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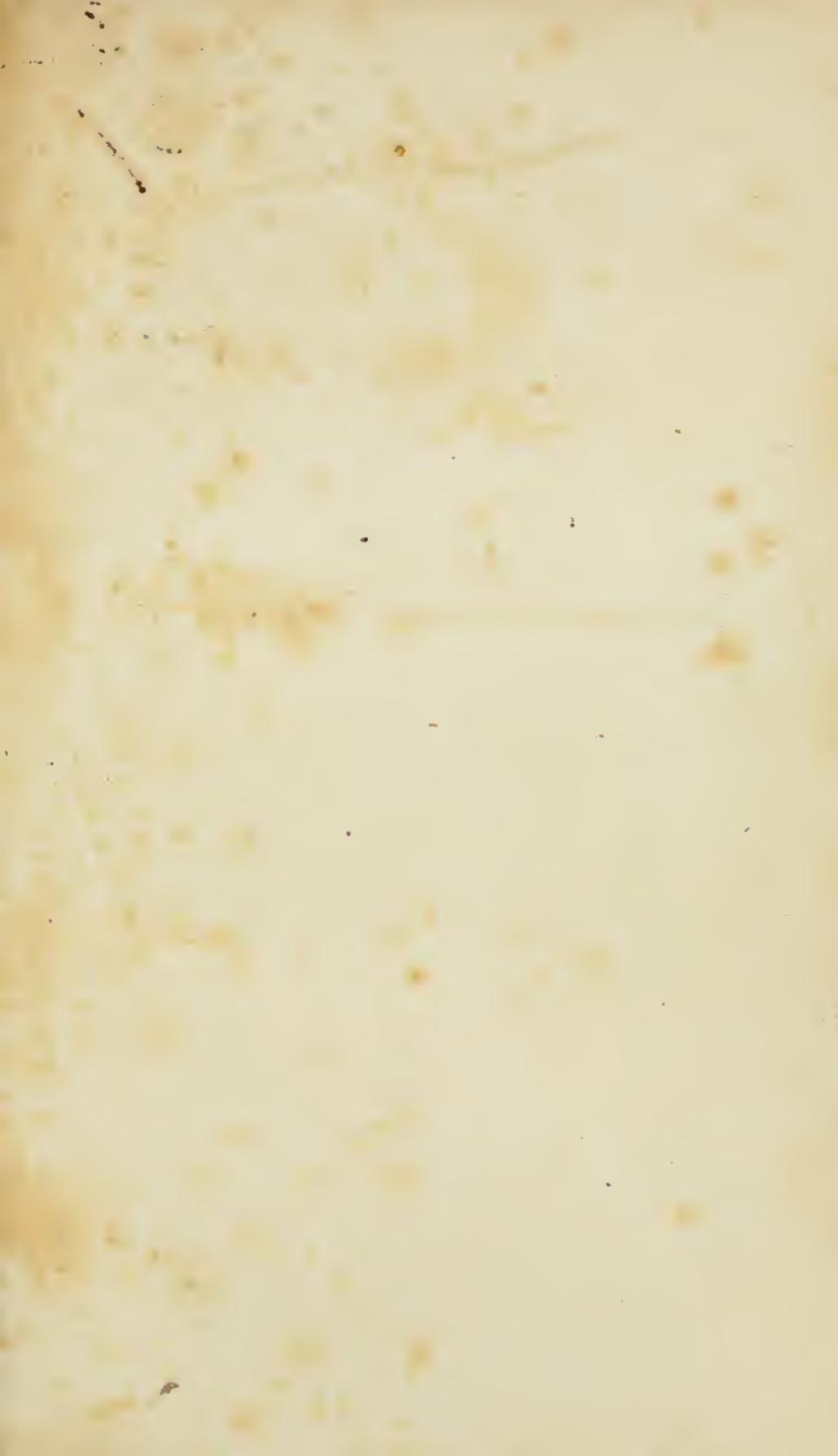
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 The Christian's daily walk,
 in holy security and peace

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THE
CHRISTIAN'S DAILY WALK,
IN HOLY
SECURITY AND PEACE.

By HENRY SCUDDER,
Late Minister of Collingborn Ducis, in Wiltshire
Recommended by Dr. Owen and Mr. Baxter.

Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the Way, walk ye in it.--
Isaiah xxx. 21.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Dr. Owen's Recommendation, - - - - -	9
Mr. Baxter's Recommendation, - - - - -	11
Mr. Davenport's Epistle, - - - - -	13

CHAPTER I.

OF WALKING WITH GOD.

Introduction, - - - - -	21
Section 1. Wherein it consists, - - - - -	21
Sect. 2. Reasons for this Holy Practice, - - - - -	24
Sect. 3. The universal Obligation to it, - - - - -	27

CHAPTER II.

OF BEGINNING THE DAY WITH GOD.

Sect. 1. How to awake with God, by pious Meditation and Thanksgiving, - - - - -	29
Suitable Reflections on Apparel, and Rules concerning it, - - - - -	30
Sect. 2. By renewed Faith and Repentance, self-examination and Prayer, - - - - -	32
Sect. 3. Directions concerning Prayer, &c. - - - - -	36
Sect. 4. Signs of worldly-mindedness in holy Duties, and Remedies against it, - - - - -	37

CHAPTER III.

Sect. 1. General Directions for Walking with God in the Progress of the day, - - - - -	43
Sect. 2. Special Duties of Superiors and Inferiors, - - - - -	45
Sect. 3. Of Bodily Refreshment and Recreations, - - - - -	47
(1.) Rules concerning Eating and Drinking, - - - - -	47
(2.) Rules concerning Recreations, - - - - -	47

CHAPTER IV.

OF RELIGIOUS FASTING.

	PAGE
Sect. 1. The Nature of, and Reasons for, religious Fasts, -	49
Sect. 2. Special Directions concerning them, - - - -	55
Helps to Self-examination, - - - -	70
(1.) From God's holy Law, - - - -	70
(2.) From the Gospel of Christ, - - - -	71
(3.) Of Humiliation and Self-judging for Sin, - - -	72
(4.) Directions for Obtaining Pardon of Sin, and Power over it, - - - -	73
(5.) The Benefits of religious Fasting, &c. - - - -	80

CHAPTER V.

OF THE LORD'S DAY, OR CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

(1.) The Divine Institution of the Lord's Day, - - -	85
(2.) Directions for the religious Observance of it, - -	85
(3.) The Nature and Design of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, - - - -	88
Directions relating thereunto, - - - -	90
(4.) Motives to keep holy the Lord's Day, - - - -	93

CHAPTER VI.

Directions how to end the Day with God, - - -	94
Rules concerning Sleep, - - - -	95

CHAPTER VII.

OF WALKING WITH GOD ALONE.

Sect. 1. Rules concerning Solitude, - - - -	96
Sect. 2. Of Reading the Word of God, and other good Books, - - - -	98
Sect. 3. Of Meditation, - - - -	102
(1.) Directions concerning it, - - - -	103
(2.) The Necessity and Use of it, - - - -	108

CHAPTER VIII.

OF KEEPING COMPANY.

	PAGE
Sect. 1. Rules concerning Company in general, - - - -	109
Sect. 2. Cautions and Directions as to evil Company, - -	116
Sect. 3. Directions with respect to good Company, or Christian Fellowship, - - - - -	118

CHAPTER IX.

RULES FOR OUR RELIGIOUS CONDUCT IN PROSPERITY.

(1.) In shunning those Sins to which we are most prone in Prosperity, - - - - -	123
(2.) In attending to those Duties which Prosperity especially calls for, - - - - -	124
Sect. 1. Professed Praise and Thanksgiving to God, - -	124
(1.) and (2.) How and for what, Praise and Thanks- giving is to be offered, - - - - -	124
(3.) The Evil of Unthankfulness, - - - - -	126
(4.) Motives to the Duty of Thankfulness, - - - -	127
(5.) Impediments to Thankfulness, - - - - -	128
(6.) Helps to Thankfulness, - - - - -	129
(7.) Signs to know when God gives good Things in Love, - - - - -	132
Sect. 2. Real Proofs of Gratitude, by using it to his Glory,	134

CHAPTER X

DIRECTIONS FOR WALKING WITH GOD IN ADVERSITY.

(1.) Rules concerning light Crosses, - - - - -	136
(2.) Directions how to bear all Afflictions well, - - -	136
1. Remedies against sinful Anger, - - - - -	137
2. The Cure of Worldly Grief, - - - - -	140
(3.) The Nature of Christian Patience, - - - - -	140
(4.) Motives to it, - - - - -	141
(5.) Means to gain Christian Patience, - - - - -	142
(6.) Of bearing Afflictions thankfully and fruitfully	152

CHAPTER XI.

OF UPRIGHTNESS.

	PAGE
Sect. 1. The Necessity of Uprightness in Religion, - - -	154
Sect. 2. The Description of it, - - - - -	155
Sect. 3. Rules to judge of our Uprightness by, - - -	159
Sect. 4. Particular Marks of Uprightness and Hypocrisy,	160
Sect. 5. Dissuasives from Hypocrisy, and Motives to Uprightness, - - - - -	172
Sect. 6. Means to subdue Hypocrisy and promote Up- rightness, - - - - -	177

CHAPTER XII.

OF LAWFUL CARE, AND FREEDOM FROM ANXIOUS CARE.

Sect. 1. The Description of lawful Care, - - - - -	183
Sect. 2. Signs of immoderate Care, - - - - -	185
Sect. 3. The Duty of quiet Trust in God, - - - - -	186
Sect. 4. Reasons against anxious Care, and for cheerful Trust in God, - - - - -	188
Sect. 5. Means to attain quieting Confidence in God, - -	193

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE PEACE OF GOD.

Sect. 1. The Nature and Excellency of it, - - - - -	194
Sect. 2. Further Excellencies and Advantages of the Peace of God, - - - - -	202

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE IMPEDIMENTS OF PEACE.

Sect. 1. False Hopes and false Fears described, - - - -	204
Sect. 2. The Causes of Presumption or false Peace, - -	206
Sect. 3. Several Grounds of false Peace discovered and removed, - - - - -	207

CHAPTER XV.

CONCERNING FALSE FEARS.

	PAGE
Sect. 1. Of needful holy Fear, - - - - -	223
Sect. 2. The Springs and Cure of causeless Fears, - - -	224
(1.) Of those which arise from natural Distempers, -	224
(2.) From the Greatness of Sin, - - - - -	227
Sect. 3. Of Fears concerning not being elected, - - -	235
Sect. 4. Of Fears concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost, - - - - -	238
Sect. 5. Of Fears arising from an accusing Conscience, -	241
Sect. 6. Of Fears from late Repentance, - - - - -	244
Sect. 7. Fears of Misusing the Means of Grace, - - -	248
Sect. 8. Of Fears arising from Doubts of God's Love, - -	249
(1.) Because of Affliction, - - - - -	250
(2.) From Want of Affliction, - - - - -	251
(3.) From inward Horrors and Distresses, - - -	252
(4.) From the Greatness of Afflictions, - - - -	255
(5.) Because Prayers are not answered, - - - -	258
(6.) From the Want and Weakness of Faith, - - -	260
Sect. 9. Reasons why Christians think they have no Faith, considered, - - - - -	262
(1.) In what true Faith consists, - - - - -	265
(2.) The Difference between Faith and Assurance, -	265
(3.) The Nature and Properties of saving Faith, - -	269
(4.) True Faith discerned by its Effects, - - - -	276
Sect. 10. Fears concerning the Truth of Grace, - - - -	278
(1.) Because not deeply humbled, - - - - -	278
(2.) From the Intrusion of evil and blasphemous Thoughts, - - - - -	283
(3.) From the Prevalence of some gross Sin, - - -	290
(4.) From Want of affectionate Sorrow for Sin, - -	292
(5.) From Defects in spiritual Duties, - - - -	294
(6.) From Deadness of Affection after Duties, - -	295
(7.) From the greater Improvement of others in Piety and Holiness, - - - - -	296
(8.) From remaining Hardness of Heart, - - - -	298
Sect. 11. Of Fears of Apostasy, - - - - -	299
(1.) Who may apostatize, - - - - -	299
(2.) Who shall persevere, - - - - -	300
(3.) How far Christians may decline in Grace, - - -	301
(4.) The Difference between the Falls of the Sincere and the Insincere, - - - - -	305
(5.) Why the Faithful shall not finally apostatize, -	307

	PAGE
Sect. 12. Sundry Doubts removed; in particular, about falling from Grace, - - - - -	311
(1.) Fears of being Hypocrites only, - - - - -	311
(2.) Because of the Decay of Grace and Comfort, - -	312
(3.) Because of the Apostasy of others, - - - - -	315
(4.) From not being able to endure Persecution, - -	315
(5.) From the Deceitfulness of the Heart, - - - - -	317
(6.) From sensible Weakness and Despondencies, -	317
(7.) From not performing the Condition of the Promises, - - - - -	318
(8.) From the Want of such Grace as God has pro- mised to his People, - - - - -	322
(9.) From the Power and Number of Temptations, -	324
Sect. 13. The Christian's Ground of Hope against all Fears,	326

CHAPTER XVI.

MEANS TO ATTAIN THE PEACE OF GOD.

Sect. 1. Errors in misjudging of a Person's State removed,	328
Sect. 2. Rules for a right Judgment of ourselves, - - -	329
Sect. 3. Directions for the troubled Conscience in Applica- tion to Ministers and others, - - - - -	332
Sect. 4. Means to get and preserve true Peace, - - - -	335

RECOMMENDATION

BY THE

REV. DR. OWEN.

It is now above thirty years ago since I first perused the ensuing treatise. And although until upon this present occasion I never read it since; yet the impression it left upon me in the days of my youth, have (to say no more) continued a grateful remembrance of it upon my mind. Being, therefore, unexpectedly, upon this new edition, desired, by him concerned therein, to give some testimony unto its worth and usefulness; I esteem myself obliged so to do, by the benefit I myself formerly received by it. But considering the great distance of time since I read it, and hoping perhaps that there might be, since that time, some little improvements of judgment about spiritual things in my own mind; I durst not express my thoughts concerning it, until I had given it another perusal: which I have now done. I shall only acquaint the reader, that I am so far from subducting my account, or making an abatement in an esteem thereof, that my respect unto it, and valuation of it is greatly increased; wherein also I do rejoice, for reasons not here to be mentioned. For although, perhaps, some few things might be expressed in different words or order, yet there is generally that soundness and gravity in the whole doctrine of the book, that weight and wisdom in the directions given in it for practice, that judgment in the resolution of doubts and objections, that breathing of a spirit of holiness, zeal, humility, and the fear of the Lord, in the whole; that I judge and am satisfied therein, that it will be

found of singular use unto all such as in sincerity desire a compliance with his design ; namely, such a walking with God here, that he may come to the enjoyment of him hereafter. I know, that in the days wherein we live, there are other notions esteemed higher or more raised, and those otherwise expressed with more elegance of words, and pressed with more appearing strenuous ratiocinations than those contained in this book, wherewith the generality of professors seem to be more taken and satisfied. But for my part, I must say, that I do find in this, and some other practical discourses of the worthy ministers of the age past, that authority and powerful evidence of truth, arising from a plain transferring of the sacred sense of the Scripture in words and expressions suited to the experience of gracious, honest, and humble souls, that the most accurate and adorned discourses of this age do not attain or rise up unto. Such, I say, is this discourse ; the wisdom and ability of whose author discover themselves from first to last, not in expressing his mind “with enticing words of man’s wisdom,” but in evident deduction of all his useful directions from express testimonies of Scripture, in such a way as to give light unto them, without intercepting the influence of their authority on the minds and consciences of the readers. I shall therefore say no more, but that if those into whose hands this book shall come, be not either openly or secretly enemies unto the whole design of it, as being “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,” or be not possessed with prejudices against the simplicity of the gospel, and that strictness of obedience it requireth ; they will find that guidance, direction, and spiritual advantage, as having their faith, love, and obedience, increased and improved thereby ; which will issue in the praise of God’s grace, that ought to be the end of all our writing and reading in this world.

JOHN OWEN.

Feb. 24, 1673-4.

RECOMMENDATION

BY THE

REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

READER, I take it for some dishonour of our age, that such a book as this should need any man's recommendation, to procure its entertainment, having been so long known and so greatly approved by the most judicious and religious ministers and people, as it hath been; even to be to practical Christians, the one instead of many, for the ordering of their daily course of life, and securing their salvation and well-grounded peace. And though I know that there are some few words, especially about *perseverance*, of which all good Christians are not fully of one mind, (and I never undertake to justify *every word*, in my own books, or any others, while we all confess that we are not absolutely infallible;) yet I must say, (without disparagement to any man's labours,) that I remember not any book which is written to be the daily companion of Christians, to guide them in the practice of a holy life, which I prefer before this: I am sure, none of my own. For so sound is the doctrine of this book, and so prudent and spiritual, apt and savory the directions, and all so fully suited to our ordinary cases and conditions, that I heartily wish no family might be without it; and many volumes (good and useful) are now in religious people's hands, which I had rather were all unknown than this. And I think it of more service to the souls of men, to call men to the notice and use of such a treasure, and to bring such old and excellent writings out of oblivion and the dust, than to encourage very many who overvalue

their own, and to promote the multiplication of things common and undigested, to the burying of more excellent treatises in the heap.

Reader, if thou wilt make this book (after the sacred Scripture) thy daily counsellor, and monitor, and comforter, I am assured the experience of thy own great advantage, and increase of wisdom, holiness, and peace, will commend it to thee more effectually than my words can do.

Read, love, and practise that which is here taught thee, and doubt not of thy everlasting happiness.

RICHARD BAXTER.

Jan. 16th, 1673-4.

THE EPISTLE

TO THE READER.

THE searching out of man's true happiness has exercised the wits and pens of many philosophers and divines with a different success.

1. Some, by a mistake of the end, have erred about the means. All their enterprises have ended in vanity and vexation, whilst they have caught at the shadow of fruit in a hedge of thorns, and have neglected the tree itself, whence the fruit might have been gathered with more certainty and less trouble. Man's natural corruption has so darkened his understanding, Eph. ix. 18, that in vain have the wisest men sought the happiness, which without the help of God's word and Spirit, they could never find, Acts xvii. 27. And his spiritual appetite and taste is so distempered, that he can judge of the chief good no better than a sick man can do of the best of meats.

2. Others, Eph. i. 18, having the eyes of their understanding enlightened, and their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 12, have concluded, that man's true happiness consists in the soul's enjoyment of God by a holy conformity, and sweet communion with him, through Christ Jesus.

For what else is true happiness than the enjoyment of the chief good? And that God is the chief good, appears in this, that all the properties, which exalt goodness to the highest perfection, are in God only. For he is the most pure, John i. 5; perfect, universal, primary, unchangeable, communicative, desirable, and delightful good, Gen. i. 31; the efficient, pattern, and utmost end of all good, Gen. i. 27; without whom there is neither natural, moral, nor spiritual good in any creature, 1 Peter i. 16. Prov. xvi. 4. Matt. xix. 17. Our conformity to him, the apostle Peter expresses, when he says, that the saints are "made partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 4; that is, "they are renewed in the spirit of their mind, and have put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness," Eph. iv. 23, 24. So that they have, 1. A new light in their understanding, Col. iii. 10, that they know God, not only as Creator, but as Redeemer also of the world, John xvii. 3; and whilst they "behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, with open face, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." This knowledge is begun in this life, in the knowledge of faith, Isa. liii. 11, and shall be perfected in the life to come, in the knowledge of sense, Rom. viii. 24. This is, in a glass; that shall be face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12. Secondly, they have a new life in their will and affections; that is, they have dispositions and inclinations in their hearts, conformable to the directions of God's holy word. This the apostle Paul intended, when he said to the Romans, that they had obeyed from the heart, the form of doctrine, whereunto they were delivered, Rom. vi. 17; that is, the word is as a mould whereinto being cast, they are

fashioned according to it. Hence it is, that the saints are said to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit,” Eph. i. 13, because as the seal leaves its print upon the wax, so the Spirit makes holy impressions in the soul: this is called the “writing of the law in our hearts,” Jer. xxxi. 32; in allusion whereunto the apostle compares the hearts of believers to tables, 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3; and their affections or conversation to an epistle, which is said to be read and understood of all men when they walk as examples of the rule, 2 Cor. iii. 2.

3. Hence it is, that godliness hath a self-sufficiency joined with it, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Because the Christian is now in communion with God, whose face when a man beholds in righteousness, he shall be satisfied with his image, Psa. xvii. 15. Hence comes that peace of conscience, joy unspeakable and glorious, and that holy triumph and exultation of spirit, which you may observe in the apostle Paul and others, Rom. v. 1. 1 Peter i. 8. Rom. viii. 25.

Having briefly shewed what this conformity, and communion with God is, I will add one or two more words to make it manifest, that only those are truly happy who are in this estate. For, 1. Man’s utmost end is, that it may be perfectly well with him, which he can never attain unto without communion with God, who is the Father of spirits, and the best of goods. Other things are desired as subordinate to this. The body is for the soul, as the matter for its form, or the instrument for its agent. Human wisdom and moral virtues are desired, not for themselves, but for the fruit that is expected by them, as glory, pleasure, and riches. Worldly and bodily pleasures, excessively desired, are as drink in a fever, or dropsy; better it is to be without the malady than to enjoy

that remedy. Riches are desired not for themselves, but for the conveniences of life. Life is not so much desired for itself as for the enjoyment of happiness, which when a man has sought in the labyrinth of earthly vanities, after much vexation and disquietude of spirit, he must conclude, that it is only in that truest and chief good, which is the fountain whence true delight first flows, and the object, wherein finally it rests.

Secondly, That is man's happiness, in the possession and enjoyment whereof, his heart rests best satisfied. So far a man is from true happiness as he is from full contentment in that which he enjoys. The bee would not sit upon so many flowers, if she could gather honey enough from any one, neither would Solomon have tried so many conclusions, if the enjoyment of any creature could have made him happy. Would you know the cause why so many (like Ixion) make love to shadows and leave the substance, or (that I may speak in a better phrase) Jer. ii. 13, forsake the fountain of living water, and dig to themselves broken cisterns that will hold no water? Briefly, it is because man, who in his pride would have seen as much as God, is now become so blind that he sees not himself, Gen. iii. 5. For if men knew either the disposition of their souls by creation, or the indisposition of their souls by corruption, they would easily escape this delusion. 1. The soul is a spiritual substance, whose original is from God, and therefore its rest must be in God; as the rivers run into the sea, and as every body rests in his centre. The noblest faculties are abased, not improved; abused, not employed; vexed, not satisfied; when they are subjected to these inferior objects, as when Nebuchadnezzar fed among beasts, Dan. iv. 29;

or, as when servants rode on horseback, and masters walked like servants on the ground, Eccles. x. 7.

2. Consider the soul as it is in this state of corruption; nothing can now content it, but that which can cure it. The soul is full of sin, which is the most painful sickness; hence the prophet compares wicked men to the raging waves of the sea, that is never at rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa. lvii. 1. What will you do to comfort him that is heart-sick? Bring him the choicest delicates, he cannot relish them; compass him about with merry company and music, it is tedious and troublesome to him; bring him to a better chamber, lay him on an easier bed: all will not satisfy him. But bring the physician to him, then he conceives hopes; let the physician cure him of his distemper, and then he will eat coarser meat, with a better stomach, and sleep on a harder bed, in a worse chamber, with a more cheerful and contented heart.

Just so it is with a guilty conscience, though he is not always sensible of it. What comfort can his friends give him, when God is his enemy? What delight can he take in his stately buildings, or frequent visits, who may expect, even this night, to have his soul required of him, and be made a companion with devils? Luke xii. 20. What is a golden chain about a leprous person, or the richest apparel upon a dead carcass? Or, what comfort will a costly banquet yield to a condemned malefactor, who is just going to execution? Surely no more than Adam found, when he had sinned in the garden, Gen. iii. 10, or than Haman had, when Ahasuerus frowned on him in the banquet, Esth. vii. 6—8. On the other side, let a man be at peace with God, and, in a sweet communion, enjoy the influence of heavenly graces and comforts

in his soul, he can rejoice in tribulation, Rom. v. 3 sing in prison, Acts xvi. 25, solace himself in death, Psa. xxiii. 4, and comfort his heart against principalities and powers, tribulation and anguish, height and depth, things present and things to come, Rom. viii. 38, 39. This true happiness, which all men desire, (but most miss it, by mistaking the way conducing to it,) is the subject-matter of this book. Here you may learn the right way of peace, Rom. iii; how a man may do every day's duty conscientiously, and bear every day's cross comfortably. Receive it thankfully, and read it carefully.

‘But this course is too strict.’

In bodily distempers we account that physician the wisest and best, who regards more the health than the will of his patient. The carpenter squares his work by the rule, not the rule by his work. O miserable man, what an antipathy against truth is in thy cursed corrupted nature, which had rather perish by false principles, than be saved by receiving and obeying the truth! But secondly, as it is strict, so it is necessary, and in that case, strictness does not blunt, but sharpen the edge of industry to duty, therefore, saith our Saviour, Strive to enter in at the strait gate, Luke xiii. 34; that is, therefore strive to enter because the the gate is strait. Bradford well compared the way of religion to a narrow bridge, over a large and deep river; from which, the least turning awry is dangerous. We see into what a gulf of misery Adam plunged himself, and his posterity, by stepping aside from God's way. Therefore forget not these rules of the apostle: “Walk circumspectly, and make straight paths to your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way;” Eph. v. 15. Heb. xii. 13.

2. 'But many of God's children attain not to this strictness, yet are saved.'

It is true; though all God's children travel to one country, yet not with equal speed; they all shoot at one mark, yet not with the same dexterity. Some difference there is in the outward action, none in their inward intention; some inequalities there are in the event, none in the affection. In degrees there is some disparity, none in truth and uprightness. All that are regenerate are alike strict in these five things, at least. First, they have but one path or way wherein they all walk, Isa. xxxv. 8. Secondly, they have but one rule to guide them in that way which they all follow, Gal. vi. 15, 16. Thirdly, all their eyes are upon this rule, so as they are not willingly ignorant of any truth, 2 Peter iii. 5. Nor do they suppress, or detain any known truth in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18, but they stand in the ways, and ask for the old path, which is the good way, Jer. vi. 16. Fourthly, they all desire, and endeavour to obey every truth, Luke i. 9, not only to walk in all the commandments of God without reproof, before men, Heb. xiii. 19, but also in all things, to live honestly and uprightly, before God, Gen. xvii. 1. Fifthly, if they fall by temptation, Gal. vi. 1, (as a member may, by accident, be disjointed) yet they are in pain till they be set right again. If they stumble, through infirmity (as sheep may slip into a puddle) yet they will not lie down, and wallow in the mire, which is the property of swine. If they are sometimes drawn aside by violent temptations, or step aside by mistake, yet they will not walk on in the counsel of the wicked, Psa. i. 1, nor will any way of wickedness, (that is, a constant, or daily course in any one *sin*) be found in them; they are so far from

perverting the right ways of God, Acts xiii. 10, (that is, speaking evil of what is good) that they will justify God in condemning themselves, and subscribe to the righteousness of his word, praying that their ways might be directed to keep his statutes, Psa. cxix. 5.

To conclude, laying aside all cavils, beg of God a teachable disposition, and make the best profit of the labours of this faithful servant of Jesus Christ. For the matter of this book, use it as thy daily counsellor; learn to write by this copy. I mean, stir up the gifts of God that are in thee, to become more profitable to others, both in presence, by discourse, and in absence, by writing.

The Christian and intelligent reader shall find in this, some things new, other things expressed in a new manner, all digested in such a method, with such brevity and perspicuity, as was necessary to make the book a vade mecum, or pocket companion, especially profitable to the poor and illiterate.

I will here stop, wishing thee (candid and serious reader) to consider that an account must be given of what thou readest, as well as of what thou hearest, and therefore, to join prayer with thy reading, that spiritual wisdom and strength may be increased in thee, for the practice of what thou learnest. So I commend the book to thy reading; and thee, and it to God's blessing.

Thine in the Lord Jesus,

JOHN DAVENPORT.

THE
CHRISTIAN'S DAILY WALK.

CHAPTER I.

OF WALKING WITH GOD IN GENERAL.

THE INTRODUCTION.

BELOVED FRIEND, observing your forwardness and zeal in seeking to know how you might please God, and save your soul; I thought it would be acceptable and profitable to you, if I should, by the infallible rule of God's word, direct you how, with most certainty, speed, and ease, you might attain to this your holy aim. Wherefore, considering that most of God's children make their lives unprofitable and uncomfortable, by troubling themselves about many things, Luke x. 40, 41; and that too much in things less needful, by caring and fearing what shall befall them and theirs hereafter, with respect unto this present life; that you may obtain that one thing needful, Luke x. 42, and contain yourself within your own line and calling, I exhort you heedfully to apply yourself to do each present day's work with Christian cheerfulness, and to bear each present day's evil with Christian patience.

SECT. 1. WALKING WITH GOD DESCRIBED.

THE best and surest way to please God, and gain a cheerful quiet heart in the way to heaven is, to walk with God in uprightness, (through faith in Jesus

Christ,) being careful in nothing : but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make your request known unto God, which if you do, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall so establish your heart and mind, in and through Christ Jesus, that you may live in a heaven upon earth, and may be joyous and comfortable in all estates and conditions of life whatsoever.

That you should walk with God in uprightness, is commended to you in the cloud of examples, of Enoch, Gen. v. 22, 24; Noah, Gen. vi. 9; Job, Job i. 1; David, 1 Kings ix. 4; Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6: with many others, renowned in Scripture; and is commanded to Abraham, and, in him, to all the faithful, Gen. xvii. 1.

To live by faith (which is, to frame your heart and life according to the will of God revealed in his word) and to walk with God, are all one. Enoch was said to have walked with God, Gen. v. 24; what was this else, but to rest and believe on God, whereby he pleased him? Heb. xi. 5, 6. For according to what we live, according to that we are said to walk, Colos. iii. 7. The moral actions of man's life are fitly resembled by the metaphor of walking, which is a moving from one place to another. No man, while he liveth here, is at home in the place where he shall be, Heb. xiii. 14. There are two contrary homes, to which every man is always going, either to heaven, or to hell. Every action of man is one pace or step whereby he goeth to the one place or the other. The holiness or wickedness of the action is the several way to the place of happiness, or place of torment.

So that God's own children, while they live in this world as pilgrims and strangers, are but in the way, not in the country which they seek, which is heavenly, Heb. xi. 3-16.

This life of faith and holiness, 1 Thess. i. 9, 10, what is it, but a going out of a man's self, and a continual returning to God (by Christ Jesus) from the way of sin and death, and a constant perseverance in all those acts of obedience which God hath ordained to be the

way, for all his children to walk in, unto eternal life ? Eph. ii. 10.

A godly life is said to be a walking with God in respect of four things that concur thereunto.

First, Whereas by sin we naturally are departed from God, Isa. liii. 6, and gone away from his ways which he has appointed for us, Rom. iii. 12, we, by the new and living way of Christ's death and resurrection, Heb. x. 20, and by the new and living work of Christ's Spirit, are brought near to God ; and are set in the ways of God, by repentance from dead works, and by faith towards God in Christ Jesus ; which are the first principles of true religion, Heb. vi. 1, and the first steps to this great duty of walking with God. Now, to believe and to continue in the faith, is, to walk in Christ, Col. ii. 6, 7, therefore to walk with God.

Secondly, The revealed will of God is called God's way, because in it God doth as it were display the secrets of his holy Majesty, to shew his people their way to him, and so bring them nigh unto himself ; as the inspired Psalmist speaks : Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps, Psa. lxxxv. 13. Now this way of righteousness, revealed in the sacred scriptures, is the rule of a godly life : He who walketh according to God's law, is said to walk before God, (compare 1 Kings viii. 25, with 2 Chron. vi. 16.) So that he who walketh according to God's will in the various changes and conditions of life, keeping himself to this rule, walketh with God.

Thirdly, He that liveth a godly life, walketh after the Spirit, not after the flesh. He is led by the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 1—14, having him for his guide ; wherefore in this respect also he is said to walk with God, Gal. v. 16.

Fourthly, He that walketh with God, sees, by the eye of faith, God present with him in all his actions ; seriously thinking of him upon all occasions, remembering him in his ways, Isa. lxiv. 5 : setting the Lord always before him, as David did, Psa. xvi. 8 ; seeing him that is invisible, as Moses did, Heb. xi. 27 ; doing

all things, as Paul did, as of God, in the sight of God, 2 Cor. ii. 17. Now he who so walketh that he always observeth God's presence, and keepeth him still in his view in the course of his life, not only with a general and habitual, but, as much as he can, with an actual intention to please and glorify God, this man may be said to walk with God.

Thus you may know when you walk with God: (1.) When you daily go on to repent of sins past, believe in Jesus Christ for pardon, and believe his word for direction. (2.) When you walk not according to the will of man, but of God. (3.) When you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (4.) When you set God before you, and walk as in his sight, then you walk with, before, after, and according to God: for all these are understood in one sense.

That you may walk with God, consider these arguments further to convince and induce you:

SECT. 2. REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD WALK WITH GOD.

First, You are commanded to walk as Christ walked, 1 John ii. 6; and it concerns you so to do, if you would approve yourself to be a member of his body: for it is monstrous, nay, impossible, that the head should go one way, and the body another. Now our Saviour himself observed all these methods of walking with God, justifying faith and repentance only excepted, because he was without sin.

Secondly, It is all which the Lord requireth of you, for all his love and goodness showed unto you, in creating, preserving, redeeming, and saving you. For what doth the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah vi. 8.

Thirdly, If you walk with God, and keep close to him, you will be sure to go in the right way, in that good old way, Jer. vi. 16, which is called the way of holiness, Isa. xxxv. 8; in a most straight, Prov. iii. 17,

most sure, and (to a spiritual man) most pleasant way, the paths of which are peace; the very happiness and rest of the soul, Jer. vi. 16. God teacheth his children to choose this way, Isa. xlviii. 17, Psa. lxxxv. 13, Psa. xxxvii. 23. And if they happen to err, or to doubt of their way, they shall hear the voice of God's Spirit behind them, saying, This is the way, walk in it, Isa. xxx. 21.

Fourthly, If you walk with God, you shall walk safely; Prov. iii. 24, Psa. xxxvii. 24; you will not need to fear, though ten thousand set themselves against you, Psa. iii. 5, 6; for his presence is with you, and for you. His holy angels encamp about you, Psa. xxxiv. 7; and while you walk in his ways, they are charged to support you, Psa. xci. 11, 12, lest you should receive any harm.

Fifthly, When you walk with God (though you be alone, separate from all other society) you still walk with the best company, even such whereof there is most need, and best use. While God and you walk together, you have an advantage above all that walk not with him; for you have a blessed opportunity of that holy acquaintance with God, which is expressed Job xxii. 21—30. You have opportunity to speak unto him, praying with assurance of a gracious hearing. Abraham and his faithful servant made use of their walking with God for these purposes, Gen. xxiv. Is it not a special favour that the most high God, whose throne is in heaven, should condescend to walk on earth with sinful man? nay, rather to call up man from earth to heaven, to walk with him? Phil. iii. 20, Colos. iii. 2. It would be therefore shameful ingratitude not to accept this offer, and not to obey this charge.

Sixthly, To set the Lord always in your sight, is an excellent preservative and restraint from sin. With this shield Joseph did repel and quench the fiery darts of the temptations of his designing mistress, Gen. xxxix. 9. For who is so foolish, and shameless, as wilfully to transgress the just laws of a father, king,

and judge, knowing that he is present, and observes him with detestation if he so do ?

Seventhly, To set the Lord always before you, Psa. cxix. 168, is an excellent remedy against spiritual sloth and negligence in duties, and it is a sharp spur to quicken, and make you diligent and abundant in the work of the Lord. What servant can be slothful and careless in his master's sight ? And what master will keep a servant that will not observe him, and do his commands, while he himself looketh on ?

Eighthly, Walking with God in manner aforesaid, doth exceedingly please God, Heb. xi. 5. It also pleases God's holy angels, 1 Cor. xi. 10. It pleases God's faithful ministers, 3 John ver. 3, and doth please and strengthen all the good people of God, Psa. cxix. 74, with whom you do converse. It is to walk worthy of God in all well pleasing, Colos. i. 9, 10.

Ninthly, Thus walking with God, you shall be assured of God's mercy and gracious favour. He keepeth covenant and mercy with all his servants, that walk before him with all their heart, 1 Kings viii. 23. When you do thus walk in the light, you have a gracious fellowship with God, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth you from all sin, 1 John i. 7. There is no condemnation to you who thus walk, Rom. viii. 1. Your flesh, when you die, shall rest in hope. For to them that set God before them, he doth show the path of life, which will bring them into his glorious presence, where are fulness of joys, and pleasures for evermore, Psa. xvi. 11.

Any one of these motives, seriously thought upon by an humble Christian, is enough to persuade him to this holy walking with God.

Notwithstanding, it is sad to consider, how few there are who walk thus. For most men seek not after God, God is not in all their thoughts, Psa. x. 4 ; they walk in the vanity of their minds, Eph. iv. 17, after their own lusts, 2 Peter iii. 3 ; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, 1 John ii. 16 ; walking according to the course of this world, according to the

will of Satan, the prince of the power of the air, Eph. ii. 2, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; who refuse to return, or to call themselves into question concerning their ways, though God doth wait and hearken for it; no, not so much as to say, What have we done? Jer. viii. 6; but every one runneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

Now concerning all that walk thus contrary unto God, God hath said, that he will set his face against them, and punish them seven times, Lev. xxvi. 21—28; even with many and sore plagues. And if yet they will walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to them in fury, and punish them seven times more for their sins. And if yet they will walk in impenitency, notwithstanding God's offer of mercy to them in Christ, Paul could not speak of such with dry eyes, but peremptorily pronounceth that their end is destruction, Phil. iii. 18, 19.

Weigh well, therefore, these premises; compare the way, wherein you walk with God, with all other ways; compare this company with all other company, and the issues and end of this way with the issues and end of all other ways: and the proper choice of your walk will easily and quickly be made.

Thus much may be said in general of walking with God.

SECT. 3. WALKING WITH GOD, TO BE CONSTANT AND UNIVERSAL.

THE commandment to walk with God is indefinite, without limitation, therefore must be understood to be a walking with him in all things, and that at all times, in all companies, and in all changes, conditions, and estates of your life, whatsoever. To walk with God in general and at large is not sufficient.

You are not dispensed with for any moment of your life; but all the days of your life, and each day of your life, and each hour of that day, and each minute of that hour; you must pass the time, 1 Peter

i. 17, the whole time of your dwelling here in fear; even all the day long, saith Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 17. You must endeavour to have a conscience void of offence always, Acts xxiv. 16. You must live the rest of your life, 1 Peter iv. 2, not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; taking heed lest at any time there be in you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, Heb. iii. 12.

1. For this end Christ did redeem you from the hands of your enemies, that you might serve him in holiness and righteousness (which is the same with walking with God) all the days of your life without fear, Luke i. 74, 75.

2. The end of the instructions of God's word, which is the light of your feet in this walking, is, that it be bound upon your heart continually, to lead, keep, and converse with you at all times, Prov. vi. 21, 22.

3. The lusts of your own heart, and your adversary the devil lie always upon the advantage to hinder you in, or divert you from, this godly course, 1 Peter v. 8, so that, upon every intermission of your holy care to please God, they take their opportunity to surprise you.

4. You are accountable unto God for losing and mis-spending all that precious time wherein you do not walk in his ways, Eph. v. 16.

5. Besides, he that hath much work to do, or that is in a long journey, or is running a race for a wager, hath no need to lose any time. If you be long obstructed in your Christian work and race, by sin and sloth, you will hardly recover your loss but with much sorrow, with renewed faith, and with more than ordinary repentance.

Wherefore when you awake in the night, or in the morning, and while you are employed in the day, and when you betake yourself to sleep at night, you must, as David, have thoughts on God, and set him always before you, Psa. xvi. 8. Acts ii. 25. When I awake, I am still with thee, saith he, Psa. cxxxix. 18; and in the night he remembered God, Psa. lxxiii. 6; and his hope and meditation was on God's word, Psa. cxix.

147, 148. And Isaiah (in the person of all the faithful) saith, With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early, Isa. xxvi. 9.



CHAPTER II

OF BEGINNING THE DAY WITH GOD.

SECT. I. HOW TO AWAKE WITH GOD.

IN the instant of awaking let your heart be lifted up to God with a thankful acknowledgment of his mercy to you. For it is he that giveth his beloved sleep, Psa. cxxvii. 2; who keepeth you both in soul and body while you sleep, Prov. vi. 22; who reneweth his mercies every morning, Lam. iii. 22, 23. For, while you sleep, you are as it were out of actual possession of yourself, and all things else. Now, it was God that kept you, and all that you had, and restored them again, with many new mercies, when you awaked.

2. Arise early in the morning (if you be not necessarily hindered) following the example of our Saviour Christ, John viii. 2, and of the good matron in the Proverbs, Prov. xxxi. 15. For this will usually much conduce to the health of your body, and the prosperity, both of your temporal and spiritual state; for hereby you will have the day before you, and will gain the best, and the fittest times for the exercises of religion, and for the works of your calling.

3. In the time between your awaking and arising (if other suitable thoughts offer not themselves) it will be useful to think upon some of these: I must awake from the sleep of sin, to righteousness, Eph. v. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 34; as well as out of bodily sleep, unto labour in my calling. The night is far spent, the day

is at hand, I must therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, Rom. xiii. 11, 12, 13. I must walk honestly as in the day. I am, by the light of grace and knowledge, to arise and walk in it, as well as by the light of the sun to walk by it. Think also of your awaking out of the sleep of death, and out of the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 55; at the sound of the last trumpet, 1 Thess. iv. 16; even of your blessed resurrection unto glory, at the last day. It was one of David's sweet thoughts (speaking to God) When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness, Psa. xvii. 15.

4. When you arise, and dress yourself, lose not that precious time (when your mind is freshest) with impertinent and fruitless thoughts, as is the custom of too many to do. This is a fit time to think upon the cause why you have need of apparel; namely, the fall and sin of your first parents, which from them is derived to you. For before their fall, their nakedness was their comeliness, Gen. i. 31, and seeing it, they were not ashamed, Gen. ii. 25. It will likewise be to good purpose to consider what the wise providence of God hath appointed to be the substance of your apparel. The rinds of plants, the skins, hair, or wool of brute beasts, and the bowels of the silkworm; the very excretions and superfluous apparel of unreasonable creatures. Which, as it doth magnify the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, in choosing, and turning such mean things to such excellent use: so it should humble and suppress the pride of man. For what man in his senses would be proud of the badge of his shame, even of that apparel, for which (under God) he is beholden even to plants and beasts?

Now also is a good time to call to mind what rules are to be observed, that you may dress yourself as becometh one that professeth godliness: namely,

1. That your apparel, for matter and fashion, do suit with your general and special calling, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, and with your estate, sex, and age, Deut. xxii. 5.

2. That your apparel be consistent with health and comeliness, 1 Cor. xi. 14, 15. 1 Cor. xii. 23.

3. That you rather go with the lowest, than with the highest of your state and place.

4. That the fashion be neither strange, immodest, singular, nor ridiculous, Zeph. i. 8.

5. That you be not over curious, or over long, taking up too much time in putting it on.

6. Neither the making nor wearing of your apparel, must savour of pride, lightness, curiosity, lasciviousness, prodigality, or base covetousness, Isa. iii. 18—24 But it must be such as becometh holiness, wisdom, and honesty, and such as is well reported of, Phil. iv. 8. 1 Cor. xi.

7. Follow the example of those of your rank and means, who are most sober, most frugal, and most discreet.

While you dress yourself, it will be seasonable and profitable also, by this occasion, to raise your thoughts, Rev. iii. 18; and fix them upon that apparel which doth clothe and adorn your inward man, 1 Peter iii. 4, which is spiritual, and of a divine matter, which never is out of fashion, which never weareth out, but is always the better for the wearing. Think thus: If I go naked without bodily apparel, it will be to the shame of my person, and to the hazard of my health and life. But how much more will the filthy nakedness of my soul appear to the eyes of men, of angels, and of God himself, Rev. iii. 17. Rev. xvi. 15. Exod. xxxii. 25, whose pure eyes cannot abide filthiness, Hab. i. 13, whereby my soul will be exposed to most deadly temptations, and my whole person to God's most severe judgments; except I have put on, and do keep on me the white linen of Christ's spouse, the righteousness of the saints, Rev. xix. 8, that is, justification by faith in Christ, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ?

And because every day you will be assaulted with the world, the flesh, and the devil, you will do well to consider whether you have put on, and do improve your coat of mail, that complete armour, prescribed Eph. vi. 11—18.

When you use your looking-glass, James i. 23, 24,

25, and by experience and that it serveth to discover, and to direct you how to reform whatever is uncomely, and out of order in your body; you may hereby remember the necessity and admirable use of the glass of God's word, and gospel of Christ, both read and preached, for the good of your soul. For, this being understood and believed, doth not only show what is amiss in the soul, and how it may be amended; but in some measure will enable you to amend; for, it doth not only show you your own face, but the very face and glory of God in Christ Jesus, which by reflection upon you, will, through the Spirit, work on you a more excellent effect than on Moses's face in the mount, *Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30*, which yet was so glorious, that the people could not endure to behold it. For by this glory of God, which by faith you behold in the word, you will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, *2 Cor. iii. 18*.

Concerning these things which I have directed to be thought upon, when you arise, and put on your apparel in the morning, and those which I shall direct when you put off your apparel at night; my meaning is not to urge them as necessary, as if it were sin to omit any of these particulars: but to be used, except better come in place, as most convenient.

SECT. 2. OF BEGINNING THE DAY WITH GOD, BY RENEWED FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

(1.) **WHEN** you are thus awake, and are risen out of your bed, that you may walk with God the remainder of the day, it will be needful that you first renew your peace with God, by faith in Jesus Christ; and then endeavour to show your dutifulness and gratitude to God, by doing those works of piety, equity, mercy, and sobriety, which may any way concern you that day. For how can two walk together, except they be agreed? *Amos iii. 3*. And how can any walk with God, if he be not holy in all his con-

versation? You have as much cause to beware of him, and to obey his voice, and not provoke him who goeth before you in the wilderness of this world, to guide and bring you to his heavenly kingdom, Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, 22, as the Israelites had to beware of him who went before them to keep them in the way, and to conduct them unto the earthly Canaan, the place which he had promised and prepared for them. It was for this, that Joshua told the people, that except they would fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and put away their strange gods, they could not serve God, Josh. xxiv. 14—19; they could not walk with him. For he is (saith he) a holy God: he is a jealous God: he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins.

