt as an enemy, where it doth not rule and reign as a king; as you see this day in many nations of the earth, there are many enemies that do molest, vex, and tempt the subjects of those nations, who yet are far enough off from having any rule or dominion over them; but then sin is in dominion, when it commands in the heart as a king in his throne, or as a lord in his house, or as a general in his army, freely, boldly, universally, cheerfully; and when the soul doth as freely, boldly, universally, and cheerfully subject itself to sin's commands. Where men commonly yield up their wills and affections to the commands of sin, there sin reigns; and this is the case of every unregenerate man; but where the will does commonly make a stout opposition to sin, there it reigns not; now this is the case of every regenerate man. That prince cannot truly be said to reign in that kingdom, where commonly he meets with stout opposition; so it is here. A sincere Christian makes it the great business and work of his life, above all other things in this world, to make all the opposition he can against his lusts, and is thoroughly resolved to die fighting against his sins, as Pietro Candiano, one of the Dukes of Venice, died fighting against the Nauritines, with the weapons in his hand. As Cæsar said in a battle he fought against one of Pompey's sons, 'At other times I fought for honour, but now I fight for my life;' so a sincere Christian fights against his sins, as for his life. Castello's opinion was vain, viz., that men were of three sorts, some unregenerate, some regenerating, and others regenerated, and that these last have no combat betwixt flesh and spirit, which is quite cross to Scripture, Rom. vii. 14-24, Gal. v. 17, &c., and contrary to the experience of all saints, in all the ages of the world,² &c. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *When a man is usually peremptory in his sinnings, in the face of all reprehensions and arguments that tend to dissuade him from sin, then sin is in dominion*, Prov. xxix. 1; Jer. v. 3, 4; and xlv. 15-17. When the constant bent of the heart is inflamed towards sin, and when the desires of the soul are insatiably carried after sin, and when the resolutions of the soul are strongly and habitually set upon sin, then sin is in the throne, and then it reigns as a king. When God hedges up the sinner's way with thorns, yet the sinner will break through all to his sin, Hosea ii. 6, 7; when life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, are set before the sinner, yet the sinner will be peremptory in his sinnings, though he lose his life, his soul, and all the

¹ The apostle, as Chrysostom and Theodoret observes, on Rom. vi. 12, doth not say, Let not sin tyrannize, for that is sin's own work, and not ours; but he says, Let it not reign in you; for when a king reigns, the subjects do, as it were, actively obey and embrace his command, whereas they are rather patients than agents in a tyranny.

² It is a harder thing to fight with a man's lusts, than to fight with the cross.—*Augustine* [Confessions.—G.].

glory of another world, then sin reigns, Deut. xxx. 15-19, and xi. 26-29.

But,

[4.] Fourthly, *When men ordinarily, habitually, commonly are very careful, studious, and laborious to make provision for sin, then sin reigns:* Rom. xiii. 14, 'Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;' or, as the Greek has it, 'Make no projects for the flesh,' or 'cater not for the flesh.' When a man's head and heart is full of projects how to gratify this lust, and how to satisfy that lust, and how to fulfil the other lust, then sin reigns, then it is in its throne: James iv. 3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' Both the law of God and nature requires me to make provision of raiment, food, and physic for my body, and for theirs that are under my charge; but it may cost me my life, my estate, yea, my very soul, to make provision for my lusts. Such as ask amiss shall be sure to ask and miss. He that would make God a bawd to his lusts, may ask long enough before God will answer. Of all affronts there is none to this of making God a servant to our lusts; and where this frame of spirit is, there sin is in dominion, Hosea ii. 8. He that abuses mercies to serve his lusts, fights against God with his own weapons, as David did against Goliath, and as Benhadad did against Ahab, with that very life that he had newly given him; such a soul, like the waters of Jordan, will at last certainly drop into the dead lake. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *When sin is commonly, habitually sweet, and the soul takes a daily pleasure and delight in it, then it reigns;* as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² When a man daily takes as joyful contentation and satisfaction in his lusts, and in walking after the ways of his own heart, as he does in his highest outward enjoyments, or in his nearest and dearest relations, then certainly sin is in dominion. Such men as can go constantly on in a way of wickedness, merely to delight and content the flesh, such men are certainly under the power and reign of sin. Many of the heathens, who knew what rational delights were, scorned sensual delights as inferior to them. These will one day rise in judgment against many of the professors in our days. I know there is no real pleasure or delight in sin. If intemperance could afford more pleasure than temperance, then Heliogabalus should have been more happy than Adam in paradise; yea, if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly sin, and most perfectly be tormented with their sins. 'Hark, scholar,' said the harlot to Apuleius, 'it is but a bitter sweet that you are so fond of.'³ When an asp stings a man, it doth at first tickle him, and make him laugh till the poison by little and little gets to his heart, and then it pains him more than before it delighted him. It is so with sin, it may tickle the soul at first, but it will pain it at last with a witness. 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, he found her in the morning to be the dead body of one that he had formerly been naught

¹ David, in an hour of temptation, once made provision for his lusts, 2 Sam. xi. 14, 15; but this was not his course, his trade, &c.

² Job xx. 12, 13; Prov. ii. 14; Amos vi. 13; Zeph. iii. 11; 2 Thes. ii. 12.

³ Plutarch.

with, which had been acted by the devil all night, and left dead again in the morning; so that the gallant's pleasure ended in no small terror. And thus it is doubtless with all sinful pleasures. What sin is there so sweet or profitable that is worth burning in hell for, or worth shutting out of heaven for? &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *When men commonly take part with sin, when they take up arms in the defence of sin, and in defiance of the commands of God, the motions of the Spirit, and the checks of conscience, then sin is in dominion.* He that readily, resolvedly, and habitually fights sin's battles is sin's servant, and without all peradventure under the reign and dominion of sin. Look, as we groundedly conclude, that such men are under the reign and dominion of that king, that they readily, resolvedly, and habitually take up arms to fight for; so when the inward faculties of the soul, and the outward members of the body, do readily resolve, and habitually take up arms to fight for sin, then and there sin is in dominion, as you may plainly see by consulting the scriptures in the margin;¹ but where the soul readily, resolvedly, and habitually strives against it, conflicts with it, and makes war against it, there it is not in dominion, there it reigns not, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² That man that can truly appeal to God, and say, Lord! thou that knowest all hearts and things, thou knowest that there is nothing under the whole heavens that I am so desirous and ambitious of as this, that my sins may be subdued, that my strongest lusts may be mortified, and that those very corruptions that my nature, constitution, and complexion is most inclined to, may be brought to an under;—that man that can appeal to God, and say, O Lord! whatever becomes of me, I will never be reconciled to any known sin; yea, Lord, though I should perish for ever, yet I am resolved to fight against my sins for ever; let God do what he will against me, I will do all I can against my sins, and to honour my God;—that man is not under the reign and dominion of sin. But,

[7] Seventhly, *When sin commonly rises by opposition, then it reigns.* Look, as grace, when it is in the throne, it rises by opposition: 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'I will yet be more vile;' Mark x. 47, 48, 'And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me';³ so when sin is in the throne, it rises higher and higher by opposition. As the more water you cast upon lime, the more fiercely it burns; so when sin is in its reign and dominion, it flames out the more by opposition. Witness the Jews' malice and envy against Christ, which, when it received but a little easy, gentle check by Pilate, they cried out so much the more, 'Crucify him, crucify him,' Mark xv. 12–14. A man that is under the reign and dominion of sin, is like the rainbow; the rainbow is never on that side of the world that the sun is, but wheresoever it appears, it is in opposition against the sun: if the sun be in the east, the rainbow is in the west, &c. Where sin has the throne, it will still rise higher and higher by opposition. Reprove a swearer for swearing, and he will swear so much the more; yea, many times he will swear that he did not swear, when indeed he did; and so it holds in all other vices

¹ Rom. vi. 19, 20; Eph. ii. 2, 3; Titus iii. 3.

² Rom. vii. 23, 24; Gal. v. 17 Rom. viii. 13.

³ Acts iv. 6–34, v. 40–42.

that the sinner is given up to. It is said of Catiline, that he was a compound and bundle of warring lusts and vices; the same may be said of all others, where sin is in dominion. But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, *If the Lord Jesus Christ hath not dominion over you, then sin has certainly dominion over you*, Rom. vi. 17, 18. Christ hath no dominion over that soul that sin hath dominion over, and sin hath no dominion over that soul that Christ hath dominion over. Christ and sin cannot have dominion over the same soul at one and the same time; Christ's dominion is destructive, and inconsistent with sin's dominion, &c.

Quest. But how shall I know whether the Lord Jesus Christ hath dominion over my soul or no? How shall I know whether the Lord Jesus Christ be my Lord or no? For if I can but groundedly conclude that Christ is my Lord, then I may very boldly, safely, and undoubtedly conclude, that sin is not my Lord; but if Christ be not my Lord, I may more than fear that sin is certainly my Lord.

Ans. Sol. Canst thou truly say, in the presence of the great and glorious God, that is the trier and searcher of all hearts, that thou hast given up thy heart and life to the rule, authority, and government of Jesus Christ; and that thou hast chosen him to be thy sovereign Lord and King, and art truly willing to submit to his dominion, as the only precious and righteous, holy and heavenly, sweet and pleasant, profitable and comfortable, safe and best dominion in all the world; and to resign up thy heart, thy will, thy affections, thy life, thy all, really to Christ, wholly to Christ, and only to Christ?¹ Canst thou truly say, O dear Lord Jesus! other lords, viz., the world, the flesh, and the devil, have had dominion too long over me; but now these lords I utterly renounce, I for ever renounce, and do give up myself to thee, as my only Lord, beseeching thee to rule and reign over me for ever and ever, Isa. xxvi. 13; O Lord, though sin rages, and Satan roars, and the world sometimes frowns, and sometimes fawns, yet I am resolved to own thee as my only Lord, and to serve thee as my only Lord, Joshua xxiv. 5; my greatest fear is of offending thee, and my chiefest care shall be to please thee, and my only joy shall be to be a praise, a name, and an honour to thee. O Lord, I can appeal to thee in the sincerity of my heart, that though I have many invincible weaknesses and infirmities that hang upon me, and though I am often worsted by my sins and overcome in an hour of temptation, yet thou that knowest all thoughts and hearts, thou dost know that I have given up my heart to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and do daily give it up to his rule and government; and it is the earnest desire of my soul, above all things in this world, that Jesus Christ may still set up his laws in my heart, and exercise his dominion over me. Now, doubtless there is not the weakest Christian in the world, but can venture himself upon such an appeal to God as this is; and without all peradventure, where such a frame and temper of spirit is, there the dominion of Jesus Christ is set up; and where the dominion of Christ is set up, there sin has no dominion; but where the dominion of Christ is not set up, there sin is in full dominion. Christ's dominion cannot consist with sin's dominion, nor sin's dominion cannot consist with Christ's domi-

¹ Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24, xxvi. 2; Jer. xi. 20, xvii. 10; Prov. xvii. 3; 1 Thes. ii. 4.

nion, Mat. vi. 24. Now by these eight things, if men are not resolved beforehand to put a cheat upon their own souls, they may know whether their sins have dominion over them or no, and so accordingly conclude for or against themselves. But,

[15.] *Fifteenthly*, and lastly, A godly man may argue thus: There is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1; but I walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; therefore there is no condemnation to me.¹ Walking after the flesh notes a course of sin, and walking after the Spirit notes a course of godliness. Now, to such as keep off from a course of sin, and that keep on in a course of godliness, there is no condemnation, there is not one condemnation; for God the Father won't condemn such a person, nor Jesus Christ won't condemn such a person, nor the Holy Spirit won't condemn such a person, nor the word of grace won't condemn such a person, nor no commandment or threatenings will condemn such a person, no, nor such a man's own heart nor conscience, if it be rightly informed, won't condemn him; and therefore well may the Holy Ghost say to such a one, There is no condemnation to such a one; there is not one condemnation, &c.

Now thus you see, 'by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things,' and by a rational arguing from Scripture, a man may attain unto a comfortable certainty of his gracious state, and safely and groundedly conclude his interest in Christ. Now this assurance of God's favour, 'by the witnessing of our own spirits,' which assurance is deduced by way of argument syllogistically, is more easily attained than many—may I not say than most?—Christians imagine; for let a gracious man but clear himself of heart-condemning sins, and rationally argue as before has been hinted, and he will speedily reach to some comfortable, supporting, soul-satisfying and soul-quieting assurance, there being an infallible connection between the fore-mentioned graces and future glory, 1 John iii. 20, 21. These fifteen arguments may well be looked upon as fifteen sure and infallible evidences of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's estate.

Oh that you would often, every day, think on this, viz. that the undoubted verity of God's promises proveth an inseparable connection between true faith and eternal glory: John iii. 14–16, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John v. 24, 'Verily, verily'—these serious asseverations or protestations amount almost to an oath—'I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life.' John iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' He hath it in the promise, he hath it in the first-fruits, Rom. viii. 23; he hath it in the earnest, Eph. i. 13, 14; and he hath it in Christ his head, Eph. ii. 6. Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.' 1 Peter ii. 6, 'Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone,

¹ Walking, in Scripture, signifies to hold on a course of life, Gen. v. 22, and xvii. 1.

elect, precious : and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.' John vi. 40, 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.' Ver. 47, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.' John xi. 25, 'Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Ver. 26, 'And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.' John xx. 31, 'But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.' Look, as certainly as the unbeliever shall be cast into outer darkness, so certainly shall the believer be partaker of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light ; for certainly the promises are as true as the threatenings : Acts xvi. 30, 31, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' The apostle speaks not doubtingly, Perhaps thou shalt be saved ; nor they do not say, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and it may be thou mayest go to heaven ; but they speak boldly, confidently, peremptorily, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Joshua xxiii. 14, xxi. 45. O my soul ! what greater certainty and security can any man have than the infallible promise of that God that is truth itself, who will not, who cannot, deny his word ? But the same love and free grace that moved him to infuse grace into his children's souls, will move him also to keep the word that is gone out of his mouth, and to make good whatever he hath promised. Thus you evidently see that the promises prove an inseparable connection between grace and glory, between faith and everlasting life ; so that, let me but prove that I have a saving faith, and the scriptures last cited prove infallibly that I shall be saved.

Oh labour as for life, daily to give a firm and fixed assent to the truth of those blessed promises last cited, and hold it as an indisputable and inviolable principle, that whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ, or whosoever hath received Christ as his Lord and Saviour, shall be certainly saved.¹ This is the person that hath the word, the promise, the covenant, the oath of that God that cannot possibly lie, or die, for the pardon of his sin, and for the salvation of his soul. Now, O my soul, what security couldst thou ask more of a deceitful man, than that which the great Jehovah, the faithful God, of his own accord, hath given to thee, viz., his word and his oath ? Now not to believe God upon his promise and oath, is to make him a liar, yea, the worst of liars ; yea, it is to do worse than the devils, for they 'believe and tremble.' Though the word of the Lord deserves the greatest credit that any mortals can give unto it, he being truth itself that hath said it, though it hath no oath nor no asseverations to be its surety, yet God, in his infinite condescending love to poor sinners, that he may sink the truth of what he saith deeper into the hearts and minds of his people, and leave the fairer and fuller print in our assents to the same, he sets on the word of promise with the weight of asseverations and oaths ; yea, and to all these he hath annexed his broad seal, the Lord's supper, and the privy seal of his Spirit. Oh unreasonable unbelief ! shall not the oath of God silence all

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15 ; 1 John i. 9 ; Heb. vi. 17, 18 ; Ezek. xxxii. 11, xviii. 32 ; 1 John v. 10-14 ; James ii. 19.

disputes? A man would never desire of any honest man, so much as God hath condescended to, for the confirmation of our faith. Witness his promises, his covenant, his oath, and his seals; and therefore let us give glory to him by believing, and quietly rest upon his faithfulness.

O sirs! that soul that dares not take his sanctification as an evidence, yea, as a choice and sure evidence of his interest in Christ, and of the Lord's precious love to him, according to the promises of his favour and grace, several of which hath been but now under consideration, that soul ought to acknowledge it as his sin, yea, as his great sin, for which he deserves to be smartly rebuked, as making God a loud liar. O my friends! it is a spiritual peevishness and sinful crossness that keeps many good men and women long in a sad, dark, doubting, perplexed, and disconsolate condition; and certainly it is no small sin to set light by any work of the bless'd Spirit, and the joy, comfort, and peace that we might have by it. Ah, how many are there that fear the Lord, who quench, grieve, vex, and provoke the Holy Spirit, by denying his work, and by quarrelling against themselves, and the blessed work of the Spirit in them! Certainly it is the duty of every Christian to hear as well what can be said for him, as what can be said against him. Many poor, weak, and yet sincere Christians, are often apt to be too sour, rigid and bitter against their own souls; they love to practise a merciless severity against themselves; they do not indifferently, impartially consider how the case stands between God and their own souls.¹ It is in this case, as Solomon speaks in another: 'There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches,' Prov. xiii. 7. That is, there be those in the world that pretend they are rich, and make a show before men as if they were men of great estates, whereas indeed they are exceeding poor and needy.²

There are not a few that stretch their wing beyond their nest; that bear a port beyond their estates; that trick up themselves with other men's plumes, laying it on above measure in clothes, in high entertainments, in stately buildings, in great attendance, &c., when not worth one groat in all the world, but either they die in prison, or lay the key under the door,³ or compound for twelve pence in the pound, &c. And there are others again that are exceeding rich and wealthy, and yet feign themselves and look upon themselves to be very poor and needy. To apply this spiritually, it is the damning sin of the self-flattering hypocrite, to make himself rich, to make himself significant, to make his condition better than it is, Rev. iii. 17; and it is the vanity, the folly of some sincere Christians to make their condition worse than indeed it is, to make themselves more miserable and unhappy than indeed they are. Ah, Christians! it is sad with you, it is night with you, when you read over the evidences of God's love to your souls, as a man does a book which he intends to confute. Is it not sad when Christians shall study hard to find evasions to wheel off all those comforts, refreshings, cheerings, and supports, that are tendered to them, that are due to them, and

¹ Ps. lxxii. 2, lxxxviii; Job. xv. 11, xvi. 8, 9.

² Ever since man ceased to be what he should be, he striveth to seem to be what he is not. It is not the outward show that shews what things are.

³ 'Take flight.'—G.

that they may upon gospel grounds justly claim as their portion, as their inheritance? And oh that all such Christians would seriously and frequently lay to heart these eight things.

[1.] First, *That they highly dishonour the blessed God, and the work of his grace, by denying that which he hath done for them and wrought in them.*

[2.] Secondly, *They are spiritual murderers, they are self-murderers, they are soul-murderers*; for by this means they stab and wound their own precious souls and consciences through and through with many a deadly dart. Now is there any murder like to spiritual murder, to self-murder, to soul-murder? Surely no. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *They are thieves; for by this means they rob their own precious souls of that joy, peace, comfort, rest, content, assurance, and satisfaction which otherwise they might enjoy.* Now there is no theft to spiritual theft; and of all spiritual theft, there is none to that which reaches the precious and immortal soul. Mark all prevalent disputes about our personal integrity, they do hold off the application and tastes of comfort, though they do not disannul the title and right. Even the good man will walk uncomfortably so long as he concludes and strongly fears that his estate is sinful; for sensible comfort riseth or falleth, cometh on or goeth off, according to the strength of our judgment and present apprehensions. Observe, it is not what indeed our estate is, but what we judge of it, which breeds in us sensible comfort or discomfort. A false heart may even break with a timpany¹ of foolish joy upon an erring persuasion of his estate, and so may a sound sincere heart be very heavy and disconsolate upon an unsound misconstruction and judging of its true condition. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *They bear false witness against Christ, his Spirit, their own souls, and the work of grace that is wrought in them.* Oh how many dark, doubting, drooping Christians are there, who, if you would give them ten thousand worlds, yet would never be brought to bear false witness against their poorest neighbour, brother, or friend, and that out of conscience, because of that command, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,' &c., who yet make no conscience, no bones of it, frequently to bear witness against the Lord Jesus Christ, and his gracious works upon their own hearts! But,

[5.] Fifthly, *They join with Satan and his work and his suggestions, and with that strong party he has in them, against the Lord Jesus Christ and his work, and his weak party in them.* Sin is Satan's work, and grace is Christ's work. Now, how sad is it to see a Christian fall in with Satan's work in him, against the work of Christ that is in him.² Satan has a strong party in their souls, and Christ has but a weak party. Now, how unjust is it for them to help the strong against the weak, when they should upon many accounts be a-helping the weak against the strong, a-helping the Lord against the mighty, a-helping weak grace against strong and mighty corruptions. Ah, how skilful and careful are many weak Christians to make head against the work of Christ in their own souls, and to plead hard for Satan and his

¹ 'Swelling,' = up-rising.—G.

² See Mr Dod on the Commandments, pp. 310, 311; and pp. 321–324. [1606 and 1622, 4to, partly by Cleaver.—G.]

works in them, as if they had received a fee from him to plead against Christ and their own souls. O Christians! that you would be wise at last, and let Baal plead for Baal, let Satan plead for himself, but do you plead for Christ and that seed of God that is in you. Well, remember this, that as fire is often hid under the embers, so grace is often hid under many foul distempers; and as a little fire is fire, though it be even smothered under the embers, so a little grace is grace, though it be even smothered under much corruption, 1 John iii. 9.

Now, by these short hints you may easily perceive how many royal commands these poor Christians transgress who deny and belie the blessed work of the Lord in them. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *They rob the Spirit of all the honour and glory that is due unto him for that blessed work of grace and holiness that he has formed up in their hearts.* Oh what a grief and dishonour must it be to the Holy Spirit, that when he hath put forth a power in men's hearts equivalent to that by which the world was created, and by which Christ was raised from the dead, we find it overlooked, and not at all acknowledged, Rom. viii. 11. *Spiritus Sanctus est res delicata*, the Holy Spirit is a very tender thing. But do these poor doubting souls carry it tenderly to him? Surely no. Dear Christians, the standing law of heaven is, 'Quench not the Spirit,' 1 Thes. v. 19. Now, if the word Spirit is not here taken essentially for the three persons in Trinity, nor yet metonymically for the fruits of the Spirit, but hypostatically for the third person in Trinity, as some conceive, then you must remember that you may grieve and quench the Spirit (1.) not only by your enormities, Isa. lxiii. 10; (2.) not only by refusing the cordials and comforts that he brings to your doors, yea, that he puts to your mouths, Ps. lxxvii. 2; (3.) not only slighting and despising his gracious actings in others, Acts ii. 13; (4.) nor only by fathering those sins and vanities upon him that are only the brats and fruits of Satan and your own hearts; but also, (5.) in the fifth place, by misjudging and miscalling the precious grace that he has wrought in your souls, as by judging and calling your faith fancy, your sincerity hypocrisy, your wisdom folly, your light darkness, your zeal wild-fire, &c.¹ Now, O sirs! will you make conscience, yea, much conscience, of quenching the Spirit in the four first respects, and will you make no conscience of quenching the Spirit in this fifth and last respect? Oh, how can this be? Oh, why should this be? But,

[7.] Seventhly, *They keep grace at a very great under; for how can grace spring, and thrive, and flourish, and increase in the soul, when the soul is full of daily fears and doubts that the root of the matter is not in it,* Job xix. 28; *or that the root is still unsound; or that the work that is passed upon it is not a work in power,* 1 Thes. i. 5; *or that it is not a special and peculiar work, but some common work of the Spirit, which a man may have and go to hell?* But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, *They very much discourage, dishearten, and disanimate many poor, weak Christians,* who observing of them, of whom they have had very high and honourable thoughts for the grace of God that they have judged to be in them, to be still a-questioning of their integrity, and still a-doubting of the graciousness and goodness of

¹ Mark, you cannot despise the gifts or graces of any that are sincere, but by interpretation you judge the Spirit, and despise the Spirit, as it is said of the poor in Prov. xvii. 5.

their conditions, do begin to question their own estates and conditions; yea, and many times peremptorily to conclude that surely they have no grace, they have no interest in Christ, and that all this while they have but put a cheat upon their own souls.

Now, oh that all poor, weak, dark, doubting Christians would never leave praying over these eight things, and pondering upon these eight things, till they are perfectly cured of that spiritual malady that they have been long labouring under, and which has been very prejudicial to the peace and comfort of their own souls.

Dear hearts, a gracious soul may safely, boldly, constantly, and groundedly say that which the word of the Lord saith. Now, the word of the Lord saith, that 'the poor in spirit are blessed, and that they that mourn are blessed, and that they that hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed, and that they that are pure in heart are blessed,' Mat. v. 3, 4, 6, 8, and therefore he is blessed. And assuredly he that cannot embrace and seal to these as true and blessed evidences of a safe and happy condition, is greatly to lament and mourn over his unbelief, and earnestly to seek the Lord to persuade his heart and to satisfy and overpower his soul in this thing, as the poor man in the Gospel did: Mark ix. 24, 'And straightway the father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.'

O sirs! the condition of the promises last cited being fulfilled, the promises themselves must certainly and infallibly be fulfilled, else the great and blessed God should lie, be unrighteous, unfaithful, and deny himself;¹ which is as impossible as for God to die, or to send another Saviour, or to give his glory to graven images. Assuredly the too hard, the too harsh, the too severe, the too jealous thoughts and conjectures, and the too humble, if I may so speak, censures and surmises that many weak, doubting Christians have of themselves, or of the goodness or graciousness of their estates, by reason of the weakness of their graces, or depth of melancholy, or the present prevalency of some unmortified lusts, or the subtilty of Satan, shall never make void the faithfulness of God, or the promises of God, which in Christ Jesus are all yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. Doubtless God will never shut any poor, weak, doubting Christian out of heaven, because through bashfulness, or an excess of modesty, or the present darkness that is upon his understanding, or through the ungroundedness of some strong fears of an eternal miscarriage, he cannot entertain such good thoughts, such honest thoughts, such gracious thoughts of himself, or of the goodness or happiness of his condition, as he should entertain, and as he would entertain, if once he could but be too hard for the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Oh that you would remember this for ever, viz., that the Lord never makes any promises to support, comfort, cheer, and encourage his people against their sadness, darkness, doubts, and droopings, but they shall support, comfort, cheer, and encourage his poor people in that condition; for otherwise the Lord should provide means for an end, out of his infinite wisdom, love, and tender care and compassion towards his people, and yet they should never attain that end. But thus to imagine is no small folly; yea, it is little less than blasphemy. Well, sirs! this is to be for ever remembered, viz., that whatsoever gift or grace of God in

¹ Joshua xxi. 45, xxiii. 14, 15; 1 John v. 10-12.

man brings him within the compass of God's promises of eternal favours and mercies, that gift, that grace, must needs be an infallible sign or evidence of salvation. But such are the gifts and graces specified in the fifteen particulars but now cited, and therefore that soul that really finds those gifts and graces in himself, or any of them, shall certainly be saved. But,

The ninth maxim or consideration.

IX. Ninthly, Consider this, *That in divers men there are divers degrees of assurance, and in one and the same gracious soul there are different degrees of assurance at divers times, but there is in no man at any time in this life perfection of degrees; for our understanding and knowledge in this life is imperfect both as to the faculty and its acts.* 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly (Gr., in a riddle), but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even¹ as also I am known.' A clear, distinct, immediate, full, and perfect knowledge of God is desirable on earth, but we shall never attain to it till we come to heaven. This well is deep, and for the most part we want a bucket to draw withal. The best of men can better tell what God is not than what he is; the most acute and judicious in divine knowledge have and must acknowledge their ignorance. Witness that great apostle Paul, who learned his divinity among the angels, and had the Holy Ghost for his immediate tutor, yet he confesses that he knew but in part. Certainly there is no man under heaven that hath such a perfect, complete, and full assurance of his salvation, in an ordinary way, as that one degree cannot be added to the former. Neither is there any repugnancy in asserting an infallible assurance and denying a perfect assurance; for I infallibly know that there is a God, and that this God is holy, just, and true, and yet I have no perfect knowledge of a deity, nor of the holiness, justice, and truth of God, for in this life the most knowing man knows but in part. Dear friends! in the church of Christ there are believers of several growths: there are fathers, young men, children, and babes, 1 John i. 13, 14; 1 Peter ii. 2. And as in most families there are commonly more children and babes than grown men, so in the church of Christ there are commonly more weak, staggering, doubting Christians than there are strong ones, grown up to a full assurance. Some think that as soon as they be assured, they must needs be void of all fears, and filled with all joy in believing, but this is a real mistake; for glorious and ravishing joy is a separable accident from assurance; nor yet doth assurance exclude all doubts and fears, but only such doubts and fears as ariseth from infidelity and reigning hypocrisy. But,

The tenth maxim or consideration.

X. Tenthly, Consider, *We have no ground from Scripture to expect that God should, either by a voice from heaven, or by sending an angel from about his throne, or by any glorious apparitions or strong impressions, or by any extraordinary way of revelations, assure us that we do believe, or that our grace is true, or that our interest in God and Christ is certain, or that our pardon is sealed in heaven, or*

¹ As is not a note of equality, but likeness; so that the sense may be this: Look, as God knoweth me after a manner agreeable to his infinite excellency, so shall I know God according to my capacity, not obscurely, but perfectly, as it were face to face.

that we are in a justified state, and that we shall be at last undoubtedly saved. Oh no! But we are to use all those blessed helps and means that are appointed by God, and common to all believers, for the obtaining of a particular assurance that we are believers, and that our state is good, and that we have a special propriety in Christ and in all the fundamental good that comes by him. Mark, he that will receive no establishment, no comfort, no peace, no assurance, except it be administered by the hand of an angel, and witnessed to by some voice from heaven, &c., will certainly live and die without establishment, comfort, peace, or assurance. Gregory¹ tells us of a religious lady of the empress's bed-chamber, whose name was Gregoria, that, being much troubled about her salvation, did write unto him, that she 'should never cease importuning of him till he had sent her word that he had received a revelation from heaven that her sins were pardoned, and that she was saved.' To whom he returned this answer, 'That it was a hard and altogether a useless matter which she required of him; it was difficult for him to obtain, as being unworthy to have the secret counsels of God to be imparted to him, and it was as unprofitable for her to know: and that, first, because such a revelation might make her too secure; and secondly, because it was impossible for him to demonstrate and make known unto her or any other the truth and infallibility of the revelation which he had received to be from God, so that, should she afterwards call into question the truth of it, as well she might, her troubles and doubtings concerning her salvation would have been as great as they were before.' Oh therefore, let all believers that would have sure establishment, sound comfort, lasting peace, and true and sweet assurance of the love of God, and of their interest in Christ, &c., take heed of flying unto revelations, visions or voices from heaven, to assure them of their salvation, and of the love of God, and of their interest in Christ, &c. If you who are advantaged to consult history, please to do it, you will find upon record that where one hath been mistaken about searching his own heart, and trying his ways, and observing the frame and temper of his own spirit, many hundreds have been eternally deceived and deluded by voices, visions, apparitions, revelations, and strange impulses and strong impressions, especially among the Romanists, 2 Thes. ii. 9-12; and within these few years, have not many hundreds in this nation fallen under the same woful delusions, who are all for crying up a light within, and a Christ within? &c. And this you are seriously and conscientiously to observe in opposition to the papists, who boldly and stoutly affirm that assurance of a man's salvation can be had by no other means than by extraordinary revelation. Witness the council of Trent, who have long since said, 'That if any man say that he knoweth he shall certainly persevere, or infallibly be assured of his election, except he have this by special revelation, let him be Anathema.' Without all peradventure, God will one day cross and curse such a wicked council, that curseth, that anathematizeth his people for asserting and maintaining that that may certainly be obtained in this life, as I have sufficiently proved by ten arguments in my treatise called *Heaven on Earth*, from page 1 to page 26.² I think there is a

¹ Vide Gregorii Epistolae; à Lapide in Rom. viii. 16.

² See Vol. II. p. 300, seq.—G.

great truth in that Confession of Faith, that saith that 'infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without any extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto; and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure.'¹ But,

The eleventh maxim or consideration.

XI. Eleventhly, Consider *that probabilities of grace, of sincerity, of an interest in Christ, and of salvation, may be a very great stay, and a singular support, and a special cordial and comfort to abundance of precious Christians that want that sweet and blessed assurance that their souls do earnestly breathe and long after.* There are doubtless many thousands of 'the precious sons and daughters of Zion comparable to fine gold,' Lam. iv. 2, that have not a clear and full assurance of their interest in Christ, nor of the saving work of God upon their souls, who yet are able to plead many probabilities of grace, and of an interest in Christ. Now doubtless probabilities of grace and of an interest in Christ may serve to keep off fears and doubts, and darkness and sadness, and all rash and peremptory conclusions against a man's own soul, and his everlasting welfare, and may contribute very much to the keeping up of a great deal of peace, comfort, and quietness in his soul. The probable grounds that thou hast grace, and that God has begun to work powerfully and savingly upon thee, are mercies more worth than ten thousand worlds. Will you please seriously and frequently to dwell upon these ten particulars.

[1.] First, *That though many weak gracious souls do not enjoy communion with God in joy and delight, yet they do enjoy communion with God in sorrow and tears,* Hos. xii. 4; Isa. xxxviii. 3; Ps. li. 17. A man may have communion with God in a heart-humbling, a heart-melting, and a heart-abasing way, when he hath not communion with God in a heart-reviving, a heart-cheering, and a heart-comforting way. It is a very great mistake among many weak, tender-spirited Christians, to think that they have no communion with God in duties, except they meet with God embracing and kissing, cheering and comforting up their souls. And oh that all Christians would remember this once for all, viz., that a Christian may have as real communion with God in a heart-humbling way, as he can have in a heart-comforting way, John xx. 11-19. A Christian may have as choice communion with God when his eyes are full of tears, as he can have when his heart is full of joy. When a godly man upon his dying bed was asked which were his most joyful days, either those before his conversion or those since his conversion, upon which he cried out, 'Oh give me my mourning days again, give me my mourning days again, for they were my joyfullest days.' Many times a poor Christian has never more joy in his heart than when his eyes are full of tears. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Though many poor, weak, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that they do love the Lord Jesus Christ, yet they dare*

¹ 1 John v. 13; Isa. l. 10; Mark ix. 24; 1 Cor. ii. 12; 1 John iv. 13, 14; Heb. vi. 11 12; Eph. iii. 17-19; 2 Peter i. 10.

say that they would love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts, and with all their souls, and they dare say, that if it were in their power, they would even shed tears of blood because they cannot love Christ both as they would and as they should.¹ Blessed Bradford would sit and weep at dinner till the tears fell on his trencher, because he could love God no more. So the poor, doubting, trembling Christian mourns and laments because he can love Christ no more. 'A man may love gold, and yet not have it, but no man loveth God but he is sure to have God,' saith Augustine. A good man once cried out, 'I had rather have one Christ, than a thousand worlds.'

[3.] Thirdly, *Though many poor, weak, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that they have grace, yet they dare say that they prize the least dram of grace above all the gold and silver of the Indies.* Were all the world a lump of gold, and in their hands to dispose of it, they would give it for grace, yea, for a little grace. Now certainly no man can thus highly prize grace but he that has grace. No man sees the worth and lustre of grace, no man sees a beauty and excellency in grace, nor no man can value grace above the gold of Ophir, but he whose heart has been changed, and whose eyes has been opened by the spirit of grace.² But,

[4.] Fourthly, *Though many poor, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that their condition is good, that their condition is safe and happy, yet they dare say that they would not for ten thousand worlds change their conditions with the vain and debauched men of the world, who delight in sin, who wallow in sin, who make a sport of sin, and who live under the reign and dominion of sin.* They had rather, with Lazarus, be full of sores and full of wants, and live and die in rags, and after all be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, than with Dives, every day to fare sumptuously, and be clothed gloriously, and perish eternally, Luke xvi. Though they are poor, and wicked men rich; though they are debased, and wicked men exalted; though they are empty, and wicked men full; though they are low, and wicked men high; though they enjoy nothing, and wicked men enjoy everything; yet they would not for as many worlds as there be men in the world change conditions with them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that they do not sin, because there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not: Eccles. vii. 20, 'And because no man can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin;' Prov. xx. 9, 'And because in many things we offend all;' James iii. 2, 'And because if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' 1 John i. 8, chap. iii. 6, 8, 9, 10; yet they dare say that they would not willingly, wilfully, wickedly, resolutely, maliciously, and habitually sin against the Lord to gain the whole world.* Though they dare not say they do not sin, yet they dare say, if they might have their choice, they would never dishonour God more, nor crucify the Lord of glory more, nor grieve the Spirit of grace more, nor wound conscience

¹ It was a famous saying of Austin's, he loves not Christ at all that loves not Christ above all. [Confessions, and *De Civitate Dei*, often.—G.]

² Cardan saith, that every precious stone hath an egregious virtue in it. The same we may say of every saving grace.

more, nor cloud the face of God more, nor darken their evidences for heaven more, nor interrupt their communion with God more, &c. But,

[6.] *Sixthly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that God is their God, or that Christ is their Redeemer, or that the Spirit is their Comforter; yet they dare say, that if God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace and glory, and holiness and happiness, were offered to them on the one hand, and all the honours, pleasures, profits, delights, and carnal contents of the world were offered them on the other hand, they had ten thousand times rather, they had infinitely rather, choose God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace and holiness, and everlasting happiness, than the contrary:* Cant. v. 10; Deut. xxvi. 17; Ps. lxxiii. 25; Philip. iii. 6-8. Look, as Rachel cried out, 'Give me children, or I die,' Gen. xxx. 1; so these poor hearts are still crying out, 'O Lord, give me thyself, or I die; give me thy Christ, or I die; give me thy Spirit and grace, or I die; give me pardon of sin, or I die; lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, or I die; bring me under the bond of the covenant, or I die. O Lord, let all these things be done, or I am undone, and that for ever; Lord, let the men of this world take the world, and divide it among themselves; let me but enjoy thyself, thy Christ, thy love, and I shall say, 'My lot is fallen to me in a pleasant place, and verily I have a goodly heritage,' Ps. xvi. 5, 6. But,

[7.] *Seventhly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that they have grace in their own hearts, yet they dare say that they dearly love, and highly honour, and greatly prize the graces of the Spirit which they see sparkling and shining in the hearts and lives and lips of other saints.*¹ And they dare say that there are no men in all the world that are so precious, so lovely, so worthy, and so honourable in their eyes, or so high in their esteems, as those who have the image of God, of Christ, of holiness, most clearly, fairly and fully stamped upon them. But,

[8.] *Eighthly, Though poor, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that they have such strength and power against their sins as they would have, or as they should have, or as many of the dear saints of God have, who often lead captivity captive; yet they dare say, that when the Lord is pleased, now and then, by his Spirit, power, word, grace, &c., to help them, though it be but a little, against their sins, to help them in any measure to subdue their sins, or to assist them to bring any one sin or another to an under, or to arm them against any temptations, occasions, or provocations to sin, there are no such times or seasons of joy, comfort, delight, refreshing, and content to their souls as these are:* Ps. lxxv. 3, Gal. v. 14. The language of their souls in such a day as this is, is this: Oh that it might be always thus with us! Oh that every day we might lead captivity captive! Oh that every day we might have our lusts at an under! Oh that every day we might triumph over the old man! Oh that every day one lust or another might fall before the power, the Spirit, the presence, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But,

[9.] *Ninthly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that they make so much advantage, so much earnings of the sermons they hear, or of the prayers they make, or of the*

¹ Acts xi. 23; Ps. xv. 4; Ps. xvi. 3; Lam. iv. 2; 1 Thes. i. 2, 3; Heb. xi. 38.

scriptures they read, or of the communion of saints that they enjoy, as others do; yet they dare say that they would not for all the world cast off praying, or hearing, or reading, or the communion of saints, and give up themselves to the ways of sin and Satan, and the world. Ps. iv. 3; lxvi. 19, 20; cxxxviii. 8; Lam. iii. 55-58. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, *Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that Christ is their Saviour, yet they dare say that they desire and endeavour to honour Christ as their Lord, though they cannot see Christ bestowing himself on them as their Redeemer, John xx. 28, yet they are willing to make a resignation of themselves up to him as their king; they are willing to resign up their hearts and lives to the government of Jesus Christ.* Though they cannot find comfort, yet they will oppose sin; though they cannot comprehend Christ, yet they will not willingly offend Christ; though they cannot see their own propriety in Christ, yet they desire nothing more than that Christ may claim a propriety in them; though they cannot see Christ as a friend, yet they can look upon sin as an enemy; though they cannot close with the promises, yet they will close with the precepts; though they cannot close with the privileges of a Christian, yet they will close with the services of a Christian; though they cannot share in the comforts of a Christian, yet they will side with the duties of a Christian; though they cannot clear up their interest in Christ, yet they are willing to yield subjection to Christ; though they want strength to throw themselves into the arms of Christ to save them, yet they will cast themselves at the feet of Christ to serve him; though they want the light of comfort and consolation, yet they will walk in the light of commands and directions, Isa. l. 10.

All men will grant that these ten things are strong probabilities of grace; but give me leave to say that they are, without all controversy, most sure, sound, solid, and infallible evidences of true grace, and of an interest in Christ and salvation; and therefore all those poor doubting, staggering, and trembling Christians that find all these, or any of these ten things in their own souls, they ought for ever to bless the Lord, and speak well of his name upon these accounts. And therefore, O my soul! be thou much in adoring and admiring of free and infinite grace, that hath wrought all these things in thee and for thee.

But now, dear hearts, that this eleventh particular concerning probabilities of grace may the better stick upon you, and be the more seriously minded and weighed by you, I beseech you often to ponder upon these six following things:

[1.] *First, That you have deserved hell, and therefore for you to have but a probability of going to heaven, is infinite grace and mercy.* You have deserved to be shut up in chains of darkness with devils and damned spirits to all eternity, Jude 6, and therefore for you to have a probability of enjoying for ever the presence of God, Christ, the glorious angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven,' Heb. xii. 22-24, is a mercy more worth than ten thousand worlds. You have deserved to dwell with a 'devouring fire,' Isa. xxxiii. 14, and to lie for ever under those flames and torments that are easeless, endless, and remediless; and therefore for you to have a probability of satiating and delighting your souls in that fulness of joy, and in those 'everlasting

pleasures that be at God's right hand,' Ps. xvi. 11, is grace, yea, glorious grace upon the throne, &c. But,

[2.] *Secondly*, Consider that if you cast up a true and faithful account, you will certainly find that the comfort, the peace, the joy, the quiet, the rest, the satisfaction, the content that the generality of saints do enjoy, is more from probabilities of grace, than it is from any certainty or assurance that they have of grace being in their souls; it is more from probabilities of an interest in Christ, than from any assurance of an interest in Christ; it is more from probabilities of being saved, than it is from any special persuasions that they shall be saved; it is more from probabilities of going to heaven, than it is from any raised fixed confidence that they shall go to heaven; and therefore the people of God have very great cause to bow before the Lord, and to adore his grace, and for ever to speak well of his name, for the very probabilities of grace, and of an interest in Christ, and of being saved and glorified.

[3.] *Thirdly*, Consider that there have been very many under such dreadful horrors and terrors of conscience, and under such wrath and displeasure of an angry God, and that have lain trembling upon their dying beds, and that have been even ready to be swallowed up in the gulf of despair, who would have given all the world, had it been in their power, for the very probabilities of grace. Spira, being in a deep despair for renouncing of those doctrines of the gospel which he had once stoutly professed, said, 'That he would willingly suffer the most exquisite tortures of hell-fire for the space of ten thousand years, upon condition he might be well assured to be released afterward.'¹ He further added, in that hellish and horrible fit, that his dear wife and children, for whose sake principally he turned away from the gospel, to embrace this present world, appeared now to him as hangmen, hags, and torturers. A despairing soul is *Magor Missabib*, a terror to himself; his heart a hell of horror, his conscience an *Aceldama*, a field of black blood. So that as Augustine describes such a one flying from the field to the city, from the city to his house, from his house to his chamber, from his chamber to his bed, &c., so that he can rest nowhere, but is as if infernal devils in fearful shapes were still following of him, and still terrifying and tormenting his distressed and perplexed soul. Now, doubtless such poor souls would have given ten thousand worlds, had they so many in their hands to give, and that for the very probabilities of grace; and how many tempted, deserted, clouded, wounded, and benighted souls are there, who would think it a heaven on this side heaven, if they could but see probabilities of grace in their souls! Oh, therefore, let not the probabilities of grace be a small thing in your eyes, but bow the knee, and let the high praises of God be found in your mouths, even for probabilities of grace! But,

[4.] *Fourthly*, Consider that Satan is a very deadly enemy to the least probabilities of grace, and will do all he can to cloud, darken, and obscure probabilities of grace, since divine vengeance has cut him

¹ He died desperately, who died with this desperate saying in his mouth, *Spes et fortuna valet*, Farewell, life and hope together. Despair is Satan's masterpiece; it carries men headlong to hell, as the devils did the herd of swine into the deep. [Spira: cf. Sibbes, vol. iii., note 92, p. 523.—G.]

off from the least hopes, from the least probabilities of ever obtaining the least dram of grace or mercy.¹ Oh how does he storm and take on against every probability of grace and mercy that God vouchsafes to his people for their comfort and encouragement! Satan is an old experienced enemy, almost of six thousand years' standing, and he very well knows that probabilities of grace will certainly arm a Christian against many temptations, and sweetly support him under many afflictions, and exceedingly heighten and raise his resolutions. He knows that probabilities of grace will turn crosses into crowns, storms into calms, and winter nights into summer days. Satan knows that probabilities of grace will make every bitter sweet, and every sweet seven times more sweet; and therefore his spirit rises and swells against every probability of grace. Now the greater Satan's rage is against the probabilities of grace, the more thankful we should be for the probabilities [of] grace. It is good to move and act cross to him, who in all his actings loves to act cross to the glory of God and the good of our souls. But,

[5.] *Fifthly*, Consider that from probabilities in outward things, men commonly gather a great deal of comfort, support, quietness, and satisfaction. When the physician tells the patient that it is probable, yea, very probable that he will recover, live and do well, oh what a support, comfort, and refreshing is this to the languishing patient! When there is but a probability of a good market, how does the marketman smile; when there is but a probability of good trading, how does the tradesman cheer up; when there is but a probability of a good voyage, how does the merchants' and the mariners' spirits rise; when there is but a probability of a good harvest, how does the husbandman sing; when there is but some hopes, some probability of a pardon for a condemned man, how does his spirits revive, and how does his heart even leap and dance for joy; and so when a Christian has but some hopes, some probabilities of grace, of an interest in Christ, and of being saved, he may well cheer up and maintain his ground against all fears and doubts, objections and temptations. But,

[6.] *Sixthly* and lastly, Consider there is a great deal of grace and mercy in Scripture peradventures, as you may easily see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² Scripture peradventures ought to keep down despair, and raise our hopes and our hearts. To know that God is favourable, and that sin is pardonable, and that mercy is attainable, and that hell is avoidable, is no small comfort to a poor doubting trembling Christian. And as there is a great deal of grace and mercy in Scripture peradventures, so there is a great deal of grace and favour in Scripture may-bes, as you may see by comparing these scriptures in the margin together.³ Now, if Scripture peradventures and Scripture may-bes afford so much support, relief, and comfort to your souls, as indeed they do, then doubtless probabilities of grace, of an interest in Christ, of going to heaven, and of being saved, ought very much to support, relieve, cheer, and comfort the hearts of all those that have such probabilities. A gracious soul may say when he is lowest and weakest,

¹ Let not any think, saith Luther, the devil is now dead, no nor yet asleep; for as he that 'keepeth Israel,' so he that hateth Israel 'never slumbereth or sleepeth.'

² Exod. xxxii. 30; 1 Sam. ix. 6; 1 Kings xx. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 25.

³ 1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Sam. xvi. 12; 2 Kings xix. 4; Isa. xxxvii. 4; Ezek. xiv. 11; Amos v. 15; Zeph. ii. 3; Dan. iv. 27.

Well, though I dare not say that I have grace, yet I have a peradventure for it; and though I dare not, I cannot say I have an interest in Christ, yet if I have a may-be for it, I ought to bear up bravely and comfortably against all fears and doubts; yea, and to take the comfort and the sweet of all those blessed probabilities of grace, of an interest in Christ, and of being saved, and of all the peradventures and may-bes that are scattered up and down in the book of God, and with Hannah to walk up and down without a sad countenance, 1 Sam. i. 18.

The twelfth maxim or consideration.

XII. Twelfthly, *Consider that it is a Christian's greatest wisdom and highest concernment, to take the most commodious time for the casting up of his spiritual accounts.* If I would know what I am worth for another world, and what I have to shew for 'the inheritance of the saints in light,' then I am to take my heart when it is at best, and when I am most divinely prepared and fitted for this great service, then to enter upon it. It is no wisdom for a man to go to see his face in troubled waters, or to look for a pearl in a puddle. There are some particular times and seasons in which it is no way safe nor convenient for a Christian to enter upon the trial of his spiritual estate. 'As, first, When the body is greatly distempered; 2, When the soul is greatly tempted by Satan, or sadly deserted by God; 3, When the conscience is so deeply wounded by some great falls, as that the soul is filled with exceeding great fear, terror, and horror.¹ It is with many poor Christians in this case, as it hath been with some who have been so struck with the fear and horror of death before the judge, that though they were good scholars, and able to read anything, yet fear and horror hath so surprised them, that when their lives have been at stake, and the book hath been given them to read, they have not been able to read one line, one word.² So many of the precious servants of Christ, when they have been under wounds of conscience, and when they have been filled with fears, terrors, and horrors, they have not been able to look up to heaven, nor read their evidences, nor turn to the breasts of the promises, nor call to mind their former experiences, nor behold the least glimpse of heaven's glories, Ps. xl. 12, lxxvii., lxxxviii.; Job xxiii. 8, 9. No man in his wits, if he were to weigh gold, would weigh it in the midst of high winds, great storms, and horrible tempests, which would so hurry the balance up and down, this way and that, that it would be impossible for him to weigh his gold exactly. Now the trial of our spiritual estates is like the weighing of gold, for we are all to weigh ourselves by the balance of the sanctuary, Job. xxxi. 6; Dan. v. 27. God himself will one day weigh us by that balance, and if we hold weight when he comes to weigh us, we are safe and happy for ever. But when he comes to weigh us in the balance of the sanctuary, if we shall then be found too light, it had been good for us we had never been born. When Belshazzar saw the handwriting upon the wall, his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled, and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another, verses 5, 6; but what was all this to an everlasting separation from God, and to those endless,

¹ Times of desertion and temptation are rather times and seasons for mourning, watching, resting, and seeking of God, than for judging and determining of our conditions.

² Cf. Sibbes, vol. v. p. 408.—G.

ceaseless, and remediless torments that such must endure, who, when they are weighed in the balance, shall be found too light? 2 Thes. i. 7-10. A man that would weigh gold to a grain, must weigh it in a quiet still place; and so a man that would make an exact trial of his spiritual estate, he must take his soul when it is most serious, quiet, still, and composed; he must take his heart when it is in the best frame, and most disposed to solemn and weighty work. There are some times which are very unapt for a gracious person to sit as judge upon his spiritual estate, and to pass sentence upon his own soul.¹ The best Christians under heaven do meet with divers inward and outward changes; sometimes the light shines so clear that they can see things as they are, but at other times all is dark and cloudy, and tempestuous, and then they are apt to judge themselves by feeling and new representations, and not according to the truth. O sirs! remember this once for all, that times of inward or outward distresses are best for praying, and worst for judging. If a man will at such times pass sentence on himself or his estate as a judge, he will certainly judge unrighteous judgment, for then the soul is not itself, and is very apt and prone to take Satan's work for his own, and to side with him against itself, yea, and then usually it will see nothing, it will think of nothing, it will dwell upon nothing but what makes against itself. 4. When God exercises a man with some exceeding severe and unusual providences, when God steps out of his ordinary way of dispensations in his dealings with a man; when God sets a man up before all the world as a mark to shoot at, as he did Job, Job vii. 20, xvi. 12. Now a poor Christian is ready to doubt and conclude, Surely the Lord has no regard of me, he has no entire love for me, his heart is certainly not towards me, seeing all these sore trials make so much against me; but here the poor Christian is mistaken, as Jacob once was: Gen. xlii. 36, 'And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.' But Jacob was out, for all those things made for him, and for the preservation of the visible church of God in the world, Gen. xlv. 5-9. Certainly all the afflictions that befall the people of God, are but his love-tokens. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,' Rev. iii. 19, Heb. xii. 5, 6, and therefore those Christians are miserably mistaken that take them for testimonies of his wrath, and effects of his disfavour. O sirs! what can be more absurd, displeasing, and provoking, than for a Christian to make that an argument of God's hatred, that he intends for an instance of his love? and yet Christians are apt thus to act. It is observable the apostle reckons affliction amongst God's honoraries and tokens of respect, 'For to you it is given,' saith he, 'not only to believe, but also to suffer,' Philip. i. 29, 'which,' saith father Latimer, 'is the greatest promotion that God gives in this world.' Job, when he was himself, could not but admire at it, Job vii. 17, 18, that God should make such an account of man, and that he should so magnify him, and dignify him, as to think him worthy of a rod, a whipping; as to think

¹ The candle will never burn clear whilst there is a thief in it. Sin indulged in the conscience, is like Jonah in the ship, which causeth such a tempest, that the conscience is like a troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest, or it is like a mote in the eye, which causeth a perpetual trouble while it is there. ['Thief.' Cf. Sibbes, vol. iv., note j, p. 486.—G.]

him worth a melting and trying every morning, yea, every moment. It is certain that great prosperity and worldly glory are no sure tokens of God's love, Prov. i. 32, Ps. lxxiii. 5, Eccles. ix. 1, 2; and it is certain that great troubles and afflictions are no sure marks of God's hatred; and yet many poor Christians, when the waters of affliction rise high, and are ready to overflow them, oh how apt are they to conclude that God hates them, and will revenge himself upon them, and that they have nothing of God or Christ, or the Spirit, or grace in them! Or, 5, when the Spirit, the Comforter, stands afar off, Lam. i. 16, and withholds those special influences, without which, in a common ordinary way, a Christian cannot divinely, candidly, clearly and impartially transact with God in order to his own peace, comfort and settlement. Or, 6, when either a Christian's evidences are not at hand, or else they are so soiled, darkened, blotted and obscured, as that he is not able to read them. Or 7, when a Christian is extremely oppressed with melancholy. Melancholy is a dark and dusky humour, which disturbs both soul and body, and the cure of it belongs rather to the physician than to the divine. It is a most pestilent humour where it abounds; one calls it *balneum diaboli*, the devil's bath; it is a humour that unfits a man for all sorts of services, but especially those that concern his soul, his spiritual estate, his everlasting condition.¹ The melancholy person tries the physician, grieves the minister, wounds relations, and makes sport for the devil. There are five sorts of persons that the devil makes his ass to ride in triumph upon, viz., the ignorant person, the unbelieving person, the proud person, the hypocritical person, and the melancholy person. Melancholy is a disease that works strange passions, strange imaginations, and strange conclusions. It unmans a man, it makes a man call good evil, and evil good; sweet bitter, and bitter sweet; light darkness, and darkness light. The distemper of the body oftentimes causeth distemper of soul, for the soul followeth the temper of the body. A melancholy spirit is a dumb spirit; you can get nothing out of him; and a deaf spirit, you can get nothing into him.² Now of all the evil spirits we read of in the Gospel, the dumb and the deaf were the worst. Darkness, sadness, solitariness, heaviness, mourning, &c., are the only sweet, desirable, and delightful companions of melancholy persons. Melancholy makes every sweet bitter, and every bitter seven times more bitter. The melancholy person is marvellously prone to bid sleep farewell, and joy farewell, and meat farewell, and friends farewell, and ordinances farewell, and duties farewell, and promises farewell, and ministers farewell, and his calling farewell, and it is well if he be not even ready to bid God farewell too. Melancholy persons are like idols, that have eyes but see not, and tongues but speak not, and ears but hear not. Melancholy turns truths into fables, and fables into truths; it turns fancies

¹ Ps. lxxxviii; Job xxxiii. 10. It is an old saying, that *Melancholia est vehiculum dæmonum*. In the German proverb, Luther says it goes for current, *Caput melancholicum diaboli balneum*, the melancholy head is the devil's bathing place.

² Mat. ix. 28, 29. It is no more wonder to see a melancholy man doubt and question his spiritual condition, than it is to see a child cry when he is beaten, or to hear a sick man groan, or to hear a drowning man call out for a boat. You may silence a melancholy man, when you are not able to comfort him. Whilst Nebuchadnezzar was under the power of a deep melancholy, he could not tell whether he was a man or a beast. Melancholy is the mother of fears, doubts, disputes, and discomforts.

into realities, and realities into fancies. Melancholy is a fire that burns inwards and is hard to quench. Now if a Christian be under the power of natural or accidental melancholy, his work is not now to be a-trying his estate, or a-casting up of his accounts to see what he is worth for another world, but to use all such ways and means as God hath prepared in a natural way for the cure of melancholy ; for as the soul is not cured by natural causes, so the body is not cured by spiritual remedies. Now in the seven cases last mentioned, a Christian's work lies rather in mourning, self-judging, self-loathing, self-abhorring, and in repenting and reforming, and in fresh and frequent exercises of faith on the Lord Jesus, on his blood, on his promises, and on his free rich sovereign and glorious grace, that is displayed and offered in the gospel, and in a patient waiting upon the Lord in the use of all holy and heavenly helps for deliverance out of his present straits, trials and exercises, than in falling upon that great work of casting up his spiritual accounts, and of searching into the records of glory, to see whether his name be registered in the book of life or no. O sirs ! when poor Christians are bewildered, their proper work is to cast themselves upon the promises, to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay themselves upon their God, Isa. l. 10. Job, in a cloudy stormy day, resolves to trust in the Lord, though he should slay him, Job xiii. 15 ; and so must you. And oh that this rule were more seriously minded, and effectually observed by all doubting, trembling, and staggering Christians. But,

The thirteenth maxim or consideration.

XIII. Thirteenthly, Consider *you must never judge yourselves unsound, or hypocrites, by those things which the Scripture never makes a character of an unsound Christian, or of an hypocrite, or of hypocrisy.*¹ Mark, as you are to receive no comfort, but what is backed with clear scripture, nor no evidences for the goodness and happiness of your spiritual estate and condition, but such as are backed with clear scriptures ; so you are to receive, you are to admit of no arguments, nor pleas, nor reasonings, to prove yourself an hypocrite, or unsound, or that you have no grace, or that your spiritual estate and condition is not good, but such arguments, pleas, and reasonings, as are backed with clear scriptures. Now tell me, O thou weak, doubting, staggering, trembling Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves wandering thoughts in duty, or that proves narrowness or straitness of spirit in a duty, to be characters of an hypocrite, or of hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound ? Tell me, O thou sighing Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves the want of a good memory for the best things, or the want of those gifts or abilities that many Christians have, to pray, to speak, to discourse, to open Scripture, or to dispute for the concerns of Christ and his kingdom, to be characters of an hypocrite or of hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound ? Tell me, O thou distressed Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that will justify thee to conclude that thou art an hypocrite, because thou art without the present evidence of thy sincerity ? Are there

¹ The grand rule by which we must try and judge of our spiritual and eternal estates, is the word of God, Isa. viii. 20. In this scripture the prophet plainly shews whither we must go with our doubts, fears, scruples, questions, and with whom we must consult, and of whom we must take advice ; and that is ' the law and the testimony.'

not many of the precious sons and daughters of Zion, comparable to fine gold, Lam. iv. 2, who have true grace and sincerity in their hearts, though for the present it be hid from their eyes? Isa. 1. 10, 1 John v. 13. Joseph's brethren had their money in their sacks, though they did not see it, nor know it till they came to their inn and opened them, Gen. xlv. So many of the dear children of God have sincerity in their hearts, though for the present they do not see it nor know it. O sirs! it is Christ's work, not grace's, to evidence itself so clearly and fully to our eyes, as to enable us to own it. It is one thing for the Spirit of God to work grace in the soul, and another thing for the Spirit to shine upon his own work. Now, till the Spirit shines upon his own work, the soul is in the dark. The graces of the Spirit are best seen in the light of the Spirit, as we see the sun best by his own light, 1 Cor. ii. 12. It is good for doubting Christians when they are in the dark, to hold fast this conclusion, viz., that they may be upright, though at present they are not able to see their uprightness. Now, though this will not bring in a full tide of comfort into their souls, yet it will keep them from despair, and it will support and uphold their hearts, till the Spirit, who is a messenger of a thousand, shall shew them their uprightness. Tell me, O thou mourning Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves deadness, dulness, and indisposedness in duty, though it be sadly lamented, bewailed, and mourned over, and much striven against, yea, though it be the great grief and burden of the soul, to be characters of hypocrites, or of hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound? Tell me, O thou disquieted Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves the want of those enlargements, ravishments, joys, comforts, peace, or assurance that some others have, to be characters of hypocrites or hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound? And yet, upon the account of the above mentioned things on the one hand, and under a sensible want of the things last cited on the other hand, how exceeding apt and prone are many poor weak, doubting, trembling Christians, confidently and peremptorily to conclude themselves to be hypocrites, and to be unsound, and that they have not a dram of grace, nor no saving interest in Christ at all! O sirs! remember this once for all, that as you must never admit of any arguments, pleas, or reasonings, for the comfort, peace, and refreshment of your souls, but such as are attended with the evidence of clear Scripture, but such as are backed with pregnant scriptures, so you must never admit of any pleas, arguments, or reasonings, to trouble, vex, perplex, and disquiet the peace of your souls, but such as are attended with clear Scripture evidence, but such as are well backed with canonical Scripture.¹ Now if this choice rule were but wisely observed, and carefully, frequently, and conscientiously practised by many weak, doubting, trembling Christians, how would it set them at liberty from their fears, doubts, and misgivings of heart! how would it knock off all their chains, and wipe all tears from their eyes, and remove that sadness that

¹ In all soul cases, God expects we should consult his word, and cleave to his word, without warping or turning aside either to the right hand or to the left. John xii. 48: That book that shall try you at last, and that shall save you or damn you in the great day, is the only book by which you must make a judgment of your present and future estates. Clemens of Alexandria, speaking of the word, saith, It is the touchstone of truth and falsehood.

lies like a load upon their hearts, and how soon would it bring them into a condition of peace, comfort, quietness, and settlement. O sirs! every working and appearance of hypocrisy doth not presently prove the person in whom it is to be an hypocrite. A man may be hypocritical, either, 1, really; or, 2, in opinion and fancy. Many of the dear children of God are very apt and prone many times both to suspect and falsely charge the true estate of their souls. A child in a distemper may question the inheritance which is entailed on him, &c.; but, remember this, if thy heart be upright, all comfort is thy portion; for as our distrustful fears do not prejudice the reality of the estate of grace, so our frequent suspicions that we are hypocrites, does not cut us off from the title and right of promised comforts. Christians must carefully distinguish between the presence of hypocrisy and the predominancy of hypocrisy. In the most upright hearts that are in the world, there is more or less hypocrisy remaining in them. All the saints that ever were in the world have found more or less of this root of bitterness springing up in them, Rom. vii. 22, 23, Heb. xii. 15. It is not the presence of hypocrisy, but the reign of hypocrisy that damns the soul. That hypocrisy that is discerned, resisted, opposed, and mourned over, will never make a Christian miserable. Where the standing frame and general bent of a man's heart is upright, there the presence of hypocrisy cannot denominate a man an hypocrite. All men must stand and fall for ever according to the standing frame and general bent of their hearts. If the standing frame and general bent of their hearts be sincere, they are happy for ever; but if the standing frame and general bent of their hearts be hypocritical, they are miserable for ever. But,

The fourteenth maxim or consideration.

XIV. Fourteenthly, Consider *you must never judge yourselves unsound, or hypocrites, for such things, or from such considerations, or by such arguments or reasonings, which being admitted and granted to be true, will necessarily and unavoidably prove the whole generation of the faithful, the whole body of them that fear the Lord, to be unsound, and to be a pack of notorious hypocrites*, Ps. lxxiii. 15. He that shall judge himself unsound, or an hypocrite, because his thoughts and imaginations are that he is not sincere, or because he is thus and thus tempted, or because he is at particular times, and in particular cases, thus and thus worsted and captivated by sin, Isa. lv. 7-9, notwithstanding all the resistance that he is able to make against it, and notwithstanding his hatred of it, and his loathing and judging of himself for it, or because he is thus and thus afflicted in his family, or in his relations, or in his own person; or because he is thus and thus distracted in prayer, and straitened in prayer; or because he is sometimes troubled with sad, hard, hideous, and blasphemous thoughts of God; he does in so judging judge and condemn the whole generation of the righteous, for there are none of them but first or last, more or less, have been exercised even as he is, or as he has been exercised.¹ Who dare judge his neighbour, his brother, his friend, an hypocrite, because

¹ Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Heman, Paul, and those worthies in the 11th of the Hebrews, have been as much afflicted as thou hast been: now for thee to conclude that thou art not beloved, because thou hast been thus afflicted, this is to conclude against all those worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, Heb. xi. 38.

the hand of the Lord has been various ways lifted up against him, or because Satan has been let loose to play with his grand battery upon him? Now if thou darest not judge thy neighbour an hypocrite upon these accounts, how darest thou to judge thyself an hypocrite upon the very same accounts? When thy neighbour, thy brother, thy friend is thus and thus afflicted, tempted, distressed, &c., thou canst tell them that this has been the common lot of the people of God in all the ages of the world; thou canst tell them that no man knows love or hatred by these things, and that all things come alike to all; thou canst tell them that the choicest saints have been most afflicted, tempted, clouded, and distressed; thou canst tell them that all shall end well, that all shall issue well.¹ Remember the patience of Job, and consider the end that the Lord made with him. Thou canst tell them that thou hast got that good by afflictions, temptations, cloudings, distresses, that thou wouldst not exchange for ten thousand worlds. Now if Christians, when they are afflicted, tempted, clouded, distressed, would be but as kind, favourable, and merciful to themselves as they are to others in the same condition, how well would it be with them, how soon would they get out of the snare! O sirs! if this rule were but prudently considered, and seriously practised, how would the fears, doubts, and darkenesses of many poor weak, doubting, staggering, and trembling Christians vanish, and what peace, comfort, and settlement would they quickly find. O sirs! we must never stand to that judgment which we pass upon our spiritual estates, which is irrational, or without sufficient ground from Scripture, or which would be to condemn the generation of the just. We may safely appeal from that sentence of our judgment, which acts itself in times of passion or violent temptation, as he did from Alexander drunk to Alexander sober, &c. We must not unjustly vex our own hearts, and dash out our integrity, when the sentence that we pass upon ourselves is rather of imagination than of reason. When a man thinks, and thinks again and again that his heart is not sincere with God, though many, if not all, evidences of sincerity appear in him, and when he cannot produce any one inherently distinguishing ground of an hypocrite in himself, why this is but an imaginary judgment, and utterly unreasonable, for this is to condemn the innocent without cause. O sirs! that soul will never be settled in peace and comfort, which gives way to his own imaginations and passions, and which hath a conceit that every sinful thought, or violent temptation, or more durable conflict with an inward corruption, or the resurrection of some old sin, or frequent distractions in religious duties, or particular falls or slips into this or that sin, cannot stand with grace, cannot stand with uprightness, cannot stand with singleness and soundness of heart. Oh that you would for ever remember this, viz., that where a man hath either no ground at all, or those that he hath are false, he should never so settle on them, and yield and entertain them, as to question his estate for them, or for them to shut the door of comfort against his own soul. But,

The fifteenth maxim or consideration.

XV. Fifteenthly, Consider *in judging of yourselves and your spiritual estates and conditions, you must always have an eye to your natural tempers, complexions, constitutions, and inclinations, and the*

¹ Eccles. ix. 1-3; Isa. i. 25, xxvii. 9; Heb. xii. 10, 11; James v. 10, 11.

sins and temptations that these do lay you most open to, and remember that as in some tempers a little grace makes a very great show, so in other tempers a great deal of grace makes but a very little show. A little water in a long narrow-mouthed glass seems to be a great deal, when ten times, yea, twenty times as much in a large cistern is hardly discernible; the application is easy.¹ A little sugar will serve well enough for sweet wines, but much more is requisite to sweeten that wine that is sharp and harsh. A little grace will make a very glorious show in such men and women whose very natural tempers are sweet, soft, gentle, meek, affable, courteous; when a great deal of grace is hardly discernible in those men and women whose very natural tempers are cross, crooked, choleric, fierce, passionate, rough, and unhewn. As a good man said of an eminent light now in heaven, 'That he had grace enough for ten men, but scarce enough for himself,' his natural temper was so bad, which he would himself often lament and bewail, saying to his friends, 'That he had such a cross, crooked nature, that if God had not given him grace, none would have been able to have lived one day quietly with him.' A sincere Christian may have more roughness of nature, and more sturdiness of passions, than is in many a moral man. He that hath more Christianity may have less morality, as there is more perfection of animal and sensitive faculties in some brutes than in some men. It is an old experienced truth, that those sins are with the greatest pains, labour, travail, and difficulty subdued and mortified, which our natural tempers, complexions, and constitutions do most strongly incline and dispose us to, and were but those lusts subdued and brought under, it would be no difficult thing to bring all other things to an under. When Goliath was slain, the Philistines fled, 1 Sam. xvii. 51, 52; when a general in an army falls, the common soldiers are quickly routed. So it is here; get but the sins of your natural tempers, complexions, and constitutions under your feet, and you will quickly ride in a holy triumph over the rest. When justice is effectually done upon your constitution-sins, other sins will not be long lived; thrust but a dart through the heart of Absalom, and a complete conquest will follow, 2 Sam. xviii. 14, *seq.* Now before I close up this particular, let me advise you frequently to consider, that you can never make a true, a right, a serious judgment of yourselves, or of your spiritual estates and conditions, without a prudent eye upon your natural tempers, complexions, and constitutions, granting to yourselves such indulgence and grains of allowance upon the account of your natural tempers, as will stand with sincerity and the covenant of grace. But,

The sixteenth maxim or consideration.

XVI. Sixteenthly, Consider, *if you cannot, if you dare not say that you have grace, yet do not say that you have no grace, for the being of grace in the soul is one thing, and the seeing of grace in the soul is another thing.* Mark iv. 26-28: A man may have grace, and yet not know that he has grace; he may have a seed of God in him, and yet not see it. 1 John v. 13, He may believe, and yet not believe that he does believe; the child lives before it knows that it lives. If you cannot say that your graces are true, yet do not say they are counterfeit,

¹ A little gold ring upon an alabaster hand makes a more glorious show than a very great ring upon a leprous hand; the application is easy.

lest you bear false witness against the real work of the Spirit in you. There are none so apt to question the truth of their grace as those are that are truly gracious. Though Satan cannot hinder the Holy Spirit from working true grace in the soul, yet he will do all he can to fill the soul with fears and doubts and jealousies about the truth of that grace that the Holy Spirit has wrought in it, 1 John iv. 4; Ps. lxxvii. When did you ever know the devil to tempt an hypocrite to believe that his graces were not true, and that certainly he had not the root of the matter in him? If you cannot say that you have an interest in Christ, yet do not say that you have no interest in Christ; for a man may have an interest in Christ, and yet not see his interest in Christ, not know his interest in Christ. There are many precious Christians that walk in darkness, who yet have an interest in that Jesus that is all light, life, and love, Isa. l. 10. If you cannot say that your pardon is sealed in the court of your own conscience, yet do not say that it is not sealed in the court of heaven; for many a Christian has his pardon sealed in the court of heaven, before it is sealed in the court of his own conscience, Ps. li. A pardon sealed in the court of conscience, is that new name and white stone which God does not give to every one at first conversion, Rev. ii. 17. God will take his own time to seal up every Christian's pardon in his bosom. If you cannot say that your name is written in the book of life, yet do not say that it is not written in the book of life. The disciples' names were first written in heaven before Christ bid them rejoice because their names were written in heaven, Luke x. 20. A man may have his name written in heaven, and yet it may be a long while before God may tell him that his name is written in heaven. Ay, you cannot say that the precious promises are yours, yet do not say that they are children's bread, and such dainties that your soul shall never taste of. It is not every precious Christian, that has an interest in the promises, that can run and read his interest in the promises, Ps. lxxvii., lxxxviii.; 1 Pet. i. 4. If you cannot say that the heavenly inheritance is yours, yet do not say that it is not yours. A Christian may have a good title to the heavenly inheritance, and yet not be able to make good his title, to clear up his title; as a child in the arms or in the cradle may be heir to a crown, a kingdom, and yet he is not able to make good his title. If you cannot say that you have assurance, yet do not say that you shall never have assurance, for a man may want assurance one year, and have it the next; one month, and have it another; one week, and have it another; one day, and have it another; yea, one hour, and have it another, Luke xix. 1-10; Acts xvi. 29-35; Rom. xi. 33. If you cannot say that you shall certainly go to heaven, yet do not say that you shall undoubtedly go to hell; for who made you one of the privy-councillors of heaven? Who acquainted you with the secret decrees of God? &c. Now were this rule but thoroughly minded, and conscientiously practised, oh how well would it go with many tempted, troubled, bewildered, and clouded Christians! Oh how would Satan be disappointed, and poor souls quieted, composed, and refreshed. But,

The seventeenth maxim or consideration.

XVII. Seventeenthly, *Whenever you cast your eye upon your gracious evidences, it highly concerns you seriously to remember that you*

have to deal with God in a covenant of grace, and not in a covenant of works. Every breach of peace with God is not a breach of covenant with God. Though the wife hath many weaknesses and infirmities hanging upon her, and though she may often grieve, provoke, and displease her husband, yet as long as she remains faithful, and truly loving, and in the main obedient to him, though he may alter his carriage towards her, yet he will not withdraw his love from her, or deny his relation to her. No more will God towards his weak miscarrying ones, as you may evidently see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.¹ Doubtless there are many dear Christians whose troubles of conscience about their spiritual and eternal estates arise from their looking upon God and dealing with God in a covenant of works.² Are there not many precious Christians, who, when they fall before temptations, and are worsted by their corruptions, that are ready to question all, and throw up all as lost and peremptorily to conclude against their own souls, that all is naught, very naught, stark naught, and that they are hypocrites, and that God will never own such as they are, nor never accept of such as they are, nor never delight in such as they are, nor never have anything to do with such as they are; and all this because they do not aright understand the covenant of grace, and think that they have to deal with God in a covenant of works. Though many Christians do freely and readily acknowledge that there is a covenant of grace, yet upon the least stirring of any corruption, or the least conquest that is made upon them by the violence of any temptation, they are so full of fears, faintings, reasonings, diffidences, and despondencies, &c., and they carry it so weakly and unworthily towards the Lord, as if there were no covenant of grace at all, or as if they had wholly and only to deal with God in a covenant of works. Now what a high dishonour is this to the free, rich, infinite, sovereign, and glorious grace of God, which so sparkles and shines in the covenant of grace, and which tells us that our eternal estates shall never be judged by a covenant of works, and that the want of an absolute perfection shall never damn a believing soul, and that the obedience that God requires at our hands is not a legal but evangelical! Oh that all those dear Christians who are so apt to be dejected and overwhelmed upon the account of the prevalence of such and such corruptions, and because they fail in keeping covenant with God, and in walking in a covenant-relation with God; I say, oh that all these would frequently and seriously consider of these three things.

[1.] *First, That so long as a Christian doth not renounce his covenant with God, so long as he doth not wilfully and wickedly break the bond of the covenant, the substance of the covenant is not yet broken, though some articles of the covenant may be violated,* Ps. lxxxix. 30–35, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. While Christ lies at the bottom of the

¹ Jer. iii. 12, 14, 22; Hosea. xiv. 4; Isa. lxiii. 22–26; lvii 16–18.