(2.) For this cause (if unavoidable necessity hinder not) begin the day with solemn prayer and thanksgiving, Psa. xcii. 1, 2. Psa. lxxxviii. 13. Before which (that these duties may be the better performed) it will be convenient, if you have time, that you prepare yourself by meditation, Lam. iii. 40, 41. Job xi. 13; the matter whereof should be an inquiry into your present state, how all things stand between God and you; how you have behaved since you last prayed and renewed your peace with God; what sins you have committed, what graces and benefits you want, what fresh favours God has bestowed on you, Psa. cxvi. 1—13, since last you gave him this tribute of thanks; and how much praise and thanks you owe to him also for the continuance of former blessings. Think also what employments you shall have that day, in which you may need his special grace and assistance. Consider likewise what ground and warrant you have to approach to the throne of grace, to ask pardon, and to hope for favour and help of God. Upon these considerations, you must seriously and faithfully endeavour, in the strength of Christ (without whom you can do nothing) to reform whatsoever you find to be amiss, Job xi. 14; flying unto, and only relying upon God's mercy in Christ; to acknowledge him in all things; and that you will now seek grace and help of

him, whereby you may walk as in his sight in all well pleasing, all that day.

To assist you therein, do thus :

First, Lay a strict charge upon your conscience to deal impartially, plainly, and fully, in this examination and judging of yourself.

Secondly, You should be so well acquainted with the substance and meaning of God's holy law, Deut. vi. 8, 9, that you may be able to carry in your head a catalogue or table of the duties required, and vices forbidden, in each commandment ; whereby you may try your obedience past, and may set before you a rule of life for time to come.

Thirdly, (lest the calling to mind the multitude and greatness of your sins should make you despair of God's favour) You should be so well instructed in the Christian faith, and in the principal promises of the gospel, that you may be able also quickly to call them to mind, for the strengthening of your faith and hope in God. The form of sound words in the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 13, should be familiar unto you for these purposes.

All these need not take up much time: you will find it to be time well redeemed. For, first, by such preparation you will keep yourself from that rude and irreverent thrusting yourself into God's holy presence, whereof you are warned in the Scriptures, Eccles. v. 1, 2.

Secondly, When by this means your heart is well humbled, softened, and set right towards God, so that you can say, you regard no iniquity in your heart, Psa. lxvi. 18. John ix. 31; and when hereby you have called in your thoughts from straggling, and have gotten composedness of mind, and inward strength of soul (without which the arrow of prayer can never fly home to the mark) then you may approach into God's special presence with more faith and boldness ; you shall be more able to utter before him apt confessions, lawful requests, and due thanksgivings, with more understanding, more humbly, more feelingly, more fervently, and with more assurance of a gracious

hearing, (all which are requisite in prayer) than you could ever possibly be able to do without such preparation.

Thirdly, This due preparation to prayer doth not only fit you to pray ; but is an excellent furtherance to an holy life. For it maketh the conscience tender and watchful, by the daily exercise of the knowledge of the precepts and threats of the law, and the precepts and promises of the gospel ; and it being enforced to examine, accuse, judge, and pass sentence, and do a kind of execution upon you for your sin ; smiting your heart, and wounding itself with godly fear, grief, and shame, (a work to which the conscience is loth to come, till it needs must ;) wherefore, to prevent all this trouble and smart, it will rather give all diligence in other acts which are more pleasing ; namely, it will direct you in the ways to God, check and warn you before hand, lest you should sin ; to the end that when you come to examine yourself again, it might find matter, not of grieving and tormenting, but of rejoicing and comforting your heart, which is the most proper, and most pleasing work of a sanctified conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. He that knoweth that he must be at much pains to make himself whole and clean, when he is wounded and defiled, will take the more heed lest he wound and defile himself.

Fourthly, This due preparation to prayer, by examining, judging, and reforming yourself, doth prevent God's judging you ; for when you judge yourself, you shall not be judged of the Lord, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 31.

(3.) Being rightly prepared, you must draw near into God's special presence, falling low at his footstool, Psa. xcv. 6, representing him to your thoughts as one who is in himself, and of himself, the only heavenly, all-knowing and almighty Majesty, Matt. vi. 9, now become your loving and merciful Father, through Christ his Son your Lord : then you must pour out your soul before him in confessing your sins, 1 Sam. i. 15 ; and in making your desires (through the Spirit) known unto him in the name of Christ, for

yourself and others, in all lawful petitions and supplications, with thanksgiving, Phil. iv. 6; and all this with understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, with the intention and full bent of the soul, James v. 16, and expectation of being heard, Mark xi. 24, in due time and measure, and in the best manner.

SECT. 3. FURTHER DIRECTIONS CONCERNING PRAYER.

UNTO the directions both for preparation to prayer, and concerning prayer itself, take these cautions.

First, If it may be, omit neither the one nor the other, and let them be the first work after you are up, Psa. v. 3. But if that cannot be, because of some necessary hinderance, yet perform them so soon as you can, and as well as you can; though you can do neither, either so soon, or so well as you would, yet omit them not altogether. Break through all seeming necessities, which will daily come in your way, to hinder and thrust out these duties. The devil, knowing that nothing doth undermine and overthrow his kingdom more than these duly performed; knowing also that the spiritual performance of them is tedious to corrupt nature, will thrust upon you seeming necessities, so many, and so often, that if you be not watchful to gain, and to take time, breaking through all such hinderances as are not truly necessary; you will often, by the circumvention of the flesh and of the devil, be brought to an omission of preparation, or of prayer, or both. Upon which will follow similar temptations, together with a proneness to the like neglect, and a greater indisposition to these duties afterward.

Secondly, Lay not too great a task upon yourself in this preparation to prayer; I mean, so much as will take up more time than the works of your calling, and other needful affairs, will permit; but contrive and husband your time so, that every lawful business may have its own time, Eccles. iii. 1. God has subordinated the works of your general and particular

calling in such sort, that, usually, the one shall not obstruct the other.

If, through taking up too much time in preparation to prayer, and in prayer, either of them grow necessarily tedious and burthensome; Satan will circumvent you by this means, causing you out of a true weariness of too much (even before you are aware) to omit them altogether.

Thirdly, Whereas when you prepare yourself to pray, and when you do pray, it is lawful to think of your worldly business, to the end that you might pray for direction and for good success therein (for you may ask your daily bread,) Matt. vi. 11; you must take heed, when you think of these things, that your thoughts be not worldly through distempers and distractions about the same, Luke xii. 29. For these will abate your spirituality and fervour in prayer, and will shut the ears of God against your prayer.

SECT. 4. SIGNS OF WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS IN DEVOTION,
AND REMEDIES AGAINST IT.

IF you desire to know the signs and remedies of distempers and distractions about worldly things in your preparation for holy duties; by distempers, I mean, inordinate trouble about the means; and by distractions, I mean, a vexing trouble about success.

I. As to the signs of it. You may know that your mind is distempered with worldliness (even in thinking on lawful business) when you prepare yourself to prayer, and at other seasons, by these marks:

1. When (except in case of necessity in their apparent danger) your worldly affairs are first in your thoughts to be the matter of your meditation. For thoughts how to hallow God's name, and how his kingdom may come, and how you may do his will, should usually be in your mind, before those that concern your daily bread.

2. When they interpose themselves, interrupt, and

jostle out those good thoughts whereon you were thinking, before you have thought of them sufficiently.

3. When your thoughts of worldly business are with greater intention of mind, than the thoughts of things spiritual and heavenly.

4. When they last longer than such as immediately concern the glory of God, and the good of your soul: or hold you too long upon them.

5. You may know it by the ends which you propose to yourself in your thoughts of worldly business; are the ends you propose, only, or chiefly, that you may prevent poverty, or that you may have wherewith to satisfy your natural desires? If you propose not other, and more spiritual ends, your thoughts of them at that time, are worldly: But if your thoughts of your worldly business, be to the end that you may lay them to the rule of God's word, that you may not offend him in your labour and care about them; or that you might crave God's direction and blessing upon your said care and labour, you being spiritual in thoughts of worldly business, then your thoughts of lawful business are not distempered with worldliness.

II. To remedy these distempered thoughts; 1st, Let a sound and clear judgment discern what is good, what is bad; also what is best, and what is least good; preferring things spiritual, heavenly, and eternal, incomparably before those which are earthly and temporal. Make those best things your treasure, Matt. vi. 21; then your heart will be chiefly set, and your thoughts will chiefly run on them; and you will be moderate in thinking of those things which are less needful.

2. Do as a wise counsellor at law, or as a master of requests, who must hear many clients, and receive and answer many petitions. Consider whose turn it is, and what is the most important suit; and despatch them first. Let thoughts of worldly business be shut out, and made to stand at the door, till their turn come to be thought upon, and let the more excellent, and more needful be despatched first.

3. If thoughts of the world will imprudently intrude themselves, and will not be kept out; rebuke them sharply; give them no hearing, but dishearten them, and rebuke the porter and keeper of the door of your heart; that is, smite, wound, and check your conscience, because it did not check and restrain them.

4. In all lawful business, insure yourself fully and sufficiently to intend that one thing which you have in hand for the present, Eccles. ix. 10; and at all times restrain wandering thoughts as much as may be. Let your reason get such power over the fancy, that you may be able to think of what you please, when you please. You will say, "to a fickle mind this is hard, if not impossible." To this I answer, if you would not nourish and entertain evil, flying, and unseasonable thoughts when they arise; and would (as often as they offer themselves) be much displeased with them, and with yourself for them; then in time you will find it possible, and not exceedingly hard to think of what good things you would, and not of what evil things you would not.

5. Lastly, When the time of thinking and doing of your worldly business is come, then think thereof sufficiently, and to good purpose; for then they will be the less troublesome in thrusting themselves in out of place, because it is known that in their place, they shall be fully regarded. Idleness and improvidence about these things, puts a man into straits many times, and into distempers about his worldly business, more than needs, or else would be.

You would also know when your thoughts of success in your worldly affairs are evil, together with a remedy against them.

To think, that, if you be not prudent and diligent in your calling, and that if God do not bless your diligence, you may do the works of your calling in vain, and may expect ill success; thus to think is lawful and useful. For it will excite in you a resolution to be frugal and diligent; and when you have done all you can, these thoughts also will quicken you to prayer unto God for success. But if your thoughts

of thriving, or not thriving, be other than these, and bring forth other effects; namely, if desires of success drive you to think of using unlawful means, from doubting that you cannot so soon, or so certainly, or not at all, speed by the use of lawful only: if it make you full of anxiety and fear, that though you use what good means you can, all will be in vain: if you be yet doubtful and take anxious thought about what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and what you shall put on, or how you and yours shall live another day, then your thoughts about success in wordly business, are worldly and distracted.

I shall speak to this sin with its remedy more fully when I write against taking care in any thing.

Yet for the present, know: All the fruit you will reap from unbelieving fears and distrusts, doubts of success, &c., will be nothing else, but a further degree of vexation of heart. For all the anxiety in the world cannot bring good success. Besides, nothing provokes the Lord to give ill success sooner, than when you nourish distrustful care.

Secondly, Consider the power and faithfulness of God, who has taken care of the success of your labour upon himself: commanding you not to care but to cast all the care on him, 1 Peter v. 7. If you would rest upon this, you might be secure of good success in your outward state, even according to your desire; or else God will more than recompense the want thereof, by causing you to thrive, and to have good success in spiritual things, which is much better, and which you should desire much more.

4. A fourth caution to be observed in your preparation to prayer, and in prayer, is, be not slight and formal herein, which is, when cursorily and out of custom only you call your sins, your duties, God's favours, and his promises, into a bare and fruitless remembrance. For if the heart be not seriously affected with anger, fear, grief, and shame for sin; and if it be not affected with a thankful acknowledgment of being beholden to God for his favours; moreover, if it be not affected with hope and confidence in God

at the remembrance of his blessed promises; and if withal, the heart be not gained to a renewed resolution to reform what is faulty, and to cry earnestly to God for grace and mercy; and for the time to come to endeavour to live a godly life; all your preparation is nothing. Nay, this slight and fruitless calling of sin and duty to remembrance, and no more, is a great emboldener and strengthener of sins; and a great weakener and quencher of the Spirit. For sins are like to idle vagrants, and lawless subjects; if officers call such before them, and, either say nothing to them, or only give them threatening words, but do not smite them and make them smart, they grow ten times more bold, insolent, and lawless. Good thoughts are like to dutiful servants and loyal subjects, such as are ready to come at every call, and offer themselves to be employed in all good services; now if such be not entertained with suitable regard, if they be not cherished in their readiness, they (like David's people) return disheartened, and their edge to future service is taken off, 2 Sam. xix. 3. Besides, this cursory performing of holy duties, is the highway to a habit of hypocrisy, that accursed bane of all that is good.

5. My last caution is, that if in your meditations, and in your prayers, you find a dulness and want of spirituality, I would have you to be humbled in the sense of your impotency and infirmity; yet, be not discouraged nor give them over, but rather betake yourself to these duties with more diligence and earnestness. When you want water, (your pump being dry) you by pouring in a little water, and much labour in pumping, can fetch water; so, by much labouring the heart in preparation, and by prayer, you may recover the gift of prayer, Luke xi. 13. And, as when your fire is out, by laying on fuel, and by blowing the spark remaining, you kindle it again: so by meditation you stir up the grace that is in you, 2 Tim. i. 6, and by the breath of prayer, may revive and inflame the spirit of grace and prayer in you. Yet, if you find that you have not time to prepare by meditation; or having done so, if you find a confusion and distraction in

your meditation, then it will be best to break through all hinderances, and without further preparation attend to the duty of prayer, only with premeditation of God to whom, and of Christ by whom, through the Spirit, you must pray.

If for all this you do not find satisfaction in these holy exercises; yet give them not over: for God is many times best pleased with your services, when, through an humble sense of your failings, you are displeased with yourself for them. Yet more, if when you have wrestled and striven with God and your own heart in prayer, you are forced to go halting away, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 25—31, in the sense of your infirmities; yet be not discouraged, for it is a good sign that you have prevailed with God as Jacob did, Gen. xxxii. 28.

God uses, when he is overcome by prayer, to work in them that do overcome some sense of weakness, to let them know, that they prevail with him in prayer, not by any strength of their own or by any worthiness of their prayer, when they have prayed best; but from the goodness of God's free grace, from the worthiness of Christ's intercession, by whom they offer up their prayers, and from the truth of his promise made unto them that pray. If it were not thus, many, when they have their hearts' desire in prayer, would ascribe all to the goodness of their prayers, and not to the free grace of God; and would be proud of their own strength, which, in truth, is none at all.

CHAPTER III.

DIRECTIONS FOR WALKING WITH GOD, IN THE PROGRESS
OF THE DAY.

SECTION 1.—When you have thus begun the day in prayer by yourself, seeking peace with God through Jesus Christ, and craving his gracious presence to be with you, and for you, that day, you must then conscientiously, according to the nature of the day (be it one of the six days, or the Lord's day) apply yourself to the business of that day, whether it be in acts of religion, or of your personal calling, or in any other works belonging unto you, as you are superior or inferior in family, church, or commonwealth; doing all as in God's sight.

And because all lawful business is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1 Tim. iv. 5, and it is part of your calling (if you are master of a family) to govern your children and servants in the fear of God, and to teach them to live godly; therefore it is your duty to take the fittest time in the morning to call them together, and pray with them; before which prayer, it will be profitable to read the Scripture in order, with due reverence, taking all opportunities, in fit times, to instruct them in the principles of religion, often pressing the word upon them, Deut. vi. 7.

If it be a working day, with cheerfulness and diligence, attend to the work of your particular calling. For whosoever hath no calling whereby he may be profitable to the society of man in family, church, or commonwealth; or having a lawful calling doth not follow it, he lives inordinately, 2 Thess. iii. 10, 11. God never made any man for play or to do nothing. And whatever a man doth, he must do it by virtue of his Christian calling, receiving warrant from it, else he cannot do it in faith, without which no man can please God, Heb. xi. 6. Besides, whosoever is called

to Christianity, has no way to heaven but by walking with God in his personal and particular calling, as well as in his general calling, 1 Cor. vii. 17—24.

1. That you may do this, be sure that the thing whereabout you labour, either with head or hand, be lawful and good.

2. Be diligent and industrious, Eph. iv. 28; for the sluggard and idle person desireth, but has nothing; but the diligent hand maketh rich, Prov. x. 4.

3. Let there be truth, plainness, and equity in all your dealings with men, Prov. x. 4. Circumvent and defraud no man, 1 Thess. iv. 6. Make not your own gain the weight and measure to trade by. I will propose to you sealed weights and rules, according to which, you must converse with all men.

(1.) Consider your neighbour's good as well as your own. Weigh impartially with yourself what proportionable advantage (in common estimation) your neighbour is like to have for that which you receive of him. For you must love your neighbour as yourself, Matt. xxii. 39. In whatsoever you have to do with men, you must not look only to your own advantage, but to the benefit also of your neighbour, Phil. ii. 4. Observe therefore the royal law, the standard of all equity in this kind: Whatsoever you (with a rectified judgment and honest heart) would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them: for this is the law and the prophets, Matt. vii. 12.

(2.) Be watchful that you let not slip your opportunities of lawful advantage, Prov. vi. 6—8; and take heed lest in these evil times you be circumvented by fraud and falsehood, and be ensnared by unnecessary suretyship, Prov. xi. 15, xxii. 26, vi. 1—6.

Whereas in every calling there is a mystery, and for the most part each calling and condition of life has its special sin or sins, which the devil, and custom, for gain or credit sake amongst evil men, have made to seem lawful; yea have put a kind of necessity upon it, which cannot be shunned without exposing a man's self to censure; look narrowly therefore by the light

of God's word, and by experience, to find out that or those sins, and then be as careful to avoid them.

SECT. 2. CONCERNING SUPERIORS AND INFERIORS.

THERE are other works also, such as concern you as you are a superior, and in authority; or as you are inferior, and subject, either in family, church, or commonwealth; in doing which you must act for the glory of God, following the directions of his word and Spirit.

1. As you are a superior, 1st. Walk worthy of all honour and due respect, behaving yourself in your place with such holiness, wisdom, gravity, justice, and mercy; and observing such a medium between too much rigour and remissness, between straining your authority too far, and relaxing it too much, that those under your charge may have cause to fear and love you, Lev. xxv. 43.

2. Wait on your office, and be watchful over your charge with all diligence and faithfulness; using all good means to direct and preserve them in the duties of godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. ii. 2, which is the only end why God has set you over them. The means are, (1.) Go before them in good example. Examples of superiors have a kind of constraining power, working strongly and insensibly upon inferiors. (2.) Pray with and for them, Job i. 5. (3.) Command only things lawful, possible, and convenient, and only those to which the extent of your authority from God and man doth allow you. (4.) As much as in you lies, procure for them the means, and put them upon the opportunities of being, and of doing good, Exod. xx. 8—10. (5.) Prevent likewise and remove all occasions of their being, and of doing evil. (6.) Protect and defend them, according to your power from all wrongs and injuries. (7.) When they do well, encourage them, by letting them see that you take notice as readily of their well-doing, as of their faults, Psa. ci. 6; and so far as is fit, let them have the praise and

fruit of their well-doing, Prov. xxxi. 31. (8.) When they do evil, rebuke them more or less, according to the nature of their fault: but never with bitterness, Col. iii. 19—21, Eph. vi. 9, by railing at, or reviling them, in terms of disdain and contempt. There should be always more strength of reason in your words to convince them of their sin, and to make them see their danger, and to know how to be reformed, than heat of anger, in uttering your own displeasure. (9.) If admonitions and words will reclaim them, then proceed not to correction and blows; but if they regard not your reproofs, then according to the nature of the fault, and condition of the person, and the limits of your authority, you must, in mercy to their soul, give them sufficient but not excessive punishment, Prov. xxix. 15—19. (10.) When you have done thus, and have waited a convenient time for their amendment, but find none; when they thus declare themselves to be rebellious, you must seek the help of higher authority, Deut. xxi. 18—21.

That you may govern according to these directions: consider well and often, first, that those whom you govern, are such whom you must not oppress, neither may you rule over them with rigour, Lev. xxv. 39—43; because they now are, or may be heirs of the same grace together with you, 1 Peter iii. 7.

Secondly, Remember often, that you have a Superior in heaven, Eph. vi. 9, Col. iv. 1; that you are his servant and deputy, governing under him; that all your authority is from him, and that, at last, a time will come when you must give account to him of your government.

II. As you are under authority, Exod. xx. 12. (1.) You must honour and reverence all whom God has set over you. (2.) You must obey them, Eph. v. 24, and vi. 1—5, Heb. xiii. 17, in all such their lawful commands as are within the compass of their authority and commission, and that with fidelity, and singleness of heart, for the Lord's sake, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, Eph. vi. 5, 6. (3.) You must submit to their reproofs, corrections, and just restraints with patience, without mur-

muring, or answering again or resisting, Tit. ii. 9. For if you do not submit to the powers that be ordained of God, or if you resist them, Rom. xiii. 2; you rebel against God, and resist the ordinance of God: which whoso doth, shall receive to himself damnation or judgment. But if you, not only for wrath, but chiefly for conscience to God, Rom. xiii. 5, do submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, 1 Peter ii. 13, 14, doing therein the will of God from the heart, Eph. vi. 6—8, then, whether men requite you or not, you shall be sure of the Lord to receive the reward of the inheritance, Col. iii. 24, for thus obeying men, you serve the Lord Christ.

SECT. 3. CONCERNING BODILY REFRESHMENT AND RECREATIONS.

THE constitution of man's soul and body is such that they cannot long endure to be employed, and stand bent with earnestness upon any thing, without relaxation and convenient refreshment.

(1.) The whole man is refreshed by eating and drinking: in which you must be, first, holy, secondly, just, thirdly, temperate.

1. It was their sin, who fed themselves without all fear of God, Jude 12. Meats and drinks are not sanctified to a man, if he be not pure and holy, Tit. i. 15, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5; and if they be not received with prayer and thanksgiving.

2. You must not eat bread of deceit, Prov. xx. 17, 2 Thess. iii. 12, nor ill-gotten food: every man must eat his own bread. God would have no man to eat the bread of wickedness, nor yet drink the wine of violence, Prov. iv. 17.

3. Moreover, you must not eat and drink for gluttony and drunkenness, Rom. xiii. 13, Prov. xxiii. 20, 21, to please the palate, and to gorge the appetite; but for health and strength, Eccles. x. 17.

(2.) A man when he is weary may be refreshed likewise by variety and interchange of the duties of his

particular and general calling. And the best recreation to a spiritual mind, when it is weary of worldly employments, is to walk into Christ's garden, Cant. iv. 12—15, and v. 1; and there, by reading and meditating, Psa. xciv. 19, singing of Psalms and holy conference, Col. iii. 16, you may solace yourself with the sweet comforts of the Holy Spirit, and enliven your heart with joy in God, even joy in the Holy Ghost; and a delight in the commandments and word of God, Psa. cxix. 14, 16, 24. These are the most profitable, most ravishing, and most lasting delights of all other. And by how much the soul is of a more spiritual, heavenly constitution, by so much more it will content and satisfy itself in these delights.

Yet since bodily and natural delights are part of our Christian liberty, therefore (taking heed that you abuse not your liberty) you may, when you have need, recreate yourself with them. Now that you may innocently enjoy recreation, follow these directions:

1. The matter of your recreation must be of a common nature, and of things of indifferent use. Things holy are too good, and things vicious are too bad, to be sported or played with.

2. Recreations must be seasonable for time; not on the Lord's day, in which time God forbiddeth all men to seek their own pleasures, Isa. lviii. 13. Usually, diversions must be used, not before, but after the body or mind has been thoroughly employed in honest business. Not over long, to the expense and loss of your precious time, which you should study to redeem, not to trifle away, Eph. v. 16.

3. Recreations must always be inoffensive, 1 Cor. xvi. 14; such as do no harm to yourself, or to your neighbour. If your diversions do impeach or hazard your own, or your neighbour's life, estate, or comfortable living, they are unlawful.

4. Recreations must be moderate, not sensual or brutish; looking at no higher or further end than earthly delights. For as he that eateth and drinketh that he may enlarge his appetite, to eat and drink yet

more; so he who sporteth that he may sport, is brutish and sensual. It is very Epicurism: God has threatened that he who loves sport, shall be a poor man, Prov. xxi. 17; and he that loves wine and oil, shall not be rich.

5. Whatsoever your diversions be, you must so recreate the outward man, that you be no worse, but rather better in the inward man. For God hath set such a blessed order in all lawful things, that the meanest being, lawfully used, shall not hinder, but assist us in the best things.

6. In all recreations you must propose the right end; the nearest and immediate end is to revive your weary body, and to quicken your dull mind; but your highest and principal end is, that with this refreshed body and quickened spirit, you may the better serve, and glorify God, 1 Cor. x. 31; that whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do else, all may be done to the glory of God.

This may serve for direction how you should walk with God upon any of the six days, except there be special cause of setting a day apart for holy use, as, for fasting and prayer.



CHAPTER IV.

OF RELIGIOUS FASTING.

SECT. 1. THE NATURE OF, AND REASONS FOR, RELIGIOUS FASTING.

THE fast which I mentioned in the former chapter, of which I am now to treat, is a religious fast; which is, sanctifying a day to the Lord by a willing abstinence from meat and drink, from delights and worldly labours, that the whole man may be more thoroughly humbled before God, and more fervent in prayer.

This fast has two parts; the one, outward, the chastening the body; the other, inward, the afflicting of the soul; under which are contained all those religious acts which concern the setting of the heart right towards God, and the seeking help of God for those things, for which the fast is intended.

Take fasting strictly for bodily abstinence, so it is an indifferent thing, and is no part of God's worship: but take it as it is joined with the inward part, and is referred to a religious end, being a profession of an extraordinary humiliation; and it is a great assistance to a man's spiritual and reasonable service of God, giving a stronger and speedier wing to prayer, which must always go with it, Ezra viii. 23. Psa. xxxv. 13; so it is more than an ordinary worship.

It has the name from the outward part; Mark ix. 29. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Acts xiii. 3; it being most sensible; but has its excellency and efficacy from the inward, being that for which the outward is observed.

A fast is called public, when a whole state, or when any one public congregation doth fast.

Private, when one alone, one family, or some few together, do fast.

Public and private fasts have their warrant from the New Testament, as well as from the Old; which shows that religious fasts were not peculiar to the Jews; but are a Christian duty, belonging to all fitly qualified for them.

In the sacred Scriptures we have manifold examples of private fasts; and examples and commandment for public ones.

Our Lord and Saviour said, that his disciples after his departure from them should fast, Matt. ix. 15. Matt. vi. 16, 17, and gives directions unto all concerning private fasts. The apostle speaks of husbands and wives abstaining from conjugal embraces, that they might give themselves to fasting and prayer, 1 Cor. vii. 5. And we have repeated examples of the apostles, and primitive Christians, for religious fasts, Acts xiii. 2, 3. Acts xiv. 23. All which prove fasting to be a Christian duty.

The case of a person's self, or family, the church, or commonwealth, may be such, that ordinary humiliation and prayer will not suffice. For as there were some devils that could not be cast out, but by fasting and prayer, Mark ix. 29; so it may be that such hardness of heart may be grown upon a person; or some sinful lusts may have gotten so much strength, that they will not be subdued; some evils, private and public, (1 Sam. vii. 5, 7. Judges xx. 18, 23, compared with verse 26) which cannot be prevented or removed; some special graces and blessings, which shall not be obtained or continued, but with the most importunate seeking of God, by fasting and prayer.

Reasons for fasting.

Fasting is contrary to that fulness of bread, which makes both body and soul more disposed to vice, and, indisposed to religious duties, through drowsiness of head, heaviness of heart, dulness and deadness of spirit. Now these being removed, and the dominion of the flesh subdued by fasting, the body will be brought into subjection to the soul, and both body and soul to the will of God, more readily than otherwise they would be.

A day of fasting is a great assistance to the soul, for the better performing of holy duties, such as meditations, reading, and hearing the word, prayer, examining, judging, and reforming a person's self; both because his spirits are better disposed, when he is fasting, to serious devotion; and the mind being so long taken wholly off from the thoughts, cares, and pleasures of this life, he may be more intent and earnest in seeking of God.

“Fasting is an open profession of guiltiness before God, and an expression of sorrow and humiliation; being a real acknowledgment of man's unworthiness, even of the common necessities of this present life.”

But it is not enough that the body be chastened, if the soul be not also afflicted, Isa. lviii. 5; because, it is else but a mere bodily exercise, which profits little; nay, it is but an hypocritical fast, abhorred and con-

demned by God; frustrating a chief end of the fast, which is, that the soul may be afflicted.

Afflicting the soul works repentance; another chief end, and companion of fasting; for godly sorrow causes repentance, never to be repented of, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

When the soul is afflicted, and heavy laden with sin, then a man will readily and earnestly seek after God, even as the sick do to the physician for health, and as a condemned man to the king for a pardon. In their affliction (saith God) they will seek me diligently, Hosea v. 15. If this be true of the outward, then much more of inward affliction.

The afflicted soul is a fit object of God's mercy; to him doth God look that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, Isa. lxvi. 2, that trembles at his word; yea, the bowels of his fatherly compassion are troubled for him, Jer. xxxi. 20, who is troubled and ashamed for his sin.

Moreover, upon a day of humiliation (if a man deal sincerely) this affliction of his soul drives him quite out of himself to seek help of God in Christ; and makes him endeavour to bring his soul into such good frame, that he may truly say he doth not regard iniquity in his heart, Psa. lxvi. 18, and that his unfeigned purpose is, and endeavour shall be, to keep a good conscience toward God and man alway. Whence follows boldness, and assurance, through Christ Jesus, that God will be found of him, John xv. 7, and that in God's own time, and in the best manner, he shall have all his holy desires fulfilled.

Who are to observe religious fasts.

All whom lawful authority enjoins, are to keep a public fast, Joel i. 14, so far as health will permit.

These only may keep a private fast:

First, Such as are of understanding; else how can they search out their ways, judge themselves, or pray? In public fasts, if authority think fit, little children may be caused to fast, that the parents, and others of understanding, may (as by objects of misery) be stir-

red up to a more thorough humiliation; but, in private, children and idiots are to be exempted.

Secondly, Novices and unexperienced Christians are not usually to fast in private; such were Christ's disciples, Matt. ix. 14, 16, 17. Luke v. 33, 34, 35, &c. When exception was taken at our Saviour, because they fasted not, he excuses them, not only that it was unseasonable to fast in a time of joy, while he, the bridegroom, was with them: but because they were not able to bear so strong an exercise, they being like old vessels and old garments, which would be made worse rather than better by the new wine, or new cloth of fasting. Strong physic is good, but not for babes. There is not the same reason why they may fast in private as in public, because the minister by teaching them, and by praying with them, and for them, taketh from them the greatest part of the burden of the fast in private.

Thirdly, All such as are not in their own power, are not to keep a private fast, when those under whose power they are shall expressly contradict it. For the husband might disallow the vow of his wife, even that wherewith she had bound herself to afflict her soul by fasting, Numb. xxx. 3—8, 13. Wherefore none may fast against the will of those who have full power to command their service and attendance.

When, and how long, fasts are to be observed.

Public fasts are to be kept as often as authority shall see cause.

Private, as often as a man shall have more than ordinary cause of seeking unto God, either for others or himself, 2 Sam. xii. 16. Neh. i. 4; for removing or preventing imminent judgments from the church and commonwealth, or for procuring their necessary good, Dan. ix. 3; for subduing some headstrong lust; for obtaining some necessary grace, or special blessing, Acts x. 30; for preparing himself for some special service of God, or the like.

Though I cannot but justly complain of Christians seldom fasting; yet I dare not allow you to make this extraordinary exercise of religion to be ordinary and

common: for then it will soon degenerate into mere form or superstition: but wish you to observe it as you shall have special occasion, and when ordinary seeking of God is not likely to prevail.

It is indifferent which of the six days you set apart for fasting. Let it be as shall best suit with your occasions. As for the Lord's day, though it cannot be denied but that if the present necessity require, you may fast upon that day, neither can I utterly deny servants, and such as are under the power of others (if they can have no other time) sometimes to make choice of that day; yet because the Sabbath is a day of Christian cheerfulness, and fasting is somewhat of the nature of a free-will offering, I think you will do best to set such a day apart to yourself for fasting, which is more your own, and not the Lord's day.

The Scripture has not determined how long a continued fast should be kept. We have examples that some have fasted a longer time, as three days, Esther iv. 16; some a shorter, but none less than one day, Judges xx. 26. In hotter countries they could, without injury to health, abstain from food longer than we can who live in a colder; but I think the body cannot usually be sufficiently afflicted through want of food in less time than one day.

Thus I have proved religious fasting to be a Christian duty. And have showed what it is; who should and may fast, when and how long. It remains that I show you how you may keep a fast acceptable to God, and profitable to yourself, which is the principal thing to be regarded in a fast. And this I do the rather, because many well affected Christians have professed that they would gladly set about the duty, but ingenuously confess that they know not how to do it, and (in particular) how to be intent and spiritually employed, for want of matter, for a whole day together. But of this in the next section.

SECT. 2. DIRECTIONS FOR THE KEEPING A RELIGIOUS FAST.

By way of preparation to a religious fast, do thus: Take but a moderate supper the night before: for if a man glut himself over night, he will be more unfit for the duty of humiliation the next day, and it differs in effect little from breaking of fast next morning.

When you commend yourself to God alone by prayer that night (as every good Christian doth) then set yourself in a special manner to seek the Lord, as the saints of God; in the beginning of their fasts, have done; 2 Chron. xx. 3. Dan. x. 12; proposing to yourself the end of your intended fast; remembering this, that if the chief occasion and end be your own private good, that you forget not others, nor the public; or if it be the public, yet mind also your own private; for until you have renewed your own peace with God, your fasting and praying will prevail little for the public. And God having joined the public with our private good in prayer, we must not disjoin them in our fasting. Resolve with yourself, to the utmost of your power, to keep a religious fast unto God, according to his will; for this cause in your prayers add serious petitions to God for his grace to assist you therein.

When you awake that night, let not your thoughts be upon worldly business, much less upon any evil thing; but let them be holy, such as may tend to the assistance of the holy duties of the next day.

Also, if necessity hinder not, arise early on the day of your fast. It is most agreeable to a day of fasting, whereon your flesh is to be subdued, that you allow not yourself so much sleep as at other times. It is probable, that for this cause some lay on the ground, others in sackcloth, in the nights of their fasts, 2 Sam. xii. 16; not only to express, but to assist their humiliation, by keeping them from sleeping over much, or over sweetly, Joel i. 13.

When the day is come, be strict in observing the outward fast. To this end,

First, Forbear all meat and drink, Esth. iv. 16. Luke v. 33, until the set time of the fast be ended, which usually is about supper-time. A general council in the primitive church decreed, that total abstinence should be observed until evening prayer was ended. In case of necessity, that is, when total abstinence will indeed disable you from attending to the chief duties of that day, you may eat or drink; for in such cases God will have mercy rather than sacrifice; but then it must be a small refreshment, and that not of a dainty kind; only such and so much as may remove the impediment to the spiritual performance of the duties of that day.

Secondly, Abstain from all other worldly delights, as (so far as will stand with comeliness) from fine apparel, Exod. xxxiii. 4, 5, 6; from all recreations and pleasant music. Isa. lviii. 3: from the marriage bed, and the like, 1 Cor. vii. 5. Joel ii. 16.

Thirdly, Abstain from all worldly labour, as upon a Sabbath day, Isa. lviii. 3; for worldly business, and the cares thereof, do distract the thoughts, and hinder devotion, as well as worldly delights; and a ceasing from these gives a full opportunity to holy employments the whole day. Therefore the Jews were commanded to sanctify a fast, Joel ii. 26. And that yearly fast, called the day of atonement, Lev. xxiii. 27—32, was, upon peril of their lives, to be kept by a forbearance of all manner of work. Now although the ceremonials of that day are abolished in Christ, yet, forbearing work, as well as meat and drink (being of the substance and morality of a fast) remains to be observed in all truly religious fasts.

Thus much for the outward fast: you must be as strict in observing the inward.

Begin the day with prayer, according as I directed you to do every day; but with more than ordinary preparation, with fervency and faith, praying for God's special grace, to enable you to sanctify a fast that day according to the commandment.

Then apply yourself to the main work of the day, which has these parts: (1.) Unfeigned humiliation; (2.) Reformation, together with reconciliation; and (3.) Earnest invocation.

The soul is then humbled, the heart broken and truly afflicted, when a man is become vile in his own eyes, through consciousness of his own unworthiness, and when his heart is full of grief and anguish through fear of God's displeasure; and with godly sorrow and holy shame in himself, and anger against himself for sin. These affections excited do much afflict the heart.

This deep humiliation is to be wrought, partly by awakening your conscience through a sight of the law, and apprehensions of God's just judgments due to you for the breach of it, which will break your heart; and partly by the gospel, raising your mind to an apprehension and admiration of the love of God to you in Christ, which will melt your heart, and cause you the more kindly to grieve, and to loath yourself for sin, and also to entertain hope of mercy, whence will follow reconciliation, reformation, and holy calling upon God by prayer.

To work this humiliation, there must be,

First, Examination, to find out your sins.

Secondly, An accusation of yourself, with due aggravation of your sins.

Thirdly, Judging and passing sentence against yourself for sins.

Sin is the transgression of the law, and revealed will of God; wherefore for the better finding out of your sins, you must set before you God's holy law, for your light and rule, Psa. cxix. 105. And if you have not learned, or cannot remember the heads of the manifold duties commanded, or vices forbidden; then get some catalogue or table, wherein the same are set down to your hand, which you may read with serious consideration and self-inquiry, fixing your thoughts most upon those particular sins whereof you find yourself most guilty.

If you do not meet with one more fit for your purpose, then use the following table.

But expect not herein an enumeration of all particular sins and duties, which would require a volume; but of those which are principal and most common; by which, if your conscience be awakened, it will bring to your remembrance other sins and omissions of duty, not mentioned in the table, of which you may be guilty.

The first table of the law concerns the duties of love and piety to God, the performance whereof tends immediately to the glory of God, and mediately to the salvation and good of man.

1st. The first commandment respects the loving, serving, and glorifying the only true God, as your God, Exod. xx. 2, 3.

Examining yourself by this (and so in the other commandments) think thus with yourself: Do I know and acknowledge the only true God to be such an one as he has revealed himself in his word and works, namely, One only infinite, immaterial, immutable, incomprehensible spirit, and everlasting Lord God; having being and all-sufficiency in and from himself; one who is absolutely full of all perfections, and incapable of the least defect; being wisdom, goodness, omnipotence, love, truth, mercy, justice, holiness, and whatsoever is originally and of itself excellent; the only Potentate, King of kings, Lord of lords, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, God blessed for ever? Amen.

Do I believe his word, in all things related, commanded, promised, and threatened therein? and that his holy and wise Providence is in all things? Have I him and his word in continual remembrance?

Do I esteem and exalt God in my heart above all, so that it humbly adores him at the very mention and thought of him; judging myself to be nothing in mine own eyes, yea, esteeming all creatures to be nothing in comparison of him?

Have I given religious worship to him only? Have I believed in him, and in him only? Have I sworn by him as there has been cause, and by him alone? Have I prayed unto him, and him alone? And sought to obtain help of him only by such means as he has appointed; giving the glory and thanks of my being and well-being, and of all other things which are good, unto him?

Is my conscience so convinced of the truth and authority of God, that it holds itself absolutely bound to obey him in all things, so that it does incite to that which is good, restrain from that which is evil, encourage me in well-doing, and check me when I do ill?

Is my will resolved upon absolute and unfeigned obedience; to do whatsoever God commands, to forbear whatsoever he forbids, to subscribe to whatsoever he does, as well done; and have I borne patiently, all that, which either by himself or by any of his creatures, he has inflicted upon me?

Have mine affections been so for God, that I have loved him with all my heart, loving nothing more than him, nothing equal to him? Do I hate every thing that is contrary to him? Hath my confidence been only in him, and my expectation of good from him? Have my desires been to him, and from him, longing above all things to have communion with him? Has it been my greatest fear to offend him, or to be separated from him? Has it been my greatest grief and shame that I have sinned against him? Have I rejoiced in God as my chief good? Has mine anger risen against whatsoever I saw contrary to his glory? Have I been zealous for God? And have I made him the utmost end of all mine actions?

Hath my whole outward man, as tongue, senses, and all other active powers of my body, been employed in the service of the true God, and yielded obedience to his will?

Or, contrariwise, am I not guilty of denying of God in word, in works, or at least in heart? questioning the

truth of his being, and of his word, denying his providence, power, or some other of his divine attributes? Have I not been ignorant of God, and of his will, and erroneous and misbelieving, if not heretical in my conceptions concerning God the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost?

Have I not been over curious in prying into the nature and secret counsels of God, beyond the rule of the revealed will of God? Have I not put myself, or any other creature in the place of God, through pride preferring, and resting upon my own way and will before God's, or by making myself mine utmost end, professing God and his religion, only to serve my own designs, or by seeking to the creature, (as to angel, saint, devil, or witch,) instead of the Creator?

Have I not been forgetful of God, and of his will? Is not my conscience impure, blind, deluded, or seared; and my will perverse, obstinate, impatient, and murmuring against God, and full of dissimulation?

Have I not set my affections upon the world, rather than upon God, loving that which is evil, hating that which is good, yea, God himself, if not directly, yet in his holiness, shining in his ordinances and in his children, or as he is a severe inflicter of punishment? fearing man more than God, trusting in the creature, making something besides God my chief joy? Have I not presumed when I had cause to despair, and despaired after that I had cause to hope? Have I not tempted God many ways? And have I not in the matters of God been either cold, lukewarm, or blindly or presumptuously zealous?

Has there not been a proneness in my whole outward man, to rebel against God?

2d. The second commandment concerns all such worship of God, which he only has appointed; whereby he communicates himself to man, and man again makes profession of him: forbidding, under one kind, all such as are not by him ordained, Exod. xx. 4—6.

Think thus: have I worshipped God in spirit and

truth, in all the kinds and parts of his worship, public and private, ordinary or extraordinary; as, by hearing, reading, and meditating of his word; by praying, praising, and giving thanks to him; by a right use of his sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's supper; and by religious fasting, religious feasting, and making of vows, according as I have had special occasion? And have I done what has been in my power for the maintaining and promoting of God's true worship; and have I, according to my place, executed aright, or submitted unto the government and discipline of the church of God?

Or, besides the omission of the former duties, am I not guilty, some way or other, of idol worship, conceiving of God in my mind, or representing him to my sense, in the likeness of any creature?

Have I not added to or detracted from, any part of God's worship? Have I not run into the appearances and occasions of idolatry, as, by presence at idol service, by marriage and needless familiarity with idolatrous persons? At least, is not my heart guilty of not hating, but rather lingering after, idolatrous worship? Have I not been guilty of superstition or will-worship, &c.

3d. The third commandment concerns the glory of God's holy name, shining forth in his titles, attributes, religion, word, ordinances, people, or any thing that has in it any signatures of his holiness or excellency; forbidding the taking of it in vain, and that in all words or actions, religious or common, Exod. xx. 7.

Have I glorified God, by answering my holy profession, with an holy and unblamable conversation; by performing all holy duties with due preparation, knowledge and devotion, also by thinking and speaking of the names and holy things of God with holy reverence; and in particular by fearing an oath?

Or, have I not caused the name, religion, and people of God, to be ill thought of, and dishonoured by my evil course of living, or at least by committing some

gross sin? Am I not guilty of rash, unprepared, heedless, forgetful, and fruitless reading, hearing, receiving the sacraments, or performances of any other part of the worship of God?

Have I not thought or spoken blasphemously or contemptuously of God, or any of the things of God? Have I not used the name of God needlessly, rashly, wickedly, or falsely in swearing, or lightly in my salutations, admirations, or otherwise in my ordinary discourse?

Have I not abused the name of God, his Scriptures, his ordinances and creatures, using them for other purposes than he allows, as, for sports, charms, or any sorcery, luxury, or the like? Have I not passed by the great works of God's power, mercy, and judgments, (especially of his redeeming love in Christ Jesus,) without due observation and acknowledgment of God therein?

4th. The fourth commandment concerns the ordinary solemn time of the service and worship of God, requiring that the seventh day (now our Lord's day) be kept as an holy rest, Exod. xx. 8—11.

Have I upon the six days remembered the Lord's day, that I might despatch all my worldly business, and prepare my heart, that when it came I might keep an holy Sabbath to the Lord, according to the commandment? Did I, according as my health would permit, rise early on that day?

Have I performed my daily (both morning and evening) exercises of religion alone, and with my family, that day in prayer?

Have I caused all under my authority, according to my power, to rest from all manner of works and worldly recreations; also myself not only from the labour of my body, but of my mind in all worldly business; except about the things that concern common honesty, and comeliness, works of mercy, and such works of necessity as could not be done before, or let alone till afterwards?

Have I always prepared my heart before I went

into the house and presence of God, by meditation of God's word and works, and in particular by examination and reformation of my ways, by prayer, thanksgiving and holy resolution to carry myself as in God's presence, and to hear and obey whatsoever I should be taught out of the word of God?

Have I caused my family to go with me to the church? And did I with them come in due time, and, being there, stay the whole time of prayer, reading, and preaching of the word, singing of psalms, receiving and administering the sacraments, even that of baptism, when others are baptized; and did I attend diligently, and join with the minister and the rest of the congregation in all those holy exercises?

Did I spend the day, after the morning and evening prayers, sermons, or catechizing, in meditation, and (as I had opportunity) in conference and repetition of what I had heard? Also in visiting the sick, and other works of mercy; and so, from the beginning to the end of the day, have been employed in holy thoughts, words, and deeds, and all this with spiritual delight?

Or, am I not guilty of forgetting the Lord's day before it came, and of neglecting and profaning it when it came? as by mere idleness, or by taking opportunity of leisure from the business of my calling to be licentious in company keeping, &c., or by reserving that day for journeys, idle visits, and for the despatch of worldly business?

Have I not been careless of the service of God, frequenting it no oftener than law, or very shame did compel me?

Have I not been careless whether my servants or children, did keep the Sabbath or no? And when I was at church, did I not idle away the time, by gazing about or by sleeping, or by worldly thoughts?

Have I not bought, sold, spoken of, or done other works forbidden to be done, spoken, or contrived upon that day?

Have I not, under the name of recreation, sought mine own pleasure, using sports and games, which

cause the mind to be more indisposed to the due performance of holy duties than honest labours do, to which they are subordinate, and with them forbidden to be done that day?

Has not the strict observance of the Sabbath been at least tedious to me, so that I could have wished that it had been gone long before it was ended?

5th. The second table concerns duties of love and righteousness towards man, the performance whereof tends immediately to the good of man; but mediately to the proof of his being truly religious, and to the glory of God.

God made man not to be alone, nor to be only for himself; therefore, for the greater good of mankind, he has endued men with variety of gifts, and degrees of place, some excelling others, both in family, church, and commonwealth; yet so as each is excellent in his gift and place, even the meanest made worthy of respect from the greatest, because of his usefulness for the common good: even as the least member of the natural body is truly useful and to be respected as well, though not so much, as the most honourable.

Now when each member in the body politic does acknowledge the several gifts and mutual use one of another, according to their place, then is there a sweet harmony in the society of man, and there is a sure foundation laid of all good offices of love between man and man.

Wherefore, in the first place, God in the fifth commandment, Exod. xx. 12, provides that the order which he had set amongst men, should inviolably be observed; requiring all inferiors, under the name of children, to honour their superiors, that is, to acknowledge that dignity and excellency which is in them, showing it in giving due respect unto their persons and names; implying that all superiors should walk worthy of honour, and that they should mutually shew good respect to their inferiors, seeking their good, as well as their own.

Concerning this fifth commandment, think thus: do I live in a lawful calling? And have I walked worthy my general calling of Christianity, and discharged my particular calling, and employed the gifts which God gave me, for the good of the society, of man in family, church, or commonwealth?

Have I honoured all men, for that they were made after the image of God, and have yet some remains thereof; are capable of having it renewed, if it be not renewed already; and because they are or may be useful for the common good of man; using them with all courteousness and kind respect; excepting when, and wherein, they have made themselves vile by open wickedness; so that it will not stand with the glory of God, the good of others, or of themselves, or with the discharge of my place, to show them countenance? Have I showed my due respect to others, in praying to God, and, as there has been cause, in giving him thanks for them?

Have I conceived the best, that in charity I might, of others? And by love have I endeavoured, according to my place, to cure their grosser evils, and to cover their infirmities? And have I to my power promoted my neighbour's good name and reputation, and have I been contented, nay desirous, that he should be esteemed as well, nay, better than myself? And have I, both in his life-time, and after his death, given him the honour of common humanity, as in common civilities at least, and in comely burial, so far as any way it did belong to me, and in maintaining his injured reputation? &c.

Have I, being superior to others in gifts of any kind, as learning, wit, wealth, strength, &c., employed those gifts to the honour of God, and the good of man, more than others?

As I am beyond others in years, am I superior to them in gravity, good counsel, and good example?

As I am above others in authority, do I acknowledge that it is not originally in me, but derived to me from God, and have I held it, and used it for him;

keeping within the due limits thereof, governing with wisdom and moderation; procuring the good of their bodies and souls, so far as lay in me; commanding only things lawful and convenient; encouraging them in well-doing, by commendation and rewards; preventing evil as much as I could, and restraining it in them by seasonable and due reproofs, according to the quality of the offence, and of the person, when fairer means would not prevail?

As I am an equal; have I esteemed others better than myself, and striven in honour to prefer them?

As I am below others in gifts and age, have I in word and gesture, showed them due reverence, and thankfully made use of their good parts and experiences?

As I am under authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth, have I submitted myself to all my governors, reverencing their persons, obeying readily all those their lawful commandments, which are within the compass of their authority to enjoin me? Have I received their instructions, and borne patiently and fruitfully their reproofs and corrections?

Or do I not live without a lawful calling? or idly or unprofitably in it? Have I not buried or abused my talent and place, to the hurt rather than the good of myself and others?

Have I not been high-minded, esteeming better of myself than there was cause, seeking after the vain applause of men?

Have I not despised others? Yea, those who were good, yea, my superiors? Showing it by my irreverent gestures, and by my speeches to them, and of them? Have I not, some way or other, detracted from, and diminished the credit of others, or, at least, envied their due estimation?

As I am a superior, have I not carried myself insolently, lightly, or dissolutely?

As I am under authority, have I not carried myself stubbornly and undutifully?

6th. God having set an order in human society, does next provide for the life and safety of the person of man, who must keep this order, and make this society, by forbidding, in the sixth commandment, whatsoever may take it away, or impair it.

Have I had a care of mine own health, in a sober use of meat, drink, labour, sleep, recreation, physic, or whatever else is apt to promote health, and to prevent disease?

Have I been, or am I meek, patient, long-suffering, easy to be appeased, apt to forgive, full of compassion, kind, merciful; showing all these in soft speeches, gentle answers, courteous behaviour, requiting evil with good, comforting the afflicted, relieving the needy, peace-making, and by doing all other offices of love, which might tend to my neighbour's safety or comfort?

Or, have I not wished myself dead, or neglected the means of my health? Have I not impaired it, by surfeits, by excessive labour or sports, by fretting and over grieving, or by any other means? And have I not had thoughts of doing myself harm?

Have I not been angry unadvisedly, maliciously, and revengefully? showing surly gestures and behaviour, as sour looks, shaking the head or hand, gnashing the teeth, stamping, mocking, railing, cursing, quarreling, smiting, hurting, or taking away the life of man any way, without God's allowance?

Have I not been a sower of discord, or some way or other been an occasion of the discomfort, if not the death of others?

7th. The seventh commandment concerns chastity, whereby God provides for a pure propagation and conservation of mankind; forbidding all bodily pollution, under the name of adultery, *Exod. xx. 13.*

Have I been modest, sober, shamefaced, possessing my body in chastity, shutting mine eyes, and stopping mine ears, and restraining my other senses from all

objects and occasions of lust? bridling my tongue from lascivious speeches; forbearing all manner of obscenity and wantonness; abstaining from self-pollution, fornication, or any other natural or unnatural defilement of my body, either in deed or desire?

And being married, was I wise in my choice? and have I kept the marriage-bed undefiled, through a sanctified, sober, and seasonable use thereof?

Or, am I not guilty of manifold acts of uncleanness; at least of immodest looks, touches and embraces; of wanton speeches, gestures, apparel, and behaviour?

Have I not run into the manifold occasions of adultery and uncleanness; as idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, choice of such meats, drinks, or any other things that provoke lust; effeminate dancing, frequenting wanton company, or of unseasonable conversing with the other sex alone?

8th. The eighth commandment concerns the preservation of man's goods, the means of his comfortable maintenance in this life, forbidding all injuries and wrongs, under the name of stealing.

Have I a good title to the things which I possess, as by lawful inheritance, gift, reward, contract, or any other way which God allows? Have I been industrious and faithful in my calling, frugal and provident? Have I done that for which I have received pay or maintenance from others; and have I given to every man his own, whether tribute, wages, debts, or any other dues?

Or, have I not got my living by an unlawful calling? or have I impoverished myself and mine by idleness, luxurious and unnecessary expenses? by gaming, unadvised suretyship, or otherwise? Have I not withheld from myself or others, through covetousness, that which should have been expended?

Have I not gotten or kept my neighbour's goods, by fraud, oppression, falsehood, or by force, and made no restitution? Have I not some way or other impaired my neighbour's estate?

9th. The ninth commandment concerns truth of speech; the great means of intercourse between man and man, and of preserving the rights, and redressing the disorders of human society; forbidding all falsehood of speech, under the name of bearing false witness, Exod. xx. 14.

Have I at all times, in all things spoken the truth from my heart? giving testimony, in public or private, by word or writing, of things concerning mine own or neighbour's name, credit, life, chastity, goods, or in any matters of speech between me and others, whether in affirming, denying, with or without oath, or in any bare reports, promises, or in any other way?

Or am I not guilty of telling lies jestingly, officiously, or perniciously? Have I not raised, spread, or received false reports of my neighbour? Have I not spoken falsely in buying and selling; also in commending by word or writing unworthy persons, dispraising the good, in boasting of myself, or flattering of others?

Have I not given false evidence, used equivocations, or concealed the truth which I should have spoken, or perverted it when I did speak it?

10th. The tenth commandment concerns contentment with a man's own condition; the foundation of all order and justice amongst men; forbidding the contrary, namely, coveting that which is not his, Exod. xx. 15.

Am I contented with mine own condition, as, with my place which I hold in family, church, or commonwealth, with husband or wife, house or estate? Can I heartily rejoice in the prosperity of others, even when they are greater, happier, wiser, or better than myself?

Or have I not been full of discontent with my condition, coveting after something or other which was my neighbour's? at least by actual concupiscence, in multitude of evil and envious thoughts, arising from

the law of my members, though my will hath contradicted them?

RULES FOR SELF-EXAMINATION FROM THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

Besides the breaches of God's holy law, have I not been guilty of many sins peculiarly against the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Such as opposition to, and hatred of Christ, and his cause; being incensed against him, and his method of salvation; or vilifying his gospel by word or writing, Isa. xlv. 25.

Scepticism and gross infidelity, from a disinclination to conviction; and not impartially, in the fear of God, weighing the evidences in proof of the heavenly mission of our Lord and Saviour, John v. 39.

Unsound faith; not extended to all the revealed truths and duties of the gospel; either through culpable ignorance, strong prejudice, resolving to believe no further than I can comprehend, or may be consistent with the quiet of my conscience in an evil course, John iii. 19—21. Or has it been a mere notional and historical faith? However extended to all the doctrines, duties, promises, and threatenings of the gospel; yet not attended with heart-impressions, humbling the soul, making me poor in spirit at the feet of Christ; seeking the glory of God and the Redeemer, and my own salvation, as my chief business, Gal. vi. 15. Has it been such a faith that does not purify the heart, Acts xxiv. 18; that worketh not by love, Gal. v. 6; that unites not the soul to Christ; so as to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, Gal. v. 24; that directs not the whole conversation by the will and example of our acknowledged Lord and Master; not resting by faith in his promises, in all seasons of adversity and prosperity, 1 John ii. 6; that moderates not fear and hope concerning things present and temporal, by looking to Jesus, and things eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 13. Heb. xii. 12; that does not trust and rely upon Christ alone (in the prescribed way) for justification and salvation; submitting unto the righteousness of God in him, Rom. x. 3, 4.

Impenitency; not being seriously affected with an

humbling sense of the odious nature of sin; not searching out my offences, but hiding and extenuating them, Rom. ii. 3, 4. Not abasing myself for my sins (so many and aggravated) against all the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor. vi. 2. No resolved and vigilant forsaking of sin, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, Matt. iii. 8.

Despair of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, saying, There is no hope, Jer. ii. 25.

Presumption, and turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude 4; continuing in sin, that grace may abound, Rom. vi. 1, 2.

Making light of Christ, not esteeming him as the pearl of great price, and being willing to part with all to obtain it, Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

Slighting the benefits of redemption, Luke xiv. 16—20; such as peace with God through the blood of Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit, as sanctifier; meetness for, and a title to the kingdom of heaven; and communion with God in the way to it.

Undervaluing the means of salvation; the holy Scriptures, secret prayer, public worship, the sacraments, &c. and not being spiritual in, if attendant upon them, John iv. 23. Heb. x. 25.

Great coldness and indifference about the honour of the sacred name into which I was baptized; and all the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, Phil. iii. 3.

No joyful progress in the works of faith and labours of love, to the full assurance of hope, even where faith is unfeigned, Phil. iii. 12—15.

Inconstancy and fickleness in the service of God, with the natural consequences thereof, despondency, diffidence, and the spirit of bondage again to fear, Gal. v. 7. Rom. viii. 15.

Slavish fear and cowardice, 2 Tim. i. 7.

Declensions in the love of Christ and the fruits of holiness; and growing conformity to the world, luxury, gaiety, pastimes, &c. with increasing inattention to the soul's immortality, the approach of death and eternity, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection and

judgment-day, heaven's joys or hell's horrors, Rom. ii. 1—10. 2 Peter iii. 14.

Upon the whole,—How shall man be just with (or justify himself before) God? If he contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand, Job ix. 2, 3. So that every mouth must be stopped, since all the world is become guilty before God. Being justified (if ever) freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth (in the most illustrious manner) to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, &c. Rom. iii. 19—27.

Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, Acts xiii. 40, 41. Examine yourselves, 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 reprobates? 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

SELF-JUDGING FOR SIN.

THE EVIL NATURE AND EFFECTS OF SIN.

Thus having by God's holy law found out your sins, you must arraign and accuse yourself, as it were at the bar of God's tribunal; representing your sins to your mind as they are, in their heinousness and mischievousness, according to their several aggravations.

First, Consider sin in its nature. It is a moral evil, an irregularity in the soul and actions, and enmity to God the chief good; it is the worst evil, worse than the devil and Satan, he had not been a devil but for sin; worse than hell, which, as it is a torment, is caused by sin, and is only contrary to the good of the creature, whereas sin itself is contrary to the good of the Creator. It is such a distemper of the soul, that the Scripture calls it wickedness of folly, even foolishness of madness, Eccles. vii. 25.

Secondly, Considering from whence sin in man had its original, even from the devil, John viii. 44. Gen. iii. who is the father of it; it came, and comes from hell, James iii. 15; therefore is earthly, sensual,

devilish. Whensoever you sin, you do the lusts of the devil.

Thirdly, Consider the nature of the law whereof sin is a transgression: a law most perfect, most holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12. Gal. iii. 21. Rom. viii. 3; which would have given eternal life to the doers of it, had it not been for this cursed sin.

Fourthly, Consider the person against whom sin is committed, whom it highly offends and provokes; it is God, Psa. li. 4, to whom you owe yourself and all that you have; who made, Acts xviii. 28, and does preserve you, and yours; who, though you have sinned, desires not your death, Ezek. xxxiii. 11, nor afflicts you willingly; but had rather that you should humble yourself, repent, and live; who, that you might be saved, gave his only begotten Son to death, to ransom you, John iii. 16; who, by his ministers, makes known his word and good-will towards you, making proclamation, that if you will repent and believe, you shall be saved; yea, entreats you by his ministers to be reconciled to him, 2 Cor. v. 20. It is that God, who is rich in goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, 2 Peter iii. 9, waiting when you will return, that you may live; who, on the other hand, if you despise this his goodness, and shall continue in your sin, thereby provoking the eyes of his glory, Isa. iii. 8, is a terrible and revengeful God, Nahum i. 2; who, if you still err in heart, and will not walk in his ways, has sworn in his wrath, that you shall not enter into his rest, Heb. iii. 11; who in his wrath is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29; and is ready and able to destroy body and soul in the eternal vengeance of hell-fire, Matt. x. 28.

Fifthly, Consider sin in the evil effects of it, namely, it brought a curse upon the whole creation, Gen. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 20, for man's sake; whereby the creatures are become defective, and oftentimes unserviceable, nay, hurtful to you. From your sins come all manner of diseases and afflictions that ever befell you. This your sin (until it be repented of and pardoned) makes you hateful to God, Psa. xi. 5, separates

between you and God, Isa. lix. 2, causing him to withhold good things from you, Jer. v. 25, and to inflict evil upon you, even in this life. It defiles the whole man, Tit. i. 15, and every renewed act of sin does strengthen the body of sin, and works a decay of grace in you, though you be regenerate. And if it be gross iniquity, if it does not benumb and sear your conscience, yet it will wound it, and break the peace thereof, if it be tender; vexing it as motes do your eye, or thorns your feet, Psa. li. causing terrors and doubtings of salvation; God's withdrawing his favour and loving countenance from you; and, if you be not in Christ, it will in the end bring upon you everlasting damnation, Matt. xxv. 46. Rev. xxi. 8.

Sixthly, Consider the ransom for sin, who paid it, and what was paid; consider Christ Jesus, who he was, and what he did and suffered to take away your sin. He, the only Son of God, very God, did veil his glory for a time, and left heaven to dwell in the tabernacle of human flesh, taking upon him the estate of a servant, Phil. ii. 6—8; he was poor, despised of men, Isa. liii. 3; persecuted from the manger to the cross; made to shed tears abundantly; yea, so tormented with the sense of God's wrath for your sin, that for very anguish he did sweat as it were drops of blood, Luke xxii. 44. He was accused, condemned, spit upon, mocked, buffeted, and scourged by wicked men, Matt. xxvii. 1—31; made to bear his own cross, till for very faintness he could bear it no longer, Mark xv. 21; then he was crucified between thieves, dying the most accursed death, Gal. iii. 13; and, which to him was more than all the rest, he, in his human apprehension, was forsaken of God, crying out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt. xxvii. 46.

Now you may be assured, that if the justice of God could have been satisfied, and your sin expiated and done away by a less price, Jesus Christ, his only Son, would never have been caused to pour out his soul a sacrifice for your sin, Isa. liii. 10, 12.

This looking (by the eyes of your faith) upon Christ whom you have pierced, Zech. xii. 10, will at once

show you the greatness and hatefulness of your sin, which required such an infinite ransom; and the infinite love of God in Christ towards you, even when you were his enemy; in providing for you a sure remedy, which will free you from both the guilt and power of this sin. The thoughts hereof will (if any thing will) even melt the heart into godly sorrow for sin, and withal, give hope (in the use of means) of mercy and forgiveness.

That the former aggravations may be more pressing, observe these directions :

1st. You must consider sin in particulars, one after another ; for generals leave no impressions ; therefore David cries out of his bloody sin in particular, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. Psa. li. 14.

2d. You must judge the least sin to be damnable, James i. 15, until it be pardoned, and repented of in particular, if known unto you ; at least in general, if not known.

3d. The greater any sin is, Heb. x. 29, the greater you must judge the guilt and punishment to be.

4th. Sins committed long since, unrepented of, and the punishments deserved but deferred, are to be judged to be as near, lying at the door, Gen. iv. 7, and exposing you to condemnation, as if committed at the present ; so that you may look for God's hand to be upon you this present moment. They, like the blood of Abel, or sins of Sodom, cry as loud to God for vengeance now, as the first day they were committed ; nay, louder, because they are aggravated by impenitency, and by the abuse of God's long-suffering, Rom. xxiv. 5.

5th. Your humiliation must, in your endeavour, proportion your guilt of sin, Ezra ix. x. 1—14 ; Matt. xxvi. 75 ; the greater the guilt, the greater the humiliation.

Know, therefore, that sins against God, of the first table, all things considered, are greater than those of the second, 1 Sam. ii. 25. Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

The more grace hath been offered you by the gospel, Matt. xi. 21—24 ; and the more means you have

had to know God and his will, the greater is your sin, if you be ignorant, impenitent, and disobedient.

The number of sins, according as they are multiplied, do increase the guilt and punishment, Isa. lix. 12, 13. Ezek. xvi. 51.

The more bonds are broken in sinning, as, committing it against the law of God, of nature, and nations, Jude 10. Jer. xxxiv. 18, against conscience, promises, and vows; the greater the sin and punishment.

All these things known and considered, now judge yourself, 1 Cor. xi. 31; pass a condemnatory sentence against yourself: whence will, through the grace of God, follow affliction of soul. Now you will see that you are base and vile, and that you may justly fear God's judgments; now you will see cause to be grieved, ashamed, yea, even confounded in yourself, and to conceive an holy indignation against yourself.

You will now think thus: Ah! that I should be so foolish, so brutish, so mad, to commit this, to commit these sins (think of particulars) to break so holy a law, to offend, grieve, and provoke so good and so great a majesty! So ill to requite him, Deut. xxxii. 6; so little to fear him, vile wretch that I am! That I should commit not only sins of common frailty, but gross sins, many and oft against knowledge, conscience, &c. (but still mind particulars.) Jesus Christ my Saviour shed his precious blood for me, to redeem me from my vain conversation, and do I yet again and again transgress, O miserable man that I am! What am I in myself, at best, but a lump of sin and pollution, not worthy to be loved, but worthy to be destroyed; one that may justly look to have my heart hardened, or my conscience terrified, and that, if God be not infinitely merciful, he should pour upon me all his plagues. Wherefore remembering my doings that they are not good, but abominably evil, I loath myself for mine abominations, Ezek. xxxvi. 31, and abhor myself, and repent, as in sackcloth and ashes, Job xlii. 6.

Now set upon the work of reformation and of reconciliation; general or particular, as you find

there is need. It is not enough to search out and consider your ways, nor yet to lament them; if withal you do not turn again unto the Lord, Lam. iii. 40—42. Psa. cxix. 59. Zeph. ii. 1—3; and turn your feet unto his testimonies; and withal seek grace and forgiveness.

The gospel opens a way, and affords means to attain both, through the commands and promises thereof, in the doctrine of faith and repentance.

Now, therefore, bring yourself to the gospel; try yourself thereby, first, whether your first faith and repentance were sincere: then set upon reforming, and getting pardon of particular and later offences.

But learn to put a difference between the commands of the gospel and of the law; the law exacts absolute obedience; the gracious gospel does, through Christ, accept of the truth of faith and repentance, so that there be an endeavour after their perfection.

It would be too long to show you at large the signs of unfeigned faith and repentance. I will, for the present, only say this:

Have you been truly humbled for sin? and through the promises and commandment of the gospel, which bids you believe, have you conceived hope of mercy, relying on Christ for it? And thereupon have had a true change in your whole man, so that you make God your utmost end, and receive the Lord Jesus as your only Saviour; and, out of hatred of sin, and love unto Christ and his ways, have a will in all things to live honestly, Heb. xiii. 18; and to keep always a good conscience towards God and man, Acts xxiv. 16; desiring the sincere milk of the word, to grow by it, 1 Peter ii. 2; loving the brethren, 1 John iii. 14. Psa. xvi. 3; desiring and delighting in communion with them? Then you may be confident that your first faith, repentance, and new obedience were sound.

If upon trial you find that they were not sound, then you must begin now to repent and believe; it is not yet too late.

6th. Concerning reformation and obtaining of pardon and power of your particular sins, do thus:

1st. Consider the commandment which bids you to repent and amend, Ezek. xxxiii. 11, Rev. ii. 5.

2d. Consider the commandment which bids you to come unto Christ, when you are weary and heavy laden with your sins, Matt. xi. 28; believing that through him they shall be pardoned and subdued, Mic. vii. 18, 19. To this end,

3d. Consider that Christ, has fully satisfied for such and such a sin, yea, for all sin, 1 John ii. 1, 2; and that you have many promises of grace and forgiveness, 1 John i. 9; yea, a promise that God will give you grace to believe in him, that you may have your sins forgiven, Heb. x. 15—17.

4th. Consider that there is virtue and power in Christ's death and resurrection, Phil. iii. 10, John i. 16, applied by faith, Acts xv. 9, 1 Peter i. 21, 22, through his Holy Spirit, for the mortifying the old man of sin, and quickening the new man in grace; as well as merit to take away the guilt and punishment of your sin.

5th. Improve this power of Christ in you unto an actual breaking off your sins, and living according to the will of Christ, which is done by mortifying that old man of sin, and by strengthening the new and inner man of grace, Col. iii. 5, Rom. xii. 2, Eph. iii. 16.

In mortifying your sin, do thus:

1st. Take all your sins, especially your bosom sins, those to which the disposition of your nature, and condition of your place does most incline you, your strongest and most prevailing sins, and with them the body of corruption in you, the original and fountain of sin, Psa. li; smite at them, strike at the very root, arraign them, condemn them in yourself, bring them to the cross of Christ, and nail them thereunto, Col. i. 20, ii. 10—16; that is, believe that, not only in respect of their guilt, but also of their reigning power (through faith in his precious sacrifice and intercession) they shall be crucified with him, dead, and buried, Rom. vi. as is lively signified to you in your

baptism. When you see that your old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed, you will take courage against sin, and will refuse to serve it, since by Christ you are freed from the dominion of it. When you thus by faith put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. xiii. 14, you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

2d. Grieve heartily for your sins, James iv. 9, Job xlii. 6, 2 Cor. vii. 10; conceive deadly hatred against them, and displeasure against yourself for them. These, like a corrosive, will eat out the life and power of sin.

3d. Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it, Rom. xiii. 14; but be sober in the use of all worldly things, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31; this, by little and little, will starve sin.

4th. Avoid all objects and occasions of sin, Job xxxi. 1, Prov. xxiii. 20—31; yea, abstain from the appearance of it, 1 Thess. v. 22; this will disarm sin.

5th. When you feel any motion unto sin, whether it arise from within, or come from without, resist it speedily and earnestly, by the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, 1 Peter. v. 9, Acts viii. 20, as your Saviour did, Matt. iv. 4, and as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9; for which cause it must dwell plentifully in you, Col. iii. 16. Thus you shall kill sin.

That you may strengthen the inner man by the Spirit, whereby you may not only mortify the deeds of the flesh, but bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, do thus:

1st. Apply Christ, risen from the dead, to yourself particularly, Rom. iv. 24, 25, vi. 4; believing that God by the same power quickens you, and raises you together with Christ, Eph. ii. 5, 6; to walk in newness of life; reckoning yourself now to be alive unto God, Rom. vi. 9—11; being dead unto sin, and become the servant of righteousness. This believing in Christ, embracing and relying upon him, as set forth in the precious promises of the gospel, 2 Peter i. 4, does draw virtue from Christ into your heart, and does more and more incorporate you into him; and by it,

he, by his Spirit, dwells in you, Eph. iii. 17, whereby of his life and grace, John i. 12—16, you receive life and grace; and so you are made partaker of the divine nature, shunning the corruption which is in the world through lust.

2d. Affect your heart with joy unspeakable, and with peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13, considering that you are justified through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 1—3, Phil. iv. 4. This joy of the Lord, Neh. viii. 10, as a cordial, will exceedingly strengthen grace in the inner man.

3d. Take heed of quenching or grieving the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 19—21, but nourish it by the frequent use of holy meditation, prayer, hearing and reading the word, receiving the sacrament, by a Christian communion with such as fear God, Acts i. 12—14, ii. 42—46, iv. 32, 33, and by attending to the motions of the Spirit of God; which you shall know to be from it, when the thing whereunto it moves is, both for matter and circumstance, according to the Scripture, the word of the Spirit. This is to be led of the Spirit; and this will be to walk in the Spirit, and then you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, Gal. v. 16—18.

There remains yet one principal work wherein consists the chief business of the day of your fast, for which all hitherto spoken makes way, and by which, with the former means, you may attain to true reformation of yourself, and reconciliation with God; which is invocation and earnest prayer to God, in the name of Christ, through the Holy Ghost, 1 Sam. vii. 6, Neh. i. 4, &c., ix. 5, &c., Dan. ix. 3, &c., in particular, large and hearty confessions and complaints against yourself for your sins, asking forgiveness, making known your holy resolutions, asking grace, and giving thanks that God is at peace with you, having given Christ for you and to you, (upon your believing in him) and that he has given you a mind to know him, 1 John v. 20, and the power of his resurrection; with other first-fruits of the Spirit, which is the earnest of your inheritance, Eph. i. 13, 14.

Let this solemn and more than ordinary seeking of

God by prayer alone, be twice at least, in the day of your fast, besides your ordinary prayers in the morning and evening; and having thus obtained peace with God, through faith in Christ Jesus, you may, nay ought to pray for the good, or against the evil, which was the occasion of the fast, Ezra viii. 23, 2 Chron. xx. 3—6, &c.

But in praying you must in fervency of spirit cry mightly, Jonah iii. 8; striving and wrestling in prayer.

The extraordinary burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, besides the sin-offering of the atonement, to be offered on the solemn day of the fast, Numb. xxix. 7—12, under the law (which, as I told you, in the morality of it, is the standard of religious fasts,) does show, that a fast must be kept in manner as has been said; for hereby we prepare and sanctify ourselves, and seek to God in Christ; hereby we by faith lay hold on Christ, the only true sacrifice for sin; and hereby we do by him draw nigh to God, and in token of thankfulness do give ourselves to be a whole and living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1.

For your greater and more thorough humbling of yourself, and further exercise of your faith in God, and love to your brethren and church of God, something yet is to be added.

You must represent to your thoughts also the sins and evils that are already upon, or hanging over the head of your family and nearest friends, and of the town, country, or kingdom where you live, together with their several aggravations; lay them to heart, Psa. cxix. 136—158, Jer. ix. 1, xiii. 17; considering that they by sinning do dishonour God your Father, and do bring evil upon the souls and bodies of those whom you should love as well as yourself: and it is a thousand to one but that you are involved in their sins, and become accessary, if not by example, counsel, permission, or concealment, yet in not grieving for them, in not hating them, and in not confessing and disclaiming them sufficiently before God. These also bring common judgments upon church and state,

which you should prefer before your own particular interest, and wherein you may expect to share a part.

You must therefore affect your heart with these thoughts, and mourn for your own first, and then for the abominations of your family, town, country, and kingdom, Ezek. ix. 4; for the sins of princes and nobles, Neh. ix. 34; for the sins of ministers and people. And not only for present sins of the land, but for the sins long since committed, whereof it has not yet repented, Dan. ix. 5, 6; rivers of waters should run down from your eyes, Psa. cxix. 136; at least sighs and groans should rise from your heart, Ezek. ix. 4, Jer. ix. 1, because others as well as yourself have forgotten God's law, and have exposed themselves to his destroying judgments. Do all this so, that you may pour out your heart like water to the Lord in their behalf, Lam. ii. 18, 19.

This is to stand in the breach, Exod. xxxii. 11—15, Psa. cvi. 23; the prayer of a righteous man avails much, if it be fervent, James v. 16, 17, though he have infirmities. If it should not take good effect for others, yet your tears and sighs shall do good to yourself, Ezek. xiv. 14; it causes you to have God's seal in your forehead, Ezek. ix. 4; you are marked for mercy. God will take you from the evil to come, Isa. lvii. 1, or will make a way for you to escape, Jer. xxxix. 16, or will turn the hearts of your enemies to you, Jer. xxxix. 12; or, if you smart under the common judgment, it shall be sanctified to you: and if you perish bodily, yet, when others that cannot live, and are afraid to die, are at their wits' end, you shall be able, in the consciousness of your godly sorrow for your own and others' sins, to welcome death as a messenger of good tidings, and as a gate to everlasting happiness.

If it be a public fast, all these things before mentioned are to be done alone, both before and after the public exercises, at which time you must join in public hearing the word read and preached, and in prayer with more than ordinary attention and fervency.

If you fast with your family, or with some few, let

convenient times be spent in reading the word of God, or some good book, or sermons, which may be fit to direct and quicken you for the present work; also in fervent prayer: the other time alone, Matt. vi. 18, let it be spent as I have showed before.

If some public or necessary occasion, such as you could not well foresee or prevent, when you made choice of your day of private fast, happen to interrupt you; I judge that you may attend those occasions, notwithstanding your fast. But do it thus: if they may be despatched with little ado, then despatch them, and after continue your fast; but if you cannot, I think that you had better be humbled that you were hindered, break off your fast, and set some other day apart instead thereof; even as when a man is necessarily hindered in his vow. Numb. vi. 9—12.

The benefits of religious fasting.

The benefit that will accrue to you by religious fasting, will be motive enough to a frequent use of it, as there shall be cause.

1st. It was never read or heard of, that a fast was kept in truth, according to the former directions from the word, but it either obtained the particular blessing for which it was kept, or at least a better, to him that fasted. Judges xx. 26—35, 1 Sam. vii. 6—10, Ezra viii. 23, 2 Chron. xx. 3—22, Jonah iii. 7—10.

2d. And besides those advantages, thus fasting will put the soul into such good frame, into such an habit of spiritual-mindedness, that (as when against some special entertainment, a day has been spent in searching every corner in a house, to wash and cleanse it) it will be kept clean with common sweeping a long time after.

I do acknowledge that some have fasted, and God has not regarded it, Isa. lviii. 3; yea, he tells some before-hand, that if they fast, he will not hear their cry, Jer. xiv. 12. But these were such who fasted not to God, Zech. vii. 5—12; they only sought themselves; they would not hearken to his word; there was no putting away of sin, or loosing the bands of wickedness, &c. Isa. lviii. 6; no mortification of sin, no re-

newing their covenant with God. Now, unless we do join the inward with the outward, we may fast, but the Lord sees it not, Isa. lviii. 3—5; we may afflict ourselves, but he takes no notice; we may cry and howl, but cannot make our voice to be heard on high. But when God sees the works of them that fast, that turn from their evil way, Jonah iii. 10; yea, that they strive to turn and seek him with all their heart, then he will turn to them; his bowels of compassion does yearn towards them; and I will have mercy on them, saith the Lord, Jer. xxxi. 18—20.

After the time of the fast is ended, eat and drink but moderately. For, if you then over-indulge yourself, it will put your body and soul both out of order.

Secondly, Your fast being ended, hold the strength which you got that day as much as you can; keep your interest and holy acquaintance which you have obtained with God, and the holy exercises of religion. Though you have given over the exercises of the day, yet unloose not the bent of your care and affections against sin, and for God. It is a corruption of our nature, and it is a policy of Satan to help it forward, that (like some unwise warriors, when they have gotten victory over their enemies) we grow full of presumption and security, by which the enemy takes advantage to re-collect his forces, and coming upon us unlooked for gives us the foil, if not the overthrow. We are too apt, after a day of humiliation, to fall into a kind of remissness, as if then we had gotten the mastery; whereas, if Satan fly from us, if sin be weakened in us, it is but for a season, Luke iv. 13, and but in part; and, especially if we stand not upon our watch, Satan will take occasion to return, and sin will revive in us, Matt. xii. 43—45.

I will add a few cautions touching this excellent but neglected duty of fasting.

1st. The body, although it must be kept under, 1 Cor. ix. 27, Col. ii. 23; yet it must not be destroyed with fasting. It must not be so weakened as to be disabled to perform the works of your ordinary calling.

2d. In private fasts, you must not be open, but as private as conveniently you may, Matt. vi. 16.

3d. Separate not the inward from the outward work in fasting, Isa. lviii. 6, 7.

4th. Think not to merit by your fasting, as papists do.

5th. Presume not that presently upon the work done, God must grant every petition, as hypocrites do, that say to him, We have fasted, and thou dost not regard it, Isa. lviii. 3. You may and must expect a gracious hearing upon your unfeigned humiliation, Matt. xxi. 22; but as for when and how, you must wait patiently: faith secures you of good success, 1 John v. 14, but neither prescribes unto God how, Isa. xl. 13, nor yet does it make haste, Isa. xxviii. 16; but waits his leisure, when in his wisdom he shall judge it most seasonable.



CHAPTER V.

OF THE LORD'S DAY, OR CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

ON the Sabbath or Lord's day, you must remember to keep it holy, according to the commandment, Exod. xx. 8—11, xxxv. 2, 3. For this cause consider,

(1.) The divine institution of the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath.

First, Put a difference between this and the other six days, even as you put a difference between the bread and wine in the sacrament, and that which is for common use. And that because it is set apart for holy use, by divine institution. For as the seventh day, from the beginning of the creation, until the day of Christ's blessed resurrection; so our Lord's day, which is the day of the resurrection, is by divine institution moral. The commandment to keep an holy rest upon the seventh day, after the six days of work (which is the substance of the fourth commandment)

remains the same. And this Adam (no doubt by the instinct of uncorrupted nature, which desires a time for God's honour and solemn worship) knowing that God finished the creation in six days, and rested on the seventh, would have observed; yet it was requisite that the particular day should be by institution, for natural reason could not certainly tell him which day. The Lord of the Sabbath therefore limited it unto the seventh from the creation, until Christ's resurrection, and then removed it to the day we keep, which is the first.

Now it appears, that it was the will of our Lord and Saviour Christ, that we should, since his resurrection, keep for our Sabbath that first day of the week; forasmuch as he arose on that day, John xx. 1—19, and appeared divers times on this our Lord's day to his disciples before his ascension; and did on this day, being the day of pentecost, Acts ii. 1—4, fill his disciples with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, they being assembled together; all which gives a pre-eminence to this day, and a probability to the point.

But inasmuch as the apostles, 1 Cor. xi. 1, who followed Christ, and delivered nothing but what they received from Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 23. xiv. 37, did observe this day as a Sabbath, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; what can this argue but a divine institution of this day? The apostle Paul might have chosen any other day, for the people to assemble to hear the word, and receive the sacrament: but they assembled to receive the sacrament, and to hear the word, upon the first day of the week, which is our Lord's day, Acts xx. 6, 7. Now the approved practice of the apostles, and of the church with them, recorded in Scripture, carries with it the force of a precept.

Moreover, the Spirit of God honours this day with the title of the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10, as he does the communion with the title of the Supper of the Lord, 1 Cor. x. 21. xi. 20. What does this argue but as they both have reference to Christ, so they are both appointed by Christ? The Spirit of Christ knew the mind of Christ, who thus named this day.

(2.) Directions for the religious observance of the Lord's day.

Secondly, Being convinced of the holiness of this day, the better to keep it holy when it comes, you must,

1st. On the week day before the Sabbath, or Lord's day, remember it, Exod. xx. 8, 9, to the end that none of your worldly business be left undone, or put off till then; especially upon Saturday, you must prepare for it. Then you must put an end to the works of your calling; and do whatsoever may be well done beforehand, to prevent bodily labour even in your necessary actions, that, when the day comes, you may have less occasion of worldly thoughts, less incumbrance and distractions; and may be more free, both in body and mind, for spiritual exercises.

2d. You yourself, and, as much as in you lies, all under your authority, must rest upon this day, Exod. xxiii. 12; xxxiv. 21, the space of the whole day of four-and-twenty hours, from all manner of works, except those which have true reference to the present day's works of piety, mercy, and true necessity, Matt. xii. 1—13, not doing your own ways, not finding your own pleasures, nor speaking your own words Isa. lviii. 13.

2d. It is not enough that you observe this day as a rest, but you must keep a holy rest. Which that you may do, you must, on your awaking in the morning, make a difference between it and other days, not thinking on any worldly business more than will serve for a general providence, to preserve you from great hurt or loss. Both in your lying awake, and rising in the morning, make use of the former directions, showing you how to awake and rise with God. Rise early, Psa. xcii. 2, if it will consist with your health, and not hinder your fitness for spiritual exercises through drowsiness afterward, that you may show forth God's loving-kindness in the morning. Double your devotions on the Lord's day, as the Jews did their morning and evening sacrifice on the Sabbath day, Numb. xxviii. 3, 9, 10. Prepare yourself for the public holy ser-

vices by reading, by meditation, Eccles. v. 1, 2; and by putting away all filthiness, James i. 21. 1 Peter ii. 1, 2; that is, repenting of every sin; and casting away the superfluity of naughtiness; that is, let no sin be allowed or suffered to reign in you. Then pray for yourself, and for the minister, Eph. vi. 18—20, that God would give him a mouth to speak, and you an heart to hear, as you both ought to do. All this, before you shall assemble for public worship. Being thus prepared, bring your family with you to the church. Join with the minister and congregation. Set yourself as in the special presence of God, following the example of good Cornelius, Acts x. 33, with all reverence attending and consenting; saying Amen with understanding, faith, and affection, to the prayers uttered by the minister; believing, Heb. iv. 2, and obeying, James i. 22, whatsoever is by him commanded you from God. Afterward, by meditation, and by conference, Acts xvii. 11, 12; and if you have opportunity, by repetitions, call to mind, and wisely and firmly lay up in your heart what you have learned, Psa. cxix. 11. The like care must be had before, at, and after, the evening exercise.

The nature and design of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, &c.

1. If baptism be administered, stay, Ezek. xlvi. 10, and attend unto it, (1.) To honour that holy ordinance with the greater solemnity. (2.) And in charity to the persons to be baptized, joining with the congregation in hearty prayer for them, and in a joyful receiving them into the communion of the visible church. (3.) Also in respect of yourself. For hereby you may call to mind your own baptism, in which you did put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27, which also does lively represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, together with your crucifying the affections and lusts, Gal. v. 24; being dead and buried with him unto sin, and rising with him to newness of life, Rom. vi. 3—5, and to hope of glory, Col. i. 27. ii. 11—13; understanding clearly that the blood and Spirit of Christ, Heb. ix. 14. x. 22, signified by water, doth cleanse you

from the guilt and dominion of sin to your justification and sanctification, Matt. iii. 11. Tit. iii. 5. 1 John i. 7. Remembering, moreōver, that, by way of sealing, Gen. xvii. 11. Rom. iv. 11, your baptism did in particular exhibit and apply to you that believe, Christ with all the benefits of the covenant of grace ratified in his blood; minding you also of this, that it does not only seal God's promises of forgiveness, grace, and salvation to you; but that also it seals and binds you to the performance of your promise, and vow of faith and obedience, which is the branch of the covenant to be performed, according as was professed, on your part.

Recourse to your baptism is an excellent strengthener of your weak faith, 1 Peter iii. 21, and an occasion of renewing of your vow, you having broken it: and of resisting temptations, considering that they are against your promise and vow in baptism.

Directions for the right attendance on the Lord's Supper.

2. When there is a communion, receive it as oft as, without interrupting the order of the church, you may. But be careful to receive it worthily, 1 Cor. xi. 27.

It is not enough that you be born within the covenant, and that you have been baptized; but you must have knowledge of the nature of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Rom. iv. 11; both that it is of divine institution, and that it is a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, signifying to you, by the breaking and giving of the bread, and by pouring out and delivering the wine, 1 Cor. xi. 26, the meritorious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the covenant of grace is established, 2 Cor. i. 20, 21. Heb. vii. 22; presenting also, and sealing unto you, by the elements of bread and wine, the very body and blood of Christ, with all the benefits of the new covenant, of which you receive indeed livery and seisin in the act of receiving by faith, whereby you also grow into a nearer union with Christ your head, and communion with all his members your brethren, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Besides, there must be a special preparation by

examining yourself, 1 Cor. xi. 28, and renewing your peace with God before you receive, according to the directions before given, chap. v. sect. 2. Also make your peace, at least be at peace, and in charity with your neighbour, by a hearty acknowledging your fault so far as is fit, and making recompence, if you have done him wrong, Matt. v. 23, 24; and by forgiving, and forbearing revenge, if he hath done you wrong, Col. iii. 13.

In the act of administering and receiving, join in confession and prayers, and attend to the actions of the minister when he breaks the bread, pours out the wine, and by blessing sets it apart for holy use, 1 Cor. x. 16; by faith behold Christ, in representation, wounded, bleeding, and crucified before your eyes for you; looking upon him whom your sins condemned and pierced to the death, rather than his accusers, and those who nailed him to the cross; who, though malicious, were but instruments of that punishment which God, with other tokens of his wrath, did execute upon him, though in himself a Lamb without spot, justly for your sin, he being your surety.

This looking upon him whom you have pierced, Zech. xii. 10, should partly dissolve you into a holy grief for sin: but chiefly, considering that by this his passion he hath made full satisfaction for you, and also seeing what blessings God and Christ himself, by the hand of his minister, giving Christ's body and blood sacramentally, do signify and seal unto you, it should raise your heart to a holy admiration of the love of God and of Christ, and it should excite you, in the very act of taking the bread and wine, to a reverend and thankful receiving of this his body and blood by faith, discerning the Lord's body, 1 Cor. xi. 29; gathering assurance hereby that now all enmity between God and you is done away, if you are believers indeed; and that you by this, as by spiritual food for life, shall grow up in him, with the rest of his mystical body, unto everlasting life.

1st. After that you have received, until you be to join in public praise and prayers, affect your heart

with joy and thankfulness in the assurance of the pardon of all your sins, and of salvation by Christ; and that more than if you being a bankrupt, should receive an acquittance sealed of the release of all your debts, and with it a will and testament wherein you should have a legacy of no less than a kingdom, sealed with such a seal as gives clear proof of the fidelity, ability, and death of the testator; or than if, having been a traitor, you shall receive a free and full pardon from the king, sealed with his own seal, together with an assurance that he has adopted you to be his child, to be married to his son, the heir of the crown. This is your case, when by faith you receive the bread and wine, the body and blood of the Lord. Think thus, therefore, with joy and rejoicing in God. O! how happy am I in Christ my Saviour! God, who has given him to death for me, and also given him to me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things? Rom. viii. 32; even whatsoever may pertain to life, godliness, and glory, 2 Peter i. 3. Who shall lay any thing to my charge? Who, or what can separate me from the love of Christ? &c. Rom. viii. 33—39.

2d. Resolve withal upon a constant and an unfeigned endeavour to perform all duties becoming one thus acquitted, thus redeemed, pardoned, and advanced; and this in token of thankfulness; even to keep the covenant required to be performed on your part; undoubtedly expecting whatsoever God has covenanted and sealed on his part.

3d. Join in public praise and prayer heartily, and in a liberal contribution to the poor, if there be a collection.

4th. After the sacrament, if you feel your faith strengthened, and your soul comforted, nourish it with all thankfulness.

If not, yet, if your conscience can witness that you endeavoured to prepare as you ought, and to receive as you ought, be not discouraged, but wait for strength and comfort in due time. We do not always feel the benefit of bodily food presently, but stirring of humours and sense of disease is sometimes rather occasioned;

yet in the end being well digested, it strengthens; so it is often with spiritual food. Corruption may stir, and temptations may arise more upon the receiving than before; especially since Satan, if it be but to vex a tender-hearted Christian, will hereupon take occasion to tempt with more violence. But if you resist these, and stand resolved to obey, and to rely upon God's mercy in Christ, this is rather a sign of receiving worthily; so long as your desires and resolutions are strengthened, and you thereby are made more carefully to stand upon your watch. Endeavour in this case to digest this spiritual food by further meditation, improving that strength you have, praying for more strength, remembering the commandment, which bids you to be strong; and you shall be strengthened, Eph. vi. 10. Dan. x. 19.

5th. Lastly, if you find yourself worse indeed, or do feel God's heavy hand in special manner upon you, 1 Cor. xi. 30, following upon your receiving, and your conscience can witness truly that you came not prepared, or that you did wilfully and carelessly fail in such or such a particular in receiving, it is evident you did receive unworthily. In which case you must heartily bewail your sin, confess it to God, 1 John i. 9; ask, and believe that he will pardon it, through Christ Jesus, upon your sincere faith and repentance, 1 John ii. 1, 2, and take heed that you offend not in that kind another time.

(3.) Upon the Lord's day you must likewise be ready to visit and relieve the distressed, 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

Take some time this day to look into your past life, and chiefly to your walking with God the last week, as being freshest in memory, and be sure to let no old scores of sin remain between God and you.

Last of all, on every opportunity, take good time to consider God's works; what they are in themselves, what they are against the wicked, what they are to the church, and to yourself and to yours, and, in particular, take occasion from the day itself, to think fruitfully of the creation, of your redemption, sanctification, and of your eternal rest and glory to come.

For God in his holy wisdom has set such a divine mark upon this our Lord's day, that at once it reminds us of the greatest works of God, which either conduce to his glory, or his church's good; as, of the creation of the world in six days, when he rested the seventh, which specially is attributed to the Father; and of man's redemption by Christ, of whose resurrection this day is a remembrance, which is specially attributed to the Son; also of our sanctification by the Spirit, for that the observation of the Sabbath is a sign and means of holiness, which work is specially attributed to the Holy Ghost; lastly, of your and the church's glorification, which shall be the joint work of the blessed Trinity, when we shall cease from all our works, Heb. iv. 9, 10, and shall rest, and be glorious with the same glory which our head Christ has with the Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen. Do all these with delight, Psa. xcii. Isa. lviii. 13, raising up yourself hereby to a greater measure of holiness and heavenly-mindedness.

(4.) Motives to keep holy the Lord's day.

Do all this the rather because there is not a clearer sign to distinguish you from one that is profane, Exod. xxxi. 13, than this, of conscientiously keeping holy the Lord's day. Neither is there any ordinary means of gaining strength and growth of grace in the inward man, like this, of due observing the Sabbath, Ezek. xx. 12. For this is God's great mart, or fair-day for the soul, on which you may buy of Christ, wine, milk, bread, marrow, and fatness, Isa. lv. 1—4, gold, white raiment, eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18, even all things which are necessary, and which will satisfy, and cause the soul to live. It is the special day of proclaiming and sealing of pardons to penitent sinners, Acts ii. 38. It is God's special day of publishing and sealing your patent of eternal life. It is a blessed day, sanctified for all these blessed purposes, Exod. xx. 11.

Now, lest this so strict observance of the Lord's day, in spending the whole day in holy meditation, holy exercises, and works of mercy, excepting only necessary repasts, should be thought, as it is by some,

to be merely Jewish, or only the private opinion of some zealots, more nice than wise; know, that as the fourth commandment is of moral obligation, there is the same reason for the strict observance of it, as any other divine precept, as against idolatry, murder, fornication, &c. And the taking away of the morality of the fourth commandment, and unloosing the conscience from the immediate bonds of God's command to observe a day for his solemn worship, overthrows true religion, and the power of godliness, and opens a wide gap to atheism, profaneness, and all licentiousness; as daily experience proves in those persons and places, by whom and where the Lord's day is not holily and duly observed.