² Everything which is a ground of grief or sorrow to the people of God, is not a sufficient ground of questioning their integrity, or the goodness and happiness of their spiritual estates and conditions. If, upon every slip, failing, and infirmity, a Christian should question all that ever was wrought in him, and done by God upon him, his life will certainly be made up of fears and doubts, and he will never attain to any settled peace, comfort, or assurance, or be able to live that life of joy, praise, and thankfulness that the gospel calls for.

covenant, it cannot be utterly broken. As among men there be some trespasses against some particular clauses in covenants, which, though they be violated, yet the whole covenant is not forfeited; it is so here. Every jar, every miscarriage doth not break the marriage covenant; no more doth every sin, every miscarriage break the covenant between God and the soul. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Seriously consider that many weak Christians are much mistaken about the terms and condition of the covenant of grace*; they think that the condition of the covenant is perfect and unerring obedience, whereas it is only sincere obedience. Mark, that man sincerely obeys and sincerely walks in covenant with God, who sincerely, who heartily, who ordinarily desires, labours, and endeavours to obey the law of God, the will of God, and to walk in covenant with God.¹ Mark, particular actions do not denominate any estate; it is the course of actions which doth denominate a man's walking in covenant with God, or his not walking in covenant with God. If his course of actions be sinful, he walks not in covenant with God; but if his course of actions be holy and gracious, he walks in covenant with God. Though the needle of the seaman's compass may jog this way and that way, yet the bent of the needle will still be northward; so though a Christian in covenant with God may have his particular sinful joggings this way or that way, yet the bent of his heart will still be to walk in covenant with God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider *that infirmities, aberrations of weakness, do not nullify or evacuate our covenant with God, nor hinder our walking in covenant with God*; for if they should, then no man could possibly keep covenant with God, or walk in covenant with God. Infirmities God passes by and pardons in course, and will never put them into the account, and therefore they cannot hinder our walking in covenant with God. Breaches made in the first covenant were irreparable, but breaches made in the covenant of grace are not so, because this covenant is established in Christ, who is still a-making up all breaches. Mark, there are five things which shew that the deviations of God's people are only infirmities and not enormities, weaknesses and not wickednesses; and the first is this, viz., that they do frequently and principally arise from the subtilty and sudden power of Satan's temptations, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. (2.) That the frame of their spirits is against the evil that they do, Rom. vii. 15, 16, 19, 23, 24. (3.) Their daily cries, tears, and complaints, speak it out to be an infirmity. They are in this particular like a lost sheep, or a lost child, or a lost friend, (4.) Though they do fall, yet they rise again; though they do step or wander out of the way, yet they do return into the right way again. (5.) When they do fall, there is a vast difference, a mighty difference between their falls, and the falls of wicked men that are not in covenant with God, and that [1.] first, in respect of willingness; [2.] in respect of choice; [3.] in respect of affection; [4.] in respect of course; [5.] in respect of quietness; [6.] in respect of continuance. Mark, when wicked men fall, when men out of covenant with God fall, then they fall willingly, they fall out of choice, they fall out of affection to fall, they fall in a course, they fall, and they are quiet under their falls; they fall,

¹ Isa. liv.; vii. 8-10; Jer. xxxi. 33-37.

and continue to fall, 'to-morrow shall be as to-day,' Isa. lv. 12. But persons in covenant with God, though they do fall, yet they do not fall, nor cannot fall, as they do that are out of covenant with God. For [1.] first, there is in all such persons an habitual purpose to keep covenant with God; [2.] an habitual desire to keep covenant with God; [3.] an habitual resolution to keep covenant with God; [4.] an habitual endeavour to keep covenant with God. Now, where it is thus, that man is certainly in covenant with God, and that man walks in covenant with God; he is under a covenant of grace; his sins are pardoned, and therefore they shall never be his ruin. Doubtless many precious Christians have charged and condemned themselves for those things that the great God will never charge them with, nor condemn them for, Isa. lxiii. 17. Blessed Bradford wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; but doubtless God will never bring in such a charge against him.¹ O sirs! the stirrings of sin, and the workings of sin, and the prevalency of sin for particular acts will stand with the covenant of grace, though not with the covenant of works. You may not by any means conclude that you are not in a covenant of grace, because such and such corruptions stir in you, or because such or such weaknesses now and then break forth and discover themselves, either in your lips or lives. Did Christians but study the covenant of grace more, and understand better than they do the difference between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works, how would their fears and doubts about their spiritual and eternal estates vanish, as the clouds before the sun when it shines in its greatest strength and glory! &c.

It was the saying of an eminent minister on his deathbed, that he had much peace and quietness, not so much from a greater measure of grace than other Christians had, or from any immediate witness of the Spirit, but because he had a more clear understanding of the covenant of grace than many others, having studied it and preached it so many years as he had done. Doubtless, had Christians a more clear and a more full understanding of the covenant of grace, they would live more holily, serviceably, humbly, fruitfully, comfortably, and sweetly than they do; and they would die more willingly, readily, and cheerfully than many (may I not say than most?) Christians use to do. But,

The eighteenth maxim or consideration.

XVIII. *Eighteenthly* and lastly, *That trouble, grief, and sorrow for sin, that drives a man from God, is sinful, and must one day be repented of and wept over.* All true trouble, grief and sorrow, drives to God, as is evident by the scriptures in the margin.² Suppose thou hast so and so sinned, yet it is a false inference that therefore thou shouldst be discouraged, and let thy hopes sink, and thy heart faint, as if there were no help, no hope, no comfort for thee in thy God.

Quest. But when is a man's trouble or sorrow for sin sinful?

Ans. [1.] When it keeps Christ and the soul asunder. [2.] When it keeps the soul and the promises asunder. [3.] When it unfits a man for the duties of his place and calling, wherein the providence of God has stated him. [4.] When it unfits a man for the duties of religion,

¹ See index, *sub nomine*, for other references to Bradford.—G.

² Hosea v. 14, 15, vi. 1-3; Jer. xxxi. 18-20; Ps. li.; Hosea xiv. 1, 2; Ps. xxv. 11.

either private or public. [5.] When it takes off the sweet and comfort of all outward comforts and enjoyments, and renders all our mercies like the white of an egg, that has no taste or savour in it. [6.] When it weakens, wastes, or destroys the outward man; all godly sorrow is a friend to the soul, and no enemy to the body.

And thus much for those divine maxims, considerations, and rules that are seriously to be minded and observed in order to the clearing up a man's interest in Christ, and his title to all the glory of another world. Certainly these eighteen maxims, considerations, or rules, if God shall please powerfully to set in with them, are of singular use for the clearing up of the saving work of God upon poor souls. And therefore it highly concerns Christians seriously to ponder upon them, as Mary did upon the sayings of the angel in her heart, Luke ii. 19. Now these things being premised, I shall come in the next chapter to lay down some infallible evidences of saying grace.

CHAPTER II.

Containing many choice, precious, and infallible evidences of true saving grace, upon which a Christian may safely and securely, comfortably and confidently, rest and adventure the weight of his precious and immortal soul, and by which he may certainly know that it shall go well with him for ever; and that he has a real saving interest in Christ, and shall be everlastingly happy, when he shall be here no more, &c.

I. *First*, There are some things in regard of sin, and a Christian's actings about it, that speaks out a gracious estate, and that discovers a saving principle of grace to be in the soul. I shall instance in these eleven particulars.

[1.] *First*, *A universal willingness to be rid of all sin, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace in a man's soul.*¹ The first saving work of the Spirit upon the soul is the dividing between sin and the soul; it is a making an utter breach betwixt sin and the soul; it is a dissolving of that old league that has been between the sinner and his sin. The first work of the Spirit is to make a man look upon sin as an enemy, and to deal with sin as an enemy, to hate it as an enemy, to loathe it as an enemy, to fear it as an enemy, and to arm against it as an enemy. When the Holy Spirit takes possession of a soul, from that day forward the soul looks upon sin with as evil and as envious an eye as Saul looked on David when the evil spirit was upon him. Oh, saith Saul, that I were but once well rid of this David; and oh, saith the gracious soul, that I were but once well rid of this proud heart, this hard heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this froward heart, this earthly heart of mine, &c. Look, as the daughters of Heth even made Rebekah weary of her life, Gen. xxvi. 35, so corruptions within makes the gracious soul even weary of his life. 'Many a day have I sought death with tears,' said blessed Cowper, 'not out of im-

¹ Isa. xxviii. 15, 18, xxx. 22; Hosea xiv. 8; Rom. vii. 22-24.

patience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it.' Look, as when Christ hath won the will, he hath won the man; so when sin hath lost the will, it hath lost the man. The will is the heart; 'My son, give me thy heart,' is, My son, give me thy will. The will is the fort-royal of the soul; it is that stronghold that stands out stoutest and longest against all the assaults of heaven. When the will is won, all is won, the castle is won, the heart is won; the man is won when the will is won.¹ A man's judgment and reason may say, I ought to turn from sin, and his conscience may say, I must turn from sin, or it will be bitterness in the end, and yet the work not done, nor the soul won; but when the heart says, the will says, I will turn from sin, then the work is done, and the man is won. Where reason saith these lusts ought to be subdued, and the conscience saith these lusts must be subdued, and the will saith these lusts shall be subdued,—Ps. lxxv. 3, 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away,'—there is a saving work upon the soul. When the will says to sin, as Ephraim said to his idols, 'Get you hence, what have I any more to do with you?' Hosea xiv. 8, then the work of God is begun in power upon the soul.

A universal willingness to be rid of all sin, speaks the heart to be sound and sincere with God. The enmity that grace works in the heart against sin is against the whole kind; it is against all sin, as well profitable and pleasurable sins as disparaging and disgracing sins; and as well against small sins as against great sins. True grace strikes at root and branch, at head and members, at father and son. A true Israelite would not have one Canaanite left in the holy land; he would have every Egyptian drowned in the red sea of Christ's blood: Ps. cxix. 104, 'I hate every false way': Ps. cxxxix. 24, 'Search me, O Lord! and see if there be *any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' Saving grace makes a man as willing to leave his lusts, as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a thief his bolts, or a beggar his rags. But now take a man that is in his natural condition, and he is as unwilling to part with his sins, as Abraham was to turn Hagar and Ishmael out of doors. Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that having a disease upon his body, the physician told him, That except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c., he was like to lose his eyes; his heart was so desperately set upon his lusts, that he answered, *Vale lumen amicum*, Farewell, sweet light then; he had rather lose his eyes than leave his sins. So they in Micah vi. 6, 7, do make very large offers for a dispensation to live in their sins; they offer calves of a year old; they offer thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil; yea, they offer their first born for their transgressions, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. Sinners' hearts are so glued to their lusts, that they will rather part with their nearest, dearest, and choicest enjoyments, than part with their sins; yea, when they are put hard to it, they will rather part with God, Christ, and all the glory of another world, than they will part with some base bosom lust. Witness that young man in the Gospel, who

¹ Restraining grace doth only suppress and abate the acts of sin, it doth never alter the disposition and will of a man as to sin. You may chain up a lion, but you cannot change the nature of a lion.

went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions, Mat. xix. 21, 22. Look, as a man leaves his wife and children, his country, estate, and trade, with tears in his eyes and sorrow in his heart; so does an unregenerate man leave his lusts, with tears in his eyes and sorrow in his heart. Very observable is the story of Phaltiel: David had married Michal; Saul injuriously gave her to another. When David came to the crown, and was able to speak a word of command, he sends for his wife Michal; her husband dares not but obey; he brings her on her journey, and then, not without great reluctance of spirit, takes his leave of her. But what, was Phaltiel weary of his wife that he now forsakes her? Oh no! he was forced to it, and though she was gone, yet he cast many a sad thought after her, and never leaves looking till he sees her as far as Bahurim, weeping and bemoaning her absence, 2 Sam. iii. 15, 16. And just thus it is with carnal and unregenerate men, who, though for fear, or some other reasons, they shake hands with their sins, yet they have many a longing heart after them; they part, but it is upon a force; they part, and yet they are very loath to part asunder.¹ Look, as the merchant throws away his goods in a storm, because he cannot keep them, so carnal men, in times of sickness and distress, or in times of horror and terror of conscience, or when death, the king of terrors, knocks at their doors, or when they see hell gaping to devour them, and God as a terrible judge standing ready to pass an eternal doom upon them, then they are willing to cast overboard their usury, their drunkenness, their swearing, their cursing, their lying, their flesh-pleasing, &c.; but not out of any hatred to their lusts, but out of love to themselves, and out of fear of being damned, &c.; for could they but enjoy their sins and heaven too, sin and they would never part. But now, were there no danger, no wrath, no hell, no damnation, no separation from God attending sin, yet a gracious soul would be heartily willing to part with all sin, and to be rid of all sin, upon the account of the vile nature of sin, upon the account of the defiling and polluting nature of sin. Of all things in the world, sin is the most defiling thing; it makes us red with guilt and black with filth; it is compared to a menstruous cloth, Isa. xxx. 22, which of all unclean things in the law was the most unclean, as some observe; and upon this very account a gracious soul would be willingly rid of it.

[2.] Secondly, *A constant habitual willingness to be rid of all sin, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace in the soul.* It is not a transient willingness to be rid of sin, when a man is either under some outward trouble, or some inward distress, that speaks out the truth of saving grace, but a permanent, lasting, and abiding willingness to be rid of sin does. Pharaoh in a fit, in a fright, when thunder and hail and frogs and flies were upon him, was then willing to let Israel go; but when his fright was over, and the judgments removed, he grew prouder and harder than before. So many men, when they are a little sermon-sick, or under some smart pangs of conscience, or under some startling or amazing judgments, oh! then

¹ Augustine, in his youth, before his conversion, prayed thus: 'I said indeed with my lips, Lord, give, and yet in my heart I was too willing to give longer day, and could have said, Lord, pray not yet, I was even afraid lest thou shouldst hear me too soon, and too soon heal and subdue my corruption for me.'—*Confessions.*

they will be willing to let Israel go, then they will be willing to let drunkenness go, and pride go, and uncleanness go, and worldliness go, &c. ; but when their sickness is over, and the pangs of conscience abated, and judgments removed, oh! then they return with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to the wallowing in the mire again. There was a man well known to a minister in this city, who, in the time of his sickness, was so terrified in his conscience for his sins, that he made the very bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long, 'I am damned, I am damned, I am damned;' and this man, in the days of his outward and inward distresses, made many and great protestations of amendment of life if God would be pleased to recover him; in a little while he did recover, and being recovered he was as bad and as wicked, if not worse, than he was before, 2 Pet. ii. 20-22. So in the time of the great sweat in king Edward's days, as long as the heat of the plague lasted, all sorts and ranks of people were still a-crying out, *Peccavi*: 'Mercy, good Lord, mercy, mercy, mercy!' Then lords and ladies, and other persons of quality, cried out to the ministers, 'For God's sake tell us what we shall do to avoid the wrath of God; take these bags; pay so much to such a one whom I have deceived, and so much restore unto another, whom in bargaining I over-reached; oh! give so much to the poor, and give so much to such and such pious uses.' But after the sickness was over, they were just the same men that they were before. Men in time of trouble are very ready to cry out, 'Arise and save us,' Jer. ii. 27; and with them, 'Deliver us this time,' Judges x. 15; and with the Samaritans, who when God had sent lions among them, inquired after the manner of his worship, 2 Kings xvii. 25, 26; and yet after all this to remain as vile and wicked as they did: Jer. ii. 20, 'For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands, and thou saidst, I will not transgress, when upon every high hill, and under every green tree thou wanderdest, playing the harlot.' A wicked man's willingness to be rid of his sins is transient, not constant; it is like the morning cloud and the early dew, that passeth away, Hosea vi. 4. The Jews were a very unstable people, a people bent to backsliding, a people that would often start aside like a deceitful bow, Hosea xi. 7; Ps. lxxviii. 34, 37, 57; Hosea vii. 16. Sometimes when the judgments of God were heavy upon them, or when they were under the reign of some good kings, then down went their groves, their altars, their idols, and their high places; but soon after you shall have them as much set upon idolatry as before; sometimes they were willing to be rid of their idols, and at other times they were mad to go a-whoring after their idols. But now a godly man, when he is himself, he is never unwilling to be rid of his sins, yea, to be rid of all his sins. The fixed, standing, and abiding disposition and bent of a godly man's soul, of a godly man's will, is to be rid of every sin; and thrice happy is that man that is habitually under such a choice and blessed frame.

[3.] Thirdly, *A transcendant willingness, a superlative willingness, an overtopping willingness to be rid of sin, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace in the soul.* When a man's willingness to be rid of his sins overtops his unwillingness; when a man is more willing to be rid of his sins than he is to continue in sin, then his spiritual state is certainly good. A gracious heart had much rather,

if it were put to his choice, live without all sin, than to have allowance to wallow in any sin ; he had rather live without the least sin, than to have liberty to live in the greatest, or the most flesh-pleasing sin. It is certain that sin is more afflictive to a gracious soul than all the losses, crosses, troubles, and trials that he meets with in the world. David cries, not *Perii*, but *Peccavi* ; not ' I am undone,' but ' I have done foolishly,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. He does not cry, Take away the pestilence, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant. Nor Daniel cries not out, Oh we are sadly reproached, we are greatly distressed, we are wofully oppressed, but, We have rebelled, Dan. ix. 5. And the church cries not out, Take away our captivity, but, Take away all iniquity. It is not, Take away our chains, but, Take away our sins ; it is not, Take away our afflictions, but, Take away our pollutions ; it is not, Take away all our enemies' lives, but, Take away the lives of all our lusts, Hosea xiv. 2. And so Paul cries not out of his reproaches, or persecutors, or bonds, or chains, or stripes, or perils, or prisons ; he rather glories in these. But he cries out of a law in his members, rebelling against the law of his mind, and bringing of him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members, 2 Cor. xi. 16 ; Rom. vii. 23. Paul does not cry out, O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from all my sorrows and sufferings ? but ' O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ? ' ver. 24. A sincere heart, when he is himself, had much rather be rid of his sins than of his sufferings, yea, of the least sins than of the greatest sufferings. It was a sweet saying of Bernard : ' I had rather,' saith he, ' that God should better my heart than remove his hand ; I had rather that God should continue my strokes than my sins.' And the same noble spirit was working bravely in Job when he was under the heavy hand of God : Job xxxiv. 31, 32, ' Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more : that which I see not, teach thou me ; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' (See Job vii. 20, 21.)

But now graceless men are much more willing to be rid of their afflictions than to be rid of their sins. Witness Pharaoh, who cries out, Take away the frogs ! see Exod. x. 17 : Exod. viii. 8, ' Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people ; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.' It is not, Entreat the Lord, that he would take away this proud heart, or this hard heart, or this besotted heart, or this blind mind, or this perverse will, or this benumbed conscience that is in me and my people ; but Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me and my people. A graceless heart is more abundantly willing to be freed from punishment, the effect of sin, than it is willing to be freed from sin, the cause of punishment. A gracious heart sees more filthiness in sin than in frogs, and had rather be rid of his sins than of all the frogs or toads that be in the world. See what a sad spirit was upon the children of Israel, in that Num. xxi. 6, 7, ' And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people ; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned ; for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee : pray unto the

Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.¹ Now, mark, in the fifth verse you have them murmuring against God, and Moses, and divine dispensations, and nauseating of the wheat of heaven as light meat, because they came lightly by it; they distrust the providence of God, they let fly at God; their spirit swells against the Holy One of Israel, and they scorn, deride, revile, and contumeliously and despitefully speak against Moses; and though they had often smarted for these sins, yet they are at them again. Upon this, God sends an army of fiery serpents among them, and they bite and devour many of them. And now they run to Moses, who but a little before they had despised, and are very importunate with him to pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from them. They do not desire Moses to improve his interest in heaven, that God would take away their proud hearts, their distrustful hearts, their murmuring hearts, &c., but that God would take away the serpents; they were much more desirous to be rid of their serpents than they were to be rid of their sins. So those in Jer. xxx. 15, 'Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.' They do not cry out of their sins, but they cry out of their afflictions. Why criest thou for thine affliction? Unsound hearts are more ready and willing to be rid of their afflictions than they are willing to have their souls bettered, or their lives mended, or their lusts subdued by them.

Pilate was unwilling to condemn Jesus; witness his seeking to release him, and his washing his hands, and his pleading his innocency, &c., Mat. xxvii. 17, 18, 22-24; but yet the prevailing part of his will carried him forth to deliver up Jesus to be scourged and crucified, ver. 26. So Herod was unwilling to behead John Baptist; witness that word, 'The king was exceeding sorry,' Mark vi. 26; but yet the prevailing part of his will carried him forth to cut off John's head, ver. 27, whose head was more worth than Herod's kingdom. So Darius was very unwilling to cast Daniel into the lions' den; witness his being sore displeased with himself, and witness his setting his heart on Daniel to deliver him, and witness his great unquietness of spirit; for he could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, the night after he was cast into the lion's den; and witness his great joy at Daniel's safety, Dan. vi. 14, 18-20: all which did clearly argue a very great unwillingness that Daniel should suffer; and yet the prevailing part of Darius, his will, carried him forth to sacrifice Daniel to the lions, yea, to that which was worse, viz. the lusts of his enemies, ver. 16, 17. By all these instances, it is most evident that the prevalent part of a wicked man's will stands most strongly biased towards sin; but now the prevalent part of a Christian's will is to be rid of sin. If the Lord should say to a gracious Christian, Ask what thou wilt, O Christian, and it shall be granted to thee; the answer would be: Lord, rid me of my sins; Lord, take away mine iniquities; Lord, mortify my corruptions; Lord, whoever lives, let these lusts die; Lord, drown these Egyptians in the sea of thy Son's blood, who have so violently and unweariedly pursued after the blood of my precious soul; Lord, kill and crucify all these sinful evils that

¹ Heb. burning serpents. Thus they are called from the effect of their biting, which caused a mortal burning, and consequently such an excessive thirst as killed them.

have killed and crucified the Lord of life and glory ; ' Lord, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,' Ps. li. 2, 7 ; ' Lord, purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ;' Lord, carnal reason, and flesh and blood, would fain have such and such pleasurable sins, and such and such profitable sins, indulged and spared ; but, Lord, the earnest, the ardent desires of my soul are, that I may be rid of them, and that justice to the height may be done upon them ; Lord, be but the death of my sins, and my soul shall say, ' My lot is fallen in a pleasant place,' and ' verily I have a goodly heritage ;' Lord, cleanse me but from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and I shall cry, ' Hosanna' to thee, Mat. xxi. 9 ; Lord, let me but outlive my lusts, and follow them to the grave before others follow me to my grave, and I shall say it is enough, Ps. xvi. 6 ; 2 Cor. vii. 1. And thus every gracious soul is more willing to be rid of his sins than he is to keep his sins. A porter cannot be more willing to be rid of his burden, nor a sick man to be rid of his disease, nor a beggar of his nasty lousy rags, nor a prisoner of his chains, than a gracious soul is willing to be rid of his lusts, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, *That soul that does not, nor through grace assisting, will not allow himself, or indulge himself in a course of sin, or in the common practice of any known sin, that soul is certainly a gracious soul.* ' The evil that I do, I allow not,' Rom. vii. 15. So Ps. cxix. 1, 3, ' Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the law of the Lord, they also do no iniquity ;' that is, they allow not themselves in the practice of any iniquity. Blessed souls live not in the service of sin, they live not in an ordinary practice of any iniquity : 1 John iii. 9, ' Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' He that has the seed of God, the seed of grace and regeneration in him, he cannot allow himself in a way of sin, he cannot give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin, he cannot make a trade of sin. So Prov. xvi. 17, ' The highway of the upright is to depart from evil ;' that is, it is the ordinary, usual, constant course of an upright man to depart from evil. An honest traveller may step out of the king's highway into a house, a wood, a close, but his work, his business is to go on in the king's highway. So the business, the work of an upright man is to depart from evil. It is possible for an upright man to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts ; but his main way, his principal work and business is to depart from iniquity, as a bee may light upon a thistle, but her work is to be gathering at flowers ; or as the sheep may slip into the dirt, but its work is to be grazing on the mountains, or in the meadows. Certainly there is no man in the world so abominable wicked, but that he may now and then, when he is in a good mood, or when he is under distress of conscience, or bleeding under a smarting rod, or beholding the handwriting upon the wall, or under a sentence of death, depart from evil ; but this is not his course, this is not his business, this is not his work, this is not his highway. Thieves do but now and then step into the king's highway to take a purse, they do not keep the king's highway. But now the upright man's highway, his common and ordinary course, is to depart from evil, and therefore he cannot allow himself liberty to walk in an evil way : Titus ii. 11, 12, ' For the grace

of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,' (without distinction of nations, sex, age, or condition) 'teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Under the name of ungodliness, he compriseth all the breaches of the first table; and under the name of worldly lusts, he compriseth all inordinate desires against the second table; and those three words, 'soberly, righteously, and godly,' have a threefold reference: the first to ourselves, the second to our neighbour, and the third to God. We must live soberly in respect of ourselves, righteously in respect of our neighbours, and godly in respect of God. And this is the sum of a Christian's whole duty. Now if the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches saints to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, then certainly saints that are taught by that grace cannot live, nor allow themselves in ungodliness or worldly lusts. Without all peradventure, heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that can appeal to heaven that he allows not himself in the practice of any known sin. Thus David did: 'Search me, O Lord,' says he, 'and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,' Ps. cxxxix. 24. It is a most sure sign, that sin hath not gained a man's heart nor consent, but committed a rape upon his soul, when he allows not himself in it, but cries out bitterly to God against it, as Paul did, Rom. vii. If the ravished virgin under the law cried out, she was guiltless, Deut. xxii. 25-27. Certainly such as cry out of their sins, and that would not for all the world allow themselves in a way of sin, such are guiltless before the Lord. That which a Christian does not allow himself in, that he does not do in divine account, &c.

But now the whole trade, the whole life of formal and carnal Christians, is nothing else but one continued web of wickedness; there is no wicked unregenerate person in the world, but lives in the daily practice of some known sin or other; but allows himself in some trade or way of wickedness or other, as you may evidently see by comparing of these following scriptures together, Prov. i. 20-33; Jer. v. 3, xlv. 16-19, ix. 3-6, vii. 8-16; Ps. l. 16, 17; Isa. lxvi. 3; Mat. vii. 23; Rom. vi. 12, 13, 19, viii. 5; Luke xiii. 27; Ephes. ii. 2, 3; Philip. iv. 19; Titus iii. 3; 2 Peter ii. 14. Sin is a sinner's absolute work, it is his main work, and the sinner is besides himself, besides his calling, as it were, when he is besides his sin.

[5.] Fifthly, *He that conflicts most with heart-sins, and is most affected with spiritual sins, and that laments and mourns most over secret sins, invisible sins, sins that lie most hid and remote from the eyes of the world, he is certainly a gracious soul.*¹ Grace in truth, and grace in power, will rise and conflict, and make head against the most inward and secret vanities of the soul, as against secret self-love, and secret hardness of heart, Isa. lxiii. 17; and secret unbelief, Mark ix. 24; and secret carnal confidence, and secret hypocrisy, and secret envy, and secret malice, and secret vain-glory, and secret fretting and murmuring, and secret lustings, and secret runnings-out of the soul after the meat that perisheth, and secret pride. Hence Hezekiah humbles himself for the pride of his heart; and so David, he humbles him-

¹ Ps. xix. 12; cxix. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts;' Ps. xxx. 6, 7; Isa. lxiv. 7.

self for the pride of his heart in numbering of the people, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. And how does the same prophet chide himself for sinful dejection of spirit: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?' Ps. xlii. 11. And how does he at another time befool himself, and be-beast himself, for his secret grudging and fretting at the prosperity of the wicked: 'So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee,' Ps. lxxiii. 22. And so Paul was most affected and afflicted with a law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind. Inward pollutions and defilements did sit closest and saddest upon his spirits. And the same apostle in that 2 Cor. vii. 1, is for keeping down the filthiness of the spirit, as well as the filthiness of the flesh; he is for inward cleansing, as well as for outward cleansing: 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. So Mr Bradford was a man that had attained to so great and eminent a height of holiness, that Doctor Taylor, the martyr, calls him 'that saint of God, John Bradford;' and yet, oh how sadly does he bewail his secret hypocrisy. True grace makes opposition as well against the being of sin in a man's nature, as against the breakings out of sin in a man's life, Col. iii. 5. True grace will make head against the corruptions of the heart, as well as against the excursions of the feet; it is as willing and desirous to be rid of a polluted heart, as it is willing and desirous to be rid of a polluted hand. It would fain have, not only sinful acts, but also sinful dispositions, and not only irregular actions, but also inordinate affections, mortified and subdued. O friends! heart sins are root sins; they are the springs that set all the wheels a-going, the fountain that sets all the streams a-running, the fire that sets the furnace a-smoking, the bellows that sets the fire a-burning. Certainly a proud heart hath more of Satan in it than a proud look, and a wanton heart is more vile than a wanton eye, and a murderous or adulterous heart is worse than a murderous or adulterous act, &c. And therefore true grace makes head against heart sins, against spiritual sins, against the most inward secret sins, against those very sins that lie not within the reach of reason, or the sword of the magistrate, or the piercing eye of the most knowing or observing man in the world, but are only obvious to an omniscient eye. But now carnal men, as they make little of outward sins, so they make nothing of heart sins, of spiritual sins. If they are not drunkards, nor swearers, nor extortioners, nor whoremasters, nor cursers, nor cheaters, nor oppressors, nor liars, nor persecutors, Mat. xix. 16-27; if they are good negative Christians, then they think themselves very good saints, and in a very fair way for heaven, and that no man can say black is their eye, when their hearts are as full of evil thoughts and secret lusts, as ignorance, atheism, unbelief, pride, envy, discontent, anger, formality, hypocrisy, indifferency, lukewarmness, deadness, and hardness, &c., as the sun is full of light, or as hell is full of darkness. Restraining grace, common grace, only makes head against gross enormities, against palpable vanities, as you may see in the scribes and pharisees; but saving grace makes head against heart sins, against spiritual sins. Common grace is all for washing the outside, but saving grace is for washing the inside as well as the outside. Common grace is only for washing the

feet and the head, but saving grace is for washing both feet, head, and heart, Mat. xxiii., John xiii. 9, 10. Look, as in a dark night we can only see those stars that are of the greatest magnitude; so by the star-light of natural conscience, the natural man can only see those sins that are more great and gross. Natural convictions can reach no further than natural light, but spiritual convictions can reach to the most inward, secret, spiritual, and undiscernible sins. Certainly that is a sincere heart, a heart more worth than gold, that smites a man for inward sins as well as for outward sins; for sins done in a corner, as well as for sins acted upon the house-top; for spiritual sins, as well as for fleshly sins; for sins against the soul, as well as for sins against the body; for sins committed in a closet, as well as for sins committed on the most public stage. Certainly that trouble and grief that springs from heart sins, from spiritual sins, from secret sins, bears a more immediate relation to the holiness of God, who only observes them, and is offended by them, and so is a most sure and infallible evidence of saving grace, and of the work of the Spirit in power upon the soul. When open commissions do humble and abase the heart, and secret inclinations to sin do even break and burst the heart asunder, then the heart is certainly sincere with God. A Christian will readily grant that his God is a good God, and that Jesus Christ is the chiefest of ten thousand, and that the gospel is a glorious gospel, and that the promises are precious promises, and that the ordinances are blessed ordinances, and that the lively communion of saints is the sweetest communion in all the world. But yet he will say, I have such a proud heart, such a hard heart, such a slight heart, such a carnal heart, &c., and I am so vexed and molested with sinful notions, and with sinful imaginations, and with sinful inclinations, and with atheistical risings, and with private murmurings, and with secret unbelievings, and that in despite of all my conflictings, and strivings, and prayings, and mournings, and sighings, and groanings, and complainings, that I am oftentimes even weary of my life. And if this does not speak out Christ within, and grace within, and the Spirit within such a soul, I know nothing. O friends! remember this once for all, viz., that the main battle, the main warfare of a Christian lies not in the open field, it lies not in visible skirmishes; but his main quarrels and conflicts are most within, and his worst and greatest enemies are them of his own house, they are them of his own heart. A little grace at first conversion may reform an ill life, but it must be a great deal of grace that must reform an ill heart. A little grace may make a man victorious over outward gross sins, but it must be a great deal of grace that must make a man victorious over inward sins, secret sins, spiritual sins, heart sins, yea, a thorough conquest of these sins will hold a man in play all his days. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *He that abstains from sin, he whose heart rises against sin, he that sets himself against sin, because of the evil nature of sin, because of that vileness and filthiness that is in sin, he certainly has a principle of grace, a seed of God in him.* He who refrains from sin, and whose heart rises more against sin, because of the purity of the law which forbids sin, than because of the severity of the law which condemns sin, is certainly under the power of renewing grace, of saving grace: Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant

loveth it.' It is only pure grace that can enable a man to love the word for its purity.¹ The apostle, to set forth the formidable evil that is in sin, expresses it thus, Rom. vii. 13, 'That sin might appear to be sin.' He could find nothing more evil and odious to express it by than itself. Sin is so great an evil, that it cannot have a worse epithet given it. Paul can call it no worse than by its own name, sinful sin. Had the apostle said that sin might appear to be a snare, a serpent, a viper, a toad, a plague, a devil, a hell, &c., he had said much, but yet not enough to set forth the transcendent evil that is in sin, and therefore he calls it sinful sin. All other evils are but outward, they only reach the name, the body, the estate, the life, but sin is an inward evil, a spiritual evil, an evil that reaches the precious and immortal soul, and therefore is the greatest evil. Death puts an end to all other troubles, viz., poverty, sickness, disgrace, scorn, contempt, crosses, losses, &c.; but sin is so great an evil, that death itself cannot put an end to it; eternity itself shall never put a stop, a period, to this evil of evils. All outward evils can never make a man the subject of God's wrath and hatred. A man may be poor, and yet precious in the eyes of God; he may be greatly abhorred by the world, and yet highly honoured by God; he may be debased by men, and yet exalted by God. But now sin is so great an evil, that it subjects the sinner's soul to the wrath and hatred of God. All other evils do but strike at a man's present well-being, but sin strikes at a man's eternal well-being; all other evils can never hinder a man's communion with God. A man may have communion with God in poverty, in sickness, in prison, in banishment; but sin is so great an evil, that it interrupts communion with God, it cuts off communion with God. All outward evils are God's creatures: 'Is there any evil in the city that the Lord hath not done?' But sin is the devil's creature, it is a brat of his own begetting; yea, it is worse than the devil, it is that which has turned glorious angels into infernal devils. All other evils do not fight against the greatest good, but sin is that grand evil that fights against the greatest good; it fights against the being of God, the essence of God, the glory of God. *Peccatum est Deicidium*, sin is a killing of God, it is a murdering of God. Sin is a universal evil, it is all evil, it is nothing but evil; there is not one drop, one spark of good to be found in any sin, but now in all outward evils there is some good; there is some good in poverty, in sickness, in war, in death, but there is not the least good in sin. Sin is the sole object of God's hatred; he hates nothing but sin; he is angry with nothing but sin; he has forbid nothing but sin; he has revealed his wrath from heaven against nothing but sin; so great an evil is sin. Sin is that grand evil that has midwived all other evils into the world. It was sin that drowned the old world with water; it was sin that destroyed Sodom with fire and brimstone; it was sin that laid Jerusalem in heaps; it was sin that has midwived sword, famine, and pestilence into the world; it was sin that laid the foundation of hell,

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 1. I have read of the ermine, that she will rather die than be got into the dirt to defile her beautiful skin. And rather than Joseph will defile his beautiful soul by defiling his master's bed, he will to a dirty dungeon. He had rather that the irons should enter into his soul, Ps. cv. 18, than that sin should enter into his conscience. He had rather that his chains should eat into his flesh, than that sin should pollute his soul. Isa. lix. 1, 2; Amos iii. 6; Acts v. 39.

that laid the corner-stone in that land of darkness, for before sin there was no hell, Judges v. 8; Ps. cvii. 34; Deut. xxviii. 21. It was sin that crucified the Lord of glory, Rom. viii. 7. Now, oh how great must that evil be that has ushered in all these great evils into the world! Sin is enmity against God; God hath no enemy in the world but sin, and those whom sin hath made him. Sin hath set all the world against the Lord of glory. It is sin that has turned men into incarnate devils, and that has drawn them out to fight against God, and Christ, and their own souls, and the things of their everlasting peace. Now, when a man looks upon sin as the greatest evil in the world, and his heart rises and is enraged against it, because of the vile, filthy, odious, and heinous nature of it, it is a clear evidence that such a man has the divine nature in him. Take that one instance for all: Ps. xix. 12, 13, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' But why does David pray thus? 'So,' says he, 'shall I be innocent from the great transgression.' Mark, he does not pray thus: Lord, keep me from presumptuous sin, that so I may be free from troubles without, and from terrors within, or from hell beneath; but, Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins, that so I may be innocent from the great transgression. He does not say, So shall I be free from the great correction, but, So shall I be free from the great transgression. That is a heart worth gold, that is more sensible and more affected with the evil that is in sin than with the evil that comes by sin. It was a weighty saying of Austin: 'That man,' says he, 'which fears hell, he doth not fear to sin, but fears to burn; but that man fears to sin, that fears sin as he would fear hell.'¹ Common grace never works a man thus to fear sin, but renewing grace doth. Common convictions carry the soul out to look more on the evil that comes by sin, than on the evil that is in sin; and hence it comes to pass, that souls under common convictions are more affected and afflicted at the fear of hell and dread of wrath and damnation, than they are affected or afflicted at the vileness, odiousness, and heinous nature of sin. When an unsanctified person is angry with sin, and chides sin, and falls out with sin, and makes some head against sin, it is either because it hath cracked his credit, or clouded his honour, or hindered his profit, or embittered his pleasure, or provoked his friends, or incensed the magistrate, or enraged his conscience, or exposed him to shame, disgrace, or contempt here and hell hereafter; but never because a holy God is dishonoured, a righteous law transgressed, a blessed Saviour frequently crucified, or the blessed Spirit greatly grieved. The child will not touch the coal because it will burn him, and the prudent man will not touch the coal because it will smut him. A gracious heart rises against sin because of its defiling and polluting nature, but an unsanctified heart rises against sin because of its burning and damning nature. A sanctified person hates sin, because it pollutes his soul, but an unsanctified person hates it because it destroys his soul. A sanctified person loathes sin, and abhors sin, because it fights against God's holiness; but an unsanctified person loathes it, and abhors it, because it provokes and stirs up God's justice. A sanctified person detests sin, because of the hell that is in sin; but an

¹ Augustine, Epist. 144.

unsanctified person detests sin, because of the hell that follows sin, &c. But,

[7.] *Seventhly, Where there is an irreconcilable opposition in the soul against sin, there is a saving work of God upon that man's heart.*¹ Where there is such a detestation of sin, and such an enmity raised in the soul against sin, as that the soul cannot, nor will not, upon no terms in the world, admit of any truce or reconciliation with sin, there is Christ and grace formed in the heart. The war between a gracious heart and sin, is like the war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam: 1 Kings xiv. 30, 'There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.' The oracle said to the Cirrheans, *noctes diesque belligerandum*, they could not be happy unless they waged war night and day; no more can we, except we perpetually fight against our lusts. O friends! a gracious heart that is weary of sin, will certainly and habitually fall a-striving against it: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: for these two are contrary the one to the other.' Now contraries are naturally expulsive each of other. Such a pair as a Jacob and an Esau; such twins as an Isaac and an Ishmael, cannot lie quietly together in the same womb; no, nor live quietly together in the same house, but there will be a mutual prosecuting and persecuting each of other. Fire and water may as well agree in the same vessel, as grace and sin in the same heart. True grace hath a real repugnancy and contrariety to all sin; and remember this once for all, that saving grace is not contrary to sin because it is open and manifest, nor to sin because it is private and secret, nor to sin because it is of this or that consequence, but to sin as sin, whether public or private, because both the one and the other are contrary to the law of God, the will of God, the glory of God, the nature of God, the designs of God, &c. As it is with true light, though it be but a beam, yet it is universally opposite to all darkness; or as it is with heat, though there be but one degree of it, yet it is opposite to all cold; so true grace, it is opposite to all sin, it cannot comply with any known sin. Look, as sin and grace were never born together, and as sin and grace shall never die together, so sin and grace can never be reconciled together. There is a natural contrariety between sin and grace, and therefore you can never reconcile them in the heart. The opposition that grace makes against sin is inward as well as outward; it is against sin wheresoever it is. Nothing will satisfy a gracious soul but the destruction of sin: Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' The Greek word *καταργηθῆναι*, that is here rendered *destroyed*, signifies weakened, and the strength of it broken, and made idle, fruitless, and ineffectual. So Ps. li. 2, 'Wash me thoroughly' (or multiply to wash me, or play the fuller upon me), 'from mine iniquity;'—David looked upon his sin, his stain, to be so inveterate, so ingrained, that it would hardly be ever gotten out till the cloth were almost rubbed to pieces,—'and cleanse me from my sin.'

¹ The contrariety to sin, which is in a real Christian, arises from an inward gracious nature, which is opposite to the whole species or kind of sin, as contrarieties of nature are to the whole kind; as light is contrary to all darkness, and fire to all water. So that this contrariety to sin arising from the inward man is universal to all sin, &c.

David was as desirous to be cleansed of the leprosy of sin, as ever any poor leper was willing to be cleansed of his leprosy under the law. And so ver. 7, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' All the sacrifices of expiation of sin in the old law, were done by blood, and that blood was sprinkled upon the people by a bunch of hyssop, so called from the Hebrew word *ezob*, by reason of the nearness of the sound. In the legal sprinklings made with hyssop, was shadowed out the washing away of sin through the blood of Christ. The bride's garments are made white in the blood of the Lamb, and not by any washings in snow water, Rev. i. 14, Job ix. 30. When a gracious soul looks upon sin, he cries out, Lord, raze it, raze it down to the ground; Lord, let not one stone be left upon another. In every gracious soul there is such a detestation and such an indignation against sin, that neither mountains of gold, nor rocks of pearl, nor honour, nor applause, nor favour on the one hand, nor frowns, nor threats, nor neglects, nor scorns, nor contempt on the other hand, can win the soul over to sin, or make the soul one with sin. Look how it was between the Lord and Amalek, so it is between a gracious soul and his sins. Now if you turn to that Exod. xvii. 16, you shall find how it was between the Lord and Amalek. 'Because the Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation;' or, as the Hebrew has it, 'The hand upon the throne of the Lord': God's hand is laid upon his own throne, as swearing to root out Amalek;' or because Amalek's hand is lifted up against God's throne, that is the church (so called in Jer. xvii. 12, and crown of glory, Isa. lxii. 3), therefore God will have perpetual wars with Amalek. God could as soon be reconciled to Amalek, as a gracious Christian can be reconciled to his sins. Others sense the words thus, that Moses had a solemn oath, as it were, laying his hand upon God's throne, for asseveration and assurance, that he and the people will have an irreconcilable war with the posterity of Amalek. And so every gracious soul is resolved to make an irreconcilable war with sin. But now, where there is only common grace, there a man deals by his sins as David did by his son Absalom, banish him his court for a time, and afterwards receive him into full favour, and court him as much or more than before. An unsound heart may fall out with his sin, and be very angry with its sin, for the consequence of it, for the shame it brings upon his person, for the blot it leaves upon his name, and for the stinging guilt and convulsion fits which it causeth in his conscience, and yet this very person be in a very close and strict league with sin, and his heart inwardly and strongly adhering unto sin. But a gracious heart will be still a-restraining of sin, a-curbing of sin, a-crossing of sin, a-making head against sin, and a-withstanding it in all its workings. Anger may be reconciled, but hatred cannot.

[8.] *Eighthly, Where the very prevailings of sin are ordinarily made serviceable to high and holy, to gracious and spiritual ends, there certainly is a saving work of God upon that man's soul, Ezek. xvi. 61, 63; Eph. ii. 5-7.* As when they produce more soul-loathing, soul-humiliation, self-judging, self-abasement, self-abhorring; or when they fill the soul with a greater admiration of the freeness and riches of grace; or when they keep down pride, and prevent the despising of

others, or produce holy shame ; or when they make the blood of Christ more precious and dear to the soul ; or when they engage a Christian so much the more to watch and pray, and pray and watch, that he may either be kept from the hour of temptation, or in the hour of temptation ; or when every fall makes sin more bitter to the soul than ever, and Christ more sweet to the soul than ever, and all the means of grace more delightful to the soul than ever, and heaven more desirable to the soul than ever ; or when sin is made the prevention of sin ; or when sin, through the over-ruling hand of grace, is made an occasion of more grace, as that good man said, ‘ As I get hurt by my graces, so I get good by my sins.’ You know all the falls, and knocks, and blows, that children get that are learning to go, do but make them cleave the closer and hang the faster upon the nurse’s skirts, or about the mother’s neck. So when all a Christian’s falls do but work him to cleave the closer and hang the faster upon the strength of Christ, and to be still a-drawing more and more virtue and power from Christ, then is the prevalency of sin made serviceable to holy and gracious ends ; and where God ordinarily thus works, there is certainly a work of God in power upon that soul : 2 Cor. vii. 11, ‘ For, behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge ! In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.’ This scripture I have fully opened in my eighth sign of godly sorrow in this book, and to that I refer you. The mother, by suffering the child to get one fall, keeps the child from many a fall ; and so it was with these Corinthians. Adam’s fall was an inlet to abundance of grace, and his unrighteousness did usher into the world the most glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ. Hezekiah falls, and by his fall God gives him a clearer and fuller sight of his own heart than ever he had before in all his days, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26, 31. Sin is no gainer, but a loser, by every fall of the saints. God does and will, by the over-ruling hand of his grace, make the very miscarriages of his people to be glorious inlets to more eminent degrees of grace and holiness. God hath a great revenue of glory from the very infirmities of the saints ; and the saints have a great revenue of comfort from their very miscarriages, by the wise, powerful, over-ruling, and sanctifying hand of God. God is that powerful, that skilful physician, that can make an antidote and sovereign remedy of sin, that is the most deadly poison in all the world. God does and will make the very sins of his people to further the salvation of his people, according to that golden promise, Rom. viii. 28. God never suffers his people to fall into any sin, but out of a design to break the neck and back of that sin they fall into. God suffered David to fall into those two great sins of murder and adultery, but by these very falls he broke the very back of those sins, for we never read that ever he fell into those sins the second time. And so God suffered Peter to deny him once, but by that sore fall God broke the neck of that very sin ; for we never read that ever he denied Christ any more at the voice of a damsel ; yea, it is very observable that Peter’s courage and boldness for the truth received a very high advance by those deep wounds that he had formerly given them, when he denied the Lord that bought him. After his sore falls, for

courage and boldness he carries the bell from all the apostles, as you may see in Acts iv. 12. It is the nature of true grace to gather strength by every wound. Grace gathers strength by contraries, as fire doth when it is compassed about with coldness, by an antiperistasis.¹ By all a Christian's falls, his graces grow brighter and stronger. At the long run, a Christian by all his falls loses nothing but his dross, his chaff, his scum, his filth. Now, he that finds his sins thus over-ruled for the good of his soul, he is certainly a gracious soul. O sirs! remember this for ever, viz., that the oftener an hypocrite or a formalist falls, the more ground and strength his sins get upon him, and so will continue to do till all that grace and goodness which he seemed to have had be quite extinguished. But,

[9.] Ninthly, *Where a bare naked command of God is commonly, ordinarily of that power, force, and authority with the soul, as to curb sin, and restrain the soul from sin, and to arm and fence the soul against the encroachments and commands of sin, there is certainly a saving work, a powerful work of God upon that soul.* When a man can say to heaven and hell, Stand you by for the present, and to precious promises, Stand you by for the present, and to divine threatenings, Stand you by for the present, here is a command of God that forbids such and such actions, and therefore I cannot, I dare not do this or that wickedness, and sin against the Lord; there is certainly a principle of grace in that man's heart, Gen. xxxix. 9. That is a great word of David, Ps. cxix. 161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word.' When a naked command from God does so overawe the heart, as that it dares not sin against God, then doubtless the heart is sincere with God. A child does not stand in more awe of the rod, nor a servant of a beating, nor a favourite of his prince's frowns, than a real Christian, when he is himself, stands in awe of the word. So Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid within my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' When a man hides the word in his heart as a treasure, that he may not lose it, and as a rule that he may not transgress it, then his heart is indeed right with God. When the law of God in a man's heart arms him against the lusts of his heart and life, then doubtless his heart is sound with God. So Ps. xvii. 4, 'By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;' or as some read the words, 'according to the command and charge of thy words, I have kept me from the sinful ways, manners, behaviours, &c., of the destroyer, or the cruel man.' Christ commanded his apostles to make him known to the world, and to preach the everlasting gospel, and to make known those mysteries and riches of grace that were hid in former ages, Mat. xxviii. 18-20; Acts x. 36, seq. The Jewish authority threatens them, and commands them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, Acts iv. 17, 18; but the command of Christ carries it with the apostles against all their threatenings and commands: verses 19, 20, 'But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen.' When the commands of authority run counter-cross to the commands of God, the commands

¹ ἀντιπερίστασις, opposition or counteraction.—Aristotle, *Anal.*, Post. 2, 15, 1, Probl. 33, 5, 1.—G.

of God must be obeyed, though the greatest authority under heaven should be displeased and enraged. God never gave the greatest authority in the world any authority to act contrary to his commands. Disobedience to unlawful commands is no disobedience. Woe to him that obeys the commands of men in opposition to the commands of God : 1 Cor. ix. 16, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel !' Now it is infinitely better to fall under the displeasure of men, than to fall under the woes of God. The Jews, under a pretence of their authority, command the apostles not to preach Jesus to the people ; but the commands of Christ carry it with the apostles against all their contrary commands. The apostles, who were like to bottles of new wine, that must either vent or burst, knew very well that it was not obedience to men's commands that could excuse their disobedience to God's commands. So in that third of Daniel, the commands of the great God carried it with the three children against all the dreadful threatenings, proud boastings, and idolatrous commands of king Nebuchadnezzar. Certainly the commands of sin are of all commands the vilest commands ; they are all illegal ; sin hath no ground, no reason to command our souls. Sin is but a usurper, a traitor, and therefore has no authority over us. All sin's commands are purely sinful ; they are plain and notorious rebellions against the laws of Christ, the life of Christ, and against the crown, honour, and dignity of Jesus. All sin's commands are grievous, burdensome, and painful commands ; of all yokes, none so heavy as that which sin lays upon the sinner ; hence sin is compared to a talent of lead, Zech. v. 7, to shew the weightiness and burdensomeness of it ; and hence it is that sinners are said to weary themselves in committing iniquity, Jer. ix. 5 ; and hence it is that wicked men are said to travail with iniquity, Ps. vii. 14, to shew what anxious pain and trouble they have in bringing about their wickedness : 'Behold he travaileth with iniquity ;' or as the Hebrew hath it, he shall travail, or he continually travaileth, he takes as great pains to go to hell as a travailing woman doth to be delivered. Wicked men are as laborious, and as restless and unquiet in the practice of wickedness, as a woman in labour is when the pangs of travail are upon her, Prov. iv. 14-16. Sugared poisons go down pleasantly ; oh but when they are down they gall, and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder ; it is so with sin. Lastly, the commands of sin are extremely unreasonable. What an unreasonable thing it is to command a man to run into the fire, or to drown himself in the water, or to strangle himself, &c. Now all the commands of sin tend directly and intentionally to the burning, drowning, strangling, and destroying of the sinner. All sin's commands tend to the dishonour of God, the breach of his righteous laws, and the damnation of the precious and immortal soul. Now where the commands of God do commonly carry it, against all the commands of sin, there the soul is certainly sincere with God. That we owe perfect obedience to God's will, to God's commands, is evident enough several ways, and in particular from the universal obedience of all creatures ; I mean those which are without reason, sense, or life, for they inviolably observe his commands : Isa. xlviii. 13, 'Mine hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens : when

I call to them, they stand up together,' as prepared to execute his commands. The insensible parts of the world are so compliant with his will, as to contradict their proper natures to serve his glory. Fire descends from heaven at his command, Gen. xix. 24 ; 2 Kings i. 10-12. And the fluid sea stands up at his command, Exod. xiv. 22. Now what a sad thing is it that Christians should at any time prove disloyal and rebellious, when all inferior creatures do with one consent serve and glorify the great God ! But, &c.

[10.] Tenthly, *Constant desires, and earnest and constant endeavours to avoid and shun all known appearances of sin, evidences the truth and reality of grace in the soul.*¹ Certainly that man is a true Nathanael, that makes it his business, his work, to abstain from all appearances of evil. An hypocrite loves the appearance of good more than goodness itself, and a sincere Christian hates the very appearance of evil, as well as the evil itself. He who hates a person loathes his very picture. A wicked man may abstain from broad-faced evils, but commonly he is very bold and venturous upon appearing evils. Oh what vain apologies do many make in these days for long hair, gaudy apparel, antique fashions, spotted faces, naked breasts, wanton behaviours, effeminated alliances, and a thousand other suspicious practices and vanities ! But now a man that is truly gracious, he makes conscience, not only of shunning real, gross, known evils, but also of shunning the very likeness of evil. His heart does not only rise against real sins, but he is very shy of that which looks like sin. When Joseph's mistress took hold of him and said, 'Lie with me, he left his garment in her hand and fled, and gat him out,' Gen. xxxix. 12. Joseph would not be found in the company of his impudent, brazen-faced mistress, that could so barely and basely, so boldly and frequently, solicit him to defile his master's bed, and to damn two souls at once, her own and his, that so he might avoid the very appearance of evil, the very suspicion of sin. By wanton touches and dalliance, mental adultery is often committed ; and therefore Joseph flies, as being unwilling to touch her, or to be touched by her. And so Paul refused the using his liberty in taking a lawful maintenance for his labours, lest a sinister interpretation of covetous and mercenary affection should have been put upon it by his adversaries, 1 Cor. ix. 11-15. And so the same apostle would needs have Titus and two others chosen by the church, to join with him in carrying the benevolence of the church of Macedonia to Jerusalem, because he was very careful to avoid all suspicion of dealing ill in that business. 2 Cor. viii. 20, 21, 'Avoiding this, that no man should blame us, in this abundance that is ministered by us ; providing for honest things, not only before the Lord, but also before men.' So Daniel would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, Dan. i. 3, that is, say some, he would not defile his conscience by eating such unclean meats as were forbidden under the law, for the Babylonians did eat of divers meats, as of swine, hares, &c., and of sundry sorts of fishes and fowls, which were forbidden by God unto the children of Israel, Levit. xi., Deut. xiv. ; nor with the wine which he drank ; but in the Hebrew the plural number is used, of his drinks, whence some gather that the

¹ Where do you read in all the Scriptures, of any one hypocrite that ever made conscience of shunning and avoiding the appearances of sin ?

king drank divers sorts of wines, which were also set before Daniel and his companions; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Daniel's living at a full table, and his feeding upon kingly dainties, might have been, not only a means to ensnare him, and drown him in the sensualities of the court, but it would have carried with it also too great a show of Daniel's conformity to the court's manners and customs, and have been too great an appearance of Daniel's forgetfulness of the sore and miserable calamities and matchless miseries of the captive church, who sat sighing and groaning and mourning in her cruel bondage, and had none to comfort her, or speak peace unto her; and therefore Daniel purposed in his heart, or set it upon his heart, or laid it upon his heart, as the Hebrew may be read, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, &c., that so he might avoid all shows or suspicions of evil. It is very observable, that in the law of the Nazarite, who did for a time special consecrate himself to God, that besides his not coming to the dead, and suffering his hair to grow, it was ordained of God that he should abstain from these six things: (1.) From wine and strong drink; (2.) from the vinegar of wine or strong drink; (3.) from any liquor of grapes, though it were but the water wherein they were steeped; (4.) from the green or moist grape; (5.) from the dried grape or raisin; (6.) from the husk or kernel of them, Num. vi. 3, 4. Had the Nazarite eaten but the skin of the grape or raisin, he had broken the law. Now hereby the Lord would teach us, that those that separate themselves from the world, to be in a special manner serviceable to the Lord, they must avoid not only that which is plain sin, downright sin, or such sins that men may run and read, but also that they must shun and be shy of the very appearances of sin. It was good counsel that Livia gave her husband Augustus, 'It behoveth thee,' saith she, 'not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so,' &c.¹ We must shun and be shy of the very show and shadow of sin, if either we tender our credit abroad, or our comfort at home. Walking in the power of holiness lies much in shunning the very appearance of sin. The primitive Christians would not endure that any Christian should look towards Jerusalem praying, because they would avoid the least show of Judaism. And indeed there are great reasons why every Christian should avoid whatever may have the suspicion of sin; and this will be evident, if you please but seriously to consider of these eight following particulars:

(1.) *First*, Consider those clear and plain commands of God which makes this duty to be a duty, as that 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' God requires us not only to abstain from all apparent sins, but also from all appearance of sin. We must do nothing which hath a show or shadow of sin. It is duty to abstain from whatever is of an ill show, or an ill report. And so God commands us to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, Jude 23. Saints must abhor everything that carries with it but a favour or suspicion of uncleanness. The apostle alludes to legal uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels, or the garments of unclean persons, Levit. xv.²

¹ Dio. [Laertius] in vita.

² Hence that saying of the Jews, Remove thyself from filthiness, and from all that which hath a show of it. See Drusius præterit. in 1 Thes. v. 22.

Christians must not only hate uncleanness, but they must hate everything that looks like it, or that has the least communion with it. So in that Deut. xii. 30, 'Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared, by following of them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' God does not only command his people to abstain from gross idolatry, but he also commands them to take heed of all those ways and means and inquiries that might tend to draw them to idolatry, or that might carry with them the least show or appearance of idolatry. It is observable in the law, that God commanded his people not only that they should worship no idol, but that they should demolish all the monuments of them, and that they should make no covenant, nor have any affinity with those who worshipped them; and all to avoid the very shows of idolatry, and to prevent his people from being drawn by those means to commit idolatry with them. And so Exod. xxiii. 7, 'Keep thee far from a false matter.' Every good man must stand aloof off, he must keep at a distance, both from the occasions of sin, and from the appearances of sin. So Prov. v. 8, 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.' He that is farthest from fire, is safest from burning, and he that is most remote from the water, is in least danger of drowning. It is no small wickedness to approach near the door of wickedness; he who approaches near the door of a whore's house, is already in the door of whoredom, Prov. xxii. 14, xxiii. 27. It argues too much mind to be in the house, for any one knowingly, willingly, to come near the door of it. Oh how should a man dread the coming into that house, where he must needs either perish or else overcome! Certainly it is infinite better not to be in danger of perishing, than being in danger not to perish. So Hosea iv. 15, 'Though thou Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend, and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, the Lord liveth.' Gilgal was once the key of Canaan, situate between Jordan and Jericho, famous for sundry services there performed to God, as might be easily shewed by many instances; but now Gilgal was basely abused to idol worship; and hence it is that God charges them not to come near it, that so they might avoid both the show and danger of idolatry; and it is upon the same account that God charges them not to go up to Bethaven. By these scriptures it is evident that God would have his people to abstain from all shows and appearances of sin. But, &c.

(2.) Secondly, *The holiness of God, and the honour of God, calls aloud upon all Christians to avoid the suspicion of sin.* God is so essentially holy, so unmingledly holy, so universally holy, so eminently, so transcendently holy, so superlatively holy, so originally, radically, and fundamentally holy; he is so independently holy, so unchangeably, so constantly, and so exemplarily holy, that he cannot but hate and abhor the very appearance of evil. Look, as apparent sins stir up the judicial anger of God against sinners, so the appearance of sin stirs up the fatherly anger of God against saints. A gracious heart knows that 'God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' Hab. i. 13, and therefore he keeps at a distance from the appearance of iniquity. Of all men in the world, none honour God at so high a rate as those that

keep most aloof off from the appearance of evil. Many, by their apparent evils, have lived God, and Christ, and the gospel, and their profession, and precious ordinances, into disgrace, scorn, and contempt; and oh that we would all make it our great business, by abstaining from all appearance of evil, to live God, and Christ, and the gospel, and our profession, and precious ordinances, into a greater credit, praise, and honour than ever! He keeps farthest off from dishonouring God that keeps farthest off from the appearance of sin. But, &c.,

(3.) Thirdly, *This is the way of ways for a man to keep himself clear from other men's sins.* That man that abstains from the appearance of sin is very rarely guilty of other men's sins. Men many times, by venturing upon the appearances of sin, come to wrap themselves up in the guilt of other men's sins. Effeminate dalliance is an appearance of evil; and had Joseph been toying, and playing, and sporting with his mistress in a wanton manner, how soon might he have wrapt himself up in the guilt of his mistress's burning lusts! He that would not tempt nor entice others to sin, must keep off from the very appearance of sin. Certainly there is not the holiest man in the world but has sins enough of his own to sad him, though not to sink him; to humble him, though not to damn him; to abase him, though not to deject him; and therefore how much does it concern the best men in the world to abstain from the very appearance of sin, that so they may not bring upon themselves the guilt and burden of other men's sins. It is very well observed by some, that a more grievous punishment is reserved for them which cause others to sin than for them which sin by their occasion; thus the serpent was punished more than Eve, and Eve more than Adam. And so Jezebel, who tempted and provoked Ahab to sin, was punished with a far greater and sorer punishment or judgment than Ahab himself was.¹ To sin, saith one, hath not so much perdition in it as to make others to sin; and therefore, as you would never draw others to sin, keep off from all appearance of sin. Oh that all superiors, inferiors, and equals, would lay this counsel to heart! But,

(4.) Fourthly, *The keeping off from all appearances of evil is the best and noblest way under heaven to keep a good name and to keep a good conscience.* Now, a good name and a good conscience are jewels more worth than all the sceptres and mitres in the world, and there is no wisdom in the world to that which leads a man by the hand to secure his name and his conscience: Prov. xxii. 1, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving-favour rather than silver and gold.' So Eccles. vii. 1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment;' the one being but a perfume of the nostrils, the other a perfume of the heart. It is observable, the princely preacher does not say, 'a great name is better than precious ointments,' but 'a good name is better than precious ointments.' Ointments are here named, because in those eastern parts they were laid up in the king's treasury, even among his most precious things: Isa. xxxix. 2, 'And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed him the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious oint-

¹ 2 Kings ix. 30, *seq.*, compared with 1 Kings xxii. 34-39.

ments,' &c. Precious aromatical ointments were things greatly in use and esteem amongst the Israelites, and a special part of their treasures, as is evident by the Scriptures in the margin.¹ And yet a good name, which hath its foundation in virtue, and in a holy, innocent, blameless, harmless, and exemplary life, is better than those most precious ointments. And it is observable that the initial letter of the Hebrew word טוב, *Tob*, that is here rendered good, is bigger than ordinary, to shew the more than ordinary excellency of a good name and fame amongst men. It was good counsel the moralist gave when he said, Whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet to preserve that jewel of a good name. A good renown is better than a golden girdle, say some. And a man's eye and his good name can bear no jests, say others. And if I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough, said the naturalist. O friends! as ever you would keep a good name, keep off from the very appearance of evil; for the very appearance of evil will both eclipse and wound a man's name and his conscience at once. Certainly a man were better not to live, than to outlive his good name. A man's good name is like a piece of white paper, which, if once blotted, will very hardly be got out again, so as to leave no print of it behind. It is like a fair structure, long time a-rearing, but quickly ruined; or like a merchant's estate, long a-getting, but lost in a moment. And therefore how much does it concern every Christian to keep his name as he would keep his life! and this he can never do, except he keeps off from the appearance of evil. It is his name only that shall be kept green and flourishing, like the rod of Aaron, that was laid up in the tabernacle, who keeps off from the appearance of evil. He takes the best and the wisest course under heaven to preserve his good name in the world, and to maintain the peace of his conscience, who is most studious and industrious to abstain from all appearances of evil. But, &c.

(5.) Fifthly, *The appearance of evil may very much offend, scandalise, stumble, and tempt weak Christians; and therefore it highly concerns us to keep off from the very appearance of evil.* The more grace any man hath in his own heart, the more fearful he will be of stumbling or offending those that have less. Venturing upon the appearance of evil may not only defile my own conscience, but also wound my weak brother's conscience; and therefore it concerns me to be very shy of the appearance of evil. If in things of an indifferent nature I must deny my own liberty, as I must, rather than grieve, or offend, or wound the conscience of a weak brother for whom Christ hath died, 1 Cor. viii. 11–13, x. 25, 28, oh how much more, then, must I shun the very resemblance of sin, considering how wonderful apt weak Christians are to be offended and stumbled when they see others so bold as to venture upon the appearance of evil! Alexander's Macedonians having offended him, laid by their arms, put on mourning apparel, and came running in troops to his tent, where, for almost three days together, they remained with loud cries and tears, to testify their remorse for offending him; and shall we make nothing of offending

¹ Exod. xxx. 22, 23; xxviii. 41; 1 Sam. xvi. 13; Ps. lxxxix. 20; Heb. i. 9; Isa. lxi. 3; Amos vi. 6; Esther ii. 12; Ps. xxiii. 5; Luke vii. 46; Ps. xcii. 10; Deut. xxxiii. 24; Prov. xxi. 20.

those weak Christians that are the price of Christ's blood, and the travail of his soul? The Lord forbid!

Besides, our venturing upon the appearance of evil may prove a great temptation to weak Christians, not only to venture upon seeming evils, but also to venture upon real evils. Doubtless many weak Christians have been drawn to apparent evils by observing others to venture upon the appearance of evil. It is commonly seen, that when strong Christians will adventure upon appearing evils, weak Christians will be emboldened thereby to commit real evils: 1 Cor. viii. 8-10, 'But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?' When the weak shall see men of knowledge communicating with idolaters in their feasts, their consciences will be emboldened and confirmed in their old superstition about those idols which they were beginning to leave, returning now afresh to a more reverent esteem and service of them than ever, &c. O friends! as you would not offend the weak, as you would not tempt the weak, keep off from all shows and appearances of evil, &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *Christians venturing upon appearing evils, will exceedingly harden and encourage wicked men to commit real evils.* It is very natural and customary with wicked men to make use of the appearing infirmities of the saints, as excuses and apologies to bear them out in their greatest enormities and wickednesses. Why, did not such and such knowing eminent Christians do thus and thus? and we have gone but one step beyond them, and is that so great and heinous a crime? they have been playing and sporting themselves about the pit, and we are but slipped or stepped into the pit. They have been sitting and bibbing with such and such company, and we have but taken two or three merry cups more than ordinary in the same company, and is that so great a sin? &c. O sirs! as we should walk wisely towards those that are without, so we should walk compassionately towards those that are without, 1 Thes. iv. 12. 'Of some have compassion, making a difference,' Jude 22. Did not Jeremiah wish that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people? Jer. ix. 1. Did not Samuel mourn for Saul? Did not Christ weep over Jerusalem? Did not the compassionate Samaritan bind up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, who fell among thieves in his going from Jerusalem to Jericho? Did not Paul weep over those that were enemies of the cross of Christ? Yea, shall we shew pity and compassion to an ox or an ass that is fallen into a ditch? Nay, shall David rather venture upon a lion than lose a lamb? Shall Jacob rather endure heat by day, and cold by night, than neglect his flock? Shall Moses fight with odds, rather than the cattle shall perish with thirst?¹ Nay, shall Xenocrates, a heathen, shew compassion to a poor sparrow, that being scared and pursued by a hawk, flew

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 25; Luke xix. 10; x. 30-35; Philip. iii. 20; Lev. xix. 17; 1 Sam. xvii. 34; Gen. xxxi. 40.

into his bosom for succour? &c. And shall not we have that compassion on poor sinners' precious and immortal souls, as to abstain from the appearance of sin, which may more ways than one prove so exceeding prejudicial to them? &c.

Wicked men are wonderful prone to watch for the saints' haltings, Jer. xx. 10. Christians are lights upon a high hill; yea, they are stars in the firmament of the church, and therefore every man's eye is upon them, and if wicked men can but discern the least indecency, the least appearance of any eccentric or irregular motion, oh how readily will they let fly against God and the gospel, against religion, and against all that have a profession of religion upon them! Now the honour of God, and the credit of the gospel, should be so dear and precious in the eyes of every Christian, that he should rather choose to die than to venture upon the least apparition of sin, whereby the honour of God may be clouded, or the credit of the gospel impeached or eclipsed, or the soul of a poor sinner endangered or worsted. Both the least sin, and the least appearance of sin, must be avoided and prevented; the cockatrice must be crushed in the egg, else it will soon become a serpent; the very thought of sin, if not thought on, will break out into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are in the ready way of being irrecoverably lost. Camerarius tells us a sad story of two brothers, who, walking out in the evening and seeing the element full of bright spangling stars, one of them being a grazier, wished that he had as many oxen as there were stars in the firmament; then said the other brother, If I had a pasture as big as all the world, where would you keep the oxen? He answered, In your pasture. What, said the other, whether I would or no? Yes, said his brother. The matter was very light; it was but a little evil, or an appearing evil, but it fell out very heavily; for presently they fell to words, and then drew one upon another, and in the close killed one another. O friends! as you love the lives of sinners, and as you love the souls of sinners, keep off from all appearance of evil. But,

[7.] Seventhly, *Other precious saints have abstained from all appearances of evil*; witness Joseph, Paul, Daniel, &c., but lately cited. And to these let me add that great instance of Augustine, who retracted even ironies because they had the appearance of evil. And so the primitive Christians would not set up lights and bays at their doors, though for this they were persecuted as enemies to the emperor, because the temple and the doors of idolaters were wont to be thus garnished.¹ And so David refused to take the threshing-floor, and threshing instruments, and oxen, &c., of Araunah as a gift, but would needs buy them at a price, and this he did, partly out of a divine nobleness, and partly to avoid the very show of covetousness, 2 Sam. xxiv. 21-24. Now why has God left all these famous precedents upon record, but on purpose to encourage his saints in all ages to abstain from all appearing evils, as well as from all apparent evils. Certainly God looks that we should so eye the best, the highest, the worthiest, and the exactest examples, as that we should make it our great business and work to come up to them, and to imitate them to the life. O friends! the examples last cited should be very awakening, very persuading, very convincing, and

¹ Tertullian, Apolog.—G.

very encouraging; because in them you may see that though abstinence from the appearance of evil be a difficult thing, yet it is a possible thing. Shall we love to look upon the pictures of our friends, and shall we not much more love to look upon the holy examples of those eminent saints that had the lively picture of grace, and the lovely image of Christ fairly stamped upon their hearts and lives? It is both our mercy and our duty to eye the examples, and to follow the footsteps of those Christians that have been most eminent in grace, as you may plainly see by comparing of these scriptures together, Prov. ii. 20; Heb. vi. 12; 1 Thes. i. 6; Philip. iv. 9; 2 Tim. iii. 10-12; Heb. xii. 1; Philip. iii. 17; 1 Cor. xi. 1; Titus ii. 7. He that would fain write a fair hand, had need have his eye often upon his copy; and he that would fain abstain from all appearance of evil, he had need often to eye the gracious examples of such who have made conscience of abstaining from appearing evils, as well as from apparent evils. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, *Consider what some refined heathens and civilised pagans have done in this very case.* There are stories of heathens that would not look upon excellent beauties, lest they should be ensnared. Democritus plucked out his own eyes to avoid the danger of uncleanness. Socrates' speaketh of two young men that flung away their belts, when, being in an idol temple, the lustrating water fell upon them, detesting, saith the historian, the garment spotted by the flesh. Alexander would not see the woman after whom he might have lusted. Scipio Africanus, warring in Spain, took New Carthage by storm, *aure victor*, at which time a beautiful and noble virgin fled to him for succour to preserve her chastity; he being four-and-twenty years old, and so in the heat of youth, hearing of it, would not suffer her to come into his sight for fear of temptation, but caused her to be restored in safety to her father. So when Demosthenes the orator was asked an excessive sum of money to behold the beautiful *Lais*, he answered, He would not buy repentance so dear, neither was he so ill a merchant as to sell eternals for temporals. Nor Cæsar would not search Pompey's cabinet, lest he should find new matters of revenge. Memorable is the story of the children of *Samoseta*, that would not touch their ball, but burnt it, because it had touched the toe of a wicked heretical bishop as they were tossing and playing with it. Now shall some refined heathens, shall civilised pagans abstain from the appearance of evil, from occasions and temptations to sin? and shall real Christians fall short of them? Shall blind nature do more than grace? Shall men fallen in the first Adam do more than those that are raised and enlivened by the second Adam? But to prevent all mistakes, let me add, though many heathens have abstained from the appearance of some evil, yet they have not abstained from the appearance of all evil; neither have they abstained from the appearance of any evil out of a hatred of evil; nor from any principles of saving light, or life, or love; nor out of any regard to any royal law of God; nor out of any regard to the honour or glory of God, but either out of vain-glory and popular applause, the pole-stars by which they steered all their actions, or out of hypocrisy, which set a tincture and dye upon all their actions. What writer hath more golden sentences than *Seneca* against the contempt of gold; yet if *Tacitus* and others of

¹ The Ecclesiastical Historian.—G.

his contemporaries may be credited, none more rich, none more covetous than he, as if out of design he had persuaded others to cast away their money, that he himself might come and gather it up again, &c. And thus you see that there are very great reasons why every Christian should avoid the very show, suspicion, or appearance of evil, &c. But,

[11.] Eleventhly and lastly, *He that sets himself resolutely, mostly, habitually, against his bosom sins, his constitution sins, his most prevalent sins, &c., he has certainly a saving work, a powerful work of God upon his soul*, Ps. xviii. 26. True grace will make a man stand stoutly and stedfastly on God's side, and work the heart to take part with him, against the most darling sins, though they be as right hands or as right eyes. True grace will lay hands upon a man's most beloved lusts, and cry out to heaven, Lord, crucify them, crucify them, down with them, down with them even to the ground. Lord, do justice, do signal justice, do speedy justice, do exemplary justice upon this head lust, this master sin! Lord, hew down root and branch! let the very stumps of this Dagon be broken all in pieces! Lord, curse this wild fig-tree, that never more fruit may grow thereon! Certainly God and Christ is set up highest in that man's heart, who bends most of his thoughts, strength, and endeavours against his constitution sins, against the sins of his place, calling, condition and complexion. It is very observable that the Jews, after they had been in the Babylonish furnace for idolatry, they ever hated and feared that sin, as much as the burned child dreads the fire; yea, they would die any death rather than admit an idol. Josephus tells us how stoutly they opposed Pilate and Petronius, that would have set up Cæsar's statue in their temples, offering their throats to the swords of the soldiers, rather than they would endure that idol in God's house.¹ Oh when once the heart of a Christian comes thus to be set against all his golden and silver idols, then we may safely say, 'Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.' He that finds his lusts, his bosom, his darling lusts, begin to fall before him, as Haman once begun to fall before Mordecai, Esther vi. 13, he may safely and confidently conclude that he is of the seed of the Jews, and that the seed of God abideth in him, 1 John iii. 9. But having discoursed so largely as I have concerning bosom sins, darling lusts, head corruptions, in my other writings, I need say no more at this time. And thus you see that there are eleven particulars in regard of sin and a Christian's actings about it, that speaks out a true saving work of grace to be in the souls of the saints. But, &c.

II. Secondly, *Where the constant, ordinary, standing, and abiding purpose, disposition, frame, and general bent of a man's heart, soul, spirit, desires, and endeavours are fixed and set for God, for grace, for holiness in heart and life, there is a most sure and infallible work of God passed upon that man's soul.*² The constant bent and the settled purpose of a true child of God, is for God, for grace, for holiness in heart and life: Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes always, even to the end.' Verse 38, 'Stablish thy word unto

¹ The Jewish War, B. ii. c. x.—G.

² Ps. xl. 8, xxxix. 1, ci. 3; 2 Cor. i. 12; Ps. cxix. 4, 5, 20; 2 Chron. xix. 3, xxx. 18, 19; Neh. i. 11; Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.

thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.' Verse 44, 'So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.' Verse 45, 'And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.' Acts xxiv. 16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' Heb. xiii. 18, 'Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' Gracious souls do strongly affect that which they cannot easily effect: Ps. cxix. 57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words.' Some read this verse thus, 'Lord, I have said, my portion shall be to keep thy words.' Holy David was fully determined and resolved in himself, to keep God's royal law, in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And so Barnabas exhorted the disciples, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, Acts xi. 23; as if all piety and truth of grace consisted in gracious purposes of heart. Certainly when the bent of a man's mind, and the settled purpose of a man's soul, and the unfeigned desires of his heart, are for God, for grace, for holiness in heart, in life, then the estate and condition of that man is safe and happy. It is very observable that that great apostle Paul, in his spiritual conflict, lays a very great stress upon these things; witness Rom. vii. 16, 'If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.' So verse 18, 'For to will is present with me.' So verse 19, 'For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.' So verses 21, 22, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' So verse 25, 'So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God.' Certainly, the truth, the life, and power of grace, of holiness, of regeneration, is not so much seen in our actions, as in the renewing and sanctifying of our minds and wills, according to that Rom. xii. 2, 'Be ye transformed,' or metamorphosed, as the Greek has it, 'by the renewing of your mind.' No man is to judge of the soundness or sincerity of his spirit by some particular acts, but by the constant frame and bent of his spirit, and by his general conversation in this world. If particular actions might determine whether a man had grace or no grace, whether he were in Christ or not in Christ, whether he were a saint or not a saint, whether he were sincere or unsound, we should many times conclude, that those had no grace who indeed have, and that they were not in Christ who indeed are, and that they are no saints who indeed are, and that they are not sincere, who certainly are true Nathanaels.¹ The best saints have had their extravagant motions, and have very foully and sadly miscarried as to particular actions, even then when the constant course and bent of their spirits have been Godwards and Christ-wards, and holiness-wards and heaven-wards, &c. Witness David's murder and adultery, Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, Joseph's swearing, Job's cursing, Jonah's vexing, Peter's denying, and Thomas his not believing. Such twinklings do and will accompany the highest and fairest stars. As he who foots it best may be found sometimes all along, and the neatest person may sometimes slip into a slough.