CHAPTER VI.

DIRECTIONS HOW TO END THE DAY WITH GOD.

WHEN you have walked with God from morning until night, whether on a common day, a day of fasting, or on the Lord's day, according to the former directions; it remains that you conclude the day well, when you would give yourself to rest at night. Wherefore,

First, Look back and take a strict view of your whole carriage that day past. Reform what you find amiss; and rejoice, or be grieved, as you find you have done well or ill, as you have advanced or declined in grace that day.

Secondly, Since you cannot sleep in safety, if God, who is your keeper, Psa. cxxi. 4, 5, do not wake and watch for you, Psa. cxxvii. 1; and though you have God to watch when you sleep, you cannot be safe, if he that watches be your enemy; wherefore it is very convenient, that at night, you not only conclude the day with your family, by reading some Scripture,

and by prayer; but you must alone renew and confirm your peace with God by faith and prayer, and with like preparations thereto, as you received directions for the morning; commending and committing yourself to God's tuition by prayer, Psa. iii. 4, 5. xcii. 2, with thanksgiving, before you go to bed. Then shall you lie down in safety, Psa. iv. 8.

All this being done, yet while you are putting off your apparel, when you are lying down, and when you are in bed, before you sleep, it is good that you commune with your own heart, Psa. iv. 4. If other good and fit meditations offer not themselves, some of these will be seasonable:

1. When you see yourself without your apparel, consider what you were at your birth, and what you shall be at your death, when you put off this earthly tabernacle (if not in the mean time, as concerning your outward estates:) how that you brought nothing into this world, nor shall carry any thing out, 1 Tim. vi. 7; naked you came from your mother's womb, and naked shall you return, Job i. 21. This will be an excellent means to give you sweet content in any thing you have, 1 Tim. vi. 8, though never so little; and in the loss of what you have had, Job i. 21, though never so much.

2. When you lie down, you may think of lying down in your winding-sheet, and in your grave. For besides that sleep, 1 Cor. xi. 30, and the bed do aptly resemble death and the grave, Isa. lvii. 2, who knoweth when he sleeps, that ever he shall awake again to this life?

3. You may think thus also: if the sun must not go down upon my wrath, Eph. iv. 26, lest it become hatred, and so be worse ere morning; then it is not safe for me to lie down in the allowance of any sin, lest I sleep not only the sleep of natural death, Psa. xiii. 3, but of that death which is eternal; for who knows what a night will bring forth? Now, it is a high point of holy wisdom, Deut. xxxii. 29, upon all opportunities, to think of, and to prepare for your latter end.

4. Consider likewise, that if you walk with God in

uprightness, your death unto you is but to fall into a sweet sleep, an entering into rest, a resting on your bed for a night, Isa. lvii. 2, until the glorious morning of your happy resurrection.

5. Lastly, If you possibly can, fall asleep with some heavenly meditation, Then will your sleep be more sweet, Prov. iii. 21—25, and more secure, Prov. vi. 21, 22; your dreams fewer, or more comfortable; your head will be fuller of good thoughts, Prov. vi. 22; and your heart will be in a better frame when you awake, whether in the night, or in the morning.

Thirdly, Being thus prepared to sleep; you should sleep only so much as the present state of your body requires; you must not be like the sluggard, to love sleep, Prov. xx. 13; neither must you sleep too much: for if you do, that (which being taken in its due measure, is a restorer of vigour and strength to your body, and a quickener of the spirits) will make the spirits dull, the brain sottish, and the whole body inactive and unhealthy. And that which God has ordained for a furtherance, through your sin shall become an enemy to your bodily and spiritual welfare, Prov. vi. 6—11. Thus much of walking with God in all things, at all times.



CHAPTER VII.

HOW TO WALK WITH GOD ALONE.

SECTION 1.—There is no time wherein you will not be either alone or in company, in either of which you must walk in all well-pleasing, as in the sight of God.

Rules concerning Solitude.

1. Concerning being alone. First, Affect not too much solitude; be not alone, except you have just cause, namely, when you separate yourself for holy duties, and when your needful occasions do withdraw you from society; for in other cases, two are better

than one (saith Solomon) and woe be to him that is alone, Eccles. iv. 9, 10.

2. When you are alone, you must be very watchful, and stand upon your guard, lest you fall into manifold temptations of the devil; for solitariness is Satan's opportunity, Gen. iii. 1, xxxix. 11, 2 Sam. xi. 2, Matt. iv. 1; which he will not lose, as the manifold examples in Scripture, and our daily experience, do witness. Wherefore you must have a ready eye to observe, and a heart ready bent to resist all his assaults. And it will now the more concern you to keep close to God, and not lose his company; that through the weapons of your Christian warfare, you may by the power of God's might quit yourself, and stand fast, Eph. vi. 10, &c.

3. Take special heed, lest when you be alone, you, yourself, conceive, devise, or indulge any evil, to which your nature is then most prone.

And beware in particular, lest you commit alone, by yourself, contemplative wickedness, Mic. ii. 1, Psa. xxxvi. 4, Matt. v. 28; which is, when by feeding your fancy, and pleasing yourself in covetous, lustful, revengeful, ambitious, or other wicked thoughts, you act that in your mind and fancy, which, either for fear, or shame, you dare not, or for want of opportunity or means, you cannot act otherwise.

4. When you are alone, be sure that you are well and fully exercised about something that is good, either in the works of your calling, or in reading, or in holy meditation or prayer. For whensoever Satan does find you idle, and out of employment in some or other of those works which God has appointed, he will take that as an opportunity to use you for himself, and to employ you in some of his works, Matt. xii. 44. But if you keep always in your place; and to some or other good work of your place, you are under God's special protection, as the bird in the law was, while she sat upon her eggs or young ones, keeping her own nest; in which case no man might hurt her, Deut. xxii. 6.

I have already showed how you should behave

yourself as in God's sight, both in prayer, and in the works of your calling, I will say something for your direction concerning reading and meditation.

SECT. 2. OF READING.

BESIDES your set times of reading the holy Scriptures, you will do well to gain some time from your vacant hours, that you may read in God's book, and in the good books of men.

How to read profitably.

First, When you read any part of the word of God, you must put a difference between it and the best writings of men, preferring it far before them. To this end, (1.) Consider it in its properties and excellencies. No word is of like absolute authority, holiness, truth, wisdom, power, and eternity, Psa. xix. 7—11. (2.) Consider this word in its ends and good effects. No book aimeth at God's glory, John v. 39, 2 Cor. iii. 18, and the salvation of man's soul, Rom. xv. 4, James i. 21, like this; none concerns you like to this. It discovers your misery by sin, together with the perfect remedy, Rom. iii. 23, 24. It proposes perfect happiness unto you, Isa. lv. 1—3, affording means to work it out in you, and for you, Rom. i. 16, 1 Thess ii. 13. It is mighty, through God to prepare you for grace, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. It is the immortal seed to beget you unto Christ, 1 Peter i. 23. It is the milk and stronger meat to nourish you up in Christ, 1 Peter ii. 2, Heb. v. 13, 14. It is the only soul-physic (through Christ Jesus) to recover you, 2 Tim. i. 13, and to free you of all spiritual evils. By it Christ gives spiritual sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, strength to the weak, health to the sick: yea, by it he does cast out devils, and raise men from the death of sin (through faith) as certainly as he did all those things for the bodies of men by the word of his power, while he lived on the earth, John v. 25. This book of God does contain those many rich legacies bequeathed to you in that last will and testament of God,

sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, Heb. ix. 15—18. It is the magna charta, and statute-book of the kingdom of heaven, Isa. viii. 20. It is the book of privileges and immunities of God's children, Rom. vi. 14—22, 1 John v. 13. It is the word of grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified, Acts xx. 32. For it will make you wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, making you perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.

Whenever therefore you hear this word preached, and when at any time you read it, you must receive it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, then it will work effectually in you that believe, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

Secondly, When you read this word, lift up the heart in prayer to God for the spirit of understanding and wisdom, Psal. cxix. 18, that your mind may be more and more enlightened, and your heart more and more strengthened with grace by it. For this word is spiritual, containing the great counsels of God for man's salvation, and which is as a book sealed up, Isa. xxix. 11, 12, in respect of discovery of the things of God in it, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, to all that have not the help of God's Spirit; so that none can know the inward and spiritual meaning thereof, powerfully, and savingly, but by the Spirit of God.

Thirdly, Read the word with a hunger and thirst after knowledge and growth in grace by it, 1 Peter ii. 2, with a reverent, humble, teachable, and honest heart, Luke viii. 15; believing all that you read; trembling at the threatenings and judgments against sinners; rejoicing in the promises made unto, and the favours bestowed upon the penitent, and the godly; willing and resolving to obey all the commandments.

Thus if you read, blessed shall you be in your reading, Rev. i. 3; and blessed shall you be in your deed, James i. 25.

Who must read the Scriptures.

The holy Scriptures are thus to be read of all, of every sort and condition, and of each sex; for all are

commanded to search the Scriptures, John v. 32; as well the laity as the clergy; women as well as men, Acts xvii. 11, 12; young as well as old, 2 Tim. iii. 15; all sorts of all nations, Isa. xxxiv. 1—16. Rev. i. 3. For though the Spirit of God is able to work conversion and holiness immediately without the word, as he does in those infants that are saved, yet in adult persons the Holy Ghost will not, where the word may be had, work without it as his instrument, Luke xvi. 29—31; using it as the hammer, plough, seed, fire, water, sword,* or as any other instrument to pull down, build up, plant, purge, or cleanse the souls of men. For it is by the word both read, Rev. i. 3, and preached, that Christ does sanctify all that are his, John xvii. 17; that he may present them to himself, and so to his Father without spot or wrinkle, a church most glorious, Eph. v. 26, 27.

And whereas it is most true, that those who are unlearned and unstable, 2 Peter iii. 16, do wrest not only hard Scriptures, but all other also, to their destruction; yet let not this, as papists would infer, cause you to forbear to read; any more than, because many surfeit and are drunk by the best meats and drinks, you do forbear to eat and drink.

To prevent misunderstanding and wresting of Scriptures to your hurt, do thus: (1.) Get and cherish a humble and honest heart, resolved to obey what you know to be God's will. If any man will do his will, saith Christ, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, John vii. 17. (2.) Get a clear knowledge of the first principles of the Christian religion, and believe them stedfastly. And endeavour to frame your life according unto those more easy and known Scriptures, whereon these first principles of the oracles of God are founded; for these give light, even at the first entrance, unto the very simple, Psa. cxix. 130. This do, and you shall neither be unlearned in the mysteries of Christ, nor yet unstable in his ways. (3.) Be much in hearing the word interpreted, by learned and faith-

* They are Scripture metaphors.

ful ministers, Isa. viii. 20. (4.) If you meet with a place of Scripture too hard for you, presume not to frame a sense to it of your own head; but take notice of your ignorance, admire the depth of God's wisdom, suspend your opinion, and take the first opportunity to ask the meaning of some or other, of those whose lips should preserve knowledge, Mal. ii. 7.

Motives to read Scripture.

Let no colourable pretence keep you from diligent reading of God's book; for hereby you will be better prepared to hear the word preached. For it lays a foundation for preaching, Acts viii. 28, 34, 35; leading the way to a better understanding thereof, and more easily preserving it in memory; also, to enable you to try the spirits and doctrines delivered, Acts xvii. 11. 1 John iv. 1. 1 Thess. v. 21; even to try all things, and to cleave to that which is good.

How to read men's writings profitably.

1. In reading men's writing, read the best, or at least those by which you can profit most.

2. Read a good book thoroughly, and with due consideration.

3. Reject not hastily any thing you read, because of the mean opinion you have of the author. Believe not every thing you read, because of the great opinion you have of him that wrote it. But, in all books of faith and manners, try all things by the Scriptures, Isa. viii. 20. Matt. xxii. 29, 31. Receive nothing upon the bare testimony or judgment of any man, any further than he can confirm it by the canon of God's holy word, Luke x. 26, or by evidence of reason, or by undoubted experience; provided always, that what you call reason and experience, be according unto, not against the word of God. If the meanest speak according to it, then receive and regard it: but if the most judicious in your esteem, yea, if he were an angel of God, should speak or write otherwise, refuse and reject it, Gal. i. 8.

Thus much for private reading.

Only take this caution. You must not think it to

be sufficient that you read the Scriptures and other good books at home in private, when by so doing you neglect the hearing of the word read and preached in public. For God has not appointed, that reading alone, or preaching alone, or prayer, or sacraments should singly and alone save any man, where all, or more than one of them may be had; but he requires the joint use of them all in their place and time. And in this variety of means of salvation, God has in his holy wisdom ordained such order, that the excellency and sufficiency of one shall not, in its right use, keep any from, but lead him unto a due performance of the other; each serving to make the other more effectual to produce their common effect, namely, the salvation of man's soul.

Indeed, when a man is necessarily hindered by persecution, sickness, or otherwise, that he cannot hear the word preached, then God does bless reading with an humble and honest heart, without hearing the word preached. But where hearing the word preached, is either contemned or neglected, for reading sake, or for prayer sake, Prov. xxviii. 9, or for any other good private duty, there no man can expect to be blessed in his reading, or in any other private duty, but rather cursed. Witness the evil effects, which by experience we see do issue from thence, viz. self-conceit-ness, singularity in some dangerous opinions; and schism, and too often a falling away into damnable heresies and apostasy.

SECT. 3. OF MEDITATION.

WHEN you are alone, then also is a fit season for you to be employed in holy meditation. For according to a person's meditation such is he. The liberal man devises liberal things; the covetous man the contrary, Isa. xxxii. 8. The godly man studies how to please God, the wicked how to please himself.

In meditation, the mind or reason of the soul fixes

itself upon something conceived or thought upon for the better understanding thereof, and for the better application of it to itself for use.

The distinct acts and parts of meditation.

(1.) In meditating aright, the mind of man exercises two kinds of acts; the one direct upon the thing meditated; the other reflex upon himself, the person meditating. The first is an act of the contemplative part of the understanding; the second is an act of conscience. The end of the first is to enlighten the mind with knowledge: the end of the second is to fill the heart with goodness. The first serves, I speak of moral actions, to find out the rule whereby you may know more clearly what is truth, what is falsehood, what is good, what is bad; whom you should obey, and what manner of person you should be, and what you should do, and the like. The second serves to direct you how to make a right and profitable application to yourself, and to your actions, of the rule.

In this latter are these two acts: First, an examination, whether you and your actions be according to the rule, or whether you come short, or are swerved from it, giving judgment of you, according as it finds you.

The second is a persuasive and commanding act, charging the soul in every faculty, understanding, will, affections, yea, the whole man, to reform and conform themselves to the rule, that is, to the will of God, if you find yourself not to think and act according to it: which is done by confessing the fault to God with remorse, praying for forgiveness, returning to God by faith and repentance, and reforming the heart and life through new obedience. This must be the resolution of the soul. And all this a man must charge upon himself peremptorily, commanding himself with sincere desire and fixed endeavour to conform to it.

When you meditate, join all these three acts, else you will never bring your meditation to a profitable issue. For if you only muse and study to find out what is true, what is false, what is good, what is bad,

you may gain much knowledge of the head, but little goodness to your heart. If you only apply to yourself that whereon you have mused, and no more; you may, by finding yourself to be a transgressor, lay guilt upon your conscience, and terror upon your heart, without fruit or comfort; but if to these two, you lay a charge upon yourself to follow God's counsel concerning what you should believe and do, when you have offended him; if you also form an upright design, through God's grace, to be such an one as you ought to be, and to live such a life hereafter as you ought to live; then unto science you add conscience, and to knowledge, you join practice, and will find the comfortable and happy effects thereof. Observe David's meditations, and you will find they came to this issue. His thoughts of God and of his ways, made him turn his feet unto God's testimonies, Psa. cxix. 59. The meditation of God's benefits made him resolve to take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, and to pay his vows, Psa. cxvi. 12—14. When he considered what God had done for him, and thence inferred what he should be to God again, he saith to his soul, My soul, and all that is in me, praise his holy name, Psa. ciii. 1—3. When in his meditation he found that it was his fault to have his soul disquieted in him through distrust, he charges it to wait on God, Psa. xlii. 5—11, and raises up himself unto a holy confidence. I will meditate on thy precepts, saith he. What, is that all? No, but he proceeds to this last act of meditation, and saith, I will have respect unto thy ways, Psa. cxix. 15, 16, 106.

Rules for meditation.

(2.) God's holy nature, attributes, word, works, also what is duty, and what is sin; what you should be, and do; what you are, and what you have done, what are the miseries of the wicked, and what are the happiness and privileges of the righteous, are fit subjects of meditation.

(3.) That which must settle your judgment, and be the rule to direct you what to hold for true and good, must be the canon of God's word rightly under-

stood, 2 Peter i. 19, and not your own reason or opinion: nor yet the opinions or conceits of men; for these are false and crooked rules.

Cautions about the matter of meditation.

(4.) In seeking to know the secrets and mysteries of God and godliness, you must not pry into them further than God hath revealed; for if you wade therein further than you have sure footing in his holy word, you will presently lose yourself, and be swallowed up in a maze and whirlpool of errors and heresies. These deep things of God must be understood with sobriety, Psa. cxxxii. 1; Rom. xii. 3, according to that clear light which God has given you by his word.

(5.) When sin happens to be the matter of your meditation, take heed lest while your thoughts dwell upon it, though your intention be to bring yourself out of love with it, it steal into your affections, and work in you some secret liking to it, and so circumvent you. For the cunning devices of sin are undiscoverable, Eccles. vii. 24, 26, 28, and you know that your heart is deceitful above all things, Jer. xvii. 9. Wherefore, to prevent this mischief; (1.) As sin is not to be named, Eph. v. 3, but when there is just cause; so it is not to be thought upon, but upon special cause, namely, when it shows itself in its motions and evil effects, and when it concerns you to try and find out the wickedness of your heart and life. (2.) When there is cause to think of sin, represent it to your mind as an evil, the greatest evil, Gen. xxxix. 9, most loathsome and abominable to God, and most hateful and hurtful to yourself. Whereupon you must raise your heart to a holy detestation of it, and resolution against it. (3.) Never stand reasoning or disputing with it, as Eve did with Satan, Gen. iii. 2, 3; but without any indulgence of it, you must do present execution upon it, by sheathing the word of God, Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10, the sword of the Spirit, into the heart of it; and by mortifying of it through the help of his Spirit, Rom. viii. 13. And if you would dwell long in meditating upon any subject, make choice of matter more pleasant and less infectious

(6.) It is necessary that you be skilful in this first part of meditation, for hereby you find out, who is to be adored, who not; what is to be done, what not; what you should be, what not. But the life of meditation lies in the reflex acts of the soul, whereby that knowledge which was gotten by the former act of meditation, doth reflect and return upon the heart, 2 Chron. vi. 37; causing you to apply to yourself what was proposed; whence also you are induced to endeavour to form your heart and life according to that which you have learned it ought to be.

This, though it be most profitable, yet, because it is tedious to the flesh, is most neglected. Wherefore it concerns you who are instructed in the points of faith and holiness, to be most conversant in this when you are alone, whether it be when you are engaged in the common business of life, or retirement for solemn worship.

(7.) You should therefore be well read in the book of your conscience, as well as in the Bible, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 31. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Commune often with it, and it will fully acquaint you with yourself, and with your estate, through the light of God's Holy Spirit. It will tell you what you were and what you now are; what you most delighted in, in former times, and what now. It will tell you what straits and fears you have been in, and how graciously God delivered you; what temptations you have had, and how it came to pass, that sometimes you were overcome by them; and how, and by what means you overcame them. It will show what conflicts you have had between flesh and Spirit, and what was the issue thereof, Psa. lxxvii. 1—13; whether you were grieved and humbled when sin got the better, and whether you rejoiced and were thankful when God's grace restrained you, or gave you the victory. Your conscience being set on work, will call to remembrance your oversights; and the advantages which you gave to Satan and to the lusts of your flesh, that you may not do the like again. It will remember you by what helps and means, through God's grace, you prevailed and got a conquest over

some sin, that you may use the same another time. If you thus diligently observe the passages and conflicts of your Christian race and warfare, your knowledge will be an experimental knowledge; which, because it is a knowledge arising from the frequent proof of that whereof you were taught in the word; it becomes a more fixed, perfect, and fruitful knowledge than that of mere contemplation.

It is only this experimental knowledge that will make you skilful in the duties and trials of the Christian life. Take a man that hath only read much of husbandry, physic, merchandise, policy, &c., who hath gotten into his head the notions of all these, and makes himself believe that he hath great skill in them; yet one that hath not read half so much, but hath been of long practice, and of great experience in these, as far excells him in husbandry, physic, trading, &c. as he excells one that is a mere novice in them. Such difference there is between one that hath only a superficial knowledge of Christianity, without experimental observation; and him that is often looking into the records of his own conscience, carefully observing the workings of his own heart, and God's dispensations towards him.

The experience which by this means you will obtain, of God's love, truth, and power; of your enemies' falsehood, wiles, and methods; of your own weakness without God, and of your strength by God to withstand the greatest lusts, and strongest temptations; yea, of an ability to do all things through Christ that strengthens you, will beget in you, faith and confidence in God, and love to him, watchfulness and circumspection, lest you be overtaken with sin; with such degrees of humility, wisdom, and Christian courage, that no opposition shall daunt you, nor shake your confidence in Christ Jesus.

Where do you read of two such champions as David and Paul? 1 Sam. xvii. 36. 2 Tim. i. 12. iv. 7, 17, 18. And where do you find two that recorded, and made use of their experiences of God's truth and goodness, like these?

Wherefore, next to God's book, which gives light and rule to your conscience, read often the book of your conscience. See what is there written for or against you. When you find that your heart and life are according to the rule of God's word, hold that fast to your comfort; but, wherein you find yourself not to be according to this rule, give yourself no rest, until in some good measure, at least in endeavour, you do live according to it.

I have insisted the more largely on this point of meditation, because of the great necessity and profitableness of it; many of God's people omit it, because they know not how to do it; and because they know not their need, nor yet the benefit which they may receive from it.

Motives to meditation.

(9.) The necessity and use of meditation will appear, if you consider, 1. That reading, hearing, and transient thoughts of the best things leave not half that impression of goodness upon the soul, which they would do, if they might be recalled, and fixed there by serious thought. Without this meditation, the good food of the soul passes through the understanding, and either is quite lost, or is like raw and undigested food, which doth not nourish those creatures that chew the cud, till they have fetched it back and chewed it better. Meditation is instead of chewing the cud. All the outward means of salvation do little good in comparison, except by meditation they are thoroughly considered, and laid up in the heart.

2. The great usefulness of meditation appears in that, (1.) It does digest, ingraft, and turn the spiritual knowledge gained in God's word and ordinances, into the very life and substance of the soul, changing and fashioning you according to it, so that God's will in his word and your will become one, choosing and delighting in the same things. (2.) Meditation fitteth for prayer, nothing more. (3.) Meditation also promotes the practice of godliness, nothing more. (4.) Nothing does perfect and make a man an understanding Christian more than this. (5.) Nothing does make

a man more know and enjoy himself with inward comfort, nor is a clearer evidence that he is in a state of happiness, than this. For in the multitude of my thoughts within me (saith David to God) thy comforts delight my soul, Psa. xciv. 19. And he does by the Spirit of God pronounce every man blessed, that does thus meditate in God's law day and night, Psa. i. 2.



CHAPTER VIII.

OF COMPANY IN GENERAL. RULES CONCERNING IT.

WHEN you are in company, of what sort soever, you must amongst them walk with God.

Directions relating hereunto are of two sorts. First, showing how you should behave towards all: Secondly, how towards good or bad company.

First, In whatsoever company you are, your conversation in word and deed must be such, as may procure (1.) Glory to God, Matt. v. 16. (2.) Credit to religion, 1 Tim. vi. 1. (3.) All mutual, lawful, content, help, and true benefit to each other, Gen. ii. 18. For these are the ends, first, of society; secondly, of the variety of the good gifts that God has given unto men to do good with, 1 Cor. xii. 7—25.

To attain these ends, your conversation must be, 1. Holy; 2. Humble; 3. Wise; 4. Loving.

First, It must be holy, 1 Peter i. 15; you must, as much as in you is, prevent all evil speech and behaviour, which might else break forth, being careful to break it off, if it be already begun in your company. Suffer not the name and religion of God, nor yet your brother's name be traduced, or evil spoken of; but in due place and manner vindicate each. Be diligent to watch, and improve all fit opportunities of introducing pious and useful conversation; even whatsoever may

tend to the practice and increase of godliness and honesty.

Secondly, Your conversation must be humble. You must give all due respect to all men, according to their several places and gifts; reverencing your betters, submitting to all in authority over you, 1 Peter ii. 17, Eph. v. 21; esteeming others as better than yourselves, in honour preferring them before you, Phil. ii. 3; condescending unto, and behaving respectfully towards, those of meaner rank, Rom. xii. 16.

Thirdly, You must be wise and discreet in your carriage towards all, and that in divers particulars.

(1.) Be not too open, nor too reserved; not over suspicious, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, nor over credulous, John ii. 24. Jer. xl. 14—16. For the simple believes every word, but the prudent looks well to his going, Prov. xiv. 15.

(2.) Apply yourself to the several conditions and dispositions of men in all indifferent things, so far as you may, without sin against God, or offence to your brother, becoming all things to all men, 1 Cor. ix. 19—23; suiting yourself to them in such a manner, that if it be possible, you may live in peace with them, Rom. xii. 18, and may gain some interest in them, to do them good.

But far be it from you to do as many, who under this pretence, are for all companies; seeming religious with those that are religious; but profane and licentious with those that are profane and licentious; for this is carnal policy, and damnable hypocrisy, and not true wisdom.

(3.) Intermeddle not with other men's business, 1 Thess. iv. 11, but upon due and necessary occasion.

(4.) Know when to speak, and when to be silent, 1 Tim. v. 13. How excellent is a word spoken in season! Eccles. iii. 7. As either speech or silence will make for the glory of God, and for the cause of religion, and good one of another, so speak, and so hold your peace, Prov. xv. 23, xxv. 11.

(5.) Be not hasty to speak, Prov. xxix. 11, nor be much in speaking, Prov. xvii. 27, Eccles. x. 14, but

only when just cause shall require; for as it is shame and folly to a man to answer a matter before he hears it, Prov. xviii. 13, so is it for any to speak before his time and turn, Job xxxii. 4—6. Likewise consider, that in the multitude of words there wants not sin; but he that refrains his lips is wise, Prov. x. 19.

(6.) Be sparing to speak of yourself or actions, to your own praise, except in case of necessary apology, 2 Cor. xii. 11, and defence of God's cause maintained by you, and in the clearing of your wronged innocence, or needful manifestation of God's power and grace in you; but then it must be with all modesty, giving the praise unto God, Phil. iv. 12, 13. Neither must you cunningly hunt for praise, by debasing or excusing yourself and actions, that you may give occasion to draw forth commendations of yourself from others. Thus seeking of applause, argues pride and folly. But do praiseworthy actions, seeking therein the praise of God, that God may be glorified in you, then you shall have praise of God, Rom. ii. 29, whatever you have of man. However, follow Solomon's rule: Let another praise thee, not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips, Prov. xxvii. 2.

(7.) As you must be wise in your carriage towards others, so you must be wise for yourself; which is to make a good use to yourself of all things that occur in company. Let the good you see, be matter of joy, and thankfulness to God, and improved for your own imitation, Rom. xii. 9. Let the evil you see, be matter of grief and humiliation, and a warning to you, lest you commit the like, since you are made of the same mould that others are, and are liable to the same temptations. If men report good of you to your face, repress those speeches as soon and as wisely as you can, giving the praise of all things to God, Gen. xli. 15, 16, Acts xi. 23; knowing that this is but a temptation and a snare, Prov. xxvii. 14, and a means to breed self-love, pride, and vain-glory in you. If this good report be true, bless God that he has enabled you to deserve it, and study by virtuous living to continue

it. If this good report be false, endeavour to make it good by being hereafter answerable to the report.

(8.) If men report evil of you to your face, be not so much inquisitive who raised it, or how to confute them, or clear your reputation amongst men; as to make a good use of it to your own heart before God.

For you must know, this evil report does not rise without God's providence, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. If the report be true, then see God's good providence; it is that you may see your error and failings, that you may repent. If the report be false, yet consider, if you have not run into the appearance and occasions of those evils. Then say, though this report be false, yet it comes justly upon me, because I did not shun the occasions and appearances. This should humble you, and cause you to be more circumspect in your ways. But if neither the thing reported be true, nor you have given occasion for it, yet see God's wise and good providence; not only in discovering the folly and malice of evil men, who raise and take up an evil report against you without cause; but in giving you warning to look to yourself, lest you deserve thus to be spoken of. And how do you know, but that you should have fallen into the same, or the like evil, if by these reports you had not been forewarned? Make use therefore of the railings and revilings of an enemy, 2 Sam. xvi. 10—12; though he be a bad judge, yet he may be a good remembrancer; for you shall hear from him those things, of which flatterers will not, and friends, being blinded, or over indulgent through love, do never admonish you.

Fourthly, Your conversation amongst all must be loving: you should be kind and courteous towards all men, Tit. iii. 2. Do good to all, according as you have ability and opportunity, Gal. vi. 10. Give offence willingly to none, 1 Cor. x. 32. Do wrong to no man, 1 Cor. vi. 1—8, either in his name, life, chastity, or estate, or in any thing that is his; but be ready to forgive wrongs done to you, Col. iii. 13, and to take wrong, rather than to revenge, or unchristianly to seek your own vindication. As you have calling and

opportunity, do good to the souls of your neighbours; exhort and encourage unto well-doing, 1 Thess. v. 14. If they show not themselves to be dogs and swine, Matt. vii. 6; that is, obstinate scorers of good men, and contemners of the pearl of good counsel, you must, so far as God gives you any interest in them, admonish and inform them with the spirit of meekness and wisdom, Lev. xix. 17. With this cloak of love you should cover and cure a multitude of your companions' infirmities and offences, 1 Peter iv. 8. In all your behaviour towards him, seek not so much to please yourself as your companion, in that which is good to his edification, Rom. xv. 2.

(1.) Speak evil of no man, Tit. iii. 2; nor yet speak the evil you know of any man, except in these or the like cases. (1.) When you are thereunto lawfully called by authority. (2.) When it is to those whom it concerns, to reform and reclaim him of whom you speak, and you do it to that end, 1 Cor. i. 11. (3.) When it is to prevent certain damage to the soul or estate of your neighbour, Acts xxiii. 16, which would ensue, if it were not by you thus discovered. (4.) When the concealment of his evil may make you guilty and accessory. (5.) When some particular remarkable judgment of God is upon a notorious sinner for his sin, then, to the end that God may be acknowledged in his judgments, and that others may be warned, or brought to repent of the same or like sin, you may speak of the evils of another, Psa. lii. 6, 7. But this is not to speak evil, so long as you do it not in envy and malice to his person, nor with aggravation of the fault more than is cause, nor yet to the judging of him as concerning his final estate.

(2.) When you shall hear any in your company speak evil of your neighbour, by slandering, whispering, or tale-bearing, whereby he detracts from his good name; you must not only stop your ears at such reports, but must set your speech and countenance against him, like a north wind against rain, Prov. xxv. 23.

(3.) When you hear another well reported of, let

it not be grievous to you, as if it detracted from your credit; but rejoice at it, inasmuch as God has enabled him to be good, and to do good; all which makes for the advancement of the common cause of religion, wherein you are interested; envy him not therefore his due praise.

(4.) Detract not from any man's credit, either by open backbiting, Psa. xv. 3, or by secret whispering, Prov. xvi. 28, or by any cunning means of casting evil aspersions, whether by way of pitying him, or otherwise: as, He is good or does well in such and such things; but, &c. This *but* mars all.

(5.) And, in a word, in all speeches to men, and communications with them, your speech must be gracious, Col. iv. 6, that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace, not vice, to the hearers. It must not be profane, nor any way corrupt, Eph. iv. 29, as defiled with oaths, curses, or profane jests; it must not be flattering, Job xvii. 5, nor yet detracting; not bitter, not railing, censorious, or injurious to any man, Eph. iv. 31. It must not be wanton, lascivious, and filthy, Eph. v. 3, 4. Col. iii. 8. It must not be false, Col. iii. 9; no, nor yet foolish, idle, and fruitless; for all evil communication does corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. xv. 33. And we must answer for every idle word which we speak, Matt. xii. 36. Besides, a man may easily be discerned of what country he is, whether of heaven, or of the earth, by his language; his speech will betray him.

(6.) There is no wisdom or power here below, can teach and enable you to do all, or any of the fore-mentioned duties. This wisdom and power must be had from above, James iii. 13—18. Wherefore, if you would in all companies carry yourself worthy the gospel of Christ:

First, Be sure that the law of God, and the power of grace be in your heart, else the law of grace and kindness cannot be in your life and speech, Psa. xxxvi. 30, 31. Prov. xxxi. 26. You must be endued, therefore, with a spirit of holiness, humility, love, gentleness, long-suffering, meekness, and wisdom;

else you can never converse with all men as you ought to do. For such as the heart is, such the conversation will be. Out of the evil heart come evil thoughts and actions, Matt. xv. 19; but a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and according to the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, Matt. xii. 34, 35. A man must have the heart of the wise, before the tongue can be taught to speak wisely, Prov. xvi. 23.

Secondly, You must resolve before-hand, as David did, to take heed to your ways, that you sin not with your tongue; and that you will keep your mouth as with a bridle, Psa. xxxix. 1. Before your speech and actions, be well advised; weigh and ponder in the balance of reason, all your actions and words, before you vent them.

Thirdly, Let no passion of joy, grief, fear, anger, &c. get the head, and exceed their limits. For wise and good men, as well as bad, when they have been in any of these passions, have spoken unadvisedly with their lips, Job iii. 3, 23. Psa. cvi. 32, 33. Mark ix. 5, 6. Jonah iv. 8, 9. Mark vi. 22, 23. And experience will teach you, that your tongue never runs before your wit so soon, as when you are over-afraid, over-grieved, over-angry, or over-joyed.

Fourthly, You must be much in prayer unto God, before you come into company, that you may be able to order your conversation aright; let your heart also be lifted up often to God when you are in company, that he would set a watch before your mouth, and keep the door of your lips, and that your heart may not incline to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity, Psa. cxli. 3, 4; and that he would open your lips, that your mouth may show forth his praise, Psa. li. 15; and that you may speak as you ought to speak, knowing how to answer every man, Col. iv. 6; for the tongue is such an unruly evil, that no man, but God only, can tame and govern it, James iii. 8.

SECT. 2. CAUTIONS AND DIRECTIONS CONCERNING EVIL COMPANY.

WHEN company is evil or sinful, if you may choose, come not into it at all, Prov. i. 15; xxiii. 20; Psa. xxvi. 4, 5. For keeping evil company will (1.) Blemish your name. (2.) It will expose you often to many hazards of your life and state, 1 Kings xxii. 29—32; 2 Chron. xviii. 31, and xxii. 6—9; Gen. xiv. 11, 12. And (3.) you are always in danger to be corrupted by the contagion and infection of it, Prov. xxii. 24, 25.

By bad company, I do not only understand, seducers, and such as are openly profane or riotous; but also such civil men, who yet remain mere worldings, and all lukewarm professors, who are strangers to the life and power of religion. For although the sins of these latter do not carry such a manifest appearance of gross impiety and dishonesty, as those of open blasphemers, drunkards, adulterers, and the like; yet they are not less dangerous. Your heart will quickly rise against these manifest enormous evils: but the other, by reason of their unsuspected danger, through that tolerable good opinion which, in comparison, is had of them, will sooner ensnare and infect you, by an insensible chilling of your spirits, and by taking off the edge of your zeal towards the power of godliness; and so, by little and little, draw you to a remissness and indifferency in religion, and to a love of the world.

If you shall think, that by keeping evil company, you may convert them, and draw them to goodness; be not deceived; it is presumption so to think. Has not God expressly forbidden you such company? Prov. xxiii. 20. If you be not necessarily called to be in sinful company, you may justly fear that you shall be sooner perverted, Psa. cvi. 34, 35, and made evil by their wickedness, than, that they should be converted and made good by your holiness.

Secondly, When by reason of common occasions in respect of the affairs of your calling, generally, or in particular, in church, commonwealth, and family, you cannot shun ill company; (1.) Be specially watchful that your conversation be honest, 1 Thess. iv. 12, unblamable and harmless, Phil. ii. 15, 16; Eph. v. 15, 16; even with a dove-like innocency, Matt. x. 16; that by your good example, they may without the word be brought to love the power and sincerity of that true religion which you profess, 1 Peter iii. 1. However, give no advantage to the adversary to speak evil, 1 Tim. v. 14, either of you, or of your religion; but, by a holy life, stop the mouths of ignorant and foolish men, 1 Peter ii. 15; or if they will notwithstanding speak against you, let your holy life shame all that blame your good conversation in Christ Jesus, 1 Peter iii. 16. (2.) Be wise as serpents, Col. iv. 5; Matt. x. 16. Walk cautiously, lest they bring you into temporal evils and inconveniences: but especially lest they infect you with their sin; for a little leaven will quickly leaven the whole lump, 1 Cor. v. 6.

That you may not be infected by that ill company which you cannot avoid, use these preservatives: (1.) Be not high minded, Rom. xi. 20; but fear, lest you do commit the same or the like sin; for you are of the same nature, and are subject to the same, or the like temptations. He that sees his neighbour slip and fall before him, had need to take heed lest he himself fall, 1 Cor. x. 12. (2.) Your soul, like that of righteous Lot, must be vexed daily with seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds, 2 Peter ii. 8, Psa. cxix. 136—158. (3.) Raise your heart to a sensible loathing of their sin; yet have compassion on the sinner, Jude 22, 23; and so far as you have opportunity, admonish him as a brother, 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15. (4.) When you see or hear any wickedness, lift up your heart to God, and before him confess it, and disclaim all liking of it, Psa. cxx. 5, 6; pray unto God to keep you from it, and that he would forgive your companion his sin, and give unto him grace to repent of it.

Lastly, Though you may converse with sinful com-

pany, when your calling is to be with them, in a common and colder kind of fellowship, by a common love, whereby you wish well to all, and would do good to all; yet you must not converse with them with such special and intimate Christian familiarity and delight, Psa. xvi. 3, as you do with the saints that are excellent. Thus do, and the Lord can and will keep you in the midst of Egypt and Babel, as he did Joseph and Daniel, if he call you to it.

Thirdly, As soon as possibly you can, depart out of their company, when you find not in them the lips of knowledge, Prov. xiv. 7, or when they any way declare that they have only a form, but deny the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5. From such turn away, saith the apostle. And so use the preservatives prescribed, or any other, as prudence shall direct, that you depart not more evil, or less good, than when you came together.

SECT. 3. DIRECTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

Now concerning good company, or Christian fellowship, First, highly esteem it, Psa. xvi. 3, and much desire it. For you should love the brotherhood, 1 Peter ii. 17, however the world scoff at it; and forsake not the fellowship, Heb. x. 25, or the company of the godly, as the manner of some is; but, with David, as much as may be, be a companion with them that fear God, Psa. cxix. 63.

Secondly, When you are in good company, you must express all brotherly love; improving your time together for your mutual good, chiefly in the increase of each other's faith and holiness, Rom. i. 11, 12; provoking one another to love, and to good works, Heb. x. 24.

Then is your Christian love of the right kind, (1.) When you love them out of a pure heart fervently, 1 Peter i. 22; which is, when you love them, because they are brethren, partakers of the same faith and spirit of adoption, Heb. iii. 1; having the same Father,

and being of the same household of faith with you, Gal. vi. 10. (2.) When you love them not only with a love of humanity, as they are men, for so you should love all men, even your enemies; nor yet only with a common love of Christianity, wherewith you love all professing true religion, though actually they show little fruit and power thereof; but with a special love, 1 Peter i. 22, iv. 8; for kind, spiritual; and for degree, more abundant. Therefore it is called brotherly kindness, Rom. xii. 10, and a fervent love, distinct from charity, or a common love, 2 Peter i. 7.

Where this love is, it will unite hearts together, like Jonathan's and David's, 1 Sam. xviii. 1, making you to be of one heart and soul, Acts iv. 32. It will make you enjoy each other's society with spiritual delight, Psa. xvi. 3. It will make you to sympathize with one another; and to bear each other's burthens, Gal. vi. 2. It will make you to communicate in all things communicable, with gladness, and singleness of heart, Acts ii. 46, as you are able, and that with a special love, Gal. vi. 10, beyond that which you show to them which are not alike excellent. Yea, it is so entire and so ardent, that you will not hold your life to be too dear, to lay down for the common good of the brethren, 1 John iii. 16.

When therefore you meet with those that fear God, improve the communion of saints, not only by communicating in natural and temporal good things as you are able, and as there is need; but especially in the communion of things spiritual, edifying yourselves in your most holy faith, Jude 20, 1 Thess. v. 11, by holy speech and conference, and in due time and place, in reading the holy Scriptures and good books, and by prayer, and singing of psalms together, Col. iii. 16.

That your singing may please God, and edify yourself and others, observe these rules:

1. Sing as in God's sight, and, in matter of prayer and praise, speak to God in singing, Psa. xxx. 4.

2. The matter of your song must be spiritual, either indited by the Spirit, or composed of matter agreeing thereunto, Col. iii. 16.

3. You must sing with understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

4. You must sing with judgment, being able in private to make choice of psalms suitable to the present time and occasion; and both in private and public to apply the psalm sung to your own particular case, only taking heed that you do not apply the imprecations made against the enemies of Christ and his church in general, to your enemies in particular; also endeavour to confirm your faith, and incline your will and affections according to the subject of your psalmody, whether you sing the prophecies of Christ, his promises, threats, commands, mercies, or judgments, &c.

5. You must make melody to the Lord in your heart, Col. iii. 16; which is done (1.) By preparing and setting the heart in tune, Psa. lvii. 7. It must be an honest heart. (2.) The heart must be lifted up, Psa. xxv. 1. (3.) The mind intent, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. (4.) The affections lively, Psa. xxxiii. 3, Rev. xiv. 3; the heart believing, and, in the matter of praise and thanks, joyous, Psa. lxxxiv. 1.

6. Lose not your short and precious time, with idle compliments, worldly discourses, or talking of other men's matters and faults, 1 Tim. v. 13; nor yet in a barren and fruitless hearing and telling of news, Acts xvii. 21, out of affectation of strangeness and novelty. But let the matter of your talk be, either of God, or of his word and ways, wherein you should walk; or of his works of creation, preservation, redemption, sanctification, and salvation; of his judgments which he executes in the world, and of his mercies showed towards his people: or matter of Christian advice, either of the things of this life, or of that which is to come. Impart also each to other the experience and proofs you have had of God's grace and power, in your Christian warfare. And as there shall be cause, exhort, admonish, and comfort one another, 1 Thess. v. 11—14.

To do all these well, will require special godly wisdom, humility, and love. If these three be in you, and abound, your society will be profitable: The strong

will not despise the weak, neither will the weak judge the strong, Rom. xiv. 1—3. You will be far from putting a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in your brother's way, but you will follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith you may edify one another, 1 John ii. 10, Rom. xiv. 13—19. You will then bear with each other's infirmities, Rom. xv. 1—3, and not seek to please yourself, but your neighbour, for his good to edification.

You must first be wise to make choice, not only of such matter of speech as is good and lawful, but such as is fit, considering the condition and need of those before whom you speak. In proposing questions, you must not only take heed that they be not vain, foolish, and needless, 2 Tim. ii. 23; such as engender strife, Tit. iii. 9; and do minister and multiply questions, rather than godly edifying, 1 Tim. i. 4; but you must be careful that they be fit and pertinent, both in respect of the person to whom they are proposed, and in respect of the person or persons before whom they must be answered.

Some men have special gifts for one purpose, some for another. Some for interpreting Scripture; some for deciding of controversies; some for discovering Satan's methods and enterprises; some are excellent for comforting and curing afflicted and wounded consciences; some are better skilled, and more exercised in one thing than in another. And some also of God's dear children, as they are not able to bear all exercises of religion, Matt. ix. 15—17; so neither are they capable of hearing and profiting by all kind of discourses of religion, Heb. v. 11—13. If this were wisely observed, Christian conference would be much more useful, than usually it is.

Secondly, You must be lowly minded, and of an humble spirit, not presuming above your gifts and calling, Rom. xii. 3. When you speak of the things of God, be reverent, serious, and sober, keeping yourself within the line, 2 Cor. x. 13, both of your calling, and the measure of that knowledge and grace which God has given you; speaking positively and confi-

dently only of those things which you clearly understand, and whereof you have experience, or sure proof. Think not yourself too good to learn of any, Acts xviii. 26; neither harden your neck against the admonitions and reproofs of any. If you have an humble heart, you will do as David did, when he was admonished and advised by a woman. He saw God in it, and blessed him for it, he received the good counsel, and blessed her that gave it. Now blessed be God who has sent thee to meet me this day, said he, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou who hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, &c. 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

Thirdly, There will be need of the exercise of much fervent love and charity, even amongst the best. For as Satan has malice against all good company and good conference, he will infuse matters of difference and discord. And because the best men differ in opinion, though not in fundamentals, yet in ceremonies, and less necessary points of religion; and forasmuch as they all have infirmities, and, while the remains of corrupt nature are in them, are subject and apt to mistake and misconstrue one another's actions and speeches, you will need that this bond of love be strong, that it be not broken asunder by any of these, or other such means; but that you remain strongly and sweetly knit together in the unity of the Spirit, through this bond of peace, Eph. iv. 3.

I especially recommend this Christian society in brotherly love, 1 John iii. 14; because, 1. There is nothing gives a more sensible evidence of conversion, and translation from death to life than this. 2. Nothing does more assist the increase and power of godliness in any place or person, than this, Acts ii. 44—47; iv. 32, 33. For, let it be observed, though there be never such an excellent minister in any place; you will see little improvement in grace amongst the people, until many of them become of one heart; showing it by consorting together in Christian fellowship, in the communion of saints. 3. Nothing brings more sensible joy, comfort, and delight, next to communion

with God in Christ, than the actual communion of saints and love of brethren, Psa. xvi. 3; Acts ii. 46, 47. It is the beginning of that happiness on earth, which shall be perfected in heaven. It is for kind, the same, only differing in degree.

And, to conclude this subject, after you have been in company, good or bad, it will be worth your while to examine how far you have hindered any evil in others, and have preserved yourself from evil: how far you have endeavoured to do good to others, and how much you have gained in knowledge, serious affection, zeal, or any other good grace, by your company; and according as you find, let your conscience reprove or comfort you.



CHAPTER IX.

RULES FOR OUR RELIGIOUS CONDUCT IN PROSPERITY.

WHEN at any time you prosper in any thing, and have good success, that you may therein walk according to God's word,

First, Take heed of committing those sins to which the nature of man is most addicted, when his heart is satiated with prosperity.

Secondly, Be careful to produce those good fruits, which are the principal ends why God gives good success.

1st. The sins especially to be watched against, are, (1.) Denying of God, Prov. xxx. 9; by forgetting him and his ways, Deut. vi. 12; departing from him, Deut. xxxii. 15; when you are waxen fat like Jeshurun; taking the more licence to sin, Job xxi. 14, by how much you prosper the more in the world. (2.) Ascribing the praise of success to yourself or to second

causes, Dan. iv. 30; sacrificing to your own net, Hab. i. 15, 16. (3.) High-mindedness, 1 Tim. vi. 17; thinking too well of yourself, because you have that which others have not, and despising and thinking too meanly of those, who have not what you possess, 1 Cor. xi. 22. (4.) If riches increase, or if you thrive in any other earthly thing, set not your heart thereon, Psa. lxii. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 17, either in taking too much delight therein, Job xxxi. 25, or in trusting thereto. Holy Job, and good David, were in some particulars overtaken with this fault. When Job was prospered, he entertained this secure conceit, that he should die in his nest, and multiply his days as the sand, Job xxix. 18; and David in his prosperity said, he should never be moved, Psa. xxx. 6. But the Lord by afflictions taught them both to know by experience, how vain all earthly things are to trust unto, and ingenuously to confess their error.

2d. I reduce the good effects or fruits, which are the principal ends why God gives good success, unto these two heads: (1.) Professed praise and thankfulness to God. (2.) Real proofs of the said thankfulness, in well using and employing this good success for God.

SECT. 2. MOTIVES TO PRAISE AND THANKFULNESS.

FIRST, Praise and thank God. For, (1.) It is the chief and most lasting service and worship, which God has required of you. (2.) It is most due, Psa. xxix. 2, and due to him only: he only is worthy, Rev. iv. 11; v. 12; for of him are all things, Rom. xi. 36, and he is called the God of praises. (3.) It is the end why God declares his excellency and goodness, both in his word and works, Prov. xvi. 4, that it may be matter of praise and thanksgiving; also why he has given man a heart to understand, and a tongue to speak, that for them, and with them, as by apt instruments, they might acknowledge his goodness and excellency; thinking and speaking to his praise and

glory. Wherefore David, speaking to his heart, or tongue, or both, when he would give thanks, saith, Awake, my glory, and I will give praise, Psa. lvii. 8, and cviii. 1, compared with Psa. xvi. 9, and Acts ii. 26. (4.) There is not any service of God more beneficial to man, than to be thankful, 1 Tim. iv. 4; for it makes those gifts of God, which are good in themselves, to be good to you, and they are the best preservatives of good things to you; nay, thankfulness for former blessings, are real requests for further favours, as well as the best security you enjoy, Phil. iv. 6, 7; for God will not withdraw his goodness from the thankful.

This praise and thanksgiving is a religious service, wherein a man makes known to God, that he acknowledges every good thing to come from him, and that he is worthy of all praise and glory, for the infinite excellency of his wisdom, power, goodness, and all his other holy and blessed attributes, manifested in his word and works; and that he is beholden to God for all that he has had, now has, and which he still hopes to enjoy.

Praise and thanksgiving go together, and do differ only in some respect. The superabundant excellency in God, showed by his titles and works, is the object of praise, 1 Chron. xxix. 11—13; Psa. viii. 1—9. The abundant goodness of God, showed in his titles and works, to his church, to you, or to any person or thing to which you have reference, is the object and matter of your thanks, 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

(2.) Directions for thanksgiving.

These following things, concerning praise and thanksgiving, are needful to be known and observed:

First, Who must give praise and thanks? Namely, you, and all that have understanding and breath, must praise the Lord, Psa. cl. 6.

Secondly, To whom are praise and thanksgiving due? Only to God, Psa. l. 13. Not unto us, not unto us, saith the church, but unto thy name give glory, Psa. cxv. 1.

Thirdly, By whom must this sacrifice of thankful-

ness be offered? Even by Christ only Eph. v. 20; Heb. xiii. 15, the only high-priest of our profession, out of whose golden censer our prayers and praises ascend, and are acceptable to God as incense, Rev. viii. 3, 4.

Fourthly, For what must we praise God and give him thanks? We must praise him in all his works, be they for us, or against us; we must thank him for all things, spiritual and temporal, wherein he is any way good unto us, Eph. v. 20.

Fifthly, With what must we praise and thank him? Even with our souls, and all that is within us, and with all that we have, Psal. ciii. 1. We must praise and thank God with the inward man; praise him with the spirit, and with the understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 15; praise him with the will; praise and thank him with all the affections, with love, desire, joy, and gladness; praise him with the whole heart. We must likewise praise him with the outward man, both with tongue and hands, Psal. xxxv. 28; our words and our deeds must show forth his praise. When our thanks are cordial and real, then they make a good harmony and sweet melody, most pleasant in the ears of God.

Sixthly, When must we give thanks? Always, morning, noon, evening, at all times; as long as we live and have any being, we must praise him, Eph. v. 20. Psal. lv. 17. cxix. 164. civ. 33.

Seventhly, How much? We must praise and thank him abundantly, Psal. xlviii. 1. We must endeavour to proportion our praise to his worthiness and goodness: As we must love him, so we must thank him, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

(3.) The evil of unthankfulness, and dissuasives against it.

There is no sin more common than unthankfulness, Luke xvii. 17, 18; for scarce one out of ten gives thanks to God for his benefits; and those who do give thanks, besides many errors in thanksgiving, do not thank God for one mercy in twenty. Many in distress will pray, or cry and howl at least, Hosea vii. 14, as they of old, for corn and oil; but who returns proportionable praises to his prayers? Whereas the Chris-

tian should be oftener in thanks than in prayers, Psa. lix. 10, because God prevents our prayers with his good gifts a thousand ways.

Take heed therefore that you be not unthankful. It is a most base, hateful, and damnable sin. For he that is unthankful to God, is (1.) A most dishonest and disloyal man: he is injurious to God, in detaining from him his due, in not paying him his tribute. (2.) He is foolish and improvident for himself; for by not paying his tribute of thankfulness, and doing this homage, he forfeits all that he has into the Lord's hands, Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. Hosea ii. 8, 9; which forfeiture many times he takes: But if he does not presently take the forfeiture, it will prove worse to the unthankful in the end. For prosperity, without a thankful heart, always increases sin, Hosea iv. 7. Rom. i. 21, and prepares a man for greater destruction. The more such an one thrives, the more does pride, hard-heartedness, and many other evil lusts grow in him. This unthankfulness is the highway to be given over to a reprobate sense, Rom. i. 21—29. Such prosperity always proves a snare, and ends in utter ruin, Psa. lxix. 22. For the prosperity of fools shall destroy them, Prov. i. 32. And when the wicked prosper, it is but like sheep put into fat pastures, that they may be prepared for the slaughter, Jer. xii. 1—3. An unthankful man is, of all men, most unfit to go to heaven. Heaven can be no heaven to him: for there is praising of God continually. Now to whom thanksgiving and singing of the praises of God is tedious, to him heaven cannot be joyous.

(4.) It does concern you, therefore, that you be much and often in thanksgiving and praise unto God. To this end, attend to these directions; 1. Stir up your heart to holy resolution and longing desire so to do. 2. Beware of, and remove impediments to thankfulness. 3. Improve all the means of gaining such a frame of mind.

First, Consider that gratitude and thankfulness is the best service, being the end of all other worship; and is God's due; and is the end why God gives

matter and means by which, and for which we should be thankful; and that nothing is more beneficial than thankfulness, nor any thing more mischievous than unthankfulness, as has been already showed. Consider also, that hearty and constant thankfulness is a testimony of uprightness; it does excellently become the upright to be thankful, Psa. xxxiii. 1. It is all the homage, and all the service which God requires at your hands, for all the good that he bestows on you. It is pleasant and delightful, Psa. cxlvii. 1. It is possible and easy through the grace of God's Spirit. It is a small matter, to what God might exact; even as an homage-penny or pepper-corn. Thankfulness does elevate and enlarge the soul, making it fruitful in good works, beyond any other duty. For the thankful man, with David, is often consulting with himself what he shall render to the Lord for all his benefits to him, Psa. cxvi. 12. Lastly, This spiritual praise and thanks to God by Christ, is the beginning of heaven upon earth, being part of that communion and fellowship which saints and angels have with God above. It is that everlasting service which endures for ever.

(5.) Impediments to thankfulness.

Not only stir up your soul to this great duty of praise and thanksgiving, but carefully shun all the impediments thereunto. Amongst many, take heed especially of these: (1.) Ignorance. (2.) Pride. (3.) Forgetfulness. (4.) Doubting of God's love. (5.) Undue affection to the benefits received, especially to such as are temporal.

First, If you are ignorant of the excellency and worth of God's good gift, or if you misprize things, preferring natural, temporal, or common gifts, before spiritual, eternal, and special graces, peculiar to God's children, you will either give no thanks at all; for who can give thanks for that which he esteems worth little or nothing? or if you do give thanks, it will be preposterous, giving thanks for temporal blessings sooner, and more than for spiritual and eternal. Moreover, though you do know each good gift accord-

ing to its due value, yet if, through ignorance, you mistake the giver, you will bestow your thanks upon men, and second causes, but not on God, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, James i. 17.

Secondly, If you be proud and highly conceited of your own worth and good deservings, you will expect matters otherwise than God will think fit to give, as Naaman did, before he was cleansed, 2 Kings v. 11, 12; and when you miss of your expectation, you will be so far from thanks, that you will murmur and complain.

Thirdly, Though you know the worth of the gift, and do acknowledge the giver; and also think yourself unworthy of the gift; yet, if you have not these in actual remembrance; if you have forgotten them, and they be out of mind, how can you be duly thankful? Therefore, when David calls upon himself to be thankful, he saith, Forget not all his benefits, Psa. ciii. 2.

Fourthly, Suppose that you know well the worth of the gift, and do judge yourself unworthy of it, and remember well that you received it of God; yet if through misbelief and doubting of God's love, you think that God does not give it to you in love and mercy, but in wrath, as he gave Israel a king, Hosea xiii. 11; your heart will sink, and be so clogged with this fear, that you cannot raise it up to praise and thankfulness, for any gift which you conceive to be so given.

Fifthly, Suppose that you are free from all the former impediments; yet if you be too eagerly affected with the gift, you will in a kind of over joyousness be so taken up with it, that, as little children, when their parents give them sweet-meats, or such things as they most delight in, fall to eating of the sweet-meat, and run away for joy, before ever they have shown any sign of thankfulness, so you will easily be overtaken in this kind, and neglect God that gave it.

(6.) Helps to thankfulness.

The helps to thankfulness, are most of them directly contrary to the former hindrances; of which, take these;

First, Get sound knowledge of God, and of his infinite excellencies, Psa. viii. 1, 9, and absoluteness every way, Matt. vi. 13. Rom. xi. 36, and of his independency on man, or any other creature; whence it is that he needeth not any thing that man hath, Psa. l. 12, 15. 1 Chron. xxix. 14—16, or can do; neither can he be beholden to man. But know, that you stand in need of God, Acts xiv. 17. xvii. 28, and must be beholden to him for all things. Know, also, that whatsoever God doth, by whatever means it be, he doth it from himself, Isaiah xliii. 25. Hosea xiii. 4, induced by nothing out of himself, being free in all that he doth. Know likewise, that whatsoever was the instrument of your good, God was the author of both the good and the instrument, James i. 17.

Next, get a clear understanding of the full worth and excellent use of God's gifts, both common and special. Wealth, honour, liberty, health, life, senses, reason, &c., considered in themselves, and in their use, will be esteemed to be great benefits; but if you consider them in their absence, when you are sensible of poverty, sickness, and the rest; or if you be so blessed, that you know not the want of them; then if you considerately and humbly look upon the poor, base, imprisoned, captive, sick, deaf, blind, dumb, distracted, &c. putting yourself in their case, Heb. xiii. 3, you will say that you are unspeakably beholden to God for these corporal and temporal blessings.

But chiefly learn to know, and consider well the worth of spiritual blessings. One of them, the peace of God, passeth all understanding, Phil. iv. 7. To enjoy the gospel upon any terms, to have salvation, such a salvation as is offered by Christ, to have faith, hope, love, and other the manifold saving graces of the Spirit, though but in the least measure, in the very first seed of the Spirit, though no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, Luke xvii. 6, with never so much outward affliction, is of such inestimable value and consequence, that it is more than eye has seen, or ear has heard, or ever entered into the heart of man, 1 Cor. ii. 9. For besides that the least grace is

invaluable in itself, it is also the evidence of better gifts, namely, that God has given you his Spirit, has given you Christ, and in him has given himself, a propitious and gracious God, and with himself has given you all things, Rom. viii. 32. When you know God aright, and his gifts aright, knowing all things in God, and God in all things, then you will be full of praises and thanks.

Secondly, Be humble and base in your own eyes, 1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14. Let all things be base in your eyes, in comparison of God, account them worthless and helpless things, without him, Psa. cxlvi. 1, 3; xxxiii. 16, 17. Judge yourself to be, as indeed you are, less than the least of God's mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10. For what are you of yourself, but a compound of dust and sin, unworthy any good, deserving of all misery? You stand in need of God, but not he of you; it is of his mercy that you are not consumed, Lam. iii. 22. When you are thus sensible of your own need, and that help can come only from God, and that you are worthy of no good thing, then you will be glad and thankful at heart to God for any thing. An humble man will be more thankful for the least mercy, than a proud man will for the greatest.

Thirdly, Frequently reflect upon the infinite excellencies of God and his great benefits. Commune with your soul, and cause it to represent lively to your thoughts, what God is in himself, what to his church, and to you, how precious his thoughts are to youward, Psa. cxxxix. 17. Consider often what God has done, and what he will do for your soul, Psa. xl. 5. Call to mind with what variety of good gifts he enriches his church, and has blessed you: and you will find that they will pass all account and number. When also you consider that God is free in all his gifts to you, who are unworthy the least of them; if you would thus dwell upon these, and such like thoughts, they would excite in you a holy rapture and admiration, causing you to break out, with David, into these, or in the like praises; O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Psa. viii.

1. I thank thee, I praise thee, I devote myself, as my best sacrifice to thee, Rom. xii. 1. I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

Fourthly, Be persuaded of God's love to you in these good things, which he gives unto you: First, He loves you as his creature, and if only in that respect he does preserve you, and do you good, you are bound to thank him. Secondly, You know not but God may love you with a special love to salvation, 1 John iii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 4. God's revealed will professes as much, for you must not meddle with that which is secret. I am sure he gives all-sufficient proof of his love, making offers of it to you; and which you are daily receiving the tokens of, both in the means of this life, and that which is to come. Did not he love you when out of his free and everlasting good will towards you, he gave his Son to die for you, that you, believing in him, should not die, but have everlasting life? John iii. 16. What though you are yet in your sins, does he not command you to return to him? Hosea xiv. 2—4; and has he not said, he will love you freely? What though you cannot turn to him, nor love him as you would, yet apply by humble faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, as your only Saviour and great physician, and endeavour in the use of all good means, to be and do as God will have you; then doubt not but that God does love you; and patiently wait, till you see it in the performance of all his gracious promises unto you.

(7.) Signs to know when God gives good things in love.

If you would consider things aright, you may possibly know with certainty, that the good things you have received of God, are bestowed in love to you. I will only ask these questions: Have God's mercies excited you to labour more diligently to please him well in all things? Have you had a will to be thankful upon the consideration thereof? Or, if you find a defect and barrenness herein, has not this unfruitful and unthankful receiving of blessings from God, been a great burden and grief of heart to you? If

so, this is an evident sign that God gave those good things to you in love, because this holy and good effect is wrought in you by them. Again, do you love God? Would you love God, and his ways, and ordinances yet more? This proves that God loves you; for no man can love God, till God has first loved him, 1 John iv. 10—19. Likewise, do you love the children of God? Then certainly you are God's child, and are beloved of God, 1 John iv. 7. By these things you have proof of your calling and election, that you are now translated from death to life, 1 John iii. 14. So that, though God may give you some things in anger, as a father gives correction, yet he never gives any thing in hatred and in wrath, as he does to his enemies. All things work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28; therefore whatsoever he gives to such, is in love.

Fifthly, Prefer the honour and glory of God, before and above all things that may be beneficial to yourself; prefer likewise the kindness and love of God in the gift, far above the gift itself; then you will never be so taken up with the enjoyment of the gift, as to forget to give praise and thanks to the giver.

Sixthly, Unto the former helps, add this: lay a holy command upon your soul, and strictly charge yourself to be thankful; and, since you have such good reason for it, make no excuses against it, but say, with David, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, &c. Psal. ciii. 1.

Lastly, To all other means, join earnest prayer to God, to give you a thankful heart. It is not all the reasons you can allege for it, nor all the moral persuasions you can propose to yourself, can effect it, though these be good means, yea, God's means; yet if you go about to raise your heart to it, in the power of your own might, all will be vain. For as you cannot pray but by God's Spirit, so neither can you give thanks but by the same Spirit. Therefore say, as David did: Renew, O Lord, a right spirit in me; and open my lips, that my mouth may show forth thy praise, Psal. li. 10—15.

SECT. 2. OF THE REAL PROOFS OF GRATITUDE AND
THANKFULNESS TO GOD.

It is not enough to profess and utter praise and thanks to God; but you must give real proof thereof.

First, By devoting and giving yourself to God, Rom. xii. 1; to be at the will of him, who is your sovereign Lord, who gives you all that you have, who is always giving unto you, and always doing you good; paying your vows to him that performs his promises to you, Psa. cxvi. 14. Let it appear that you acknowledge him to be such an one as you say in your praises, and that you stand obliged and beholden to him indeed, as you say in your thanks, in that both in the frame of your heart, and the conduct of your life, you behave towards him as one who only is excellent, who only is God, who is your God, the God of your life and salvation; and that, in all holy service. For thanks-living is the best way of thanks-giving, and it is a divine saying, The good life of the thankful, is the life of thankfulness. Wherefore let every new mercy quicken your resolution to persevere and increase in well-doing, serving God so much the more with gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, Deut. xxviii. 47.

Secondly, Do good with those blessings, which God gives you. For every good gift is given to a man to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7; not only himself, but every member of that body, whereof he is part. Whatsoever good gift God has given you, whether temporal or spiritual, it must be employed to God's glory, and to your neighbour's good, as well as to your own, as you have opportunity. If riches, (and the same rule will serve for health, strength, wisdom, skill, &c.) be given to you, you must honour God therewith, Prov. iii. 9; and as God prosper you in any thing, you must communicate to them that need, 1 Cor. xvi. 2, as to the poor, sick, weak, simple, and ignorant. If God give knowledge, faith, spiritual wisdom, ability to

pray, or any other of his rich graces, you must not hoard them up, and keep them reserved for your own private benefit; but you must communicate them to others, and improve them for the promoting their spiritual good, and edifying them in faith, hope, and love.

By communicating your good and common gifts of God in this sort, you make yourself friends with them, Luke xvi. 9, against a day of need; and when you honour God, and do good with the talents which God puts into your hand, then you make the best improvement of them. He who thus walks with God in prosperity, shall certainly find him to be his sure friend in adversity, and when he shall be put out of his stewardship at death, then he shall be received into the everlasting habitations, Luke xvi. 9. When, the more you prosper, the better you desire and endeavour to be, and do more good, this is an infallible proof of true thankfulness, and is an evident sign that you walk with God in prosperity as he would have you.

Give all diligence therefore, to learn this lesson, how to be full, and how to abound, Phil. iv. 12; but know, it can be learned no where but in Christ's school, and can never be practised but by Christ's strength. This is it which the apostle had learned, and said, he was able to do it through Christ that strengthened him, Philip. iv. 12, 13. It is a most needful and high point of learning, to be instructed and to know, every where, and in every thing, how to be full and how to abound: of the two, it is more rare and difficult, than to know how to be abased, and to suffer want, which shall be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

DIRECTIONS FOR WALKING WITH GOD UNDER AFFLICTIONS

EVERY day will bring forth its evil and cross, Matt. vi. 34, whether lighter and ordinary, or more heavy and extraordinary. The first sort rises partly from the common frailties of the persons with whom you converse, and partly from your own; as from pride and peevishness, and suspicion of evil, &c. Such as discourtesies from those of whom you expected kindness; imperiousness, and too much domineering of superiors; sullenness, negligence, and disregard from inferiors; awkwardness and perverseness in the persons and things with which you have to do.

(1.) Rules concerning lighter crosses.

First, Lay not these to heart, make them not greater than they be through your impatience, as many do, who, upon every light occasion of dislike, cast themselves into such a state of vexation and discontent, that all the blessings they enjoy, are scarcely observed, or can make their lives comfortable. Whereas wisdom should prevent, and love and prudence should cover and pass by most of these; seeing, as if you saw not: or if you will give way to any passion at these, let it be with hatred of their and your sin, which is the cause of these, and all other crosses.

Secondly, These should cause you to pity, and pray for them that give you this offence, and for yourself, who many times without cause take offence. You may if need require, show your dislike, and admonish the offender, provided you do it with meekness of wisdom, James iii. 13; but learn hereby to warn yourself, that you give not the like offence.

(2.) Directions how to bear all afflictions well.

But whether your crosses and afflictions be imagi-

nary only, or real; whether from God immediately, or from man, whether light or heavy, follow these directions: 1. Be not transported with passion and anger, like proud Lamech, Gen. iv. 23, 24, and forward Jonas, Jonah iv. 7—9. 2. Be not overwhelmed, or sullen with grief, like covetous Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 4, and foolish Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 37. But, 3. Bear them patiently. 4. Bear them cheerfully and thankfully. 5. Bear them fruitfully.

Remedies against sinful anger.

To help you, that passion and heat of anger kindle not, or at least break not out beyond due bounds,

First, Convince your judgment thoroughly, that passion and rash anger is forbidden and hated of God, Matt. v. 22; Eccles. vii. 9. It is a fruit of the flesh, Gal. v. 20. A work of the devil, James iii. 14, 15. Bred and nourished by pride, Prov. xxi. 24, folly, Prov. xiv. 29, and self-love, Jonah iv. 1—3. Also, that it surprises all the powers of right reason, putting a man beside himself, causing him to abuse his tongue, hands, and the whole man; making him like a fool, to cast firebrands at every thing which crosses him, and that not only against his neighbour and dearest friends, 1 Sam. xx. 30—33, but against God himself, Jonah iv. 9. Consider likewise that it makes a man unfit to pray, 1 Tim. ii. 8, to hear the word, 1 Peter ii. 1; James i. 19, or to perform any worship to God; and unfit to speak, or hear reason, or to give or receive good counsel. God forbids his children the company of the forward, Prov. xxii. 24, and saith, that such an one abounds in transgression, Prov. xxix. 22; and that there is more hope of a fool than of him, Prov. xxix. 20. Wherefore he must needs be exposed to all the just judgments of God, Prov. xix. 19, temporal and eternal. For which cause, fix in your mind such an abhorrence of this vice, that you may beware and shun it with all caution.

Secondly, Observe watchfully when anger begins to kindle and stir in you, and before it flame and break forth into speech or behaviour, set your reason at work, to prevent or restrain it. Nay set faith at

work, having in readiness, upon your mind, such pertinent scriptures as these: Be angry, but sin not, Eph. iv. 26; and, anger rests in the bosom of fools, Eccles. vii. 9. Shall I then sin against God? Shall I thus play the fool?

Rules to know when anger is sinful.

You sin in your anger, first, when it is without cause; as when neither God is dishonoured, nor your neighbour or yourself indeed injured; when it is for trifles, and only because you are crossed in your will and desire, and the like; but chiefly when you are angry with any for well doing, 1 Kings xxii. 24—26. Secondly, Though you have cause, yet if it extinguish your love to the person with whom you are angry; so that you neglect the common and needful offices thereof. Thirdly, When it exceeds due measure, as when it is over much, and over long. Fourthly, It is sinful when it brings forth evil and unseemly effects, such as neglect, or ill performance of any duty to God or man; also when it breaks out into loud, clamorous, or reviling speeches, or into churlish, sullen, or indecent behaviour, or when it is attended with any injurious act.

Thirdly, If you cannot keep anger from rising within you, yet be sure that you bind your tongue and hand to good behaviour. Make a covenant with them, and charge them not to show it, nor partake with it any further than considerate reason, and good conscience shall advise you, Psa. xxxix. 1. Set a law to yourself, Psa. cxli. 3, that you will not chide, nor strike while you are in the heat of anger. If there be cause of either, defer it until you have more government over yourself. If you say, that "If you do them not in your heat, you shall not do them at all;" I answer, that, in saying so you discover a great deal of folly and weakness. I am sure you never do them well in passion. And conscience of duty should lead you to chiding and correcting when there is cause, not passion: for, in it, you serve and revenge yourself upon the party, but not God.

Fourthly, Both before, and when you are angry,

see God, by the eye of your faith, as present with you, in hearing and looking upon you, Psa. xi. 4, 5. This will make you peaceable and quiet, causing you not only to hold your hands and tongue, as you find by experience you use to do, when some reverend friend is present; but this will calm and abate the inward heat and passion of your mind.

Fifthly, If you feel your corruption and weakness to be such, and the provocation to anger so great, that you fear you cannot contain yourself, then, if it be possible, avoid all occasions of anger, and remove yourself, in a peaceable and quiet manner, from the person, object, or occasion thereof. And at all times shun the company of an angry man, as much as your calling will give you leave, lest you learn his ways, Prov. xxii. 24, 25.

Sixthly, Howsoever it may happen that anger kindles in you, and breaks out; be sure that you subdue it before it grow into hatred of him with whom you are angry. For this cause let not the sun go down upon your wrath, Eph. iv. 26; you know not what hatred it may grow into before morning. And the best means that I know to subdue it, is, if you find your heart to rise against any, pray heartily to God for him in particular, for his good, Matt. v. 44; to this you are commanded. And be so far from seeking revenge, that you force yourself to be loving and kind, showing all good offices of love with wisdom, as you shall have occasion; overcoming evil with good, Rom. xiii. 17—21. Pray also to God for yourself, that he would please to subdue this passion in you. This act of love to him with whom you are angry, performed before God, in whose sight you dare not dissemble, will excellently quench wrath, and prevent hatred against him, and will give proof between God and your conscience that you love him.

If, pleading for yourself, you shall say, "It is my natural constitution to be choleric, and flesh and blood will have their course;" know, this is to nourish your passion. Know also, it is a wicked and hateful constitution of body, which came in with the fall. And

flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50. Say not, "I am so crossed and provoked, never "any the like;" for Christ was more injured and more provoked than you, and yet never was in a passion, 1 Peter ii. 23; Heb. xii. 2, 3. And you provoke God a thousand times more every day, yet he is patient with you. Say not, "It is such a headstrong passion, that it is impossible to bridle and subdue it;" for, I can assure you, that by using means, these prescribed, if you also do often and much abase yourself before God for your passion and folly, and daily repent thereof, and watch over yourself, you may, of most hasty and passionate, become most meek and patient before you die. I have seen it in old men whose age in itself giveth advantage to peevishness and forwardness, who were exceedingly passionate in their youth, yet through the grace of God, by constant conflict against this vice, have attained to an admirable degree of meekness.

2. The cure of worldly grief.

Next, as carnal anger, so worldly grief must be avoided in all sorts of crosses. For, by it, you repine against God, fret against men, and make yourself unfit for natural, civil, and spiritual duties, 1 Kings xxi. 4; and if it be continued, it works death, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

The best remedy against worldly sorrow for any affliction, is to turn it into godly sorrow for sin, which is the cause of all our troubles. This will work repentance to salvation, never to be repented of, 2 Cor. vii. 10; and will drive you to Christ, in whom, if you believe, you will have joy and comfort; even such joy unspeakable as will dispel and dry up both this and all other griefs whatsoever, 1 Peter i. 6, 8. For godly sorrow does always, in due time, end in spiritual joy.

(3.) The nature of Christian patience.

In the third place, I proceed to show the nature of Christian patience. By patience, I do not mean a stoical senselessness, or dull stupidity, like that of Issachar, Gen. xlix. 14, 15; nor yet a counterfeit patience, like Esau's, Gen. xxvii. 41, 42, and Absalom's, 2 Sam. xiii. 13, 22; nor a mere civil or moral

patience, which wise heathens, to free themselves from vexation, and for vain glory and other ends, attained unto; nor yet a profane patience, Rev. ii. 2, of men insensible of God's dishonour or afflicting hand; nor a patience per-force, when the sufferer is merely passive, because he cannot relieve himself: but a Christian holy patience, wherein you must be sensible of God's hand, and when you cannot but feel an unwillingness in nature to bear it, yet, for conscience towards God, you do submit to his will, and that voluntarily, with an active patience, causing yourself to be willing to bear it so long as God shall please; after the example of Christ, Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, Not my will, but thine be done. The excellency of Christ's sufferings was not in that he suffered, but in that he was obedient in his sufferings. He was obedient to the death, Phil. ii. 8. So likewise no man's suffering is acceptable, if he be not active and obedient in suffering.

This patience is a grace of the Spirit of God, wrought in the heart and will of man, through believing, and applying the commandments and promises of God to himself; whereby, for conscience sake towards God, 1 Peter ii. 19, he does submit his will to God's will, quietly bearing, without bitterness and vexation, all the labour, changes, and evil occurrences which befall him in the whole course of his life, whether from God immediately, or from man: as also waiting patiently for all such good things as God has promised, but yet are delayed and unfulfilled.

(4.) Motives to Christian patience under adversities.

To induce you to get, and to show forth this holy patience, know, that you have great need of it, Heb. x. 36, and that in these respects:

First, You are but half a Christian, you are imperfect, and want a principal grace in the Christian life, if you want patience: thus James argues, implying that he who will be entire, James i. 4, and want nothing to make him a Christian, must have patience. This passive obedience is greater than active; it is

more excellent, and more difficult to obey in suffering, than to obey in doing.

Secondly, You cannot have a sure possession of your soul without patience; in your patience possess ye your souls, saith our Saviour, Luke xxi. 19. A man without patience, is not his own man: he has not power to rule over his own spirit, Prov. xxv. 28, nor yet of his own body. The tongue, hands, and feet of an impatient man will not be held in by reason. But he that is patient, enjoys himself, and has rule over his spirit, Prov. xvi. 32; no affliction can put him out of possession of himself.

Thirdly, There are many oppositions and hinderances in your Christian race and warfare, that without patience to suffer, and to wait, Rom. viii. 25, you cannot possibly bring forth good fruit to God, nor hold out your profession of Christianity to the end; but will decline, and give over before you have enjoyed the promise, Heb. x. 36. Therefore you are bid to run with patience the race that is set before you, Heb. xii. 1. And the good ground is said to bring forth fruit with patience, Luke viii. 15; and the faithful are said through faith and patience to inherit the promises, Heb. vi. 12.

Fourthly, Patience works experience, Rom. v. 5, without which no man can be an established Christian; this experience being of the highest use to confirm the soul of a Christian in the greatest difficulties. This must be said of the necessity, together with the benefit of patience, that you may love it, and may desire to have and show it.

(5.) Means to gain Christian patience under afflictions.

By what means you may attain it, follows:

First, Spend those passions on your lusts, which war in your members, which are exercised on other objects; fall out with them, and mortify them, Col. iii. 5; for nothing makes a man impatient, so much as his lusts do, both because they will never be satisfied, and it is death to a man to be crossed in them; and because the fulness of lusts causes a guilty conscience,

whence follows impatience and troublesome vexation upon every occasion, like the raging sea, which with every wind does foam and rage, and cast up nothing but mire and dirt, Isaiah lvii. 20. And, as James saith, Whence are wars and fightings, James iv. 1, so I say of all other fruits of impatience, but from your lusts which war in your members? Take away the causes of impatience, then you have made a good advance towards gaining Christian patience.

Secondly, Lay a good foundation of patience by being humble and low in your own eyes, through an apprehension that you are less than the least of God's mercies, and that your greatest punishments are less than your iniquities have deserved, Ezra ix. 13. As Christians abound in humility so will they abound in patience, witness the examples of Abraham, Moses, Job, David, and others.

Thirdly, Labour to gain and improve the Christian graces of faith, hope, and love: all and either of these calm the heart, and keep it steady in adversity. For besides that, they quiet the heart in the assurance of God's love in Christ: For being justified by faith, we have peace with God, rejoice in hope, Rom. v. 1, 3, 4; whence proceed joy and patience in tribulation. And who can be impatient with him whom he loves with all his heart and strength? These graces also furnish the Christian with an ability of spiritual reasoning and disputing with a disquieted soul, whereby it may be happily composed, and brought to possess itself in patience under any adversity.

Wherefore the fourth means of patience is, to do as David did. Whensoever you find your heart begin to fret and be impatient, you must, before passion or grief has got the mastery over you, ask your soul what is the matter; and why it is so disquieted within you, Psal. xlii. 11. This do seriously, and your heart will quickly represent to you such and such afflictions aggravated by many circumstances of distress. All which you must answer by the spiritual reasoning of your faith, founded on the word of God, whereby you may quiet your heart, and put your grief to silence.

Whatsoever the affliction be that may trouble you, you may be furnished with reasons why you should be patient, either (1.) From God that sent it: (2.) From yourself, on whom it lies: (3.) From the nature and use of the affliction itself: (4.) By considering the evils of impatience: (5.) By comparing the blessings you have, and are assured that you shall have, with the crosses you have, especially if patiently endured. From all these considerations you will see reason why your heart should be quiet under the greatest afflictions.

First, Consider well, that whatsoever the trouble and cross be, and whosoever be the instrument of it, either in the sense of evil, or in the want of good promised, it comes from God your Father, (1.) Who does all things according to the wisdom and counsel of his own will; (2.) Who doth afflict with most tender affection; (3.) Who corrects and afflicts in measure; (4.) Who has always holy purposes and ends in all afflictions, directing them for your good.

1. Consider that it was God who did it. There is no evil, that is of punishment, in a city, which the Lord has not done, saith Amos, Amos iii. 6; 2 Sam. xvi. 10.—It is the Lord, let him do what seems him good, saith Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. I opened not my mouth, saith David, because thou, Lord, didst it, Psa. xxxix. 9. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord, saith Job i, 21. Hosea vi. 1; 1 Sam. ii. 6. 7.

2. All this God does to his children with a fatherly affection, in much love and pity, Heb. xii. 5, 6. He has your soul still in remembrance, while you are in adversity, Psa. xxxi. 7. Yea, he bears some part of the burden with you: for, speaking after the manner of man, he saith, that in all the afflictions of his children he is afflicted, Isaiah lxiii. 9. He delights not in afflicting the children of men, Lam. iii. 33, much less his own children.

If you ask, Why then does he afflict, or why does he not ease you speedily? I ask you, why a tender-hearted father, being a surgeon, who is grieved and

troubled at the pain and anguish, which he himself causes his child to feel by necessary operation, does notwithstanding apply the burning irons, and suffer those plasters to afflict him for a long time? You will say, Sure the wound or malady of the child required it, and that else it could not be cured. This is the case between God and you: God's heart is tender, and yearns towards you, when his hand is upon you: therefore bear it patiently.

3. God afflicts you in measure, Isaiah xxvii. 8; fitting your affliction for kind, time, and weight, according to the strength of grace which he has already given you, or which certainly he will bestow upon you. He does never lay more upon you, than what you shall be able to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13, and will always with the cross and temptation, make a way to escape. The husbandman will not always be ploughing, Isaiah xxiii. 24, 25, and harrowing of his ground, but only gives it so much as it hath need of, or as the nature or situation of the soil requires. So likewise he threshes his divers sorts of grain, with divers instruments, according as the grain can endure them: the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is the cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin: bread-corn is bruised, because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen, Isaiah xxviii. 26—28. If the husbandman do all this by the discretion wherewith God has instructed him; can you think that God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, Isaiah xxviii. 29, will plough and harrow any of his ground, or thresh any of his corn, above that which is fit, and more than his ground and corn can bear? Should not his ground and corn therefore be patient at such tillage, and at such threshing?

4. God's end in afflicting, is always his own glory in your good; as, to humble you, and to bring you to a sight of your sin, to break up the fallow ground of your heart, that you may sow in righteousness and reap in mercy, Hosea x. 12, to harrow you, that the seed of grace may take root in you. All God's afflic-

tions are to remove impediments of grace. By this, saith Isaiah, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. All the ploughing is but to kill weeds, and to fit the ground for seed; all the threshing and winnowing is but to sever the chaff from the corn; and all the grinding and bolting by afflictions, is but to sever the bran from the flour, that God's people may be a pure offering, acceptable to him, Isa. lxvi. 20. Or else he afflicts, that his children might have experience of his love and power in preserving and delivering them, or that they might have the exercise, proof, and increase of faith, hope, Rom. v. 4, love, and other principal graces, which serve for the beautifying and perfecting of a Christian. God does judge his children here, 1 Cor. xi. 32, that they may repent, and be reformed, that they may not be condemned with the world. God's end in chastening you, will be found to be always for your good, that you shall be able to say, It was good for me to be afflicted, Psa. cxix. 67, 71. For it is that you may be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10, 11, and accordingly of his glory and happiness. Bear therefore all afflictions patiently, for they are for your good.

If this be your cross and trouble, that you want many of the graces and good gifts of God which he has promised, know also that this deferring to give graces and comforts, is of God, not out of neglect or forgetfulness of you; but of wise and good purposes towards you; as to inflame your desires more and more after them; and, that you should seek them in a better manner. It is likewise to try your faith and hope, whether you will do him that honour, as to wait and rest upon his bare word. When you are fit for them, you shall have them. You must therefore charge your heart yet to wait patiently for them, considering the faithfulness and power of God that promised: and that all the promises of God are, yea and amen in Christ, 2 Cor. i. 20. He is wise, true, and able to fulfil them in the due time, and in the best manner; for faithful is he that has promised and will

fulfil it: and yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, Heb. x. 23, 37.

Secondly, When the soul begins to be disquieted, consider how unworthy you are of any blessing, how worthy you are of all God's curses, yea, of eternal damnation in hell; and that justly, because of the sins of your nature, of your heart, and of your life. When you do thus, your heart will be quiet and contented, you will say with the church, whatsoever your trouble be, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, for I have sinned against him, Micah vii. 9. He who acknowledges that he has deserved to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, for an offence against the king, if the king will be so merciful that he shall escape only with a severe whipping, to remember him of his disloyalty, though he smart terribly with those lashes, yet in his mind he can bear them patiently and submissively. If you think thus, "I deserve more punishment in this kind, nay, in any other more grievous than this; my punishment is less than mine iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13, for I might have been long since despairing in torments, and past all means and hope of salvation; but I live, and have time and means to make a good use of my afflictions;" these thoughts will cause you to say, Why do I, who am a living man, complain for the punishment of my sin, Lam. iii. 39, which is so much lighter than my desert? And you will say, with the church, in all your distresses, It is God's mercy it is not worse. It is God's mercy I am not utterly consumed, Lam. iii. 19—22.

Thirdly, When your soul begins to be impatient under afflictions, whether in soul, body, or estate; consider the nature and use of them. To the eye of sense they are evil as poison, hurtful and dangerous, Heb. xii. 11; but to the eye of faith, they are good and useful, as physic, most healthful to the soul, and saving, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. God, the skilful physician, has quite altered the nature of crosses to his children; he that brings light out of darkness, so orders afflictions, that they become good antidotes and preservatives against sin, and good purgatives of sin, Isa.

xxvii. 9. The sting and curse of the cross, which remains to the wicked, is by Christ's patient suffering, and God's mercy, taken quite away out of the afflictions of believers. Afflictions to the godly, are not properly punishments, serving to pacify God's wrath for sin; but are only chastisements to remove sin, and are exercises of graces, and means of holiness. For they serve either to prevent evil, or to reform it; either to prepare way for grace, to quicken and increase grace, or to discover and give proof of it. God is a wise and skilful refiner, he knows how to purge his gold, by casting it into the fire of affliction, 1 Peter i. 7; which fire is not the same to the dross, that it is to the gold; it consumes the dross, but refines the gold, that it may be fit to be made a vessel of honour. Fire serves to try gold, as well as to purge it; for pure gold, though it remain in the fire many days, the fire cannot waste it; when it is once pure, it will hold its weight still for all the burning. Hence it is that the Psalmist saith, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes, Psa. cxix. 67, 71; and the apostle saith, All things work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. He is a froward and foolish person, who, being sick of a deadly disease, does not patiently and cheerfully bear the gripings and sickness of stomach, when he knows this sickness, caused by bitter physic, is for his health.

You will say, if you could find that your afflictions did you any good, you should not only be patient, but cheerful under them.

I answer, Whatsoever you feel, faith in God's word will tell you, that they now do you good, and hereafter you shall feel the benefit of it. The benefit of physic is not always felt the day you take it, but chiefly when the physic has done working. The chief end why God tries and purges you by afflictions, is, that he may humble you, and prove you, to do you good at your latter end, Deut. viii. 15, 16. You should therefore be patient in the mean time.

Fourthly, If yet your heart remain disquieted, be-

cause of your affliction; consider with yourself, what harm impatience will do you, compared with the good that will follow a patient enduring of it. For, besides that it deprives you of your right understanding, and makes you to forget yourself, as I have said, even to forget your duty both to God and man; it is the readiest means to double and lengthen the affliction, not to abate it, and take it off. That parent who intended to give a child but light correction, if he be impatient and rebellious under it, is hereby more incensed, and does punish him more severely. But if, in any affliction, you do patiently submit yourself under God's mighty hand, 1 Peter v. 6, besides the ease and quiet it gives to the soul, and experience and hope which it produces in you, it is the readiest means of seasonable deliverance out of it; for then God will exalt you in due time. God is wise, and too strong to be overcome by any means, but by fervent prayer and humble submission to his will, Hosea xii. 4.

Fifthly, If yet your mind be disquieted within you at any crosses; that you may quiet your soul, you must not, as most do, only consider the weight and number of your crosses, together with their several aggravations; but withal seriously think upon the manifold mercies and favours of God, both in the evils you have escaped, and in the benefits which you have received, and do now enjoy, and which, through Christ, you have cause to hope to receive hereafter. But amongst all his mercies, forget not this one, which you have already, God has given Christ unto you, whereby he himself is yours, as your all-sufficient portion. Now, if you have Christ, you have with him, all things also which are worth the having, Rom. viii. 32.

When you have thus weighed impartially blessings and mercies against crosses, you will tell me, that for one cross, you have a hundred blessings, yea, a blessing in your crosses, Psa. cxix. 71, and you will say, that this one mercy of being in Christ, alone weighs up all crosses, and makes them as light as nothing; giving you so much matter of joy and thankfulness,

even in the midst of affliction, that you can neither have cause nor time to be impatient, or to repine at any affliction, but to rejoice even in your tribulations, Rom. v. 1—3.

And as for the time to come, when you think upon all your crosses and sufferings of this present time, yet reckon, that they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you, Rom. viii. 18. For they are but short for time, and light for weight, being compared with the everlasting weight of glory which they will work for you, if you endure them patiently. I will say nothing of the shortness and lightness of your afflictions, in comparison of the far more intolerable and eternal weight of torments in hell, which you escape: and in comparing afflictions with glory, I will point out to you only the apostle's gradation; you shall have, for affliction, glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17; for light affliction, weight of glory; for short affliction, an eternal glory; for common and ordinary affliction, excellent glory. And although it might be thought that he had said enough, yet he adds degrees of comparison; yea, goes beyond all degrees, calling it more excellent, far more excellent: for thus he saith: Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory. Indeed, you must not look at the things which are seen with the eye of sense, 2 Cor. iv. 18, but at things which are not seen, which are spiritual and eternal, seen only by the eye of faith.

You will say, if you did but bear afflictions for Christ, then you could rejoice in hope; but you oft-times suffer afflictions justly for your sin.

I answer, Though this place principally points to suffering for Christ's cause, yet it is all one, in your case, if you bear afflictions patiently for his sake. A man may suffer afflictions for Christ two ways: First, When he suffers for his religion and for his cause. Secondly, When a man suffers any thing which God lays upon him, quietly, for Christ's will and commandment sake. This latter is more general than the former, and the former must be comprehended in this

latter; else the former suffering for Christ's cause, if it be not in love and obedience, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, and for Christ's sake, out of conscience to fulfil his will, is nothing; whereas he that endures patiently God's just punishment for sin for Christ's sake, endeavouring to submit his will to the will of Christ, this man suffers, that is, patiently endures affliction for Christ, though he never suffer for profession of Christ; and, if such an one were put to it, he would readily suffer for Christ's cause. And such afflictions as these, thus patiently endured, work also this excellent weight of glory, as well as the other.

By these and the like reasonings of faith, you may possess your soul in patience, as David and others have done, Psa. xlii. xliii. by casting anchor on God, and on his word, fixing their stay and hope in him. Let the issue of your reasoning be this: I will wait on God, and yet, for all the causes of distress, praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God. Thus David quieted his heart, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, when he heard tidings that his city Ziklag was burnt, and that his wives and all that he had, together with the wives and children of all his soldiers, were carried captive; and when he saw that his soldiers began to mutiny, and heard them speak of stoning him, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. And good Jehoshaphat, in his desperate condition, cast anchor here, saying, O our God, we know not what to do, but our eyes are on thee, 2 Chron. xx. 12. Thus by the exercise of your hope in God, the heart may be wrought unto much patience and quietness in all distresses.

A further means of grace is, observe the patience of others, as of the prophets and faithful servants of God, who are recorded in Scripture, and left as examples of suffering affliction, and of patience. We count them happy that endure, saith James; you have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, James v. 10, 11. But especially represent to your thoughts the patience of your head and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom you pierced by your sins,

who as a lamb, dumb before the shearer, opened not his mouth, Isa. liii. 7. Now, if you would consider him who is the author and finisher of your faith; who endured such contradiction of sinners, Heb. xii. 1—3, &c. and such intolerable anguish of soul, when he wrestled with his Father's wrath; then you would not be wearied nor faint in your minds, when you are under any affliction. If with Christ you set the joy before you, you will be able to endure the cross, and despise the shame of all persecution for well doing, and so run that race which is before you with patience, that you shall in the end sit down with Christ at the right-hand of the throne of God, Heb. xii. 2; Rev. iii. 21.

Sixthly, and lastly, Pray much for patience, waiting patiently for it, James i. 4, 5; and without doubt, the God of patience and consolation, who has commanded it, who sees that you have need of it, and who has promised to give you all your petitions which you make according to his will, will surely give you patience.

(6.) Of bearing afflictions thankfully and fruitfully.

To bear adversity and afflictions well, it is not enough that you bear them patiently, because you deserve them, and because they come from God; but you must bear them thankfully, Lam. iii. 22, 23; Job i. 21; cheerfully and comfortably, Rom. v. 3, because they are, as you have heard, for your good, Psa. cxix. 71; Lam. iii. 27. We do not only patiently endure the hand of the surgeon, and the prescriptions of the physician, but we thank them, pay them, and are glad of their recipes, though they put us to pain. Count it exceeding joy, saith James, when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience, &c. James i. 2, 3.

Last of all, unto patience and thankfulness, you must add fruitfulness and growth of grace, Psa. cxix. 67—71; this should be the fruit of all crosses and afflictions, that with David you may be better for them, and that you may, with Job, come out of them as gold refined and purged from dross, Job xxiii. 10.