¹ Though the needle of the seaman's compass may jog this way and that way, yet the bent of the needle will still be northward. So though a Christian may have his particular sinful joggings, this way or that way, yet the bent of his heart will still be God wards.
Una actio non denominat.

He that cannot endure to see a spot upon his clothes, may yet sometimes fall into a quagmire. So the holiest and exactest Christians may sometimes be surprised with many infirmities and unevennesses, and sad miscarriages. Certainly particular sinnings are compatible with a gracious frame, though none are with a glorious condition. Though no darkness, no clouds can be mixed with the sun in heaven, yet both may be in the air which is enlightened below. Our best estate on earth is mixed, and not absolute. Glory annihilates all sinful practices, but grace only weakens them. The most sincere Christian is but an imperfect Christian, and hath daily cause to mourn over his infirmities, as well as he has cause to bless God for his graces and mercies. Well, sirs! look, as every particular stain doth not blemish the universal fineness of the cloth, so neither doth this or that particular fact disprove and deny the general bent of the heart. Particulars may not decide the estate either way. It is true, a man by a particular sinning is denominated guilty, but by no one particular can a man's estate be challenged, either for good or bad. He that shall judge of a Christian's estate by particular acts, though notorious bad, will certainly 'condemn the generation of the righteous.' We must always distinguish betwixt some single good actions, and a series of good actions. It is not this or that particular good action, but a continued course of holy actions, that denominates us holy. Certainly, as there is no man so holy, but sometimes he falls into this or that particular sin; so there is no man so wicked, but sometimes he falls in with this or that particular duty. Witness Pharaoh, who in a fit desires Moses and Aaron to pray for him; and witness Balaam, who in a good mood desires to die the death of the righteous; and witness Saul, who under a pang condemns himself, and justifies David; and so witness Ahab's humbling of himself, and Nineveh's repenting, and Felix his trembling, and Herod's hearing of John Baptist gladly.¹ Now look, as every sin which a godly man falls into, through infirmity, doth not presently denominate him ungodly, so neither will a few good actions done by a wicked man prove him godly. It is what the course and tenor of the life is, that must be most diligently and wisely observed, for every man is as his course is; if his course be holy, the man is so; if his course be wicked, the man is wicked. There is a maxim in logic, viz., that no general rule can be established upon a particular instance; and there is another maxim in logic, viz., that no particular instance can overthrow a general rule. So here, as no man can safely and groundedly conclude from no better promises² than from some few particular actions, though in themselves materially and substantially good, that his heart is therefore sincere; so on the contrary, no man ought to conclude, because of some gross particular sinful actions, and extravagant motions, that his heart is unsound. O sirs! we are not to make a judgment of our states and conditions, by some particular actions, whether they are good or evil, but we are to make a judgment of our estates and conditions by the general frame, bent, and disposition of our hearts, and by the con-

¹ Mere particular actions do not conclude, either way, the estate of the soul. An hypocrite may do some good act, and an upright person may do some sinful act. A man must give in judgment for or against himself, according as the habitual purpose and temper of his heart stands, &c.

² Qu. 'premises'?—Ed.

stant tenor of our lives.¹ It is certain, that God accounts every wicked man guilty of all those sins, wickednesses, and vanities, which the settled purpose, desire, bent, bias, and frame of his soul inclined him to, though he doth not actually commit them: Mat. v. 28, 'He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.' A man may commit adultery, and yet not touch a woman. There are many thousands that die of the wound in the eye. So 1 John iii. 15, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.' A man may commit murder, and yet not kill a man, yea, he may commit murder, and yet not touch a man: Prov. xxiii. 7, 'For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The man is as the mind is. God esteems of wicked men according to their hearts, and not according to their words. So it is as certain that the Lord accounts every godly man to do all that good, that the settled purpose, frame, bent, bias, and unfeigned desires of the soul inclines him to: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted.' So Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only son;' that is, in disposition and full purpose of heart, and willingness of mind, which God accepted for the deed. A true intent is in God's account as a real act. So David had a purpose, a mind, a will to build God a house, and for this God commends him: 1 Kings viii. 18, 'And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart;' yea, God rewards him for it, as if he had actually done it, and tells him in his ear that he would build him an house, 2 Sam. vii. 27. So when that servant that owed his Lord ten thousand talents had shewed his readiness, and willingness, and resolvedness to pay all: 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all!' Mat xviii. 26, a thing as impossible for him to do, as it is for us to keep the whole law, and not to fail in one point; but his desires, his mind, his will, his purposes was to do it; well, and what does his Lord do? Why, his Lord has compassion on him, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt, ver. 27; his Lord took this for full and current payment, he accepted of the will for the deed. So when Zaccheus had unfeignedly professed his purpose and willingness to make restitution, Christ presently replies, 'This day is salvation come to thy house,' Luke xix. 9. Certainly the Lord accounts that soul a true believer, and a blessed soul, that unfeignedly desires to believe; witness that Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.' And it is as certain that the Lord accounts that sinner a true penitent, that doth unfeignedly desire, purpose, and resolve to repent, to break off his sins, and to turn to the Lord, as you may see in that great instance of the prodigal: Luke xv. 18-20, 'I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

¹ It is not a pang of the soul, nor a mood, nor a fit of an ague, nor a flash of lightning, nor a man's being as the morning dew, but his habitual purpose, resolution, and inclination to good, that evidences the man to be really good: Ps. cxix. 10, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times,' &c. A sheep may slip into a slough as soon as a swine; and an apple tree may have a fit of barrenness, as well as a crab tree. But the sheep loves not to wallow in the mire, as the swine does. And though the apple tree be barren one year, yet it brings forth fruit the next.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' As soon as ever the prodigal did but purpose and resolve to repent, and return to his father, the compassions of his father are kindled and turned towards him, and he does not go, but runs and falls on his neck, and instead of kicking and killing, there is nothing but kissing and embracing a returning prodigal. God always sets a higher value upon our dispositions than upon our actions, and in our best services he esteems more of our wills than he does of our deeds, as is evident by the scriptures in the margin.¹ Every good man is as good in the eye and account of God, as the ordinary frame and bent of his spirit speaks him to be. Every man is as holy, as humble, as heavenly, as spiritual, as gracious, as serious, as sincere, as fruitful, as faithful, as watchful, &c., as the settled purposes, desires, resolutions, and endeavours of his soul speaks him to be. Hence Noah is said to be a just man, and perfect or upright in his generation, Gen. vi. 9. And hence Job is said to be a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil, Job i. 1-8. And hence David is said to be a man after God's own heart, 1 Sam. xiii. 14; and to fulfil all his wills, Acts xiii. 22. Here the Greek word *θελήματα* is *wills*, to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience. And hence Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to be both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless, Luke i. 5, 6. Hence the church is said to be all fair: Cant. iv. 7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.' And hence those hundred forty and four thousand saints that had their Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev. xiv. 1, are said to be without fault: ver. 5, 'And in their mouth was found no guile: for they were without fault before the throne of God.' God in the covenant of grace, and upon the credit of his Son's blood, and for the glory of his free grace and favour, is graciously pleased to accept of his people, and to approve of his people, and to delight in his people, and to interpret his people, according to the common bent, frame, disposition, resolution, unfeigned desires, and constant endeavours of their souls. But, &c.

III. Thirdly, *If your obedience be the obedience of faith, then your estate is good, then you have assuredly an infallible work of God upon your souls.*

Quest. But how shall we know whether our obedience be the obedience of faith or no? How may a man discern when his obedience springs from faith?

Ans. You may certainly know whether your obedience be the obedience of faith or no, by these following particulars:

[1.] First, *That obedience that springs from faith is a full obedience, a universal obedience.* David did look upon his universal obedience as a special testimony of his uprightness: Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.' Mark! the psalmist doth not say, When I obey all thy commandments, then shall I not be ashamed; but, 'When I have a respect to all thy commandments, then shall I not be ashamed.' Now a respect to all God's commandments notes an inward awe and reverential eye

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 10; 1 Cor. ix. 17; 1 Peter v. 2; Exod. xxv. 2; Philem. 14.

towards every duty that God requires. The words, according to the Hebrew, may be read thus: 'Then shall I not blush when my eye is to all thy commandments.'¹ Now you know the traveller hath his eye towards the place whither he is going, and though he be short of it, yet he is still a-putting on and pressing forwards all he can to reach it. So when the eye of a saint is to all the commands of God, and he is still a-pressing forwards towards full obedience, such a soul shall never be put to the blush; such a soul shall never be ashamed in the great day of our Lord Jesus. So Acts xiii. 22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will;' πάντα τὰ θελήματά μου, all my wills, to note the sincerity and universality of his obedience. So Acts xxiv. 16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' So Heb. xiii. 18, 'We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' That obedience that springs from faith doth neither dispute divine commands, nor divide divine commands one from another. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luke i. 5, 6. That obedience that springs from faith is a full obedience, a universal obedience. It is universal in respect of the subject, the whole man, and it is universal in respect of the object, the whole law. Mark! he who obeys sincerely obeys universally, though not in regard of practice, which is impossible; yet (1.) In regard of his will and desires; his will and desire is to obey all: Rom. viii. 18, 'For to will is present with me.' Ps. cxix. 5, 'Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' (2.) In respect of election or choice; he chooses to obey all: Ps. cxix. 173, 'Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts.' The word here rendered *chosen* signifies to choose upon trial and examination: I have chosen thy precepts before all, and above all other things.² I have chosen thy precepts for my chiefest good, and for my only treasure. I have chosen thy precepts to own them, to follow them, and to obey them. (3.) In respect of approbation; he approves of all the commands of God, as holy, just, and good; he highly approves of those royal commands that he cannot perfectly obey: Rom. vii. 12, 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good.' And ver. 16, 'I consent unto the law that it is good.' He assents to the commands of God as holy, and he consents to them as good. (4.) In respect of affection; he loves all the commands of God, he dearly loves those very commands that he cannot obey: Ps. cxix. 97, 'O how I love thy law!' Such a pang of love he felt, as could not otherwise be vented, but by this pathetic exclamation, 'Oh how love I thy law!' Ver. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' Ver. 163, 'I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.' Ver. 119, 'Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.' Ver. 127, 'Therefore I love thy commandments

¹ The rule is good and true, *quicquid propter Deum fit, equaliter fit*, he who doth serve and obey God for God's sake, will equally obey all that God commands him. No one command is unjust or unreasonable to him whose heart is upright in obedience, &c. Seneca, describing a virtuous man (Epist. 120), saith of him, that he is *idem semper, et in omni actu par sibi*.

² *Bacharti*, from *Bachar*. The word notes a careful and diligent choice, upon good trial and proof.

above gold, yea, above fine gold.' Ver. 159, 'Consider how I love thy precepts.' Ver. 167, 'My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.' (5.) In respect of valuation or esteem, he highly values all the commands of God, he highly prizes all the commands of God, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together: Ps. cxix. 72, 127, 128, Ps. xix. 8-11, Job xxiii. 12. (6.) In respect of his purpose and resolution; he purposes and resolves, by divine assistance, to obey all, to keep all: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' Ps. xvii. 3, 'I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.' (7.) In respect of his inclination; he has an habitual inclination in him to keep all the commands of God: 1 Kings viii. 57, 58, 2 Chron. xxx. 17-20; Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end.' (8.) In respect of endeavours; they endeavour to keep all: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' There is no man that obeys God truly, who doth not endeavour to obey God fully. And thus you see in what respect that obedience that flows from faith is a full obedience, a universal obedience. A child of God obeys all the commands of God in respect of his sincere desires, purposes, resolutions, and endeavours; and this God accepts in Christ for perfect and complete obedience. This is the glory of the covenant of grace, that God accepts and esteems of sincere obedience as perfect obedience. Such who sincerely endeavour to keep the whole law of God, they do keep the whole law of God in an evangelical sense, though not in a legal sense. In the work of conversion, God infuseth all grace together, and writes not one particular law in the hearts of his children, but the whole law, which is a universal principle, inclining the soul impartially to all, Ezek. xi. 19, 20. The gracious soul sincerely falls in with every command of God, so far as he knows it, without prejudice or partiality; he dares not pick and choose what commands to obey, and what to reject, as hypocrites do; he hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to obey the first table as well as the second, and the second as well as the first. He doth not adhere to the first, and neglect the second, as hypocrites do; neither doth he adhere to the second, and contemn the first, as profane men do. All Sauls, Jehus, Judases, Demases, scribes, pharisees, and temporaries,¹ they are still partial in their obedience; for while they yield obedience to some commands, they live in the habitual breach of other commands, Mat. xxiii. 23. Jehu boastingly calls out, 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,' 2 Kings x. 29, 30. But if Jehoshaphat had gone a little further, he might have seen his calves too, contrary to God's commands. Herod heard John Baptist gladly, and did many things; but if John will be close and plain with him, he shall then first lose his liberty, and then his head for his labour, Mark vi. 16, 17. A sincere Christian loves all the known commands of God, and prizes all the commands of God, and sees a divine image, majesty, and authority stamped upon all the commands of God. And therefore the main bent and disposition of his soul is to obey all, and to be subject to all the commands of God. Let me in a few particulars open this great truth a little more fully to you. And therefore take me thus.

¹ See Glossary, s. v.—G.

First, *A sincere Christian will endeavour to obey God in suffering commands as well as in doing commands, in losing as well as gaining commands.* An unsound Christian, he loves cheap obedience; he is willing to fall in with those commands that are not chargeable or costly; he loves a cheap gospel, and a cheap ministry, and a cheap membership, and a cheap communion of saints, &c. But when his obedience comes to be chargeable, when his obedience to divine commands may cost him his health, his strength, his liberty, his riches, his estate, his friends, his credit, his name, &c., then he retires, then he cries out, *Durus sermo*, it is a hard saying, who can bear it? John vi. 60. This is a hard commandment, who can obey it? When religion is attended with freedom, honour, and safety, when religion is attended with riches, pleasures, and applause, then unsound hearts will put forwards; but when these part, then they bid religion farewell. As you see in the young man in the Gospel, who was willing to follow Christ so long as he might be no loser in following of him, Mat. xix. 20–25; but when it came to this, that he must part with his riches or with Christ, then he falls off, and went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. But now a sincere Christian will obey even the most chargeable and costly commands of God, as you may see in that little book of martyrs, tenth and eleventh chapters of the Hebrews; and as you may see in the three children in Daniel, in the disciples, in the primitive Christians, and in the martyrs in the Marian days: Mat. xix. 27. But,

Secondly, *If your obedience springs from faith, then you will endeavour to obey God in relative commands as well as in absolute commands.* You will not only hear, and pray, and read, and meditate, and fast, and mourn, but you will labour to be good in your relations, both as a husband, a father, a master, a magistrate, a minister. Remember this for ever, every one is that really that he is relatively. Many make a great profession, and are under a great name, and have great parts and gifts, and can discourse rarely well on any subject, whose houses are not Bethels, but Bethavens; not little temples, but little hells. One, writing of the Italian women, saith that they were angels in the streets, saints in the church, and devils in their houses. This is very applicable to many high professors this day, who are very forward in the general duties of religion, and yet make little conscience of relative duties; but he whose obedience springs from faith, he will make conscience of relative commands as well as of absolute commands. Whatever command hath the stamp of God, the authority of heaven, upon it, though it seem never so small, he dares not disobey it. If he sees a beam of divine majesty sitting upon the face of any command, he will submit to it. You know men will not refuse a penny if the king's stamp be upon it; so if the authority of God be stamped upon the least command, a sound Christian will yield subjection to it as well as the greatest. Mark, if a man make no conscience of relative commands, though his general conversation as a Christian be never so admirable, yet he hath great cause to suspect himself and his estate, and that his heart is not right in the sight of God, Acts viii. 21. Oh that you would seriously consider that relative and domestical graces and duties do more demonstrate true piety and godliness than public duties, than general duties, do; for pride, vain-glory, self-ends, and a hundred other outward carnal considerations, may put a man

upon the general duties of religion, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin,¹ and as you may see in the scribes and pharisees throughout the New Testament; but it argues both truth and strength of grace to be diligent and conscientious in the discharge of relative duties; and this is the true reason why the apostles in their epistles do so frequently, so earnestly, and so strongly, by variety of motives, press Christians to the performance of those relative duties that lie upon their hands. But,

Thirdly, *If your obedience springs from faith, then you will endeavour to obey God in affirmative commands, as well as in negative commands.* You will not only look upon what God would not have you to do, but you will also look to see what God would have you to do. Dives was not cast into hell for oppressing Lazarus, but for not shewing mercy to Lazarus; he was not damned because he took anything from him, but because he gave nothing to him, Luke xvi. 19-29. The evil servant did not riot out his talent, but omitted the improvement of it, for which he was cast into outer darkness, Mat. xxv. 24-31. Nor those reprobates in the same chapter did not rob the poor saints, but omitted the relieving of them, which was their ruin. Moab and Ammon were banished the sanctuary to the tenth generation for a mere omission, because they met not God's Israel in the wilderness with bread and water, Deut. xxiii. 3, 4. Look, as the omission of good diet breeds diseases, so the omission of religious duties will either make work for repentance, or for hell, or for the Physician of souls. Mark, there is many a man's religion lies merely in negatives; he is no swearer, no drunkard, no adulterer, no oppressor, no defrauder, &c., Luke xviii. 11. A formal professor's obedience to divine commands does principally lie in negatives; he considers not so much what the command requires as what it prohibits, and he pleases himself rather in abstaining from evil than in doing of good, in being outwardly reformed than in being inwardly renewed. He thinks it enough that he turns from sin, though he makes no conscience of turning to God. If you ask him concerning affirmative commands, there you will find him speechless. Ask him, Art thou holy? Art thou humble? Art thou heavenly? Art thou sincere? Art thou a believer? Dost thou set up God as the great object of thy fear? Dost thou love God with a superlative love? Is the Sabbath of the Lord a delight unto thee? &c. Now here you strike him dumb; he looks upon the neglect of these things as no sins, because they are not such scandalous sins as the others are, Isa. viii. 13, Ps. xviii. 1, Isa. lviii. 13. Remember, sirs, sinful omissions many times lead to sinful commissions, as you may see in the angels that fell from heaven to hell; and as you may see in Adam, who fell from his highest glory into a woful gulf of sin and misery. But,

Fourthly, *If your obedience spring from faith, then you will endeavour to obey God in the spirit of the command, as well as in the letter of the command.* In every command of God there is an *intra* and an *extra*; one part of Christ's law binds the flesh, and another part binds the spirit: 'Thou shalt do no murder;' there is the letter of the command. 'Thou shalt not be angry with thy brother without a cause;' there is the spirit of the command. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery;' there is the letter of the command. 'Thou shalt not look upon a woman

¹ Isa. lviii. 1-5; Hosea v. 14; Zech. vii 4-7.

to lust after her; there is the spirit of the command, Mat. v. 21, 22, 27, 28. The pharisees of old did not look to the spirituality of the law, but only to the letter of the law; they rested wholly upon an outward conformity to the law. When their hearts were full of hellish lusts, they were all for the outside of the law, they regarded not the inside of the law; they were all for washing of platters and cups, and for beautifying of tombs, like an adulteress, whose care is to paint and set a fair face upon a foul matter; they were all for paying tithe of mint and anise and cummin; but they regarded not the inside of the law, they omitted the weightier matters of the law, viz., judgment, mercy, and faith, Mat. xxiii. 23. While Paul walked by the letter of the command, he was blameless in his own account; but when he came to walk by the spirit of the command, then sin revived, and he died, Philip. iii. 6, Rom. vii. 9. Friends, there are the more general duties of religion, as hearing, praying, reading, receiving, fasting, repeating, discoursing, &c. Now these all lie in the very letter of the command. And there are the more inward and spiritual duties of religion, as the exercise of faith, fear, love, hope, joy, patience, contentation, humble submission, and choosing of God, and cleaving to God, and delighting in God, and admiring of God, and exalting of God, and following hard after God, and holy meditation, and self-examination, &c. Now all these lie in the very spirit of the command.¹ Now in the exercise of these more spiritual duties our fellowship and communion with God mainly lies. In the more general duties of religion, an hypocrite may manifest the excellency of his gifts; but in the more spiritual duties of religion, a sincere Christian doth manifest both the excellency and efficacy of grace. Mark, an unsound heart looks no further than to the bare letter of the command, to bare hearing, and bare praying, and bare preaching, and bare fasting, and bare giving, and bare receiving, and bare suffering; he looks no further than to that part of the command which only binds the flesh, or outward man; and if he does but observe that in the gross, he thinks he hath done marvellous well; like a melancholy man, that matters not what melody and harmony he makes, so he does but touch the strings of the instrument. But now, a sound, a sincere Christian, he looks to the spirit of the command; and if he does not come up to that in sincere desires, in gracious purposes, in fixed resolutions, and in cordial endeavours, he can have no peace, no rest, no quiet, no comfort. O sirs! as ever you would see God, and enjoy God another day, you must labour, not only to obey the letter of the command, but also to bring your hearts to the sincere obedience of the spirit of the command. This is a very close, piercing, distinguishing, and discovering sign. But,

Fifthly, *If your obedience springs from faith, then you will labour, not only to obey God in the matter, but also in the manner of the command, not only in the substance of the command, but also in the circumstance of the command.* God requires the manner as well as the matter; and God looks upon that work as not done, that is not done in a right manner. 'Did not the Lord command sacrifice? and did not

¹ Could a man come up to all affirmative and negative precepts in his outward conversation; yet, if he were not spiritual in all these, his obedience would be but as a body without a soul. The pharisees rise higher in their outward obedience, and yet Christ clearly and fully convinces them that they were wretched adulterers and murderers, though they were not guilty of any such outward crimes, &c.

Cain offer sacrifice? and yet God had no respect to him, nor to his offering, because his sacrifice was not offered up in a right manner, his offering was not offered up by a hand of faith; he offered his offering, but because he did not offer himself as an offering to God, his offering was rejected by God,' Gen. iv. 8.¹ A work may be materially good that is not formally and eventually good; and this was Cain's curse. How frequently did God command the Jews to pray? and yet he plainly tells them, 'When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear,' Isa. i. 15. He commanded them to sacrifice, and yet he saith, 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?' ver. 11, and all because they did not manage their prayers nor sacrifices in a right manner. Their hands were full of blood, and their hearts were full of sins, and their lives were full of lewdness; and therefore all their services were vain oblations, yea, an abomination to God. An unsound heart looks no further than to the substance of the command. If he has heard, and prayed, and fasted, and read, and repeated, and given alms, and received the Lord's supper, he strokes himself, and blesses himself, and hugs himself, and thinks all is well, and so he looks no further. But now a sound sincere Christian, he looks to the circumstance as well as the substance, to the manner as well as to the matter of the command. When he prays, he labours to pray fervently, earnestly; he labours to get his heart into his prayers; when he hears, he will hear with attention and intention of spirit; when he walks, he endeavours to walk wisely, humbly, faithfully, fruitfully, circumspectly, exemplarily, winningly, convincingly, blamelessly; when he obeys, he desires and endeavours to obey freely, willingly, cheerfully.² O sirs! if we pray, and pray not fervently; if we hear, and hear not fruitfully; if we obey, and obey not willingly; if we shew mercy, and do it not cheerfully; if we sanctify the Sabbath, and not with delight, all is worth nothing, all will come to nothing, Isa. lviii. 13. Mark, there are some circumstances accessory, some necessary, some wherein the being, and some wherein the well-being of a duty doth consist; and if you abstract these from them, the duty is worth nothing. Take away fervency and humility from prayer, take away faithfulness and fruitfulness from hearing, and take away willingness and delight from obedience, and all will be worth nothing. God regards not only the matter, but the manner. Criton the papist could say, That God loved better adverbs than nouns, not to pray only, but to pray well. *Non bonum sed bene agere*, Not to do good, but to do it well, is the great wisdom of a Christian. What is the sun without light, or the fountain without water, or the body without the soul, or wood without fire, or a bullet without a gun, or a ship without a rudder? No more are words in prayer, without the spirit of prayer. God looks more at the manner than at the matter of your prayers. And let thus much suffice to confirm the first particular. But,

[2.] Secondly, *That obedience that springs from faith, is an obedience that is only grounded upon the word of God, the commands of God.* Ps. cxix. 4, 5, 'Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently; Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes?' Isa. viii.

¹ Luther on Genesis.—G.

² James v. 17, 18; Micah vi. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 12, and iii. 1-3; 1 Thess. ii. 10; 2 Cor. i. 12; Ps. cx. 3.

20, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Mat. v. 18, 'For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' John x. 35, 'If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.' Chap. xii. 48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' Now the reasons why that obedience that springs from faith is an obedience that is only grounded upon the word of God, the commands of God, are these five:

(1.) And the *first* is drawn from the *supremacy and sovereignty of God, who alone is to prescribe to man his duty*. He is our great Lord and Master, he is our only Lord and Lawgiver. Isa. xxxiii. 22, 'For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King.' James iv. 12, 'There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?' Now by the laws of this Lord and Lawgiver, we must square all our actions. Look, as it would be very absurd in a servant to do that work which he thinks meet, and not what his master commands; so it is as absurd for men to think, that God will accept of this or that at their hands, when they cannot plead his superscription and authority for what they do. God will one day say to such, 'Who hath required this at your hands? Isa. i. 12. O sirs! you must lay the command of God as a foundation for what you do, or else all your buildings, though never so glorious, will certainly totter and fall; in all you do, you must be able to say, 'Thus saith the Lord,' or else after you have done your best, you may be undone for ever. But,

(2.) *Secondly, God's promise and blessing is only annexed to God's command*. He that will have the sweet of the promise, and the blessings of heaven, he must look that his obedience be bottomed upon divine commands. In holy actions it is not thy performance, nor thy grace, nor thy warmth, nor thy zeal, but the command and the promise that is annexed to it, that will bear thee out. Therefore we are called children of the promise, and heirs of the promise, Gal. iv. 28; Heb. vi. 17. The children of God, in all their obedience, should still keep an eye upon the command of God, and the promise of God, as ever they would run the race that is set before them, Heb. xii. 1. But,

(3.) *Thirdly, Our obedience must be grounded and bottomed upon a divine command, because of that great corruption, pollution, blindness, and darkness which is upon our minds and understandings, which would carry us to what not, if we were not to steer our Christian course by divine commands*, Col. ii. 20-22. The apostle condemns those things which had a show of humility and great mortification, because they were not bottomed upon a divine command; and Christ condemned many practices of the scribes and pharisees, because they were not bottomed upon a divine command, as you may see by comparing the 6th, 15th, and 23d chapters of Matthew together. But,

(4.) *Fourthly, Our obedience must be bottomed upon a divine command, because else we can never be able to bear up our hearts comfort-*

ably, courageously, confidently, and resolutely, under all the afflictions, oppositions, temptations, persecutions, and discouragements that we meet with in the ways of the Lord, and in doing the work of the Lord, Ps. xliv. 9, seq.; Ezek. xxviii. 12, 22. All the messages that the prophets delivered were still grounded upon a divine command, 'Thus saith the Lord;' and this steeled their spirits in the work of the Lord, this made them resolute and undaunted in the midst of all the afflictions and oppositions that they met with. And so it was a word of command that raised the spirits and encouraged the hearts of the apostles in the work of the Lord, in the face of all the oppositions, threatenings, and buffetings that they met with from the civil powers, Acts iv. 19, 20, and v. 29. You know Absalom lays his bloody commands upon his servants, as their highest encouragement to that bloody work of killing his brother Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 28. 'Now Absalom had commanded his servants [his assassins], saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant; or sons of valour, as the Hebrew runs. And so a Christian must lay the command of God before him, as his highest encouragement to do what God requires of him, &c.

(5.) *Fifthly* and lastly, Our obedience must be bottomed and grounded upon the commands of God, *to difference and distinguish ourselves from all hypocrites, formalists, superstitious and profane persons, whose obedience is sometimes bottomed upon the traditions of men, and sometimes upon the commandments of men.* It was the sin of the ten tribes, that they complied with the command of Jeroboam and his princes, to worship the calves at Dan and Bethel; and for this the wrath of the Lord fell heavy upon them. 'Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandments.' And sometimes their obedience is bottomed upon the examples of men, sometimes their obedience is bottomed upon the examples of their forefathers and ancestors,—Jer. x. 3, 'The customs of the people are vain,' &c.,—and sometimes upon the examples of great men. This was that which the pharisees objected against believing on Christ.¹ 'Have any of the rulers or of the pharisees believed on him? but this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.' And sometimes they bottom their obedience upon the example of the multitude. This was Demetrius his argument against Paul, on the behalf of Diana, 'that all Asia and the world did worship her,' Acts xix. 26, 27; and therefore the doctrine of Paul, that they be no gods which are made with hands, was false, and not to be suffered. This hath always been, and is still, the common plea of many, We do but as the most do; and sure a great many eyes can see more than one or two. And hereupon they exclaim against others for their singularity, because they won't do as the rest of their neighbours do. But,

[3.] *Thirdly, That obedience that springs from faith is a growing obedience, it is an abounding obedience.* Such a man's desires, will, study, and labour, is to get up to the highest pitch of obedience, to get up to the highest round in Jacob's ladder: Rev. ii. 19, 'I know thy

¹ Isa. xxix. 13, 14; Mat. xv. 1-10; Mark vii. 3-10; Hosea v. 11, 12; Jer. xlv. 17, 18, &c.; John vii. 48, 49.

work, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.' The angel of the church of Thyatira is commended, (1) first, for his love; (2) for his charity; (3) for his faith; and (4) for his patience. And in the general course of his life, he daily became more excellent; for his 'latter works were more than the first,' that is, they were more manifest proofs of his constancy, and more worthy of praise than the first. This faithful pastor is commended for his holy progress in grace and holiness. So Paul, Philip. iii, 12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Ver. 13, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.' Ver. 14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' The Greek word *διώζω*, doth emphatically import a pressing with an eager pursuit after the mark. It is the same word that signifies to persecute, because the earnestness of his spirit in pressing toward the mark now is the same that it was in the persecution of those that pressed toward the mark before. Look, as good runners, when they come near unto the mark, stretch out their heads, and hands, and whole bodies, to take hold of them that run with them, or of the mark that is before them; so he in his whole race so laboured unto that which was before, as if he were still stretching out his arms to take hold of it. If such a man might have his choice, he would be the most humble, the most holy, the most heavenly, the most mortified, the most patient, the most contented, the most thankful, the most fruitful, the most active, the most zealous, and the most self-denying Christian in the world, 1 Peter i. 15, 16. If he might have his choice, he would be holy as God is holy, and perfect as his heavenly father is perfect; he would do the will of God on earth, as those princes of glory, the angels, do it now in heaven, viz., freely, readily, cheerfully, delightfully, universally, reverentially, and unweariedly, &c. If he might have his choice, he would exercise every grace, and perform every duty, with all his might; he sees so much excellency and beauty in God and Christ, that he cannot be at rest till he be swallowed up in the enjoyment of them; he sees so much excellency in grace, that nothing but perfection of grace will satisfy him; he makes perfection not only his utmost end, but he also labours after perfection with his utmost strength and endeavours. When God is made the one of a man's desires, the one of a man's affections, the one of a man's life and comfort, then will he be the one of a man's endeavours too. That obedience that springs from faith, when it is not winter-time with a Christian, is a fruitful obedience, it is an abounding obedience, it is a progressive obedience. Look, as the mercy and favour of God to a believer is not stinted nor limited, so the obedience of a believer to God is not stinted or limited; but now the obedience of hypocrites is always stinted and limited. This command they will obey, but

¹ It is not every believer's happiness always to make a progress in grace. Solomon and Asa, and others, run retrograde. Saints have their winter seasons; they have their decaying times, and withering times, as well as their thriving times, their flourishing times, Rev. ii. 4.

not that; this duty they will do, but not that; this work they will attend, but not that, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, *That obedience that springs from faith is the obedience of a son, not of a slave*; it is a free, voluntary, evangelical obedience, and not a legal, servile, and forced obedience: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness;' in the Hebrew, it is willingnesses, in the plural number, to shew their exceeding great willingness: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' By face is meant, (1.) God himself: Exod. xx. 3, 'Before my face,' that is, before me. (2.) His favour, Jer. xviii. 17, 'I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.' Now, no sooner had God given forth a word of command for the psalmist to seek him, and to seek his favour, but presently his heart did echo to that command: 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' So Jer. iii. 22, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings; behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' Every gracious soul hath the duplicate of God's law in his heart, and is willingly cast into the mould of his word: Rom. vi. 17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine that hath been delivered to you,' or whereto you were delivered, as the words may be read. They did not only obey, but they obeyed from the heart, their hearts were in their obedience: Ps. xl. 8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God! yea, thy law is within my heart,' or in the midst of my bowels, as the Hebrew runs; these note the tenderest affections. There is the counterpane¹ of the law written, yea, printed upon every gracious heart; a godly man will live and die with the law of God stamped upon his heart, Col. i. 12; Philip. i. 8; Jer. xxxi. 33. *O beata Apocalypsis!* said the martyr, catching up the Revelation, that was cast into the same fire with him to be burned. O blessed revelation! how happy am I to be burned with thee in my hands? It was Christ's meat and drink to do his Father's will; and the same mind is in all the saints as was in Christ Jesus. 'They delight in the law of God after the inward man,' John iv.; Philip. ii. 5; Rom. vii. 22. True obedience flows from principles of heartiness and love within, and not from bye and base respects and ends, that are carnal and worldly. It is observable, that Jehu's obedience was as ample and as large as God's command: 2 Kings x. 30, 'And the Lord said unto Jehu, because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' And yet because his heart was not in his obedience, and because he did not purely act for God, but for himself, that he might bring about his own designs, he met with a revenge instead of a reward; as you may see in that: Hosea i. 4, 'And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel, for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' Jehu's heart was not in his obedience, he had a dispensatory conscience; for though he rooted out Baal's worship, yet the golden calves must still continue. He destroyed idolaters, but not idolatry; and this carnal policy brought down vengeance and misery upon him and his posterity. Artaxerxes goes far: Ezra

¹ See Glossary, s. v.—G.

vii. 23, 'Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done.' To what a height doth this heathen prince rise! He will do anything for God, he will do everything for God that he requires. But mark, what is that which moves him to it? Is it love to God? is it delight in God? Oh no! all his obedience proceeded from nothing but fear of wrath and vengeance, as is evident in the latter part of the verse: 'For why should there be wrath upon the realm of the king, and of his sons?' or, as the Hebrew runs, Why should there be boiling or foaming anger, great indignation? as it is rendered and made the utmost degree of divine displeasure in that Deut. xxix. 28. Some read these words, 'Against the realm of the king and his sons,' as distinct one from another, and not depending one upon another; thus: Against the realm, the king and his sons; and this reading the original will bear. And this reading shews, that as the king feared God's wrath against himself, so also against his realm and children; and accordingly he was the more studious and careful to escape it. Blind nature was afraid of divine wrath, and therefore was the more sedulous to prevent it. Oh! but now a true child of God, he has the law of God written, not only in his understanding, but also in his heart and affections, Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; and this is that which makes his obedience to be pleasing and delightful to him; so that if he might be free from the injunctions and directions of the word, with the servant in the law, he would not value such a liberty, Exod. xxi. 4-6, &c.; he would not swear, nor lie, nor be drunk, nor whore, nor dissemble, nor cheat, nor run into all excess of riot if he might, because in his soul he has a principle of grace, and an inward contrariety and antipathy against it; he would not cease to hear, to read, to pray, to meditate if he might, because his soul takes a delight and sweet complacency in these things. There is a principle within him agreeable to the precept without him, which makes all religious performances to be easy and pleasurable to him. Look, as the eye delights in seeing, and the ear in hearing, so a gracious heart (except when it is under a cloud of desertion, or in the school of temptation, or under some grievous tormenting afflictions, or sadly worsted by some prevalent corruption) delights in obeying. Actions of nature, you know, are actions of delight; and so are all those actions that spring from a new nature, a divine nature, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, *That obedience that springs from faith is a transforming obedience.* It mightily alters and changes a man; from impurity to purity, from sin to sanctity, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from earthly-mindedness to heavenly-mindedness, from pride to humility, from hypocrisy to sincerity, &c., 2 Cor. iii. 18, Rom. xii. 1, 2. Such as please themselves with this, that they are no changelings, and that they are whatever they were, these are still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 23. That obedience of the Romans, which was said to have come abroad unto all men, was an exemplary obedience, and a transforming obedience, Rom. xvi. 19. Certainly, gospel-obedience is a grace of much worth, and of great force upon the whole man; for when it is once wrought in the heart, it worketh a conformity to all God's holy will. But having spoken more largely of this in my other writings, let this touch here suffice, &c.

[6.] Sixthly, *That obedience that springs from faith is a constant obedience; it is a fixed and resolved obedience.* Not in respect of practice and continued acts, 'for in many things we offend all.' 'There is not a just man upon the earth, that doth good and sinneth not.' 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' 'There is no man that sinneth not.' 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' &c.¹ But in respect of a Christian's sincere desires, bent of will, purpose of heart, resolution of soul, and faithful endeavours: Ps. cxix. 20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' Ver. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes alway, even to the end.' Ver. 33, 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.' Job xvii. 9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' So Isa. xl. 29-31, Job ii. 3. Mark, the renewed man hath at all times a desire to fear the name of the Lord, Neh. i. 11; a will to live honestly at all times, Heb. xiii. 18. And it hath some endeavours and exercise of spirit, to keep always a conscience void of offence towards God and men, Acts xxiv. 16. The Israelites, in their marches toward the holy land, were many times interrupted by divers enemies, but yet they advanced in their course, as soon as they could get rid of their enemies. So, though the believer be many times interrupted, in the course of his obedience, by many fierce temptations, and 'strange working of corruptions; yet after the temptation is over, the believer returns to the course of obedience with greater forwardness, and with redoubled strength and courage, and in the end perfects his course of holiness in the fear of the Lord, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Mark, the appearing motion and walking of an unregenerate man in a way of righteousness and holiness, is but artificial, from the engine of hypocrisy and self-interest, like the flying of Archytas his artificial dove,² and therefore having no inward principle of life, it endureth not; but the motion and walking of a man, renewed by grace in ways of holiness and righteousness, is like the natural living motion of birds, it continues as long as life continues; and as everything in motion, the nearer it comes to the centre, the more swiftly it moves, so the nearer the believer, through time, to his rest in heaven, the more propense he is in all his motions towards God; 'he forgets the things that are behind, and reacheth forth unto those things that are before,' Philip. iii. 13. That obedience that springs from faith is a fixed and resolved obedience; like David's worthies, it will break through an host of Philistines, through an army of difficulties, impediments, and discouragements, that it may be found doing the will of God. To make this a little more clearly and fully out, observe with me these few things:

First, No contrary commands of men shall take this man off from his obedience to the commands of God, Acts iv. 19, and v. 29, &c.

Secondly, No stream of evil examples, no current of corrupt times, shall bear them down in ways of obedience: Joshua xxiv. 15, 'I and my household will serve the Lord, though all Israel should serve idols.' And Noah was upright with God, and walked with God in his genera-

¹ James iii. 2; Eccles. vii. 20; Prov. xx. 9; 1 Kings viii. 46; 1 John i. 8.; Ps. xvii. 3.

² Archytas: About the 'dove,' see *Gell.*, x. 12.—G.

tion, when the whole world was overspread with violence, and all flesh had corrupted their ways, Gen. vi. 9, and vii. 1.

Thirdly, No worldly profit or advantage shall bribe this man from his obedience, Heb. xi. 8. Abraham will obey and follow God, though he forsakes all the benefits and contentments of his native country, and of his father's house, not knowing where his lot should fall, &c.

Fourthly, No carnal disputes or reasonings with flesh and blood shall dissuade him from his obedience, Heb. xi. 7. Noah might have raised many objections against that strange attempt of building an ark, a work of an hundred and twenty years' continuance; but Noah waves all disputes, and falls upon building of the ark, according to the command of God. So Paul, as soon as he was converted, he was commanded by God to preach to the Gentiles; he might have made abundance of objections against that service, but instead of objecting, he falls close to his Master's work, and never consults with flesh and blood, Gal. i. 15-17.

Fifthly, No flood of natural affection shall hinder them in the way of their obedience. When God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt-offering, he goes about it readily, and never acquaints Sarah with it, lest she should have hindered him in his obedience, and he goes three days' journey to effect it, Gen. xxii. compared with Heb. xi. 17-19. When God commands, Abraham will not stick at it, though it be to offer up a son, a natural son, and not an adopted son; an only son, and not one of many; a son of the free-woman, and not of the bond-woman; a son of his old age; a son of the promise; a son in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; a son of his love and delight; a son that made the good old man laugh and be merry,—Isaac signifies laughter,—a son that was grown up to some years; witness the wood of the burnt-offering that he laid upon him, Gen. xxii. 6, 7. And this was the commendation of Levi: Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9, 'And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one' [Urim and Thummim signify light and perfection, according to their best derivation in the Hebrew tongue, and they are here put in the plural number, lights and perfections, to note the plenty as well as the excellency of divine graces,] 'whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children.'¹ This relates to that heroic fact of the Levites, Exod. xxxii. 26-29, when, at the commandment of Moses, they slew their idolatrous brethren that had worshipped the golden calf, not sparing those that were most nearly allied to them, but did execute God's judgments upon parents, brethren, and children, as if they had been mere strangers to them; the Levites were so impartial in God's cause as not to acknowledge either father or mother, brother or children, against his command. Natural affections are strong, but supernatural obedience is stronger. Some have well observed, that the married martyrs, who were parents of many children, as Rogers, Watts, Guest, Rawlins, &c., suffered with most alacrity.²

¹ By Urim and Thummim, some understand sincerity of life, and soundness of doctrine.

² Interesting notices of all these in Clarke, as before, *sub nominibus*.—G.

Sixthly, No terrors, no threats, no reproaches, no afflictions, no oppositions, no persecutions, no bonds, no banishments, no dangers, no deaths, shall deter them or affright them from their obedience, as will evidently appear by comparing of these scriptures together, Ps. xlv. 16-21; Acts xx. 23, 24, xxi. 12, 13, and xxiv. 14; Dan. iii. 14-19; Rev. xii. 11. This is most evident in the histories of the ten persecutions, and in all other histories, both of a former and a later date, &c.

Physicians observe a difference betwixt the natural and preternatural heat in men's bodies. The preternatural heat, which ariseth from distemper, may be more for the present; but as it exceeds for measure, so it abates for time, because the natural heat is a more equal, and moderate, and durable heat; every part hath an equal share, and it is not extreme, and yet it continues. Thus it is with hypocrites and upright persons in the matter of obedience. The hypocrite may, in a kind of preternatural heat, in a hot fit, in a present heat, fall upon hearing, and reading, and praying, and reforming of his family, and upon leaving of this sin and that, and upon casting off this vain company and that, and upon associating of himself with this good company and that. But this hot fit does not last; the cold fit takes him again, and then he shakes hands with all his duties, and loses all his good inclinations, and lays aside all his warm resolutions. Will the hypocrite pray always? Job xxvii. 8, 9. Ephraim's goodness was as a morning cloud, which soon vanisheth, and as the early dew, which is soon dried up by the sunbeams, Hosea vi. 4. They were both false and fickle, unsteady and unstable, constant only in inconstancy; their hearts were never right with God, for they were not stedfast in his covenant, Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37. There are four times wherein an hypocrite may express a great readiness and forwardness to religious duties:

(1.) First, *When he is under terrors and distress of conscience.* Oh, now for a little ease, a little rest, a little quiet, a little comfort, what won't the hypocrite do! &c.

(2.) Secondly, *When he is under sore and heavy afflictions.* Hosea v. 15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early;' Isa. xxvi. 16, 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;' Ps. lxxviii. 34, 'When he slew them, then they sought him.' It is a reproach to some: No penny, no paternoster. And it is a shame to others: No plague, no paternoster; no punishment, no prayer, &c. So Pharaoh and Ahab, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, *When religion is in fashion, when it is a credit to be a professor, and when profession is the highway to profit and preferment.* In the warm summer of prosperity, when there is no hazard, no danger, no loss to be a Christian, who then so forward in religious duties as the hypocrite? but when the sun of persecution is up, then he falls away, Mat. xiii. 5, 6.

(4.) Fourthly, *When others' presence, counsel, and examples have an influence upon them.* Oh, now they keep close duties! Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest; but when Jehoiada was dead, Joash serves groves and idols, and turns a deaf ear to those prophets that testified against him, and gives Zechariah the son of Jehoiada his passport out of the world for inveighing against his evil manners, and the wicked courses of his

princes and people, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17–23. Whilst the good judges lived, the Israelites kept close to the service of God : Judges ii. 7, ‘And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.’ But when the good judges were dead, the Israelites did what was right in their own eyes : every man’s lust was his law, Judges xvii. 6, and chap. xxi. 25. Whilst Moses was present, there was no talking of a golden calf, but no sooner was his back turned but the Israelites make a golden calf, and worship it when they had done, Exod. xxxii. 1–9, &c.

But now mark, that obedience that springs from faith, that is a constant obedience, that is constant in opposition to fits and starts, and imports the course and bent of a Christian’s life, which is always to walk with God, to cleave to God, to follow God, and to obey God. But, [7.] Seventhly and lastly, *That obedience that springs from faith, is directed to right ends.* Gospel obedience has always gospel ends attending of it. *Quest. What are they? Ans. They are these nine.*

(1.) First, *To testify our thankfulness to the Lord for all his favours and benefits that we have received from him,* Ps. ciii. 1–4; cxvi. 12, &c.

(2.) Secondly, *To recover the image of God again, to the height of what we are able.* The first Adam lost the image of God by his disobedience. Now, this image of God we recover again in Christ our second Adam ; but so as that the more enlightened, the more holy, the more humble, the more heavenly, the more righteous, the more gracious, and the more obedient we are, the more we recover of this image of God, which consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Now, saith the believer, my intent is to recover that precious image of God which I lost in the first Adam, and therefore do I labour to come up to the highest pitches of obedience, because the higher I rise in my obedience, the more I shall recover of the lost image of God. I know that I lost this image by partaking of the disobedience and pollution of the first Adam ; and I know that I have recovered in part the same image by partaking of the obedience and holiness of the second Adam ; and I yet further know that the more holy and obedient I am, the more I shall be like to that God that is holiness itself, and the more I shall recover of that blessed image which consists in perfect holiness.

(3.) Thirdly, *Not for the justification of their persons, for that is only by Christ’s complete obedience, which is made theirs by faith,* 1 Cor. i. 30, Colos. ii. 10 ; *but for the testification of their justifying faith, according to that of the apostle,* James ii. 17, 18, 26, &c.

(4.) Fourthly, *That they may imitate the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be the more conformable to Christ their head, who proposes his holiness to believers as a pattern for them to follow, as a copy for them to write after :* 1 John ii. 6, ‘He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.’ Now saith the believer, oh how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how meek, how compassionate, how zealous, how exemplary, how convincing, how winning, how obedient was he when in this world ! and therefore, O my soul ! look to it, that thou makest it thy business, thy work, thy heaven, to imitate

the Lord Jesus to the utmost that thou art able to reach to, Mat. xi. 28, 29.

(5.) Fifthly, *Though not for the obtaining of salvation, that being made sure to us by Christ, yet for the obtaining of assurance of salvation, and for the making of our calling and election sure, according to that word, 2 Peter i. 5-11.*

(6.) Sixthly, *That they may keep up their communion with God;* for though the union the saints have with God by Christ depends wholly upon that which is without, viz., their being married to Christ, and clothed with his righteousness, yet the communion which the saints have with God through the Spirit hath much dependence upon a saint's walking, and upon his obedience; so that, if a saint shall dare to walk carnally and loosely, though he shall not break the marriage-knot, and lose his union, yet he will by such sinful practices grieve the Spirit, and lose his communion with God, Jer. iii. 14, Isa. xlix. 1, 2. But on the other hand, when a believer walks spiritually, graciously, obedientially, oh what sweet communion! what delightful communion! what high communion, what commodious communion! what soul-satisfying, soul-ravishing, soul-filling, soul-contenting communion with God does he then enjoy! When the child walks wisely and obedientially before his father, what sweet and delightful converses and communion is there between the father and the child; but if the child walk foolishly, stubbornly, rebelliously, disobediently, the prudent father will carry it severely, strangely, frowningly, and at a distance. Though his heart be still full of love to his child, and though he won't disinherit him, yet he will not be familiar with him. The application is easy, &c.

(7.) Seventhly, *To keep down the body, and to bring it into subjection to the soul:* 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.' By spiritual exercises the apostle did subdue his flesh to the obedience and discipline of the Spirit. In former times they had several exercises, as wrestling, and running for the prize. Now, such as were slow, palsy, unwieldy, and lazy, were cashiered; they would not admit such to be of their society or company, who wrestled and run for the prize. Them that were admitted to those exercises kept their bodies at an under, and did not pamper their bodies with dainties and delicates. To these the apostle alludes; of idleness there comes no goodness. When the spirit is not acting in that which is good, that the flesh may be kept under, the flesh will take an advantage to be very active in those things that are evil, that the spirit may be kept under; the flesh is like an unruly beast, which through rest, idleness, and high feeding, grows wild and masterless. Now, the only way to tame this beast is to work him hard; so the way of ways to keep the body under is to keep up the soul as much as may be, in the full exercise of holiness and obedience. Such as have most pampered their bodies, have been the greatest enemies to their own souls; and how many are there this day that pamper their bodies, but starve their souls; that adorn their bodies, but defile their soul; that trick and trim up their bodies with gold, and silver, and silks, whilst their souls are naked of all grace, holiness, and goodness, like the Laodiceans of old.¹ The body itself, if you set too high a price upon it, will make a cheap

¹ Deut. xxxii. 13-17; Jer. v. 7, 8, &c.; Rev. iii. 16-18.

soul; a man may be as happy in russet as in tissue; and he is certainly an unhappy man whose outside is his best side. Our bodies are but dirt handsomely tempered, and artificially formed; we derive our pedigree from the dust, and are akin to clay; and therefore we need not scruple the keeping of it under by holy exercises, and by all ways of gospel obedience, &c.

(8.) Eighthly, *To the profit and advantage both of sinners and saints.* [1.] To convince sinners, to silence sinners, and to stop the mouths of sinners. Let but one man that walks wisely, humbly, circumspectly, convincingly, exemplarily, blamelessly, come into a town, a parish, a family, made up of drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, whoremasters, &c., and his holy walking will convince them and condemn them, 1 Peter ii. 12, 15; chap. iii. 13, 16. [2.] To the profit, advantage, and encouragement of the saints. The strict, exact-walking Christian provokes the slight, loose Christian to mend his manners, and to order his steps and conversation aright; and the lively active Christian puts the dull, heavy, sluggish Christian to a blush, and spurs and quickens him up to a more lively walking with God; and the warm, flaming, zealous, burning Christian puts heat and warmth into the cold, formal, frozen Christian; and the free, liberal, bountiful Christian provokes others to be free, noble, and liberal for the supply of the necessities of the saints, 2 Cor. ix. 1, 2; chap. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 19, 20, &c.

(9.) The ninth and last, though not the least, end, *is the honour and glory of the great God.* God's grace is the spring, and God's glory is the end of all a Christian's obedience. God's glory is the ultimate end, the primary end, the universal end, the sea to which all a Christian's actions, like so many rivers, move and bend, Rom. xiv. 7, 8; Philip. i. 20, 21. It is true many poor, low, mean, base ends may creep into a Christian's performances; but here mark, [1.] they are disallowed; [2.] they are loathed and abhorred; [3.] they are resisted and striven against; [4.] they are lamented and mourned over; [5.] the gracious soul would willingly be rid of them. If a Christian might have his choice, he would never be troubled with any base end any more. Beloved, you must always distinguish between a man's settled and his suggested ends. A man's settled end may be one thing, and his suggested end another thing. Now for ever remember this, that the great God always makes a judgment of men according to their settled ends, according to the universal frame of their spirits, and not according to those ends that may be suggested to them by the world, the flesh, or the devil. It is in this case as it may be with a man that shoots at a mark; he aims aright at the mark, but his elbow may meet with a jog, which may carry the arrow quite another way than what he intended; or as it is with a man that is sailing to such a haven, or to such a harbour, he steers a right course by his compass, but the winds blowing contrary, and the sea running high, he is forced into such a creek, or such a harbour, which he never intended, &c.

Quest. Is it requisite, for the clearing of the sincerity of our hearts, that we have a continual eye to the glory of God in every action we do?

Ans. 1. First, *You must distinguish between an actual aim and intention, and an habitual aim and intention.* For the first, an actual

aim and intention of the spirit, in every particular action that a man doth to the glory of God, is utterly impossible, whilst we carry about with us a body of sin and death. The angels and 'spirits of just men made perfect' do thus actually aim at the glory of God in all they do; but it is a work that will be too high and too hard for us, whilst we are here in a polluted estate. This was so high a mark, that Adam missed it in his innocency. No wonder then if we often miss it in our sinful state and condition. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, *There is an habitual inclination in us, in every action we do, to aim at the honour and glory of God, though there be not the actual intention of the spirit in every action we do.* It is with us, as with a man travelling towards a town or city; he thinks in the morning to go to such a town, such a place, where he purposes to lie the first night, and therefore sets forth towards it; and though he doth not think of this every step he takes, yet it is his purpose in his journey to rest there at night; or as it is with a man that comes to church, his end is to hear the word of the Lord; yet in every word he hears spoken, he hath not the thought of his end upon his spirit, but he is there by virtue of his first intention. So here, though in every particular there be not an intention of spirit to level this or that action to the glory of God, yet it is the main drift and habitual scope of a man's spirit, that God's glory may be the end of all his actions.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, *There is a mediate and there is an immediate eyeing or looking to the glory of God;* as when I forbear such and such a sin, because God by such a command hath forbidden it, or I do such and such a duty, because God hath commanded it. Now, in eyeing of the command of God, I eye the glory of God immediately, though not mediately.¹ But,

Ans. 4. Fourthly, *In some particular or special cases, I ought actually to eye the glory of God:* as [1.] In some eminent or extraordinary service that I am to do for Christ; or [2.] In some special testimony that I am called to give for Christ or his gospel; or [3.] In some great thing that I am called to suffer for Christ, or his gospel, or his interest. But,

Ans. 5. Fifthly, *The more a Christian actually eyes the glory of God in all he does, the more,* [1.] He glorifies God; [2.] The nearer you are the life of heaven, and the more you act like the glorious angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect'; [3.] The more will be your joy, comfort, and peace, both in life and death, and in the day of your account; [4.] The more strong will be your confidence and assurance that your spiritual estate is good, and that you shall be saved for ever; [5.] The better you will be able to bear up under all the false, hard, and sour censures of this world; [6.] The more you will be temptation-proof; [7.] The more glorious and weighty will be your crown of glory at last. He shall be highest in heaven, who has actually aimed most at the glory of God in this lower world.

And thus you see how you may know whether your obedience is such an obedience as springs from faith or no. Now, if upon trial you shall find that your obedience is the obedience of faith, then you may safely and groundedly conclude, that you have a saving work of God upon your hearts. But,

¹ Qu. 'mediately, though not immediately'?—ED.

IV. Fourthly, *A gracious heart is an uniform heart.* Ubiquity¹ is a sure evidence of integrity. He that is truly good, will be good in bad times, and in the worst of places. Principles of grace and holiness are lasting, yea, everlasting; they are not like the morning cloud, nor the early dew, Ps. cxix. 112; 1 John iii. 9; Hosea vi. 4. A gracious soul will be steady and fixed in its principles, in the worst times, in the worst places, and under variety of dispensations. Let times and places be what they will, he will not dishonour his God, nor blemish his profession, nor wound his conscience to preserve his safety, or to secure his liberty. An upright man is a right man; so *יָשָׁר*, *jashar* is rendered by the Septuagint, Judges xvii. 6. He is one that will not be bowed or bent by the sinful customs or examples of the times and places where he lives. Abraham was righteous in Chaldea, and Noah was perfect in his generation, though it was the worst in the world; and Lot was just in Sodom, and Job was upright in the land of Uz, which was a place of much profaneness and superstition; and Nehemiah was courageous and zealous in Damascus; and Daniel was holy, yea, eminently and exemplarily holy, in Babylon. The several generations wherein these holy men lived, were wholly devoted to wickedness and superstition, and yet these precious, gracious souls had wholly devoted themselves to the Lord and his service; so David, 'My soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgments at all times,' Ps. cxix. 20. Let the times be never so dangerous, licentious, superstitious, idolatrous, or erroneous, yet David's heart was strongly carried forth to God's judgments; that is, to his word, for under this title, *judgments*, you are to understand the whole word of God. So there were some in Sardis that were of the same spirit with the worthies last mentioned: Rev. iii. 4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.' In polluting times pure hearts will keep themselves pure; a holy heart will keep himself undefiled, even in defiling times, Ps. cxix. 1-3. Rev. xiv. 4, 'These are they which were not defiled with women;' when others are besmeared all over, he will keep his garments white and clean. The three children, or rather the three champions, Dan. iii. 17-20, were so highly resolved to keep themselves pure from the abominations of their day, that it was neither Nebuchadnezzar's music that would flatter them, nor his fiery furnace that could scare them from their God, or from their duty, or from their religion. Let the times never so often turn, you shall find that he that is really holy, he will be holy under every turn; no turns shall turn him out of a way of holiness; Job xvii. 9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' The laurel keeps its freshness and greenness in the winter season; a gracious soul is *semper idem*. Let the wind, and the world, and the times turn which way they will, a gracious soul for the main will still be the same; he is 'like mount Zion, which cannot be removed,' Ps. cxxv. 1. Job xxvii. 5, 6, 'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' A gracious heart is, in some measure, like the heart of God, without variableness or shadow of changing. That Christian that is not for substance the

¹ Being alike in all places.—G.

same that once he was, was never what he ought to be, James i. 17. A gracious heart is firm and fixed for God and godliness, both in prosperity and in adversity; take him among the good or among the bad, take him in storms or calms, in winter nights or in summer days, take him among friends or foes, take him at bed or board, take him in health or sickness, take him in an ordinance or out of an ordinance, take him in his work or take him at his recreations, take him in his commerce or in his converse, take him living or take him dying, and you shall still find that the bias of his soul is still God-wards, Christ-wards, holiness-wards, and heaven-wards. A gracious man will stand his ground, and hold his own in all changes, his heart being fixed upon an unchangeable God. The philosopher's good man is τετραγωνος, four square; cast him where you will, like a die he falls always square and sure. So cast a gracious man where you will, and into what company you will, and into what condition you will, yet still he falls sure and square for God and godliness.¹ Let the times be never so sad, nor never so bad, yet a gracious soul will keep his hold; he will let all go, he will let everything go, before he will let his God go, or his religion go, or his integrity go. A gracious Christian is like gold. Now cast gold into the fire, or into the water; cast it upon the dunghill, or into the kennel; cast it among the poor, or among the rich; among the religious, or among the superstitious, &c.; yet still it is gold, still it retains its purity and excellency. So cast a gracious Christian, who is the only golden Christian in the world, into what condition you will, and into what company you will, yet still he will retain his purity, his innocency. Lapidaries tell us of the Chelydonian stone,² that it will retain its virtue and lustre no longer than it is enclosed in gold: a fit emblem of an hypocrite, who is only good while he is enclosed in golden prosperity, safety, and felicity. An unsound Christian, like green timber, shrinks when the sun of persecution shines hot upon him, Mat. xiii. 6. The heat of fiery trials cools the courage of an unsound Christian. If you put water into a tub, it will have the shape of the tub that you put it into; or if you put water into a glass, it will have the shape of the glass you put it into. This is the very picture of an unsound heart; but a sincere Christian is like a massive vessel of gold, that keeps its own shape and figure, at all times, in all places, and in all companies. Unsound hearts, they will be righteous among the righteous, and licentious among the licentious. They will be as the company is amongst which they are cast. With the good they will be good, and with the bad they will be bad; with the zealous they will be zealous; and with the superstitious they will be superstitious; and with the lukewarm they will be lukewarm. They are for all times and tides; they are for any turn that will serve their turn; they are for any mood that will bring either profit or pleasure to them; they are like Alcibiades, of whom it was said, that he was *omnium horarum homo*, a man for all times; for he could swagger it at Athens, and take any pains at Thebes; he could live most sparingly at Lacedæmon, and bib³ among the Thracians, and hunt among the Persians. They

¹ Joshua xxiv. 15; Ps. cxii. 7; Mal. iii. 6. The poor heathen could say, that change of place causeth not any change of mind, &c.:

Cælum non animun mutant qui trans mare currunt.—(Horat. lib. i. ep. xi.)

² See Index *sub voce* for other references to this.—G.

³ = 'tipple.'—G.

are like the chameleon, ready to change their hue with every one they converse with ; they are like *Polypus*, that resembleth every stone that it sticketh to ; or they are like the buskins anciently used in tragedies, that would serve either leg alike ;¹ they are as fit for one society as another ; or like the players that used them, such as acting princely parts, wear royal apparel, keep state, and demean themselves gravely and soberly, so long as they are in public view upon the stage ; but when they have done acting, are no sooner off the stage, but they pass presently into another habit, and retain neither their princely behaviour nor apparel, but are most beggarly, base, and debauched, either in private among themselves, or among their companions like themselves.² Unsound hearts can accommodate themselves to the times, and comply with them, whatever they be. With Proteus they will transform themselves into all shapes ; as the times change, so will they ; what the times favour, that they will favour ; what the times commend, that they will commend ; what the times cry up and admire, that they will cry up and admire ; and what the times frown upon and condemn, that they will frown upon and condemn. Look, as curious and well drawn pictures seem to turn their eyes every way, and to smile upon every one that looks upon them, so these can turn with the times, they can look as the times look, and smile as the times smile ; they can say with the times, and sail with the times ; sometimes they can act one part, and sometimes another part, as the times require. If the times require a large profession, they can make it ; if the times bespeak them to leave their religion at the church door, they can leave it. But now, a sincere Christian, he will labour to be so much the more gracious, by how much the more the times are licentious. A sincere Christian is like gold. If you cast it into the fire, it will not waste ; if you throw it into the water, it will not rust, it will retain its own purity and excellency wherever you dispose of it. But,

V. Fifthly, *A gracious heart sets himself most against his darling sin, his bosom-sin, against the sin of his complexion, constitution, inclination, and calling, &c.*, Heb. xii. 1. There is some one sinful quality that is more predominant in the heart of man than any other.³ There is some one Delilah, some one darling sin that a man is more apt to play withal, and to hug in his own bosom, than any other. There is usually some one sin that is a favourite, some one sin which the heart is most fond of, and which the bias of the soul doth most naturally and strongly incline towards. Pliny writeth of some families that had privy marks on their bodies peculiar to those of that line ; and so every man hath as it were his privy sin, which is most justly and peculiarly called his ; as in a ground that lieth untilled, amongst the great variety of weeds, there is usually some master weed, one among the rest that is rifer and ranker than all the rest. And as it is in the body of man, that although in some degree or other, more or less, there be a mixture of all the four elements, not any of them wholly wanting, yet there is some one of them predominant that gives the denomination ; in regard whereof some are said to be of a sanguine, some of a phlegmatic, some of a choleric, and some of a melancholic constitution. Now, thus it is in the souls of men. Though there be a general mixture and medley of all

¹ Lucian.² Seneca, ep. 76, &c.³ *Peccatum in delitiis*.—Augustine.

evil and corrupt qualities, yet is there some one usually that is paramount, more powerful and prevalent, that swayeth and sheweth forth itself more eminently and more evidently than any other of them do; and from this, therefore, more frequently and apparently discovering itself, is the denomination wont to be given whereby some are styled ambitious, some lascivious, some envious, some malicious, some haughty, some hasty, and the like. Or as in every man's body there is a seed and principle of death, yet some are more prone to die of a fever than of a dropsy, and others are more prone to die of a dropsy than of a fever, &c. ; so though original sin hath spread itself over all our noble and ignoble parts, yet every man hath his particular inclinations to one kind of sin rather than another; and this may properly be called a man's own sin, his own evil way. Now mark, a gracious heart makes most head, most opposition, against his darling sin, against his complexion sin, against those sins that were once as dear to him as his right hand, or as his right eye, or as Delilah was to Samson, Herodias to Herod, Isaac to Abraham, and Joseph to Jacob: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity;' that is, from my darling sin whereunto I was most inclined and addicted. What this bosom-sin was that he kept himself from, it is hard to say. Some suppose his darling sin was lying, dissembling, for it is certain he often fell into this sin: Ps. cxix. 29, 'Remove from me the way of lying.'¹ Others suppose it to be some secret iniquity, which was only known to God and his own conscience. Others say it was uncleanness, and that therefore he prayed that God would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, Ps. cxix. 37. Others judge it to be that sin of disloyalty which Saul and his courtiers falsely charged upon him. Well, be it this or that, it is enough for our purpose that his heart did rise against that very sin that either by custom or complexion, or some strong inclination, he was most naturally apt, ready, and prone to fall into. This is the laying of the axe to the root of the tree; and by this practice David gives a clear proof of the integrity of his heart. Idolatry was the darling sin of the people of Israel; they called their idols delectable or desirable things; they did dearly affect and greatly delight in their idols, Jer. xvii. 1, 2; Hosea ii. 8; Isa. xxxi. 6, 7, xlv. 9, &c. But when the Lord in the day of his power wrought savingly and gloriously upon their hearts, oh! how did their hatred and indignation against their idols rise! as you may see Isa. xxx. 22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' They were so delighted and enamoured with their idols, that they would lavish gold out of the bag, or they waste or spend riotously, as the Hebrew runs, that they might richly deck them up, and set them forth in the greatest glory and bravery. Oh! but when the Lord should make a glorious turn upon their spirits, then they should readily and roundly deface, defile, and disgrace their idols, then they should hate and abhor them, then they should so detest and loathe them, that in a holy indignation they should cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, Get ye hence,

¹ In that 1 Sam. xxi. 2, 8, he tells three or four round lies, and the like he did in that 1 Sam. xxvii. 8-10.

pack, begone, I will never have any more to do with you, Isa. xlvi. 6.¹ And so in that Isa. ii. 20, 'In that day,' that is, in the day of his people; ver. 17, 'A man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.' In the day when God should exalt himself in the souls of his people, and before the eyes of his people, they should express such disdain and indignation against their idols that they should not take only those made of trees and stones, but even their most precious and costly idols, those that were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats; that is, they should cast them into such blind holes, and into such dark, filthy, nasty, and dusty corners, as moles make underground, and as bats roost in. So when Christ, and grace, and holiness comes to be set up in men's hearts and lives, then all their darling sins, their bosom lusts, which are their idols of silver and their idols of gold, these are with a holy indignation cast to the moles and to the bats; they are so loathed, abhorred, abandoned, and cashiered, that they desire they may be for ever buried in oblivion, and never see the light more. Idols were Ephraim's bosom sin: Hosea iv. 17, 'Ephraim is joined,' or glued, as the word signifies, 'to idols, let him alone.' But when the dew of grace fell upon Ephraim, as it did in chap. xiv. 5-7, then saith Ephraim, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' ver. 8. Now Ephraim loathes his idols as much or more than before he loved them; he now abandons and abominates them. Though before he was as closely glued to them as the wanton is glued to his Delilah, or as the enchanter is glued to the devil, from whom by no means he is able to stir, as the words in the fountain² imports, when it was the day of the Lord's power upon Ephraim, then Ephraim cries out, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Oh! I have had to do with them too long, and too much already! Oh! how doth my soul now rise against them! how do I detest and abhor them! Surely I will never have more to do with them. The Scripture tells us, Deut. xiii. 6-9, that if father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or kinsman, or friend, should go about to draw a man from God, his hand should be first upon him to put him to death. Now, bosom sins, complexion sins, they seek to draw a man's heart from God, and therefore a gracious soul can't but rise up against them, and do his best to stone them, and to be the death of them: 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand,' saith bloody Esau, 'then will I slay my brother Jacob,' Gen. xxvii. 41. It is a bloody speech of a vindictive spirit, whom nothing would satisfy but innocent blood. So saith the gracious soul, The days of mourning for the death of my dear Saviour are now at hand, and therefore I will slay my bosom lusts, my constitution sins; now will I be revenged on them for all the dishonours that they have done to God, and for all the wounds that they have made in my conscience, and for all the mercies that they have embittered, and for all the favours that they have prevented, and for all the afflictions that they have procured, and for all the duties that they have hindered. Samson pleads hard with God, that he might be avenged on the Philistines for his two eyes, Judges xvi. 28; and so doth the gracious soul plead hard with God,

¹ After the return of the Jews out of Babylon, they so hated and abhorred idols that in the times of the Romans they chose rather to die than to suffer the eagle, which was the imperial arms, to be set up in their temple.

² The original 'Hebrew.'—G.

that he may be avenged on his bosom lusts, on his complexion sins, which have put out his two eyes, which have so blinded him that he has not for a long time been able to see God, or Christ, or the things that belong to his external, internal, or eternal peace. The next of kin in the law was always the avenger of blood, and to him it appertained to hunt after the murderer, to bring upon his head the innocent blood that he had shed. If therefore we will shew ourselves brethren or sisters of Christ, or anything of kin unto him, we must even be the avengers of his blood upon bosom sins, upon complexion sins; for for them as well as others was his blood shed. O sirs! what bosom sin is there so sweet or profitable that is worth a-burning in hell for, or worth a-shutting out of heaven for? Surely none. This a gracious soul seriously weighs, and accordingly he sets himself against the toad in his bosom, against his darling sins, against his complexion sins. But now, unsound hearts are very favourable to bosom sins, to complexion sins. They say of them, as Lot of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' Gen. xix. 20. And as David once said concerning Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 5, 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom;' 'beware that none touch the young man Absalom,' verse 12. 'And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?' verse 29. An unsound heart is as fond of his bosom sins, of his complexion sins, as Jacob was of his Benjamin; or as Jehu was of his calves; or as Naaman was of his idol Rimmon; or as Judas was of bearing the bag; or as Herod was of his Herodias; or as Demetrius was of his Diana; or as the Pharisees were of devouring widows' houses, and of having the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and of being saluted in the market places with those glorious titles, Rabbi, rabbi. The besotted sinner is most engaged to his bosom sins, his complexion sins; and therefore it is as bitter a thing as death for him to part with them. He had rather part with burnt-offerings and calves of a year old; he had rather part with 'thousands of rams, and with ten thousand rivers of oil; yea, he had rather part with his first-born, than with his bosom sin; he is ready to give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul,' Micah vi. 6. Let God frown or smile, stroke or strike, lift up or cast down, promise or threaten, yet he will hide and hold fast his bosom sin; let God set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery before him, yet will he not part with his bosom sins; let God wound his conscience, blow upon his estate, leave a blot upon his name, crack his credit, afflict his body, write death upon his relations, and be a *Magor-missabib*, a terror to his soul, yet will he not let go his darling sins, Jer. xx. 3, 4. An unsound heart will rather let God go, and Christ go, and heaven go, and all go, than he will let his darling lusts go. But now a sound Christian, a throughout Christian, he sets himself most against the Delilah in his bosom, against the Benjamin, the son, the sin of his right hand. A sincere Christian looks upon bosom sins, upon complexion sins, as the most God-provoking sins. There are no sins so provoking to God's jealousies and justice as bosom sins; he looks upon bosom sins, complexion sins, as the most dangerous sins; he looks upon bosom sins, complexion sins, as the worst thing in all the world; he looks upon bosom sins, complexion sins, as more ugly and horrid than the devil himself, or than hell itself; he looks upon bosom sins as the great make-baits between God and his soul, and

between his conscience and his comfort, Isa. lix. 1, 2, Lam. iii. 8, 44; he looks upon bosom sins as those enemies that have provoked God often to turn a deaf ear to all his prayers; he looks upon his bosom sins as so many Judases that have often betrayed him into the hands of the devil; he looks upon his bosom sins as the waters of Marah, that has embittered all his mercies; he looks upon his bosom sins as the only things that have often clouded the face of God; he looks upon his bosom sins as dead flies in the box of precious ointment, that spoils all, and accordingly with all his might he sets himself against them. (1.) He fights most against these; (2.) he weeps most over these; (3.) he watches and arms most against these; (4.) he prays most against these; (5.) he resolves most against these; and (6.) he lays the axe of repentance most to these, &c.

But pray sir, before you close up this chapter, lay down some sure and infallible evidences of the goodness, graciousness, and happiness of their estates and conditions, who are but weak in grace, who are but babes of grace, that so they may have their portion, satisfaction, support, and consolation as well as others.

Ans. I shall endeavour to do it, and therefore thus:

VI. Sixthly, *True desires of grace is grace, true desires after Christ, and grace, and holiness, is grace.* He who does sincerely desire to believe, he does really believe; and he that does sincerely desire to repent, he does really repent; and he that does sincerely desire to obey the Lord, and to fear the Lord, and to serve the Lord, he does really obey the Lord, and fear the Lord, and serve the Lord.¹ It is the first step to grace, for a man to see his heart void of grace; and it is the first degree of grace, for a man to desire grace. Mark, all true desires of grace have the very nature and truth of grace in them, as there is true fire in a spark as well as in a flame, and true water in a drop as well as in a stream, and true light in a beam as well as in the sun, and true gold in the very filings of gold as well as in the whole wedge of gold; the least of anything partakes of the nature of the whole, Isa. lv. 1, 2, lxv. 1; John vii. 37. True desires of grace argues a state of grace and salvation: Ps. xxxviii. 9, 'Lord, thou knowest all my desires, my groaning is not hid from thee.' Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;' or as the Greek runs, after the participle of the present tense, they that are hungering and thirsting; intimating, that wherever this is the present disposition of men's souls, they are blessed: Rev. xxii. 17, 'And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Sincere desires of grace are those holy seeds, those divine beginnings of grace in the soul, out of which grace springs and grows up to its measure and perfection.² O sirs! look, as no man can sincerely seek God in vain, so no man can sincerely desire grace in vain. A man may love gold, yet not have it; but no man loveth God, but is sure to have him. Wealth a man may desire, and yet be never the nearer for it; but grace no man ever sincerely desired and missed it. And why? it is God that hath wrought this desire in the heart, and he will never

¹ 1 Peter ii. 3, 4; 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19; Mat. vii. 8; Ps. xlii. 1, 2, lxiii. 1, &c.