Therefore God chastens you as he did Jacob: This is all the fruit, to take away your sin, Isa. xxvii. 9, and that you should be partaker of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. Be better, therefore, for crosses; then God has his end, when, after his ploughing, harrowing, and threshing of you, he shall reap the harvest of well doing, which he reaps not so much for himself, as for you; for the ground that brings forth fruit meet for him that dresses it, receives blessing from God, Heb. vi. 7. All good works are "treasured up in heaven for the doers of them."

When you have learned this lesson also, how to be abased and to suffer need, as well as how to be full and to abound, Phil. iv. 11, 12, with all the fore-mentioned directions, how at all times, and in all things, to walk with God, you will prove yourself to be a good proficient in the school of Christ, one that has walked to good purpose before God; showing that you are neither barren or unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Peter i. 5—8.

Thus much concerning the outward frame of your life and conversation, according to which you must walk with God. The inward truth and life of all this, which is, doing all in uprightness, remains to be spoken unto, and is as follows.



CHAPTER XI.

OF UPRIGHTNESS.

THE sum of this head is contained in this, that in your whole walking with God, you must be upright. Both these, to walk with God, and to be upright, are joined in this precept: Walk with me, and be perfect, or upright, Gen. xvii. 1. He speaks not of an absolute perfection of degrees, in the fulness of all graces, which

is only aimed at in this life, towards which the Christian, by watchfulness and diligence, may come nearer and nearer; but is never attained until we come to heaven, amongst the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. He speaks here of the perfection of parts, and of truth and grace in every part, expressing itself in unfeignedness of will and endeavour; which is uprightness.

SECT. 1. THE NECESSITY OF UPRIGHTNESS IN RELIGION.

THAT you should be sincere and upright, read Joshua xxiv. 14; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. And the apostle tells you, that since Christ Jesus, your passover, is slain, you must keep the feast, which shadows forth the whole time of our life here, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. The examples of Noah, Gen. vi. 9; Job, Job i. 1; Nathaniel, John i. 47; with many others in the Scriptures, are therefore written, that of them you may learn to be upright.

There is special reason why you should be upright:

First, Your God with whom you walk, is perfect and upright, Matt. v. 48; he is truth; he loves truth in the inward parts, Psa. li. 6; all his works are done in truth; and there was no guile ever found to be either in the mouth, hand, or heart, of your head Christ Jesus, 1 Peter ii. 21, 22. Now, you should please God, and be like your Father, and your head Christ Jesus, following his steps.

Secondly, It is to no purpose to do that which is right in God's sight, in respect of the matter of your actions, if in the truth and disposition of your soul you be not upright therein. For the best action, void of uprightness, is but like a well-proportioned body without life and substance. And that is counted as not done at all to God, Zech. vii. 5, 6, which is not done in uprightness. This exception is taken against Amaziah's good actions; it is said, He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but he did it not in up-

rightness, he did it not with a perfect heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2.

Thirdly, The best actions, without uprightness, do not only lose their goodness; but in God's account are esteemed abominable evils. Such were the prayers and sacrifices of the hypocritical Jews, Isa. i. 13, 14, lxvi. 3. For God judges such actions, and such services, to be mere flattery, lying, and mocking him to his face, Psa. lxxviii. 34, 36, 37.

Now, because there is none so ready to presume that he is upright, as the hypocrite, saying, with Ephraim, In all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me, that were sin, Hosea xii. 8; and because there are none so ready to doubt whether they be upright, as are the tender-hearted and sincere: so it was with David, when he prayed to have a right spirit renewed in him, Psa. li. 10; it will be needful and useful that I show you what uprightness is, and by what infallible signs you may know whether you be upright or no.

SECT. 2. THE DESCRIPTION OF UPRIGHTNESS.

CHRISTIAN uprightness, for of that I speak, is a saving grace of the Holy Ghost, wrought in the heart of a man rightly informed in the knowledge of God in Christ, whereby his soul stands so entirely and sincerely right towards God, that in the true disposition, bent, and firm determination of his will, he would, in every faculty and power of soul and body, approve himself to be such an one as God would have him to be, and would do whatsoever God would have him to do, and all as God would have him, and that, for and unto God, and his glory.

The author of this uprightness is God's sanctifying Spirit.

The common nature of it, wherein it agrees with other graces, is, it is a saving grace; it is peculiar to them that shall be saved, for only they are endued with it; but it is common to all, and every one, who is effectually called.

The proper seat of this grace is the will.

The fountain in man, from whence, through the special grace of the Holy Ghost, it springs, is sound knowledge of God and of his will, concerning those things which the will should choose and refuse; and from faith in Christ Jesus, through whom every believer does, of his fulness, receive this grace to be upright. Hereby Christian uprightness differs from that uprightness, which may be in a mere natural, superstitious, and misbelieving man, for even such may be unfeigned in their actions in their kind, both in actions civil and superstitious, doing that which they do, in their ignorance and blindness, without dissimulation either with God or man. This Paul did before his conversion, he did as he thought he ought to do, Acts xxvi. 9.

The form and proper nature of uprightness, is the good inclination, disposition, and firm intention of the will to a full conformity with God's will, and that not in some faculties and powers of man, or in some of his actions, but the Christian would be universally sincere in all his parts, and in all things; he would be, and do, as God would have him to be and do, making God's will, revealed in his word and works, to be his will, and God's glory to be his end.

This holy uprightness expresses itself in these three things:

First, It shows itself in a well-grounded and unfeigned purpose and resolution to cleave to the Lord, and to make God's will to be his will, Acts xi. 23; Psa. cxix. 57, 106. This is an act of the will, guided and concluded from sound judgment.

The second act is, an unfeigned desire and longing of the heart to attain this good purpose and resolution, willing or desiring in all things to live honestly, Heb. xiii. 18, and to live worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing; longing, with David, after God's precepts, Psa. cxix. 40. This is an act of the affection of desire, a motion of the will, drawing and exciting a man forward, giving him no rest, until he have obtained, at least in some good measure, his said purpose.

Thirdly, Uprightness shows itself in a true endeavour and exercise, according to the strength and measure of grace received, to be, and to do according to the former resolutions and desires. Such was the apostle's endeavour to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men, Acts xxiv. 16. This endeavour is an act of the whole man. All and every active power of soul and body, as there shall be use of them, are employed in unfeigned endeavour.

Now concerning endeavour, know, there are who think they endeavour sufficiently, when they do not; others that they do not, when yet they do. The first, if they, to the sluggard's longing and wishing, do join an outward conformity to the means of grace, as to hearing the word, praying now and then, and receiving the sacraments; and if they do some things which may be done with little labour and difficulty; and if to these they add some slight essays to abstain from sin, and to do well, think they endeavour much; whereas, if they do no more, all is to little purpose.

For, to endeavour, is to exercise the head with study how, Acts xxiv. 16, and the heart with will and desire, and the hand and tongue, and the whole outward man, to do their utmost, putting to their whole strength, their whole skill, and their whole will, to subdue sin, and to be strengthened in grace, and built up more and more in knowledge, faith, and holiness, removing or breaking through every hindrance, shunning all occasions of evil, or whatsoever may strengthen sin, and seeking after and embracing all opportunities and means to be strengthened in the inward man, Phil. iii. 11, 14. If one means will not be sufficient, if there be others to be used, they will find out and use them also; if they cannot attain their good purposes at once, they will try again and again. They who endeavour indeed, not only seek to obtain their ends, but they strive in seeking; as hard students, as good warriors and wrestlers, and as those who run in a race do; so that they may obtain that which they study, fight, wrestle, and run for, 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. It is not a

bare wishing or *woulding* for a fit, or a cold and common seeking; but an earnest striving to enter in at the strait gate, Luke xiii. 24, that gives admittance into the way of holiness, and into the kingdom of heaven. It is a studying and exercising a man's self as in a matter of life and death; and as a wise man would do for a kingdom, where there is possibility and hope of obtaining it.

Others, who indeed endeavour to keep a good conscience toward God and man, yet because they cannot bring into act always that which they labour for, or because they see oversights, neglects, or some weakness in their endeavours, think that they endeavour to no purpose. Whereas, if they do what they can, according to the strength of grace received, or according to the condition or state wherein they are, which is sometimes better, sometimes worse; if they see their failings in their endeavours, and bewail them, and do ask pardon, resolving by God's grace to strive to do better; this is true endeavour, this is that which God for Christ's sake does accept of, Mark xiv. 8. For since endeavour is a part of our holiness, you must not think that it will be perfect in this life; if it be true, you must thank God, for he will accept of that.

A man's endeavour may be as true, and as much, when yet he cannot perform what he endeavours to do, as it is at other times, when with the endeavour he has also ability to perform. As you may see in natural endeavours. The same man being well in health, if he fall, and break not his arms or legs, endeavours to get up, and readily does it: but if he be weak, or if falling he breaks his arms and legs, he also has a will and desire to rise, and strives earnestly to help himself, but cannot do it effectually, and in that case, he is fain to lie until he see help coming: then he will call, and entreat help, and when one gives him the hand, though he cannot rise of himself, yet he will lift up himself, as well as he can. Does not this man, in his latter condition, as truly endeavour as he did in his former? So it is with a spiritual man in his

spiritual endeavours. If he essay to do what he can, and call to God for his help, and when he has it, is glad, and willing to improve it, this is the true endeavour, which, concurring with the two former acts, purpose and desire, gives proof of uprightness.

There is a twofold uprightness; the one of the heart and person, the other of the action. I have described the uprightness of the person. And then an action is upright, when a man does not dissemble, but means, as he saith, intending as much as is pretended, whether it be in actions toward God or man. The first is, when the heart of man agrees with, and in the intention thereof, is according to the will of God. The second is, when the outward act agrees with, and is according to the heart of him that does it.

SECT. 3. RULES TO JUDGE OF UPRIGHTNESS.

THAT you may rightly judge whether you are upright or no; first, take certain rules for direction, to rectify your judgment; then observe the marks of uprightness.

First, Uprightness being part of sanctification, is not fully perfect in any man in this life; but is mixed with some hypocrisy, conflicting one against the other. It has its degrees, sometimes more, sometimes less; in some things more, in some things less, according as each part prevails in the opposition, and according as the Christian grows or decays in other principal and fundamental graces.

Secondly, A man is not to be called an upright man, or an hypocrite, because of some few actions wherein he may show uprightness or hypocrisy: for an hypocrite may do some upright actions, in which he does not dissemble, though he cannot be said to do them in uprightness; as Jehu destroyed the wicked house of Ahab, and the idolatrous priests of Baal, with all his heart, 2 Kings x. And the best man may do some hypocritical and guileful actions, as, in the matter of Uriah, David did, 1 Kings xv. 5. It is not the having

of hypocrisy that denotes an hypocrite, but the reigning of it, which is, when it is not seen, confessed, bewailed, and opposed.

A man should judge of his uprightness rather by his will, bent, and the inclination of his soul, and good desires, and true endeavours to well doing in the whole course of his life, than by this or that particular act, or by his power to do. David was thus esteemed a man according to God's own heart, no otherwise; rather by the goodness of the general course of his life, &c., than by particular actions: for in many things he offended God, and polluted his soul, and blemished his reputation.

Thirdly, Although uprightness is to be judged by the inward frame of the heart towards God, yet wheresoever uprightness is, it will show itself in men's actions in the course of their lives, James ii. 18. Only observe this, that in judging your actions, you must not judge them so much by the greatness of the quantity, as by the soundness and goodness of the quality. If it be good in truth, according to the measure of grace received, God accepts it in Christ, 2 Cor. viii. 12. She has done what she could, saith our Saviour, Mark xiv. 8. A little sound and true fruit, though weak in comparison, is far better than many fair blossoms, yea, than plenty of grapes, if they be wild and sour.

SECT. 4. PARTICULAR MARKS OF UPRIGHTNESS.

THAT you may conceive more distinctly, and better remember the signs of uprightness, I reduce them to these heads. They are taken, 1. From universality of respect to all God's will. 2. From a special respect to such things as God requires especially. 3. From a will and desire to please God in one place as well as another; in secret as well as openly. 4. From a constancy of will to please God at one time, as well as another. 5. From the true causes from whence good actions flow. 6. From the effects that follow well

doing. 7. From the effects that follow evil doing
8. From the conflict which shall be found between
uprightness and hypocrisy.

First, The upright man is universal in his respect
to the whole will of God, Psa. cxix. 6.

(1.) In an unfeigned desire and endeavour to know
what manner of man he ought to be, and what he
ought to do, Psa. cxix. 33, 34. He would know and
believe any one part of God's will, so far as it may
concern himself, as well as another; threats as well
as promises, commandments as well as either; and
that not some, but all the threats, all the promises, and
all the commandments; coming to the light readily,
that his deeds may be made manifest, John iii. 21.

He is willing to know and believe what he should
do, as well as what he should have, and hope for. But
the hypocrite does not so, he winks with his eyes,
and is willingly ignorant of that sin, which he would
not leave, Matt. xiii. 15. 2 Peter iii. 5, and of that
duty which he would not do, and of that judgment
which he would not feel. He is willing to know the
promises of the gospel, but willingly ignorant of the
precepts of the gospel, and of the conditions annexed
to the promises.

(2.) His universal respect to God's will is not only
to know but to do, and to submit unto it in all things,
willing to leave and shun every sin; willing to do every
thing which he knows to be his duty; willing to bear
patiently, thankfully, and fruitfully, every correction
wherewith the Lord does exercise him. He dislikes
sin in all. He loves grace and goodness in all. He
would keep a good conscience in all acts of religion
towards God, Acts xxiv. 16, and in all acts of right-
eousness and sobriety towards and amongst men. He
would forbear not only those sins to which his nature
is not so much inclined, or to which his condition in
life affords not so many temptations; but those to
which his nature and condition of life most carry
him; he will cross himself in his dearest lust, espe-
cially his formerly beloved sin; his own sin, as David
calls it, Psa. xviii. 23. Neither does he endeavour

to abstain from those vices which may bring loss, and are out of credit; which human laws punish, and all men cry out against: but such as, through the iniquity of the times, are in countenance with the greatest, and practised by most; the forbearance whereof may threaten and procure danger and discredit, Dan. iii. 18; Acts iv. 19; the doing whereof may promise and promote much worldly gain and honour. Moreover, the upright man does not only strive to do those holy and virtuous actions, which are in credit, and for his advantage in the world; but those also which may expose to disgrace and loss even of his life and livelihood, Dan. vi. 10. He would abstain as well from less evils, even from appearance of evils, 1 Thess. v. 22, as from gross sins, and would so do the greater things of the law, as not to leave the other undone, Matt. xxiii. 23. But the hypocrite does not so, Mark vi. 20—27; there is some sin he will not leave, some duty he will not do, &c. Follow the opposition.

Secondly, An upright man is known by this: where God has laid a special charge, there he will have a first and special respect to it; as, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, Matt. vi. 33; that one thing necessary, Luke x. 42; and to show a special love to the household of faith, Gal. vi. 10; Psa. xvi. 2; to be first and most at home, reforming himself, pulling the beam out of his own eye, Matt. vii. 5: to be most zealous for matter of substance in religion, and less in matter of ceremony and circumstance, Matt. xxiii. 23. Lastly, his chief care will be to apply himself to a conscientious discharge of the duties of his particular calling, Luke iii. 10—14; 1 Thess. iv. 11; knowing that a man has no more conscience nor goodness in truth, than he has will and desire in it to show the works of his particular place and calling. The hypocrite is contrary in all these. Matt. vii. 3—5; 1 Tim. v. 13; 2 Thess. iii. 11.

Thirdly, The upright man endeavours to approve himself to God, as well in secret, as openly; as well in the inward man, as in the outward; as well in thought, as in word and deed. But it is quite other-

wise with the hypocrite ; if he may seem good to men, it is all he cares for, Matt. vi. 2, &c.

Fourthly, The upright man is constant ; his will is that he might always please God, Acts xxiv. 16. He does as much endeavour to approve himself to God in prosperity as in adversity, and even then studies how to be able to hold out before God, if his state should alter. I do not mean such a constancy as admits of no intermission or obstructions in his Christian course. A constant running spring may be hindered in its course for a time, by damming it up ; yet the spring will approve itself to run constantly, for it will be still thrusting to get through, or to get under ; or, if it can do none of these, it will raise itself in time, according to its strength, and get over all hinderances, and will bear down all before it, and run with a more full streams afterwards, by as much as it was before interrupted : so it is with an upright man. But the hypocrite's religion is by fits and starts ; as he calls not on God at all times, Job xxvii. 10, so it is with all other his goodness, it is but as the seed in stony ground, and amongst thorns, Matt. xiii. 21, 22, and as morning dew, Hosea vi. 4, it endures but for a season.

Fifthly, An upright man is known by the causes from which all his good actions spring, and to which they tend.

(1.) That which causes the upright man to endeavour to keep a good conscience always, is an inward principle and power of grace, causing him through faith in Christ, John xv. 2, 5, in and from whom, as the root of all grace, he brings forth fruit ; and from love and fear of God, 1 Cor. ix. 16—18 ; 2 Cor. v. 14 ; Gen. xlii. 18 ; and from conscience of the commandment, to do the will of God, 2 Cor. ii. 17. Not only fear of wrath, and hope of reward, causes him to abstain from evil and do good ; but chiefly love of God, and conscience of duty.

Now, if you would know when you obey out of conscience of the commandment, and from love of Christ ; consider, 1. Whether your heart and mind stand bent to obey every of God's commandments which you

know, as well as any, and that because the same God who has given one, has given all, James ii. 11. If so, then you obey out of conscience. 2. Consider what you do, or would do, when Christ, and his true religion, and his commandments go alone, and are separated from all outward credit, pleasure, and profit. Do you, or will you then cleave to Christ, and to the commandment? Then love of Christ, fear of God, and conscience of God's command, was, and is the true cause of your well-doing; especially if you choose and endeavour this, when all these are by the world clothed with peril and contempt. 3. Consider whether you can go on in the strict course of godliness alone, and whether you resolve to do it though you shall have no company, but all or most go in the way of sin, and also persuade you thereunto. When you will walk with God alone, and without other company, this shows that your walking with God is for his sake. So walked Noah, Gen. vii. 1, and Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 13, as he thought.

But the cause of an hypocrite's well-doing is only goodness of nature, or good education, or mere civility, or some common gifts of the Spirit, or self-love, slavish fear, or the like. See this in Ahab's repentance, 1 Kings xxi. 27, in Jehu's zeal, 2 Kings x. 16, and Joash's goodness, 2 Chron. xxiv. Ahab's humiliation was only from a slavish fear of punishment. The zeal of Jehu was only from earthly joy and carnal policy; for had it been in zeal for God, he would as well have put down the calves at Dan and Bethel, as slain the priests of Baal. And the goodness of Joash was chiefly for Jehoiadah's sake, whom he revered, and to whom he esteemed himself beholden for his kingdom, and not for God's sake. For the Scripture saith, that after Jehoiadah's death, the princes solicited him, and he yielded to them, and fell to idolatry; added this also, he commanded Zechariah the high-priest, Jehoiadah's son, to be slain, because, in the name of the Lord, he reprov'd him for his sin, 2 Chron. xxiv. 6, 17, 18, 20, 21.

(2.) The upright man's actions, as they come from

a good beginning, so they are directed to a good end, 1 Cor. x. 31, namely, the pleasing of God, and the glory of his name, as his direct, chief, and utmost end; not that a man might not have respect to himself, and to his neighbour also, proposing to himself his own and his neighbour's good, as one end of his actions, sometimes; but these must not be proposed either only, or chiefly, or as the ultimate end, but only as they are subordinate to those chief ends, and are the direct means to promote God's glory. For so far as a man's health and welfare, both of body and soul, lie directly in the way to glorify God; he may in that respect aim at them in his actions. Our Saviour Christ, in an inferior and secondary respect, aimed at his own glory, and at the salvation of man, in the work of man's redemption, when he said, Glorify thy Son; and prayed, that his church might be glorified, John xvii. 1, &c. Here he had respect unto himself, and unto man; but when he says, "that thy Son may glorify thee," here he made God's glory his utmost end, and the only mark which for itself he aimed at.

The upright man's aim at his own, and at his neighbour's good, is not for themselves, as if his desire ended, and was terminated there; but in reference to God, the chief good, and the highest end of all things.

Indeed, such is God's wisdom and goodness, that he has set before man evil and good; evil, which follows upon displeasing and dishonouring him by sin, that man might fear and avoid sin; good, and recompence of reward, which follows upon faith and obedience; that he might hope, and be better induced to believe and obey. This God did, knowing that man has need of all reasonable helps to deter him from evil, and to allure him to good. Now, God having set these before us, we may and ought for these good purposes to set them before ourselves. Yet the upright man stands so fully and only to God, that, so far as he knows his own heart, he is thus resolved, that if there were no fear of punishment, nor hope of reward; if there were neither heaven nor hell, he would endeavour to please

and glorify God, even out of that duty he owes to him, and from that high and awful estimation which he has of God's sovereignty, and from that entire love which he bears unto him. He that habitually in doing of common and earthly business, though they concern his own good, has a will to do them with a heavenly mind, and to a heavenly end, certainly stands well, and is uprightly resolved, although, in temptations and fears, he does not always feel the said resolution.

But the hypocrite does not so: he only or chiefly aims at himself, Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16, and in his aim serves himself in all that he does. If he look to God's will and glory, as sometimes he will pretend, he makes that but the bye, and not the main end, 2 Kings x. 16; he seeks God's will and glory not for itself, but for himself: not for God's sake, but for his own. Thus did Jehu.

Sixthly, An upright man may know he is upright, by the effects that follow upon his well doing.

(1.) His chief inquiry is, and he does observe, what good comes by it, and what glory God has had, or may have, rather than what earthly credit and benefit he has gotten to himself, Philip. i. 12—20. Or if this latter thrust in itself before the other, as it will oft-times in the best, he is greatly displeased with himself for it. The hypocrite not so; all that he inquires after, and is pleased with, after he has done a good deed, is, what applause it has amongst men, &c.

(2.) When an upright man has done a praise-worthy action, he is not puffed up with pride, and high conceit of his own worth, glorying in himself; but he is humbly thankful unto God; thankful, that God has enabled him to do any thing with which he will be well pleased, and accept as well done; humble and low in his own eyes, because of the manifold failings in that good work, and because he has done it no better; and because whatsoever good he did, it was by the grace and power of God, not by any power of his own. Thus David showed his uprightness in that solemn thanksgiving when he said, But who am I, and what

is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? &c. 1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14.

But it is otherwise with the hypocrite: for either he ascribes all the glory of his good work to himself; or if he seem to be thankful, it is with a proud thankfulness, like that of the pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, accompanied with disdain of others, who in his opinion do not so well as himself.

(3.) The upright man having begun to do well, does not set down his rest there; but strives to do more, and to be better: he, with the apostle, forgets what is behind, looking to that which is before, not thinking that yet he has attained to what he should do, Philip. iii. 13—15. So many as are indeed perfect and upright do thus.

But the hypocrite, if he have some flash of common illumination, and some little taste of those things which concern the kingdom of heaven, and has attained to a form of godliness, thinks that he has enough, and needs nothing. So did Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17.

Seventhly, The upright man and the hypocrite are distinguished by their different affections and carriage, after that they have fallen into a sin, for in many things we sin all, James iii. 2. As the upright man did not commit his sin with that full consent of will, which the hypocrite may do, and often does; but always with some reluctance and opposition of will, though not always felt and observed, insomuch that he can say, It was not he, but sin that dwelt in him, Rom. vii. 15—17; so after he is fallen into sin, when his sin is made known to him, he does not hide, excuse, or defend his sin, Job xxxi. 33, or if he do, it is but seldom in comparison, and but faintly and not long, his conscience smiting him when he does it, or quickly after it, Job xl. 3, 4, xlii. 3—6.

An upright man will not be much or long angry with any, who admonish him of his sin, yea, though an enemy, by malicious railing, call his sin to remembrance, as Shimei did to David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10—12; even therein he can see God, and can for the most part abstain from revenge, and will stir up his heart

to godly sorrow for his sin. But if any, like Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33, shall, in wisdom and love, admonish him, he blesses God that sent him or her; he blesses and makes good use of the admonition, and blesses the admonisher, and takes it for a special kindness. Thus David, a man according to God's own heart, as he displayed human frailties in his many and great falls; so he gave clear proof of his uprightness, sooner or later, by his behaviour after his falls. He could say, and his repentance did prove it, that though, to his grief and shame, sometimes he departed from God; yet he did not wickedly depart from God. Psa. xviii. 21. Though upright men be transgressors, yet they are not wicked transgressors, Psa. lix. 5; there is a great difference between these two. And though there be evil in their actions, yea, in some of them filthiness, and grievous iniquity, yet in their filthiness is not lewdness, Ezek. xxiv. 13, as God complains of Judah, that is, they are not obstinate and rebellious, standing out against the means of purging and reclaiming them. For when God does correct them by his word or providence, they are willing to reform whatever is discovered to be amiss, Job xlii. 6.

Moreover, although the upright man may be often drawn into a way that is not good, and often, through his weakness and heedlessness, falls into a state that is not good; yet he does not set himself in a way which is not good, Psa. xxxvi. 2—4, nor yet, like the swine, delight to wallow and lie in it. When an upright man is fallen, and has recovered out of his spiritual swoon, when he is come to himself, he is like a man sensible of his bones broken or out of joint; he is not well, nor at quiet, nor his own man, until he has confessed his sin, repented of it, asked pardon and grace, and renewed his peace with God. An upright man is likewise like the needle of the mariner's compass, which may, by violent motion, sometimes swerve to the west, or to the east; but stands steady no way but towards the north, and if it be truly touched with a loadstone, has no rest but in that one point; so an upright man may, through boisterous temptations, and

strong allurements, oftentimes look towards the pleasure, gain, and glory of this present world: but because he is truly touched with the sanctifying Spirit of God, he still inclines towards God; and has no rest until his mind is steadily fixed on Christ and heaven.

But it is not so with the hypocrite. He is in each particular directly contrary. I leave the full and particular application thereof to yourself.

Eighthly, You will find the most evident mark of uprightness from your sense of hypocrisy in yourself, and from your conflict with it, Gal. v. 17. The upright man is sensible of too much hypocrisy and guile in his heart, Psa. li. 10. Yea, so much, that oftentimes he makes it a question whether he have any uprightness; and, until he has brought himself to due trial by the balance of the sanctuary, the word and gospel of Christ, he fears he is still a hypocrite. But there is nothing which he would oppose more, nothing which he complains of, or prays to God more against, than this hypocrisy, nor is there any thing he longs after, labours and prays for more, than that he may love and serve the Lord in sincerity, 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. All this plainly shows, that this man would be upright, which hearty desire so to be, is uprightness itself.

The hypocrite contrariwise, neglects to observe his guile and false heartedness in religion: or if he can see it, he is not much troubled at it, but suffers it to reign in him: and as he boasts of his good actions, so likewise of his good heart, and good meaning in all that he does, except when his lewdness and hypocrisy are discovered to his face; flattering himself in his own eyes, till his iniquity is found to be hateful, Psa. xxxvi. 2.

Before I leave this, I will answer a question or two, concerning judging of uprightness by these marks.

(1.) Whether an upright man can at all times discern his uprightness, by these or any other marks?

Ordinarily, if he will impartially compare himself with these evidences, he may. But sometimes it so happens that he cannot; namely, in the case of spirit-

ual desertions, when God, for his neglect of keeping his peace with him, is hidden from him for a time, and when in his displeasure he looks angrily, and writes bitter things against him. Likewise, when he is in some violent and prevalent temptation, and thereby cast into a kind of spiritual swoon, and in such like cases. But a man must not judge himself to be dead, because when he is asleep, or in a swoon, he has no feeling, or sense of life.

(2.) Whether is it necessary that a man should find all these marks of uprightness in him, if he be upright?

No. Although, if he were in a condition to judge and try himself thoroughly, he might find them all in him; yet if he find most, or but some of these, he should comfort himself with those, until he find the rest.

Take heed therefore that you do not as many, who when they hear and see many signs given of this, or any other needful grace, if they cannot approve themselves by all, will make a question whether they have the grace or no. One may give you twenty signs of natural life, as seeing, hearing, talking, breathing, &c. What though you cannot prove yourself by all? Yet if you know you feel, or breathe, or move, you know you are alive by any one of them.

(3.) What is to be done when you cannot find that you are upright, whereas heretofore sometime you did hope that you were?

Do not presently conclude you are an hypocrite; but look back unto former proofs of uprightness. And though you have, for the present, lost your evidence and assurance of heaven, yet give not over your possession of what you have had, nor your hope. A man that has once had possession of house and lands, if his estate be questioned, will seek out his evidence; and, suppose that he has laid aside, or lost his evidence thereof, yet he is not such a fool as to give over his possession, or his right; but will seek till he find his evidences, or if he cannot find them, will search the records, and get them from thence. So must you in this case; you must seek for evidence again, Psa. li.

12. However cleave fast to God and to his promises, Acts xi. 23; Job xiii. 15, 16; frequently renew your acts of faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, and continue to persevere in the ways of godliness as you are able, and you shall not be long, before you shall know that you are upright: or if you attain not to this, yet be sure the Lord will know you to be his, 2 Tim. ii. 19, though you do not so certainly know that he is yours. But more of this when I shall speak of peace of conscience.

But in trying my uprightness, I find many of the signs of hypocrisy in me. I do not find myself to be so universal in my respect to all God's commandments as I should; I do not hate all sins alike; I find myself inclined to one sin more than another, and I am readier to neglect some duty than other; I cannot so thoroughly seek God's kingdom as I should; I am readier to find fault with others, than to amend my own conduct, &c. I find that I am not so constant as I ought to be in holy duties, and I have too much respect to myself in all that I do, and too little to God's glory. In reading all the notes of hypocrisy, except the last, I find hypocrisy, nay, much hypocrisy to be in me; must I not therefore judge myself to be a hypocrite?

No. For truth of uprightness may be in the same person, in whom there is sense of much hypocrisy; nay this, to feel hypocrisy with dislike, is the certain evidence of truth of uprightness. Indeed, if you felt not thus much, you might fear you were not upright. All that you have said, if it be true, only proves that you have hypocrisy remaining in you, and that you feel it. You must remember I told you, that not the having, but the reigning of hypocrisy, makes an hypocrite. Besides, a man may have an universal respect to all God's commandments, and yet not an equal respect to all. If you see and bewail your sin, and fight against your hypocrisy when you feel it, assure yourself you are no hypocrite.

(4.) What if a man finds indeed by these notes of hypocrisy, that it does reign in him?

He must know that he is for the present hated of God, and in a damnable state, yet his state is not desperate. If the hypocrite forsake his hypocrisy, and become upright, he shall not die for his hypocrisy; if this be true of a sinner's forsaking all sin, then, it is true of this in particular, of forsaking his hypocrisy; but in the uprightness wherein he lives, he shall live, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. What Christ said to hypocritical and lukewarm Laodicea, Rev. iii. 19, that I say to all such: they must be zealous, they must amend, and be upright; hypocrisy is as pardonable as any other sin to him who is penitent, and believes in Christ Jesus, Isa. i. 11, 16, 18.

By this which I have written, you may plainly see, (1.) That you ought to be upright; (2.) What it is to be upright; (3.) Whether you be upright or no. It concerns you therefore to hate and avoid hypocrisy, and to love and embrace sincerity. Which that you may do, make use of the motives and means which follow in the next sections.

SECT. 5. DISSUASIVES FROM HYPOCRISY, AND MOTIVES TO UPRIGHTNESS.

IF you would abandon hypocrisy, consider the dissuasives; taken from the evils and mischiefs that accompany it where it reigns, and how troublesome and hateful it is, where it does not reign.

The evils of hypocrisy, where it reigns.

First, Hypocrisy takes away all the goodness of the best actions. They are good only in name, not in deed. The repentance and obedience of a hypocrite is none, because it is feigned; his faith is no faith, because it is not unfeigned; his love is no love, because it is not from a pure heart, without dissimulation, 1 Tim. i. 5. Judge the same of all other graces and good actions of a hypocrite.

Secondly, All the good actions of a hypocrite are, together with himself, wholly lost, Luke xiii. 25; Matt.

vii. 22; xxv. 11, 12. Such is preaching, hearing, praying, almsgiving, &c.

Thirdly, Hypocrisy, in whom it reigns, does not only take away all goodness from the best gifts and actions, and cause the loss of all reward from God, but it poisons and turns the best actions into most loathsome and abominable sins, Isa. lxvi. 3; inso-much that in those good works wherein the hypocrite seems to make haste to heaven, he still runs post to hell. For such allowed hypocrisy is worse than professed wickedness, Rev. iii. 15. It is so odious in God's sight, that for it he will plague those in whom it rules with his severest judgments. For the hypocrisy of men professing the truth, brings the name, religion, and best services of God into disgrace and contempt, Rom. ii. 24, and causes the best actions and best men to be suspected. For such as have not spiritual wisdom to judge rightly, stumble thereat, and forbear the exercises of religion, and the company of those that are religious, ignorantly judging all who profess that religion to be alike. Besides, hypocrisy is high treason against God; for it is a gilding over, and setting the king's stamp upon base metal. It is tempting and mocking of God to his face, Psa. lxxviii. 36; a sin so abominable, that his holy justice cannot endure it.

God's just judgments upon hypocrites.

Fourthly, God's judgments on such hypocrites are manifold. For this cause God gives them over to believe lies, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11; Heb. vi. 5, 6; even popery, or any other damnable error or heresy. Hence it is that God gives them up many times to fall from seeming goodness to real wickedness, and from one evil to another, Luke viii. 18, even unto final apostasy, Heb. x. 25, 26. And at last, when God takes away a hypocrite's soul, he is sure not only to lose his hope, which adds much to his hell, Job xxvii. 8, but to be made to feel that which he would not fear, being ranked with those sinners, who shall be punished with the greatest severity in the eternal vengeance of hell fire, Matt. xxiv. 51. For after that a hypo-

critic has played the civil and religious man for a while upon the stage of this world, his last act, when his life is ended, is to be, indeed, and to act to the life, the part of an incarnate and tormented devil. He shall have his portion with the devil and his angels, Matt. xxv. 41. When fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites; who shall dwell with the devouring fire? who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? saith the prophet, Isa. xxxiii. 14. Happy were it for them, if this warning might effectually awaken them out of this damning security.

The evils of hypocrisy, though it doth not reign.

Consider likewise; that hypocrisy does much harm, even where it does not reign, and that more or less, according as it is more or less mortified.

For, first, it brings the soul into a general consumption of grace; no sin more so. Secondly, It blinds the mind, and insensibly hardens the heart; no sin more. Thirdly, It makes a man formal and careless in the best actions. Fourthly, It causes fearful sins, and decays of grace. Fifthly, It deprives a man of peace of conscience in such a manner, that a spiritual physician can hardly suggest any hope or comfort to him on whose conscience lies the guilt of hypocrisy; yea, hardly to him that does but fear he is guilty; for he refuses the comfort of his good affections and actions, saying, All that I did was but in hypocrisy. Lastly, Besides that, it brings many temporal judgments; it causes a man to lose many of his good works done in hypocrisy, 2 John 8; 1 Cor. iii. 15, though, through God's mercy, he lose not himself, because he is still found in Christ, and Christ's spirit of uprightness reigns in him.

Motives to uprightness.

Now to induce you to love uprightness, and to labour after it; consider the good which accompanies uprightness: First, temporal and outward; but Secondly, and chiefly, that which is spiritual and eternal.

First, Uprightness has the promise of this life, 1 Tim. iv. 8. It is a means to keep off judgments, Psal. xci. 9, 10, 14, or in due time to remove them.

If affliction like a dark night overspread the upright, for their correction and trial for a time, yet light is sown for them, and in due time will arise unto them, Psa. xxxiv. 9, 10. Moreover, this uprightness does not only provide well for a person's self; but if any thing can procure a blessing to his children, and his children's children, uprightness will, Prov. xx. 7. The Holy Ghost saith, the generation of the upright shall be blessed, Psa. cxii. 2.

Secondly, The spiritual blessings which belong to the upright, are manifold.

1. The upright man is God's favourite, even his delight, Prov. xi. 20.

2. He is hereby assured of his salvation, Psa. xv. 1, 2. For although an upright man fall into many grievous sins, yet presumptuous sins, Psa. xix. 13, shall not reign over him; he shall be kept from the great transgression; he shall never sin the sin unto death; yea, he shall be kept from the dominion of every sin.

3. By uprightness a man is strengthened in the inward man; it being that girdle which buckles and holds together the chief parts of the Christian armour, Eph. vi. 14. Nay, it is that which gives efficacy to every piece of that armour: it strengthens the back and loins, yea, the very heart of him that is begirt with it.

4. He that is upright, is sure to have his prayers heard, Jer. xxix. 13, and to be made able to profit by the word of God, and by all his holy ordinances. Do not my words, saith God, do good to him that walks uprightly? Micah ii. 7.

5. The upright man's services to God in prayer, hearing, receiving sacraments, &c. though performed with much weakness and imperfections, shall, through Christ, be accepted of God, 2 Chron. xxx. 18—20. Nay, where there is not power, the will of the upright man is taken for the deed, 2 Cor. viii. 12; and where there is power and deed both, even there the uprightness and readiness of the will is taken for more than the deed, according to that commendation of them, who were said not only to do, but to be willing a year

ago, 2 Cor. viii. 10. For many may do good things, who yet do them not with an upright will and ready mind.

6. The upright man has always matter of boldness before men. He can make an apology and defence for himself against the slanders of wicked men, and against the accusations of Satan, Acts xxiii. 11; xxiv. 14—16, who are ready upon every slight occasion, to reproach him as a hypocrite, and say, that all which he does is but in hypocrisy: but he can give all the lie, who charge him with dissimulation or hypocrisy. He knows more of his hypocrisy than they can tell him; he finds fault with, and accuses himself for it, more than they can do: yet this he can say, he allows it not, he hates it, and his heart is upright towards God. He cares not though his adversary write a book against him, Job xxxi. 35, 36; xix. 23—25. He has his defence; if men will receive it, they may; if not, he dares to appeal to heaven. For his record is on high. He has always a witness both within him, and in heaven for him, Job xvi. 19; 2 Cor. i. 12.

7. Uprightness is an excellent preventer and cure of despair, arising from accusations of conscience; even of a wounded spirit, of which Solomon saith, Who can bear it? For either it keeps it off, Job xxvii. 5, 6; or, if it be wounded, this uprightness in believing, and in willingness to reform and obey, is a most sovereign means to cure and quiet it, or at least wil' allay the extremity of it.

Not but an upright man may have trouble of mind, and that to some extremity; but he may thank himself for it, because he will not see and acknowledge that uprightness which he has, and does not properly apply it, or cherish it; which if he would do, there is nothing, next to the precious blood of Jesus Christ, would answer the charges of his accusing conscience, or bring feeling comfort to his soul, sooner or better.

8. The upright man has a holy boldness with God. When Abimelech could say, In the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this,

Gen. xx. 5, he had boldness to expostulate and reason his case with God. An upright man in his sickness, or in any other calamity, yea, at all times, when he needs God's help, can be bold to come before God, notwithstanding his sin that remains in him, his original sin, and his many actual transgressions. So did Hezekiah, upon his death bed, as he thought, saying, Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done good in thy sight, Isa. xxxviii. 3. So did Nehemiah, saying, Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy, Neh. xiii. 22. This uprightness gives boldness with God, but without all presumption of merit, as you see in good Nehemiah.

9. Lastly, Whatsoever the upright man's beginning was, and whatsoever his changes have been in the times that have gone over him, both in the outward and inward man, in his progress of Christianity; mark this, his end shall be peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37. The last and everlasting part which he shall act indeed, and to the life, is, everlasting happiness, Prov. xxviii. 18.

And, to contract all these motives into a short, but final sum, The Lord is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

SECT. 6. MEANS TO SUBDUE HYPOCRISY, AND PROMOTE UPRIGHTNESS.

IT remains now that you should know by what means you may abate and subdue hypocrisy; and may get, keep, and increase this grace of uprightness.

First, You must, by a due and serious consideration of the evils of hypocrisy, and advantages of uprightness, fix in your heart, by the help of Christ, a loathing and detestation of the one, and an admiration, love, and longing desire of the other; with a sincere purpose of heart, by the grace of God, to be upright. This must first be wrought, for until a man stand thus

affected, and resolved against hypocrisy, and for uprightness, he will take no pains to be free from the one, nor yet to obtain the other.

Secondly, You must be sensible of that hypocrisy which yet is in you, and of the want of uprightness, though not altogether, yet in great part. For no man will be at the pains to remove that disease whereof he thinks he is sufficiently cured though he judge it to be never so dangerous; nor yet to obtain that good of which he thinks he has enough already, though he esteem it never so excellent.

Hitherto both in the motives and means, I have endeavoured to gain the will: to will and resolve to be upright, and to be willing to use all good means to be upright. Now those means that will effect it follow.

Thirdly, Do your best to root out those vices that beget and nourish hypocrisy; and to plant in their room those graces which produce and strengthen uprightness.

The chief vices are ignorance and unbelief, self-love, pride, and an irresolved and unsettled heart, unstable and not firmly resolved what to choose, whereby it wavers and is divided between two objects, dividing the heart between God, and something else, Zeph. i. 5. either false gods, a man's self, or the world; whence it is, that the Scriptures call a hypocrite a man that has a heart and a heart, one that is double-minded, James iv. 8.

The graces are, a right knowledge of God and of his will, and faith in him; self-denial, humility, and lowly-mindedness; stability, and singleness of heart towards God.

For, the more clear light you can get into your mind, the more truth you will have in your will. And when you can so deny yourself, that you can quite renounce yourself, and first give yourself to Christ, and unto God, 2 Cor. viii. 5, 10, 11, then there will follow readiness of mind, and heartiness of will, to do whatsoever may please God. Also, the more humility you have in your mind, the more uprightness you will have in your heart. For while the soul is lifted up,

that man's heart is not upright in him, saith God, Hab. ii. 4. Lastly, when your eye is single, and your heart one, and undivided, you will not allow yourself to be in part for God, and in part for mammon, Matt. vi. 22—24, in part for God, and in part for your lusts, whether of the flesh, or of the world, or of the pride of life; you will not give your name and lips to God, and reserve your heart for the world, the flesh, or the devil; but, by your will, God shall be all in all unto you.

Fourthly, If you would be in earnest and in truth against sin, and for goodness, you must represent sin to your thoughts as the most hurtful, hateful, and most loathsome thing in the world, Gen. xxxix. 9; and must represent the obeying and doing of God's will unto your mind, as the best and most profitable, most amiable, most sweet and excellent thing in the world, Psa. xix. 7, 8, 11; cxix. 72. Hereby you may affect your heart with a thorough hatred and loathing of sin, and with an hearty love and delight in God's commandments, Psa. cxix. 97. If you do thus, you cannot choose but shun sin, and follow after that which is good, not in pretence only, but in deed and in truth, with all your heart, For, a man is always hearty against what he truly hates, and for what he dearly loves.

Fifthly, If you would be sincere, and do all your actions for God's glory, and for his sake, you must, by the light of God's word and works, fully inform and persuade yourself of God's sovereignty and absoluteness, and that, because he is the first absolute and chief good, he must needs be the last, the absolute and chief end of all ends. For he, that is the Alpha, must needs be the Omega, of all things, Rev. i. 8. Since all things are of God, Rom. xi. 36, and since he made all things for himself, Rev. iv. 11, therefore you should, in all things you do, be upright, intending God's glory as your principal and ultimate end in all things, 1 Cor. x. 28, 31.

Sixthly, Consider often and seriously, that how close and secret soever hypocrisy may lurk, yet it

cannot be hid from the eyes of God, with whom you have to do, and before whom you walk, Heb. iv. 12, 13, who will bring every secret thing to judgment, Eccles. xii. 14. Wherefore take continual notice, that you are in the sight of God that made your heart, Psa. xciv. 9—11, who requires truth of heart, Psa. li. 6, and who perfectly knows the guile or truth of your heart. This will much further your uprightness; for who can dare to promote and dissemble in the presence of his Lord and judge, who knows his dissimulation better than himself?

Seventhly, Unite yourself more and more strongly unto your head Christ Jesus, by faith and love; continually renounce your own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, that you may every day be more and more united unto him. Grow daily in faith and hope in him, from whence you shall more and more partake of his fulness, Phil. iii. 8, &c., even grace for grace, John i. 12, 16. For the measure of your uprightness, will usually be in proportion to your faith. For in proportion as the branch partakes more of the vine, so it draws more virtue and bears more good fruit, John xv. 5.

Eighthly, You must, with an holy jealousy of the deceitfulness of your heart, examine yourself often; not only of what you have done, and now do, but of the motives and ends of your religious actions; as was before directed in the marks of uprightness. Lay yourself often to the rule of uprightness, that is, the will of God, and finding yourself defective, study and labour to amend, and be upright, and that to the utmost of your power.

Ninthly, Excuse that measure of uprightness which you have, and be more thankful for the little you have, than discouraged as many are, because they have no more. If you find yourself upright, be abundantly thankful, and resolve to keep and increase it by all means. Keep your heart thus with all diligence, Prov. iv. 23; then, as all other graces, so this of uprightness will increase in the using.

Tenthly, and lastly, Use the means of all means,

the catholicon for all graces, which is prayer. Think not to gain uprightness by the power of your own might: but in the sense of your insufficiency, repair often to God by prayer; even to him who made your heart, in whose hands your heart is, who best knows the crooked windings and turnings of your heart, who only can amend and rectify your heart; who, because he delights in an upright heart, and has commanded you to seek it in the humble use of his means, will assuredly give it. Thus prays David; Renew, O Lord, a right spirit within me; Psa. li. 10; and, Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, Psa. cxix. 80.



CHAPTER XII.

OF LAWFUL CARE, AND OF FREEDOM FROM ANXIOUS CARE.

WHEN you have thus exercised a holy care to walk with God in uprightness, according to the foregoing directions, it remains that you free yourself of all other care, and that you rest holily secure in God: enjoying your most blessed peace with him, according to the divine direction, Be careful for nothing, &c. Phil. iv. 6, &c.

The care which is commanded, and carefulness which is forbidden, differ thus:

Lawful care is an act of wisdom, whereby after that a person has rightly judged what he ought to do, what not, what good he is to pursue, and what evil is by him to be shunned, or removed; he, accordingly with more or less intention and eagerness of mind, as the things to be obtained or avoided are greater or less, is careful to find out, and diligent to use lawful and fit means for the good, and against the evil, and that with all circumspection; that he may omit nothing which may assist him, nor commit any thing

that may hinder him in his lawful designs; which, when he has done, he rests quiet, and cares no further; casting all care of success upon God to whom it belongs, expecting a good issue upon the use of good means, yet resolving, howsoever, to submit his will to God's will, whatsoever the success shall be.

Sinful care is an act of fear and distrust, exercising not only the head, but chiefly the heart, to the inquietude and disturbance thereof, causing a person inordinately, and anxiously to pursue his desires, perplexing himself with doubtful and fearful thoughts about success.

Lawful care may be called a provident care, and care of the head.

Carefulness may be called a distrustful care, or a care of the heart.

This provident care is not only lawful, but necessary; for without it, a man cannot possibly be secure, nor have reasonable hope of good success.