² Augustine. Where there are sincere desires of grace, there are the seeds of grace, the conception of grace, the buds of grace.

frustrate the desire that himself hath there wrought. Let no man say, I have no faith, no repentance, no love, no fear of God, no sanctifying, no saving grace in me. Doth he see a want of those things in himself? Yes, that is it which so grieves him, that he cannot love God, stand in awe of him, trust in his mercy, repent of sin as he should; yea, but doth he seriously and unfeignedly desire to do thus? Yes, he desires it above all things in the world, and would be willing, as it were, to buy even with a whole world the least measure, or dram, or drop only of such grace. Now let me ask him, who is it that hath wrought this desire in him? Not the devil; for he would rather quench it than kindle it in him; not his own corruption, for that is naturally averse to every thing that is good; it must needs then be the work of the Spirit of God, who 'works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,' and who pronounceth all them blessed that thus desire after grace. 'When I have a good desire,' saith one, 'though it doth scarcely shew itself in some little slender sigh, I must be assured that the Spirit of God is present, and worketh his good work.' Wicked men do not desire the grace of the Holy Spirit, whereby they may resist sin, and therefore they are justly deprived of it; for he that earnestly desireth the Holy Ghost hath it already, because this desire of the Spirit cannot be but from the Spirit. 'Our faith,' saith another, 'may be so small and weak, as it doth not yet bring forth fruits that may be lively felt in us; but if they which feel themselves in such an estate desire to have these feelings, namely, of God's favour and love, if they ask them of God's hands by prayer, this desire and prayer are testimonies that the Spirit of God is in them, and that they have faith already; for is such a desire a fruit of the flesh or of the spirit? It is of the Holy Spirit, who bringeth it forth only in such as he dwells in, &c.² Then those holy desires and prayers, being the motions of the Holy Ghost in us, are testimonies of our faith, although they seem to us small and weak. As the woman that feeleth the moving of a child in her body, though very weak, assureth herself that she hath conceived, and that she goeth with a live child; so if we have these motions, these holy affections and desires before mentioned, let us not doubt but that we have the Holy Ghost, who is the author of them, dwelling in us, and consequently that we have also faith. Again, saith the same author, (1.) if thou hast begun to hate and fly sin; (2.) if thou feelest that thou art displeased at thine infirmities and corruptions; (3.) if, having offended God, thou findest a grief and a sorrow for it; (4.) if thou desire to abstain from sin; (5.) if thou avoidest the occasions of sin; (6.) if thou doest thy endeavours against sin; (7.) if thou prayest to God to give thee grace; all these holy affections, proceeding from none other than from the Spirit of God, ought to be as so many pledges and testimonies that he is in thee. It is as impossible for us naturally to do the least good, or to desire the least grace, as it is for a toad to spit cordials, Philip. ii. 13, 2 Cor. viii. 10, 12. Sincere desires after God, and Christ, and grace, is sometimes the all that the people of God find in them-

¹ Kemnitius, *Ursini Catechis.*

² Taffnie's book of the Marks of God's children. [*Sic*: but rather John Taffin of Amsterdam, whose searching little treatise 'Of the Markes of the Children of God, and of their Comforts in Afflictions,' was translated by Prowse in 1590, and was long a favourite among the Puritans.—G.]

selves. This was all that Nehemiah could say of himself, and the rest of his brethren, Neh. i. 11, that they did desire to fear God's name. And so the church: Isa. xxvi. 8, 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thy holiness.' And ver. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night.' So the spouse, Cant. iii. 1-3. So David, Ps. xxvii. 4, xlii. 1, 2, lxiii. 1. They must needs be sure of grace that have an unfeigned desire of it. This is a maxim that we must live and die with, viz., that no man can truly desire grace but he that hath already grace; certainly he that desireth grace hath grace to desire it. It is an infallible sign, that that man hath already some measure of grace, that doth seriously desire to have it. He would never seriously desire to fear God, who stands not in some awe of him already; nor he would never desire seriously to love God, who has not in him some love to God already; nor he would never seriously desire to believe, who has not in him some faith already; nor he would never seriously desire to repent, that hath not repented already; nor he would never seriously desire sanctifying grace, whose heart in some measure is not already sanctified by the Spirit of grace. It is the very essence of righteousness, saith one of the ancients, for a man to be willing to be righteous. And the poor heathen could say, 'It is a principal part of goodness, for a man to be willing to be good.'¹ It is natural for every one to desire his own natural good, but to desire spiritual grace, holiness, sound sanctification, faith unfeigned, the true fear of God, serious repentance, &c., is more than ever any natural man did or can do. No man did ever desire to eat which had not eaten before, nor no man did ever desire to believe, that did not believe before; all true desires after faith spring from faith as the root of them. Certainly wicked men do not, and cannot so much as desire saving grace, Job xxi. 14, Isa. liii. 2; and that,

[1.] First, *Because grace is above the reach of nature.* 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The water riseth no higher than the springs from whence it came; so natural men can ascend no higher than nature. Spiritual things can neither be discerned nor desired but by those that are anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit. The natural man is dark and blind, and he sees no beauty nor excellency in grace, that he should desire it or be in love with it. Man in his natural estate is without, Eph. ii. 12. There are five *withouts*: (1.) without Christ; (2.) without the church; (3.) without the promise; (4.) without hope; (5.) without God in the world. Now, every natural man being under these five *withouts*, how is it possible that he should have any serious desires after grace? Such is the corruption of our nature, that, if you propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water, or wet wood, with hissing. Propound any evil, then it is like fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which naturalists say sucks and snatches the fire to it with which it is consumed. The contrariety and enmity that is in every natural man's heart against God, and Christ, and grace, and holiness, may sufficiently satisfy us that the natural man is a mere stranger to serious and

¹ *Pars magna bonitatis, est velle fieri bonum.*—Sen. Ep. 34.

sincere desires after God, or Christ, or grace, or the great things that belong to his everlasting peace, Rom. viii. 7. Such sincere and serious desires as these, Oh that Christ were mine! oh that I were married to his person! oh that I were clothed with his righteousness! oh that my soul were adorned with his grace! oh that I was filled with his Spirit! oh that he would be my king to rule me, and my prophet to teach and instruct me, and my priest to make an atonement for me! oh that I might enjoy choice and high communion with him! oh that I might sin no more against him! oh that I may do nothing unworthy of him! oh that after death I might live for ever in the enjoyments of him! &c. I say such serious and sincere desires are not to be found in the natural man's breast.

[2.] Secondly, *Because grace is contrary to nature.* 'The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God,' Rom. viii. 7. Fire cannot desire water, nor water fire, because they are contrary, one expelling the other; for either the water will quench the fire, or else the fire will lick up the water. So here, nature would have a man love himself, and seek himself, and exalt himself; but grace will have a man love God, and seek God, and exalt God, &c. Take nature when it is most adorned, enriched, raised, elevated, &c., yet then you shall find it at enmity with God and grace. *Ergo, &c.*

[3.] Thirdly, *Because grace is not only above nature, and contrary to nature, but it is even a hell to nature.*¹ Grace and holiness is a hell to a natural man. Look, as a glorified estate would be a hell to every wicked person (*Cælum est altera gehenna damnatorum*, saith one of the ancients, heaven is another hell to the damned), so would a gracious estate also. Grace puts a man to keep up the cross of Christ, to deny his natural self, his sinful self, his religious self, his relative self, and to give up a man's self to the strictest and exactest ways of God, and to crucify his lusts, and to pull out his right eye, and to cut off his right hand, &c. And oh! what hard work is this, yea, what a hell is this to nature! &c.

[4.] Fourthly, Wicked men do not nor cannot so much as truly and seriously desire saving grace: *witness their daily withstanding and slighting the offers of grace.* Compare these scriptures, Prov. i. 20, seq., chap. viii. 1-12; Ezek. xxiv. 13; Mat. xxiii. 37; Luke xix. 41, 42, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Wicked men do not nor cannot so much as truly and seriously desire saving grace: *witness their common, ordinary, habitual provoking, vexing, quenching, resisting, and grieving of the Spirit of grace.* Turn to these scriptures, Gen. vi. 3; Isa. lxiii. 10; Acts vii. 55; Eph. iv. 30.

[6.] Sixthly, Wicked men do not nor cannot truly and seriously desire saving grace: *witness that enmity, hatred, rage, and madness that is in them against the saints, whose hearts and lives are enamelled with grace,* Gen. iii. 15; Ps. xxxiv. 21, xlv. 10; Job xxxi. 29; Amos v. 10, &c. I have read of a desperate wretch, that, when he came to die, he gave good portions to all his children but one, and to him he would give but twelve pence; and being asked the reason of it, he made answer, he was a Puritan. I have heard him say, said his wretched father, that he had a promise to live on; let us now see whether a pro-

¹ See my treatise on Holiness, pages 64-66. [Vol. IV. in loc.—G.]

mise will maintain him or no. Certainly, wherever there are true serious desires after grace, there is a dear love to those upon whose hearts the work of grace is past.

Now, by these short hints, it is evident enough that wicked men do not, nor cannot sincerely, seriously desire grace. Certainly, such that are 'poor in spirit,' and that mourn for their spiritual defects, and that hunger and thirst after grace and holiness, after a righteousness imparted and a righteousness imputed, must confess themselves to be in a blessed estate, and consequently in a state of grace; for what true happiness is there out of it? or else they must contradict our Saviour, and charge truth itself with untruth, who hath pronounced them blessed that are so qualified, so affected. Were this well weighed and seriously considered of, how would it comfort, refresh, support, and stay up many a troubled soul; and what a well-spring of life would this be to many a wounded spirit! Doubtless, the greatest part of a saint's perfection in this life (witness Paul's own ingenuous confession, after fourteen years' conversion, say some; and who ever went beyond him? and how exceedingly do most fall short of him!) consisteth rather in will than in work, and in desire and endeavour more than in deed. Rom. vii. 15, 18, 19, 21, 22. There is so much good in good desires, that it is the main that the godly have to speak of, and to reckon of. Make an inventory of a Christian's estate, and search every room; if you find not these, you find nothing; and if you set these down in the inventory, you set down even all he is worth for another world. Daniel is called a man of desires, and so is every gracious man, a man wholly made up of gracious desires, Dan. x. 11. Mark, God makes a judgment upon the sons of men, according as their desires stand; he that desires to steal, he is a thief in the account of God; and he that desires to commit adultery, he is an adulterer in the account of God; and he that desires to oppress, he is an oppressor in the account of God; and he that desires to deceive, he is a deceiver in the account of God; and he that desires to persecute, he is a persecutor in the account of God; and he that desires to profane the Sabbaths of God, he is a profaner of the Sabbaths of God in the account of God, &c. Look, as every wicked man is as bad in the account of God as his desires are bad, so every godly man is as good in the account of God as his desires are good; he that sincerely desires to believe, he does believe in the account of God. 'The desire,' saith one, 'to believe in the want of faith is faith; though as yet there want firm and lively grace, yet art thou not altogether void of grace; if thou canst desire it, thy desire is the seed, conception, or bud of what thou wantest.'¹ Now is the spring-time of the engrafted word or immortal seed cast into the furrows of thy heart; wait but a while, using the means, and thou shalt see that leaves, blossoms, and fruits will shortly follow, &c. Another saith [Ursinus], faith in the most holy is not perfect; nevertheless, whosoever feels in his heart an earnest desire to believe, and a striving against his doubts, he both may and must assure himself that he is endued with true faith. And he that sincerely desires to repent, he does repent in the account of God. Holy Bradford, writing to Mr Jo. Careless, saith, Thy sins are undoubtedly pardoned, &c., for God hath given thee a penitent and believing heart, that is, a

¹ Mr Perkins in his 'Grain of Mustard-seed.' [Works, as before.—G.]

heart which desireth to repent and believe; for such a one is taken of him, he accepteth the will for the deed, for a penitent and believing heart indeed.¹ And he that sincerely desires to mortify sin, he does mortify sin in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to walk with God, he does walk with God in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to honour God, he does honour God in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to deny himself, he does deny himself in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to be weaned from the world, he is weaned from the world in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to be conformable to God, he is conformable to God in the account of God; and he that desires to grow in grace, he does grow in grace in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to improve mercies, he does improve mercies in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to glorify God in the hour of his visitation, he does glorify God in the hour of his visitation in the account of God.² A gracious man may make a better judgment of his estate by his sincere desires than he can by his duties; and so a wicked man may make a better judgment of his estate by his desires than he can by his words or works. I have been the larger upon this evidence because of its great usefulness to weak believers. But.

[7.] Seventhly, *No man can sincerely desire grace for grace's sake, viz., faith for faith's sake, and love for love's sake, and humility for humility's sake, and uprightness for uprightness's sake, and meekness for meekness's sake, and holy fear for holy fear's sake, and hope for hope's sake, and holiness for holiness's sake, and self-denial for self-denial's sake, &c., but he that has true grace.* Mark, no man can sincerely and seriously desire grace for the inward beauty, glory, and excellency of grace, but he that has true grace. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 13, though within is not all her glory. Grace differs nothing from glory but in name; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant; grace has an inward glory upon it, which none can see and love, but such as have grace in their own hearts, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Wicked men can see no beauty, no glory, no excellency in grace why they should desire it, or be taken with it; and no wonder, for they could see no beauty, nor excellency, nor glory, nor form, nor comeliness in Christ the fountain of grace, why they should desire him, and be taken with him, Isa. liii. 1-4. Though next to Christ, grace is the most lovely and desirable thing in all the world, yet none can desire it for its own loveliness and desirableness, but such as have a seed of God in them. Though grace be a pearl of price, though it be a jewel more worth than the gold of Ophir, though it be a beam of God, a spark of glory, a branch of the divine nature; yet carnal hearts can see no glory nor excellency in it, that they should desire it. If carnal eyes were but opened to see the excellency of grace, *mirabiles sui excitaret amores*, it would ravish the soul in desires after it; but grace's beauty and glory is inward, and so it is not discerned but with spiritual eyes. Plato was wont to say, If moral virtues could be seen with bodily eyes,

¹ Foxe and Clarke, as before.—G.

² Let thy desires be before God, 'and he which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly;' thy desire is thy prayer, and if thy desire be continual, thy prayer is continual, &c.

they would stir up in the heart extraordinary flames of admiration and love. I might say much more of grace, 1 Cor. ii. 14, *seq.* Grace (1.) puts an excellency, it puts a lustre and beauty upon men's persons. 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26; and pray what makes him so but grace? Wisdom makes a man's face to shine; riches, and honours, and dignities, and royal ornaments, and costly fare, and noble attendants, don't put an excellency and glory upon man, Dan. xi. 21; witness Antiochus, Saul, Haman, Herod, Dives, &c., but saving grace does, 1 Peter iii. 4, 5, &c. The graces of the Spirit are that chain of pearl that adorns Christ's bride. (2.) Grace puts an excellency upon all a man's duties; 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;' faith put an excellency upon Abel's sacrifice. (3.) Grace puts an excellency upon all a man's natural and acquired excellencies. It puts an excellency upon beauty, honour, riches, name, arts, parts, gifts. Now, how excellent and glorious must that be that puts an excellency upon all our excellencies? (4.) Grace makes a man conformable to God and Christ. (5.) Grace fits a man for communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit. (6.) Grace fits a man for the choicest services. (7.) Grace turns all things into a blessing. (8.) Grace fills the soul with all spiritual excellencies. (9.) Grace preserves a Christian from the worst of evils, viz., sin. (10.) Grace sweetens death, it makes the king of terrors to be the king of desires. (11.) Grace renders a man acceptable to God, and that is the height of a Christian's ambition in this world: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour' (*φιλοτιμούμεθα, we are ambitious*), 'that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' The apostles made it their ambition to get acceptance in heaven. Riches, and honours, and gifts, and arts, and parts, &c., may commend us to men, but it is only grace that commends us to God, and that renders us lovely in his eyes. (12.) Grace will eternalise your names, grace will perfume and embalm your names: Heb. xi. 2, 'By faith the elders obtained a good report.' Ver. 39, 'And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.' Nothing raises a man's name and fame in the world like grace.¹ A man may obtain a great report without grace, but he can never obtain a good report without grace. Nothing below grace will perpetuate a man's name. The seven deacons that the church chose, Acts vi. 3, 5, were gracious men, and they were men of 'good report,' they were men well witnessed unto, well testified of, as the Greek word imports, Acts x. 1-4, 22. Cornelius was a gracious man, and he was a man of good report among all the nation of the Jews, Acts ix. 10, 20, comp. with chap. xxii. 12. Ananias was a gracious man, and he was a man of a 'good report.' Gaius and Demetrius, they were both gracious men, and they were men of good report; witness that third epistle of John. How renowned was Abraham for his faith! and Moses for his meekness! and Jacob for his plain-heartedness! and Job for his uprightness! and David for his zeal! and Joshua for his courage! Holy Abel hath been dead above this five thousand years, and yet his name is as fresh and fragrant as a rose to this very day, Heb. xi. 4. Grace will make your names immortal. 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,' Ps. cxii. 6. 'The memory of the just

¹ 1 John iv. 17, i. 1, 2; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Zeeh. iii. 7; Mal. ii. 2; Prov. ii. 11, 12.

is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot,' Prov. x. 7. Wicked men many times outlive their names, but the names of just men outlive them. When a gracious man dies, he leaves his name as a sweet and as a lasting scent behind him; his fame shall live when he is dead. According to the Hebrew the words may be read thus: 'The memory of the just shall be for a blessing.' The very remembering of the just shall bring a blessing upon them that remember them. When a gracious man dies, as he carries a good conscience with him, so he leaves a perfumed name behind him. Grace is the image of God, the delight of God, the honour of God, the glory of God; grace is the purchase of Christ, and the birth of the Spirit, and the pledge of glory; grace is the joy of angels, the glory of man, and the wonder of the world. What is the body without the soul? what is the cabinet without the jewels? what is the sun without light? what is the fountain without water? what is paradise without the tree of life? what is heaven without Christ? That is a soul without grace. Now, every gracious soul sees a real eternal excellency, beauty, and glory in grace, and accordingly it is carried out in its desires after it. It sees such an innate excellency, beauty, and glory in that faith, wisdom, humility, meekness, patience, zeal, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, uprightness, &c., that sparkles and shines in such and such saints, that it many times strives with God in a corner, even to sweat and tears, that it may be bedecked and enriched with those singular graces that are so shining in others. Oh that I had the wisdom of such a Christian, and the faith of such a Christian, and the love of such a Christian, and the humility of such a Christian, and the meekness of such a Christian, and the zeal of such a Christian, and the integrity of such a Christian, &c. Oh that my soul was but in their case! I don't covet their riches, but their graces. Oh that I had but those graces! Oh that I had much of those graces that sparkle and shines in the hearts and lives of such and such Christians! I see a beauty and glory upon sun, moon, and stars, yea, upon the whole creation, but what is that to that beauty and glory that I see stamped upon grace? And this fires his heart with desires after grace. But,

[8.] Eighthly, *No man can sincerely desire all grace, every grace, or the whole chain of graces, but he that has true grace*, 2 Peter i. 5-9. Vain men, when they are under some outward or inward distresses, may, to serve their present turns, desire, in a cold, formal, customary way, patience, or contentation, or meekness, or hope, or faith, &c.; but they don't, nor can't, whilst they are wicked, whilst they are in their natural estate, whilst they are 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,' Acts viii. 19-25, sincerely desire every grace, especially those particular graces that are most opposite to their master sin, to their darling lusts, to their constitution sins, to their complexion sins, to those particular lusts that are to them as dear as their right eyes or right hands. Austin before his conversion he was much given to whoredom, and he would often pray, 'Lord, give me continency, but not yet; Lord, give me continency, but not yet.'¹ He was afraid lest God should have heard him too soon, as he himself confesseth. Wicked men would be very sorry if God should take them at their words, and in good earnest answer the cold and lazy desires of their souls. If when the drunkard in a good

¹ Confessions, b. viii., 26, 27, *et alibi*.—G.

mood should desire sobriety, God should take him at his word, he would be very angry ; or if when the unclean person should desire chastity, continency, God should answer his desires, he would not be very well pleased. If when the covetous person should, under some pang of conscience, desire a free, a charitable, a noble, generous spirit, God should take him at his word, he would be sorely displeased. The same may be said of all other sorts of sinners ; but now a real Christian, though he be never so weak, yet he seriously desires every grace ; he is for every link of the golden chain of graces ; he finds in his own heart sins that are contrary to every grace ; and therefore he desires every grace, that he may make head against every sin, and he finds his heart and life so attended and surrounded with all sorts and kinds of temptations, that he earnestly, seriously, and frequently desires the presence and assistance of every grace, that so he may be temptation-proof, yea, victorious over every temptation ; and he sees and feels the need of every grace to fill up every place, station, and condition wherein the Lord has set him, and therefore he begs hard for every grace ; and he sees a beauty, and a glory, and an excellency upon every grace, and therefore he desires every grace as well as any one single grace, which no hypocrite or profane person in the world does. But,

[9.] Ninthly, *No man can sincerely and seriously desire grace for gracious ends and purposes, but he that has true grace in his soul.* No man can truly desire grace, that he may enjoy communion and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and that he may be made conformable to Christ, and that he may be serviceable and useful to the interest of Christ, and that he may walk even as Christ walked, in the exercise of every grace, and that he may be rid of his sins, yea, all his sins, especially his special sins ; and that he may run the ways of God's commands more easily, more readily, more delightfully, more resolutely, more patiently, more unweariedly, and more zealously ; and that he may be made victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and that he may so live, as to be a praise, a name, an honour, and a glory to Christ ; and that after all and by all he may be prepared and fitted for an eternal fruition and enjoyment of Christ,¹ but he that has true grace in his soul. Now, every weak believer is able to appeal to God, that he desires grace for gracious ends and purposes, as for the ends last cited, and others of the like nature with them. Wicked men may in a fit desire grace, as Simon Magus did desire the Holy Ghost, to get money by it, Acts viii. 18-20 ; or when they are under some pang of conscience, they may desire grace to be rid of their horrors and terrors, or when they are upon a dying bed they may desire so much grace as may keep them out of hell, and bring them to heaven ; but in all this they look no further than self, they are far from desiring of grace for gracious ends and purposes. There is nothing in all the world that the great God so much regards as man, 'All these things have my hands made, but to this man will I look,' Isa. lxvi. 2. Nothing in man so much as the heart ; 'My son, give me thy heart.' That is the mount Zion which God loveth above all the dwellings of Jacob ; and nothing in the heart so much as the aim and end of it. Let a man's

¹ John i. 1-4, and-ii. 6 ; Mat. xi. 29, 30 ; Ps. cxix. 32 ; 1 John v. 4, 5 ; Rom. xiv. 7 8 ; Philip. i. 20.

profession be never so glorious, let him be never so abundant in the performance of duties, let his desires after this and that good thing be never so strong, yet if his ends be wrong, all his pretensions and performances are but beautiful abominations. Did David pray three times a-day? So did the pharisees. Did David and Daniel fast? So did the pharisees, and that twice in the week. Did Cornelius give alms? So did the pharisees. Did Abraham pay tithes? So did the pharisees; they tithed their very mint and rue. But their ends being wrong, their time was lost, and their pains was lost, and their duties was lost, and their alms was lost, and their souls was lost, and that for ever.¹ God writes a nothing upon all those services wherein men's ends are not right, Jer. xxxii. 23. But,

[10.] Tenthly, *No man can sincerely desire and earnestly endeavour after the highest pitches of grace, but he that has true grace.* Though the weak Christian has but a little grace in his heart, yet he has the top of grace, the perfection of grace in his sincere aims, in his sincere desires, and in his earnest and constant endeavours, Philip. iii. 12-16, &c; and if the weakest saint might have his desires, his mind, his wish, his will, his choice, he would never sin more; he would never dishonour Jesus Christ more; he would never grieve the Spirit of grace more; he would yield unsinning obedience; he would obey in this lower world, as the angels, and as the 'spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 22, 23, do obey in that upper world. The weakest Christian has his eye to the highest round in Jacob's ladder, and fain would he be at the top of it, Luke xvii. 5; and oh, how sweet is every providence, and every ordinance, and every duty, and every mercy, and every opportunity, that helps his soul more Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards! Sincere desires, and serious endeavours to grow in grace, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace, 2 Peter iii. 18, 1 Peter ii. 2, 1 John v. 11, 1 John iii. 9. Look, as a man may have grace and not know it, so a man may grow in grace and yet not discern it. As in the lopping of a tree there seems to be a kind of diminution and destruction, yet the end and issue of it is better growth; and as the weakening of the body by physic seems to tend to death, yet it produceth better health and more strength; and as the ball by falling downward riseth upward; and water in pipes descends that it may ascend, so the Christian's spiritual growth, when seemingly dead and declining, and to stand at a stay, is still carried on by the hidden method of God to increase; for every true Christian is a member of a thriving body, in which there is no atrophy, but a continual issuing of spirits from the head; so that life, being wrought by the Spirit of life, never dieth, but is always upon the growing hand,—except in the dark winter night of desertion and temptations,—ripening and increasing even in the midst of all ordinary troubles and trials.² The apostle tells us, that the whole body of Christ, whereof every true Christian is a limb, is so compact together in itself, and so firmly fastened with certain spiritual nerves and ligaments to the head, that from it there is by them conveyed to each part a continual supply of spiritual grace, both sufficient to furnish it, and to further the growth

¹ Mark xii. 40; Luke xviii. 12; Mat. vi. 2; Luke xi. 42; Mat. xxiii. 1, *seq.*

² 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree,' Ps. xci. 12-14. The palm-tree never loseth his leaf or fruit.—*Pliny*. Grace grows not alike in all saints. In the parable, some brought forth thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

of it. Let me give a little further light into this particular, by this similitude: A man is bound for the East Indies, and shapeth his course thitherward, but by the way is put often off by cross winds to the westward; he is by contrary winds compelled to put into divers harbours, and to make some stay by the way there, either to shift off stormy weather, or to take in fresh water, or to stop a leak, or to get some fresh provisions; and yet all this while we truly say, he is going on in his way in his voyage, because his settled purpose and constant resolution is to make to his port, his haven, whither he is bound, and all these seeming lets¹ shall help forward his voyage. It is so in spiritual things; for our very growth in grace consists much in sincere desires, in fixed resolutions, and in faithful endeavours to grow in grace. Aristotle makes it the mark of a good man, that he studieth how he may grow better than he is, not contenting himself with any degree or measure of goodness. And another heathen observes, that 'the earnest desire of what men would have, maketh them forgetful of what they have.'² 'I forget what is past,' saith the apostle, 'and press on to what is before,' Philip. iii. 13. Their eye is more upon what they want than upon what they have. It is with good Christians in this case as it is with rich worldlings, that, like men in a race, have their eye on those that be before them, not on those that come after them; they are ever eyeing those that seem to outstrip and outgo them in wealth, and think they have nothing, and that they are but poor men, so long as they come short of such and such, who are rich and great in the world. And so it is with many precious Christians; they have still their eye fixed upon those whose examples they either read of, or whose courses and graces they are eye-witnesses of; and hereupon they think that they have no grace, or else that they make no progress in grace, at least worth speaking of, so long as they come behind and fall short of such and such, who are very eminent, or most eminent, in grace and holiness; and upon this account it is, that they make such sore complaints of their spiritual wants, and of their slow progress in grace and holiness, and that they can hardly perceive but that they stand still at a stay. Now mark, these sad complaints of theirs, and their serious desires to grow in grace, is a sure and infallible evidence of the truth of grace in them; yea, it is a sure argument that they love grace as it is grace, that they love grace for grace's sake, which none can do but such as have grace. It is a sure sign that he was never truly good, that desireth not to be better; *ille non est bonus qui non vult esse melior*; yea, he has very great cause to fear, that his heart is naught, very naught, if not stark naught, that desireth not to be as good as the best, to be as gracious as he that is most gracious, and to be as holy as he that is most holy. Well, sirs! this will be found an everlasting truth, viz., That no man can sincerely desire, and habitually endeavour after the highest pitches of grace, but he that hath true grace.

[11.] Eleventhly, *No man can always desire grace, but he that has true grace.* Constant desires after grace argues the reality of grace; constant desires after grace speaks out a state of grace: Ps. cxix. 20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' Isa. xxvi. 7-9, Cant. iii. 1-4, Ps. cvi. 3. Pliny speaks of a

¹ 'Hindrances.' Cf. Sibbes, Works, vol. i. page 101, note d.—G.

² Aristotle, Rhet. lib. i. cap. xi.; Seneca, lib. ii. cap. xxvii.

golden vine which never withereth. All gracious desires are such golden desires as never wither. Take a Christian when you will, and where you will, and among whom you will, and in what condition you will, and still you shall find his heart full of gracious desires. Oh that I had grace! Oh that I had much grace! &c. Balaam in a fit, in a good mood, desires to die the death of the righteous, but his desires were fleeting and flashy, they were transient, not permanent, Num. xxiii. 10. Some poor sinners, when they are in a good mood, or under some distress of conscience, or under some grievous trials, or when they see the handwriting upon the wall, Dan. v. 6; and when death, which is the king of terrors, and the terror of kings, knocks at their doors, oh then they cry out, Oh that we had grace! Oh, what shall we do for grace! Oh, send to such a minister, and to such a Christian, whom we have hated, scorned, reproached, and opposed, and desire them to be earnest with God, that he would give us grace; for now we see, that without grace there is no escaping of hell, nor no coming to heaven. But all these desires of theirs are but like the morning cloud, or the early dew, that quickly passeth away, Hosea vi. 4, Ps. lxxviii. 37, Ps. v. 9. But now if you look upon the weak Christian, as you shall commonly find a tear in his eye, a sigh in his breast, and a complaint in his mouth; so you shall always find desires in his heart after grace, Oh that I had grace! Oh that I had much grace! Oh that I did but excel in grace! Oh that I had as much grace as such a Christian! Oh that I had a greater exercise of grace! Ps. xlii. 1-3, and lxiii. 1, 2, 3, 8. Whatever outward or inward changes may attend a Christian in this world, yet you shall still find him full of holy desires, and breathings, and hankeringings, and longings after God, and Christ, and grace, and holiness. Oh that I had more of these! Oh, when shall I have more of these! Oh that God would cut me short in anything, yea, in everything, rather than cut me short in these things, that the desires of my soul are so much running after! These desires of theirs may further be set forth by a spring between a couple of hills; the spring will always run through those lets¹ that stop it, or else it will run over those lets, for it cannot cease running if it be a living spring; so the desires of a gracious soul will still be running after God, and Christ, and grace. The good desires of bad men after God, and Christ, and grace, and holiness, are like water in a cistern, that quickly runs out; but the desires of a godly man after God, Christ, grace, holiness, are like water in a fountain that is still a-running. An unsound Christian is never good at all times; he is only good by fits, and starts, and turns, sometimes when he is sermon-sick, or under a smarting rod, or a galled conscience, or when he is under some heavy cross or sad loss. Oh, then he will be good! Oh, then he will have God, and he will have Christ, and he will have grace, and he will have heaven; but this good frame, this good temper of his, is not lasting, it is not abiding; it is like a vapour that quickly vanishes, or like a windmill that goes as long as the wind fills the sails, but no longer. These are like Sigismund the emperor, who, when he was sick, would be very godly, but when he was well, none more wicked. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, *No man can sincerely desire to abound and excel most in those particular graces which are most opposite and contrary*

¹ 'Hindrances,' as before, page 370.—G.

to those particular sins which his natural temper, constitution, complexion, calling, or condition, does most expose him and incline him to, but he that has true grace, but he whose heart is sincere with God. Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' If passion be a sincere Christian's head-lust, then his desires run most out for meekness; if pride, then his desires are most for humility; if earthliness, then his desires are most for heavenly-mindedness; if unbelief, then his desires are most for faith. You shall then find him with the disciples, crying out, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke vii. 5. But now, though a wicked man's heart rise against every grace, yet it rises most strongly against those particular graces which are most opposite and contrary to those particular lusts which are a wicked man's bosom lusts, his darling sins, &c. Hence the covetous heart rises and swells most against liberality, as you see in Judas, 'What need this waste?' Mat. xxvi. 8, 9. Flesh and blood looks upon all as lost that is laid out upon Christ, his servants and services. And the lukewarm Christian's heart rises and swells most against zeal and fervency, Rev. iii. 15-17, Luke xix.; and the griping usurer's heart rises and swells most against restitution; and the adulterer's heart rises and swells most against purity, chastity, continency; and the ignorant man's heart rises and swells most against light and knowledge. The ignorant man is willing to go to hell in the dark, and ready and bold enough to conclude that we never had such sad and bad times as we have had since there hath been so much preaching, and so much hearing, and so much fasting, and so much praying, and so much light and knowledge in the world. But now it is quite otherwise with a true child of God; for his heart rises and swells most against the toad or toads that are in his own bosom, Rom. vii. 22, 23; and the daily and earnest desires of his soul are, that God would make him eminent in every grace, yea, that God would make him most eminent in those particular graces which are most opposite and contrary to those particular lusts and corruptions which more peculiarly, more especially he hath cause to call his iniquity, or the iniquities of his heart, and of his heels, Ps. xlix. 5. Look, as we have some dirt, more or less, that will still cleave to our heels whilst we are in a dirty world,¹ so there is some defilements and pollutions that will still be cleaving to all our duties, services, ways, and walkings in this world, which we may well call the iniquity of our heels. Now, a gracious heart rises most against these, &c.

[13.] Thirteenthly, *No man can truly love grace in another, but he that has true grace in his own soul*, 1 John iii. 10. No man can love a saint as a saint but he that is a real saint. No man can love holiness in another but he that has holiness in his own soul. No man can love a good man for goodness' sake but he that is really good. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren,' 1 John iii. 14.² Sincere love to the brethren is a most evident sign of a Christian's being already passed or translated from death to life, that is, from a state of nature into a state of grace. Such a poor soul that dares not say that he has grace in his own heart, yet dares say before the Lord that he loves, delights, and takes pleasure to see the holy graces of the Spirit sparkling and shining in the hearts, lives, and lips

¹ Qu. 'road'?—Ed.

² This text you have opened in the first maxim of this book.

of other saints, secretly wishing in himself that his soul were but in their case; and that dares say before the Lord that there are no men in all the world that are so precious, so lovely, so comely, so excellent, and so honourable in his account, in his eye, as those that have the image of God, of Christ, of grace, of holiness, most clearly, most fairly, and most fully stamped upon them. When a poor Christian can rejoice in every light, in every sun that outshines his own; when he sees wisdom and knowledge shining in one saint, and faith and love shining in another saint, and humility and lowliness shining in another saint, and meekness and uprightness shining in another saint, and zeal and courage shining in another saint, and patience and constancy shining in another, and then can make his retreat to his closet, admiring and blessing of the Lord for the various graces of his Spirit shining in his children, and be frequent and earnest with God, that those very graces might shine as so many suns in his soul; doubtless such a poor soul has true grace, and is happy, and will be happy to all eternity.¹ In Tertullian's time, the heathen would point out the Christians by this mark, 'See how they love one another.'² Now, to prevent mistakes, I shall shew you the several properties of sincere love to the saints.

(1.) *First*, True love to the saints is *spiritual*; it is a love for the image of God that is stamped upon the soul. 1 John v. 1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him;' 1 John iv. 7. A soul that truly loves, loves the father for his own sake, and the children for the father's sake. If the image of God be the loadstone that draws out our love to the saints, then our love is real to them. He that does not love the saints as saints, he that does not love them under a spiritual notion, he hath no true affection to them. Naturally we hate God, because he is a holy God; and his law, because it is an holy law; and his people, because they are a holy people, Gen. iii. 15; 1 John iii. 12. It is only the Spirit of God that can enable a man to love a saint for the image of God that is in him. Many there are which love Christians for their goods, not for their good; they love them for the money that is in their purses, but not for the grace that is in their hearts. Many, like the Bohemian cur, fawn upon a good suit.² Love to the saints, for the image of God stamped upon them, is a flower that does not grow in nature's garden. No man can love grace in another man's heart, but he that hath grace in his own. Men do not more naturally love their parents, and love their children, and love themselves, than they do naturally hate the image of God upon his people and ways, Prov. xxix. 10; Ezek. xxv. 15. I have read of one who was so lusty and quarrelsome, that he was ready to fight with his own image so often as he saw it in a glass. Oh how many are there in these days, that are still a-quarrelling and fighting with the image of God wherever they see it! True love is for what of the divine nature, for what of Christ and grace shines in a man. It is one thing to love a godly man, and another thing to love him for godliness. Many love godly men as they are politicians, or potent, or learned, or of a sweet nature, or affable, or related, or as they have been kind to them; but all this is but natural love; but to love them because they are spiritually lovely, because of the seed of God

¹ Ps. xv. 1, 4, xvi. 3. He that loves his brother, saith Augustine, better knows his love wherewith he loves than his brother whom he loves.

² Dress.—G.

in them, because they are all glorious within, is to love them as becometh saints; it is to love them at a higher and nobler rate than any hypocrite in the world can reach to, John iii. 9, Ps. xlv. 13. The wasps fly about the tradesman's shop, not out of love to him, but the honey and fruit that is there. But,

(2.) *Secondly*, True love to the saints is *appreciating*. A gracious soul sets the highest price and the greatest value and esteem upon those that are gracious, Ps. xv. 4. He honours them that fear the Lord; he looks upon the wicked as lumber, but upon the saints as jewels; he looks upon the wicked as dross, but upon the saints as the gold of Ophir; he looks upon the wicked as chaff, but upon the saints as wheat; he looks upon the saints as sons, but upon the wicked as slaves; he looks upon the saints as heirs of salvation, but upon the wicked as heirs of damnation, Ps. cxix. 119; Ps. i. 4; John i. 12; Heb. i. 14. Gracious souls do not value persons by their great places, offices, names, professions, arts, parts, gifts, gay clothes, gold chains, honours, riches, but by what they are worth for another world. As the great God, so gracious souls look not how rational men are, but how religious; not how great, but how gracious; not how high, but how holy; and accordingly they value them. 'My goodness extends not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight,' Ps. xvi. 3. 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26. It is grace that differences one man from another, and that exalts one man above another. A gracious man, though never so poor, and low, and contemptible in the world, is a better man than his wicked neighbour, though he be never so great or rich in the world; in the eye, account, and esteem of God, angels, and saints, there is no man to the gracious man. The sun doth not more excel and outshine the stars, than a righteous man doth excel and outshine his unrighteous neighbour. 'Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich,' Prov. xxviii. 6. A gracious man prefers a holy Job upon the dunghill, before a wicked Ahab upon the throne. He sets a higher price upon a gracious Lazarus, though clothed with rags and full of sores, than upon a rich and wretched Dives, though he be clothed gloriously, and fares sumptuously every day, Luke xvi. This is, and this must be for a lamentation, that this poor, blind, mad, besotted world rates and values men according to their worldly interest, greatness, glory, and grandeur; but gracious souls, they rate and value men by their graces, by their inward excellencies, and by what they are worth for eternity. In the eye of a gracious man, there is no wife to a gracious wife, no child to a gracious child, no friend to a gracious friend, no neighbour to a gracious neighbour, no magistrate to a gracious magistrate, no minister to a gracious minister, no master to a gracious master, nor no servant to a gracious servant. Internal excellencies carries it with a gracious man before all external glories.¹ The Jews say, that those seventy souls that went with Jacob into Egypt, were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. Doubtless, seventy gracious persons, in the esteem and judgment of those that are gracious,

¹ Ps. xlv. 13. Wicked men may highly prize and admire at the common gifts of the saints, as Pharaoh admired at the wisdom of Joseph, and Nebuchadnezzar admired at the wisdom of Daniel; but they never prize nor admire at their graces. 'Every one that doth evil hateth the light.' John iii. 20.

are more worth than a whole world, yea, than seventy worlds of graceless persons. Well sirs, remember this: No man can truly prize, and highly value grace in another, but he that hath grace in his own heart. Some prize Christians for their wit, others prize them for their wealth; some prize them for their birth and breeding, others prize them for their beauty and worldly glory; some prize them for the great things that have been done by them, others prize them for the good things that they have received from them; some prize them for their eagle eyes, others prize them for their silver tongues, and others prize them for their golden parts; but he that is truly gracious, he prizes them for the grace of God that is in them, he sets the highest value upon them for their holiness, &c. But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, True love to the saints is *universal, to one Christian as well as another, to all as well as any*;¹ to poor Lazarus as well as to rich Abraham, to a despised Job as well as to an admired David, to an afflicted Joseph as well as to a raised Jacob, to a despised disciple as well as to an exalted apostle: Eph. i. 15, 'Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints'; Col. i. 4, 'Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.' Faith in Christ Jesus maketh love to all the saints; therefore they go commonly coupled in Paul's Epistles. It was the glory of the Ephesians and Colossians that their faith and love reached to all the saints. Their love was not a narrow love, a love confined to some particular saints, but it was universal to all saints: Philip. iv. 21, 'Salute every saint in Christ Jesus;' the meanest as well as the richest, the weakest as well as the strongest, the lowest as well as the highest, and those that have many infirmities as well as those that have fewer infirmities, and those that have but mean parts and gifts as well as those that have the strongest parts and the most raised gifts, Eph. i. 21-23; 1 Pet. ii. 17. All saints have the same Spirit, the same Jesus, the same faith, &c.; they are all fellow-members, fellow-travellers, fellow-soldiers, fellow-citizens, fellow-heirs, and therefore must they all be loved with a sincere and cordial love. Love is set upon the brotherhood, upon the whole fraternity of believers, and not here and there upon one. Divine love casts an eye of favour upon grace in rags, upon a dunghill, in a dungeon, a den, a prison, a fiery furnace. Grace is as lovely in the illiterate as in the greatest scholar, in the servant as in the master, in the maid as in the mistress, in the child as in the father, in the subject as in the prince, in the buyer as in the seller, &c. Look, as all our delight must be in the saints, so our delight must be in all the saints. It is sad and sinful to contemn our poor brethren; and yet this was the very case of the Corinthians, for they in their love-feasts carried it so unequally, 'that one was hungry,' to wit, the poor, 'and another was drunken,' to wit, the rich. And this made the apostle put that question to them, 'What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?' 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22, or put them to shame that have nothing. And the apostle James doth very roundly reprove and con-

¹ No unregenerate person hath a love to all the saints, for though he seems to love some, yet he loathes others; he is guilty of sinful partiality, having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons. They seem to love the rich, and despise the poor, James ii.

demn that partial love that was generally among the Jews in his days: James ii. 1-4, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons; for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool, are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Not that the apostle doth simply or absolutely prohibit a civil differencing of men in place from others; for it cannot be denied but that there is a holy and warrantable respect of persons in respect of their age, callings, gifts, graces, and greatness in the world; but when the rich man's wealth is more regarded than the poor man's godliness, and when men carry it so to the rich as to cast scorn, contempt, disgrace, and discouragement upon the godly poor; they that respect a rich man that has but a little grace, before a poor man that is rich in grace, are worthy of blame. All true-born sons love to see the image and picture of their father, though hung in never so poor a frame, and in never so mean a cottage; so the true-born sons of God, they love to see the image of God, the picture of God, upon the poorest saints. It is sad to prefer a worldly lustre before heavenly grace, a gold ring before a rich faith, a chain of gold before a chain of grace. Ver. 5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom? It is a vile thing, saith one of the ancients, to have the faith of Christ in respect of persons. We do not judge of faith by persons, but of persons by faith.¹ It is the great wisdom of a Christian not to judge of men by their outwards, but by their inwards; not by their externals, but by their internals; not by what they are worth for this world, but by what they are worth for that other world. The poorest saints are God's portion, Deut. xxxii. 9; they are his pleasant portion, Jer. xii. 10; they are his peculiar treasure, Exod. xix. 5; they are his jewels, Mal. iii. 17; they are the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8; they are his glory, Isa. iv. 5; they are the crown of his glory and royal diadem, Isa. lxii. 3; and therefore it is a dangerous thing to slight them, to disown them, to look frowningly upon them, or to carry it unworthily towards them. Pompey told his Cornelia, It is no praise to thee to have loved *Pompeium Magnum*, Pompey the Great, but if thou lovest *Pompeium miserum*, Pompey the miserable, thou shalt be a pattern for imitation to all posterity. So I say, It is no great matter to love those that are rich and pious, great and gracious, high and holy; but to love the poor saints of God in their lowest and most miserable condition, when they have not a rag to cover them, nor a crust to refresh them, nor a fire to warm them, nor a friend to stand by them, nor a penny to help them, this is praiseworthy, this speaks out much of God, of Christ, of grace within. Romanus the martyr, who was born of noble parentage, entreated his persecutors that they would not favour him for his nobility; for it is not, said he, the blood of my ancestors, but my Christian faith, that makes me noble. It is not race nor place, but grace, that makes a man truly noble. Without a peradventure, he that loves one

¹ *Non ex personis fidem, sed ex fide personas.*—Tertullian.

saint for the image of God that is upon him, he cannot but fall in love with every saint that bears the lovely image of the Father upon him; he cannot but love a saint in rags as well as a saint in robes; a saint upon the dunghill as well as a saint upon the throne. Usually, those Christians that have least of the world have most of Christ. Commonly, those Christians that have least of the world have most of heaven in their hearts, houses, and lives. But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, True love to the saints will *extend to those that are most remote in respect of place, as well as to those that are near*. They of Macedonia and Achaia made a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Rom. v. 26. The saints of Macedonia and Achaia did freely and cheerfully contribute to the poor saints at Jerusalem, whose faces probably they had never seen. And Gaius is commended for his love to strangers, 3 John 5. A gracious man that has an estate, a treasury, an inheritance, he is like a common fountain, that freely gives out to strangers as well as to near neighbours. A great fire will warm those that sit far from it, as well as those that sit near unto it. So sincere love will extend and stretch out itself to those saints that are most remote. Gracious souls do dearly love and highly value those saints whose faces they have never seen, nor are like to see in this world, and from whose hands they have not received the least civility; and all upon the serious reports that they have had of the grace of God that has been sparkling and shining in them, whose habitations are at a great distance from them. A sincere love, an unfeigned love, a hearty love, will be running out towards those that live most remote from us, if we do but understand that God is in them and with them of truth, Rom. xii. 9, 1 Peter. i. 22, 1 John iii. 18. But,

(5.) *Fifthly*, Our love to the saints is right, *when we love them best and most in whom the spiritual and supernatural causes of love are most sparkling and shining*. Where grace draws the affections, there the more grace we see, the more we shall love: Ps. xvi. 3, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' There are saints, and there are excellent saints. The Hebrew word that is here rendered *excellent*, signifies magnificent ones, noble ones, glorious ones, wonderful ones. O sirs! there are some saints that are magnificent in grace, noble in grace, glorious in grace, wonderful in grace. Now this is certain, if grace be the true reason why we love any, then the more excellent, the more magnificent any are in grace, the more highly we shall prize them, and the more dearly we shall love them, and the more abundantly in our hearts we shall honour them, Ps. xv. 4. Look, as grace rises higher and higher in the same person, so we shall rise higher and higher in our love to the same person. Daniel was greatly beloved, Dan. ix. 23, and John was singularly beloved, John xxi. 20. And why, but because they were more eminently gracious than others were? Where there is most grace, there God is most honoured, and there Christ is most exalted, and there the Spirit is best pleased, and there religion is most adorned, and there Satan is most dethroned, and there the world is most conquered, and there sin is most subdued, and there duties are most exactly performed; and therefore there the gracious soul can't but love best and most. There are some that seem to love such and such godly men, whose

judgments are weak, and light little, and parts low, and grace small, who yet look with a squint eye, an envious eye, upon every sun that outshines their own, upon every one's graces and excellencies that are more sparkling than their own. Though pride and envy have received their death's wound at the soul's first conversion, yet they are not quite slain in a believer. There is an aptness even in real saints to grudge and repine at those gifts, graces, and excellencies in others that outshine their own. John's disciples muttered and murmured because Christ had more followers and admirers than John, Luke vii. 16-23, and that spirit that lived in John's disciples is still alive to this very day. This is, and this must be, for a lamentation. Well, sirs, look, as the fairest day hath its clouds, the finest linen its spots, the richest jewels their flaws, the sweetest fruits their worms, so when many precious Christians are not themselves, when they are in an hour of temptation, when their corruptions are up and their graces down, they may, and too often do, envy and repine at those graces, excellencies, and abilities, that do overcast, cloud, darken, and outshine their own, Num. xi. 29. The best of men are but men at the best, and there is still those bitter roots of pride, vain-glory, self-love, envy, &c., remaining in them that occasions their hearts to rise and swell, yea, sometimes to cast disgrace upon those excellencies in others that themselves want, Heb. xii. 15, as that great man that could not write his own name, and yet called the liberal arts a public poison and pestilence.¹ This spiritual disease is mostly to be found among Christians that are got into some of the highest forms in Christianity. Take your ordinary common Christians, and they commonly rejoice most where they see most grace. And so do your Christians in a higher form too, when they come to themselves, and to make up their accounts, and have wept over those cursed roots of bitterness that are so apt to be sprouting out. Now, there is no greater argument that our grace is true, and that we do love others for grace's sake, than our loving them best that have most grace, though they have but little of the world. A pearl is rich if found on a dunghill, though it may glisten more when set in a ring of gold; so many a poor believer is rich in grace, and precious and glorious in the eye of Christ, and should be so in ours, though like Job he sits upon a dunghill. Though in the eyes of the world he may seem to glisten most when adorned with riches, honour, and outward pomp, if grace be the true reason why we love any person, then the more grace that person hath, the more we shall love him. A godly man loves all that are godly, but he loves them most that excel most in the power, purity, and practice of godliness, &c. But,

(6.) *Sixthly* and lastly, True love to the saints is *constant, it is permanent*: 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 'Love never faileth;' Heb. xiii. 1, 'Let brotherly love continue.' It is a love like that of Christ's, who loved his to the end: 1 John iv. 16, 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' John xiii. 1, and xv. 12, &c., Our love to our brother must not only lodge with us a night and away, but we must *dwell* in brotherly love. Look, as our love must be sincere without hypocrisy, so it must be constant without deficiency. That love was never true that is not constant. True love, like the pulse, will still be

¹ Eusebius speaks of him in his Ecclesiastical History, &c. [Namely, Licinus, as before: see index, *sub nomine*.—G]

beating, it will still be working and running out to the person beloved. True love will not fawn upon a Christian when high, and frown upon him when low; it will not kiss him upon the throne and kick him upon the dunghill. The grounds and causes of their love are constant, viz., God's commands, their spiritual relations, and the truth of grace in their souls; and therefore their love cannot but be constant. 'A friend,' saith Solomon, 'loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,' Prov. vii. 17. Euripides hit it when he said, 'That a faithful friend in adversity, is better than a calm sea to a weather-beaten mariner.'¹ He that truly loves, will love in adversity as well as in prosperity, in storms as well as in calms, in winter nights as well as in summer days. He that sincerely loves the saints, he will love them as well when men frown upon them, as when they smile upon them; as well when men strike them, as when they stroke them; as well when men cast them down, as when they lift them up; as well when men cry, 'Crucify them, crucify them,' as when they cry, 'Hosanna, hosanna,' to them. Consalvus, a Spanish bishop and inquisitor, wondered how the Christians had that commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' so indelibly printed in their hearts, that no torture could blot it out, and make them confess and betray one another, or cease from loving one another. I have read of one [in Jerome] Ursinus, a Christian physician, who being to suffer martyrdom for the gospel of Christ, began to waver and faint; which, when Vitalis, a holy man, saw, he stepped to him, and though he knew it would cost him his life, yet he thus comforted and encouraged him, saying, What! have ye been heretofore so industrious to preserve men's bodies, and will you now shrink at the saving of your own soul? Be courageous, fear not, &c. For which faithful counsel, he also was condemned to death, and suffered accordingly. A true friend is neither known in prosperity, nor hid in adversity. True love is like that of Ruth's to Naomi, that of Jonathan's to David, permanent and constant. Many there be whose love to the saints is like Job's brooks, which in the winter, when men have no need of them, overflows with tenders of service and shows of love; but when the season is hot and dry, and the poor thirsty traveller stands in most need of water to refresh him, then the brooks are quite dried up. They are like the swallow, that will stay by you in the summer of prosperity, but fly from you in the winter of adversity. It is observed by Josephus of the Samaritans, that whenever the Jews' affairs prospered, they would be their friends, and profess much love to them; yea, they would vaunt of their alliance, saying, that they were near akin, and of the race of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. But when the Jews were in trouble and affliction, and brought to an under, then they would not own them, nor have any thing to do with them; yea, then they would set themselves with all their might against them, as the same historian tells us.² This age is full of such Samaritans; yet certainly, such as truly love, they will always love; such as truly love the people of God, they will love them to the end. In the primitive times it was very much taken notice of by

¹ Christian friendship makes such a knot, that great Alexander cannot cut, &c. [Allusion to the Gordian knot.—G.]

² Joseph Antiq. lib. xi. (*bis*) lib. xii., lib. xiii. (*bis*). [Cf. Sibbes, vol. iii. pp. 536, 537, note *cccc*.—G.]

the very heathen, that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians, otherwise strangers, stuck close one to another. Their love of religion and one of another, proved firmer than that of nature. They seem to take away the sun out of the world, said the orator,¹ who take away friendship from the life of man; for we do not more need fire and water than constant friendship. Though wicked men may pretend great love to the saints, yet their love is not constant. God sometimes indeed overrules their spirits with a very strong hand, as he did Laban's and Esau's, or as he overruled the spirits of the lions to preserve Daniel; and of the ravens to feed Elijah, Gen. xxxi. 24, 29, xxxiii. 1-5; Dan. vi.; but so soon as that overruling providence is over, they are as they were before. God for a time gave the Israelites favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, but before and after they were their utter enemies. But now a gracious soul, he loves the saints at all times, his love to them is constant. But,

[14.] Fourteenthly, *That soul that dares not say that he has grace, yet can truly say before the Lord, that he prizes the least dram of grace above ten thousand thousand worlds, certainly that soul has true grace in him.* Doubtless there are none that can prize grace in their understandings and judgments above all the world, but such as are first taken out of the world by grace, Micah vi. 6, 7; Philip. iii. 18, 19; Mat. xix. 16-25; Ps. ii. 21. There is no man on earth whose heart is void and empty of grace, but sets a higher value and price upon his lusts, or upon his relations, or upon his honours, or riches, or pleasures, or upon this or that worldly enjoyment, than he does upon grace, or the fountain of grace; yea, how many thousands are there that set a higher price or value upon a hound, a hawk, a horse, a harlot, a good trade, a fair estate, a rich inheritance, yea, upon the very toys and trifles of this world, than they do upon God, or Christ, or grace! It was never yet known in the world, that ever God sent such a man to hell, who prized grace above heaven itself, who had rather have grace and holiness without heaven, than heaven itself without grace and holiness.

[15.] Fifteenthly, *That soul that dares not say that his condition is good, yet can say in truth of heart before the Lord, that he would not change his condition with the vain, carnal, formal, and profane men of the world, for ten thousand worlds; that man is certainly for heaven, and heaven is certainly for that man.* We may be very highly and groundedly confident, that God will never cast that man to hell, among devils and damned spirits, at the great day, who in his day of life would not choose to be in the condition of the men of the world, for as many worlds as there be men in the world. Look, as none meet in heaven, but such as are like to like in their renewed natures, principles, and practices; so none meet in hell but such as are like to like in their old natures, principles, and practices. That God that would not suffer an ox to be yoked with an ass in this world, Deut. xxii. 10; nor a believer with an infidel, 2 Cor. vi. 14-18; will never suffer such to be yoked with devils and damned reprobates in that lower world, who would not, to gain many worlds, be willingly yoked with wicked men in this world. Certainly they shall never be a Christian's companions in that other world, whose society and company, and whose wickedness

¹ Cicero, *de Amicitia*.—G.

and baseness have been a grief, a torment, a hell to him in this world, Ps. cxix. 53, 136 ; Jer. ix. 1, 2 ; Ezek. ix. 4, 6 ; 2 Peter ii. 7, 8. When Mrs Catherine Brettergh was upon her dying bed, and most grievously assaulted by temptations, in the midst of her sore conflicts, this was no small support and comfort to her, that surely God would not send her to hell, to live for ever among such wicked persons, whose company and whose sin was a burden to her in this world,¹ &c. But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, *That soul that dares not say that he does not sin,—* ‘For in many things we offend all ;’ ‘and there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not ;’ and who can say, ‘I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin ?’ ‘And if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,’—*yet can say in uprightness before the Lord, that he would not willingly, resolutely, maliciously, wilfully, wickedly, and habitually sin against the Lord to gain a world ; that soul that don’t or won’t, through grace assisting, allow himself, or indulge himself in a course of sin, or in a trade of sin, or in the common practice of any known sin, that soul is certainly a gracious soul.* ‘The evil that I do I allow not,’ Rom. vii. 15. It is one thing for a man to sin, it is another thing for a man to allow himself in sin ; it is one thing for a godly man to step into a sin, and it is another thing to keep the road of sin. ‘Search me and try me, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me,’ or as the Hebrew runs, ‘any way of pain, or of grief, or of provocation,’ Ps. cxxxix. 24, that is, any course of sin that is grievous or provoking to the eyes of divine glory. A real saint can neither allow of sin, nor wallow in sin, nor be transformed into the image of sin, nor mix itself with sin. It is possible for a sincere Christian to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts, and now and then in an hour of temptation, to slide, to trip, and to be overtaken unawares ; but his main way, his principal work, is to depart from iniquity, Gal. vi. 1, Prov. xvi. 17, as a true traveller may now and then step a few steps out of his way, who yet for the main keeps his way, keeps the road ; or as a bee may now and then light upon a thistle, but her main work is to be gathering at the flowers ; or as a sheep may now and then slip into the dirt, or into a slough, but its main work is to be grazing upon the mountains. Certainly, O soul, if sin be now thy greatest burden, it shall never hereafter prove thy eternal bane. God never yet sent any man to hell for sin, to whom sin has commonly been the greatest hell in this world. God has but one hell, and that is for those to whom sin has been commonly a heaven in this world. That man that hates sin, and that daily enters his protest against sin, that man shall never be made miserable by sin. Sin in a wicked man is like poison in a serpent ; it is in its natural place, it is delightful to a sinner ; but sin in a saint is like poison in a man’s body, it is offensive, and the heart rises against it, and is carried forth to the use of all divine antidotes whereby it may be expelled and destroyed. Nothing will satisfy a gracious soul, but the heart blood of his lusts. Now, he shall never be damned for his sins, whose heart is set upon killing his sins.

[17.] Seventeenthly, *Such a poor soul that dares not say, that God is his God, or that Christ is his redeemer, or that he has a work of*

¹ See Index for other notices of this excellent lady.—G.

² James iii. 2 ; Eccles. vii. 20 ; Prov. xx. 7 ; John i. 1, 8.

grace upon his heart, yet can say with some integrity of heart before the Lord, that if God and Christ, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, were offered to him on the one hand, and all the honours, pleasures, profits, delights, and carnal contents of the world were offered him on the other hand, he had infinitely rather ten thousand thousand times choose God and Christ, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, than the contrary; certainly such a soul has true grace in him, and a saving work passed upon him; for none can freely, seriously, habitually, resolutely, choose God and Christ, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, as their *summum bonum*, chiefest good, but such who are really good. Look, as our love to God is but an effect of his love to us,—‘We love him because he first loved us,’ 1 John iv. 19,—so our choosing of God for our God, is but an effect of God’s choosing us for his people; we choose him because he first chose us, Deut. vii. 6–9, xxvi. 17–19. Such who, in their serious choice, set up God and Christ above all other persons and things, such God will certainly make happy and blessed for ever. God never did, nor never will, reject those, or damn those, who really choose him for their God, and for their great all. The greatest part of the world choose their lusts rather than God, and the creatures rather than Christ; they choose rather to be great than gracious, to be rich in this world than to be rich towards God, Luke xii. 21, to be outwardly happy than to be inwardly holy, to have a heaven on earth than to have a heaven after death, and so they miscarry for ever, Mat. x. 42. That soul that with Mary has chosen the better part, that soul with Mary shall be happy for ever; every man must stand or fall for ever as his choice has been. But,

[18.] Eighteenthly, *Canst thou truly say, in the presence of the great and glorious God, that is the searcher of all hearts, that thou hast given up thy heart and life to the rule, authority, and government of Jesus Christ? and that thou hast chosen him to be thy sovereign Lord and King, and art truly willing to submit to his dominion, as the only precious and righteous government, and as the only holy and heavenly, sweet and pleasant, profitable and comfortable, safe and best dominion in all the world, and to resign up thy heart, thy will, thy affections, thy life, thy all, really to Christ, wholly to Christ, and only to Christ?* Canst thou, O poor soul! look up to heaven and truly say, O dear Lord Jesus! other lords, viz., the world, the flesh, and the devil, have had dominion too long over me; but now these lords I do heartily renounce, I do utterly renounce, I do for ever renounce, and do give up myself to thee as my only Lord, beseeching thee to rule and reign over me for ever and ever! O Lord! though sin rages, and Satan roars, and the world sometimes frowns, and sometimes fawns, yet I am resolved to own thee as my only Lord, and to serve thee as my only Lord; and my greatest fear, by divine assistance, shall be of offending thee, and my chiefest care shall be to please thee, and my only joy shall be to be a praise, a name, and an honour to thee, Isa. xxvi. 13, xxxiii. 22. O Lord! I can appeal to thee in the sincerity of my heart, that though I have many invincible sins, weaknesses, and infirmities that hang upon me; and though I am often worsted by my sins, and overcome in an hour of temptation; yet thou that knowest all thoughts and hearts, thou dost know that I have given up my heart and life to the obedience of Jesus

Christ, and do daily give them up to his rule and government; and it is the earnest desire of my soul, above all things in this world, that Jesus Christ may still set up his laws in my heart, and exercise his dominion over me, Ps. lxxv. 3, Rom. vii. 23. Now certainly, there is not the weakest Christian in all the world but can venture himself upon such an appeal to God as this is; and without all peradventure, where such a frame and temper of spirit is, there the dominion of Jesus Christ is set up; and where the dominion of Christ is set up, there sin has no dominion; for the dominion of sin and the dominion of Christ are inconsistent, and therefore such a soul is happy, and will be happy to all eternity. But,

[19.] Nineteenthly, *That man that will venture his soul upon Christ, and that will lean upon Christ, and cleave to Christ with full purpose of heart,¹ and that will cleave to his blood, and cleave to his righteousness, and cleave to his merits and satisfaction, in the face of all fears, doubts, disputes, cavils, and objections; and though it cannot clear its title to Christ, yet will stay and hang itself upon Christ for life and happiness; that man is certainly a believer, and will be everlastingly saved.* 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15; if I must die, I will die at his feet, and in the midst of death expect a better life. That man acts faith to purpose that can love a frowning God, and hang upon an angry God, and follow hard after a withdrawing God, yea, and trust in a killing God, as here, Mat. xv. 22-28. Job had his feverish fits, and his impatient slips, and yet he kept up his heroic resolution to lean upon the Lord, whilst he had but one minute to live; and this speaks out not only the truth, but also the strength of Job's faith in the midst of his extraordinary combats. When the soul is peremptorily and habitually resolved to cleave to the person of Christ, and to cleave to the merits of Christ, and to cleave to the transactions of Christ with the Father for the salvation of sinners, as the wife cleaves to her husband, or as the child cleaves to the father, or as Ruth cleaved to Naomi, or as the ivy cleaves to the oak, with an 'If I perish, I perish,' Ruth i. 14-17, Esther iv. 16, then it is safe, then it is happy, then it is out of the danger of hell, then it is within the suburbs of heaven. God never did, nor never will cast such a man to hell, whose soul is drawn forth to a secret resting, staying, leaning, and relying alone upon Christ, for the obtaining of all that good, and all that glory that he has purchased, and his Father has promised. But,

[20.] Lastly, *That man that makes it his principal care, his main business, his work of works, to look to his heart, to watch his heart, and to reform his heart, that man doubtless has a saving work of God upon his heart.* There are two things which a gracious soul most looks at, his God and his heart. Though a gracious man looks to the cleansing of his hands, yet his principal care is the reformation of his heart, the cleansing of his heart, according to that of the apostle James: 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded,' James iv. 8. And that of the prophet Jeremiah: 'O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved,' Jer. iv. 14. Man must labour after a clean inside, as well as a clean outside. The conversation must not be only unspotted before the world, but the

¹ Cant. viii. 5; Acts xi. 21-23; Ps. lxxi. 16; Isa. lxi. 10.

heart also must be unspotted before God ; the heart is as capable of inward defilements as the body is of outward defilements, 2 Cor. vii. 1. O sirs ! though heart defilement is least taken notice of, yet heart defilement is the worst defilement, and the most dangerous defilement in the world. Heart defilement is spiritual defilement, and spiritual defilement is the defilement of devils, which of all defilement is the most hateful, odious, and pernicious defilement, Eph. vi. 12, [*vide* Beza.] The hypocrite's only care is to keep his life from defilement, but the sincere Christian's care is mainly to keep his heart from defilement ; for he very well knows, that if he can but keep his heart clean, he shall with more ease keep his life clean ; if the fountain be kept pure, the streams will run pure. The heart is the spring of all actions, and therefore every action is as the spring is from whence it flows ; if the spring be good, the action is good that flows from it ; if the spring be evil, the action is evil that flows from it : ' A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things ; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things,' Mark xii. 35. Certainly, the great work of a Christian lieth with his heart. The reformation of the heart is the highest and choicest part of reformation, because it is the reformation of the noblest part of man, and is that which God looks most after, Prov. xxiii. 26. The reformation of the heart is indeed the heart of reformation. There is nothing reformed to purpose till the heart be reformed ; if the heart be naught, all is naught ; if that be very naught, all is very naught ; if that be stark naught, all is stark naught ; but if that be reformed, all is reformed. A gracious man's watch is mainly about his heart : ' Create in me a clean heart, O God ! and renew a right spirit within me.' ' Unite my heart to fear thy name.' ' Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.' ' Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.' ' When thou saidst, Seek my face, my heart answered, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' ' With my whole heart have I sought thee.' ' Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' ' Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness.' The heart of man is the fountain of life or death, and therefore sin in the heart, in some respects, is worse and more dangerous than sin in the life ; and hence it is that the sincere Christian doubles his guard about his heart. Luther hit it when he said, ' I more fear what is within me than what comes from without.' The storms and winds without do never move the earth ; it is only vapours within that causeth earthquakes, as philosophers observe. Hypocrites, as our Saviour testifies, are all for the outside ; they wash the platters and the cups, and beautify the tombs, like an adulteress whose care is to paint and set a fair face upon a foul matter, Mat. xxiii. 25-30 ; but now a sincere Christian, though he has a special respect to the well ordering of his life, yet his main business and work is about his heart, Ps. l. 23. Oh that this ignorant heart were but more enlightened ! Oh that this proud heart were but more humble ! Oh that this profane heart were but more holy ! Oh that this earthly heart were but more heavenly ! Oh that this unbelieving heart were but more believing ! Oh that this passionate heart were but more meek ! Oh that this carnal heart

¹ Ps. li. 10, lxxxvi. 11, cxix. 36, cxix. 80, xxvii. 8, cxix. 2, 10 ; Acts viii. 36 ; Heb. viii. 10 ; Jer. xxxi. 33.

were but more spiritual! Oh that this lukewarm heart were but more zealous for God, and Christ, and the gospel, and the great concerns of eternity! Oh that this slight heart were but more serious! Oh that this dull heart were but more quickened! Oh that this dead heart were but more enlivened! &c. The highest and hardest work of a Christian lieth with his heart. Mark, common light, common conviction, education, enforcement of conscience, principles of common honesty and morality, the eye of man, the fear of man, the examples of man, the laws of man, and the rewards of man, with a hundred other things, may be very prevalent to reform the life, to regulate the outward conversation, and to keep that in some due decorum; and yet all these things will be found too weak, too low to change the heart, to reform the heart, to mend the heart, to purify the heart. To this great work there are principles of a higher nature required: 'Purifying their hearts by faith,' Acts xv. 9. It is not a guard of moral virtues, but a guard of saving graces that can keep the heart in order; to reform the heart, to keep the heart in a gracious frame, is one of the best and hardest works in the world: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' The text is about matter of life and death. The words are mandatory, for all counsels in Scripture carry in them the force of a command. In the words you have two things observable: (1.) A duty enjoined, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' (2.) The reason or motive enforcing it, 'For out of it are the issues of life.' In the duty there are two things considerable: (1.) Here is the subject matter, the thing that is to be done, and that is, 'keep thy heart.' This duty is charged upon all in peremptory and undispensable terms. (2.) Here is the manner how it must be done, and that is, 'with all diligence.'

(1.) 'Keep.' The Hebrew word נצר, *natsar*, to keep, hath various significations, but the main is to keep in safe custody; we should keep our hearts as under lock and key, that they may be always at hand when the Lord shall call for them, &c.

(2.) 'Thy heart.' By the heart we are not to understand that particular vital member of the body that in common speech we call the heart. Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which philosophers call the *primum vivens et ultimum moriens*, the first that lives and the last that dies. But by heart, in a metaphor, the Scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of the soul. Sometimes the heart is put for the understanding: Rom. i. 21, 'Their foolish heart was darkened,' that is, their understanding was darkened. Sometimes it is put for the will and affections: Mat. xxii. 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' that is, with thy will and with all thy affections. So Prov. xxiii. 26, Deut. x. 12. The will is the chiefest power of the soul, as the heart is the principal part of the body; and it commands all the affections, as the centurion did his servants, Mat. viii. Sometimes it is put for the conscience: 1 John iii. 20, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,' that is, if our conscience condemn us justly, then our case must be assuredly sad, because God knows much more by us than we know by ourselves, and can charge us with many sins that conscience is not privy

to, Ps. xix. 12. Sometimes it is put for the memory: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart,' that is, in my memory. So Luke ii. 19. But here it is taken comprehensively for the whole soul, with all its powers, noble faculties, and endowments, together with their several operations,—all which are to be watched over.

(3.) 'With all diligence,' or as the Hebrew runs, 'with all keeping.' The Hebrew word שמר, *shamar*, signifies, to keep with watch and ward.¹ A Christian is to keep a perpetual guard about his heart. A-Lapide notes, that the Hebrew word is borrowed from military affairs. We should keep our hearts as soldiers keep a garrison, with watch and ward. Lavater jumps with him, and tells us that the word *shamar* is taken from a besieged garrison, begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous citizens within; in which danger the soldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch. Junius reads the word thus, 'Keep thy heart,' *supra omnem custodiam*, above all keeping. So Jerome reads, *præ omne custodia*, above all keeping keep thy heart, that is, keep, keep, watch, watch, &c. So Rhodolphus reads it, *præ omni custodia*; and so we read it in the margin of our Bibles. And the Syriac reads it in the same manner that our English doth, *cum omni cautione*, with all caution and wariness we are to keep our hearts. Oh what guards and double guards! Oh what watches and double watches, should men put upon their hearts! These words, *keeping, keep*, import both a universal watchfulness over the heart, and a diligent watchfulness over the heart, and a constant watchfulness over the heart; and thrice happy are those persons who keep such a watch upon their hearts. A man is to keep his eye, and keep his mouth, and keep his feet; but above all keeping, he is to keep his heart. It is a duty incumbent upon every Christian to keep his own heart, 'Keep *thy* heart *thyself*.' Thou mayest make another thy park-keeper, or thy house-keeper, or thy shop-keeper, or thy cash-keeper, or thy horse-keeper, or thy nurse-keeper;² but thou must be thy own heart-keeper. 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' Some understand this of all kind of watchfulness. The Hebrew word is applied to several sorts of keeping. As,

First, It is applied to those that are the keepers of a prison, where dangerous felons or malefactors are to be looked to, that they do not break away. 1 Kings xx. 39, 'Keep this man,' So Joseph was made the keeper of the prison, Gen. xxxix. 21–23; so Job, vii. 12. The Hebrew word is the same with that in Prov. iv. 23. Now, oh how diligent, how vigilant are men in looking after their prisoners! Even so should we be in looking after our hearts, &c.

Secondly, It signifies to keep, as men would keep a besieged garrison, or city, or castle, in time of war. So it is used in that Hab. ii. 1. Now what strong guards, what watchful guards do men keep up at such a time! A gracious heart is Christ's fort-royal. Now, against this fort Satan will employ the utmost of his strength, art, and craft; and therefore how highly does it concern every Christian to keep a strong guard, a constant guard about his heart! But,

Thirdly, It signifies to keep, as the priests and Levites kept the sanc-

¹ Cato, Cicero, Seneca, Socrates, and others, have laid down excellent rules for the government of the outward man; but none for the government of the heart.

² Qu. 'purse-keeper'?—ED.

tuary of God, the temple of God, and all the holy things that were committed to their charge; so the word is often used by the prophet, Ezek. xliv. 8, 15, 16, &c. The temple, and all the vessels of the temple, were to be kept pure, and clean, and sweet. Our hearts are the temples of God, the temples of the Holy Ghost; and therefore we should always keep a strong and diligent guard about them, that nothing may pass in or out, that may be either displeasing, provoking, or grieving to them. But,

Fourthly, The word signifies to keep, as a man keeps his life. Job x. 12, 'Thy visitation hath preserved,' here is *shamar*, 'my life.' Now with what care, with what diligence, with what labour, with what watchfulness do men labour to preserve their natural lives! What a guard, what a watch do men daily set about their lives; the same they should set about their hearts. But,

Fifthly, Men should keep their hearts, as they keep a rich treasure of money, or jewels, or plate. Now, to preserve a rich treasure, what locks, what bolts, what bars, what chains are made use of! Our hearts are jewels more worth than all the kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres of this world. There are few men that know how to value a God, a Christ, a gospel, a covenant of grace, a heaven, or their own hearts as they should. What are mountains of gold, and rocks of pearl, to the heart, the soul of man! The heart is that pearl of price for which a man should venture his all, and lay down his all. Oh then, what a guard, what a watch should a man continually keep upon his heart! The heart is *camera omnipotentis Regis*, the presence-chamber of the King of heaven; and upon this account it becomes a Christian always to keep a guard upon his heart. He keeps his heart best who keeps it as his choicest treasure, &c.¹ But,

Sixthly, Men should keep their hearts, as a fond father keeps his only child. The fond father will still keep his child within doors, he will still have him under his eye, and in his presence, that so no hurt, no harm may befall him day or night. Our eye should be still upon our hearts, or else they will give us the slip, and play the wanton with us. But,

Seventhly, Men should keep their hearts, as lovers keep the love-tokens that are mutually sent one to another. They love to be often a-looking upon them, and a-thinking of them, and a-talking of them; and will be sure to keep the strictest and the strongest guard upon them. So a Christian should still be a-looking upon his heart, and a-thinking upon his heart, and a-speaking of his heart, either of the badness of it, or of the wants of it, and a-keeping of the strictest and strongest guard upon his heart. But,

Eighthly, A man should keep his heart as a man keeps his house, when he is afraid and in danger of being robbed by thieves in the night. Oh how wakeful, and watchful, and active will a man now be! But what is a man's house to his heart? A man's heart is in ten thousand times more danger than his house, and accordingly his guard should be most about his heart. But,

Ninthly, A man should keep his heart, as men keep their gardens that are full of choice, rich, rare, ripe fruits and flowers. Now, what care, cost, and pains men are at to keep such gardens, you well know. And oh that you did but every day more and more experimentally know

¹ All our spiritual riches are in our hearts. A good man may say with Bias, *Omnia mea mecum porto*, all my goods I carry about with me.

what it is to spend your greatest care and pains about your hearts, which are Christ's garden, his bed of spices, where all graces flourish! Cant. iv. 16.

Tenthly, and last, A man should keep his heart as spruce men and women do their fine clothes. Oh they won't endure a speck, a spot upon them! It is your wisdom, and oh that you would more and more make it your work, to keep your hearts from all sinful specks and spots! Let not others be more careful to keep their outsides clean, than you are to keep your insides clean; for what are clean clothes to a clean heart? It is better to go to heaven in ragged clothes with a clean heart, than to go to hell in fine clothes with an unclean heart. Doubtless that man that makes it his business to keep his heart as men keep dangerous felons or traitors, or as soldiers keep their garrisons or castles when closely besieged, or as the priests and Levites kept the sanctuary of God, or as a man keeps his natural life, or as a man keeps a rich treasure, or as a fond father keeps an only child, or as lovers keep their love-tokens, or as a man keeps his house when he is in danger to be robbed, or as a man keeps his pleasant garden, or as spruce men and women keep their fine clothes, that man is doubtless a true Nathanael, a man that has a work of God passed in power upon his soul; yea, that man whose sincere desires, and whose gracious purposes, and fixed resolutions, and faithful endeavours, is to guard and watch his heart, according to the particulars we have now hinted, that man, without a peradventure, is a gracious man, and one that has the root of the matter in him, and shall be happy to all eternity. Look, as no man can hear as he would and should, nor pray as he would and should, nor believe as he would and should, nor repent as he would and should, nor walk as he would and should, so no man can keep his heart as he would and should; but if a man makes it his great business and work to keep his heart, to watch his heart, to reform his heart, to better his heart, he is accepted of God, and shall be blessed for ever. It is one of the greatest and clearest evidences of grace for a man to make it his greatest business, work, and concernment in this world to keep his heart always in a gracious frame, to keep his heart always in a wakeful frame, in a watchful frame, in a tender frame, in a believing frame, in a repenting frame, in an humble frame, in a patient frame, in a serious frame in ^{the} heavenly frame, and in a jealous frame; for the more gracious the heart is, the more suspicious it will be.¹ Satan has a strong party, a numerous party, an old party, a subtle party, in all our hearts, and therefore it highly concerns us to watch our hearts with a holy jealousy. O sirs! God hath never said, Above all keepings, keep your shops; or above all keepings, keep your estates; or above all keepings, keep your flocks; or above all keepings, keep your bags; or above all keepings, keep your friends; or above all keepings, keep your bodies; or above all keepings, keep your names; or above all keepings, keep your conversations; but he hath said, Above all keepings, keep your hearts. Look, as the heart is the fountain of natural life, and if it fail, life fails; and therefore it is strongly secured with ribs about it, it is guarded in a castle of flesh and bones; so is the soul the fountain of spiritual life, and runs in-

¹ Cant. v. 2; 2 Kings xxii. 19; 2 Chron. xxxii. 26; James v. 11; Eccles. v. 1, 2; Col. iii. 1, 2; 2 Cor. vii. 11.

visibly through all the body. Fountains were to be kept pure, by the Roman laws of the twelve tables,¹ and the heart, that is the spring and fountain of all actions, is to be kept pure, by the laws of the great God, 2 Cor. vii. 1; 1 Thes. v. 23, &c. Men keep the heart principally from hurt, because every wound there is mortal. Oh that men were as wise for their souls! God's eye is mainly upon the heart. The heart, well guarded and watched, keeps all in security. Alexander was safe while Antipater kept the watch, so all within that little world Man will be safe while the heart is strongly guarded. The heart is the fountain, the root, the store-house, the *primum mobile*, the great wheel that sets all a-going, and therefore, above all keepings, keep your hearts. It is a foolish thing to watch the outworks, and leave the fort-royal without a guard; so it is a foolish thing to watch the out-works, the eye, the ear, the tongue, the hand, the feet,—though these must all be watched,—and to leave the heart, which is a Christian's fort-royal, without a guard.

*Omnia si perdas, animam servare memento.*²

'If all things else must needs be lost,
Yet save thy soul, whate'er it cost.'

He that makes it his business to watch, and weep, and sigh, and groan most over his own heart, he doubtless is in a gracious estate. He that makes it his work, his daily work, his greatest work, his work of works, to keep a continual guard upon his heart, he certainly is in a blessed estate. He that lamentingly cries out, Oh that my soul did but prosper as my body! Oh that my inward man were but in as good a frame as my outward man! Oh that this proud heart were but more humble! Oh that this hard heart were but more softened! Oh that this carnal heart were but more spiritual! Oh that this earthly heart were but more heavenly! Oh that this unbelieving heart were but more believing! Oh that this passionate heart were but more meek! Oh that this slight heart were but more serious! Oh that this blind heart were but more enlightened! Oh that this dull heart were but more quickened! Oh my heart, my heart! when wilt thou be better? Oh my God, my God! when shall my heart be better? Oh bring it into a gracious frame, and for ever keep it in a gracious frame! He that thus lamentingly cries out of his heart, he certainly has an honest heart, and will be happy for ever. O Lord, my memory is weak, and my utterance is bad, and my understanding is dark, and my gifts are low, and my affections are flat, and my temptations are strong, and my corruptions are prevalent, Ps. xxxix. 22–24; but thou, who art the great heart-searcher, thou knowest that I would fain have my heart in a better temper; I had rather have my heart brought into a gracious frame, and kept in a gracious frame, than to have all the riches of the Indies, than to be an emperor, yea, than to be king over all the earth. If it be indeed thus with thee, thou art blessed, and shalt be blessed for ever: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' I know the apostle speaks this in point of alms, but it is applicable to the case in hand, and to a hundred other cases. God measures his people not by their works,

¹ Fron., lib. ii.

² Brooks substitutes 'animam' for 'famam,' = good name, in the anonymous couplet,
'Omnia si perdas, famam servare memento
Qua semel amissa postea nullus eris.'—G.

but by their wills. If their wills be to be more holy, humble, heavenly, and to have their hearts always in a most gracious frame, then they are accepted of God; for every good man is as good in the eye of God, in the judgment of God, and in the account of God, as he would be. Not long before famous Mr Baynes died, some friends that were with him in his library, which was an excellent one, fell a-commending of it; 'Ay,' saith he, 'there stand my books, but the Lord knows that for many years last past I have studied my heart more than books.'¹ Oh no minister to him, no scholar to him, who studies his heart more than his books; nor no Christian to him who studies his heart more than his day-books, or more than his shop books, or that studies his heart more than his counting-house, or that studies his heart more than a good bargain, &c. That man is for heaven, and heaven is for that man, who makes it his greatest business in this world to watch his heart, to guard his heart. The hypocrite looks most to externals, but the sincere Christian looks most to internals. The hypocrite's main watch is about his lips, but a sincere Christian's main watch is about his heart. The hypocrite's main work lies without doors, but the sincere Christian's main work lies within doors. All know, that know anything, that both nature and grace begin at the heart, but art begins at the face. A painter doth not begin a picture at the heart; a picture hath but a face, but an outside. And as nature begins at the heart, but art at the face, so grace begins at the heart, but hypocrisy at the face, at the outside of religion. Every man is that really that he is inwardly: 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God,' Rom. ii. 28, 29. Certainly that man that makes it his great business to watch his heart, and to keep his heart always in a gracious frame, that man is a gracious man. It is true our hearts are like our watches, seldom got to go well; and when they do go well, how hard a work is it to keep them going well! The motions of our watches are not constant; sometimes they go faster, and sometimes they go slower, and often they stand in need of mending. Though in these, and many other respects, our hearts are like our watches, yet if we make it our grand work to keep a constant guard upon our hearts, and our main design in this world to have our hearts brought and kept in a gracious frame, our spiritual estate is good, and we shall be happy for ever, &c.

In my other writings there are variety of special evidences, which the Christian reader, if he please, and if need require, may make use of, in order to the further clearing up of his gracious estate, and therefore let these twenty suffice at this time. And thus much for this chapter, &c.

CHAPTER III.

Now, in this chapter I shall treat of sound, saving repentance, of repentance unto life; yea, of that evangelical repentance that hath

¹ Paul Bayne or Baynes, whose Exposition of Ephesians forms one of the reprinted Commentaries of Mr Nichol's Series.—G.

the precious promises of remission of sin and salvation running out unto it. My purpose at this time is not to handle the doctrine of repentance at large, but only to speak so far of it as may speak it out to be evidential of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's spiritual and eternal condition.

Now, before I come to open myself more particularly, give me leave to premise this in the general, viz., *that there is a repentance that does accompany salvation*: 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.' Jer. iv. 14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.' Acts xi. 18, 'When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' Mat. xviii. 3, 'And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'

Having premised thus much in the general, give me now leave to say, *That there are three parts of true, sound, saving repentance, unto all which forgiveness of sin is promised.* And the

1. *First, is contrition or grief of heart for sins committed.* Now this is called sometimes godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 10; and sometimes a contrite spirit, Isa. lxvi. 2; and sometimes a broken and contrite heart, Ps. li. 17; and sometimes the afflicting of our souls, Lev. xvi. 29; and sometimes the humbling of the heart, 2 Chron. vii. 14, Lam. iii. 20; and sometimes a mourning, Zech. xii. 10; and sometimes a weeping, Mark xiv. 72. All repenting sinners are mourning sinners. David repents, and waters his couch with his tears, Ps. vi. 6. Hezekiah repents, and humbles himself for the pride of his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. Ephraim repents, and Ephraim bemoans himself and smites upon his thigh, and is even confounded, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. Mary Magdalene repents, and weeps, and washes Christ's feet with her tears, Luke vii. 38. The Corinthians repented, and they were made sorry after a godly manner, 2 Cor. vii. 9. Repentance in the Hebrew is called נחם, an irking of the soul; and in Greek, μεταμέλεια, after-grief, and μετάνοια, after-wit; and in the Latin, *pœnitentia*; all which do import, that contrition or sorrow for sin is one part of true repentance. Oh the sighs, the groans, the sobs, the tears, that are to be found among repenting sinners, &c. Luther hit the mark when he said, 'What are all the palaces of the world to a contrite heart; yea, heaven and earth, seeing it is the seat of divine majesty?'¹

2. *Secondly, It is very observable, that all mourning persons for their sins, are within the compass of the promise of forgiveness of sins*: Zech. xii. 11, 'In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.' Zech. xiii. 1, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.' Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning of him-

¹ Luther, tom. iii. 457.

self,' &c. Ver. 20, 'I will surely have mercy on him;' or, as the Hebrew has it, I will, having mercy, have mercy on him. As soon as Ephraim's heart is troubled for his sins, God's bowels are troubled for Ephraim; as soon as Ephraim, like a penitent child, falls a-weeping at God's foot, God, like a tender indulgent father, falls a-bemoaning of Ephraim. Ephraim could not refrain from tears, and God could not refrain from opening his bowels of mercy towards him. So Isa. lvii. 15. And how can the contrite heart be indeed revived and cheered without forgiveness of sins, without a pardon in the bosom? Melancthon makes mention of a godly woman, who having upon her deathbed been in much conflict, and afterwards much comforted, brake out into these words: Now, and not till now, did I understand the meaning of these words, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' There is no comfort to that which arises from the sense of forgiveness: Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her iniquities are pardoned.' And why is the mourning soul pronounced the blessed soul: Mat. v. 4, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted:' but because the mourning soul is the pardoned soul?

Quest. But what is that sorrow or mourning for sin, that is a part of true repentance? The resolution of this question is very necessary for the preventing of all soul-deceits and mistakes, and for the quieting, settling, and satisfying of souls truly penitent, and therefore I shall give these eight following answers to it.

[1.] *First, It is a sorrow or grief that is spiritual, that is, supernatural.* No man is born with godly sorrow in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. Godly sorrow is a plant of God's own planting; it is a seed of his own sowing; it is a flower of his own setting; it is of a heavenly offspring; it is from God, and God alone. The spirit of mourning is from above; it is from a supernatural power and principle. There is nothing that can turn a heart of stone into flesh, but the Spirit of God, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. Godly sorrow is a gift from God: Job xxiii. 16, 'God makes my heart soft.' No hand but a divine hand can make the heart soft and tender under the sight and sense of sin. Nature may easily work a man to mourn, and melt, and weep, under worldly losses, crosses, and miseries, as it did David's men, 1 Sam. xxx. 4; but it must be grace, it must be a supernatural principle, that must work the heart to mourn for sin.

[2.] *Secondly, Godly sorrow is a sorrow for sin as sin,* it is a mourning rather for sin than for smart; it is not so much for loss of goods, lands, wife, child, credit, name, &c., but for that a holy God is offended, a righteous law violated, Christ dishonoured, the Spirit grieved, and the gospel blemished, &c. Peter's sorrow was godly, but Judas his sorrow was worldly; Peter mourns over the evil of sin, but Judas mourns over the evil of punishment. David mourns over his sin, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight,' Ps. li. 4. And so 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, 'And David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech thee, O Lord! take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done foolishly.' David does not cry out, Take away the threatened famine, but, Take away the iniquity of thy

servant ; nor he does not cry out, Take away the enemies of thy servant, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant ; nor he does not say, Take away the pestilence from the land, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant. But now when Pharaoh was under judgments, he never cries to the Lord to take away his sins, his pride, his hardness, his obduracy, his envy, his malice, his hatred, &c., but he cries out, Take away the judgment, take away the judgment, take away the frogs, take away the lice, take away the caterpillars, &c. But under all these dreadful and amazing judgments that he was under, such a word as this never fell from his lips, Take away my sin, O Lord ! take away my sins ; thy judgments do terrify me, but my sins will damn me, and therefore whatever becomes of my life, kingdom, and crown, take away my sins and save my soul. David saw sin to be a greater evil than flying before his enemies, or than famine or pestilence was ; and therefore he desires rather to be rid of his sins, than to be rid of the punishment that was due to his sin ; but Pharaoh saw no such evil in sin, and therefore he cries out, Take away the plague, take away the plague. And Job upon the dunghill cries out, 'I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men !' Job vii. 20. Job does not cry out, Oh, I have lost all my substance, I am bereaved of all my children, I am set as naked upon the dunghill as ever I was born ! My friends reproach me, my wife tempts me to curse my God, which is ten thousand times worse than to curse myself ; Satan persecutes me, and God has not only forsaken me, but is also become a severe enemy to me, &c. Job cries out of his sin, and not of his sufferings. A deep sense of his sins swallows up as it were all sense of his sufferings.

And so that great apostle Paul does not cry out, O wretched man that I am ! that bonds attend me in every place, and that I have neither house nor home to go to, and that I am despised, scorned, reproached, and persecuted, and that I am accounted factious, seditious, rebellious, erroneous, and that I am looked upon as the offscouring of the world, &c. Oh no ! but he cries out of his sin : 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ?' Rom. vii. 23, 24.

So the prophet Micah, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned,' Micah vii. 9. Though of all burdens the indignation of the Lord be the greatest burden, yet divine indignation is but a light burden in comparison of sin. A gracious soul can better stand under the burden of God's indignation for sin, than it can stand under the burden of sin itself, which hath kindled that indignation, &c.

[3.] *Thirdly, Godly sorrow is a great sorrow, it is a superlative sorrow, it is a sad and serious sorrow.* A sincere mourning is a deep mourning, it springs from serious and deep apprehensions of the great anger and deep displeasure of God, and of the woful nature, demerit, burden, bitterness, vileness, and filthiness of sin, &c. The blessed Scripture seems to make godly sorrow a superlative sorrow, calling it a great mourning, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, and a bitterness, as one is in for his first-born, Zech. xii. 10, 11. And so the church, 'My bowels are troubled within me, mine heart is turned within me ; for I have grievously rebelled,' Lament. i. 20. And David watered his couch with his tears, Ps. vi. 6. And Mary Magdalene wept much, as well as she loved much, Luke vii. And Peter went out and

wept bitterly, Mat. xxvi. 15. Clement observes, that all the time that Peter lived after this great fall, he would every night, when he heard the cock crow, fall upon his knees and weep bitterly. Look, as shallow brooks make the greatest noise, so hypocrites and formalists may howl, and roar, and cry, and make more noise than the true penitent; but yet the sorrow of a true penitent is more inward, secret, solid, still, and deep, Hosea vii. 14. As, you know, the deepest rivers run most silently, and make least noise, so the deepest sorrow makes least noise. The mourning of repenting souls, under the apprehensions of their sins, is like the mourning of doves; but the mourning of wicked men under the apprehension of their sins, is like the bellowing of bulls and roaring of bears, Ezek. vii. 16; Isa. li. 20, lix. 11.

[4.] *Fourthly*, A sincere mourning is an extensive mourning, it is an universal mourning. Godly sorrow and grief extends itself, not only to some sins, but to all sins, great and small. Look, as a holy heart hates all sin, so a holy heart mourns over all sin that it sees and knows to be sin. God hates one sin as well as another, and he has forbid one sin as well as another, and he has revealed his wrath from heaven against one sin as well as another, and he is provoked by one sin as well as another, and Christ is crucified by one sin as well as another, and the Spirit is grieved as well by one sin as by another, and the gospel is reproached by one sin as well as another, and the conscience is wounded by one sin as well as another, and Satan is gratified by one sin as well as another, and wicked men's mouths are opened by one sin as well as another, and young comers on in religion are stumbled, grieved, and offended by one sin as well as another, and the soul is endangered by one sin as well as another. An unsound heart may mourn for great sins, that make great wounds in his conscience and credit, and that leave a great blot upon his name, or that waste or rot his body, or destroy his estate, or that expose him to public scorn and shame, &c., but for sins of omission, for wandering thoughts, idle words, deadness, coldness, slightness in religious duties and services, unbelief, secret pride, self-confidence, and a thousand more, such gnats as these he can swallow without any remorse, Prov. v. 8-14.

But now godly sorrow is of a general extent, it mourns as well for small sins as for great. David's heart smote him, as well for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, as it did for killing of Uriah with the sword. A gracious soul weeps over many sins that none can charge upon him but God and his own conscience: Ps. xix. 12, 'Oh cleanse thou me from secret faults.'

Yea, let me say that godly sorrow and grief extends not only to a man's own sins, but also to the sins of others as well as his own, Ezek. ix. 4, 5. And this you may see also in David, Ps. cxix. 53, 136, 158; and in Jeremiah, Jer. ix. 1-3; and in Paul, Philip. iii. 18; and in Lot, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8. And if you please to turn to my treatise on holiness, you may see seven special arguments for this their practice, page 139 to page 145, and therefore a touch in this place may suffice.¹

[5.] *Fifthly*, Godly sorrow is a lasting sorrow, it is a durable sorrow. As long as a Christian continues sinning, he cannot but continue mourning. David's sins were always before him, Ps. li. 3, though his Absalom

nor his Bathsheba were not ever before him. Godly sorrow will every day follow sin hard at heels. Look, as a wicked man, in respect of his desire and will to sin, would sin for ever, if he should live for ever; so I may say, if a godly man should live for ever, he would sorrow for ever. After Paul had been converted many years, some think fourteen, you shall find him a-mourning and lamenting over his sins, Rom. vii. An ingenuous child will never cease mourning, till he ceases from offending an indulgent father. Though sin and godly sorrow were never born together, yet whilst a believer lives in this world, they must live together. And indeed holy joy and godly sorrow are no ways inconsistent, Ps. ii. 11; yea, a godly man's eyes are always fullest of tears, when his heart is fullest of holy joy, &c. A man may go joying and mourning to his grave, yea, to heaven, at the same time.

But now the sorrow, the grief of wicked men for sin, it is like a morning cloud, or the early dew, or the crackling of thorns under a pot, or a post that quickly passeth by, or a dream that soon vanisheth, or like a tale that is told, &c., their sorrowful hearts and mournful eyes soon dry up together, as you may see in Esau, Ahab, Pharaoh, and Judas; but the streams of godly sorrow will last and run as long as sin hangs upon us, and dwells in us: 1 Cor. xv. 9, 'I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' Ps. xxv. 7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' David prayeth to the Lord, not only to forgive, but also to forget, both the sins of his youth and the sins of his age. David remembered all his faults, both of former and of later times. David was well in years when he defiled himself with Bathsheba; and this he remembers and mourns over, Ps. li. And it is very observable, that God charged his people for to remember old sins: Deut. ix. 7, 'Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness.' Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation as well as other graces; witness the very covenant of grace itself: Ezek. xvi. 62, 63, 'I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done.' Certainly a true penitent can no more satisfy himself with one act of repentance, than he can satisfy himself with one act of faith, or with one act of hope, or with one act of love, or with one act of humility, or with one act of patience, or with one act of self-denial. Godly sorrow is a gospel grace that will live and last as well and as long as other graces; it is a spring that in this life can never be drawn dry.

[6.] *Sixthly*, Godly sorrow is a divorcing sorrow; it divorces the heart from sin, it breaks that ancient league that has been between the heart and sin. There is a strong firm league between every sinner and his sin, Isa. xxviii. 15, 18; but when godly sorrow enters, it dissolves that league, it separates between a sinner and his sin, it sets the soul at an everlasting distance from sin.¹ The union between the root and the branches, the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the father and the child, the husband and the wife, the body and

¹ It is an excellent saying of Austin, He doth truly bewail the sins he hath committed who never commits the sins he hath bewailed.

the soul, are all near, very near unions ; yet, that between a sinner and his sin seems to be a nearer union, Observable is the story of Phaltiel. You know when David had married Michal, Saul injuriously gave her to another ; but when David came to the crown, and sent forth his royal commands that his wife should be brought to him, her husband dares not but obey, brings her on her journey, and then not without great reluctancy of spirit takes his leave of her, 2 Sam. iii. 14-16. But what, was Phaltiel weary of his wife, that he now forsakes her ? Oh no, he was enforced, and though she was gone, yet he had many a sad thought about parting with her, and he never leaves looking till he sees her as far as Bahurim, weeping and bemoaning her absence. Just thus stands the heart of every unregenerate man towards his sins, as Phaltiel's heart stood towards his wife. But when the springs of godly sorrow rise in the soul, the league, the friendship, the union that was between the sinner and his sins, comes to be dissolved and broken in pieces, Hosea xiv. 8. All godly sorrow sets the heart against sin. He that divinely mourns over sin, cannot live in a course of sin. When of all bitters God makes sin to be the greatest bitter to the soul, then the soul bids an everlasting farewell to sin ; now the soul in good earnest bids adieu to sin for ever. O sirs ! this is a most certain maxim, to live and die with, that either a man's sins will make an end of his mourning, or else his mourning will make an end of his sin ; for he that holds on sinning, will certainly leave off mourning. No man can make a trade of sin, and yet keep his heart in a mourning frame. But he that holds on mourning for sin, will certainly leave off the trade of sin. Holy grief for sin will sooner or later break off all leagues and friendships with sin. As sin makes a separation between God and a man's soul, so godly sorrow makes a separation between a man's soul and his sin, Isa. lix. 1, 2. All holy mournings over sin will by degrees issue in the wasting and weakening of the strength and power of sin ; nothing below the death and destruction of sin will satisfy that soul that truly mourns over sin.

But now, though you may find an unsound heart sometimes a-lamenting over his sins, yet you shall never find him a-leaving of his sins. Pharaoh lamented over his sin, crying out, ' I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.' And again, ' Then Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron in haste, and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you,' Exod. ix. 27, x. 16. But though you find him here lamenting and complaining over his sin, yet you never find him leaving or forsaking of his sin. So Saul could cry out, he had sinned, but yet he still continued in his sin ; he acknowledged that he did evil in persecuting of David, and yet he still held on persecuting of him. An unsound heart mourns over sin, and yet he holds on in a course of sin ; he sins and mourns, and mourns and sins, and commonly all his mourning for sin does but the more embolden him in a way of sin ; but the gracious soul says with Job, ' If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more,' Job xxxiv. 32. He laments over sin and leaves it ; he confesses it, and forsakes it, and he is as willing to forego it as he is willing that God should forgive it.

[7.] *Seventhy, All,—and if you please I shall give you many things in one,—godly sorrow is the fruit and effect of evangelical faith.* It flows from faith as the stream from the fountain, the branch from the

root, and the effect from the cause : Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' Look, as all legal sorrow flows from a legal faith, as you may see in Ahab's and the Ninevites, so all evangelical sorrow flows from an evangelical faith : 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn.' All gracious mourning flows from looking, from believing. Nothing breaks the heart of a sinner like a look of faith. All tears of godly sorrow drop from the eye of faith. Godly sorrow rises and falls, as faith rises and falls. Faith and godly sorrow are like the fountain and the flood, which rise and fall together. The more a man is able by faith to look upon a pierced Christ, the more his heart will mourn over all the dishonours that he has done to Christ. The more deep and wide the wounds are that faith shews me in the heart and sides of Christ, the more my heart will be wounded for sinning against Christ.

Again, godly sorrow is not an enemy, but a friend to holy joy. I have read of a holy man, who lying upon his sick-bed, and being asked which were his joyfullest days that ever he had, cried out, 'Oh give me my mourning days, give me my mourning days again, for they were the joyfullest days that ever I had.' The higher the springs of godly sorrow rise, the higher the tides of holy joy rise. His graces will flourish most, who evangelically mourns most. Grace always thrives best in that garden, that heart, that is watered most with the tears of godly sorrow. He that grieves most for sin, will rejoice most in God ; and he that rejoices most in God, will grieve most for sin.

Again, the more a man apprehends of the love of God, and of the love of Christ, and the more a man tastes and is assured of the love of the Father, and of the love of the Son, the more that person will grieve and mourn that he has offended, provoked, and grieved such a Father, and such a Son. Remember this, as a man's assurance of peace and reconciliation with God rises, so his grief for sin rises. The more clear and certain evidences a man has of the love and favour of God to his soul, the more that man will grieve and mourn for sinning against such a God. There is nothing that thaws and melts the heart, that softens and breaks the heart, like the warm beams of divine love ; as you may see in the case of Mary Magdalene, Luke vii. ; she loved much, and she wept much, for much was forgiven her. A sight of the free grace and love of Christ towards her, in an act of forgiveness, broke her heart all in pieces. A man cannot stand under the shinings of divine love with a frozen heart, nor yet with dry eyes. The more a man sees of the love of Christ, and the more a man tastes and enjoys of the love of Christ, the more that man will grieve and mourn for all the dishonours that he has done to Christ. The more an ingenuous child sees, and tastes, and enjoys of his father's love, the more he grieves and mourns that ever he should offend such a father, or provoke such a father, who has been so loving and indulgent towards him. Injuries done to a friend cut deep, and the more near, and dear, and beloved a man's friend is to him, the more a man is afflicted and troubled for any wrongs or injuries that are done to him ; and just so it is between God and a gracious soul.

The free love and favour of God, and his unspeakable goodness and

mercy manifested in Jesus Christ to poor sinners, is the very spring and fountain of all evangelical sorrow. Nothing breaks the heart of a poor sinner like the sight of God's free love in a redeemer. A man cannot seriously look upon the firstness, the freeness, the greatness, the unchangeableness, the everlastingness, and the matchlessness of God's free favour and love in Christ, with a hard heart, or with dry eyes: Ezek. xxxvi. 31, compared with verses 25, 26. Oh! who is there that has but one spark of ingenuity, that can read over that heart-breaking scripture with dry eyes? Isa. xliii. 22-24, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices: I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities,' see Isa. lvii. 17-19. Now a man would think, after all this horrid abuse put upon God, this would certainly follow; therefore I will plague and punish thee; therefore my wrath shall smoke against thee; therefore my soul shall abhor thee; therefore I will shut up my loving-kindness in displeasure against thee; therefore I will shew no more mercy towards thee; therefore I will hide my face for ever from thee; therefore I will take vengeance on thee; therefore I will rain hell out of heaven upon thee, &c. Oh! but read and wonder, read and admire, read and stand amazed and astonished, read and refrain from tears if thou canst: ver. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' The prophet's expression in that Zech. xii. 10 is very observable, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only son.' Now it is observable in a father's mourning for an only son, there is nothing but pure love, sincere love, hearty love; but in a son's mourning for his father, there may be, and often is a great deal of self-love, self-respect, because the child may run and read in his father's death, his own loss, his own ruin, his own undoing; but in the father's mourning for an only son, a man may run and read the integrity, purity, and ingenuity of the father's love; and it is only such a love as this as sets the soul a-mourning and a-lamenting over a crucified Christ. The thoughts and fears of wrath, of hell, and of condemnation, works unsound hearts to mourn; but it is the sight of a bleeding, dying Saviour that sets ingenuous, gracious souls a-mourning.

[8.] *Eighthly*, and lastly, Godly sorrow, grief, or mourning, may be known by the *inseparable concomitants or companions that attend it and wait on it*, 2 Cor. vii. 11; and they are these seven:

First, 'What carefulness' or study; the word *σπουδή* notes the serious intension of the mind, and the diligence and dexterity of the soul in shunning and avoiding sin, and arming of the soul against all occasions and temptations thereunto. The great care of the repenting soul is to leave all sin, to shake off all sin, to avoid all sin, and to weaken and subdue, and bring under all sin. Oh! the care, the caution, the circumspection, the vigilancy, the strivings and the strugglings of the repenting soul against temptations and corruptions.

Secondly, Yea, 'what *clearing of yourselves*,' ἀπολογία, apology or defence; which is not done either by denying of sin, or by excusing of sin committed, but by confession of sin, and disliking of sin, and bewailing of sin, and by walking quite cross and contrary to the sin confessed, disliked, and bewailed; as Zaccheus did, Luke xix. 8; and as the jailor did, Acts xvi. 13. The true penitent has no ways to clear himself, but by arraigning, judging, and condemning of himself: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' When men judge themselves, and condemn themselves, God is prevented, and the devil defeated, as having nothing to say against them but what they have said before. When men acknowledge their sins, and aggravate their sins, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon themselves for their sins, they shall find their acquittance from them fairly drawn in the blood of Christ. Repentance for sin takes off the guilt of sin, and sin bewailed is as if it had never been committed; and this becomes the soul's apology, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22.¹

Thirdly, 'Yea, what *indignation*,' or stomach, ἀγανάκτησις, wrath unto grief. It notes the very rising of the stomach with rage, and a being angry unto fretting, fuming, and sickness. Again, it notes the very height of anger and rage. The true penitent is not so exceeding angry with himself for anything, as he is angry with himself for his sins. Indignation here imports the turning of all the passions of the soul wholly against sin. There are no men in the world so hot and angry against themselves for their sins as penitents are. Witness those that polluted the idols that they had perfumed, Isa. xxx. 22; witness David, Ps. lxxiii. 22; witness Ephraim, Hosea xiv. 8; and witness Paul, Rom. vii. 22, 23. There are none that fret, and fume, and chafe at themselves for sin, as penitent souls do; there are none that loathe themselves, that abhor themselves, and that are weary of themselves, upon the account of their sins, like penitent souls. It is not this thing nor that, nor this enemy nor that, nor this party nor that, nor this design nor that; but sin that is the main, the grand object of a penitent's hatred, scorn, wrath, rage, reproach, disgrace, and contempt, &c. He that would be angry and sin not, must be angry at nothing but sin. If some men would but spend more of their anger and indignation against their sins, they would not be so angry as they are with their brethren, that in disputable things differ from them.

Fourthly, 'Yea, what fear' of God's displeasure, and of doing any more so wickedly before the Lord. Penitent souls are of all souls the most trembling souls, the most timorous souls: Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Blessed is the man that feareth always.' The penitent Christian has still a jealous eye upon his own heart, words, and ways. He is very apt to suspect a snake under every flower, and to fear a snare in every creature-comfort. The burnt child dreads the fire. He that has been once stung hates a snake; he that has been in danger of drowning, trembles at the thoughts of going by water; and he that has once broke his leg, rides and walks with a fear of diligence and vigilancy all his life after. I have read of the dove, that she is afraid of every feather that hath

¹ As the child makes his defence and apology to his father, not by denying or defending his faults, but by confessing and disclaiming of them; so does the penitent soul carry it towards God.

grown upon a hawk; the very sight of any of the hawk's feathers brings as much terror upon her as if she had seen the hawk herself. Such a native dread is, it seems, implanted in her, that it detests and abhors the very sight of any such feather. In every penitent, God implants such a holy fear, such a filial fear, such a reverential fear, such a fear of diligence and vigilancy, that the penitent Christian's heart rises, detests and abhors, not only gross sins, but the least motions, inclinations, and temptations to sin. They that have paid dear for past guilt, that have known what an aching heart, a wounded conscience, and a bleeding soul means; that have experienced what the frowns of God, the threatenings of God, and the wrath of God means, will certainly beware of sin, watch and war against it, and fear to fall into it.

Fifthly, 'Yea, what vehement desire,' *Ἐπιπόθησις*. It signifies such a desire of fervency that can admit of no delay; it notes such a desire as produces diligence, activity, and industry. The true penitent is full of fervent and vehement desires to be rid of his sins. Rachel was never more vehement and fervent in her desires after children, nor David after the water of the well Bethlehem, nor the hunted hart after the water-brooks, nor the betrothed virgin for her marriage-day, nor the apprentice for his freedom, nor the captive for his ransom, nor the soldier for the conquest, nor the sick man for his cure, nor the condemned man for his pardon, than the true penitent is vehement and fervent in his desires to have his lusts subdued, mortified, and destroyed, Rom. vii. 22-24. Many a day have I sought death with tears, said blessed Cowper, not out of distrust, impatience, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful of falling into it.¹ If you ask the penitent, Why do you hear, pray, read, and apply yourself so seriously, so frequently, so unweariedly, and so constantly to all sin-subduing ministrations? he will tell you, it is out of a vehement and fervent desire that he has to be rid of his sins. If you ask him again, why he is so much in complaining against sin, in mourning over sin, and in warring against sin? &c., he will tell you, out of a vehement and earnest desire that he has to be fully and finally delivered from sin.

Sixthly, 'Yea, what zeal.' Zeal is an extreme heat of all the affections set against sin, and working strongly towards God. David's zeal did eat up his sin as well as himself. And Paul was as zealous in propagating the gospel, as he had been furious in persecuting of it. Many men's zeal is hot and burning, when scorns and reproaches are cast upon them; but the penitent man's zeal is most hot and burning, when religion is scorned, saints persecuted, truth endangered, and the great and dreadful name of God blasphemed, &c. The zeal of a true penitent will carry him on in a course of godliness, and in a course of mortification, in spite of all the diversions and oppositions that the world, the flesh, and the devil can make. Holy zeal is a fire that will make its way through all things that stands between God and the soul. The true penitent is unchangeably resolved to be rid of his sins, whatever it cost him. Whoever escapes, whoever lives, he is fully determined his lusts shall die for it. Only remember this, though zeal should eat up our sins, yet it must not eat up our wisdom, no more than policy should eat up our zeal.

¹ See Index, s. n. for other references.—G.

Seventhly, 'Yea, what revenge.' The true penitent revenges himself upon himself for his sins, not by whips and scourges, as the papists do, but by buffeting the flesh, and bringing it into subjection by fasting and prayer, and by crossing of his lusts, and loading of them with chains, and by drawing the sword of mortification against them, and by withholding from them that fuel that might feed them, and by the use of all other holy exercises, whereby the old man, the body of sin and death, may be subdued to the obedience and discipline of the Spirit of God.¹ Holy revenge will shew itself by contradicting of corrupt self, and by a severe chastising and punishing of all those instruments that have been servants to the flesh; as you may see by the daughters of Israel in dedicating their looking-glasses, by which they had offended, to the service of the sanctuary, Exod. xxxviii. 8; and as you may see by the Ephesians' burning of their costly and curious books before all men, Acts xix. 19; and by Mary Magdalene's wiping of Christ's feet with her hair, wherewith formerly her fond and foolish lovers were enticed and entangled, Luke vii. And the same spirit you may see working in Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8, 9; and in the jailor, Acts xvi. 23-34. And so blessed Cranmer thrust his right hand first into the fire, that being the hand by which he subscribed the popish articles, revengefully crying out, 'This unworthy right hand, this unworthy right hand,' as long as he could speak.² The common language of holy revenge is this: Lord, pour out all thy wrath, and all thy fierce anger, and all thy fiery indignation, upon this lust and that lust; Lord, bend thy bow, and shoot all the arrows of thy displeasure, into the very heart of my strong corruptions; Lord, when wilt thou rain hell out of heaven upon this proud heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this worldly heart, this froward heart, this treacherous heart of mine, &c. I have read of Hannibal, that when he saw a pit full of the blood of his enemies, he cried out with much content and delight, Oh beautiful sight! So when a penitent Christian sees his spiritual enemies, his strong corruptions, all in a gore-blood, oh how delightfully and rejoicingly does he cry out, Oh beautiful sight! Oh blessed sight, that ever I have seen! When the children of Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, then they sang a song of praise, Exod. xv. The application is easy. O sirs! let no man deceive his own immortal soul; for it is most certain, that repentance to life hath all these lively companions attending of it. Sound repentance, and the companions of it, are born together, and will live and continue together till the penitent soul changes earth for heaven, grace for glory. And let this much suffice for the first part of true repentance, &c.

2. The *second* part of true repentance lies *in confession of sin, which flows out of a contrite heart*. I mean, not a bare, formal, empty confession, such as is common amongst the worst of sinners, as that we are all sinners, and stand in need of a Saviour, God help us! God be merciful unto us! &c.; but of such a confession of sin as ariseth from a true sight and full sense of sin, and from the due apprehensions of a righteous law that is transgressed, and a holy God that is provoked,

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27. A penitent sinner loathes the very scars of his sins after they are healed.—*Gregory Nazianzen*.

² Foxe and Clarke, as before.—G.

&c. When tongue and heart goes together ; when the tongue speaks out of the abundance of the heart ; when the tongue is the faithful interpreter of the heart, freely, ingenuously and humbly acknowledging iniquity, transgression, and sin ; and the penitent judging himself worthy of death, of wrath, of hell, and unworthy of the least mercy and favour from God, &c.

Now such a confession as this is you shall find in repenting sinners ; and if you look again, you shall find those persons so confessing, to be under the capacity of the promise of the forgiveness of their sins, &c.

[1.] *First*, You shall find repenting sinners *confessing their sins* : Ezra ix. 6, 'O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee, my God : for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.' Ver. 10, 'And now, O our God, what shall we say after this ? for we have forsaken thy commandments,' &c. Ps. li. 3, 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.' Ver. 4, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.' Dan. ix. 4, 5, 'I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, &c. ; we have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments,' &c. Ver. 8, 'O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day.' Luke xv. 18, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee ;' ver. 19, 'And am no more worthy to be called thy son,' &c. 1 Cor. xv. 9, 'For I am the least of all the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' 1 Tim. i. 13, 'Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,' &c. Isa. liii. 6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' I might easily produce a hundred other scriptures to prove that repenting sinners are confessing sinners, but let these suffice, &c.

[2.] *Secondly*, If you please to cast your eyes upon other scriptures, you shall find these penitent confessing sinners *to be expressly under the promises of the forgiveness of sins* :¹ 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.' Lev. xxvi. 40-42, 'If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me ; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies ; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity : then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember.' Jer. iii. 12, 13, 'Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you : for

¹ Confessing penitents are under the promises of forgiveness, &c. Turn to that Job xxxiii. 27, 28, and ponder upon it. Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that covers his sins shall not prosper ; but he that confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy,' &c.

I am merciful, saith the Lord. Only acknowledge thine iniquity.' And observable is that prayer of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 47-50, 'If they shall bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication to thee, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; then hear thou their prayer, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee.'

Quest. But what are the properties or qualifications of true penitential confession of sin?

Ans. They are these eight that follow.

(1.) *First, It is free, it is voluntary, not forced, not extorted.* Nehemiah, Ezra, Job, David, Daniel, Paul, &c., were free and voluntary in the confession of their sins, as all know that have but read the Scripture.¹ The true penitent confesses his sins with much candour, ingenuity, and freedom of spirit. He is as free in his confession of sin, as he has been free in the commission of sin. His confessions are like water which runs out of a spring with a voluntary freeness, but the confessions of wicked men are like water that is forced out of a still with fire. Their confessions are forced and extracted merely from sense of pain and smart, or from fear of punishments, &c. Pharaoh never confessed his sin till God brought him to the rack, nor Saul till he was in danger of losing his crown and kingdom, nor Balaam till he sees the angel stand with his drawn sword ready to slay him, nor Judas till horror of conscience and the pangs of hell had surprised him, and taken fast hold on him.² Wicked men cast out their sins by confession, as mariners do their wares in a storm, wishing for them again in a calm. The confessions of wicked men are commonly extorted or squeezed out, either by some outward trouble, or by some inward distress; but penitential confession is free and ingenuous, arising from an inward detestation of sin, and from the contrariety of the heart to sin; and, therefore, were there no rod, no rack, no wrath, no hell, the true penitent would very freely and readily confess his sins. When God is most free in bestowing of mercies, then are they most free in confessing their iniquities, Hosea xiv. 1-4. Look, as that is the best wine that flows from the grape with least pressing, and as that is the best honey which drops from the honeycomb without crushing; so those are the best confessions that flow, that drop freely, voluntarily from the soul, &c.

(2.) *Secondly, True penitential confession is full as well as free.* That confession is not sincere that is not full, Lam. i. 18, 19. God loves neither halting nor mincing confessions. These undid the pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. As penitential confessions are not extorted, so they are not straitened. Sin must be confessed in its particular *species* and parts; all known sins must be confessed fully, plainly, particularly, as you may see by turning to these scriptures, Lev. xxvi. 40-42, and xix. 21; Judges x. 10; Ps. li.; 1 Sam. xii. 19; 1 Tim. i. 13; Acts xxvi. 10, 11; Dan. ix. 5-17; Lev. xvi. 21, 22, &c. Some there be that deny their sins, with the harlot: Prov. xxx. 20, 'Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.' And others there be that father their sins on

¹ Acts xxvi. 10, 11; Ezra ix. 9; Neh. ix.; Dan. ix.; Ps. v.; Job xl. 4, 5.

² Exod. x. 16; 1 Sam. xv. 24; Num. xxii. 23-35; Mat. xxvii. 3-5.

others, as Adam did, Gen. iii. 12 ; and as Eve did, ver. 13 ; and as Aaron did, Exod. xxxii. 22 ; and as Saul did, 1 Sam. xv. 22. And many there are that hide their wickedness, that conceal their wickedness, as that proud pharisee did, Luke xviii. 11, 12. That expression of the prophet Hosea, chap. x. 13, 'You have ploughed wickedness,' is rendered by the Septuagint, 'You have concealed wickedness ;' and, indeed, there is nothing more common to a wicked heart, than to keep close his sin, than to cover and hide his transgressions. And, certainly, this is that sore disease that our first parents were sick to death of, almost six thousand years ago ; and, therefore, it is no wonder if we are all infected with it. Man by nature is a vain-glorious creature, apt to boast and brag of the sins that he is free of, but unwilling to confess the sins that he is guilty of. There are no men so prone to conceal their own wickedness, as those that are most forward to proclaim their own goodness. There are many that are not ashamed to act sin, who yet are ashamed to confess sin ; but certainly of all shame, that is the most shameful shame, that leads a man to hide his sins. But now the true penitent, he makes conscience of confessing small sins as well as great sins, secret sins as well as open sins, Ps. xc. 8, xix. 12. David confesses not only his great sins of murder and adultery, but he confesses also his self-revenge intended against Nabal, and of his knife being so near Saul's throat, when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment.¹ A true penitent is much in confessing and lamenting over that secret pride, that secret fleshliness, that secret worldliness, that secret hypocrisy, that secret vain glory, &c., that is only obvious to God and his own soul. But it is quite otherwise with wicked men ; for they confess their grosser sins, but never observe their lesser sins ; they confess their open sins, but never lay open their secret sins. Cain confesses the murdering of his brother, but never confesses his secret enmity, that put him upon washing his hands in his brother's blood. Pharaoh confesses his oppression of the children of Israel, but he does not confess the pride of his heart, nor the hardness of his heart. Judas confesses his betraying of innocent blood, but he never confesses his covetousness, that put him upon betraying of the Lord of glory. And others have confessed their apostasy, who have never confessed their hypocrisy that hath led them to apostasy, &c. Well, this is certain, that those little sins, those secret sins, that never break a sinner's sleep, do often break a believer's heart.

(3.) *Thirdly*, As true penitential confession is full, so *it is sincere, it is cordial* ; it is not a feigned, nor a formal, nor a mere verbal confession, but an affectionate confession. It is a confession that has the mind, the heart, the soul, as well as the lip in it.² The penitent man's confession springs from inward impressions of grace upon his soul, he feels what he confesses, and his affections go along with his confessions. The poor publican smote upon his breast and confessed. Look, as the

¹ Job xxxi. 33. We are but flesh and blood, says one ; it is my nature, says a second ; I cannot help it, says a third ; I am not the first, says a fourth ; it was bad company drew me, says a fifth ; if it be a sin, I am sorry for it, says a sixth ; if it be naught, I cry God's mercy, says a seventh. And thus wicked men are as hypocritical in their confessions as they are in their professions, &c.

² Ps. li. 31 ; Jer. xviii. 19, 20 ; Isa. xxvi. 8, 9 ; Ezra ix. 6 ; Ps. xxxviii. 4 ; Job xlii. 6 ; Luke xviii. 13.

sick man opens his disease to his physician, feelingly, affectionately ; and as the client opens his case to his lawyer, feelingly, affectionately ; so the penitent opens his case, his heart to God, feelingly, affectionately. Cold, careless, verbal, formal, customary confessions are no small abominations in the eye of God, Jer. xii. 2. Such men's confessions will be their condemnation at last, their tongues will one day cut their throats. Though confession to men is a work of the voice, yet confession to God must be the voice of the heart. Sometimes the heart alone is sufficient without the voice, as you may see in Hanrah, 1 Sam. i. 13-15 ; but the voice is never sufficient without the heart, as you may see in that Isa. xxix. 13. Such who make confession of sin to be only a lip labour, such, instead of offering the calves of their lips as the prophet requires, Hosea xiv. 2, do but offer the lips of calves ! Heart-confessions, without words, shall be effectual with God, and carry the day in heaven, when all formal, verbal confessions, though they are never so eloquent or excellent, shall be cast as dung in sinners' faces, Isa. i. 12-16. Mary Magdalene weeps, and sighs, and sobs, but speaks never a word, Luke vii. 38 ; and yet by her heart-confessions she carries it with Christ, as is evident by his answer to her : Luke vii. 48, ' He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Penitent souls confess sins feelingly, but wicked men's confessions make no impression upon them ; their confessions run through them as water runs through a pipe, without leaving any impression at all upon the pipe. Wicked men do no more taste nor relish the evil of sin, the poison of sin, the bitterness of sin in any of their confessions, than the pipe does taste or relish the water that runs through it. Such who confess sin formally, or rhetorically, and yet love sin dearly, heartily, shall never get good by their confessions. Certainly such confessions will never reach the heart of God, that do not reach our own hearts ; nor such confessions will never affect the heart of God, that do not first affect our own hearts. Such as speak very ill of sin with their tongues, and yet secretly wish well to sin in their hearts, will be found at last of all men the most miserablest. But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, As penitential confession is sincere and cordial, so *it is distinct and not confused*. The true penitent has his particular and special bills of indictment, he knows his sins of omission, and his sins of commission ; he remembers the sins that he hath most rejoiced and delighted in ; he cannot forget the sins that have had most of his eye, his ear, his head, his hand, his heart ; the by-paths in which he has most walked, and the transgressions by which God has been most dishonoured, his conscience most wounded, and his corrupt nature most pleased and gratified, are always before him, Ezra x. 3. An implicit confession is almost as bad as an implicit faith ; wicked men commonly confess their sins by wholesale, We are all sinners ; but the true penitent confesses his sins by retail, Ps. li. 3. Though it cannot be denied but that in some cases a general confession may be penitent, as you see in the publican, ' God me merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13 ; yet it must be granted that a true penitent cannot content nor satisfy himself with a general confession. And therefore David confesses his particular sins of adultery and blood-guiltiness, and Paul particularizeth his sins of blasphemy, and persecution, and injuriousness against the saints,

1 Tim. i. 13. And more you have of this in that Acts xxvi. 10, 11, 'Which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them; and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.' So Judges x. 10, 'And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.' 'We have sinned,' there is their general confession; 'we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim,' there is their distinct and particular confession, both of their apostasy and idolatry. And so 1 Sam. xii. 19, 'And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not, for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.' They were discontented with that government that the Lord had set over them, and they would need be governed by a king, after the mode of other nations; and this sin they confess distinctly and particularly before the Lord and Samuel. And so David, in that 1 Chron. xxi. 17, 'And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done?' Thus that princely prophet confesses that particular sin that he then lay under the guilt of. And so Zaccheus makes a particular confession; he does as it were point with his finger at that wrong and injustice that he had been guilty of: 'Behold, Lord, half my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' Thus you see that true penitents make a particular confession of their right-eye sins, and of their right-hand sins; and indeed, what is confession of sin but a setting our sins in order before the Lord? And how can this be done but by a distinct and particular enumeration of them? But to prevent mistakes, this must be taken with a grain of salt, this must be understood with this limitation; we are to confess our sins distinctly, particularly, so far as we know them, so far as we are acquainted with them. There are many thousand sins which we commit that we know not to be sins, and there are many thousand sins committed by us that cannot be remembered by us. Now certainly it is impossible for us to recount or confess those sins that we know not, that we remember not; so that our particular confessions can only reach to known sins, so far as we can call them to mind; for indeed our particular acts of sin are innumerable; they are 'more in number than the hairs of our head;' and indeed we are as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, and to recount all the sparing mercies, the pitying mercies, the preventing mercies, the succouring mercies, the supporting mercies, and the delivering mercies of God, as we are able to tell, to number, to recount, the individual particular acts of sin that we are guilty of; yet so far as the knowledge and memory of a penitent Christian reaches, so far his confession reaches. But now, wicked men confess sin in the general, in the lump; as Pharaoh, 'I have sinned;' and their confessions are commonly confused, and at random. When and where do you find wicked men confessing their sins distinctly or particularly before God or man? This is none of the least of their

miserics, that they have not a clear, distinct, particular view of their own corruptions and abominations. But,

(5.) *Fifthly*, The true penitent does not only distinctly and particularly confess his sins, but he does *very highly aggravate his sins, by confessing not only the kinds and acts, so far as he knows and remembers them, but the circumstances of them also*, Ps. xxxii. 5, Lev. xvi. 21. There are sometimes some circumstances that may somewhat lessen a penitent man's sins. Now these he readily and easily passes over. But then there are other circumstances which do exceedingly heighten and aggravate his sins, and that makes them more heinous and dangerous; and these he carefully and faithfully acknowledges. The penitential confessions recorded in the Old and New Testament are full of exaggerating expressions, as is evident in these instances: Ezra at once heightens and aggravates their sins by this circumstance, that they had been committed against manifold experiments¹ that they had had both of the severity and also the mercy of the Lord, Ezra ix.; and so does Nehemiah also, Neh. ix. The like instance you have in Daniel, chap. ix. 5, 6, 'We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.' In these words you have seven circumstances that Daniel useth in confessing of his and the people's sins, and all to heighten and to aggravate them. *First*, 'We have sinned;' *secondly*, 'We have committed iniquity;' *thirdly*, 'We have done wickedly;' *fourthly*, 'We have rebelled against thee;' *fifthly*, 'We have departed from thy precepts;' *sixthly*, 'We have not hearkened unto thy servants;' *seventhly*, 'Nor our princes, nor all the people of the land.' These seven aggravations which Daniel reckons up in his confession, are worthy of our most serious consideration. The same spirit you may find working in Peter: Mark xiv. 72, 'When he thought thereon he wept;' or nearer the original, 'When he cast all these things one upon another, he wept.' Ah wretch! that ever I was born, that ever I should deny the Lord that bought me; that ever I should deny him who hath not only externally, but also internally, called me; that ever I should deny him that made me an apostle, that fed me at his table, that beautified me with his grace, and that in the mount shewed me some glimpses of his glory; that ever I should deny him who has brought me out of a state of death and wrath, into a state of life and love; that ever I should deny him that has been the best, the wisest, the holiest, the tenderest, the faithfullest, and the noblest master that ever man served. Ah wretch that I am! he forewarned me of this sin beforehand, that I might be not only cautioned but armed against it, and yet I denied him. I promised him beforehand, that I would never deny him, that I would never forsake him, that I would never turn my back upon him, and yet like a base coward, I have denied the Captain of my salvation; yea, this very night, and no longer ago, did I say again and again, that I would not deny him, and yet now, even now, I have most shamefully denied him; yea, I told him, that though all others should deny him, yet would not I deny him, and yet

¹ 'Experiences.'—G.

in all the world there is not such another to be found, that has so sadly, so desperately denied him, as I have denied him, and that before a silly maid ; nay, more beast that I am ! to my denying of him, I have added a most incredible lie, saying, I know not the man, when there was not a man in all the world that I was so well acquainted with as I was with Christ, feeding constantly at his table, and drinking constantly of his cup, and living constantly upon his purse, and waiting constantly upon his person, and being a constant eye-witness of all the famous miracles that were wrought by him ;¹ nay, yet more monster that I am, I did not only lie, but I also bound that lie with a hideous oath ; I did not only say that I knew not the man, but I also swore that I knew not the man ; nay, yet more than all this, I did not only basely deny him, I did not only tell an incredible lie against my own light and conscience, I did not only bind a fearful lie with a hideous oath, but I also fell a-cursing and damning of myself :—for so much the Greek word *αποθεμαριζεν* imports ;—I wished that the curse, the wrath, or vengeance of God might fall upon me if I knew the man, I wished myself separated from the presence and glory of God if I knew the man ; and woe and alas to me ! all this I did when my Lord and Master was near me, yea, when he was upon his trial ; yea, and yet more, when all the world had forsaken him ; yea, and yet more, when I had the greatest and loudest call that ever I had to have stood by him, and to have given my testimony for him. And thus Peter, casting up all these circumstances and aggravations together, and meditating seriously on them, ‘he went out and wept bitterly.’ Another famous instance of this you have in Paul, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. In these two verses the apostle lays down no less than eight aggravations of his sins, and all to greaten and heighten them, that his soul might be the more ashamed and humbled in him, &c.

First, That they were not the worst, but the best of men, viz., saints ; that they were not sinners but saints ; that they were not drunkards, swearers, adulterers, murderers, oppressors, Sabbath-breakers, but saints ; saints by calling, saints by their high and holy calling, saints by profession, saints by a gospel-conversation. ‘*The saints have I cast into prison.*’

Secondly, To cast a man into prison for theft, for murder, for perjury, is no iniquity. Ay, but says he, many have I cast into prison for ‘*professing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.*’ Oh ! it is dreadful to persecute men merely for professing of Christ ! and yet this I did. Though their profession and practice went together ; though they lived as they professed ; though I had nothing against them, but in the matters of their God, yet upon that very single account I did persecute them.

Thirdly, If it had been but one, or two, or three, or five, or ten saints that I had persecuted, the matter had not been much. Oh ! but they were a great number ; ‘*many of the saints did I cast into prison.*’ I have been a cruel ravening wolf, that have sucked the blood, not of a few, but of many of the precious lambs of Christ ; I have neither spared nor pitied any sex, but have broken into every house, haling and dragging both men and women to prison. Acts viii. 3, ‘As for Saul,

¹ There was scarce any Jew which knew not Christ by sight, he being very famous for the many miracles that were wrought by him.

he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.'

Fourthly, Though he had cast them into prison, yet if he had given them but some liberty in a prison, as Joseph had, and as others have had, and as himself once had when he begot Onesimus in his bonds, Philem. 10, and when Onesiphorus oft refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain, 2 Tim. i. 16, &c., or as the primitive Christians had, the matter had not been so great. Oh! but I kept them close prisoners; 'Many of the saints did I shut up in prison.' I shut them up from friends, from relations, and from all comfortable accommodations; and thus he further aggravates his sin, Acts ix. 1, 2.

Fifthly, If he had rested there, if he had proceeded no further, the matter had not been so bad; Oh! 'but I gave my voice against them to put them to death.' My heart and my hand was not only against them, but my tongue also. If I could not kill them with my hand, I was ready and willing to kill them with my tongue; if the casting voice fell upon me, I would be sure to give it against them; I never wanted a word to do them mischief. If they wanted a word, instead of a knife, to cut their throats, I would be sure to lend them one.

Sixthly, He rises yet higher, for he does not only severely punish their bodies, but he does what he can to damn their souls; I compelled them to blaspheme, like that Italian, who first made his enemy deny God, and then stabbed him, and so at once murdered both body and soul.¹ As there is no love to soul love, so there is no cruelty to soul cruelty; and as there is no mischief to soul mischief, so there is no murder to soul murder; and yet in this murder had Paul a hand. It is sad to compel a man to bear a burden beyond his strength, to lie in chains, to forsake his own country, &c., but it is infinitely more sad to compel a man to sin, to the least sin; but saddest of all to compel a man to blaspheme, 'And yet *this* I did,' says Paul, &c.

Seventhly, He yet further aggravates his sin by his madness, by his exceeding madness against the saints, in those words: 'and I was exceeding mad against them.' He was mad with rage and wrath, he was exceedingly mad with passion and fury against the dear saints of God. Madmen think madly, and madmen speak madly, and madmen act madly against those they are mad with; and so did he against the saints. The Alcoran saith, that God created the angels of light, and the devils of flame. Certainly, as God's children are children of the light, so Satan's children are furious children, wrathful children, children of the flame, children of madness; and such a one was Paul, &c.

Eighthly, and lastly, 'I did persecute them to strange cities;' them I did not kill I did scatter; I forced them to leave both house and home; them whom God had joined together I put asunder: I made the husband run one way, and the wife and children another way, and all of them glad to hide their heads in a corner.

And thus you see, that true penitents, in the confession of their sins, do clothe their sins with the highest aggravations imaginable. A penitent in his confession of sin cries out, Oh the sparing mercies, the preventing mercies, the succouring mercies, the supporting mercies, the

¹ Told in Wanley's *Wonders*, as before. See index s. n.—G.

renewed¹ mercies, the delivering mercies that I have with a high hand sinned against! Oh that clear light! oh that free love! oh that gospel grace! oh those bowels of mercy that I have sinned against! Oh the fatherly corrections, the dreadful warnings, the high resolutions, the serious protestations, the frequent vows and promises that I have desperately sinned against! Oh the checks of conscience, the rebukes of conscience, the lashes of conscience, the wounds of conscience, and the frequent motions of the Spirit, and strivings of the Spirit, that I have sinned against! &c. But now wicked men confess their sins slightly, carelessly, triflingly. They are careful and skilful to hide their sins, to cloak their sins, and to extenuate and lessen their sins; and with the unjust steward, for an hundred to set down fifty, Luke xvi. 6. All wicked men do commonly flatter themselves, that either their sins are not sins, when indeed they are, or that they are not great and grievous sins, when indeed they are, or that they are not so great and grievous as other men's sins are, when indeed they are more grievous and heinous than other men's sins are; so far are they from aggravating of their sins. The truth is, wicked men are so far from aggravating of their sins, that they are still extenuating of them, and that by fathering of them, sometimes upon their constitutions, sometimes upon bad company, sometimes upon their callings, sometimes upon Satan, and sometimes upon chance, as they call it, &c. But no more of this; enough is as good as a feast.

(6.) *Sixthly*, The true penitent confesses his sins *humbly, sorrowfully*. In his confessions he appears before the Lord with ropes about his neck, as Benhadad's servants, and with tears in his eyes. His confessions savour of contrition of heart, and not of ostentation of spirit. Contrition of heart, and confusion of face, is the common result of a penitential confession, Lev. xxiii. 27, 28. David waters his couch with his tears, Ps. vi. 6; and he mingles his meat with his tears, Ps. xlii. 3; and Ezra and Daniel confess their sins with wet eyes and blushing cheeks, Ezra ix., Daniel ix. Confession without contrition neither pleaseth God nor profiteth man. Confession is the language of the tongue, contrition is the language of the heart, and God looks for both. The publican does not only confess his sins, but he smites also upon his breast, as a man full of grief and sorrow, Luke xviii. 13. Lying in the dust, and rending of garments, and putting on sackcloth and ashes, were of old required of those that confessed their iniquities. The spirit of repentance is a spirit of mourning. Penitential confessions are commonly attended with grief in the heart, and with shame in the face: Ps. xxxviii. 18, 'For I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.'² He tells you not only that he will declare his iniquity, but he tells you also, that he will be sorry for his sin. The same spirit you may find working in Jacob, Hosea xii. 4; yea, he had 'power over the angel and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him.' The people of God, in the day of their confession, do not only say, We have sinned, but they also draw water and pour it out before the Lord in token of contrition, 1 Sam. vii. 6. Every sin is as a sword in a penitent man's

¹ Qu. 'renewing'?—Ed.

² Compare these scriptures together: Ps. li. 17; Isa. lxi. 1, and lvii. 15; Job xvi. 20; Ps. cxix. 1, 36; Jer. ix. 1, xxxi. 18, 19.

bosom, and therefore whilst confessions are in his mouth, you shall mostly find either tears in his eyes or sorrow in his heart. And indeed, true confession of sin is many times rather a voice of mourning than a voice of words. Sometimes a penitent man's eyes will in some sort tell what his tongue can in no sort utter. Many times the penitent is better at weeping than he is at speaking : Ps. xxxix. 12, 'Hold not thy peace at my tears.' Tears hath a voice as well as blood hath, and are very prevalent orators with God : Ps. vi. 8, 'The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors, and they never return from the throne of grace without an answer of grace. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which though they say nothing, yet they obtain pardon ; they prevail for mercy, and they carry the day with God, as you may see in that great and clear instance of Peter. He said nothing, he confessed nothing that we read of, but 'went out and wept bitterly,' and obtained mercy. That prescription that God gave to the leper in the law is worthy of your most serious consideration ; it is in that Lev. xiii. 45, 'And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.' In these words the leper stands charged with four things : (1.) to go in rent or torn garments, to note that there must be brokenness and sorrow of heart joined with confession of sin ; (2.) to go bareheaded, and that partly that men might not mistake him, but mainly to shew his humility under his present misery ; (3.) to put a covering upon his upper lip, some read it, upon his *mouchaches*.¹ The Jews in their mournings used this ceremony among the rest, of covering their chin, mouth, *mouchaches*, all under the nose. Now, the use of this ceremony in lepers, was partly to preserve others from being infected by his loathsome breath, and partly to shew that God takes no pleasure nor delight in the breathings, the prayers of spiritual lepers, of wicked men,—God loves not to hear good words drop from an ill mouth,—and partly to note that shame that must be mingled with his sorrow. (4.) Twice to proclaim his own uncleanness, 'Unclean, unclean.' And thus you see that there was to be a close connection between the leper's confession and his contrition ; and thus it is with the true penitent ; he does not only cry out, Unclean, unclean, but he also rents and tears his garments, that is, he joins contrition to his confession.

But to prevent mistakes, and that I may not shoot an arrow, instead of giving a cordial, to the weak and weary soul, let me only give you this short hint, viz., that when the true penitent cannot pour out his soul in heart-melting confessions before the Lord, yet then he can mourn over his own hardness of heart. When he is at worst he can grieve that he cannot grieve, and mourn that he cannot mourn, and melt that he cannot melt, and break that he cannot break ; and he can bless God for every rod, and every stroke, and every word, and every work, and every ordinance, and every frown, and every reproof, and every cross, and every comfort that has the least tendency to the melting and mollifying of his soul. The true penitent always sets a very high price and value upon a broken heart, though he has not the happiness always to have his heart broken. I know that sometimes the penitent soul is so shut

¹ Early form of 'moustaches.'—G.

up, that if he might have all the world he cannot mourn; he can only sit down and sigh, and groan; nay, if all the joys and delights of heaven were to be bought for one single tear, he cannot shed it; and yet all this time he can grieve that he cannot grieve for sin, and he can be sorry that he cannot be sorry for sin; and without all peradventure this is in a measure true godly gospel sorrow for sin, &c.

But now wicked men confess their sins, but they never grieve for their sins. They confess their sins, but they are not ashamed of their sins; they confess their sins, but they cannot blush for their sins.¹ Though men of good names, and of good natures, would be ashamed to be found doing of base things, things that are below them, that are not worthy of them, yet the generality of sinners are so bold and base, so ignorant, arrogant, and impudent, so frontless² and graceless, &c., that they are no ways ashamed, no, not of those very sins that has put Christ to an open shame, yea, that has put the sun and moon to a blush. Most sinners in these days have brows of brass, and whores' foreheads, that cannot blush. They are so far from being ashamed of their sins, that they think it a shame and disgrace not to sin, not to swear, and whore, and curse, and be drunk, and profane Sabbaths, and despise ordinances; yea, there are many that are so far from being ashamed of their abominations, that they even glory in them, like those in that Philip. iii. 19. They shew their sins as Sodom, they make both a sport of acting, and a jest of confessing their sins. Thus Austin confesseth that it was sometimes with himself before the Lord wrought upon him; I was stricken with such blindness, as that I thought it a shame unto me to be less vile and wicked than my companions whom I heard boast of their lewdness, and glory so much the more, by how much they were the more filthy; therefore, saith he, lest I should be of no account, I was the more vicious; and when I could not otherwise match others, I would feign that I had done those things which I never did, lest I should seem so much the more abject, by how much I was the more innocent; and so much the more vile, by how much I was the more chaste.³ But for a close remember this, the true penitent knows, that the more God has been displeased with the blackness of sin, the better he will be pleased with the blushing of the sinner; and therefore he cannot but blush when either he looks upon sin within him, or God above him. But,

(7.) *Seventhly*, Penitential confession, *it is believing and fiducial; it is mixed with some faith, though not always with a strong faith*, Hosea xiv. 2. It is not like the confession of a malefactor to the judge, but like the confession of a child to his father, or like the confession of a sick man to his physician. As a penitent man has one eye of sorrow upon his sin, so he has another eye of hope upon pardoning grace. Thus David, though he had sinned greatly, yet he hangs upon free mercy, and begs his pardon believingly, Ps. li. Thus Daniel, 'To the Lord our God belongs mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him,' Dan. ix. 9. Thus Shechaniab, Ezra x. 2, 'And Shechaniab the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and

¹ Compare these scriptures together, Jer. vi. 15, viii. 12; Zeph. iii. 5; Isa. iii. 9, xlii. 23; Heb. vi. 6. Caligula used to say of himself, that he loved nothing better in himself, than that he could not be ashamed, &c.

² = 'without shame.' Cf. Richardson *s. v.*—G. ³ Augustine, Confess. lib. ii. cap. 3.

said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.' If it were not for hope, the heart would break. There was hope among them that Israel would repent, and there was hope among them that God would have mercy upon their repentance. And the same spirit was working in the prodigal: 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee,' Luke xviii. 18. Though he was a prodigal, yet he would go to God as to a father, who knew how to pity and forgive the mourning and repenting child. When confessions of sin are mingled with hopes of mercy, and the soul draws near to God as a father, then the heart breaks most and melts and mourns most. That confession of sin that is not mixed with some hope of pardon, and with some faith in the mercy of God, is not penitential, but desperate. Cain in some sort confesses, but then he flies into the land of Nod, and there he falls a-building and planting, partly in contempt of the dreadful doom God had passed upon him, and partly to drown the noise of his conscience, and despairing of ever obtaining pardon in this world, or enjoying a house not made with hands in another world, Gen. iv. 16, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. Judas likewise confesses his most heinous sins, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood,' Mat. xxvii. 3, 4; but having no hope of pardon, no faith in that innocent blood he had shed, he goes out and hangs himself. Judas had no faith to mingle with his confession; he confesses despairingly, not believingly, and so goes forth and strangles himself. Since Adam fell in paradise, there has not been one wicked man in the world, continuing in that state, that has ever mixed faith with his sorrows, believing with his confessing. It is only the penitent man that confesseth sin believingly, and that is pardoned graciously. The confessing penitent reasons thus with God: Lord, though I am a sinful creature, yet thou art a merciful God; though I am unworthy of mercy, yet thou forgivest sins freely; though my sins reach as high as heaven, yet thy mercies reach above the heavens; I am here ready and willing to accuse and condemn myself, and therefore be thou as ready and as willing to absolve me, and forgive me. O Lord! though my sins are very many, yet thy mercies are exceeding more; though I have multiplied my sins, yet thou canst multiply thy pardons; though I am a sinner, a very great sinner, yet there is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared and loved, served and trusted; and therefore in the face of all my sins, provocations, and unworthiness, I will look up for mercy, and wait for mercy. But,

(8.) *Eighthly*, and lastly, True penitential confession *is joined with reformation*. That confession of sin that carries forgiveness of sin with it, is attended with serious desires, and earnest endeavours to reformation, Ps. li. 10; therefore forsaking of sin is annexed to confession of sin: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' Confession of sin must be joined with confusion of¹ sin, or all is lost. God will never cross the book, he will never draw the red lines of Christ's blood over the black lines of our transgressions, except confessing and forsaking go hand in hand. He that does not forsake his sin, as well as confess it,

¹ Qu. 'for'?—Ed.

forsakes the benefit of his confession. And indeed, there is no real confession of sin; where there is no real forsaking of sin. It is not enough for us to confess the sins we have committed, but we must peremptorily resolve against the committing again the sins we have confessed. We must desire as freely to forego our sins, as we do desire God to forgive us our sins. Confession of sin is a spiritual vomit. Now you know, a man that is burdened in his stomach, is heartily willing to be rid of that load on his stomach that doth oppress nature; and so a man that is real in his confession of sin, is as heartily willing to be rid of his sin, that lies as a load upon his conscience, as any sick man can be heartily willing to be rid of that load that lies upon his stomach. The penitential confessor doth as heartily desire to be delivered from the power of his sins, as he does desire to be delivered from the sting and punishment of his sins. This is observable in the confession of good Shechaniah: *Ezra* x. 2, 3, 'We have trespassed against our God, and taken strange wives of the people of the land; now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.' And this was the former practice of the children of Israel, who joined reformation with their confession, as you may see in that *Judges* x. 15, 'We have sinned;' ver. 16, 'And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.' That *Job* xxxiv. 31, 32, is observable, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more; that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' And the same spirit you may find working in those that were once given up to sorcery and witchcraft: *Acts* xix. 18, 'And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.' Ver. 19, 'Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men.' Penitential confession leaves a holy awe and dread on the soul, to take heed of committing sins confessed. Though a godly man may, in an hour of temptation, or in a day of desertion, or in a season of God's withholding the gracious influences of heaven from falling upon his soul, commit a sin which he has seriously confessed and sadly bewailed, yet he retains in his course and practice such a holy fear and awe upon his heart, as in some measure proves armour of proof against future commissions of sin. But now wicked men are very ready, bold, and venturous to commit the same sins they have confessed, as you may see in Saul: one while you shall have him confessing his sinful injuries against David with tears; and soon after you shall find him pursuing of him in the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men at his heels. The same evil spirit was predominant in Pharaoh; one day you shall have him confessing his sin, and promising to let Israel go, and the next day you shall find his heart hardened, and he peremptorily resolved that Israel shall not go.¹ And so the harlot made the confession of her sin to be but a provocation to more sin, *Prov.* vii. 14. The wicked sometimes confess their sins, but they never forsake their sins; after confession they commonly return with the dog to the vomit, as Fulgentius hath

¹ Compare 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 16, 17, with chap. xxvi. 2-4; *Exod.* ix. 27-34.

worthily observed.¹ 'Many,' saith he, 'being pricked in conscience, confess that they have done ill, and yet put no end to their ill deeds; they humbly accuse themselves in God's sight of the sins which oppress them, and yet with a perverse heart rebelliously heap up those sins whereof they accuse themselves. The very pardon which they beg with mournful sighs, they impede with their wicked actions; they ask help of the physician, and still minister matter to the disease, thus in vain endeavouring to appease him with penitent words, whom they go on to provoke by an impenitent course.' Well, remember this, real confession of sin is always attended with real endeavours of turning from sin. Look, as the patient lays open his diseases to the physician for this very purpose that he may be cured and healed, so the penitent soul confesses his sins to the physician of souls on purpose to be cured and healed. The daily language of the penitent soul is this, Lord, when wilt thou heal the maladies of my soul? When wilt thou heal my unbelief, and heal my pride, and heal my vain-glory, and heal my hypocrisy, and heal my impurity, and heal my hard-heartedness, and heal my carnalness, and heal my worldliness, and heal my selfishness? &c. Lord! I do as earnestly beg grace to heal my soul, as I do mercy to pardon my soul. And let thus much suffice for the second part of true evangelical repentance.

3. The *third* part of true repentance lies in *turning from all sin to God*. That great and precious promise of forgiveness of sin is made over to repenting and turning from sin. All who truly repent of their sins, and turn from their sins, shall receive the forgiveness of their sins. Pardon of sin is for that man, and that man is for pardon of sin, who truly repents and returns from his sin. Four things speak out this, &c.

[1.] First, *Scripture exhortations to repent, that so our sins may be forgiven*: Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Acts ii. 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.' Ver. 19, 'Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,' &c.

[2.] Secondly, *Express promises that our sins shall be forgiven upon our repentance*: 2 Chron. vii. 14, 'If my people shall turn from their evil way, then will I forgive their sin.' Prov. xxviii. 13, 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.' Ezek. xviii. 21, 'If the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die;' ver. 22, 'All his transgressions which he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.'

[3.] Thirdly, *A most certain assurance of the forgiveness of sins, upon repentance, though they have been never so great and heinous*: Isa. i. 16-18, 'Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

[4.] Fourthly, *Express records and instances of forgiveness unto such as have repented and turned from their sins*: 2 Sam. xii. 13, 'And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord; and Nathan

¹ Fulgent. *de Rem. peccat.* lib. i. cap. 12.

said to David, The Lord hath also put away thy sin.' Jer. xxxi. 18-20, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself; turn thou me, and I shall be turned,' &c. 'Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him,' saith the Lord.' Luke vii. 38, 'And she stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head; and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment.' Ver. 47, 'Wherefore, I say, her sins, which were many, are forgiven.' Chap. xv. 18-20, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. And he arose, and came to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck, and kissed him.'

Quest. But what are the properties or qualifications of that right turning from sin, which brings poor sinners within the compass of the promise of forgiveness of sins? Now, to this great question I shall give these four following answers:

Ans. 1. First, That turning from sin which brings a man within the compass of the promise of forgiveness of sin, is a *cordial turning from sin*: Joel ii. 12, 'Turn ye, even to me, with all your heart.' 2 Chron. vi. 38, 39, 'If they return to thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and forgive their sins.' Deut. xxx. 10, 'If thou turn unto the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,' &c. Jer. iii. 10, 'And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.' Chap. xxiv. 7, 'And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.' Wicked men are serious and cordial in their sinning, and they must be as serious and cordial in their returning, or they are lost and undone for ever. The true penitent turns from sin with his heart, with all his heart, and with all his soul. He is turned in good earnest from his sins, whose heart is turned from his sins. If the heart turns not, all is naught, all is stark naught. He that turns from sin, but not with his heart, turns but feignedly, partially, hypocritically, deceitfully. God is a jealous God, and he will never endure co-rivals or co-partners in the throne, the heart of man; a holy God will never divide with an unholy devil. The true God is a righteous God, and he will never share his glory with another. The true God must be served truly, heartily; he loves neither halting nor halving. Such as divide the rooms of their souls betwixt God and sin, God and Satan, God and the world, that swear by God and Malcham, that sometimes pray devoutly, and at other times curse most hideously, that halt betwixt God and Baal, are mere *heteroclites*¹ in religion, and such whom God abhors. When a man's heart gives a bill of divorce to his sins,

¹ 'Irregular,' 'disorderly.'—G.

when his heart breaks the league with sin, when his heart casts it off, and casts it out as an abominable thing, then the heart is turned from sin really, effectually, &c. If, notwithstanding all the professions that a man makes against his sins, his heart still loves them, and delights in them, and he will still retain them, and welcome them, and cleave to them, and make provision for them, &c., his repentance is feigned and not real, &c. But,

The second answer.

Ans. 2. Secondly, A true penitential turning is *an universal turning, a turning not from some sins, but from all sins*: Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions.' Ver. 31, 'Cast away from you all your transgressions.' 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit.' Ps. cxix. 101, 'I have refrained my feet from every evil way.' Ver. 128, 'I hate every false way.' Ezek. xiv. 14, 'Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.' Chap. xviii. 28, 'Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' True repentance is a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. He never truly repented of any sin, whose heart is not turned against every sin. The true penitent casts off all the rags of old Adam; he throws down every stone of the old building; he will not leave a horn nor a hoof behind. That which Nehemiah speaks of himself in that Neh. xiii. 7, 8, is very observable to our purpose. 'And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore' (but he rests not there; but goes further); 'therefore I cast forth all the household-stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.' What should Tobiah do with a chamber? therefore he not only outs Tobiah, but out goes all his stuff too. Thus the true penitent, when he considers all the evil that sin has done, how it has taken up not only one chamber, but every chamber in the soul, and how it has for many years quite shut out God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and everything that is good; he is grieved sore, and so falls upon the outing of every lust; being highly resolved that neither Satan nor any of his retinue shall ever find the least entertainment in his soul any more. Such as are resolved against turning from any sin, are horribly profane; such as turn from some sins, but close with others, are hideous hypocrites; such as turn from one sin to another, or change their sins as men do their fashions, are most sadly blinded, and desperately deluded by Satan; but such as turn not from some sins, but from every sin, are sincerely penitent. And certainly there are very great reasons why the true penitent does turn, and must turn from sin universally. As,

[1.] First, *It is to no purpose for a man to turn from some sins, if he does not turn from all his sins*: James i. 26, 'If any man seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is in vain.' This at first sight may seem to be a hard saying, that for one fault, for one fault in the tongue, all a man's religion should be counted vain; and yet this you see the Holy Ghost does

peremptorily conclude.¹ Let a man make never so glorious a profession of religion, yet if he gives himself liberty to live in the practice of any known lust, yea, though it be but a sin of the tongue, his religion is in vain, and that one lust will separate him from God for ever. If a wife be never so officious² to her husband in many things, and though she gives him content several ways, yet if she entertains any other lover into his bed besides himself, it will alienate his affections from her, and for ever separate him from her. The application is easy. To turn from one sin to another, is but to be tossed from one hand of the devil to another; it is but, with Benhadad, to recover of one disease and die of another, it is but to take pains to go to hell. If a ship spring three leaks, and only two be stopped, the third will sink the ship; or if a man have two grievous wounds in his body, and take order only to cure one, that which is neglected will certainly kill him. It is so here; if a man that has divers lusts fighting against the life of his precious soul, shall only mortify and slay some of them, the rest will certainly destroy him, and all his pains in subduing some of them will be lost. I have read of a devout man, who had amongst many other virtues the gift of healing, unto whom divers made resort for cure; among the rest, one Chromatius being sick, sent for him. Being come, he told him of his sickness, and desired that he might have the benefit of cure, as others had before him. I cannot do it, said the devout person, till thou hast beaten all the idols and images in thy house to pieces. Oh that shall be done, said Chromatius; here take my keys, and where you find any images let them be defaced, which was done accordingly. To prayer went the holy man, but no cure was wrought. Oh, saith Chromatius, I am as sick as ever! Oh I am very weak and sick! It cannot be otherwise, replied the holy man, nor can I help it; for certainly there is one idol more in your house undiscovered, and that must be defaced too. True, says Chromatius, there is so indeed; there is one all of beaten gold, it cost two hundred pounds, I would fain have saved it; but here take my keys again, you shall find it locked up fast in my chest, take it and break it in pieces; which done, the holy man prayed, and Chromatius was healed. The moral of this story is this: we are all spiritually sick, full of wounds and putrefied sores; Christ our spiritual physician tells us, that if we will be cured, we must break off our sins by repentance. Now this we are willing to do in part, but not in whole; we would fain keep one Delilah, one darling beloved sin, but it must not be; there must not be one sin unrepented of; we must repent as well for our Achans as our Absaloms, our Rimmons as our Mammons, our Davids as our Goliaths, our covert as well as our open sins, our loved as well as our loathed lusts, our heart abominations as well as our gross transgressions, our babe iniquities as well as our giant-like provocations. Our repentance must be universal, or it will be to no purpose.

Herod turned from many evils, but would not turn from his Herodias, and that was his ruin, Mat. vi. 18–20. Judas his life was as fair and as free from spots and blots as the lives of any of the apostles; no scandalous sin was to be found upon him; only that golden devil covet-

¹ One stab at the heart kills; one act of treason makes a traitor; one spark of fire sets the house on fire; one flaw in a diamond spoils the price of it; one puddle, if we wallow in it, will defile us; one head of garlic will poison a leopard, say the naturalists.