This provident care is commended to you in the examples of the most wise and industrious brute creatures, Prov. vi. 6—11; and in the examples of the most prudent men.

As of Jacob's care of his safety, how to escape the rage of his brother Esau, Gen. xxxii. xxxiii; of Paul's care of the churches, 2 Cor. xi. 28; of the Corinthians' care and study to reform themselves, 2 Cor. vii. 11; of the good noble woman's care to entertain the Lord's prophet, 2 Kings iv. 10; of the good housewife's care of well ordering and maintaining her family, Prov. xxxi. 10, &c. The same good examples you have in the care of godly unmarried men and women, 1 Cor. vii. 32, 34, how to please God, and that they might be holy both in body and soul; and of Mary, who cared for that one thing needful, Luke x. 42.

Moreover, you are commanded this provident care, namely, to study to be quiet, to be no busy-body, not idle, 1 Thess. iv. 11; but to labour in a lawful calling the thing that is good, Ephes. iv. 28. Also, to walk honestly towards them who are without, 1 Thess. iv.

12; to endeavour so to walk towards God's people that you keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, Ephes. iv. 3; to provide for your own, 1 Tim. v. 8; to give diligence to make your calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 5—10; to study to maintain good works, Tit. iii. 8. But amongst all, you are commanded chiefly to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, Matt. vi. 33, as the best means to free you from all unlawful cares.

The properties of lawful care are these :

SECT. 1. DESCRIPTION OF LAWFUL CARE.

FIRST, The seat wherein lawful care resides, is the head; for that is the seat of understanding, wisdom, and discretion; but carefulness is chiefly seated in the heart.

Secondly, Godly care is always about good and lawful things. It has a good object, and good matter to work upon, and be conversant about: proposing always some good thing to be the end, which it would attain. It is not a care about evil, as how to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, Rom. xiii. 14; like Ahab's and Jezebel's carefulness for Naboth's vineyard and life, 1 Kings xxi. nor yet like Absalom's carefulness, how to usurp his father's kingdom, 2 Sam. xv. nor like Haman's, how to destroy the Jews, Esther iii. 9; neither is it like the carefulness of those of whom Solomon speaks, who cannot sleep unless they do mischief, Prov. iv. 16.

Thirdly, This holy provident care makes choice only of lawful means, to obtain this lawful end. David had care of his own life; therefore he got intelligence from Jonathan of Saul's evil purposes towards him, 1 Sam. xx. 1. He did fly and hide himself from Saul, but would by no means lay violent hands upon his anointed lord and king; though he had fair opportunities, and strong solicitations to kill him, he falling twice into his power, and was earnest-

ly called upon by his servants to dispatch him, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3—7; xxvi. 7—25.

Observe likewise Jacob's care to save himself, and all that he had, from the fury of his brother Esau, Gen. xxxii. xxxiii. He used only fit and lawful means. For though a man's intention be ever so good, and the thing cared for be good, yet if the means to get it be unlawful, the care is evil. To care how to provide for yourself and yours, is in itself good and needful; but so to care, that you run to unjust and indirect means, makes it evil. To care how to be saved, is an excellent care, but when you seek to attain it by ways of your own, or of other men's inventions; as by idolatrous worship, and voluntary religion, or looking to be saved by your own works, by purgatory, Pope's pardons and indulgences, as the papists do; this is a most sinful carefulness, Col. ii. 18, &c. To care how to bring glory to God is the best care; but if to procure it, you use lying for God, or any other unlawful means, it is an unholy care, Rom. iii. 7, 8.

Fourthly, This laudable holy care is a full and impartial care, even of all things belonging to a person's condition. It is not such a care of the body and estate, as causes neglect of the soul: neither is it such a care of the soul, as is attended with neglect of the body, life, estate, or name, 1 Tim. v. 23. It is not such a care of the private, as to neglect the public good, or of the public, so as to neglect the private. It extends itself to whatsoever God has committed to our care; both for ourselves and others. Those who care only for themselves, and for the things only of this life, sin in their care. Likewise those who seem to care only how to please God, and to save their souls, yet weakly or carelessly neglect their bodies, and affairs of their families belonging to their place, or the common good of others in church or commonwealth, all these are partial, and do sin in their care. All worldings and self-loving men offend in the first kind. All superstitious and indiscreetly devout men offend in the second kind: also all such who for devo-

tion sake neglect the necessary duties of their particular calling.

Fifthly, Lawful care is a discreet and well ordered care; it puts difference between things more or less good, and between things necessary or not necessary, between things more necessary and less necessary. In all things it would keep first due order, then due measure.

1. Caring most for God's glory, as Moses and Paul did, who cared more for the glory of God than for their own lives, honours, and welfare. *Exod. xxxii. 12, 32; Rom. ix. 3.* Next, it cares for that one thing needful, how the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord, *Luke x. 42.* As any thing is best, or more needful for the present, that is cared for first and chiefly, *Matt. vi. 33.* If all cannot be cared for, the less worthy things, the less necessary for the present, and those things to which we are least bound, should be omitted.

2. As lawful care does, through discretion, keep due order, so it keeps due measure, seeking spiritual and heavenly things with more diligence and zeal than those that are temporal and earthly, *2 Pet. i. 5;* caring for the things of this life with great moderation, without eagerness and greediness of desire; always proportioning the care to the goodness and worth of that which is to be cared for. Now because the world is to be loved and used as if we loved and used it not, *1 Cor. vii. 31, 32,* it being of little worth in comparison; therefore the cares about it in comparison of the best and most necessary things must be, as if you cared not.

SECT. 2. SIGNS OF IMMODERATE CARE.

CARES of the things of this life are inordinate and immoderate, 1. When they will not give men leave to take the comforts and natural refreshments of this life, *Eccles. v. 12,* as sleep, meat, and drink, and other needful and lawful things; but especially when they

hinder them from the exercise, profitable use, or due performance of religious duties, Matt. vi. 21; xiii. 22; xxii. 5; Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

2. When they are first and chief in a man's thoughts; the mind always running upon them.

3. When they cause a man, out of his eager haste to be rich and to enjoy the world, to use unlawful and indirect means, Prov. xxviii, 20—22, or to engage in dealing and trading beyond his skill, stock, and means well to manage the same.

4. When they cause a man so to mind his worldly business, that he thinks nothing well done, or safe, if his eye or hand be not in it, and if it be not in his own custody; although there is cause why others should be used, and entrusted with it.

Lastly, This holy laudable care is confined within its due measure and bounds, as well as fixed upon its proper objects. It knows its due limits, how far to go, and where to stay: namely, when it has chosen a lawful object, and has found out and used lawful means, 2 Tim. i. 12, and applies itself to one thing as well as another, in due order and measure, it stays there, caring no further; but waits patiently God's pleasure for good success, Psa. xxxvii. 7, casting all care of event and success upon God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving.

SECT. 3. THE DUTY OF QUIET TRUST IN GOD.

By what has been said, you may see that although you may and must take thought about many things, according to the directions there given; yet you must, as the apostle says, be careful for nothing, with an anxious, perplexing care.

This is now the matter to be insisted on, viz. That God would have none of his servants and his children to be inordinately careful about any thing; nor yet when in obedience to his commandment, and due observance of his providence, they have diligently used lawful means for the attainment of all lawful things,

that they should distress themselves at all about the issue or success. He would not that they should suffer their minds to hang in doubtful suspense and fear about them; but would that they should commit their ways unto him, and trust in him, Psa. xxxvii. 5, whether it be in the matter of their souls, or bodies, of the things of this life, or of that which is to come. God frees them from all carefulness, and would that they should free themselves from it too.

God would have you use all good means for this life, but without taking thought for to-morrow about what you shall eat, what you shall drink, what you shall put on, or what shall become of you and yours another day, Matt. vi. 25—34. He would not have you be so distrustful of him, as to take the care of futurity, the care of success from him, upon yourself, perplexing your heart with doubt and fear till you find it, Luke xii. 22—29. But his will is, that when you have done what you can, with a cheerful and ready mind, you should leave the whole matter of good, or ill success to his care, Psa. lv. 22; 1 Peter v. 7.

In like manner, God would have you to use means to save your soul; but when you have so done, and continue so to do, he would have you care no further. He would not have you to doubt and fear that all shall be in vain, and to no purpose, Psa. lxxiii. 13; or that you shall not be saved notwithstanding. He would not that you should discourage and enfeeble your heart by taking thought about the issue of any trials and temptations that may befall you, before they do come, Matt. x. 19; xxiv. 6, for that is vain; nor yet when they do come, for that is needless.

In such cases, you need only to serve God's providence in the use of the present means of salvation, gaining as much grace and strength as you can against such times, improving that grace and strength which you have in such times of trial: but as to success, either how much grace and comfort you shall have, or when you shall have it, and whether you shall hold out in the time of trial, or be saved in

the end, you must not indulge doubtful and distrustful cares; but must trust God with these things also.

For our Saviour prohibits his disciples all trouble, that might arise through fear of ill success in their Christian course, John xiv. 1, 27. And Paul eases himself of this trouble and fear, committing his soul, and the issue of all his trials unto God, saying, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day; 2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 6, 8, 18. He is confident in God for good success in his whole Christian warfare; so should you be.

SECT. 4. REASONS AGAINST ANXIOUS CARE, AND FOR QUIET TRUST IN GOD.

Now to dissuade you from all carefulness, and to persuade you to rest secure in God, concerning the particular events of all actions, and touching the final event and good success of your Christian profession, consider these reasons: (1.) Showing, why you should not care eagerly and inordinately for earthly things; (2.) Why you should not take doubtful or distrustful thought about any thing, whether earthly or heavenly.

(1.) Seriously consider, that all earthly things are of little worth, very fading and transitory, 1 John ii. 17, likened, when they are at best, to the flower of grass, Isa. xl. 6; James i. 10, 11. Wherefore they cannot be worthy of your anxious thought, or careful perplexity about them. It is extreme folly for man, being endued with reason, to set his mind upon that, which is little or nothing worth, nay, which as Solomon calls riches, is not, Prov. xxiii. 5; which is but of short continuance, and only for bodily use, while he has it: which also is given, by God, unto the wicked, even to his enemies, rather than unto the godly, Psa. xvii. 13, 14.

(2.) Inordinate care of earthly things is exceedingly hurtful: for besides that it breeds many foolish and

nurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition, 1 Tim. vi. 9, it does hinder the care of things spiritual and heavenly. It causes persons either not to come at all to the means of salvation, Matt. xxii. 5; Luke xiv. 18, &c., or if they come to the word, prayer, sacraments, good company, and good conference, to depart without spiritual profit, Matt. xiii. 22; Ezek. xxxiii. 31. It will cause a man to err from the faith, 1 Tim. vi. 10, and to be altogether unfit for death, and unprepared for his latter end. For when any one part draws more nourishment to itself than it ought, some other parts must needs be hindered in their growth; and when the strength of the ground is spent in nourishing weeds, tares, or corn of little worth, the good wheat is obstructed in its growth, choked, or starved, Phil. iii. 19. "He whose cares are too much about the earth, his cares will be too little about the things of heaven."

Why a man should not be careful about success in any thing.

Next, consider the reasons, why you must not indulge any anxious care about success in your lawful endeavours, any more than by prayer to commend them to God.

First, Because it is to usurp upon God's peculiar right, God's divine prerogative, taking his sole and proper work out of his hands; for care of success, and of what shall be hereafter, is proper to God, 1 Peter v. 7.

Secondly, It is a vain and fruitless thing, when you have diligently used lawful means for any thing, to take thought for success, Psa. cxxvii. 2. For who can by taking thought add any thing to his stature? Luke xii. 25, 26; or make one hair white or black? Matt. v. 36. Understand the same of all other things.

Thirdly, Every day brings its full employment with it, together with its crosses and griefs, Matt. vi. 34; so that you will have full work enough for your care, to endeavour to do the present day's work holily; and to bear each present day's affliction fruitfully and

patiently; you have little reason therefore to perplex your heart with taking thought of future events, or of what shall be to-morrow.

Fourthly, It is altogether needless to take thought about the success of your actions, for success is cared for already by God, Matt. vi. 26, 30, 32; one whose care is of more use and consequence than yours can be. You are cared for by one, who loves you better than you can love yourself, who is wise and knows what is best for you, and what you most need, better than yourself; who is always present with you, and is both able and ready to do exceeding abundantly for you, above all that you can ask or think, Eph. iii. 20; even God, who cares for meaner creatures than you are, who also is your God, your heavenly Father, of whose care you have had happy experience, who in times past cared for you, when you could not care for yourself, who has kept you in, and from your mother's womb; who, if you are believers indeed, ordained you to salvation before you had a being, Eph. i. 4; who in due time gave his only begotten Son for you, and to you, Rom. viii. 32, as appears in that now he has given you faith and hope in him, and love to him. It is your God and Father who has commanded, that for the present, and for the future, you should cast your care and burthen on him, 1 Peter v. 7; Psa. lv. 22; having made many gracious promises, that he will care for you, that he will sustain you, and that he will bring your desire to pass, Psa. xxxvii. 5. What wise man then will encumber himself with needless cares?

Fifthly, Carefulness or anxious thoughts about success, proceed from base and cursed causes; namely, ignorance of God, and unbelief and distrust of God, in whomsoever this sin reigns; hence it was that the heathen abounded in this sin, Matt. vi. 32. And by how much this carefulness is indulged by any, though it reign not, by so much he may be said to be of little sound knowledge, and of little faith, Matt. vi. 30.

Sixthly, Carefulness, and doubtful suspense about success in your lawful endeavours, be it whether you

or yours shall prosper, or whether you shall profit by the means of grace, or whether you shall be saved in the end, does produce many dangerous and mischievous effects:

1. It will cause you to neglect the proper use of the means of this life, or of that which is to come, 2 Kings vi. 33, according as you doubt of success in either, or if you neglect them not utterly, yet you will have no heart to go about them. For as those that needlessly intermeddle with other person's business, usually neglect their own, so you will be apt to leave your own work undone, when you take God's work out of his hands; and who is he that will take pains about that which he fears will be to no purpose, or labour lost?

2. You will be ready to use unlawful means for any thing when you doubt of success from lawful, Gen. xii. 11—13; xvi. 2; xxvii. 5, 19.

3. Taking thought does divide, distract, overload, and consume the heart and spirits; nothing more.

4. You can never be thankful to God for any thing whereof you fear that you shall have no good success.

5. This anxious thought and distressing fear about success, will deprive you of the comfort of all those good things you have had, and which now you do enjoy.

6. Nothing will bring ill success upon you sooner than unbelieving and distrustful fears about futurity. For when any person shall, notwithstanding the experience he has had, or might have had, of God's power, love, care, and truth of his promises, yet distrustfully care so far, as not to content himself with his own work, so far as prudent care leads him; but also will take God's work, and the burthen of his work upon himself, caring about success, which only belongs to God, and which God only can do, and bear; this folly and presumption does so much provoke God, that it causes him, out of his wise justice to cease caring for such an one, leaving him to his own care, and to his wit, friends, or any other earthly help, to make him by woful experience see and feel, how little any,

or all these, without God, can avail him. Nay, it causes God not only to withdraw his own help, but the help of all things whereon such a man does rely; and what is more, causes them instead of being for him, to be utterly against him. Is it not just with God, that whosoever will not be beholden to God to bear their burthen, but will take it up and bear it themselves, should be made to bear it alone, and to the distress and disquietment of their own hearts?

Wherefore all these things considered, I return to the exhortation, or conclusion before proposed, viz. Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and trust in him. Cast all your care on God; be careful in nothing, Psa. lv. 22.

O! how happy are we Christians, if we did but know, or knowing would enjoy our happiness! We are cared for in every thing that we need, and that can be good for us; we may live without taking thought, or care in any thing. Our work is only to study and endeavour to please God, walking before him in sincerity, and with a perfect heart; then we may cleave to him, and rest on him both for our bodies and souls without fear or distraction, 1 Cor. vii. 35. God is all-sufficient, and all in all to such; he is known by his name Jehovah to such, Exod. vi. 3; even to the being the accomplisher of his promises to them. If we shall wisely and diligently care to do our work, we, serving so good and so able a Master, need not take thought about our wages. If we would make it our care to obey and please so good, and so rich, and bountiful a Father; we need not be careful for our maintenance here, in our minority and non-age; nor yet for our eternal inheritance, when we shall come to full age. We in this holy security and freedom from carefulness, if we are not wanting to ourselves, might live in an heaven upon earth; and that not only when we have means, for even then our security is in God, not in the means, but when to the eye of flesh we have no means: for God is above, and more than all means.

SECT. 5. MEANS TO ATTAIN QUIETING CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AND FREEDOM FROM PERPLEXING CARES.

THAT you may leave anxious caring, and be brought to cast all your care on God,

(1.) Deny yourself, and your own wisdom, Prov. xxiii. 4; be not wise in your own conceit, nor presumptuous of your wit, skill, or means.

(2.) Get sound knowledge, faith, hope, and confidence in God, Rom. viii. 32; live by faith, for the preservation both of body and soul, Heb. x. 38, 39. Get not only faith in his promise, but in his providence also. When you shall see no way or means of gaining the good you desire, or of keeping you from the evil which you fear, or of delivering you from the evil you feel, then call to mind, not only the promises of God, viz. I am with you, Joshua i. 5; I will not leave nor forsake you, Heb. xiii. 5; all things work together for good, Rom. viii. 28; and many such like; but believe also that God will provide means to bring to pass what he has promised, though yet you see not how. When you can say, with faithful Abraham, God will provide, Gen. xxii. 8, it will cast out fear and doubt. But if, with Abraham, Gen. xii. 11; xvi. 2, you believe God's promises in the main, but not God's providence in the means; you will then be tempted to seek out, and use unlawful means to obtain the thing promised, as he did; or faint in waiting, as many others have done. For we see the like in David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 10, 11, when he had faith in God's providence, he could say of Saul, The Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into the battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. But when he doubted of God's providence, then he saith, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

(3.) Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure; for when you know assuredly that God

is your heavenly Father, and Christ Jesus your Redeemer, and that you are of his family, having your name written in heaven, you then will easily free your heart from being troubled with fear and restless care, John xiv. 1, 2; being sure that your heavenly Father and Saviour does and will provide for you.

(4.) Lastly, you must often renew your acts of faith on God, his promises and providence, casting all your care on him; making your request known to God by prayer and supplication, for what you would have; being heartily thankful for what you have had, now have, and hope to have hereafter. Then the peace of God which passes all understanding, Phil. iv. 6, 7, shall keep your heart and mind from vexing thoughts, and heart-distressing fears, and that, in and through Christ Jesus; of which peace I intend next to speak.



CHAPTER XIII.

OF PEACE WITH GOD.

THE NATURE AND EXCELLENCY OF PEACE WITH GOD.

THAT you may be persuaded to walk before God in uprightness, in all well-pleasing, and to live without taking anxious thought about any thing, casting your care on God according to the former directions; God has assured you that peace shall be upon you, Gal. vi. 16, even that peace of God which passes all understanding, which shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 6, 7, if you thus do.

Peace and quiet is most desirable. All things that have motion desire it as their perfection: bodily things enjoy it by their rest in their places; reasonable things enjoy this peace in the quiet of their mind and heart,

when they have their desires satisfied, being freed from such opposition as might disquiet them.

Peace is a true agreement and concord between persons or things, whereby not only all enmity is laid aside, and all injuries are forborne; but all amity is entered into, and all readiness of communicating and doing good to each other is showed.

Natural peace is of great price, and very much to be desired, for the exceeding great benefit which it brings to the body, family, and state. But the peace of which I am to speak, which is promised to all who walk with God according to the rule of faith, and of the new creature, Gal. vi. 15, 16, casting their care on God, exceeds all other peace, as far as the soul, heaven, and eternity exceed the body, the earth, and a moment of time. Which will easily appear, if you shall observe by what motives and arguments the Holy Ghost does commend, and set this forth unto you, Phil. iv. 7. It has its commendation above all other peace in three respects :

First, In respect of the excellency of the person, with whom and from whom it is, namely, God; therefore it is called the peace of God, Phil. iv. 7. It is so called, (1.) Because it has God for its object; it is a peace with God. (2.) Because God by his Spirit is the author of it: it is peace from God, a peace which God gives; such a peace which the world neither can, nor will give, John xiv. 27.

Secondly, This peace is commended in respect of the unspeakable and inconceivable goodness and worth that is in it. It passes all understanding; and this it does, not only because unsanctified men are mere strangers to it, and understand it not; but because regenerate men, to whom it belongs, and in whom it is, even they when God gives them any lively feeling of it, find it to be such a peace as they could not imagine it to be before they felt it. For they cannot so distinctly and fully conceive the transcendent excellency of it, as by any means fitly to describe it. It rather takes up the mind into an holy rapture, unto admiration of what it sees, and of what it

perceives is yet to be known, than possibly can be distinctly and fully comprehended or expressed by mind or tongue. It is with them that feel it in any special degree, as it was with the queen of the South, when she saw Solomon's wisdom, 1 Kings x. 4—7. She had a great opinion of Solomon's wisdom, by what she had heard; but when she saw it, she was stricken with such admiration, that it is said she had no more spirit in her; his wisdom was so much beyond her expectation, that she breaks out into words of admiration, saying the half was not told her of Solomon's wisdom, it exceeds the fame thereof; so does the peace of God, being, like the dimensions of the love of Christ, the root thereof, and like the ravishing joy of Christians, the fruit thereof, surpassing all full and distinct knowledge, and all means of full and clear expression, Eph. iii. 18, 19; being, as the Holy Ghost also saith, unspeakable, 1 Peter i. 8. This peace is included amongst those other graces and gifts accompanying the gospel, which are such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, so as clearly to perceive them, or fully to express them, 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Thirdly, This peace is commended in respect of the excellent effect thereof, which is a proof that it passes understanding, namely, it keeps the heart and mind, in and through Christ Jesus.

This is an excellent and most useful effect on man's behalf; for it supplies the place and office of a castle or strong garrison, 2 Cor. xi. 32, as the original signifies, to keep the principal forts of the soul from being surprised or annoyed, either by invasion from without, or by insurrection from within.

The parts of man, which are kept by this peace of God, are the heart and mind; by heart is meant the will and affections; by mind, the power of thinking and understanding. For true peace of God does fill the heart with such joy, patience, hope, and comfort in believing, that it keeps it from heart-vexing grief, fear, distrust and despair. It likewise fills the mind so full of apprehension of God's favour, fidelity, and

love, that it makes it rest secure in God, and delivers it from distress of mind, or anxious cares about any thing; keeping out the dominion of all perplexing and distrustful thoughts.

The strength which this peace has, whereby it keeps the heart and mind as with a garrison, is impregnable. It is derived from Christ, it has it in and from Christ: the text saith, through Christ, that is, through the power of Christ's Spirit. For as we are kept by faith, from which this peace springs, as with a strong garrison, by the power of God to salvation, 1 Peter i. 5; so, by the same power of Christ, our hearts and minds are kept by the peace of God, as with a garrison, from discouraging, distracting, and uncomfortable thoughts. For what is this peace else but a beam from the object of our faith, proceeding from the love of God to us ward, and the fruit of faith, as we feel it wrought in us by God?

This peace of God is two-fold, or one and the same in different degrees.

The first is an actual entering into, and mutual embracing of peace between God and man.

The second is the manifestation and expression of this peace.

The first is when God and man are made friends; which is, when God is pacified towards man, and when man is reconciled unto God, so that now God stands well affected towards men, and man has put off enmities against God; which mutual atonement and friendship, Christ Jesus, the only mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5, has, by his satisfaction and intercession wrought for man, and by his Spirit applies unto, and works in man. For until this atonement be applied, God, in his just judgment and holy displeasure, is an enemy unto man for sin, Psa. v. 5; Rom. v. 10; and man in his evil mind, and unjust hatred is an enemy unto God, Col. i. 21, and unto all goodness, through sin.

The first peace, is peace of God with man, inherent in God, working the like disposition of peace in man

towards God; and is the fountain from which the second floweth.

The second kind, or rather further degree, of peace of God, is the operation and manifestation of the former peace, which is a peace of God in man wrought by the Spirit of God, through the apprehension that God is at peace with him.

This peace is partly and most sensibly in the conscience, which is called peace of conscience, and may also be called peace of justification, according to that, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, &c., Rom. v. 1. And it is partly in the whole reasonable man, whereby the will and affections of the soul agree within themselves, and are subject to the enlightened mind, conspiring all of them against the common adversaries of God and the soul, i. e., the flesh and the devil: this may be called peace of sanctification: according to that of the apostle, Rom. vi. 22; being made free from sin, and become servants of God, you have your fruit unto holiness. This is the agreement of all the members, to become servants to righteousness unto holiness, Rom. vi. 19. Not but there will be warring always in our members, but it is not the warring so much of one member against another, as the warring of the flesh in every member against the Spirit, which Spirit also wars against the flesh. This conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, beginning in man, as soon as the Spirit has wrought the peace of holiness, in setting the soul in order.

Moreover, this peace of sanctification consists in this, that although a Christian must never be, nor ever is at peace with sin, so that it does not assault and molest him, or that he should subject himself to it, or have it absolutely subject to him in this life, yet he has a peace and quiet, in comparison, from sin, in as much as he is freed from the dominion and power of sin, Rom. vi. 14, 22, to condemn him, or to reduce him to his former bondage unto sin. Now so far as a man gets a conquest over his lusts, that they are kept under, and forbear to assault and molest him, so far he may be said to have this peace of sanctification.

The conscience, when it is awakened in the act of accusing and condemning man for sin, does withal prick, (Acts ii. 37; Prov. xviii. 14;) sting, and wound the heart with unutterable and inconceivable griefs, fears, and terrors, through the apprehension of God's infinite, eternal, and just wrath for sin.

Now, when God, by his Spirit, Rom. v. 1—5, gives any true hope and assurance unto a man that his justice is satisfied concerning him, through Christ; and that now all enmity and wrath is done away on God's part; and that he loves him in Christ, with a free, full, and everlasting love, Rom. viii. 16; hereby he speaks peace to the conscience, having done away all the guilt of sin, which before molested it through sense of God's anger and fear of punishment. Hence arises peace and comfort in the conscience, which therefore is called peace of conscience. Thus the mind ceases to be perplexed, and, by faith in Christ's death, through the Spirit, becomes quiet with an heavenly tranquillity, resting on the word of promise, and according to the measure of clear apprehension of God's love in Christ, in the same measure is at sweet agreement within itself, without fear or trouble, John xiv. 27; and in the same measure he has peace of conscience, flowing from the assurance of justification.

As soon also as a man begins actually to be at peace with God, his lusts do begin to be at war with him, rebelling against the law of his mind, which yet by little and little shall be subdued and conquered; which conquest, though it be imperfect in this life; yet by virtue of the peace now made with God, if he will improve it by seeking help of God, and taking to him the complete armour, fighting manfully under Christ's banner, Eph. vi. 10, he may so prevail against them, that they do not so often, nor so strongly, assault him as in former times. Now, so far as the powers and faculties of man agree in their fight against sin, and subdue it, that it does not assault and molest him, he may be said to have the peace of sanctification.

The first peace whereby God is pacified, and is

become propitious and gracious to man, is absolutely necessary to the being of a Christian.

The second, which rests from the manifestation of this peace unto man, and the sensible feeling of the operation of this peace in man, is not necessary to the being of a Christian, at least in a sensible degree of it, but to the well-being of a Christian it is necessary. For a man may be in the favour of God, and yet be without the sense of this peace in himself: because this peace of conscience does not flow necessarily from the being in God's favour, but from knowledge and assurance of being in his favour.

Now, a man, in many cases, may lose for a time his sense of God's favour, his faith being over clouded with fears and unbelief, as it was with David, after his adultery, &c. *Psa. li. 11, 12*, who yet was upheld secretly by his right hand, as the Psalmist was in another case, *Psa. lxxiii. 23*, by virtue of that first peace of God, yet, until God gave him the sense and feeling of his loving countenance, he could not enjoy the comfort of it; yea, though God by Nathan in the outward ministry of his word, had given him assurance of God's loving-kindness, saying, *The Lord has put away thy sin, thou shalt not die, 2 Sam. xii. 13.*

That first peace is absolute, and admits of no degree.

The second, which flows thence, both in respect of peace of conscience, and in respect of good agreement of the powers and faculties of man within themselves, and of freedom from assaults and molestations either of Satan from without, or from lusts within, is not absolute; but admits of several degrees. In the life to come this latter peace shall be perfect: for then all believers shall be perfectly freed from all trouble of conscience, and from all molestation by temptations; their victory shall be complete. But in this life their peace is but imperfect; it is true for substance, but is more or less, as the light they have received is more clear or dim; and as grace in them is more strong or more weak.

For although man's justification is absolute, and

admits not of degrees, yet the assurance of it, whereby a man has peace of conscience, is more or less according to the measure of his clear sight of Christ's love, and evidence of his faith. Hence it is that the dear children of God have interruptions and intermissions in their peace; have sometimes much peace, sometimes little or no peace; according as they have intermissions in their assurance of God's favour.

Thus it was with David and Asaph; sometimes his heart was quiet, and his spirit was glad, in assurance that his soul should rest in hope, Psa. xvi. 9; at other times, his soul was cast down and disquieted in him, Psa. xlii. 11, thinking that he was cast out of God's sight, Psa. xxxi. 22, fearing that God would show no more favour, Psa. lxxvii. 7. Yea, he was so perplexed, that he did almost faint, and his eyes failed with waiting for God, Psa. lxix. 3. For since the best assurance of believers is exercised with combating against doubting, their truest and best peace must needs be assaulted with disquiet. And as it is with a ship at anchor, so is the most stable peace of a Christian in this life, who has his hope as an anchor of his soul, sure and steadfast, Heb. vi. 19; who, though he cannot make utter shipwreck, yet he may be grievously tossed and affrighted with the waves and billows of manifold temptations and fears. Likewise, though peace of sanctification be true, yet it must needs be more or less, according as any man grows or decreases in holiness, and as God shall please to restrain his spiritual enemies, or give power to subdue them, more or less.

Now the peace of God, both in him to man, and from him manifested and wrought in man, does pass all understanding, and serves to keep the heart and mind of him that walks with God, and rests on him through Christ.

This peace it is which you must seek for, and embrace in believing, and if you would have true comfort and tranquillity in your mind, labour especially to get and keep the peace of a good conscience,

which seems to be the peace that is chiefly, though not only, intended in this text.

SECT. 2 FURTHER EXCELLENCIES OF THE PEACE OF GOD.

THAT you may be induced with all diligence and earnestness to seek after this blessed peace, and may better perceive that this peace of God, for worth and use, passes all understanding, take these reasons in particular.

First, That must needs be an excellent peace which God will please to take into his holy title, calling himself the God of peace, Heb. xiii. 20, calling Christ the Prince of peace, Isa. ix. 6.

Secondly, That peace must needs be of infinite value, passing all understanding, for which Christ gave himself; paying the price of his own most precious blood for it, 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

Thirdly, This peace cannot but pass all understanding, because the cause from whence it comes, namely, Christ's love, Eph. iii. 18, 19, and the effect which it works, namely, joy in the Holy Ghost, 1 Peter i. 8, do, as the apostles affirm; pass knowledge, and are unspeakable.

Fourthly, This peace was that first congratulation, wherewith the holy angels saluted the church, at Christ's birth, giving her joy in her new-born husband and Saviour, Luke ii. 10, 11, 14. And it was that special legacy which Christ Jesus did bequeath to his church, leaving that as the best token of his love to it, a little before his death: saying, My peace I leave with you, John xiv. 27.

Fifthly, This peace is one of the principal parts of the kingdom of God, which consists, as the apostle says, of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17.

Sixthly, By as much as the evils and mischiefs that come to a man by having God to be his enemy, which draws upon him God's wrath, justice, power, and all God's creatures to be against him: and by as much

as the grievous and intolerable anguish of the wounded spirit passes understanding; by so much the peace of God, which frees him from all these, must of necessity, pass all understanding, Prov. xviii. 14.

Now that it is a fearful thing to have God to be an enemy, it is said, He is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. x. 21. It appears likewise by Christ's compassion and grief for Jerusalem, who neglected the time of making and accepting of peace with God; for he wept over it, and said, Luke xix. 42, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." But what it is to have God to be an enemy, is seen most fully by Christ's trouble and grief in his passion and agony in the garden, and in the extremity of his conflict with God's wrath on the cross, when God showed himself to be an enemy, and did for man's sin pour on him the fierceness of his wrath. It made him, though he was God, being man, to sweat, for very anguish, as it were drops of blood, Luke xxii. 44, and to cry, If it be possible, let this cup pass, Matt. xxvi. 39, and, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt. xxvii. 46.

Moreover, if you do observe the complaints of such distressed souls that have had terror of conscience, if you have not had experience thereof in yourself, how that they were at their wits' end, pricked at heart, as it were with the point of a spear, or sting of a serpent, Acts ii. 37, pained like men whose bones are broken and out of joint, Psa. li. 8, making them to roar, and to consume their spirits for very heaviness, Psa. xxxii. 4, then you will say that peace of conscience does pass all understanding.

Seventhly, When God and a man's own conscience are for him, and God's grace in some good measure has subdued sin and Satan in him, this brings with it assurance that all other things, whose peace are worth having, are also at peace with him, Hosea ii. 18—20. For if God be for us, who can be against

us? Rom. viii. 31, 32. This peace must of necessity bring with it all things which will make us happy, even all things which pertain to life, godliness, and glory, 2 Peter i. 3.

Lastly, Consider this, that as the worth and sense of peace with God is unutterable and inconceivable, so the time of it is indeterminable, it is everlasting, and has no end, Isa. ix. 7. Compare this with the former, and it cannot be denied, but that the peace of God does every way pass understanding.



CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING THE IMPEDIMENTS TO PEACE: FALSE HOPES,
AND FALSE FEARS.

THE KINDS OF IMPEDIMENTS THAT HINDER PEACE.

FIRST, If you would enjoy this happy peace, you must remove and avoid the impediments. Secondly, You must use all helps and furtherances which serve to procure and keep it.

I reduce the impediments unto two heads.

First, A false opinion and hope that all is well with a man, and that all shall be well with him in respect of his salvation, when yet indeed God is not reconciled to him. Hence will follow a quietness of heart, somewhat like to peace of conscience; which yet is but a false peace.

Secondly, Causeless doubting, and false fear, that a man's estate with respect to his salvation is not good; although God be indeed at peace with him; hence follows trouble and anguish of heart, somewhat like unto that of hellish despair, disturbing his true peace.

Either of these do hinder peace.

The first hinders the having, the second hinders the feeling and comfortable enjoying of peace.

It has been an old device of Satan, when he would keep any man from that which is true, to obtrude upon him that which shall seem to be true, but is false. Thus he did in the first calling of the Jews, Matt. xxiv. 5. When he saw they had an expectation of the true Christ, he, to divert and seduce them from the true Christ, sets up false Christs. Even so in the matter of peace: if he can so delude men that they shall content themselves with a false peace, he knows that they will never seek for that which is true. It is a common practice with the devil to endeavour to make all who are not in a state of grace, to presume that they are.

Also, such is his cunning and malice, that when any man is in the state of grace, he will labour by all means to distress and perplex the soul with unreasonable fears and suspicions, to make that estate doubtful and uncomfortable, to vex and to weary him, if he cannot drive him to despair, 2 Cor. ii. 7, 11. Now the heart of man, so far as it is unsanctified, being deceitful above all things, Jer. xvii. 9, is most apt to yield to Satan in both these cases. Whence it is, that there are very many who boast of much peace, and yet have none of it. And many fear they have no peace, who yet have much of it.

Wherefore the rule is, "Believe not either your deceitful heart, nor the devil, when they tell you either that you are in a state of salvation, or in a state of damnation: but believe the Scripture, what it saith in either."

You may know when these persuasions come from your deceitful heart, or from the devil, thus:

First, If the means to persuade you to either be from false grounds, or from misapplication of true grounds.

Secondly, If the conclusions, inferred from either persuasion, be to keep you in a sinful course, and to keep you, or to drive you from God, as if you need not be so strict in godliness, or that now it is in vain, or too late to turn and seek unto God; then it is from

Satan and from a deceitful heart, and you must not believe them. But if these persuasions be from a right application of true grounds, and do produce these good effects, to drive you to God, in praise or prayer, and unto a care to please God, they are from his gracious Spirit.

SECT. 2. THE CAUSES OF PRESUMPTION, OR FALSE PEACE.

THE false peace and evil quiet of conscience arises from these three causes :

First, From gross ignorance of the danger wherein a man lives because of sin, Eph. iv. 18, 19, whence follows a blind conscience.

Secondly, From groundless security and presumption that all shall be well with him, notwithstanding that he knows he has sinned, Deut. xxix. 19, and knows that sin is damnable; whence he has a deluded conscience.

Thirdly, From obstinacy, through delight and custom in sin, Jer. xlv. 16, 17, whence comes hardness and insensibility of heart, which is a seared conscience.

Wheresoever any of these evils reign, although God has said there is no peace to the wicked, Isa. lvii. 21, that is, no true peace; yet such fear no evil; but promise to themselves peace and safety, 1 Thess. v. 3, like those of whom the prophet spake, who had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at an agreement, Isa. xxviii. 15. Yea, though they hear all the curses against sinners, which are in God's book denounced against them; yet will they bless themselves in their heart, and say, they shall have peace, though they walk in the stubbornness of their hearts, Deut. xxix. 19. But whosoever is thus quiet in himself through a false peace, it is a sign that the strong man keeps the house, Luke xi. 21, and that he, continuing in this fool's paradise, is not far from sudden and fearful destruction from the Almighty, 1 Thess. v. 3. Deut. xxix. 20.

Whosoever therefore would have true peace of God, must know and be thoroughly convinced that by nature, by reason of Adam's first transgression, which is justly imputed to him, Rom. v. 12, and because of his own inherent wickedness of heart and life, Rom. vii. 18; Psa. li. 3, 5, of omission and commission, in thought, word, and deed, he is in a state of sin and condemnation, having God for his enemy, yea, is an heir of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, and of eternal vengeance of hell-fire: according to that of the apostle, All have sinned, and are become guilty before God, and have come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 19, 23. Ignorance of danger may give quiet to the mind for a time, but it can give no safety. Is not he foolishly secure that rests quietly in a ruinous house, not knowing his danger, until it fall upon him? Whereas, if he had known it, he would have had more fear and disquiet; but less danger.

SECT. 3. GROUNDS OF FALSE HOPE DISCOVERED AND REMOVED.

LET no man presume upon weak and false grounds, that he shall escape the vengeance of hell, or attain to the happiness of heaven. How weak and vain are the foundations on which many build their hopes of salvation! and from thence their peace will appear by that which follows.

1. Some think that because God made them, surely he will not damn them. True, if they should have continued good, as he made them. God made the devil good, yea an excellent creature, yet, who knows not, that he shall be damned? Matt. xxv. 41. If God spared not his holy angels, Jude 6, after that they became sinful; shall man think that he will spare him? A sinful man shall be judged at the last day, not according to what he was by God's first making; but as he shall be found defiled and corrupted by the devil, and by his own lusts. When Judah became a people of no understanding, it is said, He who made them

will show them no mercy, and he that formed them will show them no favour, Isa. xxvii. 11. Thus it is spoken to every sinner remaining in his sin, notwithstanding that God made him.

2. Some say their afflictions have been so many, so great, and so lasting, that they hope they have had their hell in this life; whence it is that their hearts are quiet in respect of any fear of wrath and judgment at the last day.

I would ask such, whether they, being thus afflicted, have returned to God that smote them, Isa. ix. 13; and whether their afflictions have made them better; or whether, like Solomon's fool brayed in a mortar, Prov. xxvii. 22, their sin and folly is not departed from them? If so, they must know, the more they have been, and now are afflicted, if they be not reformed by it, this does presage that there is the more and worse behind; as it was in the case of Judah, Isa. i. 5. v. 12—14; Amos iv. 6—13. Many have been often and extremely corrected by their parents, &c. yet, remaining incorrigible, have at last suffered public execution.

3. Some, though their ways be never so evil, yet because to them God's judgments are far above, out of their sight, and because they have no changes, Psa. lv. 19; Eccles. viii. 11, God forbearing to execute his judgments upon them speedily, they persuade themselves that God sees not, or that he is not angry with them, or that he regards not, Psa. x. 6, 11, 13, and that he will neither do good nor bad, thinking that God has forgotten, or that he is like them, Psa. l. 21, well enough pleased with them; hereby they lay their consciences asleep, promising unto themselves immunity from punishment, and that they shall never be moved, Psa. x. 6.

Know ye, that God's forbearance of his wrath is not because he sees not, or because he has forgotten, or regarded not your wickedness; but because he would give you time and means of repentance; it is because he would not have you perish, but come to repentance, that you may be saved, 2 Peter iii. 9;

which if you do not, this his bounty and long-suffering makes way for his justice, and serves to leave you without excuse; and to heap up wrath for you against the day of judgment, the day of the revelation of the just judgment of God, Rom. ii. 4—6, who shall render to every man according to his works. For God knows how to reserve the wicked to the day of judgment, to be punished, 2 Peter ii. 9. He will take his time to hear and afflict you, Psal. lv. 19, when he shall set all the sins of you that forget him, in order before you, Psal. l. 21, 22; then, if your speedy repentance do not now prevent it, he will tear you in pieces when there shall be none to deliver. The longer he was in fetching his blow, the more deadly will his stroke be when it comes. Many malefactors are not so much as called at a petty sessions, when less offenders are both called and punished; yet have they no cause to promise safety to themselves, for they are reserved for a more solemn trial, and execution, at the grand assizes. So wicked men that are not afflicted here, are reserved for the last judgment, at the great and terrible day of the Lord.

4. There are some who hope that God does love them, and that he does intend to save them; for they prosper in every thing, and are not in trouble and distress as other men; hereupon their consciences are quiet, and without fear.

Let me tell you who thus think, that this is a poor foundation to build your hope upon. What are you the better for your prosperity? Are you more thankful and more obedient? Do you the more good, by as much as you prosper more? If so, well; if not, know, as Solomon, by the spirit of truth, tells you that no man can know God's love or hatred by all that is before him; be it prosperity or adversity, Eccles. ix. 1, 2. In these things there may be one and the same event to the righteous and to the wicked. Know, moreover, that the wicked, for the most part, thrive most in this world; God giving them their portion in this life, Psal. xvii. 14, wherewith they nourish themselves against the day of slaughter, making their

own table their snare, Psa. lxi. 22, and their prosperity their ruin, Prov. i. 32.

5. There are many who compare themselves with themselves, passing by their own manifold sins, looking only upon their own hypocritical and civil good purposes and deeds; comparing also their sins with the notorious sins of God's people committed before their conversion, Luke xviii. 11, and with the gross sins of Noah, Abraham, Lot, Peter, and other godly men, after conversion. They hence conclude, that since such are saved, they must entertain a good opinion of themselves, and hope they shall be saved; they think that all is well with them, being such of whom our Saviour speaks that need no repentance, Luke xv. 7.

I would have these to know, that they who thus compare themselves with themselves are not wise, 2 Cor. x. 12; and they that think well of themselves, and commend themselves, are not approved, 2 Cor. x. 18; but those only whom the Lord commends. Moreover, the slips and falls of the people of God, both before and after conversion, did serve for their own humbling, and for a warning to all that should hear thereof. God knows how to reprove and chasten his own that offend, giving them repentance to life and salvation; and yet justly will condemn all those that shall presumptuously stumble at their falls, and wilfully lie in their sins, being fallen. It is not safe following the best men in all their actions, for in many things they sin all, James iii. 2, not only before, but after conversion. And as the cloud that guided the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 20, had two sides, the one bright and shining, the other black and dark, such is the cloud of examples of godly men. Those who will be directed by the light side thereof, shall, with the children of Israel, pass safely towards the heavenly Canaan; but those that will follow the dark side shall all perish with the Egyptians in the Red Sea of destruction. Whatsoever any were before conversion, or whatsoever gross sin they fall into after conversion, if they are humble and truly penitent, none of

them are laid to their charge, because they are done away by Christ Jesus. These are in better state than those who for matter never committed so great sins, if pharisee-like they repent not of their lesser sins, as they esteem them, and are proud of their supposed goodness and well doing. For God, in justifying the humble publican rather than the proud pharisee, Luke xviii. 10, 11, shows that proud innocency is always worse than humble guiltiness.

6. There are likewise some others who are guilty to themselves of damnable sins, yet hope to be saved by the goodness of other men, by pardons from the Pope, by absolutions of priests, and by certain penitential external acts of their own, and by good works, such as alms, &c. These, if they may hope of the Pope's indulgences, and a priest's absolution, if they fulfil their penance enjoined, if they are devout in certain superstitions, in their will-worship and voluntary religion, Col. ii. 18, their conscience is quiet for a time, notwithstanding their foul and black sins, even their abominable idolatries.

I make known to these, that all this is but a blind-folding, smothering, and stupefying the conscience for a time, laying a double, and a far greater guilt upon it, and is far from being any means truly to pacify it. For how can a man have true peace from any, or from all such actions as are in themselves an actual denying of the true head of the church, Jesus Christ, Col. ii. 19, and are a cleaving to a false head, which is antichrist? And how can any man merit for himself, when our Saviour saith, Luke xvii. 10, He who has done all that is commanded, is an unprofitable servant, and has done but his duty, which thing he must say and acknowledge? All these before-mentioned build their hopes upon false grounds. Those that follow build their presumptuous and false hopes upon a misapplication of true grounds.

7. Many acknowledge that they have sinned and do deserve eternal damnation; but they say God is merciful, therefore their heart is quiet, without all fear of condemnation.

It is true, that God is most merciful; but how? Know, he is not necessarily merciful, as if he could not choose but show it to all men. He is voluntarily merciful, showing mercy only to those unto whom he will show mercy, Rom. ix. 18. God could and did hate, and in his justice condemned Esau, Rom. ix. 13, notwithstanding his love and mercy to Jacob. God is all justice, as well as all mercy; but he has his several objects of justice and mercy, and has his several vessels of wrath and mercy, Rom. ix. 22, 23, into which respectively he does pour his wrath or mercy. When God speaks of obstinate sinners, he says, That he will not be merciful to their iniquities, Isa. xxvii. 11; and again, He that made them will not have mercy on them. And David prays with a prophetic spirit, saying to God, Be not merciful to wicked transgressors, Psa. lix. 5; and who are these, but such as hate to be reformed, Psa. l. 17, 22, who are presumptuous, and turn the grace of God into wantonness, Jude 4? Nay, concerning them that always err in their heart, he has in effect sworn that he will show them no mercy; for he has sworn that they shall not enter into his rest, Heb. iii. 10, 11.

8. Some others go further; they acknowledge that God's justice must be satisfied, and they think it is satisfied for them, dreaming of universal redemption, by Christ, who indeed is said to die to take away the sins of the world, John i. 29. This causes their conscience to be quiet, notwithstanding that they live in sin.

It must be granted, that Christ gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii. 6. This ransom may be called general, and for all, in some sense: but how? namely, in respect of the common nature of man, which he took, and of the common cause of mankind, which he undertook; and in itself it was of sufficient price to redeem all men; and because applicable to all, without exception, by the preaching and ministry of the gospel. And it was so intended by Christ, that the plaster should be as large as the sore, and that there should be no defect in the remedy, that is, in the price, or sacrifice of himself offered upon the cross, by

which man should be saved, but that all men, and each particular man, might in that respect become salvable by Christ.