² = serviceable.—G.

ousness was his sin, and his everlasting ruin. His apostleship, preaching, working of miracles, hearing of Christ, and conversing with him, &c., was to no purpose, because of that serpent he kept in his bosom, which at last stung him to death. If a man lives in the practice of any known sin, the union between sin and his soul is not dissolved; and if that union be not dissolved, Christ and his soul were never united, and therefore such a person can never be saved. Saul spared Agag and the witch of Endor, whom he should have destroyed, and so lost his crown, his kingdom, and his soul, which was saddest of all. Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard, and yet that one bastard destroyed all the rest, Judges viii. 13. The Jewish rabbins report, that the same night that Israel departed out of Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols and idolatrous temples in Egypt, by lightning and earthquakes, were broken down; so, when a man truly repents, all the idols that were set up in his soul are cast down. But,

[2.] Secondly, *God has so connexed the duties of his law one to another, that if there be not a conscientious care to walk according to all that the law requires, a man becomes a transgressor of the whole law*, according to that of St James, chap. ii. 10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.'¹ The bond of all is broken, the authority of all is slighted, and that evil disposition, that sinful frame of heart, that works a man to venture upon the breach of one command, would make him venture upon the breach of any command, were it not for some infirmity of nature, or because his purse will not hold out to maintain it; or for shame, or loss, or because of the eye of friends, or the sword of the magistrate, or for some sinister respects; and might the breach of any other of the commands of God serve his turn, and advance his ends, he stands as strongly pressed in spirit to transgress them all, as to transgress any one of them. He that gives himself liberty to live in the breach of any one command of God, is qualified with a disposition of heart to break them all. Every single sin contains virtually all sin in it. He that allows himself a liberty to live in the breach of any one particular law of God, he casts contempt and scorn upon the authority that made the whole law, and upon this account breaks it all. And the apostle gives the reason of it in ver. 11, 'For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.' Not that he is guilty of all distributively, but collectively; for the law is copulative; there is a chain of duties, and these are all so linked one to another, that you cannot break one link of the chain, but you break the whole chain. All the precepts of the law are, as it were, a string of pearls strung by the authority of God. Now break this string in any place, and all the pearls fall to the ground. No man can live in the breach of any known command of God, but he wrongs every command of God; and this at last he shall find to his cost, without sound repentance on his side, and pardoning grace on God's. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *One sin never goes alone*. Cain's anger is seconded

¹ He who prevaricates with God as to any one particular commandment of his, his heart is naught, stark naught, and he is guilty of all. He hath no real regard to any of the commandments of God, that hath not a regard to all the commandments of God, &c.

with murder; Ahab's covetousness is attended with bloody cruelty; and Jeroboam's rebellion with idolatry; and Judas his thievery with treason. I might give instances of this in Adam and Eve, and in Lot, Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Solomon, and Peter, &c., but a touch on this string is enough. One sin commonly disposes the heart to another sin. A small sin many times draws the heart to a greater, and one great sin draws the heart to another great sin, and that to a greater, till at last the soul comes to be drowned in all excess. Augustine relates the story of Manicheus, who being tormented with flies, was of opinion that the devil made them and not God. Why then, said one that stood by, if the devil made flies, then the devil made worms, and not God, for they are living creatures as well as flies. True, said he, the devil did make worms. But said the other, if the devil did make worms, then he did make birds, beasts, and man. He granted all. And thus, saith that old father, by denying God in the fly, he came to deny God in man, and so consequently the whole creation.¹ And thus yielding to lesser sins, draws the soul to the commission of greater, yea, often to the greatest of all. I have both heard and read a story of a young man, who being often tempted by the devil and his own wicked heart, to commit three sins, viz., to kill his father, to lie with his mother, and to be drunk; the two former his heart would not yield to, as being things abhorrent to the light and law of nature, and therefore to free himself from the temptation, he yielded to the last and least; but when he was drunk, he killed his father, and ravished his mother. Thus these two abominable sins, murder and incest, were ushered in by one that was not of so deep a dye.² There is something in sin, like the radical virtue that is in the seed of herbs and plants. The seed is but a small inconsiderable thing in itself, yet let it be but cast into the ground, and there rest quietly a time, and it will take root, and grow up to a great stock, and bring forth many flourishing branches; like the grain of mustard-seed, Mat. xiii. 31, 32, which though it be the least of seeds, yet being cast into the ground, grows up to be the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Satan will be sure to nest himself, to lodge himself in the least sins, as birds nest and lodge themselves in the smallest branches of a tree, and there he will hatch all manner of wickedness. A sinful motion, if it be not rejected, will procure consent, and consent will break forth into act, and one act will procure another act, until the multiplying of acts have begot a habit, and that habit hath choked and stifled conscience; and when once conscience is stifled and benumbed, it will be ready upon all occasions to lay the soul open, and to prostrate it to the basest and worst of sins. Oh there is a prodigious evil in the least of sins; it will quickly multiply itself into all manner of evils. Unless sin be cut off in the first motion, it will proceed to action, and from action to delectation, and from delight to custom, and from custom to a habit; and so the soul will be in eminent danger of being undone for ever. A little thief put in at the window, may open the doors for stronger and greater to come in, that may take away both life and treasure at once. A little wedge

¹ Exposit. in Evang. St John, Tract. cap. i.

² Told, with authority, in Wanley's *Wonders*, as before. See Index *sub nomine*.—G.

makes way for a greater, and so do little sins make way for greater. Satan and our own hearts will be modest at first, and therefore they are often in a combination, first to draw us to lesser sins and then to greater, and so from sins less obnoxious to sins more scandalous, till we come to be abominable to God, hateful to others, and a terror to ourselves. Such as live in one sin, God will in justice give over to other sins. The Gentiles gave up themselves to idolatry, Rom. i. 23; 'And God gave them up to uncleanness,' ver. 24. It is impossible for any man to take one sin into his bosom, and to shut all others out. He that lives but in the allowance of himself in one sin, will find that sin at last to shut the door of heaven against him, and therefore the true penitent turns from sin universally.

[4.] Fourthly, *The reasons of turning from sin, are universally binding to a penitent soul.*¹ There are the same reasons and grounds for a penitent man's turning from every sin, as there is for his turning from any one sin. Do you turn from this or that sin, because the Lord has forbid it? Why, upon the same ground you must turn from every sin, for God has forbid every sin as well as this or that particular sin. There is the same authority forbidding or commanding in all; and if the authority of God awes a man from one sin, it will awe him from all. There is one and the same Lawgiver in respect of all the commandments. He that gave one commandment gave also another; therefore, he that observes one commandment in obedience unto God, whose commandment it is, will observe all, because all are his commandments; and he that slightes one commandment is guilty of all, because he doth contemn the authority and will of him that gave them all. Even in those commands which he doth observe, he hath no respect to the will and authority of him that gave them. Therefore, there is no obedience towards God, where there is not an uniform endeavour to please God, as well in one thing as in another. The same God that hath inhibited one sinful act, hath inhibited every sinful act; and, therefore, he that out of conscience and respect to God's will, and word, and authority, turns from any one sin, or abhors any one sin, he will out of conscience of the same will, and word, and authority, turn from every sin, and abhor every sin, because the same God in his word hath alike forbidden all. O sirs! how is it possible for a man truly to repent of this or that sin, because it is contrary to the law, will, and authority of God, but he must needs repent of whatsoever he knows to be contrary to the law, will, and authority of God? He that turns from any one sin because it is a transgression of the holy and righteous law of God, he will turn from every sin upon the same account. He that turns from any one sin, because it is a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a wound to religion, &c., will upon the same grounds turn from every sin. He that turns from any one sin, because of the curse, the threatenings, the judgments, the wrath, the hell that hangs, as it were, over the head of that sin, he will turn from every sin, because the curse, the threatenings, the judgments, the wrath, the hell, that hangs over the head of that one sin, hangs over the head of every sin.

¹ As in a harp, to make the music good and harmonious, it is not enough that all the strings be right tuned except one; one string that jars will spoil the sweetest music. The application is easy, &c.

By these hints it is most evident, that the reasons of turning from sin are universally binding to a penitent soul ; and therefore he turns not from some sins only, but from every sin. He says not to one, but to all his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you ?'

[5.] Fifthly, *One sin allowed, wallowed and tumbled in, is sufficient to deprive a man for ever of the greatest good.* Moses came within the sight of Canaan ; but for one sin, viz., not sanctifying God's name at the water of Meribah, he was shut out, Exod. xxii. ; for him to be so near the holy land, and yet so far off from entering into it, was doubtless of all strokes the hardest that ever he felt. In the law, the leper that had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole, and accordingly he was to be shut up, and shut out from the society and company of the people of God, Lev. xiii. ; so one sin, one leprous spot, allowed and beloved, will for ever shut a man out from the glorious presence of God, Christ, the Spirit, angels, and the 'spirits of just men made perfect.' One sin wallowed in, will as certainly deprive a man of the blessed vision of God, and of all the treasures, pleasures, and delights that be at God's right hand, as a thousand. It was a sore vexation to king Lysimachus, that he should lose his earthly kingdom for one draught of water.¹ O sirs ! it will be an everlasting vexation to such, who for one lust shall at last lose not an earthly but a heavenly kingdom. One sin stripped the fallen angels of all their glory ; and one sin stripped our first parents of all their dignity and excellency, Gen. iii. 4, 5. Satan, by one loud lie to Adam and Eve, made fruitless all that God had preached to them immediately before. To turn from some sins, but not from all, is gross hypocrisy, Job xx. 13. One sin set up in the love and service of it, will keep Christ out of his throne. It speaks sin to be rampant, and Satan to be victorious ; and what can be the issue of these things but ruin and damnation ? Rom. vi. 16. One fly in the box of precious ointment spoils the whole box ; one thief may rob a man of all his treasure ; one disease may deprive a man of all his health ; one strong wind may blow down and blow away all a man's comforts ; and so one sin delighted and wallowed in, will make a man miserable for ever. Though this or that particular sin be very pleasant to the flesh, and delightful to the fancy, yet he is the wisest man, and he is the best man, and the only blessed man in all the world, that keeps furthest from it ; and therefore the true penitent turns not merely from this or that sin, but from every sin.

[6.] Sixthly, *The principle of regeneration, and seed of grace, which God lays into the soul of every penitent person at first conversion, is a universal principle, a principle that spreads itself over all the faculties of the soul, and over all the members of the body,* 1 Thes. v. 23 : Ps. xlv. 13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within ; her clothing is of wrought gold.' In regeneration there is infused the habits or principles of all grace, which like a divine leaven spreads itself over the whole man, Mat. xiii. 33. Look, as Absalom's beauty was spread all over him, even from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25 ; so grace spreads itself over every faculty of the soul, and over every member of the body. Look, as Solomon's temple was all glorious

¹ Plutarch, as before. See our Index under Lysimachus.—G.

both within and without ; so that grace which a man receives at first conversion, makes him all glorious both within and without. Look, as Adam's sin spread itself over the whole man, so that grace which we receive from the second Adam spreads itself over the whole man, John i. 16. And as that grace which was in Christ did diffuse and spread itself over all of Christ, so that grace which is in the true penitent does diffuse and spread itself all over the penitent. Now look, as heaven is contrary to all of hell, and as light is contrary to all darkness, and heat to all cold, so that divine, that noble, that universal principle of grace, which God at first conversion infuses into the penitent's soul, is contrary to all sin ; and therefore the penitent turns from all sin. But,

[7.] Seventhly, *The true penitent would have God to forgive him, not only some of his sins, but all his sins ; and therefore it is but just and equal that he should turn from all his sins.* 'If God be so faithful and just to forgive us all our sins,' 1 John i. 9, we must be so faithful and just as to turn from all our sins. The plaster must be as broad as the sore, and the tent¹ as long and as deep as the wound. It argues horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and wonderful impudency, for a man to beg the pardon of those very sins that he is resolved never to forsake. Look, as he that hath any one sin forgiven hath all sins forgiven, so he that hath sincerely turned from any one sin, he hath turned from every sin ; and he that hath not repented him of all known sin, he hath not yet sincerely repented of any known sin, nor as yet experienced the sweetness of forgiveness of sin. He that will not renounce those sins that he would have God to remit, shall be sure to have a hell of guilt in his conscience. Of all fools there is none to him that is very importunate with God to forgive those sins which he is resolved beforehand to commit ; for what prince, in his wits, will pardon his treasons that is resolved to continue a traitor ? or what judge will forgive his thievery, that is peremptorily determined to continue a thief ? or what husband will pardon his wife, that is resolved to defile his bed with other lovers ? Such as continue in the practice of those very sins, which they beg a pardon of, shall certainly go without their pardon. Pardon of sin is for that man, and that man is for pardon of sin, that is as truly willing to forsake his sins as he is to receive the pardon of his sins. Who would not look upon that man as a madman, who should earnestly beg his pardon, and yet before his pardon is sealed should afresh cut purses, and murder persons before the eyes of the judge ? The pardoned soul is the repenting soul, and the repenting soul is the pardoned soul : Ps. xxxii. 2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' He that begs pardon of sin, and is resolved against turning from sin, shall find no more sweetness in that grand promise of pardon, Prov. xxviii. 13, than devils or damned spirits do. Look, as one sin unforgiven will as certainly undo a man as a thousand, so one sin unforsaken will as certainly undo and damn a man as a thousand. The true penitent is as willing to turn from all his sins, as he is willing that God should pardon all his sins. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, *There is in every penitent a sincere hatred of sin, a universal hatred of sin :* Ps. xcvi. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord,

¹ 'Roll of lint,' for searching a wound.—G.

hate evil.' Prov. viii. 13, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.' Amos v. 15, 'Hate the evil and love the good.' Ps. cxix. 104, 'Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.' Ver. 128, 'Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.' Ver. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' Ver. 163, 'I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.' True hatred is universal; it is of the whole kind.¹ He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad; he that hates a serpent because it is a serpent, hates every serpent; he that hates a wolf because it is a wolf, hates every wolf; he that hates a man because he is holy, hates every man that is holy; and so he that hates sin because it is sin, hates every sin, and therefore he cannot but turn from it, and labour to be the death and ruin of it. Holy hatred is an implacable and an irreconcilable affection. You shall as soon reconcile God and Satan together, Christ and antichrist together, heaven and hell together, as you shall be able to reconcile a penitent soul and his sin together. A true penitent looks upon every sin as contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, the glory of God, and accordingly his heart rises against it. He looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth, which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling and polluting;² and this turns his heart against every sin. He looks upon every sin as having a hand in apprehending, betraying, binding, scourging, condemning and murdering his Lord and Master Jesus Christ; and this works him not only to refrain from sin, but to forsake it, and not only to forsake it, but also to abhor it, and to loathe it more than hell itself. The penitent soul will do all he can to be the death of every sin that has a hand in the death of his Lord and Master. He looks upon the sins of his body to be the tormentors of Christ's body, and the sins of his soul to be the tormentors of Christ's soul, to be those that made his soul heavy to the death, and that caused the withdrawals of his Father's love from him, and that forced him in the anguish of his soul to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat. xxvii. 46. And this raises up in him a universal hatred of sin; and a universal hatred of sin always issues in a universal turning from sin. Now these eight arguments do sufficiently prove, that a true penitential turning is a universal turning; a turning not from some sins, but from all sins.

Objection. But some may be ready to object, and say, Sir, *this is a hard saying, who can hear it, who can bear it, who shall then be saved? For if a man repents not unless he turns from every sin, then there is not a man to be found in all the world that repents; for there is not a man in all the world that turns from every sin, that forsakes every sin, &c.:* 1 Kings viii. 46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.' Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' It is a question that implies a strong denial. Who can say, and say it truly, that he is pure from his sin? Surely none.³ He that shall say that he has made his heart clean, and that

¹ True hatred is to the whole kind.—*Aristotle.*

² Pliny saith, that the very trees, with touching of it, would become barren. [Nat. Hist. *sub voce.*—G.]

³ Job ix. 30, 31; Ps. cxxx. 3; 2 Chron. vi. 36; Job xiv. 4; Ps. li. 5; ponder upon these scriptures, &c.

he is pure from his sin, sins in so saying; and commonly there are none more unclean than those that say they have made their hearts clean, nor none more impure than they that say they are pure from their sin: Eccles. vii. 20, 'For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doth good and sinneth not.' These words, in their absolute sense, are a full testimony of the imperfection of our inherent righteousness in this life, and that even justified persons come very short of that exact and perfect obedience which the law requireth: James iii. 2, 'For in many things we offend all'; or, as the Greek hath it, 'we stumble all.' It is a metaphor taken from travellers walking on stony or slippery ground, who are very apt to stumble or slide. This apostle was worthily called James the Just, and yet he numbers himself among the rest of the sanctified ones, that in many things offend all. The apostle does not say, in many things *they* offend all, but in many things *we* offend all. We that have more gifts than others, we that have more grace than others, we that have more assurance than others, we that have more experiences than others, we that have more preservatives to keep us from sin than others, even we in many things offend all. Nor the apostle doth not say, in *some* things we offend all, but in *many* things we offend all; the apostle speaking not of the singular individual acts of sin, but of the divers sorts of sin. Nor the apostle does not say, in many things we *may* offend all, but in many things we *do* offend all: 1 John i. 8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' The apostle does not say, If *thou* sayest thou hast no sin, thou deceivest thyself, as if he spake to some particular person only; but if *we* say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. Nor the apostle does not say, If *ye* say ye have no sin, ye deceive yourselves, as if he intended weak or ordinary Christians alone, but if *we* say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; we apostles, we that in all grace, and in all holiness, and in all spiritual enjoyments exceed and excel all others, even we sin as well as others. He that is so ignorant and so impudent, so saucy and so silly, as to say he has no sin, sins in saying so, and has no sincerity, no integrity, nor no ingenuity in him: Ver. 10, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.' As much as in us lies we make God a liar, if we say we have not sinned. He that says he has no sin, he does no sin, he does by consequence charge God with falsehood, who hath frequently told us in that word of grace, that cannot deceive us, that all men are sinners, and that they have all gone astray, and that they all need pardoning and purging grace, and that upon these very accounts he sent his beloved Son to lay down his dearest life, and to make himself an offering for sin, Isa. liii. 3, Rom. x. 23 and v. 12, &c. Now, from these scriptures these two things are most evident: *first*, that sinful qualities do remain in the most sanctified persons; *secondly*, that these sinful qualities are sometimes very prevalent over the most sanctified persons, and therefore I shall answer the objection thus, viz. that a true penitential turning from all sin consists in these six things:

Ans. 1. (1.) First, In the alienation and inward aversation and drawing off of the soul from the love and liking of all sin, and from all free and voluntary subjection unto sin, the heart being filled with a

loathing and detestation of all sin, Ps. cxix. 104, 128, as that which is most contrary to all goodness and happiness.

(2.) Secondly, *In the will's detestation and hatred of all sin*. When the very bent and inclination of the will is set against all sin, and opposes and crosses all sin, and is set upon the ruin and destruction of all sin, then the penitent is turned from all sin, Rom. vii. 15, 19, 21, 23; Isa. xxx. 20, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' Hosea xiv. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' When the will stands upon such terms of defiance with all sin as that it will never enter into a league of friendship with any sin, then is the soul turned away from every sin. When the will is set upon avenging itself upon all sin, and upon daily endeavours to mortify and crucify all sin, then is the penitent turned from all his sins. When those sins that were once to the will as Delilah to Samson, are now to the will as Tamar to Amnon, then is the soul turned from sin with a witness.

(3.) Thirdly, *In the judgment's turning away from all sin, by disapproving, disallowing, and condemning of it*: Rom. vii. 15, 'For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.' Oh, saith the judgment of a Christian, sin is the greatest evil in all the world; it is the only thing that God abhors, and that brought Jesus Christ to the cross, that damns souls, that shuts heaven, and that has laid the foundations of hell. Oh, it is the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the two-edged sword that hath wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul. Oh, it is that which hath hindered my prayers, and embittered my mercies, and put a sting into all my crosses; and therefore I cannot but disapprove of it, and disallow of it, and condemn it to death, yea, to hell, from whence it came. I thus preach and thus think, saith Chrysostom, that it is more bitter to sin against Christ, than to suffer the torments of hell. Plutarch reports of Marcus Cato, that he never declared his opinion in any matter in the senate but he would close it with this passage, Methinks still 'Carthage should be destroyed.' So whenever a penitent looks upon his sins in his judgment, he is still saying, Methinks these sins should be destroyed; methinks this pride, this unbelief, this earthly-mindedness, this hypocrisy, this vainglory, &c., should be destroyed.

(4.) Fourthly, *In the purpose and resolution of the soul, the soul sincerely purposing and resolving never willingly, wilfully, or wickedly to transgress any more*. Ps. xvii. 3, 'I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.' The general purpose and resolution of my heart is not to transgress. Though particular failings may attend me, yet my resolutions and purposes are firmly fixed against evil. Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked are before me.'¹ David highly resolves so to bridle and muzzle up his mouth, that he would not break out into any impatient or unbecoming speeches, that might give the wicked any advantage to reproach

¹ The true penitent holds up his purposes and resolutions to keep off from sin, and to keep close with God, though he be not able in everything, and at all times, to make good his purposes and resolutions, &c.

religion, or to blaspheme the Holy One of Israel, &c. Anselm was a man of a holy resolution: 'I had rather,' saith he, 'go to hell pure from sin, than to heaven polluted with that filth.' And saith another, 'I will rather leap into a bonfire, than wilfully to sin against God.' When Valens the emperor threatened Basil with imprisonment, banishment, death: 'Threaten,' says he, 'your boys with such fray-bugs, and your purple gallants, that give themselves to their pleasures; I am resolved neither menaces nor flatteries shall silence me, or draw me to betray a good cause, or a good conscience,' &c.

(5.) Fifthly, *In the earnest and unfeigned desires, and careful endeavours of the soul to abandon all sin, to forsake all sin, to be rid of all sin*, Rom. vii. 22, 23. Now where God sees this frame of spirit, there he will certainly pardon the failings, and pass by the imperfections of his people; and he 'will spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him,' Mal. iii. 17. Now you know, when a prudent, tender, indulgent father sees his child to fail and come short in that which he enjoins him to do, yet knowing that his desires and endeavours is to please him and serve him, he will not be harsh, rigid, sour, or severe towards him, but will spare him, and exercise much tenderness and indulgence towards him; and will God, will God whose mercies reach above the heavens, and whose compassions are infinite, and whose love is like himself, carry it worse towards his children than men do carry it towards theirs? Surely no. God's fatherly indulgence accepts of the will for the work, Heb. xiii. 18, 2 Cor. viii. 12, as a father will accept in his child the desire for the deed, and if there be a blemish in his child, he will pity it, and cast a mantle of love over it. A sick man is not more desirous to be rid of all his diseases, nor a prisoner to be freed from all his bolts and chains, than the true penitent is desirous to be rid of all his sins, &c.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, *In the ordinary declining, shunning, and avoiding of all known occasions, temptations, provocations, inducements, and enticements to sin*, &c. That royal law, 1 Thess. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' is a law that is very precious in a penitent man's eye, and commonly lies warm upon a penitent man's heart; so that take him in his ordinary course, and you shall find him very ready to shun and be shy of the very appearances of sin, of the very shows and shadows of sin.¹ Job made a covenant with his eyes, Job xxxi. 1; and Joseph would not hearken to his bold tempting mistress, to lie with her, or to be with her, Gen. xxxix. 10; and David, when himself, would not sit with vain persons, Ps. xxvi. 3-5; and at another time he refused to take the threshing-floor, oxen, and threshing instruments of Araunah as a gift, but would buy them, because he would avoid the very show of covetousness, as some conceive, 2 Sam. xxiv. 20, *seq.* Austin being often ensnared in uncleanness in his younger days, before his conversion, he was exceeding careful to avoid all occasions of it afterwards.

Now a true penitential turning from all sin lies in these six things, and therefore you had need look about you; for if there be any one way of wickedness wherein you walk, and which you are resolved you will not forsake, you are no true penitents, and you will certainly lose your souls, and all the great and glorious things of another world.

¹ In '*Cur Deus homo?*'—G.

² See Judges xxiii.; Exod. xxiii. 7; Prov. xxii. 3, and xxvii. 12; Prov. v. 8.

The third answer.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, A true penitential turning is *a constant and continued turning from sin*, 2 Chron. vii. 14. As it is total in respect of the act, so it is final in respect of the time. True repentance takes an everlasting farewell, an everlasting adieu of sin. It saith with the spouse, Cant. v. 3, 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?' I have found the smart of sin, I have put off the garments of the old man, the rags of old Adam, and how shall I put them on again? The burnt child will dread the fire. The man that hath smarted for suretyship will by no means be persuaded to come into bonds. Though you urge him to it never so frequently, never so strongly, never so rhetorically, yet he will tell you he has smarted for it, he has paid dear for it, and therefore you must excuse him; he has peremptorily resolved, nay, he hath seriously vowed against it; and though he be never so much entreated, and by variety of arguments importuned, yet still he remains inexorable, A Christian that hath truly repented, is so sensible of the freeness and sweetness of the grace of God on the one hand, and of the weight of sin and wrath of God on the other hand, that he is highly resolved never to have any more to do with idols, never to meddle more with those burning coals, Ps. xl. 12, Hos. xiv. 8. True repentance is a continued act, 'a repentance never to be repented of.' The true penitent is every day a-turning further and further from sin, and nearer and nearer to God. There is nothing that fetches so many tears from a penitent man's eyes, nor so many sighs and groans from a penitent man's heart, as this, that he can get no further off from sin, and that he can get no nearer nor no closer to God. Repentance for sin, and a willing continuance in sin, cannot consist in the same subject. A sincere penitent makes as much conscience of repenting daily, as he doth of believing daily, and he can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or love, or fear, or hope, or joy, or obedience, as he can content himself with one act of repentance. 'My sins are ever before me,' Ps. li. 3. This is the voice of every true penitent: Oh that I might sin no more! Oh that I might never dishonour God more! Oh that I might never walk contrary to Jesus Christ more! Oh that I might never grieve the Spirit of grace more! To sin is common to man, yea, to the best man in all the world; but to continue in a course of sin, is only proper to a wicked man.¹ To err and fail, that is human; but to maintain a league or friendship with sin, that is diabolical. Though a true penitent dares not continue in a trade, a path of sin, whilst he lives in this world, yet sin will continue in him whilst he continues in this world. Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet whilst a penitent man lives in this world they must live together. It is one thing for sin to continue in us, and it is another thing for us to continue in sin. The apostle having closed the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, in the triumph of gospel grace, that 'As sin hath reigned unto death, so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,' begins the next with a prevention of the abuse of this grace; 'What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' Rom. vi. 1, 2. To live

¹ 1 John i. 8, 10, v. 19; Isa. xxviii. 15, 18; Ps. cxxxix. 24; Rom. vii. 22, 23.

in sin, in the face of gospel grace, is most unreasonable, and to a gracious and ingenuous nature impossible. The very question implies a kind of impossibility. Such as were once dead in sin, and now by gospel grace are dead to sin, such can no longer continue in sin. Look, as it is not the mere falling into the water that drowns a man, but his lying and continuing in it; so it is not a mere falling into sin that damns a man, that drowns a man, that everlastingly undoes a man, but his living in it, his continuing in it. It is bad to sin, but it is infinitely worse to continue in sin. The first best is not to sin, the next best is not to continue in sin, no not for an hour, as Paul speaks in another case, Gal. ii. 5, 'To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour.' Certainly to argue from gospel mercy to sinful liberty, is the devil's logic. The more a man lives in the sight of gospel grace, the more sin will be discountenanced, resisted, hated, and totally displaced. A man may as truly assert that the sea burns, or that the fire cools, or that the sun darkens the air, as he may assert that the sight, sense, or sweet of gospel grace will breed security or carnality, looseness or wickedness, in a gracious heart. The true penitent never ceases repenting, till he ceases living. He goes to heaven with the joyful tears of repentance in his eyes; he knows that his whole life is but a day of sowing tears, that he may at last reap everlasting joys. True repentance makes a final and everlasting separation between sin and the soul. It makes such an absolute and complete divorce between sin and the soul, and casts them so far asunder, that no power nor policy can ever bring them to meet as lovers together. The true penitent looks upon sin as an enemy, and deals with it as Amnon dealt with Tamar: 2 Sam. xiii. 15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her; and Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.' And just thus doth the penitent soul carry it towards sin. He that truly repents, so turns from his sins, that he never returns to the bondage and service of his sins any more, Isa. xxx. 22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' Isa. i. 16, Ps. lxxxv. 8.

But now the repentance of hypocrites is not constant, but inconstant; it is not stedfast, but unstedfast; it is not permanent, but transient; it is quickly on, as quickly off. 'Come,' say they, in that Hosea vi. 1, 'and let us return unto the Lord.' But ver. 4, 'O Ephraim! what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.' The hypocrite's repentance is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night, and perished in a night, Jonah iv. 10. An hypocrite's repentance springs from mutable grounds, causes, considerations and circumstances; and therefore it is compared to a deceitful bow, Hosea vii. 16; it is as variable as the wind. An hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy, Ps. lxxviii. 8, 'whose spirit was not stedfast with God.' Ver. 37, 'Neither were they stedfast in his covenant,' &c. An hypocrite puts off his sins in the day of adversity, as he doth his garments when he goes to bed, with an intent to put them on again in the morning of prosperity. Ver. 34-36, 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and

they returned and inquired early after God: and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' In the language of the blessed Scripture, he is a dog that returns to his vomit again, and such a dog was Judas; and he is a swine that returns to the wallowing in the mire again, and such a swine was Demas; and such dogs and swine are all hypocrites, 2 Peter ii. 20-22. It is an extraordinary vanity in some men to lay aside their sins for a time, but with a purpose to return to them again; as they fable it of the serpent that layeth aside his poison when he goeth to drink, and when he hath drunk he returns to it again. It is a sad and sore evil, when men say to their lusts, as Abraham said to his servants, 'Abide you here, and I will go and worship, and return again unto you,' Gen. xxii. 5. Doubtless such souls are as far off from sound repentance as light is from darkness, or as hell is from heaven, &c.

Quest. But in what respects is a true penitential turning from sin such a turning from sin as never to return to sin any more? In what respects is the penitent's turning from sin a continued and stedfast turning from sin? &c.

Ans. This is a very sober, serious, weighty question, and bespeaks a very sober, serious, and satisfactory answer, and therefore I would answer the question, (1.) negatively; (2.) affirmatively, &c.

[1.] Negatively, *It is not such a turning from sin as never to sin more.* 1 Kings viii. 46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.' Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean? I am pure from my sin?' Prov. xxiv. 16, 'A just man falleth seven times, and riseth again.' Eccles. vii. 20, 'For there is not a just man upon the earth that doth good, and sinneth not.' Luke xvii. 4, 'If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.' Mat. xviii. 21, 22, 'Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him; till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.' James iii. 2, 'For in many things we offend all;' or we stumble all, as the Greek has it. 1 John i. 8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' Ver. 10, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. And what did the continual burnt-offering which was to be made day by day import, but a daily sinning, and expiating of it? &c., Num. xxviii. 3. Such is the universal corruption of human nature, that the souls of the best, of the purest, and of the holiest men in the world, do from day to day, yea, from moment to moment, contract some filth and uncleanness. The choicest saints can never acquit themselves from sins of infirmity, such as do inevitably and inseparably cleave unto the best of men, especially considering the state and condition wherein they are, carrying still about them corrupt flesh and blood. Methodius¹ compares the inbred corruptions of man's heart to a wild fig-tree, growing upon the wall of some goodly temple or stately palace, whereof although the main trunk of the stem be broke off, and stump of the root be plucked up, yet the fibrous strings of it piercing into the joints of the stone-work,

¹ The Martyr of Chalcois, A. D. 302-303.—G.

will not be utterly extracted, but will be ever and anon shooting and sprouting out, until the whole frame of the building be dissolved, and the stone work thereof be disjointed and pulled in pieces.

[2.] Secondly, *It is not such a turning from sin, as that the true penitent shall never relapse into the same kind of sin any more;* for a true penitent may fall into the same sin again and again. It was a sin for the disciples to sleep when Christ had commanded them to watch and pray, and yet they slept again and again, Mat. xxvi. 40-45. The prophet Jonah was a holy man, and yet he relapsed into passion and discontent with God again and again; he was discontent with the work God set him about; therefore he flieth to Tarshish, Jonah i. 2, 3; and sorrows for it, and confesseth that they that 'trust upon lying vanities forsake their own mercies,' chap. ii. 8; and yet when God had shewed mercy to Nineveh, he was exceedingly discontented with God again: Jonah iv. 1, 'But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.' And when the Lord, who might have sent him to his grave, or affrowned him to hell, reasons lovingly, sweetly, and mildly with him, to take him off from his passion, chap. iv. 3, 4, and provides for him in his extremity; yet upon a very small occasion, viz., the taking away of a gourd or shrub, which God did to convince him of his folly and, waspishness of spirit, he breaks out again into the same passion, or worse, as if he had never seen the evil of it, or been humbled for it: Jonah iv. 8, 9, 'I am greatly angry,' or I do well to be angry, 'even unto death.' And that is very considerable that Job speaks concerning his friends: Job xix. 3, 'These ten times have ye reproached me, yet are ye not ashamed.' It is a sin to reproach any man; it is a greater to reproach a godly man; but yet greater to reproach a godly man under sad and sore afflictions; but yet greatest of all to reproach a godly man under his sufferings, often, frequently; yet, saith Job, 'These ten times have ye reproached me;' and yet Job's friends were not only godly, but eminently godly. By this sad instance it is evident, that gracious men, yea, that men eminently gracious, may fall into the same sin again and again, yea, ten times, that is, often. Though Christ told his disciples that his kingdom was not of this world, yet at three several times their pride and ambitious humour put them upon striving for pre-eminence and worldly greatness.¹ King Jehoshaphat, though he was a godly man, yet he joins affinity with that nonsuch wicked Ahab, for which he was smartly reprov'd by the prophet: 2 Chron. xix. 2, 'And Jehu went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord.' Now, though this gracious prince was thus reprov'd and saved, even by a miracle of mercy,—2 Chron. xviii. 1, 2, 3, 30, 31 compared;—yet soon after he falls into the same sin again, and joins himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly, 2 Chron. xx. 35, 36, and for which he is severely reprov'd in ver. 37. 'Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.' Lot was twice overcome with wine, &c., and Abraham, though the father of the faithful, yet falls once

¹ John xviii. 36; Mat. xviii. 1-4; Mark ix. 34; Luke ix. 46, and xxii. 24, 26.

and again into the same sin : Gen. xii. 11–13, compared with chap. xx. 1, 2, 3, 4, 13. Peter falls once and again into the same sin ; and John twice worshipped the angel ; and Samson, who is by the Spirit of the Lord numbered amongst those worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Heb. xi. 32, 33, 38, fell again and again into the same gross sin, as is evident in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of the book of Judges. And the church confesses, that their backslidings are many, Jer. xiv. 7. By all which it is most evident, that good men may fall again and again into the same sin ; and no wonder, for though their repentance be never so sincere and sound, yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification but imperfect in this life, and therefore it is possible for a gracious soul to fall again and again into the same sin. If the fire be not wholly put out, who will think it impossible that it should catch, and burn again and again ?

I readily grant that the Lord hath graciously promised to heal the backslidings of his people : Hosea xiv. 4, and so Jer. iii. 22, ‘ Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings : behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.’ See Jer. iii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14. But I can nowhere find in all the Scriptures, that God hath engaged himself by any particular promise or promises, that Christians truly converted, truly penitent, shall never fall again and again into the same sins after their conversion. I cannot find in all the book of God, where God has engaged himself to give such strength or power against this sin or that, as that a Christian shall be for ever, in this life, put out of all possibility of falling again and again into the same sins. No person on earth can shew such a promise, that when a Christian has been thus or thus troubled, grieved, humbled, or melted for his sins, that then God will assuredly preserve him from ever falling into the same sins again. The sight of such a promise under God’s own hand, would be as life from the dead to all real Christians, who fear nothing more than the sin of backsliding. Certainly, there is no such power or infinite virtue in the greatest horrors or terrors, troubles or sorrows, that the soul can be under for sin, nor in the fullest, sweetest, or choicest discoveries of God’s rich grace and free love to the soul, as for ever to fence and secure the soul from relapsing into the same sin again and again. Though grace be a glorious creature, yet it is but a creature. Grace is but a created habit, that may be prevailed against by Satan’s temptations, and by the strong, secret, and subtle workings of sin in our hearts. But this must be carefully minded and remembered, that though the saints may and do sometimes relapse, yet they do not relapse in such a manner as wicked men do relapse. For,

(1.) *First, They do not relapse voluntarily, but involuntarily.* Involuntary relapses are when the resolution and full bent of the heart is against sin, when the soul strives with all its might against sin, by sighs and groans, by prayers and tears, and yet by some invincible weakness is forced to fall back into sin again, because there is not spiritual strength enough to overcome.

(2.) *Secondly, They do not relapse out of choice, as wicked men do,* Isa. lxvi. 3.

(3.) *Thirdly, They do not relapse out of any delight that they take in relapsing.* Witness their sad complaints, their great lamentations, and

their bitter mournings over their relapses. Relapses into diseases, and relapses into sins, are more troublesome and dangerous than they are any ways delightful to all that are in their wits.

(4.) *Fourthly*, They do not relapse *out of any settled purpose or resolution of heart to relapse*, as wicked men do, Jer. ii. 25. All the relapses of a saint are against the settled bent, bias, and resolution of his soul.

(5.) *Fifthly*, They do not relapse *out of any love or longing to relapse*, as wicked men do, who long and love to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt.

(6.) *Sixthly*, They do not relapse *into enormities*, as wicked men do, for it is not usual with God to leave his people frequently to relapse into enormities; for by his Spirit and grace, by his smiles and frowns, by his word and rod, he doth commonly preserve his people from a common, a frequent relapsing into enormities, into gross wickednesses. The common and ordinary relapses of the people of God are relapses into infirmities, as idle words, passion, hastiness, rashness, vain thoughts, &c., and these God pardons in course; but the common and ordinary relapses of wicked men are relapses into enormities, into gross impieties.

(7.) *Seventhly*, They do not relapse *habitually, constantly*, as wicked men do. Their relapses are transient, not permanent, they are not of course. A sheep may fall into the mire, but a swine wallows in the mire, &c.

[2.] But, *secondly*, I answer *affirmatively*, That notwithstanding all this, yet a true penitential turning from sin is a *continued and steadfast turning from sin*,¹ and that in these five respects:—

(1.) First, *In respect of his habitual purpose and resolution not to sin*: Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.' David resolves to lay a law of restraint upon his tongue, and to clap a muzzle upon his mouth, whilst he was in the presence of the wicked, who did lie at the catch to ensnare him and trepan him. Come health, come sickness, come honour, come reproach, come poverty, come plenty, come liberty, come restraint, come life, come death, the true penitent is fixed in his purpose and resolution not to sin. Jerome writes of a brave woman, that being upon the rack, told her persecutors that they might do their worst, for she was firmly resolved rather to die than lie.

(2.) Secondly, *In respect of his habitual desires, which are, that he may not sin*: Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' David's great desire is that he may walk as in a frame, that he may walk by line and rule, exactly, accurately; and that though sin did dwell in him, that yet it might not reign in him; and though it did rebel in him, that yet it might not have dominion over him. He would have his sins to be like those beasts in Daniel, whose dominion was taken away, though their lives were prolonged for a season and a time, chap. vii. 12; Ps. cxix. 10, 'O! let me not wander from thy commandments.' Ver. 36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' Under the name of covetousness all manner of viciousness is to be understood, that being the root of all evil, 1 Tim. vi. 10.

(3.) Thirdly, *In respect of his habitual endeavours, which still are not to sin*. The ordinary and habitual endeavours of a true penitent

¹ See my Treatise on Holiness, pp. 507-509.—[Vol. IV.—G.]

are still set against sin. He ordinarily rows against the stream of sin, though sometimes the stream proves too strong for him: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' He hides the word in his heart as a treasure, that he might not lose it, and as a rule, that he might not transgress against it. The law of God kept close in the heart is the best armour of proof against evil lusts. David locks up the law of God in his heart, as in a chest or cabinet, to secure him against Satan's ambushes and assaults on the one hand, and to preserve him from sin on the other hand. So Ps. xviii. 23, 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.'

(4.) Fourthly, *In respect of his habitual hatred of sin.* Although the true penitent does sometimes sin, yet he always hates the evil he does. There is a firm and fixed hatred in his soul against sin: Ps. cxix. 104, 'Therefore I hate every false way.' Ver. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts.' Ver. 163, 'I hate and abhor lying.' So Rom. vii. 15, 'The evil that I hate, that I do.' A penitent heart usually rises and swells against the toad in the bosom. Some say, that there is such a native dread and terror of the hawk implanted in the dove, that she is afraid of every feather, and that she detests and abhors the very sight of any feather that hath grown upon a hawk; so there is such a detestation and abhorrency of sin divinely implanted in every penitent man's heart, that he cannot but hate everything that looks like it, or that belongs to it, or that comes from it.

(5.) Fifthly, *In respect of his constant path, or continued way, or course of life, which is quite opposite and contrary to sin:* Gal. v. 17, Isa. xxvi. 7, 'The way of the just is uprightness.' Prov. xvi. 17, 'The highway of the upright is to depart from evil.' It is as common and ordinary for upright persons to depart from evil, as it is for passengers to keep the king's highways. Though an upright man, through mistake or weakness of grace, or violence of temptation, may step out of a way of holiness, yet walking in a way of wickedness cannot be charged upon him: Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24, 'Search me, O God! and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' You know the path and practice of penitent Zaccheus, of penitent Paul, and of the penitent jailor, was quite contrary to those ways of wickedness that they had formerly walked in.

The fourth answer.

Ans. 4. But *fourthly* and lastly, As a true penitential turning from sin is a constant and continued turning from sin, so *it is a returning to God.* Sin is an aversion from God, and repentance is a conversion to God, Acts xxvi. 18. Sound repentance is not only a ceasing from doing evil, but also a learning to do well, Isa. i. 16, 17. Repentance and turning to God are joined together, as being one and the same thing, Acts xxvi. 20. The prodigal's repenting was his returning to his father: Luke xv. 17, 'When he came to himself, he said, I will arise and go to my father, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.' &c. The Hebrew word for repentance is from שׁוּב, *shob*, which signifies to return, implying a going back from what a man had done. It notes a returning or converting from one thing to another, as from sin to God, from evil to good, from hell to heaven. The common

call of sinners to repentance is to turn from sin, and to return to God : Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,' &c. Jer. i. 4, 'If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me ; and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.' And so chap. xviii. 11, 'Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your way and your doings good.' 1 Peter ii. 25, 'For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.' It is not enough for a sinner to forsake his sins, but he must also return to the Lord. The true penitent subjects his heart to the power of divine grace, and his life to the blessed will and word of God. Look, as negative goodness can never satisfy a penitent soul, so negative goodness can never save an impenitent soul. It is not enough, O man, that thou art not thus and thus bad, but thou must be thus and thus good, or thou wilt be miserable for ever : Ezek. xviii. 21, 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Negative righteousness and holiness is no righteousness, no holiness in the account of God. It was not the pharisee's negative righteousness, nor his comparative goodness, that could prevent his being rejected of God, or his being shut out of heaven, or his being turned into hell, Luke xviii. 5, Mat. xx. 13, 14. It is not enough that the tree bears no ill fruit, but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be cut down and cast into the fire ; that tree that is not for fruit, is for the fire : 'Every tree that brings not forth good fruit,' says Christ, 'is hewn down, and cast into the fire,' Mat. vii. 19. Heaven at last will be found too holy, and too hot, to hold such as please themselves, as satisfy themselves with a negative righteousness. All that negative righteousness and holiness can do, is only to help a man to one of the coolest chambers and easiest beds in hell. True repentance brings the heart and life, not only off from sin, but on to God too ; it takes a man not only off from the ways of death, but it engages him to walk in the paths of life : Ps. cxix. 3, 'They do no iniquity, they walk in his ways.' Prov. xiii. 14, 'The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.' Prov. xv. 24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Ps. xxxiv. 14, 'Depart from evil, and do good.' We read in Scripture of God's returning to us, as well as of our returning to God ; in both there is repentance. When God returns to us, he repents of the evil of punishment that he hath brought upon us ; and when we return to God, we repent of the evil of sin which we have committed against him.² The true penitent does not only sadly smite upon his thigh, and say, What have I done? but he also speedily faces about and cries out, I will do so no more, Jer. xxxi. 19. When God calls for true repentance, it is with an 'If thou wilt return,' O Israel, 'return unto me,' Jer. iv. 1. And when the people of God do provoke and encourage one another to repentance, it is with a 'Come let us return unto the

¹ Consult these scriptures : Isa. xlv. 22, xix. 22, lix. 20 ; Hosea iii. 5, vi. 1, xiv. 1.

² [Gregory] Nazianzen, speaking of true repentance, very aptly compares the soul to a pair of writing tables, out of which must be washed whatsoever was written with sin, and instead thereof the writing of grace must be writ upon the soul ; both being necessary to true repentance.

Lord,' Hosea. vi. 1. Repentance unto life is not a turning from sin to sin, nor it is not a turning from profaneness to civility, nor it is not a turning from civility to formality; but it is a turning from darkness to light, it is a turning from the ways of iniquity into the ways of piety, it is a turning from sin to God, Acts xxvi. 18. In this respect Israel's repentance was very defective. Witness that sad complaint of the prophet: Hosea vii. 16, 'They return,' that is, they make a show of repentance, 'but not to the most High.' So they in that Joel ii. 12 have the half-turn, but returned not to the Lord with all their hearts. So Jehu went far, and gave many a half-turn, but never turned to the Most High; and that was his ruin at last. Such a repentance as brings the soul never the nearer to God, is a repentance never the nearer; but that repentance that brings the soul nearer to God, is a repentance never to be repented of. And let thus much suffice to have spoken concerning that evangelical repentance that hath the precious promises of remission of sin and salvation running out unto it, &c.

CHAPTER IV.

Several have observed to my hand how far an hypocrite may go, but my design in this chapter is to shew how far an hypocrite cannot go.¹ Many have discovered at large what an hypocrite can do, but my scope in this chapter is to shew what an hypocrite cannot do. Some have shewed what an hypocrite is, and I shall now shew what he is not. Some have shewed the several rounds in Jacob's ladder, that an hypocrite may climb up to; but my business and work in this chapter, is to shew you the several rounds in Jacob's ladder that no hypocrite under heaven can climb up to.²

[1.] First, *An hypocrite's inside is never answerable to his outside.* An hypocrite's inside is one thing, and his outside another thing; an hypocrite is outwardly clean, but inwardly unclean; he is outwardly glorious, but inwardly inglorious, Mat. xxiii. 25-27, Luke xi. 39. Hypocrites are like apothecaries' gally-pots, having without the title of some excellent preservative, but within they are full of some deadly poison. They are like the Egyptian temples, that were beautiful without, but within there was nothing to be found but serpents and crocodiles, and other venomous creatures. Hypocrites trade more for a good name, than for a good heart; for a good report, than for a good conscience; they are like fiddlers, more careful in tuning their instruments than in watching their spirits.³ Hypocrites are like white silver, but they draw black lines; they have a seeming sanctified outside, but stuffed within with malice, worldliness, pride, envy, &c. Like window cushions, made up of velvet and richly embroidered, but stuffed within with hay. An hypocrite may offer sacrifice with Cain, and fast with Jezebel, and humble himself with Ahab, and lament with the tears of Esau, and kiss Christ with Judas, and follow Christ with Demas, and offer fair for the

¹ It is better that a hundred hypocrites should perish, than that one poor Christian should want his portion.—[John] Cotton on the Covenant, p. 78.

² Torshell (1644), and Sydenham (1654), are probably referred to by Brooks above.—G.

³ Erasmus *Smilia*.

Holy Ghost with Simon Magus ; and yet for all this his inside as bad as any of theirs. An hypocrite is a Cato without and a Nero within ; a Jacob without and an Esau within ; a David without and a Saul within ; a Peter without and a Judas within ; a saint without and a Satan within ; an angel without and a devil within. An hypocrite is a Jew outwardly, but an atheist, a pagan, a Turk inwardly, Rom. ii. 28, 29. I have read of certain images, which on the outside were covered with gold and pearl, resembling Jupiter and Neptune, but within were nothing but spiders and cobwebs ;¹ a fit resemblance of hypocrites. Hypocrisy is but an outside, like cloth of arras, fair and beautiful without ; but if you look to the inside, you shall find nothing but rags and ends. That monk hit it, that said, To be a monk in outward show was easy, but to be a monk in inward reality was hard. To be a Christian in outward show is easy, but to be a Christian inwardly and really is very hard. An hypocrite's inside never echoes or answers to his outside ; his inside is vicious, and his outside is religious. But let all such hypocrites know, that dissembled sanctity is double iniquity, and accordingly at last they shall be dealt with, Mat. xxiv. 5. But,

[2.] Secondly, *No hypocrite under heaven is totally divorced from the love and liking of every known sin.* There is still some secret lust or other, which as a sweet morsel he rolls under his tongue, and will not spit it out, Job xx. 12-14. Every hypocrite tolerates some evil or other in himself, and takes liberty to transgress. An hypocrite will make hard shift to daub up his conscience, and to secure himself from the checks thereof. After once the bag was committed to Judas his custody, after once he was chosen into that sweet office, he quickly put conscience out of office, and never left stealing and licking his fingers, whilst there was any money in his bag to finger.² Herod knew much, and heard John Baptist, and had some temporary affections, and did many good things, Mark vi. 20. But yet (1.) he kept Herodias his brother's wife, Mark vi. 17 ; (2.) he took away the life of John the Baptist, Mark vi. 27 ; (3.) he sets Jesus Christ at naught, and rejected him, Luke xxiii. 11. As fair as Herod seemed to carry it, yet he lived in a known notorious sin, and unjustly murdered the messenger of God, and mocked and rejected Jesus Christ as a vile person. Some sin or other always reigns without control in an hypocritical heart. As they say of witches, that they have one familiar or another that still sucks them, an hypocrite always reserves one nest-egg or another in his heart or life, for Satan to sit and brood on. Jehu did many brave things, but yet he kept up the worship of his golden calves. Naaman promises high, but yet he is for bowing in the house of Rimmon. The pharisees were very devout, but yet they loved the praises of men, and the uppermost seats in the synagogues. There is never an hypocrite in the world, but will do what he can to save the life of his sin, though it be with the loss of his soul. O sirs ! Satan can be contented that hypo-

¹ Lucian.

² It was a strange conceit of the Cerinthians, and those Caini or Cainiani, as they are called by some, that honoured Judas the traitor as some divine and superhuman power, and called his treason a blessed piece of service, and that he knowing how much the death of Christ would profit mankind, did therefore betray him to death to save the race of men, and to do a thing pleasing to God.—*Irenæus, Aug. de hæresi.*

crites should yield to God in many things, provided they will be but true to him in some one thing ; for he very well knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, gives him as much advantage against the soul as more. Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin, as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one claw. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will mar all a man's sweetest duties and services ; as one dead fly will mar the whole box of precious ointment, Eccles. x. 1, and as one jarring string will bring the sweetest music out of tune. It is said of Naaman the Syrian, that he was a valiant man, and a victorious man, and an honourable man, and a great favourite with his prince, but a leper, 2 Kings v. 1. So it may be said of many hypocrites, they have such and such excellencies, and they perform such and such glorious duties, but they live and allow themselves in this or that sin, and that mars the beauty of all their services, Mat. vii. 21-23. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly damn a man as many ; as one disease, one ulcerous part, may as certainly kill a man as many. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will render a man as unclean in the eye of God as many. If the leper in the law had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body, he was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole, Lev. xiv. So he who hath the spot of the leprosy of sin allowed in any one part of his soul, he is a spiritual leper in the eye of God ; he is unclean, though in other parts he may not be unclean. The schoolmen say, that if a sow do but wallow in one miry or dirty hole, she is filthy ; and certainly, that soul that doth but wallow in any one sin, he is filthy in the eye of God. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as effectually keep Christ and the soul asunder as many, as one stone in the pipe will as effectually keep out the water as many. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will make way for many, as one thief can open the door to let in many more. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly shut the soul out of heaven as many. One enemy may shut the door upon a man as well as many ; and what difference is there between that man that is shut out of heaven for living in many sins, and he that is shut out of heaven for living but in one sin ? One sin lived in and allowed, will arm conscience against a man, as well as many. If there be but one crack in the honey glass, there the wasps will be buzzing. One sin allowed and countenanced, will spoil the music of conscience. One sin lived in and allowed, will make death as terrible and as formidable to the soul as many. One handwriting upon the wall made King Nebuchadnezzar's countenance to change, and his thoughts to be troubled, and the joints of his loins to be loosed, and his knees to be dashed one against another, Daniel v. 5, 6. Now, all this Satan knows, and therefore he labours mightily to engage hypocrites to live in the allowance of some one sin.¹ O sirs ! remember that as one hole in a ship will sink it, and as one stab at the heart will kill a man, and as one glass of poison will poison a man, and as one act of treason will make a man a traitor, so one sin lived in and allowed will damn a man for ever. One

¹ It is most true that the heathen man saith, *Qui habet unum vitium habet omnia* ; he that hath any one vice, viz., reigning, hath all others with it.—*Seneca, de benef.*, lib. v. cap. xv.

wound strikes Goliath dead, as well as three-and-twenty did Cæsar;¹ one Delilah will do Samson as much mischief as all the Philistines; one wheel broken spoils all the whole clock; one vein's bleeding will let out all the vitals as well as more; one bitter herb will spoil all the pottage. By eating one apple, Adam lost paradise, Gen. iii.; one lick of honey endangered Jonathan's life, 1 Sam. xiv. 33; one Achan was a trouble to all Israel, Joshua vii.; one Jonah was lading too heavy for a whole ship, Jonah i.; so one sin lived in and allowed, is enough to make a man miserable for ever. One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea as well as a hundred; so one sin lived in and indulged will sink a man to the bottom of hell as well as a hundred. I have read of a great Roman captain, who, as he was riding in his triumphant chariot through Rome, had his eyes never off a courtesan that walked along the street, which made one say, Behold how this great captain, that hath conquered such and such armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman! There is never an hypocrite in the world, but lies under the conquest of one base lust or another, but lives under the reign and dominion of one sin or another. That soul that can in sincerity of heart appeal to a heart-searching God, that it is otherwise with him, viz., that he does not live nor allow himself in any one sinful way or practice, that soul, I dare assure in the Lord's name, is no hypocrite, Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

[3.] Thirdly, As an hypocrite's heart is never thoroughly subdued to a willingness to part with every lust, *so neither is his heart thoroughly subdued to a willingness to perform all known duties.* Sometimes he is all for public duties, but makes no conscience of closet-duties, or of family-duties; sometimes he is all for the duties of the first table, but makes no conscience of the duties of the second table; and sometimes he is all for the duties of the second table, but makes no conscience of the duties of the first table. If he obeys one command, he willingly lives in the neglect of another; if he does one duty, he will be sure to cast off another; as he is not willing to fall out with every sin, so he is not willing to fall in with every duty. An hypocrite's obedience is always partial, it is never universal; he still baulks or boggles with those commands that cross his lusts. The pharisees fasted, prayed, gave alms, and paid tithes, Mat. xxiii. 23. Oh but they omitted 'the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,' chap vi.; and they were unnatural to parents, and under a pretence of praying, they made a prey of widows' houses, Mat. xv. 4-6; under a pretence of piety, they exercised the greatest covetousness, unrighteousness, and cruelty, and that upon widows, who are usually the greatest objects of pity and charity; they made no bones of robbing the widow, under a pretence of honouring of God. So Judas, under a pretence of laying up for the poor, robbed the poor; he pretended to lay up for the poor, but he intended only to lay up for himself, and to provide against a rainy day, John xii. 6. It is probable that he had no great mind to stay long with his Lord, and therefore he was resolved to make the best market he could for himself. Judas being willing to set up for himself, under a cloak of holiness, he practises the greatest unfaithfulness. Though the eagle soars high, yet still her eye is upon her prey; so though Judas did soar high in

¹ Suetonius [Julius Cæsar.—G.]

profession, yet his eye was still upon his prey, upon his bags ; and so he might have it, he cared not who went without it ; so he might be rich, he did not care though his Lord and his retinue grew never so poor. Judas under all his shows and sanctity, had not so much as common honesty in him.¹ Counterfeit holiness is often made a stalking-horse to much righteousness;² but certainly it were better with the philosopher to have honesty without religion, than to have religion without honesty. An hypocrite may exercise himself in some outward, easy, ordinary duties of religion ; but when shall you see an hypocrite laying the axe to the root of the tree, or a-searching and trying his own heart, or severely judging his bosom sins, or humbly mourning and lamenting over secret corruptions, or doubling his guards about his own soul, or rejoicing in the graces, services, or excellencies of others, or striving or pressing after the highest pitches of grace, holiness, and communion with God, or endeavouring more to cast out the beam out of his own eye, than the mote out of his brother's eye, or to be more severe against his own sins than against the sins of others ? Alas ! an hypocrite is so far from practising these duties, that he thinks them either superfluous or impossible. An hypocrite's obedience is always a limited and stinted obedience. It is either limited to such commands which are most suitable to his ease, safety, honour, profit, pleasure, &c., or else it is limited to the outward part of the command, and never extends itself to the inward and spiritual part of the command ; as you may see in the scribes and pharisees. Their obedience was all outward ; they had no regard at all to the inward and spiritual part of any command ; as is evident in that high charge that Christ gives in against them, Mat. vi. They did not murder, they did not commit adultery, they had an eye to the outward part of the command ; but Christ charges them with unjust and adulterous thoughts, unchaste glances, contemplative wickedness, speculative uncleanness, &c., they having no regard at all to the inward and spiritual part of any command. Common grace looks only to some particular duties, but saving grace looks to all. Renewing grace comes off to positives as well as negatives ; it teacheth us to cease to do evil, and it learns us also to do good, Isa. i. 16, 17. It teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and also to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Titus ii. 11-13. These words contain the sum of a Christian's duty. To live soberly towards ourselves, righteously towards our neighbours, and godly towards God, is true godliness indeed, and the whole duty of man. There is never an hypocrite in the world that can sincerely appeal to God, and say, Lord ! thou knowest that my heart is subdued to a willingness to perform all known duties ; I would willingly do the best I can to observe all thy royal laws : Lord ! I unfeignedly desire, and really endeavour to have, an eye upon every command of thine, and to live up to every command of thine ; and it is the real grief of my heart, and the daily burden of my soul, when I violate any of thy blessed laws, Ps. cxix. 6 ; Luke i. 5, 6 ; Acts xiii. 22. He that can in uprightness thus appeal to God, shall never miscarry in that other world. But,

¹ After some men have made a long and high profession, some one beloved lust or other, which they would never let go, parts Christ and them for ever.

² Qu. 'unrighteousness' ?—ED.

[4.] Fourthly, There is never an hypocrite in the world *that makes God, or Christ, or holiness, or his doing or receiving good in his station, relation, or generation, his grand end, his highest end, his ultimate end of living in the world.* Pleasures, profits, and honours, are the hypocrite's all he aims at in this world; they are his trinity which he adores and serves, and sacrificeth himself unto, 1 John ii. 16. An hypocrite's ends are corrupt and selfish. God may possibly be at the higher end of his work, but self is at the further end; for he that was never truly cast out of himself, can have no higher end than himself. An hypocrite is all for his own glory; he acts for himself, and from himself. So I may have the profit, the credit, the glory, the applause, come of God's glory what will! this is the language of an unsound heart.¹ An hypocrite will seem to be very godly when he can make a gain of godliness; he will seem to be very holy when holiness is the way to outward greatness and happiness; but his religious wickedness will double-damn the hypocrite at last. Self-ends are the operative ingredients in all an hypocrite does; self is the chief engine, self is the great wheel, that sets all an hypocrite's wheels a-going. When hypocrites take up religion, it is only to serve their own turns, to bring about their own carnal ends; they serve not the Lord, but their own bellies, Rom. xvi. 18; Philip. iii. 19. They use religion only as a stream to turn about their own mill, and the more neatly to effect their own carnal projects. Simon Magus will needs be baptized, and he is very desirous to have power to give the Holy Ghost to others; but his aim being only to get a name, and to get money, Peter tells him to his face, that his heart was not right in the sight of God, Acts viii. 21. No man can go higher than his principles, and therefore an hypocrite having no higher principles than himself, all he does must needs be terminated in himself. Look, as all the rivers that come from the sea do return back again to the sea, from whence they come, so all those duties which arise from a man's self, must needs centre in a man's self. An hypocrite always makes himself the end of all his service; but let such hypocrites know, that though their profession be never so glorious, and their duties never so abundant, yet their ends being selfish and carnal, all their pretensions and performances are but beautiful abominations in the sight of God. An hypocrite has always a squint eye, and squint-eyed aims and squint-eyed ends in all he does. Balaam spake very religiously, and he multiplied altars and sacrifices; but the thing he had in his eye was the wages of unrighteousness, Num. xxii. xxiii., 2 Pet. ii. 15. Jehu destroyed bloody Ahab's house, he executed the vengeance of God upon that wicked family; he readily, resolutely, and effectually destroyed all the worshippers of Baal, but his ends were to secure the kingdom to him and his, 2 Kings x. Ahab and the Ninevites fasted in sackcloth, but it was merely that they might not feel the heavy judgments that they feared would overtake them, 1 Kings xxi., Jonah iii. The Jews in Babylon fasted and mourned, and mourned and fasted seventy years, but it was more to get off their chains than their sins, it was more to be rid of their captivity than it was to be rid of their iniquity, Zech. vii. 5, 6. Look, as the eagle hath an eye upon her prey when she flies highest, so

¹ John vi. 26; Mat. vi. 1, 5, 16; Gal. iv. 17; Isa. lviii. 3; Mal. iii. 14; Zech. vii. 5-7; Gen. xxxiv. 21, 22.

these Jews in all their fasting, praying, mourning, they had only an eye to their own ease, deliverance, freedom, &c. ; in all their religious duties they were acted from evil principles, and carried on by self-respects ; and therefore Daniel denies that in all that seventy years' captivity they had prayed to any purpose. 'All this has come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth,' Dan. ix. 13. It is the end that dignifies or debaseth the action, that rectifies it or adulterates it, that sets a crown of honour or a crown of shame upon the head of it. He that commonly, habitually, in all his duties and services, proposes to himself no higher ends than the praises of men, or rewards of men, or the stopping the mouth of natural conscience, or only to avoid a smarting rod, or merely to secure himself from wrath to come, he is an hypocrite. The ends of a man's actions are always a great discovery either of sincerity or hypocrisy. Look, as great gifts, not sweetened with sincerity, are no ornaments to us ; so great infirmities, not soured with hypocrisy, are no great deformities to us. An hypocrite's ends are always below God ; they are always below glorifying of God, exalting of God, walking with God, and enjoying communion with God. An hypocrite, in all he does, still proposes to himself some poor, ignoble, self-end or other.

But now mark, a sincere Christian, if he prays or hears, or gives or fasts, or repents or obeys, &c., God's glory is the main end of all. The glory of God is his highest end, his ultimate end, Ps. cxv. 1 ; 1 Thess. ii. 6. A sincere Christian can be content to be trampled upon and vilified, so God's name be glorified. The bent of such a heart is for God and his glory, nothing but sincerity can carry a soul so high, as in all acts natural, civil and religious, to intend God's glory, Rev. iv. 9-11. A sincere Christian ascribes the praise of all to God ; he sets the crown on Christ's head alone ; he will set God upon the throne, and make all things else his servants, or his footstool, Rom. xiv. 7, 8. All must bow the knee to God, or be trodden in the dirt. He will love nothing, he will embrace nothing but what sets God higher, or brings God nearer to his heart. The glory of God is the mark, the white, that the sincere Christian has in his eye. The sincere Christian lives not to himself, but to him who lives for ever ; he lives not to his own will, or lusts, or greatness, or glory in this world, but he lives to his glory, whose glory is dearer to him than his own life, 1 Cor. x. 38 ; Rev. xii. 11. Look, as bright shining golden vessels do not retain the beams of the sun which they receive, but reflect them back again upon the sun ; so the sincere Christian returns and reflects back again upon the Sun of righteousness the praise and glory of all the gifts, graces, and virtues that they have received from him. The daily language of sincere souls is this : *Non nobis Domine, non nobis Domine*, not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord, but to thy name be all the glory, 1 Chron. xxix. 10, 18 ; Rom. xiii. 7. A sincere Christian makes conscience of giving men their dues ; how much more, then, does he make conscience of giving God his due, Ps. xcvi. 7, 8. Now glory is God's due, and God stands upon nothing more than that we give him the glory due unto his name, as you may see in Ps. xxix. 1, 2. There are three *gives* in those two verses : 'Give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory that is due

unto his name.¹ Glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right ; and this the sincere Christian knows, and therefore he gives him his right, he gives him the honour and the glory that is due unto his name. But pray do not mistake me : I do not say that such as are really sincere do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions. Oh no ! This is a happiness desirable on earth, but shall never be attained till we come to heaven. Bye and base ends and aims will be still ready to creep into the best hearts, but all sincere hearts sigh and groan under them. They complain to God of them, and they cry out for justice, justice upon them ; and it is the earnest desires and daily endeavours of their souls to be rid of them ; and therefore they shall not be imputed to them, nor keep good things from them. But now take a sincere Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and you shall find that his aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings are to glorify God, to exalt God, and to lift up God in the world. If the hypocrite did in good earnest aim at the glory of God in what he does, then the glory of God would swallow up his bye-aims and carnal ends, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods, Exod. vii. 10-12. Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God, where it is aimed at, will put out and consume all bye and base ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. He that sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat, Gen. xli. 4, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a man's greatest end, there all bye and base ends will be kept at an under. By what has been said, it is most evident that an hypocrite in all his transactions looks at himself, and designs the advance and advantage of himself. An hypocrite is as well able to make a world, and to unmake himself, as he is able to make the glory of God, the exaltation of God, his highest end, his utmost aim, in what he does. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *No hypocrite can live wholly and only upon the righteousness of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, the merits of Christ, for justification and salvation.* The hypocritical scribes and pharisees prayed and fasted, and kept the Sabbath, and gave alms, &c., and in this legal righteousness they rested and trusted, Mat. vi., Luke xviii. 11, 12. Ponder upon that Rev. iii. 16-18. Upon the performance of these and such like duties they laid the weight of their souls and the stress of their salvation, and so perished for ever. An hypocrite rests upon what he doth, and never looks so high as the righteousness of Christ. He looks upon his duties as so much good moneys laid out for heaven ; he weaves a web of righteousness to clothe himself withal ; he never looks out for a more glorious righteousness to be justified by than his own, and so puts a slight upon the righteousness of Christ : Rom. x. 3, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' The first step to salvation is to renounce our own righteousness ; the next step is to embrace the righteousness of Christ, which is freely offered to sinners in the gospel ; but

¹ *Propter te, Domine, propter te*, was one's and is still every sincere Christian's motto.

these things the hypocrite minds not, regards not. The righteousness of an hypocrite is not only imperfect, but impure, a rag, a filthy rag; and therefore he that rests upon such a righteousness must needs miscarry to all eternity, Isa. lxiv. 6. O sirs! who will say that that man needs a saviour, that can fly to heaven upon the wings of his own duties and services? If a man's duties can pacify an infinite wrath, and satisfy an infinite justice, then farewell Christ, and welcome duties. He that will rest upon his own righteousness for life and justification, must needs sit down on this side salvation; he that rests upon his duties, and that rests upon a gift of knowledge, a gift of utterance, a gift of memory, or a gift of prayer, though he may come near to heaven, and bid fair for heaven, yet he will never be able to get into heaven. Now, how sad is it for a man to lose himself and his soul in a wilderness of duties, when he is upon the borders, yea, the very brink, of the holy land. He that rests upon anything in him, or done by him, as a means to procure the favour of God, or the salvation of his soul, will put such a cheat upon himself as will undo him for ever. Non-submission to the righteousness of Christ keeps Christ and the hypocrite asunder. Christ will never love nor like to put the fine, clean, white linen of his own righteousness upon the old garment, the old rags of an hypocrite's duties, Rev. xix. 7, 8; neither will Christ ever delight to put his new wine into such old bottles, Mat. ix. 16, 17. An hypocrite's confidence in his own righteousness turns his righteousness into filthiness, Prov. xxi. 27. But now a sincere Christian, he renounces his own righteousness, he renounces all confidence in the flesh, Philip. iii. 3; he looks upon his own righteousness as dung, yea, as dogs' meat, as some interpret the word *σκύβαλα* in that Philip. iii. 8;¹ he will say no more to his duties, to the works of his hands, 'Ye are my gods,' Hosea xiv. 3. When they look upon the holiness of God's nature, the righteousness of his government, the severity of his law, the terror of his wrath, they see an absolute and indispensable necessity of a more glorious righteousness than their own to appear before God in. A sincere Christian sets the highest price and value upon the righteousness of Christ: Ps. lxxi. 16, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.' Mark the emphasis doubled, 'of thine,' and 'thine only.' A sincere Christian is convinced of the nature, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ, and therefore he cries out, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thine only.' The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for an hundred talents, was indeed a mean and beggarly rag in a sincere Christian's eye, to that embroidered mantle of righteousness that Christ puts upon his. A sincere Christian rejoices in the righteousness of Christ above all: Isa. lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' It is matter of joy, and a sign of great favour from the great Turk, when a rich garment is cast upon any that comes into his presence.² Oh then, what matter of joy must it be to a sincere Christian to have the rich and

¹ *σκύβαλα*, dicuntur quasi, *κυνίσβαλα*. Vide Beza; vide A-Lapide.

² Knolles' Hist. [as before.—G.]

royal garment of Christ's righteousness cast upon him! Isa. xxviii. 16. A sincere Christian rests on the righteousness of Christ as on a sure foundation: Isa. xlv. 24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' It was a very sweet and golden expression of one, when he thought himself to be at the point of death: 'I confess,' said he, 'I am not worthy; I have no merits of mine own to obtain heaven by; but my Lord had a double right thereunto; an hereditary right as a Son, and a meritorious right as a sacrifice; he was contented with the one right himself, the other right he hath given unto me, by the virtue of which gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded.'¹ A sincere Christian looks upon the righteousness of Christ as that which renders him most splendid and glorious in the eyes of God: Philip. iii. 9, 'And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' 'The church,' saith Marloratus, 'which puts on Christ and his righteousness, is more illustrious than the air is by the sun.'² A sincere Christian looks upon the righteousness of Christ as his only security against wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10. Wrath to come is the greatest wrath, wrath to come is the purest wrath, wrath to come is infinite wrath, wrath to come is everlasting wrath. Now the sincere Christian, he knows no way under heaven to secure himself from wrath to come, but by putting on the robe of Christ's righteousness, Rom. xiii. 14. The story tells us, if we may believe it, that Pilate being called to Rome to give an account unto the emperor for some misgovernment and mal-administration, he put on the seamless coat of Christ, and all the time he had that coat upon his back, Cæsar's fury was abated. There is nothing that can abate the wrath and fury of a sin-revenging God, but the seamless coat of God's righteousness. Well, for a close remember this, there is never an hypocrite in the world that is more pleased, satisfied, delighted and contented with the righteousness of Christ, than with his own, &c. Though an hypocrite may be much in duties, yet he never lives above his duties; he works for life, and he rests in his work, and this proves his mortal wound. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *An hypocrite never embraces a whole Christ*; he can never take up his full and everlasting rest, satisfaction, and content in the person of Christ, in the merits of Christ, in the enjoyment of Christ alone. No hypocrite did ever long and mourn after the enjoyment of Christ, as the best thing in all the world. No hypocrite did ever prize Christ for a Sanctifier as well as a Saviour. No hypocrite did ever look upon Christ, or long for Christ to deliver him from the power of his sins, as much or as well as to deliver him from wrath to come. No hypocrite can really love the person of Christ, or take satisfaction in the person of Christ. The rays and beams of Christ's glory has never warmed his heart; he never knew what bosom communion with Christ meant, 1 Thes. i. 10. An hypocrite may love to be healed by Christ, and to be pardoned by Christ, and to be saved by Christ, &c.; but he can never take any complacency in the person of Christ; his heart never seriously works after union with Christ. The love of a sincere Christian runs much out to the person of Christ. Heaven itself with-

¹ Guliel. Abbas in vita Bern. lib. i. cap. 12.

² Comment. in loco.—G.

out Christ would be to such a soul but a poor thing, a low thing, a little thing, an uncomfortable thing, an empty thing. It is the person of Christ that is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory, Cant. v. 10; Philip. i. 21, and iii. 7-10. No hypocrite in the world is sincerely willing to receive Christ in all his offices, and to close with him upon gospel terms. The terms upon which God offers Christ in the gospel are these, viz., that we shall accept of a whole Christ with a whole heart, 1 John xi. 13; Mat. xvi. 24. Now, mark, a whole Christ includes all his offices, and a whole heart includes all our faculties. Christ as mediator is king, priest, and prophet; and so God the Father in the gospel offers him. Salvation was too great and too glorious a work to be perfected and completed by any one office of Christ. Christ as a prophet instructs us, and as a priest he redeems us and intercedes for us, and as a king he sanctifies and saves us. The apostle hit it when he said, 'He is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. Consider Christ as our prophet, and so he is made wisdom to us; consider him as our priest, and so he is made righteousness and redemption to us; consider him as our king, and so he is made sanctification and holiness to us. An hypocrite may be willing to embrace Christ as a priest to save him from wrath, from the curse, from hell, from everlasting burning, but he is never sincerely willing to embrace Christ as a prophet to teach and instruct him, and as a king to rule and reign over him. Many hypocrites may be willing to receive a Christ Jesus, that are not willing to receive a Lord Jesus; they may be willing to embrace a saving Christ, but they are not willing to embrace a ruling Christ, a commanding Christ: 'This man shall not rule over us,' Luke xix. 27. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' 'And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' 'He came to his own, and his own received him not.'¹ An hypocrite is willing to receive Christ in one office, but not in every office; and this is that stumbling-stone at which hypocrites stumble and fall, and are broken in pieces. Certainly Christ is as lovely and as comely, as desirable and delightful, as eminent and excellent in one office as he is in another; and therefore it is a just and righteous thing with God, that hypocrites that won't receive him in every office, should have no benefit by any one of his offices. Christ and his offices may be distinguished, but Christ and his offices can never be divided, 1 Cor. i. 13. Whilst many have been a-labouring to divide one office of Christ from another, they have wholly stripped themselves of any advantage or benefit by Christ. Hypocrites love to share with Christ in his happiness, but they don't love to share with Christ in his holiness. They are willing to be redeemed by Christ, but they are not cordially willing to submit to the laws and government of Christ; they are willing to be saved by his blood, but they are not willing to submit to his sceptre. Hypocrites love the privileges of the gospel, but they don't love the services of the gospel, especially those that are most inward and spiritual. But now a sincere Christian, he owns Christ in all his offices, he receives Christ in all his offices, and he closes with Christ in all his offices. He

¹ Mat. xxiii. 37; Ps. ii. 2, 3; John v. 40, i. 11; Isa. viii. 14; 1 Peter ii. 7, 8.

accepts of him, not only as a Christ Jesus, but also as a Lord Jesus ; he embraces him, not only as a saving Christ, but also as a ruling Christ.¹ The Colossians received him as Christ Jesus the Lord, Col. ii. 6 ; they received a Lord Christ as well as a saving Christ ; they received Christ as a king upon his throne, as well as a sacrifice upon his cross, 2 Cor. iv. 5. God the Father in the gospel tenders a whole Christ. We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and accordingly a sincere Christian receives a whole Christ, he receives Christ Jesus the Lord, Acts v. 31 ; he says with Thomas, ' My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28 ; he takes Christ for his wisdom as well as for his righteousness, and he takes him for his sanctification as well as for his redemption. An hypocrite is all for a saving Christ, for a sin-pardoning Christ, for a soul-glorifying Christ, but regards not a ruling Christ, a reigning Christ, a commanding Christ, a sanctifying Christ, and this at last will prove his damning sin, John iii. 19, 20. But,

[7.] Seventhly, *An hypocrite cannot mourn for sin as sin, nor grieve for sin as sin, nor hate sin as sin, nor make head against sin as sin.* Mark, to hate sin is not (1.) Merely to refrain from sin, for so Balaam did, even then when he was tempted to it, Num. xxii. (2.) To hate sin is not merely to confess sin, for so Pharaoh and Judas did, Exod. x. 16, Mat. xxvii. 4. (3.) To hate sin is not merely to be afraid to sin, for this may be where the hatred of sin is not. (4.) To hate sin is not merely to mourn because of the dreadful effects and fruits that sin may produce, for so Ahab did, and the Ninevites did, &c. He that fears sin for hell, fears not to sin but to burn, but he hates sin indeed whose hates sin as hell itself.² It was a saying of one of the ancients, that if hell and sin were before him, he would rather fall into hell than fall into sin.³ Here was a true hatred of sin indeed. An hypocrite may be troubled for sin, as it blots his name, and wounds his conscience, and brings a scourge, and destroys his soul, and shuts him out of heaven, and throws him to hell ; but he is never troubled for sin, he never mourns for sin, he never hates sin because it is contrary to the nature of God, the being of God, the law of God, the glory of God, the design of God, or because of the evil that is in the nature of sin, or because of the defiling and polluting power of sin. True hatred of sin is universal ; it is of the whole kind. He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad ; and he who hates a man because he is holy, hates every holy man ; and so he who hates sin because it is sin, hates every sin : Ps. cxix. 128, ' I hate every false way.' True hatred is ever against the whole kind of a thing.⁴ Every sincere Christian hath in him a general hatred of every false way, and dares not allow himself in the least sin. ' What I do I allow not,' Rom. vii. 15 : Rom. xii. 9, ' Abhor that which is evil.' The Greek word ἀποστυγούνητες is very significant. The simple verb imports extreme detestation, which is aggravated by the composition.⁵ The word signifies to hate evil as hell itself. Though an hypocrite may hate some sins,—' Thou abhorrest idols,' Rom. ii. 22,—yet that is out of some peculiar and particular indisposition to a particular sin ; but this hatred of this or that particular sin, ariseth not from an inward nature

¹ 1 John i. 2 ; Mat. ii. 6 ; Heb. vii. 21, 26 ; Acts iii. 22 ; John xii. 46.

² Augustine.

³ Anselm. [*Cur. Deus Homo?* as before.—G.]

⁴ πᾶς τὰ γινῆ : *Arist. Rhet.* lib. ii.

⁵ Chrysostom.

or gracious principle, as it doth in him that is a sincere Christian; and the reason is this, because that contrariety to sin which is in a real Christian arising from this inward gracious nature, is to the whole *species* or kind of sin, and is irreconcilable to any sin whatsoever. As contrarieties of nature are to the whole kind, as light is contrary to all darkness, and fire to all water; so this contrariety to sin arising from the inward man, is universal to all sin.¹ Though a sincere Christian has not a universal victory over all sin, yet there is in him a universal contrariety to all sin. Victory argues strength, contrariety argues nature. Hence it is that an hypocrite may hate one sin and love another, because there is not a gracious nature in him which would be contrary to all. The inward nature of a Christian is to be judged by the universal contrariety of his inward man to all sin. Now this universal contrariety to all sin will beget a universal conflict with all sin. O sirs! remember this: universal contrariety to sin can be found in no man but he that is sincere; and this universal contrariety to sin argues an inward nature of grace, and this is that which differences a real Christian from an hypocrite, who may oppose some sins out of other principles and reasons. An hypocrite may be angry with this sin and that, which brings the smarting rod, and wounds his conscience, and disturbs his peace, and embitters his mercies, and strangles his comforts, and that lays him open to wrath, and that brings him even to the gates of hell, but he can never hate sin as sin. An hypocrite, he hates some sins, but likes others, he loathes some but loves others, he opposes some but practises others, like the angel of the church of Ephesus, that hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but loved lukewarmness. Many men detest theft that love covetousness, abhor whoredom that like irreligiousness, &c., Rev. ii. 5, 6. There is no hypocrite under heaven that can truly say, I hate every false way; but a sincere Christian he hates all sinful ways, but his own first and most. An upright heart leaves no nest-egg for Satan to sit on, but the hypocrite always does. Mark, in true hatred there are six things observable:

(1.) First, *True hatred includes an extreme detestation.* Every dislike is not hatred, but true hatred is an extreme loathing: 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence,' Isa. xxx. 22; 'In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats,' chap. ii. 20. Their detestation should be so great that they should cast their most costly idols of silver and gold to the most dark, nasty, dusty corners. To testify the sincerity of their conversion to God, they should hate and abhor, abandon and abolish, their gold and silver idols which they valued above all others.

(2.) Secondly, *True hatred includes earnest separation.* He that hates his sin would fain be separated from his sin; 'For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened,' 2 Cor. v. 4. A sincere Christian finds no burden to lie so heavy and weighty upon his spirit as sin, and therefore he groans to be delivered from it. In the law, he that hated his wife did sue out a bill of divorce from her, Deut. xxiv. 3. He

¹ Doctor Sibbes, in his 'Soul's Conflict,' makes the hatred of sin the surest and never failing character of a good soul, page 340.—[Works, vol. i. page 235, *seq.*—G.]

that truly hates sin, puts in many a bill into the court of heaven that he may be for ever divorced from his sin.

(3.) Thirdly, *True hatred includes an irreconcilable alienation.* He that hates sin has his heart for ever alienated from sin; he who hates sin can never be one with sin. Two angry men may be made friends; but if two men hate each other, all friendship is everlastingly broken betwixt them. A man may be angry with sin, and yet made friends with sin again; but if once he comes to hate his sin, then all friendship with sin is everlastingly broken. When Christ and the soul comes to be really one, then sin and the soul comes to be everlastingly two, &c.¹

(4.) Fourthly, *True hatred includes a constant and perpetual conflict:* 'The flesh will be still lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.' Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet whilst a believer lives in this world, they must live together; and whilst sin and grace do cohabit together, they will still be opposing and conflicting one with another, Gal. v. 17, Rom. vii. 22, 23. That man that truly hates sin will everlastingly conflict with sin. He will die fighting against his sins, as one of the dukes of Venice died fighting against his enemies with his weapons in his hand. Well, Christians, remember this, though to be kept from sin brings most peace and comfort to us, yet for us to oppose sin, and for God to pardon sin, that brings most glory to God, 2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

(5.) Fifthly, *True hatred includes a deadly intention and destruction,* for nothing satisfies hatred but death and ruin. Saul hated David, and sought his life; he hunted him up and down as a partridge in the mountains; he left no stone unturned, nor no means unattempted, whereby he might revenge himself upon David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, 20; 1 Sam. xxiii. 22. Haman hated Mordecai, and nothing would satisfy him but to bring him to a shameful death, to see him hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high, Esth. v. 14, which was designed, saith Lyra, to put Mordecai to the greater shame, for he hanging high, every one might see him and point to him. Now when there was but one night betwixt Mordecai and a shameful death, divine providence opportunely struck in and saved him from Haman's malice, and caused the mischief which he had plotted against Mordecai suddenly to fall upon his own pate; for he who was highly feasted with the king one day, was made a feast for crows the next day. Absalom hated Amnon and killed him, 2 Sam. xiii. 22-33. Julian the apostate hated the Christians with a deadly hatred. He put many thousands of them to death, and threatened and vowed that at his return from fighting against the Persians, he would put all the Christians in his empire to the sword; but God prevented him by cutting him off in that expedition. A Christian that hates sin can't be satisfied but in the death and destruction of it. In all his duties the language of his soul is, Lord, let my sins be destroyed; whoever escapes, let not my sins escape the hand of thy revenging justice. And in all ordinances the language of his soul is, O Lord! when shall my sins be subdued and mortified? when shall my cursed corruptions be brought to an under? yea, when shall they all be drowned in the Red Sea of my Saviour's blood? &c.

¹ Lawyers often fall out at the bar, but are very well agreed when they meet at the tavern.

(6.) Sixthly, *True hatred includes an impartial aversion; true hatred is of the whole kind.* But of this before.

To wind up all, ask thy heart what is it that thou abhorrest as the superlative evil? What is that which thou wouldest have separated as far from thee as heaven is from hell? What is that thy heart will never renew league or friendship with any more? What is that against which thy soul doth rise, and with which, as Israel with Amalek, thou wilt have war for ever? Exodus xvii. 16. What is that which thou wilt be avenged of, and daily dost endeavour the mortifying and crucifying of? What is that which thou settest thy heart against in the comprehensive latitude thereof, whether great or little, open or secret? If it be sin, if it be thy sins, if it be all thy sins, then assuredly here is a true hatred of sin, and assuredly here is a most distinguishing character of a child of God, of a sound conversion, and of a saving change. It was not wont to be thus with thee, nor is this findable in any hypocrite, or in any unconverted person upon the face of the earth. Sin was once to thee as Delilah to Samson, Judges xiv. 3, 7; but now it is to thee as Tamar to Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 15. Once it was a sweet morsel which thou heldest fast and wouldest not let it go, Job xx. 12, 13; but now it is the menstruous cloth, Isa. xxx. 22, which thou castest away, saying, 'Get thee hence.' Now with Ephraim thou criest out, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' Hosea xiv. 8. Oh, if it be indeed thus with thee, then thou hast cause for ever to be much in blessing and in admiring of the Lord for his distinguishing grace and favour towards thee. O sirs! the world is full of baits, snares, and temptations; but whilst the hatred of sin burns in your breasts, you may cast up your caps, and throw the gauntlet to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Well, remember this for ever, there are three things an hypocrite can never do: (1.) He can never mourn for sin as sin. (2.) He can never mourn for the sins of others as well as his own. Moses, Lot, David, Jeremiah, Paul, and those in that Ezek. ix. 4, 6, mourned for others' sins as well as their own; but Pharaoh, Ahab, Judas, Demas, Simon Magus never did. (3.) He can never hate sin as sin. But,

[8.] Eighthly, *No hypocrite is habitually low or little in his own eyes.* No hypocrite has ordinarily mean thoughts of himself, or a poor esteem of himself. No hypocrite loves to lessen himself to greatness, to debase himself to exalt Christ, 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, John vii. 49 and ix. 34. No hypocrite loves to be outshined; all hypocrites love to write an *I*, not a *Christ*, upon what they do. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: 'God, *I* thank thee that *I* am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican; *I* fast twice in the week, *I* give tithes of all that *I* possess,' Luke xviii. 11, 12.¹ All hypocrites stand not only upon their comparisons, but also upon their disparisons: 'I am not as this publican.' All hypocrites stand much upon their negative righteousness and their comparative goodness. There is no hypocrite in the world but sets down his penny for a pound, and always prizes himself above the market: 2 Kings x. 15, 16, 'And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab, coming to meet him; and he saluted him, and said

¹ Monday and Thursday were the pharisees' fasting days; because Moses went up to the mount on a Thursday and came down on a Monday, saith Drusius.

to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand, and he took him up to him into his chariot; and he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.' Come, make a greater blaze than fixed stars: 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord.' Jehu his words were for the Lord, but his project was for the kingdom. The actor in the comedy said with his mouth, *O cœlum*, O heaven, but with his finger he pointed to the earth. Lapidaries tell us of a stone called the chelydonian stone,¹ that it will retain its virtue no longer than it is enclosed in gold; a fit emblem of an hypocrite, of a Jehu. Jehu made a great blaze, but he was but a comet. An hypocrite always loves the praise of men more than the praise of God, John xii. 43. He loves more to be honoured by men than to be honoured by God: 'How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?' John v. 44. Nothing below that power which raised Christ from the grave can make an hypocrite purely nothing in his own eyes. An hypocrite is always a great thing in his own eyes; and when he is nothing, a great nothing in others' eyes; he cannot bear it. An hypocrite cannot endure to be outshined in gifts, in graces, in experiences, in duties, in communion with God, in spiritual enjoyments. An hypocrite's heart is full of pride when his deportment is most humble. He always thinks best of himself, and worst of others; he looks upon his own vices as graces, and he looks upon other men's graces as vices, or at least as no true current coin.² A proud spirit will cast disgrace upon that excellency that himself wants; as Licinius, who was joined with Galerius in the empire, he was so ignorant that he was not able to write his own name; he was a bitter enemy to learning, and as Eusebius reports of him, he called the liberal arts a public poison and pestilence.³ The emptiest barrels make the loudest sound, the worst metal the greatest noise, and the lightest ears of corn hold their heads highest. An hypocrite may well lay his hand upon his heart, and say, Is it not so with me, is it not just so with me?

But now sincere Christians, they are men of another spirit, of another temper, of another metal, of another mind; their hearts lie low when their gifts, and graces, and spiritual enjoyments are high. Abraham is but dust and ashes in his own eyes, Gen. xviii. 27. The higher any man is in his communion with God, the more low that man will be in his own eyes. Dust and ashes are poor, base, vile, worthless things, and such a thing as these was Abraham in his own eyes. So Jacob was a plain man, an upright man, and lo! what a low esteem had he of himself: 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which thou hast shewed unto thy servant,' Gen. xxxii. 10. In the Hebrew it is, 'I am little before thy mercies;' for the Hebrews have no comparative, and therefore they are wont to express this by a positive and a preposition.⁴ When Jacob had to do with Laban, he pleads his merits; but when he has to do with God, he pleads nothing but grace, setting a very low esteem upon him-

¹ As before, see *Index sub voce*.—G.

² Accius [or Attius] the poet, though he were a dwarf, yet would be pictured tall of stature. [Cicero, *Brutus*, 28, *et alibi*.—G.] The application to the hypocrite is easy.

³ Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist. lib. iv. cap. xiii.*, as before.—G.

⁴ Gen. xxxi. from ver. 38 to 41: the least mercy, saith Jacob, is more worth than I, and more weighty than I.

self. He looks upon himself as less than the least of mercies, and as worse than the worst of creatures. The least of my mercies are greater than I deserve, and the greatest of my troubles are less than I deserve, saith Jacob. The language of a plain-hearted Jacob is this: O Lord, I might with Job have been stripped of all my comforts and enjoyments at a clap, and set upon a dunghill; I might with Lazarus have been begging my bread from door to door; or I might have been getting my bread with the peril of my life, because of the sword of the wilderness, Lam. v. 9; or I might have been with Dives in hell a-crying out for a drop of water to cool my tongue, Luke xvi. 24. A sincere Christian cannot tell how to speak good enough of God, nor ill enough of himself. Agur was one of the wisest and holiest men on earth, and see how greatly he debases himself: 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man,' Prov. xxx. 1, 2. Agur had seen *Ithiel*, God with me, and *Ucal*, God almighty, and this made him so vile and base in his own eyes; this made him vilify, yea, nullify himself to the utmost. You know no man ever received a fairer or a more valuable certificate under the hand of God or the broad seal of heaven, for his being a soul famous in uprightness and holiness, than Job, as you may see, Job i. 8, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.'¹ Job was high in worth and humble in heart: Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' This expression is the deepest act of abhorrency. Abhorrency strictly taken is hatred wound up to the height: 'I abhor myself.' The Hebrew word that is rendered *abhor* signifies to reject, to disdain, to contemn, to cast off. Ah! says Job, I abhor myself, I reject myself, I disdain myself, I cast off myself, I have a very vile and base esteem of myself. David was a man of great integrity, a man after God's own heart, and yet he looks upon himself as a flea; and what is more contemptible than a flea? 1 Kings xv. 5, 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. And as he looks upon himself as a flea, so he looks upon himself as a worm: 'I am a worm, and no man,' Ps. xxii. 6. The Hebrew word *תולעת*, *tolagnath*, that is here rendered a worm, signifies a very little worm which breedeth in scarlet, a worm that is so little that a man can hardly perceive it. A worm is the most despicable creature in the world, trampled under foot by man and beasts. He who was in God's eye a man after his own heart, is in his own eye but a despicable worm. A sincere Christian is a little nothing in his own eyes.

So Paul, who had been caught up into the third heaven, and learned his divinity among the angels, as one speaks [Chrysostom], and had such glorious revelations as could not be uttered, yet he accounts himself less than the least of all saints: Eph. iii. 8, 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints.' The Greek is a comparative made of a superlative: less than the least of all saints is a double diminutive, and signifies lesser than the least, if lesser might be; not that any thing can be less than the least.² Paul's rhetoric doth not cross Aristotle's philo-

¹ Job was a nonsuch in regard of those perfections and degrees of grace, of integrity, of sanctity, that he had attained to beyond any other saints in the world in his time and day.

² *Vide Estium, Bezam, &c.*

sophy. The original word being a double diminutive, his meaning is that he was as little as could be ; therefore he put himself down so little as could not be less than the least. Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility : great Paul is least of saints, last of the apostles, and greatest of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15.

So Peter, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,' Luke v. 8, or as the Greek runs, *ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός*, 'a man, a sinner,' a very mixture and compound of dirt and sin ; a mere bundle of vice and vanity, of folly and iniquity. So Luther, 'I have no other name than sinner, sinner is my name, sinner is my surname ; this is the name by which I shall be always known. I have sinned, I do sin, I shall sin *in infinitum*,' saith Luther, speaking vilely and basely of itself. Lord, I am hell and thou art heaven, said blessed Hooper ; I am a most hypocritical wretch, not worthy that the earth should bear me, said blessed Bradford. Thus you see by these several instances that sincere Christians do as it were take a holy pleasure and delight to debase, humble, and vilify themselves. But this is a work hypocrites are mere strangers to. There is not an hypocrite under heaven that loves to debase himself, or that makes it his duty conscientiously to vilify and lessen himself that Christ may be set up above all. Humility is a grace hardly attained unto. 'Many,' saith one [Augustine], 'can more easily give all they have to the poor, than themselves become poor in spirit.' But,

[9.] Ninthly, *No hypocrite will long hold out in the work and ways of the Lord, in the want of outward encouragements, and in the face of outward discouragements.* An hypocrite is an apostate cased, and an apostate is an hypocrite uncased : Job xxvii. 8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God shall take away his soul ?' Ver. 10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty ? Will he always call upon God ?' Or, as the Hebrew runs, 'Will he in every time call upon God ?' It may be he may formally call on God in time of prosperity ; but can he seriously do it in time of adversity ? Sometimes when the rod is upon them, then they will pour out a prayer to God : 'In their affliction they will seek me early,' Isa. xxvi. 16, Hosea v. 15. 'When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired after God,' Ps. lxxviii. 34. But this was not the standing frame of their hearts : Ver. 36, 'Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' Ver. 37, 'For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' When Pharaoh was upon the rack, he could roar a confession, and earnestly cry out for a prayer, Exod. x. 16, 17, 19, 20 ; but when the judgment was removed, Pharaoh was as proud, and hard, and blind as ever. When Adonijah was in danger of death, then he could hang on the horns of the altar, 1 Kings i. 50, 51. When Ahab was threatened with utter desolation, then he could fast and lie in sackcloth ; and so did the Ninevites. But all this was but like Ephraim and Judah's goodness, that as a morning cloud and as the early dew passeth away. Will the hypocrite always, or in every time, call upon God ? Will the hypocrite call upon God as often as providence calls him to call upon God ? Will he call upon God as often as judgments call him to call upon God ? Will he call upon God as often as conscience calls him to call upon God ? Will he call upon God as often as it his duty to call

upon God? Will he call upon God as often as others call upon him to call upon God? Oh no! The hypocrite will not always call upon God; he will not persevere in prayer; he will not hold on nor hold out in prayer; he is short-spirited; he cannot always pray and not faint, or shrink back as sluggards do in work, or cowards in war, as the original word in Luke imports, Luke xviii. 1, *ἐκλακεῖν*. An hypocrite, for want of an inward principle, can neither delight in God, nor always call upon God. If God comes not at his call, if he opens not as soon as he knocks, he is out of patience, and ready to say with that proud profane prince, 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord, and what should I wait for him any longer?' 2 Kings vi. 33. If an hypocrite obtains the mercy he desires, then he will throw off prayer, as he said, 'Take away the net, the fish is caught;' if he obtains not the mercy, then he will grow weary of his duty. 'Thou hast been weary of me,' O Israel, Mal. i. 13, Isa. xliii. 22. Prayer is too hard and too high a work for an unsound heart to hold on in. Prayer is heart-work, and that proves heavy work to him. The soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, and this is a work that an hypocrite has no skill in, 1 Sam. i. 15. It was a profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch, that told God he was no common beggar, he never troubled him before with prayer, and if he would but hear him that time, he would never trouble him again.¹ Even such a spirit and such principles lie lurking in every hypocrite's breast. Doubtless he hit it who said, 'How canst thou expect that God should hear thee, when thou wilt not hear thyself? or that God should give thee a return in prayer, when thou art not mindful what thou askest in prayer?'² But now a sincere Christian he will go on in prayer, speed or not speed. If he prevails, he will love prayer the better all his days; if he do not for the present prevail, he will be so much the more importunate with God in prayer.³ It is as natural for a bird to live without air, and for a fish to live without water, and for a man to live without food, as it is for a sincere heart to live without prayer. 'Oh,' saith Chrysostom, 'it is more bitter than death to be spoiled of prayer.' And hereupon, as he observes, Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to lose or give over his private prayers, Dan. vi. Prayer is the key of heaven, and a sincere Christian loves much to be a-handling of that key, though he should die for it.⁴ As that emperor said, *Oportet imperatorem stantem mori*, It behoves an emperor to die standing; so may I say, *Oportet Christianum mori precantem*, it behoves a Christian to die praying. An hypocrite will never hold out to the end. Let but outward encouragements fail him, and his heart will quickly fail him in a way of duty. Hypocrites are like blazing stars, which, so long as they are fed with vapours, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapours dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear. Let but the eye, the ear, the applause of men, fail the hypocrite, and he will be ready to throw up all. If an hypocrite cannot make some gain of his godliness, some profit of his profession, some advantage of his religion, he will be ready with Demas to turn his back upon all religious duties

¹ Hil. Mic., p. 376. [*As before*.—G.]

² Cyprian, *de Oratione Dominica*.

³ Gen. xxxii. 24-29; Hosea xii. 3, 4; Mat. xv. 22-28.

⁴ Prayer is *porta celi, clavis paradisi*, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise.

and services, 2 Peter ii. 20-22, 2 Tim. iv. 10. Look, as a lame horse, when he is heated, will go well enough, but when he cools, will halt downright; even so an hypocrite, though for a time he may go on fairly in his way, yet in the end he will halt downright, and bid farewell, if not defiance, to all religious duties and services. Profit and applause are usually the baits that hypocrites bite at, and if they miss these baits, then farewell profession, farewell religion, farewell all: John vi. 66. 'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.' Many hypocrites who had given up their names to Christ, and who for a time had been followers of Christ, at last deserted him and turned their backs for ever upon him: Mat. xiii. 5, 'Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth' (not much care to receive, not much understanding to apprehend, not much faith to believe, not much will to obey, or not much love to retain it), 'and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth.' Ver. 6, 'And when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.' This second ground goes beyond the former: for (1.) it receives the seed; (2.) incontinently; (3.) with joy; (4.) it brings up the seed sown. It sprung up to sundry degrees: [1.] to external obedience and reformation in many things; [2.] to an outward profession; [3.] to a kind of faith; but when the sun of persecution beat hot upon them they withered and fell away; not all at once, but by little and little, as a leaf loseth his greenness and flourish, and withers by degrees. In the Palatinate, when the sun of persecution began to scorch them, scarce one professor of twenty stood out, but fell to popery as fast as leaves in autumn. The crystal looks like pearl till it comes to the hammering; so an hypocrite looks like a Christian, and in many things acts like a Christian, till he comes to be hammered by sufferings, by persecutions, and then he discovers himself in his colours; and with Hymeneus and Alexander, he makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20, Hosea v. 2. In suffering times, hypocrites labour mightily to put out that light which shines in their bosoms, and when they have quenched that light, then farewell faith, farewell profession, farewell a good conscience, farewell all. The wolf, though he often dissembles and closely hides his nature, yet he cannot always do so; for at one time or other he will shew himself to be a wolf; so though an hypocrite may carry it closely for a time, yet he will one time or other discover himself to be an hypocrite. It is reported of the waters of Nilus, that having run many hundred of miles a pure and clear water, when it comes near the Mediterranean Sea, it begins to grow brackish and salt, and at last it falls into the sea and loseth its name. Sooner or later this will be the case of all hypocrites; they won't retain their spiritual fairness, clearness, and sweetness long, but by degrees will grow brackish and salt, and lose their names, and all that seeming goodness and sweetness that once seemed to be in them.

But now a sincere Christian, he will hold on and hold out in the ways of the Lord, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all multiplied discouragements. When the eye of men, the favour of men, the bounty of men, and all other encouragement from men fails, yet then a sincere Christian will hold up, and hold on in his work and way. 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean

hands shall be stronger and stronger,' Job xvii. 9. The righteous man shall go on in a way of righteous[ness] to the end; no multiplied calamities or miseries shall ever work him to decline the way of righteousness. From this way a sincere Christian will never be withdrawn, either by any hopes or advantages on the one hand, or by any fears or dangers on the other. Sincere Christians have not taken up religion on such slight grounds, as to be either flattered or frightened out of it. Sincere Christians reckon upon afflictions, temptations, crosses, losses, reproaches on the one hand, and they reckon upon a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory on the other hand, and hereupon they set up their staff, fully resolving never to depart from the good old way wherein they have found rest to their souls, John xvi. 33; Acts xiv. 22; 2 Tim. iv. 8. Sincere Christians take Christ and his ways for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in prosperity and adversity; they resolve to stand or fall, to suffer and reign, to live and die with him, Jer. vi. 16. When all outward encouragements from God shall fail, yet a sincere Christian will keep close to his God, and close to his duty. 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Hab. iii. 17, 18. When all necessary and delightful mercies fail, yet he will not fail in his duty. Though God withhold his blessings, yet he will not withhold his service; in the want of a livelihood, he will be lively in his duty; when he hath nothing to subsist by, yet then he will live upon his God, and joy in his God, and keep close to his God. Though war and want come, yet he will not be wanting in his duty. Mark, there are three things in a sincere Christian that will strongly incline him to keep close to the Lord, and close to his ways in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements. And the first is a forcible principle, divine love; the second is a mighty aid, the Spirit of God; and the third is a high aim, the glory of God, 2 Cor. v. 14; Philip. iv. 12, 13; Rom. xiv. 7, 8. Look, as Ruth kept close to her mother in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements, — 'And Ruth said, Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part thee and me,' Ruth i. 16, 17, — so saith a sincere Christian, I will take my lot with Christ wherever it falls; I will keep close to the Lord, and close to my duty, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements. Though outward encouragements be sometimes as a side wind, or as oil, or as chariot wheels, means to move a Christian to go on more sweetly, easily, and comfortably in the ways of God, yet when this wind shall fail, and these chariot wheels shall be knocked off, a sincere Christian will keep close to the Lord and his ways. 'All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways,' Ps. xlv. 17, 18. But what do they mean by saying, 'All this is come upon us'? Why, that you may see in the foregoing part of the psalm: 'Thou hast cast us off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. Thou makest us turn back from the enemy; and they which hate us

spoil for themselves. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen. Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price. Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people,' vers. 9-14.¹ Antiochus Epiphanes looked upon the Jews' religion as superstition; his wrath and rage was exceeding great, both against the Jews and against their religion; he practised all manner of cruelty upon the miserable Jews, but yet there was a remnant among them who were faithful to the Lord, and to his covenant, and to his laws, and to his ways, even to the death. Though in the time of the Maccabees many revolted to paganism, yet some maintained their constancy and integrity to the last. That is a great word of the prophet Micah: 'For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever,' Micah iv. 5. This absolute and peremptory resolution to be really the Lord's, and for ever the Lord's, is of the essence of true conversion. It is not the world's flatteries that can bribe off a sincere Christian from the ways of God; nor it is not the world's frowns that can beat off a sincere Christian from the ways of God; but an hypocrite will never, an hypocrite can never hold it out to the end. His ground tackle will never hold when the storm beats strong upon him. An hypocrite is hot at hand, but soon tires and gives in. But,

[10.] Tenthly, *No hypocrite ever makes it his business, his work, to bring his heart into religious duties and services*, Mat. xv. 8, Mark vii. 6. He never makes conscience of bringing his heart into his work. An hypocrite is heartless in all he does: Ps. lxxviii. 34, 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God.' Ver. 36, 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' Ver. 37, 'For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' All lip-labour is but lost labour. When men's hearts are not in their devotion, their devotion is mere dissimulation. These hypocrites sought God, and inquired early after God, but it was still with old hearts, which are no hearts in the account of God. They made lip work of it, and head work of it, but their hearts not being in their work, all was lost: their seeking lost, their inquiring lost, their God lost, their souls lost, and eternity lost: Hosea vii. 14, 'And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds.'² When men's hearts are not in their prayers, all their praying is but as an hideous howling in the account of God.³ The cry of the heart is the only cry that God likes, loves, and looks for. He accepts of no cry, he delights in no cry, he rewards no cry, but the cry of the heart. Hypocrites are heartless in their cries, and therefore they cry and howl, and howl and cry, and all to no purpose. They cry and murmur, and they howl and repine; they cry and blaspheme, and they howl and rebel;

¹ The Jews sold Christ for thirty pence, and the Romans sold thirty of them for a penny, as Josephus relates.

² The fox when caught in a gin, looks pitifully, but it is only to get out. They worshipped the Lord as the Indians do the devil, that he may do them no hurt.

³ As dogs, brute beasts, and Indians do, when they are hunger-bit.

and therefore they meet with nothing from heaven but frowns, and blows, and disappointments: Isa. xxix. 13, 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.' Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' Though this people flocked to the prophet in troops, as men and women do to places of pleasure; and though they carried it before the prophet as if they were saints, as if they were the people of God, as if they were affected with what they heard, as if they were resolved to live out what the prophet should make out to them; yet their hearts ran after their covetousness. Though these hypocrites professed much love and kindness to the prophet, and paid him home with smooth words, and seemed to be much affected, delighted, ravished, and taken with his person, voice, and doctrine, yet they made no conscience of bringing their hearts into their duties. An hypocrite may look at some outward, easy, ordinary duties of religion, but he never makes conscience of bringing his heart into any duties of religion. When did you ever see an hypocrite a-searching of his heart, or sitting in judgment upon the corruptions of his soul, or lamenting and mourning over the vileness and wickedness of his spirit? It is only the sincere Christian that is affected, afflicted, and wounded with the corruptions of his heart. When one told blessed Bradford that he did all out of hypocrisy, because he would have the people applaud him, he answered, It is true, the seeds of hypocrisy and vain glory are in thee and me too, and will be in us as long as we live in this world; but I thank God it is that I mourn under and strive against. How seriously and deeply did good Hezekiah humble himself for the pride of his heart! 'Out of the eater came meat,' out of his pride he gat humility, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

O sirs! a sincere Christian makes it his great business to get his heart into all his religious duties and services, to get his heart into every way and work of God, Cant. iii. 1-6. Jehoshaphat's heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, 2 Chron. xvii. 6. So David, 'I will praise thee, O Lord, with all my heart,' Ps. xxxvi. 12. And so Ps. cxix. 7, 'I will praise thee with uprightness of heart.' Ver. 10, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee.' So Jehoshaphat he sought the Lord with all his heart, 2 Chron. xxii. 9. Isa. xxvi. 8, 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.' Ver. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Lam. iii. 41, 'Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.' Rom. i. 9, 'For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.' Paul's very spirit, his very soul, was in his service. Philip. iii. 3, 'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' Ver. 25, 'With the mind I myself serve the law of God.' A sincere Christian is always best when his heart is in his work, and when he cannot get his heart into his duties, oh! how does he sigh, and groan, and complain, and

mourn at the foot of God! Lord, my tongue has been at work, and my head has been at work, and my parts have been at work, and my eyes and hands have been at work, but where has my heart been this day? Oh! it is and must be for a sore and sad lamentation that I have had so little of my heart in that service that I have tendered to thee!¹ This is the daily language of an upright heart. But now all the work of an hypocrite is to get his golden parts into his duties, and his silver tongue into his duties, and his nimble head into his duties; but he never makes conscience of getting his heart into his duties. If any beasts sacrificed by heathens, who ever looked narrowly into the entrails, was found without a heart, this was held ominous, and construed as very prodigious to the person for whom it was offered, as it fell out in the case of Julian. Hypocrites are always heartless in all the sacrifices they offer to God, and this will one day prove ominous and prodigious to them. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, *An hypocrite never performs religious duties from spiritual principles, nor in a spiritual manner.* An hypocrite is never inclined, moved, and carried to God, to Christ, to holy duties, by the power of a new and inward principle of grace working a suitability between his heart and the things of God. An hypocrite rests himself satisfied in the mere external acts of religion, though he never feels anything of the power of religion in his own soul. An hypocrite looks to his words in prayer, and to his voice in prayer, and to his gestures in prayer, but he never looks to the frame of his heart in prayer. An hypocrite's heart is never touched with the words his tongue utters; an hypocrite's soul is never divinely affected, delighted, or graciously warmed with any duty he performs. An hypocrite's spiritual performances never flow from spiritual principles, nor from a heart universally sanctified. Though his works may be new, yet his heart remains old; his new practices always spring from old principles; and this will prove the hypocrite's bane, as you may see in that Isa. i. 15, 'When you spread forth your hands to heaven, I will hide my eyes; and when you make many prayers, when you abound in duty,' adding prayer to prayer, as the Hebrew runs, 'I will not hear, your hands are full of blood.' These were unsanctified ones; their practices were new, but their hearts were old still, Isa. i. 10-16. The same you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who fasted, prayed, and gave alms, but their hearts were not changed, renewed, sanctified, nor principled from above; and this proved their eternal bane, Mat. vi., xxiii.; Luke xviii. Nicodemus was a man of great note, name, and fame among the pharisees, and he fasted, and prayed, and gave alms, and paid tithes, &c., and yet a mere stranger to the new birth; regeneration was a paradox to him. 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?'² John iii. 4. This great doctor was so great a dunce, that he understood no more of the doctrine of regeneration, than a mere child does the darkest precepts of astronomy. Look, as water can rise no higher than the spring from whence it came, so the natural man can rise no higher than nature, 1 Cor. ii. 14. An

¹ It is reported that when the tyrant Trajan commanded Ignatius to be ripped and unbowelled, they found Jesus Christ written upon his heart in characters of gold. Here was a heart worth gold. That is the golden Christian indeed, whose heart is writ upon all his duties and services.

² No man can understand spiritual mysteries by carnal reason.

hypocrite may know much, and pray much, and hear much, and fast much, and give much, and obey much, and all to no purpose, because he never manages anything he does in a right manner; he never carries on his work from inward principles of faith, fervency, life, love, delight, &c. Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? *Ans.* No; he cannot delight himself in the Almighty.

(1.) *To delight in God is one of the highest acts of grace*; and how can an hypocrite put forth one of the highest acts of grace, who hath no grace? An hypocrite may know much of God, and talk much of God, and make a great profession of God, and be verbally thankful to God; but he can never love God, nor trust in God, nor delight in God, nor take up his rest in God, &c.¹

(2.) *An hypocrite knows not God*; and how then can he delight in that God whom he does not know? An hypocrite has no inward, saving, transforming, experimental, affectionate, practical knowledge of God; and therefore he can never take any pleasure or delight in God.

(3.) *There is no suitableness between an hypocrite and God*; and how then can an hypocrite delight himself in God? There is the greatest contrariety imaginable betwixt God and an hypocrite. God is light, and the hypocrite is darkness; God is holiness, and he filthiness; God is righteousness, and he unrighteousness; God is fulness, and he emptiness, 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16. Now what complacency can there be where there is such an utter contrariety?

(4.) *Every hypocrite's heart is full of enmity against God*; and how then can he delight himself in God? 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' Rom. viii. 7. The best part of an hypocrite is not only averse, but utterly adverse to God and all goodness.² The eagle, saith the philosopher, hath a continual enmity with the dragon and the serpent. And so an hypocrite's heart is still full of enmity against the Lord; and therefore he can never delight himself in the Lord.

(5.) *The stream, cream, and strength of an hypocrite's delight runs out to himself, and to this lust or that, or this relation or that, to this creature-comfort or that, to this worldly enjoyment or that, or else to arts, parts, gifts, privileges, &c.*, and therefore how can he delight himself in the Almighty? An hypocrite always terminates his delight in something on this side God, Christ, and heaven. Look, as the apricock tree,³ though it leans against the wall, yet it is fast rooted in the earth; so though an hypocrite may lean towards God, and towards Christ, and towards heaven, yet his delight is still rooted fast in one creature-comfort or another, &c. God nor Christ is never the adequate object of an hypocrite's delight. An hypocrite is never principled to delight himself in a holy God, neither can he cordially, divinely, habitually delight himself in holy duties. An hypocrite may reform many evil things, and he may do many good duties, and yet all this while it is only his practices, but not his heart or principles, that are changed and altered. Mark, though an hypocrite hath nothing in him which is essential to a Christian

¹ Job xxvii. 10, Job speaks of the hypocrite, as is evident, ver. 8.

² To delight in God, is *Christianorum propria virtus*, saith Jerome.

³ Early form of 'apricot.'—G.

as a Christian, yet he may be the complete resemblance of a Christian in all those things which are not essential to him. An hypocrite, in all the externals of religion, may be the complete picture of a sincere Christian ; but then if you look to his principles, and the manner of his managing of holy duties, there you will find him lame and defective, and as much unlike a sincere Christian, as ever Michal's image was unlike to David, 1 Sam. xix. 13-16 ; and this will prove the great crack, the great break-neck of hypocrites at last.

O sirs ! it is considerable, that outward motives and natural principles have carried many heathens to do many great and glorious things in the world. Did not Sisera do as great things as Gideon ? The difference did only lie here, that the great things which Gideon did, he did from more spiritual principles and raised considerations, than any Sisera was acted by. And did not Diogenes trample under his feet the great and glorious things of this world, as well as Moses ? Heb. xi. 24. The difference did only lie in this, that Moses trampled under his feet the gay and gallant things of this world, from inward gracious principles, viz., faith, love, &c., and from high and glorious considerations, viz., heaven, the glory of God, &c., whereas Diogenes did only trample upon them from poor, low principles, and from mere outward, carnal, external considerations. The favour of men, the eye of men, the commendations of men, the applause of men, and a great name among men, were golden apples, great things among the philosophers. The application is easy.

Mark, A sincere Christian, he looks to the manner as well as to the matter of his duties ; he acts and performs duties, not only from strength of parts and acquired qualifications, but from strength of grace and infused habits ; he acts from God and for God ; he acts from a new heart ; he acts from the law written in his heart ; he acts from the love of God shed abroad in his heart ; he acts from the divine nature communicated to him ; he acts from the Spirit's indwelling in his heart ; he acts from the fear of God established in his heart.¹ These be the springs and principles of a sincere Christian's spiritual life and actions ; and where they act and bear rule, it is no wonder if [there be] such motions and performances as the world may admire but not imitate. Saul's life, after his conversion, was a kind of constant miracle. So much he did, and so much he suffered, and so much he denied himself, that if he lived in these days his life would be a miracle ; but yet if we consider the principles that he was acted by, the great wonder will be, not that he did so much, but that he did no more : ' For,' saith he, ' Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. It was a great saying of blessed Bradford,² that he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Christ in the duty, till he had brought his heart into a duty-frame. He could not leave confession till he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin, nor petition till he had found his heart taken with the beauties of the things desired, and carried out after them ; nor could he leave thanksgiving till he had found his spirit enlarged and his soul quickened in the return of praises. And it

¹ Rom. xi. 24 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ; Jer. xxxi. 33 ; Rom. iii. 5 ; 2 Cor. v. 19 ; 2 Pet. i. 4 ; Eph. iii. 17 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

² Foxe, Acts and Monum. [*Sub nomine*.—G.]

was a great saying of another, 'that he could never be quiet till he found God in every duty, and enjoyed communion with God in every prayer.' 'O Lord,' said he, 'I never come to thee but by thee, I never go from thee without thee.'¹ A sincere Christian that is taken with Christ above all, cannot be satisfied nor contented with duties or ordinances, without he enjoys Christ in them, who is the life, soul, and substance of them. But now hypocrites they do duties, but all they do is from common principles, from natural principles, and from an unsanctified heart; and that mars all. Remigius, a judge of Lorraine, tells this story, that the devil in those parts did use to give money to witches, which did appear to be good coin; it seemed to be current at first, but being laid up a while, it then appeared to be nothing but leaves.² Hypocrites they make a great profession, and are much in the outward actions of religion; they make a very fair show, they hear, they read, they pray, they fast, they sing psalms, and they give alms; but these duties being not managed from a principle of divine love, nor from a principle of spiritual life, nor from a sanctified frame of heart, turn all into leaves; they are all lost, and the authors of them cast and undone for ever and ever. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, *No hypocrite in the world loves the word, or delights in the word, or prizes the word, as it is a holy word, a spiritual word, a beautiful word, a pure word, a clean word*: Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' There are no hearts but men after God's own heart, that can love the word, and delight in the word, and embrace the word for its holiness, purity, and spirituality.³ Witness Paul: Rom. vii. 12, 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' Well, and what then? Why, saith he, ver. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' But is this all? No; saith he, ver. 25, 'With the mind I myself serve the law of God.' Holy Paul delights in the law as holy, and serves the law as holy, just, and good. A sincere heart is the only heart that is taken with the word for its spirituality, purity, and heavenly beauty. None can joy in the word as it is a holy word, nor none can taste any sweetness in the word as it is a pure word, but sincere Christians: Ps. xix. 8-10, 'The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean' (that is, the doctrine of the word that teacheth the true fear of God), 'enduring for ever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'sweeter than the droppings of honeycombs.'⁴ The word of God, as it is a pure word, a spiritual word, a clean word, a holy word; so it rejoices a sincere heart, and so it is sweeter than the very droppings of honeycombs. The word, as it is a pure word, a holy word, is more sweet to a sincere Christian than those drops which drop immediately and naturally without any force or art, which

¹ Nunquam abs te absque te recedo.—*Bernard, Meditat.*

² Preston's Four Treatises. [1635, 4to.—G.]

³ Luther said he would not live in paradise if he might without the word, but with the word he could live in hell itself.

⁴ These several titles, law, statutes, testimony, commandments, judgments, are used promiscuously for the whole word of God, commonly distinguished into law and gospel.

is counted the purest and sweetest honey. There is no profit, nor pleasure, nor joy to that which the purity of the word yields to a sincere heart: Ps. cxix. 48, 'My hands will I lift up to thy commandments which I have loved.' Sometimes the lifting up of hands betokens admiration. When men are astonished and ravished, they lift up their hands. 'I will lift up my hands to thy commandments;' that is, I will admire the goodness, spiritualness, holiness, righteousness, purity, and excellency of thy commandments. Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible, he took such sweet pleasure and excellent delight in it. Rabbi Chiia, in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, says, 'That in his account all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law.' The martyrs would have given a load of hay for a few chapters of the Bible in English. Some of them gave five merks for a Bible; they were so delighted and taken with the word, as it was a holy word, a pure word, a spiritual word. Dolphins, they say, love music; and so do sincere Christians love the music of the word. It is upon record, that Mary spent the third part of her time in reading the word, she was so affected and delighted with the holiness and purity of it. King Edward the Sixth being about to lay hold on something that was above the reach of his short arm, one that stood by espying a bossed Bible lying on the table, offered to lay that under his feet to heighten him; but the good young king disliked the notion, and instead of treading it under his feet, he laid it to his heart, to express the joy and delight that he took in the holy word.¹

But now never did any hypocrite, since there was one in the world, ever love God as a holy God, or love his people as a holy people, or love his ways as holy ways, or love his word as a holy word. There is no hypocrite in the world that can truly say with David, 'Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.' Saul could never say so, nor Ahab could never say so, nor Herod could never say so, nor Judas could never say so, nor Demas could never say so, nor Simon Magus could never say so, nor the scribes and pharisees could never say so, nor the stony ground could never say so, nor Isaiah's hypocrites could never say so, Isa. lviii. It is true, some of these did rejoice in the word, and delight in the word, but not as it was a holy word, a pure word; for then they would have rejoiced and delighted themselves in the whole word of God, every part of God's word being pure and holy. Hypocrites are sometimes affected and delighted with the word, as it is dressed up with fine high notions, which are but mysterious nothings; they are taken with the word, as it is clothed with arts, parts, and elegancy of phrase; they are pleased with the word, as it is apparelled with a spruce wit, or with silken expressions, or with some delicate elocution: Ezek. xxxiii. 32, 'So thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;' or as the Hebrew may be read, 'Thou art as one that breaks jests.' These hypocrites looked upon the solemnity and majesty of the word but as a dry jest. The prophet being eloquent, and having a pleasing delivery, they were much taken with it, and it was as sweet and delightful to them as a fit of music; but they were not at all taken or delighted with the spirituality, purity, and holiness of the word, as is

¹ Sir John Hayward *in vita*. [1630 and 1636, 4to. 12mo.—G.]

evident in ver. 31, 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' It was a very smart reproof of Chrysostom to his hearers : 'This is that,' saith he, 'which is like to undo your souls ; you hear your ministers as so many minstrels, to please the ear, not to pierce the conscience.' Augustine confesseth, that the delight which he took before his conversion in St Ambrose's sermons was more for the eloquence of the words than the substance of the matter.¹ Hypocrites are taken more with the wit, eloquence of speech, action, quickness of fancy, smoothness of style, neatness of expression, and rareness of notion, than they are with the spirituality, purity, and holiness of the word, which they either hear or read. These hypocrites are like those children who are more taken with the fine flowers that are strewed about the dish, than they are with the meat that is in the dish ; and that are more taken with the red weeds and blue-bottles that grow in the field, than they are with the good corn that grows there. But now look, as the prudent farmer is taken more with a few handfuls of sound corn than he is with all the gay weeds that be in the field, so a sincere Christian is more taken with a few sound truths in a sermon than he is taken with all the strong lines, and high strains, and flourishes of wit ; or than he is taken with some new-coined phrases, or some quaint expressions, or some seraphical notions, with which a sermon may be decked or dressed up. Some are taken with the word as the profession of it brings in customers into their shops, and keeps up their credits in the world ; others are taken with the word as it seems to tickle their ears and please their fancies ; some are affected with sermons because of the elegance of the style, delicacy of the words, smoothness of the language, and gracefulness of the delivery. And these deal by sermons as many do by their nose-gays, that are made up of many picked sweet flowers, who, after they have smelt to them awhile, cast them into a corner, and never mind them more ; so these, after they have commended a sermon, after they have highly applauded a sermon, they cast away the sermon, they smell to the sermon, if I may so speak, and say, It is sweet, it is sweet ; and presently they throw it by, as a nosegay that is withered, and of no further use. But now a sincere heart savours the word, and relishes the word, and is affected and taken with the word, as it is a holy word, a spiritual word, a pure word, which the most refined hypocrite under heaven never was affected or taken with, nor can be, whilst hypocrisy keeps the throne in his soul. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, and lastly, *An hypocrite cannot endure to be tried, and searched, and laid open.* An hypocrite hates the light, and had rather go to hell in the dark than come to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, John iii. 20. A soul-searching ministry is to an hypocrite a tormenting ministry. That is no man for his money that will never let his conscience alone ; he knows he is like a velvet saddle, velvet without and straw within ; he knows he is like a whited sepulchre, glorious without and dead bones within, Mat. xxiii. 27, 28 ; and therefore his heart rises and swells against such a man and such a

¹ Confessions, Book v. xiii. 23 ; xiv. 24.

ministry, that is all for the anatomising and laying of him open to himself and to the world. But now look, as pure gold fears neither fire nor furnace, neither test nor touchstone, neither one balance nor another, so a sincere heart dares venture itself upon trial, yea, upon the very trial of God himself: Ps. cxxxix. 23, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts.' A sincere Christian prays his friends to search him, and he prays soul-searching ministers to search him; but above all, he begs hard of God to search him: 'Search me, O God.' The Hebrew word *חקרני*, is imperat. *kal*; he commands God to search him. The original word signifies a strict, curious, diligent search: see Job xxxi. 5, 6. A sincere Christian is very willing and desirous that God should thoroughly search him, that God should search into every corner and cranny of his heart: Ps. xxvi. 2, 'Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.' Every word here has its weight: 'Examine me, O Lord.' The Hebrew word *צרופה* signifies to melt, and so to try which makes the most intrinsecal and exact discovery. O Lord, let my heart and reins be melted, that it may be known what metal they are made of, whether gold or tin; 'prove me.' The Hebrew word *בהנני* signifies to view, as when a man gets upon some high tower or hill to see all from thence. 'Mount aloft, O Lord,' take the high tower, take the hill, 'that thou mayest see what is in me; try me, and know my thoughts.' The Hebrew word *וסני*, is from *נסח*, *nasah*, which properly signifies to take away, and is applied to Abraham's taking away of his son, Gen. xxii. 1. Lord, saith the prophet, if, upon searching and examining of me, thou shalt find any sin, any creature, any comfort, any enjoyment that lies in thy room, take it away, that thou mayest be all in all to me. A sincere Christian knows that God never brings a pair of scales to weigh his graces, but only a touchstone to try the truth of his graces; he knows if his gold, his grace, be true, though it be never so little, it will pass for current with God, and therefore he is free to venture upon the closest search of God, Mat. xii. 20. Now look, as bankrupts care not for casting up their accounts, because they know all is naught, very naught, yea, stark naught with them; so hypocrites, they care not to come to the trial, to the test, because they know all is naught, yea, worse than naught with them. They have no mind to cast up their spiritual estates, because at the foot of the account they must be put to read their neck verse, 'Undone, undone.' And therefore, as old deformed women cannot endure to look into the looking-glass, lest their wrinkles and deformity should be discovered, so hypocrites cannot endure to look into the glass of the gospel, lest their deformities, impieties, and wickednesses should be discovered and detected. I have read of the elephant, how unwilling he is to go into the water, but when he is forced into it, he puddles it, lest by the clearness of the stream he should discern his own deformity; so hypocrites they are very unwilling to look into their own hearts, or into the clear streams of scriptures, lest their soul's deformity and ugliness should appear, to their own terror and amazement. O sirs! look, as it is a hopeful evidence that the client's cause is good when he is ready and willing to enter upon a trial, and as it is a hopeful sign that

¹ A false evidence is the fruit of a slight and superficial search. [See Glossary, s. v. for 'neck-verse.'—G.]

a man's gold is true gold when he is willing to bring it to the touchstone, and that a man thrives when he is willing to cast up his books, so it is a hopeful evidence that a Christian is sincere with God when he is ready and willing to venture upon the trial of God, when he is willing to cast up his books, his accounts, that he may see what he is worth for another world, Gal. vi. 4, 5. Augustine speaks of an acute person, who was wont to say that he prized that little time which he constantly set apart every day for the examination of his conscience, far more than all the other part of the day, which he spent in his voluminous controversies.¹ Of all the duties of religion, an hypocrite dreads most that of self-examination, and that of venturing himself upon the search and trial of God. Well, for a close, though an hypocrite may deceive all the world, like that counterfeit Alexander in Josephus his story, yet Augustus will not be deceived, the great God will not be deceived; for his eyes are quick and piercing into all things, persons, and places.² Look, as the eyes of a well drawn picture are fastened on thee which way soever thou turnest, so are the eyes of the Lord fastened on thee, O hypocrite, which way soever thou turnest. It was a worthy saying of one, If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun?³ The eye of God many times is very terrible to an hypocrite, which makes him very shy of venturing upon the trial of God. No hypocrite since the world stood, did ever love or delight to be searched and tried by God.

And thus I have shewed you the several rounds or steps in Jacob's ladder, which no hypocrite under heaven can, whilst he remains an hypocrite, climb up to. And so much for this chapter.

CHAPTER V.

Now in this fifth and last chapter, I shall lay down some propositions and directions, that so you may see what a sober use and improvement Christians ought to make of their evidences for heaven; and how, in the use of gracious evidences, they ought to live above their gracious evidences, and how to exalt and lift up Christ above all their graces, evidences, and performances.

[1.] First proposition. *It is the wisdom, and ought to be the work of every Christian to own the least measure of grace that is in him, though it be mixed and mingled with many weaknesses and infirmities.* Sin is Satan's work, and grace is Christ's work; and therefore Christ's work ought to be eyed and owned, though it be mingled with much of Satan's work.⁴ That Christian is much clouded and benighted who hath two eyes to behold his sins, but never an eye to see his graces. Christ gets no glory, nor the soul gets no good, when a Christian is still a-poring

¹ Aug. in Ps. xxxiii. Concl. 2.

² Job xxxiv. 21, 22; 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Prov. v. 21, and xv. 3.

³ Ambrose, offic. l. i. c. xiv.

⁴ Though our graces, like Gideon's army, are but a handful in comparison of our sins, which, like the Midianites, are innumerable, yet a handful of grace is to be owned in the midst of an host of sins.

upon his sins. How can that Christian prize a little grace, and bless God for a little grace, and improve a little grace, who won't own a little grace because it is mingled with many weaknesses? Shall the husbandman own a little wheat when mingled with a great deal of chaff? Shall the goldsmith own a little filings of gold when mingled with a great deal of dust; and shall not a Christian own a little grace when mingled with a great many failings? David had a great many infirmities, 1 Sam. xxi. 13, 14, yet he owns his uprightness: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was upright before him.' And Job had a great many weaknesses, Job iii., yet he owns his integrity: Job xxvii. 5, 'Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me.' Ver. 6, 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' The spouse was sensible of her blackness, yet owns her comeliness, Cant. i. 5, 'I am black, but comely.' So Cant. v. 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' Jeremiah was a man of many failings, yet he owns his hope in God, Jer. xvii. 17: 'Thou art my hope in the day of evil,' Jer. xx. 14, *seq.* The poor man in the Gospel was very sensible of the sad relics and remains of unbelief that was in him, and yet with a holy boldness and confidence he pleads his faith: Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' Peter miscarried sadly, Mat xxvi. 69, *seq.*, and yet he owns his love to Christ: John xxi. 15, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' Ver. 16, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' Ver. 17, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' Paul had his infirmities and weaknesses hanging upon him: witness that seventh of the Romans: and yet how frequently and boldly does he own the grace of God that was in him throughout his epistles. Nothing keeps grace more at an under than men's not owning of a little grace because it is mingled with many infirmities. The best way to be greatly good, is to own a little, little good, though in the midst of much evil. But,

[2.] The second proposition is this, *It is your wisdom, and should be your work, to look upon all your graces and gracious evidences as favours given you from above, as gifts dropped out of heaven into your hearts, as flowers of paradise stuck in your bosoms by a divine hand.* A man should never look upon his graces or his gracious evidences, but should be ready to say, These are the jewels of glory with which God has bespangled my soul: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received? What gift, what grace, what experience, what evidence hast thou that thou hast not received?' All the light, and all the life, and all the love, and all the joy, and all the fear, and all the faith, and all the hope, and all the patience, and all the humility, &c., that thou hast, with all the evidences that arise from the discovery of those graces, are all grace gifts, they are all from above. 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' James i. 17. Look, as all light flows from the sun, and all water from the sea, so all temporal, spiritual, and eternal good flows from heaven. All your graces, and the greatest excellencies that are in you, do as much depend upon God and Christ, as the light doth upon the sun, or as the rivers do upon the sea, or as the branches do upon the root, John xv. 1-5. All my springs are in thee, Ps. lxxxvii. 7; all the springs of comfort that I have communicated to my soul, and all the

¹ Of thine own, saith David, have we given thee. 1 Chron. xxix. 4.

springs of grace that I have to quicken me, and to evidence the goodness and happiness of my spiritual estate and condition to me, they are all in thee. When a Christian looks upon his wisdom and knowledge, it concerns him to say, Here is wisdom and knowledge, ay, but it is from above; here is some weak love working towards Christ, but it is from above; here is joy, and comfort, and peace, &c., but these are all such flowers of paradise as never grew in nature's garden. Now, when a Christian looks thus upon all those costly diamonds of grace, of glory, with which his soul is bedecked, he keeps low, though his graces and gracious evidences are high. Where this rule is neglected, the soul will be endangered of being swelled and puffed.

It was a great saying of a very worthy man¹ that is now with God, viz., That as he often got much good by his sins, so he often got much hurt by his graces. Dear hearts, when you look upon the stream, remember the fountain; when you look upon the flower, remember the root; when you look upon the stars, remember the sun; and whenever you look upon your graces, then be sure to remember Christ the fountain of grace, else Satan will certainly be too hard for you. Satan is so subtle, so artificial,² and so critical, that he can make your very graces to serve him against your graces, conquering joy by joy, sorrow by sorrow, humility by humility, fear by fear, and love by love, if you don't look upon all your graces as streams flowing from the fountain above, and as fruits growing upon the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. Therefore, when one of your eyes is fixed upon your graces, let the other be always fixed upon Christ the fountain of grace. 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,' John i. 16. Here they eye their graces and the fountain of grace together. So Paul: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. Paul eyes Christ and his graces together; so Peter eyes Christ and his graces together: John xxi. 15, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' So those worthies of whom this world was not worthy; they eye Christ and their graces together: Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Though grace be a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17, a noble creature, a beautiful creature, an excellent creature, yet grace is but a creature, and such a creature that is strengthened, maintained, cherished, and upheld in your souls, Philip. iv. 12, 13; Cant. iv. *ult.*, in life and power, in beauty and glory, by nothing below the spiritual, internal, and glorious operations of Christ: Col. i. 10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' Ver. 11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.' Now, whenever you look upon grace as a lovely, beautiful creature, oh then remember that might and glorious power of Christ by which this creature is preserved and strengthened. Christians, your graces are holy and heavenly plants of Christ's own setting and watering, and will you mind the plants more than that noble hand that set them? It is Christ alone that can cause the desires of his people to bud, and their graces to blossom, and their souls to be like a watered

¹ Foxe [the Martyrologist, *as before.*—G.].

² 'Artful.'—G.

garden, green and flourishing, Isa. lviii. 11, and xxxv. 6, 7; and therefore let the eye of your souls be firstly, mostly, and chiefly fixed upon Christ. But,

[3.] The *third* proposition is this, *When you look upon your graces in the light of the Spirit, it highly concerns you to look narrowly to it, that you do not renounce and reject [y]our graces as weak and worthless evidences of your interest in Christ, and of that eternal happiness and blessedness that comes by Christ.* The works of grace, saith my author,¹ which consists in those divine qualities of holiness and righteousness, &c., Gal. v. 22, 23, is a sure mark, a blessed character, whereby men may know whose children they are, even as the Spartans or Lacedæmonians of old are said to know what stock and lineage they were of by a mark that was made upon their bodies by the head of a lance or spear. I readily grant that you must not trust in your graces, nor make a saviour of your graces, but yet you ought to look upon your graces as so many signs and testimonies of the love and favour of God to your souls. What certainty can there be of election, remission of sin, justification, or glorification, if there be not a certainty of your sanctification and renovation? If that persuasion that is in you about your grace or sanctification be false, then that persuasion that is in you concerning remission of sin, predestination, justification, and eternal salvation is false. This highly concerns all them to consider, that would not be miserable in both worlds. I know many cry up revelations, impressions, visions, yea, the visions of their own hearts, and speak lightly and slightly of the graces of the Spirit, of sanctification, of holiness, as evidences of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's condition. There were some in James his time who cried up faith, and union and communion with Christ, but were destitute of good works, James ii. 18. Well, what saith the apostle? 'Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works; for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead,' ver. 26. Look, as the body without the spirit, or without breath,—as the Greek word *πνεῦμα* primarily signifies,—is dead; so that faith that is without works, which are, as it were, the breathings of a lively faith, is a dead faith. Though it be faith that justifieth the man, yet it is works that justifies a man's faith to be right and real, saving and justifying. So there were some in John's time, viz., the Gnostics, who talked high of fellowship and communion with Christ, and yet walked in darkness; they lived in all impurity, and yet would make the world believe that they were the only people who knew God, and had fellowship with God, but John tells us they were liars: 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. What fellowship hath light with darkness?' 2 Cor. vi. 14. Such walk in darkness who promise to themselves the future vision of God's face, whilst they go on in the wilful breach of God's royal law. Such who say they know him, and are swallowed up in the enjoyments of him, and yet in the course of their lives walk contrary to him, such are liars: 'He that saith, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar,' 1 John ii. 4. Sanctification and justification are both of them benefits of the covenant of grace, and therefore to evidence the one by the other can be no

¹ Grotius, in Rom. viii. 16.

turning aside to the covenant of works, Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9; Heb. viii. 10, 12. You may run and read in the covenant of grace, that he that is justified is also sanctified, and that he that is sanctified is also justified; and therefore why may not he that knows himself to be really sanctified, upon that very ground, safely and boldly conclude that he is certainly justified? O sirs! the same Spirit that witnesses to a Christian his justification can shine upon his graces, and witness to him his sanctification as well as his justification; and without all controversy, it is as much the office of the Spirit to witness to a man his sanctification as it is to witness to him his justification, 1 Cor. ii. 12, 1 John iv. 13, 14. But you will say, Sir, pray what should be the reasons why many men have, and why some do still cry down marks and signs, and deny sanctification to be an evidence of men's justification, &c., and speak disgracefully of this practice that is now under consideration? I conjecture the reasons may be such as follow:

First, *Many professors take up in a great name, and in a great profession, and in great parts and gifts, though they have never found a thorough change, though they have never passed the pangs of the new birth, though they have never experienced what it is to be a new creature, a thorough Christian.*¹ And hence it comes to pass that they make head against this way of evidencing the goodness and happiness of a man's condition by inward gracious qualifications. Of all men these are most apt to outrun the truth, and to run from one extreme to another, and to be only constant in inconstancy. But,

Secondly, *Many professors are given up to spiritual judgments,* which are the sorest of all judgments, viz., lukewarmness, dead-heartedness, formality, indifferency, apostasy, blindness, hardness, and to 'strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' 2 Thes. ii. 10-12. Now, is it any wonder to see such men quarrel, and wrangle, and rail against the way and method of evidencing the goodness and happiness of a man's spiritual condition by inherent gracious qualifications? But,

Thirdly, *In some this ariseth from their lusts, which they indulge and connive at, and which they have a mind to live quietly in.* They are desirous to keep their peace, and yet unwilling to forsake their lusts; and hence they exclude this witness of water or sanctification to testify in the court of conscience whether they are beloved of God, or whether they are sincere-hearted or no, or whether they have the root of the matter in them or no; for the want of this witness, water or sanctification, is a clear and full witness against them that they are yet in their sins, under wrath, and in the way to eternal ruin; and that they have nothing to do with peace, or comfort, or the promises, or Christ, or heaven, [or] to take God's name into their lips, seeing they secretly hate to be reformed, Isa. lvii. 20, Ps. l. 16. There are many fair professors that are foul sinners, and that have much of God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness in their lips, when they have nothing but sin and hell in their hearts and lives. These men's convers[at]ions shamè their profession, and therefore they cry out against sanctification as a sure and blessed evidence of a man's justification. Such sinners as live in a course of sin, that make a trade of sin, that indulge their sins, that take

¹ 1 Thes. v. 23; John iii. 8, 5; 2 Cor. v. 17; Acts xxvi. 28.

up arms in defence of sin, that make provision for sin, that make a sport of sin, that take pleasure in sin, and that have set their hearts upon their sin, 1 Thes. ii. 11; such sinners cannot but look upon the witness of sanctification as the handwriting upon the wall, Daniel v. 5, 6. But,

Fourthly, *There are many who are great strangers to their own hearts and the blessed Scriptures, and are ignorant of what may be said from the blessed word to evidence the lawfulness of this practice that is under our present consideration.*¹ And hence it comes to pass that they cry down marks and signs, and deny sanctification to be a sure and blessed evidence of men's justification. *Ignorat sane improbus omnis*, ignorance is the source of all sin, the very well-spring from which all wickedness doth issue. Ignorance enslaves a soul to Satan, it lets in sin by troops, locks them up in the heart, shuts out the means of recovery, and so plasters up a man's eyes that he cannot see the things that belongs to his own or to others' internal or eternal peace. The Scripture sets ignorant persons below the ox and the ass. Did men either see the deformity of sin, or the beauty and excellency of holiness, they would never delight in the one nor cry down the other, Isa. i. 3. Peter tells you of some that speak evil of the things that they understood not; they did reprehend that which they could not comprehend, 2 Peter ii. 12. Ignorance is a breeding sin, a mother sin; all sins are seminally in ignorance. Ignorance is the mother of all the mistakes, and of all the misrule in the world. Christ told the Sadducees that they did 'err, not knowing the Scriptures,' Mat xxii. 29. And so I may say, many err in crying down such signs and evidences of grace which are bottomed upon Scripture, because they are ignorant of what the Scripture saith in the case. But,

Fifthly, *The generality of Christians are but lambs, babes, and children in grace.* The springs of grace runs low in them; their fears frequently overtop their faith; and their strong passions and corruptions do often raise such a dust and smoke in their souls, that if they might have all the world, yea, if their salvation lay upon it, they were not able to discern the least measure of grace in their own souls, Isa. xl. 11; 2 Peter ii. 2, 3; 1 John ii. 1. A little grace is next to none. Small things are hardly discerned. He had need to have a clear light and good eyes that is to discern a hair, a mote, or an atom. A little grace is not discoverable but by a shining light from above. There are none so full of fears, and doubts, and questions, and disputes, about the truth of their faith in Christ, and the sincerity of their love to Christ, as those that least believe and least love. The kingdom of God in most Christians is but as a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds; and therefore it is no wonder they see it not, Mark iv. 30-32. The root of the matter in most Christians is but small, and that small root is often covered over with many sinful infirmities and weaknesses; and therefore we are not to look upon it as a strange thing if we see such Christians not sensible of the root of the matter that is in them. Weak habits put forth such faint actions, and with so much interruption, that it is not an easy thing to discern whether they are the pro-

¹ It is sad to be a stranger at home, and to be least acquainted with a man's own heart. —Aristotle. It is said of knowledge, *non habet inimicum præter ignorantem.*

ducts of special or of common grace. Now, most Christians having but small measures of grace, holiness, and sanctification in them, and these small measures being much obscured and buried under the prevalency of fears, doubts, and unmortified lusts, can speak but weakly and darkly for them; and upon this ground they are not fond of bringing in this witness of sanctification to speak for them. In civil courts, men are not ambitious to bring such witnesses to the bar as can witness but weakly and faintly in their case. It is so here.

Sixthly, *Satan is a grand enemy to the peace, joy, comfort, assurance, settlement, and satisfaction of every poor Christian*; and therefore he will leave no stone unturned, nor no means unattempted, whereby he may keep them in a low, dark, unsettled, and uncomfortable condition, Ps. lxxvii., lxxxviii. When once a poor soul is brought over to Christ, how does the devil bestir himself to keep such a soul so under fears, doubts, and bondage, as that it may not in the least have an eye to anything that may have a proper tendency to its comfort, joy, assurance, peace, or quiet. The devil will do all he can to furnish such as are 'begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead' with all sorts of deadly weapons out of his armoury, to fight against those arguments and evidences which make for the peace and comfort of their own souls. He that shall look seriously and impartially upon the subtle, close, strong, and rhetorical arguings of many distressed Christians, above their own natural parts, against the peace, rest, comfort, and settlement of their own souls, may safely conclude that a hand of Joab, a hand of Satan, yea, a strong hand of Satan, has been with them, 2 Sam. xiv. 19. He that shall please to read the life of Francis Spira, though he be no great philosopher, yet he may easily discern with what subtlety and wonderful sophistry Satan helped him to argue against the pardonableness of his sins, and the possibility of his salvation. Satan knows how to transform himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14. Satan does not always appear in one and the same fashion, but he appears in as many several shapes, fashions, and changes, as Proteus did among the poets. To deceive some, he has assumed a lightsome body, as if he were an angel of heaven, as if he had been a holy one clothed with the brightness of celestial glory; to deceive others, he has appeared as an angel of light, suggesting such things to them, and injecting such things into them, under fair and specious shows and pretences of religion, piety, zeal, and holiness, which have had a direct tendency to the dishonour of God, the wounding of Christ, the grieving of the Spirit, the clouding or denying their evidences for heaven, the strangling of their hopes, and the death of all their comforts and joy. But,

Seventhly and lastly, *Some Christians live under high enjoyments and singular manifestations of God's love to them; they have God every day a-shedding abroad of his love into their hearts by the Holy Ghost*, Rom. v. 5. God is every day a-filling their souls with life, light, love, glory, and liberty, Ps. lxiii. 2-4. Christ every day takes them up into the mount, Mat. xvii. 4, and makes such discoveries of himself and his glory to them, that they are ready frequently to cry out, *Bonum est esse hic*, it is good to be here. Christ often whispers them in the ear with an 'O man, O woman, greatly beloved,' Dan. ix. 22, 23; Christ's

'left hand is every day under their heads, and his right hand doth embrace them,' Cant. ii. 6 ; they sit down every day 'under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto their taste ;' he makes out every day such sweet and clear manifestations of his admirable favour to their hearts, that their souls are daily satisfied as with marrow and fatness, Ps. lxxiii. 2-5. There are some precious Christians,—I say not all, I say not most,—who live daily under singular glances of divine glory, and who are daily under the sensible embracements of God, and who daily lie in the bosom of the Father, and who every night have Christ as a bundle of myrrh lying betwixt their breasts, Cant. i. 13. Now these choice souls who live daily in the glorious manifestations of the Spirit, and enjoy a little heaven on this side heaven, these many times are so taken up with their high communion with God, with their spiritual enjoyments, and with their tastes of the glory of that other world, that they do not much mind such evidences as we have had under our consideration. And thus much for the reasons why some cry down Scripture marks, signs, and evidences of grace, of holiness, of sanctification, and why others don't much mind them, or take any great notice of them. But,

[4.] The *fourth* proposition is this, *If this way of trying our spiritual estates by holy and gracious qualifications, were not both lawful and useful, then certainly the Holy Spirit would never have prescribed it, nor never have pressed men so earnestly upon it, as we find he has done in the blessed Scripture.* Take a taste: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves.' The precept is doubled, to teach us to redouble our diligence in this most needful but much neglected duty of self-examination.¹ The final trial of our eternal estates doth immediately and solely belong to the court of heaven, but the disquisitive part belongs to us. Here are two emphatical words in the Greek: first, *πειράζεε*, 'examine yourselves.' The word in the general signifies to take an experimental knowledge of anything, that is either uncertain, unknown, or hidden. Most men are great strangers to God, to Christ, to Scripture, and to themselves ; and therefore saith the apostle, 'Examine yourselves.' Now, if there were not sure marks and infallible signs whereby men may certainly know what their present estate is, and how it is like to go with them in another world, the redoubled command of the apostle would be in vain. The second Greek word is *δοκιμάζεε*, 'prove yourselves.' The original word signifies a severe and diligent inquisition into ourselves, so as to have a full experience of what is in us. Doubtless the apostle would never call again and again upon us, to try and examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, if it were not lawful to come to the knowledge of our faith, or of our being in the state of faithful Christians, in a discursive way, arguing from the effect to the cause. So in that 2 Peter i. 10, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' The Greek word *διό μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε*, translated 'give diligence,' is very emphatical. It signifies to do a thing, not in an overly, lazy, careless way, but to do a thing with industry, vigilancy, and unweariedness of spirit. Now, it is granted on all hands, that election cannot be made more sure in respect

¹ Ps. iv. 4. Vide Chrysostom on the words. Gal. vi. 3, 4 ; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.

of God or itself, but only in respect of us, that we may be more persuaded of it. Election cannot be made more sure than it is already, for those whom God hath elected shall be certainly glorified; but we must make it sure on our parts; that is, we must labour to have a real bottom and grounded assurance that we are elected by God in his eternal decree, to obtain life and glory by Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 29, 30. There is a double certainty: (1.) There is *certitudo objecti*, a certainty of the object; so our election is sure with God, for with him both it and all things are unchangeable. (2.) There is *certitudo subjecti*, the certainty of the subject; and so we must make our election sure to ourselves in our own hearts and consciences. Now, the means whereby we are to come to this assurance, is by adding grace to grace, and by causing those several graces to abound in us. This is the way of ways to make all sure to us. Now, by these scriptures it is most evident that we stand engaged to make our election sure by holy signs and marks. But,

[5.] The *fifth* proposition is this, *That other precious saints that are now triumphing in glory, have pleaded their interest in God's love, and their hopes of a better life, from graces inherent.*¹ I will only point at some of those scriptures among many others, that clearly speak out this truth: the first epistle of John; James ii. 17, *seq.*; Job xxiii. 10–12; and the whole 31st chapter of Job; Ps. cxix. 6; Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3; Neh. i. 1, *seq.*, and xiii. 14, &c. Now, all these scriptures do evidently prove, that the precious servants of the Lord did take their graces for precious signs and testimonies of God's love, of their interest in Christ, and thereby received much comfort, peace, and satisfaction. And truly, to deny the fruit growing upon the tree to be an evidence that the tree is alive, is to me as unreasonable as it is absurd. Certainly, it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to trust in our graces, to make a saviour of our graces. There is a great deal of difference betwixt declaring and deserving Christians. They may doubtless look to their graces as evidences of their part in Christ and salvation,—and the clearer and stronger they are, the greater will be their comfort and assurance,—but not as causes. No man advanced free grace like Paul; no man debased his own righteousness like Paul—he counted it but dung and dross, Philip. iii. 6–9; and no man exalted the righteousness of Christ like Paul, and yet by this way of signs he gathered much comfort and assurance; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' How plainly, how fully doth he here conclude his right to the crown of life, from his fighting a good fight, his finishing his course, in a way of grace and holiness, and his keeping the faith. By this great instance you may clearly see, that a Christian may greatly exalt Christ, lift up free grace, tread upon his own righteousness, as to justification, and at the very same time take comfort in his graces, and in his gracious actings. So in that 2 Cor. i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of a good conscience, that in godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.'² His joy was

¹ Grace, in the working of it, is often compared to life. Now, look as natural life is discerned by the actions thereof, as by so many signs, so also is supernatural life.

² Καύχησις is boasting; they boasted in the testimony of their consciences. Oh the quiet and tranquillity that arises from the testimony of [a] man's sincerity, both in heart and life.

founded on the testimony of his conscience; but from what did his conscience testify? from his sincere conversation. Again, take that memorable instance of Job; God hid his face from him; the arrows of the almighty stuck fast in him; Satan was let loose upon him; the wife of his bosom proved a tempter to him, a tormentor of him; his most inward acquaintance deserted him, reproached him, and condemned him as a hypocrite; God writ bitter things against him, and made him 'to possess the iniquities of his youth:' all was clouded above him, and he stripped of all the outward comforts that did once surround him, Job. i. 8, and ii. 3, so that he had nothing left to stay him, to refresh him, to support him, and to be a comfort and joy to him, but the sense of his integrity, and the evidence he had of his own uprightness, his own righteousness: Job xxvii. 5, 'Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me;' ver. 6, 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' Job was under great afflictions, sore temptations, and deep desertions. Now that which was his cordial, his bulwark, in those sad times, was the sense and feeling of his own uprightness, his own righteousness. The sense and feeling of the grace of God in him kept him from fainting and sinking under all his troubles. So in 1 John ii. 3, 'Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments,' &c. In these words two things are observable: *First*, that where there is a true knowledge of Christ, there is an observation of his commandments. *Secondly*, that by this observation of his royal law, we may know that our knowledge is sound and sincere. He speaks not of a legal, but of an evangelical, keeping of his commandments. A conscionable and serious endeavour to walk in a holy course of life, according to God's will revealed in his word, is a most certain mark or evidence that we have a saving knowledge of God, and that we are his children, and heirs of glory. Such who sincerely desire, and unfeignedly purpose, and firmly resolve, and faithfully endeavour, to keep the commandments of God, these do keep the commandments of God evangelically and acceptably in the eye of God, the account of God. So ver. 6, 'He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.' Here you may observe two things: *First*, that by faith we are implanted into Christ; *secondly*, that we discover our implantation into Christ by our imitation of Christ. Such as plead for sanctification as an evidence of justification don't make their graces causes of their implantation into Christ, or of their justification before the throne of Christ, but they make them testimonies and witnesses to declare the truth of their real implantation into Christ, and of their being justified before the throne of Christ. So 1 John iii. 14, 'We know we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren.' The apostle makes this a great sign of godliness, to love another godly man for godliness's sake, and the more godly he is, the more to love him, and to delight in him. Now mark, this love of our brethren is not a cause of our translation from death to life, for the very word *translated* supposeth such a grace, such a favour of God as is without us, but a sign of our translation from death to life. But of this I have said enough already, as you may see if you will but read from page 189 to page 200 of this book.¹ But,

¹ That is, of our text pp. 372-380—G.

[6.] The *sixth* proposition is this: *There are many scores of precious promises made over to them that believe, to them that trust in the Lord, to them that set him up as the great object of their fear, to them that love him, to them that delight in him, to them that obey him, to them that walk with him, to them that thirst after him, to them that suffer for him, to them that follow after him, &c.*¹ Now all these scores of promises are made for the support, comfort, and encouragement of all such Christians whose souls are bespangled with grace. But now if we may not lawfully come to the knowledge of our faith, love, fear, delight, obedience, &c., in a discursive way, arguing from the effect to the cause, what support, what comfort, what advantage shall a sincere Christian have by all those scores of promissory places of Scripture? Doubtless all those scores of promises would be as so many suns without light, as so many springs without water, as so many breasts without milk, and as so many bodies without souls, to all gracious Christians, were it not lawful for them to form up such a practical syllogism as this is, viz. the Scripture doth plainly and fully declare that he that believeth, feareth, loveth, obeyeth, &c., is blessed, and shall be happy for ever; But I am such a one that doth believe, fear, love, obey, &c.; Therefore I am blessed, and shall be happy for ever. Now, although it must be granted that the major of this proposition is Scripture, yet the assumption is from experience; and therefore a godly man, being assisted therein by the Holy Ghost, may safely draw the conclusion as undeniable. Oh that you would seriously consider how little would be the difference, should you shut out this discursive way, betwixt a man and a beast: if a man should assent to a thing unknown through an instinct and impression, and should to one who asks him a reason of his persuasion be able to return no other answer but this, I am persuaded because I am persuaded. But,

[7.] The *seventh* proposition is this, *That the Scripture giveth many signs and symptoms of grace; so that if a man cannot find all, yet if he discover some, yea, but one, he may safely conclude that all the rest are there.* He who hath but one in truth of the fore-mentioned characters in this book, hath seminally all; he who hath one link of the golden chain, hath the whole chain. Look, as he who hath one grace in truth, hath every grace in truth, though he doth not see every grace shining in his soul; so he that hath in truth any one evidence of grace in his soul, he hath virtually all. And oh that all weak, dark, doubting Christians would seriously and frequently ponder upon this proposition; for it may be a staff to uphold them, and a cordial to comfort them under all their fears and faintings. But,

[8.] The *eighth* proposition is this, *Without the light of the Holy Ghost our graces shine not.* Our graces are only the means by which our condition is known to us, Rom. ix. 2. The efficient cause of this knowledge is the Spirit illustrating our graces and making them visible, and so helping us to conclude from them, &c.: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of

¹ The most ordinary and safe way of coming to assurance is the discursive way in which a believer, from the fruits and effects of grace, infers he hath the habit, and from the habit concludes his justification and adoption; and as this is a way least subject to delusion, so it is also most suited to a rational creature, whose way of acting is by discourse and argumentation.

God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' Our graces, our sanctification, as well as our election, vocation, justification, and glorification, are freely given to us of God; and the Spirit of God is given as well to discover the one as the other to us. Mark, the things freely given us may be received by us, and yet the receipt of them not known to us; therefore the Spirit for our further consolation doth, as it were, put his hand and seal to our receipts, whence he is said to 'seal us up unto the day of redemption,' Eph. iv. 30. The graces of the Spirit are a real 'earnest' of the Spirit, yet they are not always an evidential earnest; therefore an earnest is often superadded to our graces. For ever remember these few hints: (1.) that it is the work of the Spirit to plant grace in the soul; (2.) that it is the work of the Spirit to act and exercise the graces that he has planted there; (3.) that it is the work of the Spirit to shine upon those graces that he has planted in the soul, and to cause the soul to see and feel what he has wrote; (4.) that it is the work of the Spirit to raise springs of comfort and joy in the soul, upon the discovery of that grace which he has wrought in the soul. O Christians! till the Spirit of the Lord shine upon your graces, you will still be in the dark. It is only God's own interpreter that must shew a man his righteousness, Job xxxiii. 23. When the Holy Ghost shines upon a Christian's graces, then a Christian finds the springs of comfort to rise in his soul, and then he finds the greatest serenity and calmness in his spirit. O sirs! no man can, by any natural light or evidence in him, come to be assured of the grace wrought in his soul. Look, as no man can see the sun but in the light of the sun, so no man can see the graces of the Spirit but in the light of the Spirit, 1 John v. 13. A man may have grace and not see it; he may be in a state of grace and not know it; as the child lives in the womb but don't perceive it, is heir to a crown but don't know it. Oh! till the Spirit shines upon his own work, a child of light may walk in darkness and see no light, Isa. l. 10. Look, as no man can subdue his sins but by the power of the Spirit; so no man can see his graces but in the light of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 13. The confidence that a believer hath of the truth of grace wrought in him, springs more from the Spirit's removing his slavish fears, and answering his doubts, and shining upon his graces, and supporting his soul, than it does from that excellency and beauty of grace which shines in him. A man may read the promises over and over a thousand times, and yet never be affected, delighted, or taken with them, till the Spirit of the Lord set them home upon his soul. And a man may read the threatenings over and over a thousand times, and yet never startle nor tremble, though he knows himself guilty of those very sins against which the threatenings are denounced, till the Spirit of the Lord sets home the threatenings in power upon his conscience; and then every threatening will be like the hand-writing upon the wall, which will cause his countenance to be changed, and his thoughts to be troubled, and his joints to be loosed, and his knees to be dashed one against another, Dan. v. 6, 7. It is just so in the matter of our graces and gracious evidences; till the Holy Spirit shine upon them, till in the light of the Spirit we come to see them, they won't be witnessing, comforting, and refreshing to us; and therefore let not the pious reader think that, by the strength of his natural light, he shall ever attain to

know the certainty of that grace which is in his soul; but let him rather beg hard of God for his Holy Spirit, and that his Spirit may shine upon that good work which he hath begun in him, that so he may be persuaded, assured, and comforted. Without the light of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit cannot be seen, no more than a book written in the fairest hand or print can be seen without light to see it or read it by. But,

[9.] The *ninth* proposition is this, *Sincere Christians may safely and groundedly rejoice, delight, and take comfort in those graces, or in those divine qualities, which in the light of the Spirit they see and know are wrought in their souls.*¹ I do not say that a Christian should build the comfort of his justification upon his graces, or that he should rest on his graces, or trust to his graces, or make a saviour of his graces; for this would be such a piece of pharisaical popery, as is justly to be detested and abhorred by all that love Christ, or are looking towards heaven. But this I say, a Christian may make several uses of his graces; he may safely look upon his graces as so many evidences of Christ's dwelling in him, and he may look upon his graces as so many heavenly bracelets, or as so many love-tokens from God, in which he may safely rejoice. The gracious evidences that I have laid down in this treatise are blessed symptoms of salvation; and therefore to rejoice in them can be no transgression of any royal law of heaven. He that can experimentally subscribe to any of the gracious evidences that are laid down in this book, has such a fair certificate to shew for heaven, that no wicked man or hypocrite under heaven has the like to shew; and why such a man should not rejoice in such a certificate, I cannot at present see. I may and ought to rejoice in the works of creation. Oh how much more then ought I to rejoice in the work of renovation, in the work of sanctification, which does so infinitely transcend the work of creation? I may and ought to rejoice in my natural life, health, strength, beauty; and why then should I not rejoice in grace and holiness, which is the life, health, strength, and beauty of my soul? Christ delights in the graces of his people. 'Thou hast ravished my heart' (or thou hast behearted me, as the Hebrew runs), 'my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes' (or with one glance of thine eyes, as some read it), 'with one chain of thy neck,' Cant. iv. 9. The eye of faith, say some; the eye of love, say others; the chain of obedience, say some; the chain of spiritual graces, say others, ravished Christ's heart. The one eye of faith, the one chain of obedience, unhearted Christ, wounded Christ; this one eye, this one chain, robbed Christ of his heart, and laid the spouse in the room of it. Now, shall Christ's heart be ravished with his children's graces, and shall not their hearts be ravished and delighted with those very graces that ravish Christ's own heart? I may, yea, I ought to rejoice in the graces of others, and why then not in my own? I may, yea I ought to rejoice in others' outward mercies, and in my own outward mercies, 1 Thes. i. 2-5, 2 Thes. i. 3, 4. Oh how much more then ought I to rejoice in the saving and distinguishing graces of the Spirit,

¹ Most Christians by experience find that their assurance and joy rises and falls as grace and holiness, and as the evidences of grace and holiness rise and fall in their souls.

especially when I consider, that the least dram of grace is more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds, as every awakened conscience will tell you when they come to die, Hab. iii. 18, Gal. vi. 14, Philip. iii. 3. Mark, firstly, mostly, and chiefly, a Christian is to rejoice in God and Christ; but secondarily and subordinately, he may rejoice in those graces, and in those gracious evidences that God has given into his soul. Firstly, mostly, and chiefly, a wife is to rejoice in the person of her husband; but secondarily, subordinately she may rejoice in the bracelets, in the ear-rings, in the jewels, in the gold chains that are given her by her husband. But,

[10.] The *tenth* proposition is this, viz., *That that assurance that the people of God may rise to by sight of their graces, and upon the sight of their gracious evidences in the light of the Spirit, is not so clear, and bright, and high, and full, as that it utterly excludes all fears, doubtings, conflicts, or spiritual agonies*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Philip. iii. 12-14. Our knowledge of God, of Christ, of ourselves, and of the blessed Scripture, which is the rule of trial, is imperfect in this life. And how then can our assurance be perfect? David, a man eminent in grace and holiness, had his up-hills and his down-hills, his summer days and his winter nights. Now you shall have him upon the mountain singing and saying, 'The Lord is my portion,' Ps. lxxiii 25; and presently you shall have him in the valleys, sighing and saying, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul; why art thou disquieted within me?' Ps. xlii. 5, 11. The same is evident in Job, Heman, and Asaph, Job iii.; Ps. lxxvii.; Ps. lxxxviii. Such an assurance as shall exclude all fears, doubts, conflicts, agonies, is very desirable on earth, but shall never be obtained till we come to heaven. The grievous assaults of Satan, the power of unbelief, and the prevalency of other corruptions in a Christian's heart, may be such as may shake, I do not say overturn, that assurance which a Christian may gather from the sight and evidence of his graces in the light of the Spirit. 'The flesh lusteth as well against the Spirit,' Gal. v. 17, as it is a Spirit of consolation, as it lusteth against the Spirit as it is a Spirit of sanctification; and therefore such an assurance as shall exclude all sorts and degrees of fears and doubts, is not attainable in this life.¹ Whilst we are in this old world we shall have water with our wine, gall with our honey, and some clouds with our brightest sunshiny days, &c. Most Christians think, that as long as they have any doubtings they have no assurance; but they consider not that there are many degrees of infallible certainty, below a perfect or an undoubting certainty. Doubtless some darkness, more or less, will overspread the face of every Christian's soul, and unbelief in one degree or another will be making head against their faith; and hypocrisy in one degree or another will be making head against sincerity, and pride in one degree or another will be making head against humility, and passion in one degree or another will be making head against meekness, and earthly-mindedness in one degree or another will be making head against heavenly-mindedness, &c., yet as long as a Christian has the sight of his graces or his gracious evidences, he may and ought to

¹ Doubting is not a virtue, as the papists would make us believe, but it is a fruit of the flesh, and a thing most contrary and opposite to the nature of faith, James i. 5; Mat. xxi. 21, and xiii. 31. And therefore Christians should pray hard to be rid of their doubts.

walk in much peace, comfort, and joy. Such Christians as are resolved to lie down in sorrow, till they have attained to a perfect assurance, must resolve to lie down in sorrow till they come to lay down their heads in the dust. Our graces are imperfect, and therefore that assurance that arises from the sight and evidence of them must needs be imperfect. Perfect signs of grace can never spring from imperfect grace, 1 Thes. iii. 10. Now, if this were seriously apprehended, studied, and minded by many weak Christians, they would not at every turn call their spiritual estates into question, as they do, because they find some seeds and stirrings of pride, hypocrisy, vain-glory, and other sinful humours and passions working in them. But,

[11.] The *eleventh* proposition is this, viz., *When all your signs and evidences of the happiness and blessedness of your condition fails you, and are so clouded, obscured, darkened and blotted that you cannot read them, that you cannot take any comfort from them, then it highly concerns you to keep high, and precious, and honourable thoughts of God, of Christ, of his word, and of his ways in your souls*, Ps. xcvi.

2. When Christ was withdrawn from his spouse, Cant. v. 6, 7, and when the watchmen that went about the city had smote her and wounded her, and when the keepers of the walls had took away her veil from her, yet then she keeps up in heart very high, precious, and honourable thoughts of Christ. Ver. 10, 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' Ver. 16, 'His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether lovely;' or his mouth is sweetnesses, and he is altogether desirablenesses, or all of him is desires, or he is wholly desirable. Here she breaks off her praises in a general eulogy, which no words can express enough. Alas! saith the spouse, I want words to express how sweet, how lovely, how comely, how desirable, how eminent, and how excellent Christ is in my eye, and to my soul! He is the desire of all nations *de jure*, Hag. ii. 8, and all that is perfect in heaven or earth is but a dim shadow of his excellency and glory. Where Christ is there is heaven. Heaven itself, in the spouse's eyes, without Christ, would be but a low little thing. The spouse looks upon Christ as the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. So David, when he was wofully clouded and benighted, when all was dark within him, and dark about him, and dark over him, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 'Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.' Ver. 21, 'My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.' Ver. 22, 'I was as a beast before thee;' or I was as a great beast, or as many beasts in one, as the Hebrew word *Behemoth* imports. Ver. 26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth;' that is, my outward man and my inward man faileth me. And yet mark, at this very time, when the psalmist was thus overcast, he keeps up in him very high, precious, and honourable thoughts of God. Ver. 1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' Ver. 23, 'Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand.' Ver. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.' Ver. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Ver. 26, 'God is the strength,' or rock, 'of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Ver. 28, 'It is good for me to draw near to God.' So the church in that Micah vii., when God had hid his face from her; ver. 7, when she sat

in darkness ; ver. 8, when she was under the indignation of the Lord ; ver. 9, when the righteous man was perished, and there was none upright among men ; ver. 2, and when her enemies rejoiced, insulted and triumphed over her ; vers. 8 and 10, yet now, even now, she keeps up in her soul very high, precious, and honourable thoughts of the Lord. Ver. 7, 'My God will hear me.' Ver. 8, 'When I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' Ver. 9, 'He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' I might give you twenty more instances, but enough is as good as a feast. Dear Christians, when your graces are not transparent, when your evidences for heaven are blotted, and when the face of God is clouded, oh then, keep up in your hearts high, precious, and honourable thoughts of God and Christ, and of his word and ways, &c. When your sun of righteousness is set in a cloud, when great darkness is upon your spirits, when all moonlight and starlight of your graces and gracious evidences fails you, Acts xxvii. 20, yet then say with David, 'Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel,' Ps. xxii. 3 ; and with Ezra, 'Thou hast punished me less than mine iniquities deserve,' Ezra ix. 13 ; and with Nehemiah, 'Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly ;' and with the church, 'The Lord is righteous,' Neh. ix. 33. In the darkest night, and under your deepest soul-distresses, say, Well, if I perish, if I should miscarry for ever, yet I will maintain and keep up in my heart, high, and precious, and honourable thoughts of God and Christ, Lam. i. 18. Say, Well, though my graces are obscured, and my evidences for heaven are blurred and soiled, yet I shall to my last breath say the Lord is good, and his word is good, and his ways are good ; yea, though he should slay me, yet I will trust in him, and entertain noble and glorious thoughts of him, Job xiii. 15. This is the way of ways to have your graces cleared and strengthened, your evidences brightened, your comforts restored, and your assurance confirmed. But,

[12.] The twelfth proposition is this, viz., *That it is the great duty and concernment of Christians to keep the evidences of their gracious and happy condition always bright and shining.* Christians should make conscience of blurring and disfiguring the golden characters of grace in their souls. The least character of grace in the soul, is more worth than all the gold of Ophir, yea, more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds ; and therefore every gracious Christian should be marvellous careful, that he does not by wilful omissions or sinful commissions cloud, dim, or darken the least character of grace, Eph. iv. 30, Ps. li. 11, 12. Such as blot or lose their evidences for heaven, they lose the comfort of their lives in this world. Satan's masterpiece is first to work Christians to blot and blur their evidences for glory, by committing this or that heinous sin ; and then his next work is to rob them of their evidences for glory, that so though at the long run they may get safe to heaven, that yet Jacob-like they may go halting and mourning to their graves. Satan knows, that whilst a Christian's evidences are bright and shining, a Christian is temptation-proof. Satan may tempt him, but he cannot conquer him ; he may assault him, but he cannot vanquish him. Satan knows, that whilst a Christian's evidences for

heaven are bright and shining, no afflictions can sink him, nor no opposition shake him, nor no persecution discourage him, nor no outward wants perplex him; and therefore he will use all his power and policy, all his arts, crafts, and parts, to draw poor Christians to blot and blur their evidences for glory. Satan knows, that a man may lose one friend, and easily get another, lose his trade in one place, and soon get a trade in another place; lose his health and get it, lose an estate and get an estate, &c. But if he lose his evidences for heaven, he knows it will cost him many a prayer, and many a sigh, and many a groan, and many a tear, and many a sad complaint, before he recovers his lost evidences; and therefore his grand design is to plunder a Christian of his evidences for heaven. O sirs! keep but your evidences for heaven always bright and shining, and then heavy afflictions will be light, and long afflictions will be short, and bitter afflictions will be sweet, 2 Cor. iv. 16-18; and then every evidence fairly written in your hearts will be a living comfort to you in a dying hour. When the tokens of death are upon your bodies, and you shall see the lively characters of grace shining in your souls, you will then cry out with old Simeon, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' Luke ii. 29; and with the spouse, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices,' Cant. viii. 14; and with the bride, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev. xxii. 20; and with Paul, 'I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' Philip. i. 23. When a man's evidences for heaven are either lost or blotted and blurred, then he will be ready to cry out with David, 'Oh spare me yet a little, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be seen no more,' Ps. xxxix. 13; and with Hezekiah, to turn his face to the wall and weep, Isa. xxxviii. 3. There are four things that above all others a Christian should labour to keep; (1) Christ; (2) his own heart; (3) the word; (4) his evidences for heaven, bright and shining. But,

[13.] The *thirteenth* proposition is this viz., *It is the high concernment of every Christian, either when he is in the dark, or when his graces shine brightest, and when his evidences for heaven are clearest, and his springs of comfort rise highest, then to have his heart and the eye of his faith most firmly fixed upon these three royal forts, or these three cities of refuge.* It must be granted, that though our graces are our best jewels, yet they are imperfect, and do not give out their full lustre; they are like the moon, which when it shines brightest hath her dark spots; and therefore a Christian had need have his eye, his heart fixed upon the three following royal forts. You know in time of war there are the outworks, and there are the royal forts. Now, when the soldiers are beaten out of their outworks, they retire to the royal forts, and there they are safe; and then they cast up their caps and bid defiance to their proudest enemies. Now, our graces and our gracious evidences, they are our outworks; and from these we may be beaten in a day of desertion and temptation, &c. Now if we make our retreat to the three following royal forts, we may in a holy sense cast up our caps, and bid defiance to an host of devils, yea, to all the powers of darkness. But,

Quest. But, sir, pray let us know which are these royal forts.

Ans. They are these three that follow.

1. The first is *the free, rich, infinite, sovereign, and glorious grace*

of God.¹ By free grace you are to understand the gracious good will or favour of God, whereby he is pleased of his own free love to choose and accept of some in Christ for his own. This we call first grace, because it is the fountain of all other grace, and the spring from whence they flow; and it is therefore called grace, because it makes a man gracious with God. Now mark, there have been many Christians who have had no assurance of the love of God, no sight of their interest in Christ, no sealing of the Spirit, nor no one clear evidence of grace, that they durst rest the weight of their souls upon; nor no one promise in the whole book of God that they durst apply or rest upon, who yet daily casting or rolling themselves, their souls, and their everlasting concerns, upon the infinite, free, rich, and sovereign grace of God in Christ, have found some tolerable peace, comfort, and refreshment in such a practice all their days. A Christian may lose the sight of his graces, and the evidences of his gracious estate; he may be so much in the dark, he may be so much benighted and bewildered in his spirit, that there may be no way under heaven left to him to enjoy peace, comfort, rest, quiet, settlement, or contentment, but by casting or rolling of his soul upon the free, rich, infinite, and sovereign grace of God in Christ; and here casting anchor, the poor bewildered, deserted, tempted, tossed soul may be safe and at rest, Isa. l. 10. The free love and favour of God will be a lamp to the soul in the darkest night; it will be a sweet lump that will sweeten the bitterest cup; it will be a singular cordial against all faintings; it will be armour of proof against all temptations; it will be an everlasting arm to you under all afflictions; it will be a sun and a shield to you in every condition, Ps. iv. 6: Ps. lxxx. 3. 'Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.' Divine favour is that pearl of price that is most desirable:² Dan. ix. 17, 'The Lord make his face to shine upon his sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake'; Num. vi. 24, 'The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you'; Ps. lxxvii. 1, 'God be merciful to you, and bless you, and cause his face to shine upon you.' Life is a very desirable thing; 'skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,' Job ii. 4; and yet the loving-kindness of God is better than life: Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' The Hebrew word is *chajim*, lives; to note that the loving-kindness of God is better than many lives, yea, than all lives, and the revenues of life, put many lives together, put all lives together; and yet there is more excellency in the least discovery of divine love than in them all. Many a man has been weary of his life, but who have ever been weary of divine love? Dear Christians, are your graces or gracious evidences shining or sparkling? Oh then solace yourselves mostly in the free love and favour of God; for in his free favour lies the life of your souls, the life of your graces, the life of your comforts, yea, in his free favour your all is bound up. If your graces or evidences are so clouded and darkened, that you are in a stormy day beat out of your outworks, oh now run to the free grace and favour of God, as to your royal fort, as to your strong tower, as to your city of refuge, where you may be safe and happy for ever. In such a

¹ Gen. vi. 8; Exod. xix. 5; Eph. i. 5-7; 1 Tim. i. 13-16. 'The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant.' The original word is *ὑπερπληθύνωσις*, was over full, redundant, more than enough, more than might serve the turn for him who was the greatest of sinners.

² Socrates prized the king's countenance above his coin. What is then the countenance of God to a gracious soul?

day ponder much upon these scriptures, Hosea xiv. 4, 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.' God's love is a free love, having no motive or foundation but within itself. All the links of the golden chain of salvation are made up of free grace. The people of God are freely loved : Deut. vii. 6-8 ; and freely chosen, John xv. 16-19, Eph. i. 4 ; and freely accepted, Eph. i. 6 ; and freely adopted, Eph. i. 5, Gal. iv. 5, 6 ; and freely reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 18-20 ; and freely justified, Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace;' and freely saved, Eph. ii. 5 ; 'By grace ye are saved,' ver. 8, 'For by grace ye are saved ;' Tit. iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' Thus you see that all the golden rounds in Jacob's ladder, that reaches from heaven to earth, are all made up of free grace. Free grace is the foundation of all spiritual and eternal mercies ; free grace is the solid bottom and foundation of all a Christian's comfort in this world. Were we to measure the love of God to us by our fruitfulness, holiness, humbleness, spiritualness, heavenly-mindedness, or gracious carriages towards him, how would our hope, our confidence every hour, yea, every moment in every hour, be staggered, if not vanquished ! Rom. iv. 16. But all is of grace, of free grace, that the promise might be sure, and that our salvation might be safe. O sirs ! it is free grace that will strengthen you in all your duties, and that will sweeten all your mercies, Rom. viii. 33-36, and that will support you under all your changes, and that will arm you against all temptations, and answer all objections, and take off all Satan's accusations, that may be cast in to disturb the peace and quiet of your souls ; and therefore, whether your graces or gracious evidences do shine or are clouded, yet still have your recourse to the free grace of God, as to your first royal fort, your first city of refuge ; and still cry out, Grace, grace. When your gracious evidences are clearest and fullest, then it concerns you to look upon free grace as your choicest and safest city of refuge. But,

2. The second royal fort that Christians should have their eyes, their hearts fixed upon, whether their graces or gracious evidences sparkle and shine, or are clouded and obscured, is *the mediatory righteousness of Christ*.¹ Beloved, there is a twofold righteousness in Christ. *First*, there is his essential and personal righteousness as God. Now, this essential personal righteousness cannot be imputed to us ; but then there is, *secondly*, his mediatory righteousness, that is, that righteousness which he wrought for us as mediator, whereby he did subject himself to the precepts, to the penalties, commands, and curses, answering both God's vindictive and rewarding justice. This is communicated to us and made ours, by virtue of which we stand *recti in curia*, justified in God's sight. The mediatory righteousness of Christ is the matter of our justification. Now, this mediatory righteousness of Christ includes, *first*, the habitual holiness of his person in the absence of all sin, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and requisite qualities ; *secondly*, the actual holiness of his life and death by obedience. By his active obedience he perfectly fulfilled the commands of the law, and by his passive obedience, his voluntary sufferings, he satisfied the

¹ Imputed righteousness seems to be prefigured by the skins wherewith the Lord after the fall clothed our first parents. The bodies of the beasts were for sacrifice, and the skins to put them in mind that their own righteousness was, like the fig-leaves, imperfect, and that therefore they must be justified another way.

penalty and commination of the law for transgressions. Mark, that perfect satisfaction to divine justice in whatsoever it requires, either in way of punishing for sin, or obedience to the law, made by the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, the mediator of the new covenant, as a common head representing all those whom the Father hath given to him, and made over unto them that believe in him: ¹ this is that righteousness that is imputed to us in justification. No other righteousness can justify us before the throne of God. Look, as Christ was made sin for us only by imputation, so we are made righteous only by the imputation of his righteousness to us, as the Scripture clearly evidences: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Jer. xxiii. 6, 'The Lord our righteousness.' A soul truly sensible of his own unrighteousness, would not have this sentence, 'The Lord our righteousness,' blotted out of the Bible for ten thousand thousand worlds. 1 Cor. i. 30, 'Christ Jesus is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness,' &c. And pray, how is Christ made righteousness to the believer? Not by way of infusion, but imputation; not by putting righteousness into him, but by putting a righteousness upon him, even his own righteousness; by the imputing his merit, his satisfaction, his obedience unto them, through which they are accepted as righteous unto eternal life: Rom. v. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' Christ's righteousness is his in respect of inhesion, but it is ours in respect of imputation; his righteousness is his personally, but ours meritoriously. Look, as there is a true and real union between us and Christ, so there is a real imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. And a gracious soul triumphs more in the righteousness of Christ imputed than he would have done if he could have stood in the righteousness in which he was created. This is the crowning comfort to a sensible and understanding soul, that he stands righteous before a judgment-seat in that full, exact, perfect, complete, matchless, spotless, peerless, and most acceptable righteousness of Christ which is imputed to him. The righteousness of Christ is therefore called 'the righteousness of God,' Rom. iii. 21, 22; x. 3; Philip. iii. 9, because it is it which God hath designed, and which God doth accept for us in our justification, and for and in which he doth acquit and pronounce us righteous before his seat of justice. That we are freely justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, is the very basis, foundation, and state of [the] Christian religion, whereby it is distinguished from all other religions whatsoever. Jews, Turks, pagans, and papists explode an imputed righteousness; yea, papists jeer it, calling it a putative righteousness. Well, sirs, remember this once for all, viz., that the mediatory righteousness of Christ is the life of your souls, and will afford you these most admirable comforts.²

[1.] *First*, In this righteousness there *is enough to satisfy the justice of God to the utmost farthing*. The mediatory righteousness of Christ is so perfect, so full, so exact, so complete, and so fully satisfactory to the justice of God, as that divine justice cries out, I have enough,

¹ Osiander was of opinion that men were justified by the essential righteousness of Christ as God, which opinion is largely confuted by Calvin in his 'Institutions.' [*Sub nomine*.—G.]

² Luther's great fear was, that when he was dead this glorious doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ would be sent packing out of the world.

and I require no more ; I have found a ransom, and I am fully pacified towards you, Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. But,

[2.] *Secondly*, This mediatory righteousness of Christ *takes away all our unrighteousness ; it cancels every bond, it takes away all iniquity, and answers for all our sins*, Isa. liii. ; Col. ii. 12–15. Lord, here are my sins of omission, and here are my sins of commission ; but the righteousness of Christ hath answered for them all. Here are my sins against the law, and here are my sins against the gospel, and here are my sins against the offers of grace, the tenders of grace, the strivings of grace, the bowels of grace ; but the righteousness of Christ hath answered for them all. When a cordial was offered to one that was sick, Oh, said he, the cordial of cordials which I daily take is this : ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all our sins,’ 1 John i. 7. O sirs ! it would be high blasphemy for any to imagine that there should be more demerit in sin, in any sin, in all sin, to condemn a believer, than there is merit in Christ’s righteousness to absolve him, to justify him, Rom. viii. 1, 33–35. But,

[3.] *Thirdly*, This righteousness of Christ *presents us perfectly righteous in the sight of God*. It is that pure, fine, white linen garment whereby our nakedness is covered before the face of God : ‘And to her was granted’ (that is, to the Lamb’s wife) ‘that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints,’ Rev. xix. 8 ; or the righteousnesses or justifications of saints, for the Greek is plural, τὰ δικαιοσύματα. Some by *righteousnesses* understand the righteousness of Christ imputed, and the righteousness of Christ imparted ; but I rather close with those who say it is an Hebraism ; the plural *righteousnesses* noting that most perfect, complete, absolute righteousness which Christ is pleased to put upon his people, Eph. v. 27. Upon the account of this righteousness of Christ, the church is said to be without spot or wrinkle, and to be all fair : ‘Thou art all fair, my love ; there is no spot in thee,’ Cant. iv. 7 ; and to be complete : ‘And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power,’ Col. ii. 10 ; and to be without fault : ‘They are without fault before the throne of God,’ Rev. xiv. 5. And so Col. i. 21, ‘And to present us holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable, in the sight of God.’ But,

[4.] *Fourthly*, This righteousness of Christ *will answer to all the fears, doubts, and objections of your souls*. How shall I look up to God ? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I have any communion with a holy God in this world ? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I find acceptance with God ? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I die ? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I stand before a judgment seat ? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ.¹ Your sure and only way under all temptations, fears, conflicts, doubts, and disputes, is by faith to remember Christ, and the sufferings of Christ, as your mediator and surety, and say, O Christ ! thou art my sin, in being made sin for me, and thou art my curse, in being made a curse for me ; or rather, I am thy sin, and thou art my righteousness ; I am

¹ That was a rare speech of Luther : *Ipse videat ubi anima mea mansura sit, qui pro ea sic sollicitus fuit, ut vitam pro ea posuerit*, let him see to it where my soul shall rest, who took so much care for it as that he laid down his life for it

thy curse, and thou art my blessing ; I am thy death, and thou art my life ; I am the wrath of God to thee, and thou art the love of God to me ; I am thy hell, and thou art my heaven. O sirs ! if you think of your sins, and of God's wrath ; if you think of your guiltiness, and of God's justice, your hearts will fail you, and sink into despair, if you don't think of Christ, if you don't rest and stay your souls upon the mediatory righteousness of Christ. But,

[5.] *Fifthly* and lastly, The righteousness of Christ *is the best title that you have to shew for a kingdom that shakes not, for riches that corrupt not, for an inheritance that fadeth not away, and for an house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heavens.*¹ The righteousness of Christ is your life, your joy, your comfort, your crown, your confidence, your heaven, your all ; and therefore whether your graces or gracious evidences do sparkle and shine, or are clouded or blotted, yet still keep a fixed eye and an awakened heart upon the mediatory righteousness of Jesus Christ ; for that is the righteousness by which you may happily live, comfortably die, and boldly appear before a judgment-seat. But,

3. The *third* royal fort, that Christians should have their eyes, their hearts fixed upon, whether their graces or gracious evidences sparkle and shine, or are obscured and clouded, is *the covenant of grace.*² The covenant of grace is a new compact or agreement which God hath made with sinful man out of his own mere mercy and grace, wherein he undertakes both for himself and for fallen man, and wherein he engages himself to make fallen man everlastingly happy. All mankind had been eternally lost, and God had lost all the glory of his mercy for ever, had he not of his own free grace and mercy made such an agreement with sinful man. This covenant is called a covenant of grace, because it flows from the mere grace and mercy of God. There was nothing out of God, nor nothing in God, but his mere mercy and grace, that moved him to enter into covenant with poor sinners. In the covenant of grace there are two things considerable : *First*, The covenant that God makes for himself to us, which consists of these branches, (1.) that he will be our God ; (2.) that he will give us a new heart, a new spirit ; (3.) that he will not turn away his face from us from doing of us good ; (4.) that he will put his fear into our hearts ; (5.) that he will cleanse us from all our filthiness, and from all our idols ; (6.) that he will rejoice over us to do us good. *Secondly*, Here is the covenant which God doth make for us to himself, which consists in these things, (1.) that we shall be his people ; (2.) that we shall fear him for ever ; (3.) that we shall walk in his statutes, keep his judgments and do them ; (4.) that we shall not depart from him. Upon many accounts I may not enlarge on these things ; but by these short hints it is evident that the covenant of grace is an entire covenant made by God, both for himself and for us. O sirs ! in the covenant of grace God stands engaged to give whatsoever he requires.

[1.] *First, He requires us to know him, and he has engaged himself that we shall know him:* 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give

¹ Heb. xii. 28 ; 1 Peter i. 3-5 ; 2 Cor. v. 1-4.

² Deut. iv. 25 ; Isa. lv. 3, and liv. 7-10 ; Jer. xxxi. 31 ; Ps. l. 5, &c. ; Hosea xiv. 4 ; Tit. iii. 6 ; Eph. i. 5-7, chap. ii. 5, 7, 8 ; Rom. ix. 18, 23 ; Jer. xxxii. 38-41 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27.

them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord ;' and Jer. xxxi. 34, 'They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' Heb. viii. 11. But,

[2.] Secondly, *The Lord frequently requires his people to trust in him*, Ps. lxii. 8; Isa. xxvi. 4; 2 Chron. xx. 20. And he has engaged himself that his people shall trust in him: Zeph. iii. 12, 'I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, *The Lord frequently commands his people to fear him*, Deut. vi. 13, chap. viii. 6. And he has engaged himself that they shall fear him: Jer. xxxii. 40, 'I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Hosea iii. 5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, *The Lord frequently commands his people to love him*: Deut. xi. 1, Ps. xxxi. 23, 'O love the Lord, all ye his saints!' And he has promised and engaged himself that his people shall love him: Deut. xxx. 6, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul.' But,

[5.] Fifthly, *The Lord frequently commands his people to call upon him, and to pray unto him*, Ps. l. 15, 1 Thes. v. 17, &c.; and he has promised and engaged himself to pour upon them a spirit of prayer: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.' But,

[6.] Sixthly, *The Lord frequently commands his people to repent and to turn from their evil ways*, Hosea xiv. 1, Ezek. xiv. 6, xviii. 30, Acts xvii. 30, xxvi. 20; and he has promised and engaged himself that they shall repent and turn from their evil ways, Acts v. 30, xi. 18, 2 Tim. ii. 25, Isa. xxx. 22, Jer. xxiv. 7. But,

[7.] Seventhly, *The Lord has commanded his people to obey him, and to walk in his statutes*, Jer. xxiv. 7; and he has promised and engaged himself that his people shall obey him and walk in his statutes: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 'And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' So Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvii. 23, 24. But,

[8.] Eighthly, *The Lord commands his people to mourn for their sins*, Isa. xxii. 12, Joel ii. 12, James iv. 10; and he has promised and engaged himself to give them a mourning frame: Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for an only son;' Ezek. vii. 16, 'They shall be on the mountains as the doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity.' But,

[9.] Ninthly, *The Lord commands his people to grow in grace*, 2 Peter iii. 18, &c.; and he has promised and engaged himself that they shall grow in grace: Ps. xcii. 12-14, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree' (which is always green and flourishing); 'he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.' The cedar of all trees is most durable, and shoots up highest. 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' See Hosea xiv. 5-7; Mal. iv. 2, &c. But,

[10.] Tenthly, *The Lord commands his people not to suffer sin to*

reign in them : Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body ; and he has promised and engaged himself that sin shall not reign in them : Rom. vi. 14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you ;' Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity ;' Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness ; and from all your idols will I cleanse you ;' Micah vii. 19, 'He will subdue our iniquities.' But,

[11.] Eleventhly, *He has commanded his people to loathe their sins, and to loathe themselves for their sins* : Ps. xcvi. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord hate evil ; Rom. xii. 9, 'Abhor that which is evil.' And the Lord hath promised and engaged himself to give them such a frame of spirit : Ezek. xxxvi. 13, 'Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations ;' Ezek. vi. 9, 'And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a-whoring after their idols ; and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations ;' Ezek. xx. 43, 'And there shall ye remember your ways and all your doings wherein you have been defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed.' But,

[12.] Twelfthly and lastly, for enough is as good as a feast, *God has commanded us to hold out, to persevere to the end*, 1 Cor. xv. 58, Rev. ii. 10, Luke xviii. 1 ; and the Lord has promised and engaged himself that they shall persevere : Job xvii. 9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger ;' Isa. xl. 31, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.'

Thus you see by an induction of twelve particulars that whatever God requires of his people, he stands engaged by the covenant of grace to give to his people, to do for his people.

Now mark, the covenant of grace is confirmed to us in the surest and most glorious way that can be imagined, Gen. xvii. 7 ; Heb. xiii. 20 ; Ps. lxxxix. 28 ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The covenant of grace is so strongly ratified that there can be no nulling of it. For,

[1.] *First*, It is confirmed to us *by his word*. 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people,' Jer. xxxiii. 38. Now, 'all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us,' 2 Cor. i. 20 ; that is, they are stable and firm, as the Hebrew word signifies. They will eat their way over all Alps of opposition. In the new covenant God neither makes nor fulfils any promises of salvation but in Christ and by Christ.

[2.] *Secondly*, God hath ratified the covenant of grace *by his oath*, Gen. xxii. 16, Heb. vi. 19. His promise is enough, but surely his oath must put all out of question. There is no room for unbelief now God hath sworn to it. Had there been a greater God, he would have sworn by him. But,

[3.] *Thirdly*, God hath ratified it *by the death of his Son*, Gal. iii. 15, Heb. ix. 15, 16. A man's last will and testament, as soon as he is dead, is in force, and cannot then be disannulled. The covenant of grace is

a testamentary covenant, which, by the death of the testator, is so settled that there is no altering of it. But,

[4.] *Fourthly* and lastly, The covenant of grace is ratified *by the seals which God hath annexed to it*. What was sealed by the king's ring could not be altered, Esther viii. God hath set his seals to the covenant of grace, his broad seal in the sacraments, and his privy seal in the witness of his Spirit, and therefore it is sure, and cannot be reversed, &c.

Now, whenever you look upon your graces or gracious evidences with one eye, be sure you look upon the covenant of grace, your last royal fort, with the other eye. The whole hinge of a man's comfort and happiness hangs upon the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is the saint's original title to heaven; it is a saint's best and brightest evidence for life and salvation. There was an eternal design, an eternal plot, if I may so speak, betwixt God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; a bargain, a covenant made between the Father and the Son, for the salvation of his chosen ones; and by this patent and tenure of grace all saints have title to heaven, &c. Dear Christians, many times your gracious evidences are so blotted and blurred that you cannot read them. Oh then, turn to the covenant of grace! When other evidences fail you, the covenant of grace will be a glorious standing evidence to you. It is upon the score of the covenant that you must challenge an interest in all the glory of another world. The covenant of grace is the great charter, the *magna charta*, of all your spiritual privileges and immunities. Now, in this great charter the Lord declares that sincerity shall go for perfection, Luke i. 5, 6. In this great charter the Lord hath declared that he judges his people by the standing bent and frame of their hearts, and not by what they are under some pangs of passion, or in an hour of temptation, Acts xiii. 22. In this great charter the Lord declares that his eye is more upon his people's inward disposition than it is upon their outward actions, 2 Chron. xxx. 18-20; and that his eye is more upon their will than it is upon their work, 2 Cor. viii. 12, Philip. ii. 13. In this great charter, the covenant of grace, the Lord hath declared that he will not forsake his people, nor cast off his people, because of those failings and weaknesses that may, and do, attend them: 1 Sam. xii. 22, 'For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.' Ponder much upon Jer. xxxi. 31-38. He chose you for his love, and he still loveth you for his choice. God will rather pity his people under their weakness than he will reject them for their weakness. The covenant of grace that God hath made with his people is as the covenant that a man makes with his wife. 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you,' Hosea ii. 19, 20; Jer. iii. 13. Now, a man will never reject his wife; he will never cast off his wife for those common weaknesses and infirmities that daily attends her; no more will the Lord cast off his people because of the infirmities that daily hang upon them. In this great charter—the covenant of grace—the Lord declares that he will require no more than he gives, and that he will give what he requires, and that he will accept what he gives; and what can a God say more? and what can a gracious soul desire more?

O sirs! when all is cloudy overhead, and all dark within doors: when

a Christian's graces are not transparent, when his evidences for heaven are soiled and blotted, and when neither heart nor house are as they should be, it is good then to turn to the covenant of grace, and to dwell upon the covenant of grace. Thus David did : 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'Although my house be not so with God ; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure : for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.' Let me give a little light into the words.

'Although my house be not so with God.' Though David in the main had a good heart, yet he had but a wicked house. Absalom had slain his brother, rebelled against his father, and lay with his father's concubines ; and Amnon had deflowered his sister, &c. Now David, under a deep sense of all this wickedness, and of his own personal unworthiness, sadly sighs it out, 'Although my house be not so with God,' &c. ; though I have not walked so exactly and perfectly as I should have done, though neither I nor my house have walked answerable to those great mercies and singular kindnesses of God that have been extended to us ;

'Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.' The word *everlasting* hath two acceptations. It doth denote, (1.) Sometimes a long duration, in which respect the old covenant, clothed with figures and ceremonies, is called everlasting, because it was to endure, and did endure a long time. (2.) Sometimes it denotes a perpetual duration, a duration which shall last for ever. In this respect the covenant of grace is everlasting. It shall never cease, never be broken, nor never be altered.¹ Now, the covenant of grace is an everlasting covenant in a twofold respect :

First, *Ex parte fœderantis*, in respect of God, who will never break covenant with his people ; but is their God, and will be their God for ever and ever : Ps. xlviii. 14, 'For this God is our God for ever and ever : he will be our guide even unto death.' Ay, and after death too ; for this is not to be taken *exclusivè*. He will never leave his people, nor forsake his people, Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

Secondly, *Ex parte confœderatorum*, in respect of the people of God, who are brought into covenant, and shall continue in covenant for ever and ever. You have both these expressed in that excellent scripture, Jer. xxxii. 40, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Seriously dwell upon the place. It shews that the covenant is everlasting on God's part, and also on our part. On God's part, 'I will never turn away from them, to do them good ;' and on our part, 'they shall never depart from me.' How so ? 'I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me' (even that fear spoken of in ver. 39, 'that they may fear me for ever').

'Ordered in all things.' Oh what head can conceive, or what tongue can express that infinite counsel, wisdom, love, care and tenderness, that the blessed God has expressed in ordering the covenant of grace, so as it may most and best suit to all the wants, and straits, and necessities, and miseries, and desires, and longings of poor sinners' souls. The covenant of grace is so well ordered by the unsearchable wisdom of God,

¹ Vide Isa. lv. 3 ; Gen. xvii. 7 ; Ps. cv. 9, 10 ; Isa. lxi. 8 ; Heb. iii. 20.

that you may find in it remedies to cure all your diseases, and cordials to comfort you against all your faintings, and a spiritual armoury to arm you against all your enemies, viz., the world, the flesh, and the devil, Isa. xl. 28, and Ps. cxlvii. 5. Dost thou, O distressed sinner, want a loving God, a compassionate God, a reconciled God, a sin-pardoning God? Here thou mayest find him, in the covenant of grace. Dost thou want a Christ to counsel thee by his wisdom, and to clothe thee with his righteousness, and to adorn thee with his grace? Here thou mayest find him in a covenant of grace. Dost thou want the Spirit to enlighten thee, to teach thee, to convince thee, to awaken thee, to lead thee, to cleanse thee, to cheer thee, and to seal thee up to the day of redemption? Eph. i. 13. Here thou mayest find him in a covenant of grace. Dost thou want grace, or peace, or rest, or quiet, or content, or comfort, or satisfaction? Here thou mayest find it in a covenant of grace. God has laid into the covenant of grace, as into a common store, all those things that sinners or saints can either beg or need. Look, as that is a well-ordered commonwealth where there are no wholesome laws wanting to govern a people, and where there are no wholesome remedies wanting to relieve a people; so that must needs be a well-ordered covenant, where there is nothing wanting to govern poor souls, or to relieve poor souls, or to save poor souls; and such a covenant is the covenant of grace.

And sure the covenant of grace is a sure covenant: Deut. vii. 9, 'The Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God' (or the God of Amen), 'which keepeth covenant with them that love him;' Ps. lxxxix. 33, 'My covenant will I not break' (Hebrew, I will not profane), 'nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' All God's precepts, all God's predictions, all God's menaces, and all God's promises, are the issue of a most just, faithful, and righteous will. God can neither die nor lie: Titus i. 2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' There are three things that God cannot do: (1.) He cannot die; nor (2.) he cannot lie; nor (3.) he cannot deny himself: Josh. xxiii. 14, 'And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' O sirs! the covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's everlasting love, upon God's unchangeable love, upon God's free love, John xiii. 1. Whom God loves once, he loves for ever: 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love,' Jer. xxxi. 3. God can as well cease to be, as he can cease to love those whom he has taken into covenant with himself. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's everlasting love, so it is bottomed upon God's immutable counsel: 'God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath,' Heb. vi. 17. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon the immutable counsel of God, so it is bottomed upon the free purpose of God: 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure;' that is, the decree and purpose of God's election stands firm and sure. Now the purpose of God's election is compared to a foundation, because it is that upon which all our happiness and blessedness is built and bottomed, and because, as a foundation, it abides firm and sure. And as the covenant of grace is

bottomed upon the free purpose of God, so it is bottomed upon the glorious power of God, Isa. xxxiii. 11, xli. 2; Mal. iv. 1; 1 Cor. i. 25. The power of God is an infinite power, it is a supreme power, a power that overtops the power of all mortals. What is the stubble to the flames, the chaff to the whirlwind? No more is all created power to the power of God. The weakness of God is stronger than men; and did not Pharaoh find it so? and Haman find it so? and Sennacherib find it so? and Nebuchadnezzar find it so? and Belshazzar find it so? and Herod find it so? In all the ages of the world the power of God hath bore down all before it. The power of God is an independent power, a matchless power, an incomparable power, an enduring power, an eternal power. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon the power of God, so it is bottomed upon the oath of God: Luke i. 72, 'To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant.' Ver. 73, 'The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.' Heb. vi. 17, 18; Ps. lxxxix. 34, 35. To think that God will break his oath, or be perjured, is an intolerable blasphemy. Once more give me leave to say, the covenant of grace is bottomed not only upon the oath of God, but also upon the precious blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is called 'the blood of the everlasting covenant,' Heb. xiii. 20, Mat. xxvi. 28. 'This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,' Heb. ix. 15. 'And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' Ver. 17, 'A testament is of force after men are dead.' It is called a covenant and a testament. (1.) A covenant in respect of God, and a testament in respect of Christ. (2.) A covenant in respect of the manner of agreement, and a testament in respect of the manner of confirming. Jesus Christ died as a testator, and by his death confirmed the testamentary gift before made of life and salvation. Now, the covenant of grace being thus gloriously bottomed as you see, it must roundly and undeniably follow, that the covenant of grace is a sure covenant.

'For this is all my salvation and all my desire;' *i.e.* this is the great ground of all my hope concerning my salvation, and of all the happiness and blessedness which I look for in another world. This everlasting covenant, this sure covenant, is the great charter of charters that I have to shew for eternal bliss. David was drawing near to his eternal home, and whether his graces and gracious evidences for heaven's happiness were bright and shining, or blotted and clouded, I shall not at this time stand to inquire. It is enough that he stays his soul upon the covenant of grace, and that he comforts and solaces his soul in the covenant of grace. And oh that all Christians, when their graces and gracious evidences are either clouded or blotted, or else sparkling and shining, that they would frequently eye these three royal forts, *viz.*, (1.) the free grace and favour of God; (2.) the mediatory righteousness of Christ; (3.) the covenant of grace. Now, that I may the more effectually prevail with you to look upon these royal forts, and to delight in these royal forts, and to prize these royal forts, and to improve these royal forts, give me leave to offer these three things briefly to your consideration:

First, Our best graces and performances are not commensurate and square payment in the eyes of pure justice. All of them as inherent in us, and acted by us, are but imperfect excellencies. No man hath so much grace and holiness as is required, nor doth he so much as he is obliged to do. Every particular grace, though it be of an heavenly and divine original, yet it is like the stars twinkling, though placed in the heavens; so that if God should enter into judgment with the most righteous person, even the righteousness that is in him would not be safety and defence unto him, Ps. cxliii. 2, Job xiv. 3, 4, Rom. iii. 20; for what a deal of pride have we mixed with a little humility! and what a deal of passion have we mixed with a little meekness! and what a deal of hypocrisy have we mixed with a little sincerity! and what a deal of earthly-mindedness have we mixed with a little heavenly-mindedness! and what a deal of unbelief have we mixed with a little faith! O sirs! in the great business of your access to God, and of your acceptance with God, and of your reconciliation to God, and of your justification before God, it is best, safest, and noblest to bottom your faith, hope, and expectation infinitely rather upon imputed righteousness than inherent righteousness, upon what Christ has done for you than upon what he has done in you, Rom. iii. 20–27, Philip. iii. 8–10. Inherent righteousness is stained, imperfect, impure; but imputed righteousness is pure and perfect. If there were any stain or any imperfection in that, it could not justify us, it could not save us, it could not secure us from wrath to come. Such evidences as are not fetched from any thing in us, nor from any things done by us, but are fetched by faith from our free justification, and from Christ's full satisfaction which he hath wrought for us, will be found the most full, the most sweet, the most refreshing, the most comforting, and the most satisfying evidences. Christ is all fair, all perfect, all pure; and therefore let him be most in your eye and most upon your hearts. But here take heed that you do not look upon your graces, or your gracious evidences, as poor, low, weak, contemptible things, as too many do; for the least of them is more worth than heaven and earth, and they may yield you much comfort, much support, much refreshing, and much satisfaction, though they cannot yield you that full comfort nor that full satisfaction as Christ himself can yield, as Christ's satisfaction can yield, as free justification can yield. Though children and friends cannot yield to a wife that full comfort, content, delight, and satisfaction as her husband does, yet they may yield her much comfort, much content, much delight, much satisfaction. The application is easy. But,

Secondly, Consider, that Christian that hath free grace, that hath free justification, that hath the mediatory righteousness of Christ, that hath the satisfaction of Christ, that hath the covenant of grace most constantly in his sight, and most frequently warm upon his heart, that Christian, of all Christians in the world, is most free from a world of fears, and doubts, and scruples, which do sad, sink, perplex, and press down a world of other Christians, who affect a life of sense, and who daily eye more what Christ is a-doing in them, and what they are a-doing for Christ, than they do eye either his active or passive obedience. Christ hath done great things for his people, and he has suffered great things for his people, and he has purchased great things for his people, and he has prepared great things for his people; yet many of his own dear

people are so taken up with their own hearts, and with their own duties and graces, that Christ is little eyed by them or minded by them; and what is this but to be more taken with the streams than with the fountain? with the leaves, blossoms and fruit, than with the tree itself? with the bracelets, ear-rings, and gold chains, than with the husband himself? with the nobles that wait, than with the king that is waited on? And this is the great reason why so many Christians, who will certainly go to heaven, do walk in darkness, and lie down in sorrow. But,

Thirdly, Trusting in our own duties, and resting on our own righteousness, and not on Christ's solely, is a close, secret, spiritual, dangerous, and unperceivable sin, which the nature of man is exceedingly prone unto, Isa. lviii. 1-3; Zech. vii. 5, 6. The pharisees were mightily given up to trust in their own righteousness, to rest on their own righteousness, and to boast and glory in their own righteousness, Mat. xxiii., Luke xviii.; and this proved their mortal disease, their damning sin. Trusting in their own righteousness had so besotted and benumbed them, that they had no mind, no heart to open the gates of their souls, that the King of glory might enter in. And this was that which undid the Jews, Rom. x. 3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' And it is observable, the apostle useth an emphatical word of a Jew, Rom. ii. 17, 'Thou restest in the law,' *ἐπιαναπαύη*, thou art secure in the law, and in some admirable privilege and signal testimony of God's love. This was Bernard's temptation, when being assisted in duty he could stroke his own head with *Bene fecisti, Bernardus*, O Bernard, this was gallantly done, now cheer up thyself! It was the saying of a precious saint, that he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins, for the one made him often proud, and the other made him always humble.² It was good counsel Luther gave, *Cavendum est non solum a peccatis, sed a bonis operibus*, we must take heed not only of our sins, but of our good works. Duties can never have too much diligence used about them, nor too little confidence placed in them. They are good helps, but bad saviours. It is necessary we do them, but it is dangerous to rely upon them. If the devil cannot dissuade us from performing religious duties, then his next work will be to persuade us all he can to rely upon them, to make saviours of them, because this will as much gratify Satan, and as certainly ruin our souls, as if we had wholly neglected them. O man! thine own righteousness rested in, will as certainly and eternally undo thee as the greatest and foulest enormities. This soul-sickness is that spiritual idolatry that will undo thee, for thou makest thyself a saviour, and thy duties a saviour, and sayest of thy duties as they did of the golden calf, 'These are the gods that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.' Open wickedness, open idolatry, slays her thousands, but secret idolatry, a secret resting upon duties, slays her ten thousands. Multitudes bleed inward by this disease, and die for ever. Open profaneness is the broad dirty way that leads to hell, but religious duties rested in, is as sure a way, though a cleaner way to hell. Profane persons and formal professors shall meet at last

¹ Look, as there is nothing more pleasing to Christ than the renouncing of all confidence in our own duties and righteousness; so there is nothing more provoking to Christ, than the setting up of our own duties and righteousness. This is a secret impostume that kills thousands.

² John Foxe the Martyrologist, as before.—G.

in one hell. Ah, Christians! don't make religious duties your money, lest you and your money perish together. The phoenix gathers sweet odoriferous sticks in Arabia together, and then blows them with her wings and burns with them; so do many shining professors burn themselves with their own duties and services. You know in Noah's flood, all that were not in the ark, though they clamb up the tallest trees, and the highest mountains and hills, yet were drowned: so let men climb up to the highest duties, yet if they be not housed in Christ, and in his righteousness, they will be as certainly damned, as the men in the old world were certainly drowned. Adam and all his posterity was to be saved by doing; 'Do this and live.' And hence it is natural to all the sons and daughters of Adam to rest on duties, and to look for life and happiness in a way of doing; but if salvation were to be had by doing, what need of a Saviour? Well, remember this once for all, such as rest on duties, such as rest on their own righteousness, or on anything on this side Christ, such shall find them as weak as the Assyrian, or as Jareb. They cannot heal them, they cannot cure them of their wounds. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb, yet could they not heal him, nor cure him of his wound, Hosea v. 13. Duties are to Satan as the ark of God was to the Philistines; he trembles to see a soul diligent in the use of them, and yet not daring to rely on them but on Christ; but when he can draw poor souls to confide in their duties, and to rest on their duties, then he has his design, then he claps his hands for joy, then he cries out, Ah! ah! so would I have it. There is no sin that doth so formally and immediately oppose Christ, and reject Christ, and provoke Christ, as this of resting upon self-righteousness; and therefore above all, pray against this, and watch against this, and weep over this. There is no man in his wits that hath a precious lading, that will dare to adventure it in a cracked and broken vessel; so there is no Christian in his wits that will dare to adventure the everlasting safety of his soul upon the leaking vessels and bottoms of his own holiness or services. O sirs! your duties cannot satisfy the justice of God; they cannot satisfy the law of God; your present duties cannot satisfy for your former sins and rents that be behind. A man that pays his rent honestly every year, does not thereby satisfy for the old rent not paid in ten or twenty years before. Thy new obedience, O Christian, is too weak to satisfy for old debts, and therefore roll thyself on Christ, and Christ alone, for life and for salvation. Bellarmine could say after all his disputes for relying on works, on saints and angels, *Tutius est, &c.*¹ The safest way is to rely on Jesus Christ. Now, let all these things work you to renounce your own righteousness, and to take sanctuary alone in the pure, perfect, and most glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, and in the free grace of God. Paul is called by one [Augustine] the best child of grace in the world; for whatsoever he was, or had, or did, he ascribeth all to free grace, Eph. iii. 8; he was the chiefest of the apostles, and yet less than the least of all saints; he was very eminent in grace, and yet what he

¹ The authority for this is the great cardinal's own treatise on 'Justification,' lib. v. cap. vii. After defending the Romish as against the Protestant Evangelical, he made this remarkable concession: '*Propter incertitudinem propriæ justitiæ et periculum inanis gloriæ, tutissimum esse in sola misericordiâ Dei et benignitate fiduciam suam reponere.*'—G.

was, he was by grace. 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' 1 Cor. xv. 10. He lived, 'yet not he, but Christ lived in him,' Gal. ii. 20. He 'laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not he, but the grace of God which was with him,' 1 Cor. xv. 10. He was able to do all things, but still 'through Christ that strengthened him,' Philip. iv. 13. Oh that these three last things might work you to be more in love with free grace than ever, and to be more in love with the righteousness of Christ than ever, and to be more in love with the covenant of grace than ever.

But,

[14.] The *fourteenth* proposition is this, *The more grace, the more holiness, the more any man has of the Spirit of sanctification, the more clear, the more fair, the more full, the more sweet will his evidences be for heaven, for salvation; and the more comfort, and the more assurance, and the more settlement, and the more of the witness of the spirit of adoption, such a person will certainly attain unto.* That Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance, and which seals us up to an holy assurance, is an holy Spirit, Eph. i. 13, 14; he is frequently called the Holy Spirit. 'Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' Ps. li. 11. 'But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit,' Isa. lxiii. 10. 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,' Eph. iv. 30. 'He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit,' 1 Thes. iv. 8. To make a man holy, is more than to create a world; it is a work too high and too hard for angels or men; it becomes none, and it can be done by none but by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is the Spirit's personal operation; it is the great work of the Spirit to shape, form, and fashion the new-creature holiness in all the vessels of glory, 2 Thes. ii. 13, 1 Peter i. 2. The Spirit is the root of all holiness, and therefore the several parts of holiness are called the fruits of the Spirit. Holiness is the very picture of God; and certainly no hand can carve that excellent picture but the Spirit of God. Holiness is the divine nature, and none can impart that to man but the Spirit; the Spirit is the great principle of holiness. Now, the more grace, the more holiness any man hath, the more he is the delight of the Spirit; and the more the Spirit will delight to witness his sonship, his saintship, and his heirship unto him. Scripture and experience will tell you, that commonly men of greatest holiness have been men of greatest assurance. This is certain, the more holiness the more assurance; for so the precious promises runs, Isa. xxxii. 17. 'The work of righteousness shall be peace,' to wit, peace of conscience, Rom. v. 1; 'and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.' Inherent righteousness, for of that he speaks, as is evident by the 15th and 16th verses of the same chapter, is the highway to assurance and peace. So Ps. l. 23, 'To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God;' that is, declare myself to be his Saviour, say some; say others, I will give him a prospect of heaven here, and a full fruition of heaven hereafter; say others, I will cause him to see and know that he shall be saved. So John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him.' Ver. 23, 'If any man love me, he will keep my words:

and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.' Holy Christians shall have most of the spiritual presence of Christ, and of the singular manifestations of the love of Christ to their souls. The great reason of reasons why the springs of comfort, of joy, of inward peace, and of assurance, rises no higher in many Christians' souls, is because the springs of grace and holiness rises no higher in their souls. Had Christians more grace, and more holiness in their hearts and lives, God would quickly bring down more of heaven and assurance into their souls. There is a blessed assurance, as I have told you before, which arises from the discovery of grace in the soul. Now, the more ample, large and full the matter of our assurance is, the more ample, large and full must our assurance be. Methinks the connection of these four verses in Titus ii. 11-14, shews this; when 'grace that appears to us, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,' &c. See what follows; then we are most likely to 'look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' And that prayer of the apostle for his Ephesians speaks as loudly in the case, Eph. iii. 16-18, that God would grant them to be strengthened by the Spirit, &c., to be rooted and grounded in love. And what then? That 'ye may comprehend with all saints, the length and breadth of the love of God.' Suppose in health or sickness, living or dying, a man should labour to support, comfort and cheer up his spirit, in the thoughts or meditations of his eternal election and free justification; and suppose that at that very time the Spirit of God, his own conscience, a faithful minister, or an experienced Christian should tell him that if he be really justified, he is really sanctified, 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14; now, if this man should say, What do you tell me of sanctification? or, I know not whether I am sanctified or no; or, I look not to sanctification, I mind not holiness, I regard not the fruits of the Spirit; will not the Holy Spirit, will not an enlightened conscience, will not a faithful minister, will not an experienced Christian reply, Then certainly thou art not elected, thou art not justified, for it is a truth as clear as the sun, a truth that will admit of no dispute, viz., that none are eternally elected and freely justified but they are sanctified, Rom. viii. 1, 13, 19, 30; and that they that are not sanctified are not justified? Mark, there is a close connection of sanctification with justification in the promises of the covenant. Sanctification and justification go hand in hand; they come forth like twins out of the womb of free grace,¹ as you may see in these remarkable Scriptures: Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.' Here you see them both expressed together in the same deed, 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity;' there is our sanctification promised; 'And I will pardon all their iniquities;' there is justification promised. So Micah vii. 19, 'He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' Here you find justification and sanctification again in the promise. 'He will subdue our iniquities;' this is sanctifying; 'and he will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea;' this is justifying. Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts' (there is the promise of sanctification); ver. 12, 'And I will be

¹ Bernard in Cant, Serm. 37.

merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more;’ there is the promise of justification: 1 John i. 9, ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;’ there is our justification promised; ‘and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;’ there is the promise of sanctification: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, ‘From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you;’ there is the promise of sanctification; ver. 29, ‘I will also save you from all your uncleannesses;’ there is the promise of justification: 1 Cor. vi. 11, ‘But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.’ Justification and sanctification are inseparable companions; distinguished they must be, but divided they can never be; where sin is pardoned, the gift of sanctity is still conferred. It is weakness, it is wickedness, for a man to conclude that he is in an elected and justified estate when he has nothing, when he has not the least thing to evidence himself to be in a sanctified estate. Both justification and sanctification have a necessary respect to the salvation of all those that shall go to heaven. He that will go to heaven must be sanctified, and he that will go to heaven must be justified. No man can go to heaven without both; no man can go to heaven unless he be justified: Rom. viii. 30, ‘Whom he called, them also he justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.’ None are justified but such as are called, and none are glorified but such as are justified. And as no man can go to heaven but he that is justified, so no man can go to heaven but he that is sanctified: John iii. 5, ‘Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Ver. 5, ‘Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;’ Heb. xii. 14, ‘And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.’ By these scriptures, it is evident that there is an absolute necessity both of sanctification and justification in reference to salvation. Now as sanctification and justification are linked together, so the more clear, the more full, the more evident, and the more eminent a man’s sanctification is, the more clear, the more full, the more evident, and the more eminent, will the evidences of his justification be. The greatest evidences of our sanctification carries with them the greatest assurance of our justification and of our salvation. But,

[15.] The *fifteenth* proposition is this, *When your graces are strongest, and your evidences for heaven are clearest, and your comforts rise highest upon the sight of your graces or gracious evidences, then in a special manner it concerns you to make it your great business and work to act faith afresh, to act faith with a greater strength, upon the free, rich, and glorious grace of God, and upon the Lord Jesus Christ.* It is reported of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and beauty upon them. This is most true of faith. Faith is a grace that gives strength and efficacy to all other graces; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl; it hath an influence upon all other graces that are in the soul. Faith is as the spring in the watch, that moves the wheels; not a grace stirs till faith sets it at work. What is said of Solomon’s virtuous woman, viz., that she sets all her maidens to work, Prov. xxxi. 15, 27, is most true of faith: faith

¹ See my Treatise on Holiness. [Vol. IV.—G.]

sets all the graces in the soul at work. We love as we believe, and we obey as we believe, and we hope as we believe, and we joy as we believe, and we mourn as we believe, and we repent as we believe. All graces keep time and pace with faith,¹ &c. Now when your graces are most shining, and your evidences for heaven are most sparkling, oh then give faith elbow-room, give faith full scope to exercise itself upon the Lord Jesus. Adam's obedience in innocency was not more pleasing and delightful to God, than the exercise of your faith on the Lord Jesus will be at such a time pleasing and delightful to him. You are to look upon all your graces and gracious evidences as your highest encouragement to a lively, cheerful, and resolute acting of faith upon the person of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, 1 John v. 13; Rom. i. 17, &c. All a Christian's graces, and all his gracious evidences, should be but as a golden bridge, or as Joseph's waggons, Gen. xlv. 19, 21, 27, a means to pass his soul over to Christ afresh by a renewed exercise of faith. When your graces and gracious evidences are most splendent, then be sure that Christ be found lying as a bundle of myrrh between your breasts, and all is well, and will be well, Cant. i. 12. Dear Christians, when your eyes are fixed upon inherent righteousness, and upon your gracious evidences, then let your hearts be firmly fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ and his imputed righteousness.² Paul's eye was fixed upon his grace, upon his better part: Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' ver. 25, 'And with my mind I serve the law of God.' And yet at the very same time his heart was set upon Christ, and taken up with Christ. Ver. 26, 'I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Though Paul had an eye to his noble part, his better part, his regenerate part, yet at the same time his heart was taken up with the Lord Jesus Christ, as freeing of him from the curse of the law, the dominion of sin, the damnable power of sin, and as translating of him into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. 'I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' So in Col. ii. 2, 3, you have their eyes fixed upon grace, and at the same time their hearts fixed upon Christ. 'That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' Their eyes were upon grace, but their hearts were taken up with Christ. So in Philip. iii. 8, the apostle had his eye upon the excellent knowledge of Christ. But, verse 9, his heart is taken up with the righteousness of Christ. 'That I might be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Though Paul had his eye upon grace, upon inherent righteousness; yet in the very presence of his grace his heart was taken up with Christ, and with his imputed righteousness, as is evident in the text. This is your glory, Christians, in the presence and sight of all your graces and gracious evidences, to

¹ Heb. xi.; Rom. iv. 3, and viii. 24; Zech. xii. 10.

² Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia, who shewed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had. She answered her again, All my riches and jewels is my husband. This is more applicable to Christ, &c. The precious stone *opalum* is said to have the virtue of all stones—the brightness of the carbuncle, the purple colour of the amethyst, the amiable greenness of the emerald; but what are all these to Christ?

see the free grace of Christ, and his infinite, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness to be your surest, sweetest, highest, and choicest comfort and refuge. Look, as Rebekah was more taken with the person of Isaac than she was with his ear-rings, bracelets, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, Gen. xxiv. 30, 52, 64, 65, 66, 67: so it becomes a Christian, in the presence of his graces and gracious evidences, which are Christ's ear-rings, bracelets, and jewels, to be more taken up with Christ than with them. Christ, and his mediatory righteousness, should be more in a Christian's eye, and always lie nearer to a Christian's heart, than inherent righteousness. Grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring. Now, what is the ring to the sparkling diamond? It is not safe to pore more upon inherent righteousness than upon imputed righteousness.¹ It is not wisdom to have our thoughts and hearts more taken up with our gracious dispositions and gracious actings, than with the person of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, &c. Dear Christians, was it Christ, or was it your graces, or your gracious evidences, or your gracious dispositions, or your gracious actings, that trod the wine-press of your Father's wrath, that satisfied divine justice, that pacified divine anger, that did bear the curse, that fulfilled the law, that brought in an everlasting righteousness, that discharged your debts, that procured your pardon, that made your peace, and that brought you into a state of favour and friendship with God? If you answer, as you must, 'None but Christ, none but Christ,' oh then, let your thoughts and hearts be firstly, mostly, chiefly, and lastly taken up with the Lord Jesus. Though inherent grace be a glorious creature, yet it is but a creature. Now, when your thoughts and hearts are more taken up with inherent grace, than they are with Christ, the spring and fountain of all grace; you make an idol of inherent grace, and reflect dishonour upon the Lord Jesus, John i. 16; Col. ii. 2, 3. A Christian may lawfully look upon his graces and his gracious evidences, and a Christian ought to be much in blessing and praising of God for his graces and gracious evidences, and a Christian may safely take comfort in his graces and gracious evidences, as they are the fruits of God's eternal and unchangeable love; but still his work should be to live upon Christ, and to lift up Christ above all, Isa. xxxviii. 3, 2 Cor. i. 12. It is Christ, it is his mediatory righteousness, it is free grace, that a Christian ought to make the chief and only ground and bottom of his hope and comforts. Though good old Jacob did really rejoice in the chariots and waggons that Joseph had sent to bring him down to Egypt, yet he did more abundantly rejoice in this, that Joseph was alive, and that shortly he should see and enjoy Joseph himself, Gen. xlv. 26-28. Though a Christian may really rejoice in his graces and gracious evidences, yet above all he ought to rejoice in Christ Jesus, to triumph in Christ Jesus, and to take up in Christ Jesus as in his great all, Gal. vi. 14, Philip. iii. 3, 2 Cor. ii. 14, Col. iii. 11. There is a great aptness and proneness in many (may I not say in most?) gracious Christians, to gaze so much and so long upon their graces, upon their gracious dispositions, upon their gracious evidences, and upon their gracious actings, that too often they neglect the exercise of faith upon Christ, upon the promises; they gaze so much and so long upon what

¹ He that holds not wholly with Christ, doth very shamefully neglect Christ. *Aut totum mecum tene, aut totum omitte.*—Grego. Nazian.

is wrought in them, and done by them, that they forget their grand work, which is immediate closing with Christ, immediate embracing of Christ, immediate relying upon Christ, immediate staying, rolling, and resting upon Christ, for justification and salvation. Now from these frequent miscarriages of Christians, some have taken the liberty and boldness very hotly and peremptorily to cry down the total use of all characters, signs, and marks, the evil of which I have formerly pointed at, and therefore let this touch suffice here. Grace is excellent, yea, very excellent, but Christ is infinitely more excellent than all your graces, and therefore above all let Christ still have the pre-eminence, Col. i. 8. Now, though it must be granted that a Christian may lawfully make use of his graces and gracious evidences, in order to his support, comfort, and encouragement, yet it cannot be denied but that the noblest, purest, highest, and most excellent acts and exercises of faith, are when a Christian closes with Christ, embraces Christ, hangs upon Christ, and stays himself upon Christ, and upon free and precious promises, when sense and feeling fails, when joy and comfort fails, and when his gracious evidences for heaven fails.¹ Oh now, to turn to Christ, and to turn to the breasts of a promise, and to live upon Christ, and to hang upon a promise, is the way of ways to exalt Christ, and to glorify Christ. There is nothing that pleases Christ, or that delights Christ, or that is such an honour to Christ, as these pure actings of faith are. Signs and evidences are most sweet, comfortable, and pleasing to us; but the pure actings of faith are most eyed and valued by Christ, and therefore many times Christ draws a curtain between him and the soul, and causes a Christian's sun to set at noon, and damps his joy, and mars his peace, and clouds his evidences for heaven, on purpose to train up his children in the pure actings of faith, Cant. iii. 1-5, and v. 3-6. It is sad when Christians make such immoderate use of their signs, marks, evidences, as damps and hinders those direct and immediate acts of faith, whereby they should receive Christ, and apply Christ, and rest upon Christ alone for pardon, peace, reconciliation, justification, and salvation. He that pores so long and so much upon his graces or gracious evidences as shall hinder him from the fresh and frequent actings of faith upon Christ, he casts contempt upon Christ.² Though the sight of a Christian's graces and gracious evidences be very comfortable and delightful to him, yet the sight of Christ should be ten thousand times more comfortable and delightful to him. O sirs! what are the favourites to the king himself? What are the servants to the lord they wait on? What are the friends of the bridegroom to the bridegroom himself? What are all the bracelets and jewels to the husband that gives them? No more are all a Christian's graces or gracious evidences to the Lord Jesus himself. A Christian should say to all his gifts, graces, evidences, and services, Stand by, make room for Christ, make room for Christ. Oh, none but Christ! Oh, none to Christ! Living by signs is most natural, pleasing and comfortable to us, but living by faith is most honourable to Christ. It is said, 'the just shall live by his faith,' not by his evidences, Hab. ii. 4, Heb. x. 38. When men pride themselves in their evidences, and when

¹ Cant. viii. 5; Job xiii. 15; Ps. xlii. 5, 11; Isa. l. 10; Micah vii. 7-10; John xx. 27-29.

² Christ is an incomparable cordial, he is worthily called the consolation of Israel, Luke ii. 25.

men secretly lean upon their evidences instead of leaning upon Christ, and when men bottom their hopes and comforts upon their signs and evidences, when they should be bottoming of all their hopes and comforts upon Christ; on a sudden Christ withdraws, and the soul is immediately filled with clouds, fears, doubts, darkness; and all a man's graces and gracious evidences are eclipsed, and he can see nothing, nor feel nothing, but deadness, hardness, barrenness, hypocrisy, unbelief, self-love, guilt, &c., which makes him a *Magor-missabib*, a terror to himself. Now the design of Christ in all this is to train up his people in a life of faith, and to teach them, in the want of their signs and evidences, how to live, above their signs and evidences, upon himself, who is their life, their hope, their heaven, their happiness, their all, Col. iii. 3, 4, i. 27. Now, Christians, the best way to prevent these sore soul distresses, is in the moderate use of your signs and evidences, to live much in the fresh and frequent actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus, and in so doing, you will neither grieve Christ, nor provoke Christ, nor wrong your own precious and immortal souls. But,

[16.] The sixteenth and last proposition that I shall lay down is this: *Whenever any fresh doubts or fears rise in your hearts upon the stirrings of corruptions, or debility of graces, or failing in duties, &c., then keep close to these two rules: First*, have recourse to any of the former characters that are laid down in this book; and while you find any of them shining in your souls, nay, though it were but one, never pass any judgment against the happiness and blessedness of your spiritual or eternal estates. *Secondly*, turn yourselves to such particular promises, and plead such particular promises, and rest and stay your trembling souls upon such particular promises, and cling fast to such particular promises, that have been comforts, cordials, and supports to many weak, doubting, trembling Christians, who have been always afraid to say they had grace, or to say that God was their Father, or Christ their Redeemer, or the Spirit their sanctifier, or heaven their inheritance, &c.¹ I have read of a woman that was much disquieted in conscience, even to despair, endeavouring to be her own executioner, but was comforted by that blessed promise, Isa. lvii. 15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' And I have read of another man, who being ready to die, Lord, saith he, I challenge thee by that promise, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' and so was comforted. And I have read of some others [Uranas and Beza] that were comforted with that promise, John x. 29, 'None shall pluck them out of my Father's hand.' And I have read of another who, having deeply wounded his conscience by subscribing to popish errors, was much comforted by that blessed scripture: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' And I have read of another [Mr Bilney the martyr] who was much comforted under sore distresses by that promise: Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace' (or as the Hebrew runs, *shalom*,

¹ Sirtorius paid what he promised with fair words.—*Plutarch*. But so does not God: men may eat their words, but God won't eat his.

shalom, peace, peace) ' whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.'¹ And many have gone to heaven triumphantly by the refreshing and comfort that they have found in these following scriptures: John vi. 37, ' All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ;' Isa. lv. 1, ' Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money : come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and wilk without money and without price ;' ver. 3, ' Incline your ear and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' And so Rev. xxii. 17, ' And the Spirit and the bride say, Come ; and let him that heareth say, Come ; and let him that is athirst come ; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.' So Hosea xiv. 4, ' I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely.' So Isa. xliii. 25, ' I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins ;' chap. lvii. 18, ' I have seen his ways, and will heal him : I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners ;' ver. 19, ' I create the fruit of the lips ; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord ; and I will heal him.' Oh, these have been comforting promises, and upholding promises, and refreshing promises to many doubting, drooping souls.² It is impossible that such a soul should ever drop into hell, that can cling fast to any of these promises, that can hang upon any of these promises, that can rest and lay the weight of their souls upon Christ in any of these promises. Doubtless reliance upon Christ in these precious promises hath ferried many poor, doubting, trembling souls to heaven. The promise is the golden cabinet, and Christ is the costly jewel that is laid up in it. The promise is the field, and Christ is the pearl of price that is hid in it.³ All the promises they point to Christ, they lead to Christ, they hang upon Christ : ' All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20. In the new covenant God neither makes any promises, nor fulfils any promises of salvation, but in Christ and through Christ. Now, when any fears, or darkness, or doubts, or disputes, arises in your souls about your spiritual estates, oh, then, run to Christ in the promise, and plead the promise, and hang upon the breasts of the promise, and let your souls cleave close to the promise ; for this is the way of ways to have your evidences cleared, your comforts restored, your peace maintained, your graces strengthened, and your assurance raised and confirmed.

¹ ' A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' This promise was a cordial to Bernard on his dying bed ; he died with this promise in his mouth. And Austin found so much sweetness in the same promise, that he caused it to be written on the wall over against his bed where he lay sick and died.

² The promises are *pabulum fidei et anima fidei*, the food of faith and the soul of faith.

³ An oversight which Brooks shares with Sibbes : a ' treasure,' not a ' pearl,' was in ' the field.' Cf. Sibbes, vol. ii. pp. 245, 248. — G.