Yet does not the salvation of all men necessarily follow hereupon; nor must any part of the price which Christ paid, be held to be superfluous, though many be not saved by it.

But know, that the application of the remedy, and the actual fruit of this all-sufficient ransom, redounds to those who are saved only by that way and means which God was pleased to appoint, which in the case of adults, is faith, John iii. 16, i. 12, by which Christ is actually applied. Which condition, many, to whom the gospel does come, make impossible to themselves, through a wilful refusal of the gospel, and salvation itself by Christ, upon those terms which God does offer it.

Upon this sufficiency of Christ's ransom, and intention of God and Christ, that it should be sufficient to save all, is founded that general offer of Christ to all and to each particular person, to whom the Lord shall be pleased to reveal the gospel, Matt. xvi. 15, xxviii. 19; likewise that universal precept of the gospel, commanding every man to repent, and believe in Christ Jesus, Matt. iii. 2, 7, 8; Mark i. 15; Acts xvii. 30; as also the universal promise of salvation, made to every one that shall believe in Christ Jesus, John iii. 16.

Although, in one sense, it is true, Christ may be said to have died for all, yet let no one think to enjoy the benefits of his precious death and sacrifice, without serious diligence to make their calling and election sure. For God did intend this all-sufficient price for all, otherwise to his elect in Christ, than to those whom he passed by and did not elect; for he intended this not only out of a general and common love to mankind, but out of a peculiar love to his elect. He gave not Christ equally and alike to save all; and Christ did not so lay down his life for the reprobate as for the elect. Christ so died for all, that his death might be applicable to all. He so died for the elect,

that his death might be actually applied unto them. He so died for all, that they might have an object of faith, and that if they should believe in Christ, they might be saved. But he so died for the elect that they might actually believe, and be saved. Hence it is that Christ's death becomes effectual to them, and not to the other, though sufficient for all. Now that many believe not, they having the means of faith, the fault is in themselves, Matt. xiii. 14, 15; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Isa. vi. 9; through their wilfulness or negligence; but that any believe to salvation, is of God's grace, Matt. xiii. 11, attending his election, Acts xiii. 48, and Christ's dying out of his especial love for them; and not of the power of man's free-will: God sending his gospel, and giving the grace of faith and new obedience to those whom of his free grace he has ordained to eternal life, both where he pleases and when he pleases, John iii. 8.

Furthermore, it must be considered that notwithstanding the all-sufficiency of Christ's death, whereby the new covenant of grace is ratified and confirmed, the covenant is not absolute, but conditional. Now what God proposes conditionally, no man must take absolutely. For God has not said that all men without exception shall be saved by Christ's death: although he saith, Christ died for all; but salvation is promised to those only who repent and believe, Mark i. 15, xvi. 6.

Wherefore, notwithstanding Christ's infinite merit, whereby he satisfied for mankind; and notwithstanding the universality of the offer of salvation to all to whom the gospel is preached; both Scripture and experience show, that not all, nor yet the most, shall be saved, and that because the number of them who repent, and unfeignedly believe, whereby they make particular and actual application of Christ and his merits to themselves, are fewest. For of those many that are called, few are chosen, Matt. xx. 16. Wherefore let none ignorantly dream of an absolute, universal redemption, as many simple people do. For though Christ be said to suffer to take away the sins of the

whole world, John i. 29; 1 John ii. 2; yet the Scripture saith, that the whole world of unbelievers and of ungodly men shall perish eternally, 2 Peter ii. 5; Jude 14, 15.

9. Many will yield that they must have faith and repentance, and that they must be ingrafted into Christ and become new creatures else they cannot hope to be saved; but they think they are all this already; whence follows quiet of conscience. Whereas when it comes to the trial, their faith and repentance are found not to be sound. As will thus appear:

They think they have faith, (1.) Because they believe the whole Scripture to be the good word of God. (2.) They believe not only that there is a God, but that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, yea, according to the letter, they believe all the articles of the Christian faith. (3.) They think they are believers, because they have been baptized, and have given their names unto Christ. They profess the only true religion, they have the very true form of godliness in all the external exercises of religion, Luke xiii. 26. Whereas if they believe no more, nor better, they may know that their faith is only an historical and general faith, or only a temporary faith at the best, necessary indeed to salvation, but not sufficient to save. The devils believe as much as the first, James ii. 29, and very hypocrites may, and do profess and do as much as the second and third. The apostle Paul, having to do with hypocritical Jews, who because of their form of knowledge, and profession, though without practice, did nourish in themselves a vain persuasion that they should be saved; removed this false ground of their hope, thus, saying, He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but that which is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God, Rom. ii. 28, 29. In like manner, Peter assures all Christians, that the baptism, which is only a putting away of the filth of the flesh, does not save, 1 Peter iii. 21; but that baptism

which gives proof that the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, as well as the body washed with pure water, Heb. x. 22, showing itself by the answer which a good conscience makes in believing the truth, 1 Peter iii. 21, consenting unto, and embracing the new covenant, whereof baptism is a seal, of which anciently men of years made profession when they were baptized. Neither is it any thing worth, to have the form of godliness in profession, when the power thereof is denied by an evil conversation, 2 Tim. iii. 5. For however such as these are most apt to claim an interest in Christ, Luke xiii. 26, yet so long as their faith is not a particular faith, drawing with it affiance, and sole reliance on Christ for salvation, declaring its truth and life by endeavouring to perform the new covenant on their part, by new obedience, in all manner of good works; our Saviour professes that he knows them not, but bids them depart from him, because they were workers of iniquity, Luke xiii. 27.

But many of these presume further, that their faith is a lively and saving faith, because, as they think, they have repented, and are become new creatures. And all because they had such enlightening as by nature man cannot attain unto; nay, the word has affected them much, and somewhat altered them from what they were, namely, (1.) When they were hearing a sermon, or when God's rod was over them, they have mourned, wept, and showed some kind of humiliation. (2.) At the hearing of God's precious promises in the gospel, in the glad tidings of salvation, they have felt a taste of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come. And (3.) They find that they do not commit many of those sins which they were used to commit; and that they do many good duties towards God and man, which they were used not to do.

But what of all this? These men, as near as they come, yet going no further, are far from salvation. For the common gifts of God's Spirit, given unto men in the ministry of the gospel, may elevate a man higher, and carry him further towards heaven, than

nature, art, or mere human industry can do ; and yet if the saving graces of the same Spirit be not added, he will be left far short of heaven. Mere oratory in some pathetic preachers, when they speak of matters doleful and terrible, will move the affections, and draw tears from some hearers. Likewise a plain, powerful conviction of the certainty of God's wrath denounced, and sense of some just judgment of God, may bring forth some tears, some humiliation, yea some kind of reformation. Did not Felix tremble, when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come? Acts xxiv. 25. Did not Ahab humble himself, when the prophet denounced God's judgments against him and against his house? 1 Kings xxi. 21, 27, 29. Did not the Israelites oft, when they were in distress, and when God did not only warn them with his word, but smote them with his rod, return and seek early after God? Psa. lxxviii. 34.

And whereas they say, they have tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; they may know, that such is the sweetness of God's promises, and such is the evidence and goodness of God's truth in the glad tidings of salvation, that, the common gift of the Spirit going with it, all the fore-mentioned feelings may be wrought in men altogether destitute of saving grace. For did not the seed sown in stony and thorny ground go thus far? Matt. xiii. 20—22. Did not those mentioned in the Hebrews, who notwithstanding all this might fall away irrecoverably, attain to thus much? Heb. vi. 4—6.

Now if men not in a state of grace may go so far, as has been proved, then it must not be marvelled that éven such, with Herod, may also reform many things, Mark vi. 20.

Besides, they mistake, when they say, they are changed and reformed, if still they retain any bosom and beloved sin, as Herod did. To change sins, one sin into another, is no change of the man, for he changes the prodigality of his youth into covetousness in old age, remaining a notorious sinner before God

as well now, as then; judge the like of all other; likewise to forbear the act of any sin, because they have not the like power, occasions, temptations, or means, to commit sin as in former time, this is no change: sin in these respects has left them, not they it.

For true conversion and repentance does consist of a true and thorough change of the whole man, whereby not only some actions are changed, but first and chiefly the whole frame and disposition of the heart is changed and set aright towards God, from evil to good, as well as from darkness to light, Eph. iv. 22—24; Rom. xii. 2. And whereas man is naturally earthly-minded, and makes himself his utmost end; so that either he only minds earthly things, or if he mind heavenly things, it is in an earthly manner, and to an earthly end, as did Jehu, 2 Kings x, if this man have truly repented, and be indeed converted, he becomes heavenly-minded, Col. iii. 1, 2, he makes God and his glory his chief and highest end; insomuch that when he has cause to mind earthly things, his will and desire is to mind them in an heavenly manner, and to an heavenly end. If you would judge more fully and clearly of this true change, see at large the description, and signs of uprightness, before delivered, chap. xi. page 153, et seq.

Last of all, there are many who presume, that although as yet they have no saving faith in Christ, nor sound repentance, God will give them space and grace to repent and believe before they die. Whence it is they have peace for the present.

These must give me leave to tell them, that they put themselves upon a desperate hazard and adventure.

1. Who can promise unto himself one minute of time more than the present, since every man's breath is in his nostrils, ready to expire every moment? Besides, the Spirit saith, God does bring wicked men to desolation as in a moment, Psa. lxxiii. 19. And again, He that being often warned, hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed without remedy, Prov. xxix. 1.

2. Suppose they may have time, yet whether they

shall have grace to believe and repent, is much to be doubted.

For the longer repentance is delayed, the heart is more hardened, and indisposed to repentance, through the deceitfulness of sin, Heb. iii. 12, 13, 15, 19. And it is a judgment of God upon such, as are not led to repentance by the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, that he should leave them to their impenitent hearts, that cannot repent; so treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 6. Custom in sin does so root and habituate it in man, that it will be as hard for him by his own will and power to repent hereafter, he neglecting God's present call and offer of grace, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, Jer. xiii. 23.

It cannot be denied, but that God is free, and if he please, may open a door of hope and gate of mercy unto the most obstinate sinner, who has deferred his repentance to his old age, Hosea ii, 15; wherefore, if such an one find his heart to be broken with remorse for his former sins, and is troubled in conscience for this his sin of not accepting of God's grace when it was offered; I wish him to humble himself before God, and entertain hope. For God has promised pardon to the penitent, whensoever they repent, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. And though no man can repent when he will, yet such an one may hope that God is now giving him repentance, in that he has touched his heart, and made it to be burdened with sin.

Yet for all this hope which I give to such a man, know, that it is very seldom to be found, that those who continued to despise grace until old age, did ever repent: but God left them justly to perish in their impenitency, because they despised the means of grace, and the season in which he did call them to repentance, and offered to them his grace, whereby they might repent. God deals with all sinners usually, as he said he would do, and as he did to Judah: Because I would have purged thee, said he, that is, I took the only course to purge thee, and bring thee to repentance,

and thou wast not purged, therefore thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest on thee, Ezek. xxiv. 13.

Thus I have endeavoured to discover and remove the false grounds, and misapplication of true grounds, whereby the conscience is deluded, and brought into a dangerous and false peace.

To conclude, he that would not be deceived with a false peace instead of a true, must beware of obstinacy, delight in, and senselessness of sin. For this sears the conscience as with a hot iron, 1 Tim. iv. 2. Now a seared conscience is quiet with a false peace; not because there is no danger, but because it does not feel it. Great care must be taken therefore, lest the conscience be seared, being made senseless and hard; for then it does altogether, or for the most part, forbear to check or accuse for sin, be it never so heinous.

This searedness is caused by a wilful customary living in any sin; but especially by living in any gross sin, or in the allowance of, and delight in any known sin; also by allowed hypocrisy, and dissimulation in any thing, 1 Tim. iv. 2, and by doing any thing contrary to the clear light of nature, planted in a man's own head or heart, Rom. i. 27; Jude 10; Eph. iv. 18, 19; or contrary to the clear light of grace, shining in the motions of the Spirit, in the checks of conscience, and in the instructions of the word, Heb. x. 26.

Keep therefore the conscience tender by all means; (1.) By hearkening readily to the voice of the word; (2.) By a careful survey of your ways daily. (3.) By keeping the conscience soft with godly sorrow for sin. (4.) By hearkening to the voice of conscience admonishing and checking for sin.

Either of these three kinds of conscience, viz. the blind, presumptuous, and seared conscience, will admit of a kind of peace, or truce rather, for a while, while it sleeps; but what God said of Cain's sin, must be conceived of all sin: If thou dost not well, sin lies at the door, Gen. iv. 7. And upon what terms soever it lies still, and troubles not the conscience for a time, yet it will awake in its time, and then by as much as

it did admit of some peace and quiet, it will grow more turbulent, mad, and furious; and, if God give not repentance, this false peace ends for the most part either in a reprobate mind, Rom. i. 21—29, or a desperate end, Matt. xxvii. 5, even in this life, besides the hellish horrors in that which is to come.

Now to the end that no man should quiet his heart in this false and dangerous peace, whether it proceed from the aforementioned causes, or any other; I would advise him to try his peace, whether it be not false, by these infallible marks:

1. Is any man at peace with God's enemies, allowing himself in the love of those things or persons which hate God and which are hated of God, such as are the world and the things of the world, whereby he denies the power of godliness: delighting in any evil company, or living in any wilful or gross sin, as vain or false swearing, open profanation of the sabbath, malice, adultery, theft, lying, or in any of those mentioned, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, or in any known sin with allowance? The Holy Ghost saith of such, that the love of God is not in them, therefore the peace of God is not in them, 1 John ii. 15; and whosoever makes himself a friend to his lusts and to the world, makes himself an enemy of God, James iv. 4. If any man be at peace with the flesh, the world, and the devil, he is not at true peace with God, nor God with him. If any such expect peace, and should ask, Is it peace? answer may be made like to that which Jehu made, What have you to do with peace? What peace, so long as your notorious sins and rebellions, wherein you delight, are so many? 2 Kings ix. 19, 22. For he that cares not to keep a good conscience towards God and towards men, cannot have true peace of conscience, Heb. xiii. 18. For there is no true peace but in a good conscience.

2. Is any man not at peace, but at war rather, with God's friends, and with the things which God loves; being out of love with spiritual and devout prayer, hearing the word, the company of God's people, and the like? If any man despise the things that God

commands and loves, certainly, God and he are not reconciled, 2 Tim. iii. 5; and whatsoever his form of godliness be, God esteems him to be yet in a state of perdition. For whosoever saith he knows God, but yet loves not, and keeps not his commandments, he is a liar, 1 John ii. 4. And if any man love not his brother, whatsoever show of peace and friendship is between God and him, I am sure God saith, He that does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother, 1 John iii. 10; he is a child of the devil, and therefore has no true peace with God.

3. He whose quiet of heart and conscience is from false peace, is willing to take it for granted, that his peace is sound and good; and cannot abide to look into, or to inquire into his peace, to try whether it be true, or whether it be false or no; being, as it seems, afraid lest stirring the mud and filth that lies in the bottom of his heart, he should disquiet it. And for this cause it is that such an one cannot endure a searching ministry, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16; Acts vii. 54. nor will like that minister who will dive into the conscience, by laying the heart and conscience open to the light and purity of God's word.

Thus I have showed you what is a first and chief impediment to be removed, viz. presumption and false hope, if you would have true peace; for false hopes breed only false peace.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCERNING FALSE FEARS.

THE second head to which I reduced impediments to true peace, is false fear; for if you doubt, fear, or despair of your estate without cause, it will much disturb and hinder your peace.

SECT. 1. OF NEEDFUL HOLY FEAR.

THERE is an holy fear and despair wrought in man, when God first convinces his heart and conscience of sin; whereupon, through sense of God's wrath and heavy displeasure, together with a sense of his own disability in himself to satisfy and appease God's wrath, he is in great perplexity; being out of all hopes to obtain God's favour, or to escape the vengeance of hell by any thing which he of himself can do or procure. This is wrought more or less in every man of years before conversion, as in those which were pricked to the heart at Peter's sermon, Acts ii. 37, and in Paul himself, Acts ix. 9, and in the jailor, Acts xvi. 29. This is a good necessary fear, serving to prepare a man to his conversion. For in God's order of working, he first sends the spirit of bondage to fear, before he sends the spirit of adoption to enable a man to cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15. This fear, and trouble of conscience arising from it, is good; and makes way to true peace.

Moreover, after that a man is converted, though he have no cause to fear damnation, yet he has much matter of fear, for as much as he is yet subject unto many evils both of sin and pain; as, lest he offend God, and cause his angry countenance, and his judgments; also, lest he should fall back from some degrees of grace received, and lest he fall into some dangerous sin, and so lose his evidence of heaven, and comforts of the Spirit. Wherefore we are commanded to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. ii. 12, and to pass the whole time of our sojourning here in fear, 1 Peter i. 17.

This fear, while it keeps due measure, causes a man to be circumspect and watchful lest he fall; it excites him to repent, and quickens him to ask pardon and grace to recover, when he is fallen; yea, is an excellent means to prevent trouble, and to procure peace of conscience. But the fear of which I am to

speaking, and which, because it disturbs true peace, is to be removed, is a groundless and causeless fear that a man is not in a state of grace, although he has yielded himself to Christ, by true faith and conversion; and has not only given good hope to others, but, if he would see it, has cause to conceive good hope that he is indeed in the state of grace.

SECT. 2. OF CAUSELESS FEAR, AND THE SPRINGS THEREOF.

THIS fear may arise either from natural distempers, Satan joining with them; or from spiritual temptations, arising from causeless doubts.

(1.) Of fears which arise from natural distempers.

By natural distempers, I mean a disposition to frenzy or melancholy, in which states of body the spirits are corrupted through superabundance of choler and melancholy, whereby first the brain, where all notions of things are framed, is distempered, and the power of imagination corrupted, whence arise strange fancies, doubts, and fearful thoughts. Then, secondly, by reason of the intercourse of the spirits between the head and the heart, the heart is distempered and filled with grief, despair, and horror, through manifold fears of danger, yea, of damnation, especially when Satan concurs with those humours, which as he easily can, so he readily will do, if God permit.

Where there is trouble of this sort, it usually brings forth strange and violent effects, both in body and mind, and that in him who is regenerate, as well as in him that is unregenerate. Yea, so far, that, which is fearful to think, even those who, when they were fully themselves, did truly fear God, have, in the fits of their distemper, through impotency of their use of reason, and through the devil's forcible instigation, had thoughts, and attempts of laying violent hands upon themselves and others, and when they have not well known what they have done or said, have been heard to break out into oaths, cursing, and other evil speeches, who were never heard to do the like before.

These troubles may be known from true trouble of conscience, by the strangeness, unreasonableness, and senselessness of their conceits in other things; as to think that they have no heart, and to say they cannot do that which indeed they do, and a thousand other odd conceits, which standers-by see to be most false. Whereby any man may see that the root of this disturbance is in the fancy, and not in the heart.

Although both the regenerate and unregenerate, according as they are in a like degree distempered, are in most things alike; yet in this they differ; some beams of holiness will glance forth now and then in the regenerate, which do not in the unregenerate. especially in the intermission of their fits. Their desires will be found to be different, and if they both recover, the one returns to his usual course of holiness with increase: the other, except God work with the affliction to conversion, continues in his accustomed wickedness. It pleases God, that for the most part his own children who are thus distempered, have the strength of their melancholy worn out and subdued before they die, at which time they have some sense of God's favour to their comfort; but if their disease continue, it is possible they may die lunatics, and, if you judge by their speeches, despairing, which is not to be imputed unto them, but to their disease, or unto Satan, working by the disease; if they have given good testimony of holiness in former times.

When these troubles are merely from bodily distempers, though they be not troubles of conscience, yet they make a man incapable of the sense of peace of conscience. Therefore, whosoever would enjoy the benefit of the peace of his conscience, must do what in him lies, to prevent or remove these distempers. And because they grow for the most part from natural causes, therefore natural as well as spiritual remedies must be used.

1. Take heed of all such things as feed those humours of choler and melancholy, which must be learned of experienced men, and of skilful physicians, and, when need is, take physic.

2 Avoid all unnecessary solitude, and, as much as may be, keep company with such as truly fear God, especially with those who are wise, full of cheerfulness and joy in the Lord.

3. Forbear all such things as stir up these humours; as, over much study, and musing too much upon any thing, likewise all sudden and violent passions of anger, immoderate grief, &c.

4. Shun idleness, and, according to strength and means, be fully employed in some lawful business.

5. Out of the fit, the party thus affected must not oppress his heart with fear of falling into it again, any otherwise than to quicken him to prayer, and to cause him to cast himself upon God.

6. Out of the fits, and in them also, if the party distempered be capable, spiritual counsel is to be given out of the word, wisely, according as the party is fit for it, whether to humble him, if he has not been sufficiently humbled, or to build him up and comfort him, if he be already humbled.

7. Lastly, Remember always that when the troubled person is himself, he be moved to prayer, and that others then pray much with him, and at all times pray much for him.

When these troubles are mixed, coming partly from natural distemper, and partly from spiritual temptation, then the remedy must be mixed of helps natural and spiritual. What the natural helps are, has been shown, also what the spiritual in general, and shall be shown more particularly, in removing false fears arising from spiritual temptations.

The fears which rise for the most part from distemper of body, may be known from those which for the most part, or only, rise from the spiritual temptation, thus: When the first sort are clearly resolved of their doubts, and brought unto some good degree of cheerfulness and comfort, they will yet, it may be, within a day or two, sometimes within an hour or two, upon every slight occasion and discouragement, return to their old complaints, and will need the same means to recover them again. But those whose

trouble is merely out of spiritual temptation and trouble of conscience, although for the time it be very grievous, and hardly removed, and sometimes long before they receive a satisfying answer to their doubts; yet when once they receive satisfaction and comfort, it does hold and last until there fall out some new temptation, and new matter of fear. This is because their fancies and memories are not disturbed in such a manner as the others' are.

The seeming grounds of fears that a man is not in a state of grace, when yet he is, are for variety almost infinite. I have reduced them into this order, and unto these heads.

First, They who are taken with false fears, think their sins to be greater than can be pardoned.

Secondly, When they are driven from that, they say they fear God will not pardon. When they are driven from this, by causing them to take notice of the signs of God's actual love to them, which give proof that he will save them, then,

Thirdly, They will question the truth of God's love and favour. But being put upon the trial whether God has not already justified them, and given them faith in Christ, which are sufficient proofs of his love; then,

Fourthly, They will seem to have grounds to doubt whether they have faith, from which they are driven, by putting them to the trial of their sanctification; then,

Fifthly, They doubt, and will object strongly that they are not sanctified, which being undeniably proved: then,

Sixthly and lastly, They fear they shall fall away, and not persevere to the end. Which fear being taken away also, and all is come to this good issue, they shall have no cause of disquiet or fear.

This is the easiest, most familiar, and the most natural method, so far as I can judge, both in proposing, and in removing false fears.

(2.) Of fears which arise from thoughts of the greatness of punishment and sin.

First, Some in their fits of despair, speak almost in Cain's words, saying, that their punishment, which they partly feel, and which they most of all fear, is greater than they can bear, or than can be forgiven, Gen. iv. 14.

I answer such: If sense and fear of wrath and punishment be your trouble, I would have you not to busy your thoughts about the punishment; but fix them upon your sins, which are the only cause of punishment; for get deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and in one and the same work you free yourself from the punishment. Labour therefore that your heart may bleed with godly sorrow for sin, cry out, as David did against his sin, Psa. li. 4, 5, so do you against yours, confess them to God, strike at the root of sin, at the sin of your nature, wherein you were conceived, aggravate your actual sins, hide none, spare none, find out, arraign, accuse, condemn your sins, and yourself for them, grow first into an utter detestation of your sins, which have brought present punishment, and a sense and fear of the eternal vengeance of hell-fire; then likewise grow into a dislike with yourself for sin, loath yourself in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Now when you are as a prisoner at the bar, who has received sentence of condemnation, when you are in your own apprehension a damned wretch, fearing every day to be executed; O, then it concerns you, and it is your part and duty to turn to God, the king of kings, whose name and nature is to forgive iniquity, transgression, and sins; and, that you may be accepted, go to him by Jesus Christ, whose office is to take away your sins, and to present you without sin to his Father; whose office is also to procure and sue out your pardon. Wherefore in Christ's name pray, and ask pardon of God, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, and withal be as earnest in asking grace and power against your sin, that you may serve him in all well pleasing. Do this, as for your life, with all truth and earnestness; then you may, nay, ought to believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned your

sin, and has done away the punishment thereof. For this is according to the word of truth, even as true as God is, who has commanded you to do thus, and to believe in him.

But some will reply, this putting me into a consideration of my sins, breeds all my distress and fear, for I find them greater and more than can be pardoned.

O! say not so; for you can hardly commit a greater sin than indeed to think and to say so. It is blasphemy against God; yet this sin, if you will follow God's counsel, and all others, may, and shall be pardoned. I intend not to extenuate and lessen you sin: but you must give me leave to magnify God's truth and mercy, and to extol Christ's love and merit. However, it is true, that because sin is a transgression of a law of infinite holiness and equity; and, in respect of the evil disposition of the heart, is of infinite intention, and would perpetuate itself infinitely, if it had time and means; and because God, the person against whom sin is committed, is infinite; therefore sin must needs contract an infinite guilt, and deserve infinite punishment.

Secondly, Consider that the price to satisfy God's justice, namely, the death of Christ, the only begotten Son of God, does exceed all sin in infiniteness of satisfaction of God's justice and wrath due for sin. For if Christ's death be a sufficient ransom for the sins of all God's elect in general; then much more of thine in particular, whosoever thou be, and how great, and how many sins soever thou hast committed.

Thirdly, Know that the mercy of God, the forgiver of sin, is absolutely and every way infinite. For mercy in God is not a quality, but is his very nature, as is clear by the description of his name, proclaimed, *Exod. xxxiv. 6*, which rightly understood and believed, removes all the objections which a fearful heart can make against itself, from the consideration of his sins.

1. He is merciful, that is, he is compassionate, and to speak after the manner of man, is one that has bowels of pity, which yearn within him at the behold-

ing of thy miseries, not willing to punish and put thee to pain, but ready to succour and do thee good.

But I am so vile and so ill-deserving, that there is nothing in me to move him to pity me, and do me good!

2. He is gracious; whom he loves, he loves freely, of his own gracious disposition, Hosea xiv. 4; I, even I, am he that blots out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins, Isa. xliii. 25. And when God saith he would sprinkle clean water upon sinners, and that he would give them a new heart, &c. not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 32. That you should be sensible of your own misery, and then, in the sense thereof, that God may be inquired after, and sought unto for mercy, is all which he expects from you to move him to pity and mercy, Ezek. xxxvi. 37; and such is his graciousness, that he will work this sense and this desire in you, that he may have mercy.

But I have a long time provoked him!

3. He is long-suffering towards you, not willing that you should perish, but that you should come to repentance, 2 Peter iii. 9, 15; he waits still for your repentance and reformation, that you may be saved.

Yea, but I am destitute of all goodness and grace to turn unto him, or do any thing that may please him!

4. He is abundant in goodness and kindness; he that has been abundant towards others heretofore in giving them grace, and making them good, his store is not diminished, but he has all grace and goodness to communicate to you also, and to make you good.

Yea, but I fear, though God can, yet God will not forgive me, and give me grace!

5. He is abundant in truth; not only the goodness of his gracious disposition makes him willing, but the abundance of his truth binds him to be willing, and does give sufficient proof unto you that he is willing. He has made sure promises to take away your sin, and to forgive it; and not yours only, but reserves mercy for thousands. Believe therefore that God both can and will forgive you.

Yea, but my sins are such and such; innumerable heinous, and most abominable. I am guilty of sins of all sorts!

6. He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin. He is the God that will subdue all your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the bottom of the sea, Micah vii. 19.

Yea, but I renew my sins daily!

7. I answer out of the Psalm—His mercy is an everlasting mercy, his mercy endures for ever, Psa. cxviii. 1; he bids you to ask forgiveness of sin daily, Matt. vi. 11; therefore he can and will forgive sin daily; yea, if you sin seventy times seven in a day, Luke xvii. 4; Matt. xviii. 22; and shall confess it to God with a penitent heart, he will forgive; for he that bids you be so merciful to your brother, will himself forgive much more, when you seek unto him.

But I have not only committed open and gross sins, both before and since I had knowledge of God; but I have been a very hypocrite, making profession of God, and yet daily committing grievous sins against him!

8. What then? Will you say your sins are unpardonable? God forbid. But say, I will follow the counsel which God gave to such abominable hypocrites. Wash ye, make you clean, Isa. i. 16. I will, by God's grace, wash my heart from iniquity, and my hands from wickedness, Jer. iv. 14, by washing myself in the laver of regeneration, bathing myself in Christ's blood, and in the pure water of the word of truth, applying myself to them, and them to me by faith. Say in this case I will hear what God will speak, Psa. lxxxv. 8. And know, that if you will follow his counsel, if you will hearken to his reasoning, and embrace his gracious offer made to you in Christ Jesus, the issue will be this, though your sins have been most gross, double dyed, even as crimson and scarlet; they shall be as wool, even white as snow, Isa. i. 18. God will then speak peace unto you, as unto others of his saints; only he will forbid you to return to folly.

For not only those who committed gross sins through ignorance before their conversion, as did Abraham in idolatry, and Paul in persecuting; nor yet only those who committed gross sins through infirmity after their conversion, as did Noah by drunkenness, Gen. ix. 21, and Lot by incest also, Gen. xix. 33, and Peter by denying and forswearing his master Jesus Christ, Matt. xxvi. 47, obtained mercy, because they sinned ignorantly and of infirmity; but also those that sinned against knowledge and conscience, both before and after conversion; sinning with a high hand as Manasses before, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6, 10, 12, 15, and in the matter of Uriah, 1 Kings xv. 5, David after conversion, they obtained like mercy, and had all their sins forgiven. Why are these examples recorded in Scripture, but for patterns to sinners, yea to most notorious sinners of all sorts, who should in after-times believe in Christ Jesus unto eternal life? 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

Be willing therefore to be beholden to God for forgiveness, and believe in Christ for forgiveness, which when you do, you may be assured that you never yet committed any sin which is not, and which shall not be forgiven.

For was it not the end, why Christ came into the world, that he might save sinners, yea, the chief of sinners, as well as others? 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. Was he not wounded for transgressions, viz., of all sorts? Isa. liii. 5. Is not the end of his coming in his gospel to call sinners to repentance? Luke v. 32. What sinners does he mean there, but such as you are, who are laden and burdened with your sin? Does he not say, If any man sin, observe, if any man, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous? 1 John ii. 1. Who by being made a curse for you, has redeemed you from the curse of the whole law, Gal. iii. 13; therefore from the curse due unto you for your greatest sin.

However, it is impossible for a notorious sinner, yea, for any sinner, by his own power or worth, to enter into the kingdom of heaven; yet know, what is

impossible with man, is possible with God, Matt. xix. 26. Is any thing too hard for the Lord, Gen. xviii. 14. He can alter and renew you, and give you faith and repentance; he can make these things possible to you that believe; yea, all things are possible to him that believes, Mark ix. 23.

Yes, you will say, If I did believe. Why, what if you do not believe? It is not hard with him, if you come to his means of faith, if you hearken to the precepts and promises of the word, and consider that the God of truth speaks in them; I say, it is not hard for him, in the use of these means, to cause you to believe.

Wherefore neither greatness of sin, nor multitude of sins should, because of their greatness and multitude make you utterly despair of salvation, or fear damnation; when once you can believe, or but will and desire to obey and believe, Isa. i. 19, the great cause of fear is past.

I know if you never had sinned, you would not fear damnation. Now to a man whose sins are remitted, his sins, though sin dwell in him, Rom. vii. 20, are as if they were not, or never had been. For they are blotted out of God's remembrance. I, even I am he, saith God, that blots out thy transgressions, for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins, Isa. xliii. 25. And who is like thee, saith the prophet, that pardons iniquities, &c.; he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea, Micah vii. 18, 19. A debt when it is paid by the surety, puts the principal out of debt, though he paid never a penny of it himself. The Holy Ghost speaks most comfortably, saying, that God finds no sin in them whose sins are pardoned, Rev. xiv. 5. In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; but how may this be? He gives the reason, for I will pardon them whom I reserve, Jer. l. 20.

If you believe that God can pardon any sin, even the least, you have like reason to believe that God can

pardon all, yea, the greatest; for if God can do any thing, he can do every thing, because he is infinite. He can as easily say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, all thy sins are forgiven thee, as to say, Rise and walk, Matt. ix. 5. He can as well save one that has been long dead, rotten, and stinking in his sin, as one newly fallen into sin. For he can as easily say, Lazarus, come forth, John xi. 43, as, Damsel, I say to thee, arise, Mark v. 41.

Lastly, To make an end of removing this fear, I ask thee, who art troubled with the greatness of thy sins past, and with fear that they can never be pardoned, How stand you affected to present sins? Do you hate and loath them? Do you use what means you can to be free from them? Are you out of love with yourself, and humbled because you have indulged them to God's dishonour, and your own hurt? And do you resolve through faith in Christ Jesus, to return from your evil ways, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22, and to enter upon a holy course of life, if God shall please to enable you; and is it your hearty desire to have this grace to be able? And are you afraid, and have you now a care lest you fall knowingly into sin; then, let Satan, and a fearful heart object what they can, you may say, though my sins have been great and heinous, for which I loath myself and am ashamed, yet now I see that they were not only pardonable, but are already, through the rich mercy of God, pardoned, Ezek. xxxvi. 25—33. For these are signs of a new heart and a new mind. Now to whomsoever God gives the least measure of saving grace, to them has he first given pardon of sin, and will yet abundantly pardon. For he saith, Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. lv. 7.

SECT. 3. FEARS CONCERNING NOT BEING ELECTED,
REMOVED.

THERE are others who make no doubt of God's power. They believe he can forgive them; but they fear, yea, strongly conclude, that he will not pardon them, and that because they are reprobates, as they say, for they see no signs of election, but much to the contrary.

I answer these thus. When your consciences are first wounded with a sense of God's wrath for sin, it is very like, that before you have believed and repented, you cannot discern any signs of God's favour, but of his anger; for as yet you are not actually in a state of grace, and in his favour. And oftentimes after the Christian does believe, though there be always matter enough to give proof of his election, yet he cannot always see it. If you be in either of these states, suppose the worst, yet you have no reason to conclude that you are reprobates.

It is true, that God, before the foundation of the world, fully determined with himself, whom to choose to salvation by grace, to which also he ordained them; and whom to pass by, and leave in their sins, for which he determined in his just wrath to condemn them. But who these be, is a secret, which even the elect themselves cannot know, until they be effectually called, nay, nor being called, until by some experience and proofs of their faith and holiness, they do understand the witness of the Spirit, which testifies to their spirits, that they are the children of God; and do make their calling and election, which was always sure in God, sure to themselves, 2 Peter i. 5, 10. But in point of reprobation, namely, that God has passed them by, to perish everlastingly in their wickedness, no man living can know it, except he know that he has sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, that unpardonable sin.

For God calls men at all ages and times, some in

their youth, some in their middle age, some in their old age; yea, some have been called at their last hour, Luke xxiii, 42, 43. Now let it be granted, that you cannot, by searching into yourselves, find the signs of effectual calling, which yet may be in you, though your dim eyes cannot perceive them; nay, suppose that you are not yet effectually called, here is no cause for you utterly to despair, and say, you are reprobates. How know you that God will not call you before you die?

It were a far wiser and better course for you, who will be thus hasty in judging yourselves to be reprobates, to busy yourselves first with other things. Acquaint yourselves with God's revealed will in his word. Learn to know what God has commanded you to do, and do that; also what he has threatened, and fear that; and what he has promised, and believe and rest on that. After you have done this, you may look into yourselves, and there you shall read your election written in golden and great letters.

For God never intended that the first lesson which a Christian should learn, should be the hardest, and highest that can be learned, taken out of the book of his eternal counsel and decree; and so to descend to the A. B. C. of Christianity; which were a course most perplexed and preposterous. But his will is, that his scholars and children should learn out of his written word here on earth, first, that God made all things. Gen. i. 31, and that he made man good, and that men, hearkening to Satan, found out evil devices, Eccles. vii. 29, and so fell from grace, and from God, and so both they, and the whole world that came of their loins, became liable to eternal damnation. Next, God would have you to learn, that he, in his infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy, thought of, and concluded a new covenant of grace, Gen. iii. 15; xvii. 1, 2, 11; Rom. iv. 11; Jer. xxxi. 31, 32; for the effecting whereof, he found out and appointed a way and means to pacify his wrath, by satisfying his justice, punishing sin in man's nature, by which he opened a way unto his mercy, to show it to whom he would; namely, He

gave his only Son, very God, to become very man, Phil. ii. 6—11, and being made a common person and surety in man's stead, died, and endured the punishment due to the sin of man, and rose again, and was exalted to sit at God's right hand to reign, having all authority committed unto him. Thus he made the new covenant of grace, established in his Son Jesus Christ; the tenor and condition whereof required on man's part is, that man accept of, and enter into this covenant, believing in Christ, in whom it is established; then, whosoever believeth in him, shall not die, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. This God did in his wisdom, justice, mercy, and love to man, that he himself might be just, and yet a justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus, Rom. iii. 26. And he has therefore given his word and sacraments, and has called, and has given gifts to his ministers, Eph. iv. 8, thereby to beget, and increase faith in men, by publishing this good news, and by commanding them, as in Christ's stead, in God's name, to believe, and to be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20, and to live no longer according to the will of their old masters, the devil, the world, and the flesh, under whom they were in cursed bondage; but according to the will of him that redeemed them, in holiness and righteousness, whose service is a perfect and blessed freedom.

Now when you have learned these lessons first, and by looking into yourselves can find faith and new obedience, 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 11, then by this your effectual calling, you may safely ascend to that high point of your predestination, which will give you comfort, through assurance that you shall never fall away.

When you observe this order in learning your election to life, it will not minister unto you matter of curious and dangerous dispute, either with God or man; but of high admiration, thanksgiving, and unspeakable comfort, causing you to cry out with the apostle, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, &c. Rom. xi. 33. And, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, who has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in his well beloved, &c. Eph. i. 3, 5, 6.

SECT. 4. OF FEARS CONCERNING THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

THERE are yet some, who having heard that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost, and that it is unpardonable, are full of fears that they have committed that sin, thence concluding that they are reprobates, for they say, that they have sinned wilfully against knowledge and conscience, since they received the knowledge of the truth, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God.

If you who thus object, have sinned against knowledge and conscience, you have much cause for humbling yourself before God; confessing it to him, asking pardon of him, and grace to believe and repent, both which you must endeavour by all means. Yet I see no cause why you should conclude so desperately, that you have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and are a reprobate. For as few in comparison, though too many, commit this sin, so few know what it is.

All sin against knowledge and conscience is not this sin, 1 Kings xv. 5; 2 Sam. xi. 4, 6, 10, 15, 25. Nor yet all wilful sinning. It is not any one sin against the law, nor yet the direct breach of the whole law, nor every malicious opposing of the gospel, Heb. x. 28, if it be of ignorance; neither is it every blasphemy, 1 Tim. i. 13, or persecution of the gospel, and of those that profess the truth, if these be done out of ignorance or passion; nor yet is it every apostasy, 2 Chron. xvi. 10; 1 Kings xi. 4—6; Heb. x. 28, 29, and falling into gross sins of divers sorts, though done against know-

ledge and conscience; yet this sin against the Holy Ghost, contains all these, and more. It is a sin against the gospel, and free offer and dispensation of grace and salvation by Christ, through the Spirit. Yet, it is not any particular sin against the gospel, nor yet a rejecting of the whole gospel, if in ignorance, Luke xxiii. 34; nor yet every denying of Christ, or sudden revolting from the outward profession of the gospel, when it is of infirmity, through fear, and such like temptation, Matt. xxvi. 69, 70, 74; neither is it called the sin against the Holy Ghost, and is unpardonable, because it is committed against the essence, or person of the Holy Ghost, for the essence of the three persons in the Trinity is all one; and the person of the Holy Ghost is not more excellent than the person of the Father and the Son; but it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, and becomes unpardonable, because it is against the office of the Holy Ghost, and against the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost, and therein against the whole blessed Trinity, all whose works, out of themselves, are consummate, and perfected in the work of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, know that it is unpardonable, not in respect of God's power, but in respect of his will; he having, in his holy wisdom, determined never to pardon it. And good reason why he should will not to pardon it, in respect of the kind of the sin, if you will observe it; it being a wilful and malicious refusing of pardon upon such terms as the gospel does offer it, scorning to be beholden unto God for it. You may perceive what it is, by this description:

The sin against the Holy Ghost is an utter, wilful, and spiteful rejection of the gospel of salvation by Christ, together with an advised and absolute falling away from the profession of it, so far, that, against former knowledge and conscience, Heb. vi. 4—6, a man does maliciously oppose and blaspheme the Spirit of Christ, in the word and ordinances of the gospel, and motions of the Spirit in them; having resisted, rejected, and utterly quenched all those common and more inward gifts and motions wrought upon their hearts and affections, which sometimes were enter-

tained by them; insomuch, that out of hatred of the Spirit of life in Christ, they crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God, and do put him, both in his ordinances of religion, and in his members, to open shame, treading under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; doing despite to the Spirit of grace, Heb. x. 26—29. If you carefully look into those places of the Scripture, which speak of this sin, and also observe the opposition which the apostle makes between sinning against the law, and sinning against the gospel, you will clearly find out the nature of this sin. Matt. xii. 24, 31, 32; Mark iii. 28—30; Luke xii. 10; Heb. vi. 4—6; x. 26—29.

But to resolve you out of this doubt, if you be not overcome with melancholy, for then you will answer you know not what, which is to be pitied rather than regarded, I would ask you, who think you have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, these questions: Does it grieve you, that you have committed it? Could you wish that you had not committed it? If it were to be committed, would you not forbear it, if you could choose? Should you esteem yourself beholden to God, if he would make you partaker of the blood and Spirit of his Son, thereby to pardon and purge your sin, and to give you grace to repent? Nay, are you troubled that you cannot bring your heart unto a sense of desire of pardon and grace? If you can say, Yea; then, although the sin or sins which trouble you, may be some fearful sin, of which you must be exhorted speedily to repent, yet certainly it is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; it is not that unpardonable sin, that sin unto death. For he who commits this sin cannot relent, neither will he be beholden to God for pardon and grace, by Christ's blood and Spirit; he cannot desire to repent: but he is given over, in God's just judgment, unto such a reprobacy of mind, deadness of conscience, and rebellion of will, and to such an height of hatred and malice, that he is so blasphemously and despitefully bent against the Spirit of holiness, Heb. x. 29, that it much

pleases him, rather than any way troubles him, that he has so maliciously and blasphemously rejected, or fallen from, persecuted, and spoken blasphemously against the good way of salvation by Christ, and against the gracious operations of the Spirit, and against the members of Christ; although he was once convinced clearly, that this is the only way of salvation, and that those graces and gifts were from God, and that they were the dear children of God, whom he now despises.

SECT. 5. OF FEARS ARISING FROM AN ACCUSING CONSCIENCE.

OTHERS, if not the same persons, object thus: God will certainly condemn, because John has said, If their hearts condemn them, God is greater than their hearts, 1 John iii. 20. Hence they infer, God will condemn them much more. For, they say, their hearts do condemn them.

There is a double judgment by the heart and conscience. It judges a man's state or person, whether he be in a state of grace, or no. Also, it judges a man's own particular actions, whether they be good or no. I take it, that this place of John is not to be understood of judging or condemning the person; for God in his final judgment does not judge according to what a man's weak and erroneous conscience judges, making it the rule of his judgment to condemn or absolve any. For many a man, in his presumption, justifies himself in his life, when yet God will condemn him in the world to come, Hosea xii. 8; Luke xviii. 11; and many a distressed soul, like the prodigal, Luke xv. 18, 19, and humble publican, Luke xviii. 13, 14, condemns himself, when yet God will absolve him. For a man may have peace with God, yet God, for reasons best known to his wisdom, does not presently speak peace to his conscience, as it was with David; in which case, man judges of his estate otherwise than God does.

This place, 1 John iii. 20, is to be understood of judging of particular actions, namely, whether a man love his brother, not in word and tongue only, but in deed and truth, according to the exhortation, 1 John iii. 18—22; which, if his conscience could testify for him, then it might assure his heart before God, and give it boldness to pray unto him, in confidence to receive whatsoever he did ask according to his will. But if his own conscience could condemn him of not loving his brother in deed and in truth; then God, who is greater than his heart, knowing all things, must needs condemn him therein much more. This is the full scope of the place. Yet this I must needs say, that the Holy Ghost has instanced in such an act, namely, of hearty loving the brethren, which is an infallible sign of being in a state of grace: whereby, except in case of extreme melancholy, or violent temptation, a man may judge, whether at present he be translated from death to life.

If any shall think the place to be understood of judging the person, he must distinguish between that judgment which the heart gives rightly, and that which it gives erroneously. But suppose that, you trying yourselves by this, your hearts do condemn you of not loving the brethren, can you conclude hence, that you shall be finally damned? God forbid. All that you can infer, is this; you cannot have boldness to pray unto him until you love them; nor can you assure yourselves that you will have your petitions granted. And the worst you can conclude is, that now for the present, you are not in a state of grace, or at least you want proof of being in a state of grace. You must then use all God's means of being ingrafted into Christ, and must love the children of God, that you may have proof thereof. Did Paul love the brethren, when he breathed out threatening, Acts viii. 3; and was, as he himself saith, Acts xxvi. 10, 11, mad against them? Was he at that time a reprobate? Acts ix. 15. Did he not afterwards, being converted, so love God's people, that he could be content to spend, and be spent himself, for them? 2 Cor. xii. 15. So,

many thousands, whose consciences for the present may justly condemn them of not loving those that are indeed God's children, may yet love them hereafter, as dearly as their own souls.

Some will yet say, Certainly we are reprobates: for we have, according to the command of the apostle, tried whether we be in the faith, or no; and whether Christ be in us; but we find neither: the apostle saith, We know these to be in us, else we are reprobates, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

By reprobate, in this place, is not meant one that is not elect; for none of the elect can before their conversion know, by any search, that they are in the faith, or that Christ is in them; for that cannot be known which yet is not. Many are not converted until they be thirty, forty, or fifty years old. Will you say, these in their younger years were reprobates? You may say, they then were in a state of condemnation, and children of wrath, but no reprobates. Besides, a man must not be said not to be in the faith, and not to have Christ in him, because he does not know so much. For many have faith and are in Christ, yet do not always know it.

The word reprobate, because it is ordinarily understood, by our common people, for a man ordained to condemnation, is too harsh.

The words now rendered "except ye be reprobates," may, as I judge, rather be translated thus: "except you be unapproved, or except you be without proof," namely, of your being in the faith, and of Christ's being in you, whereof you outwardly make profession. As if the apostle had said, If upon trial you cannot find that you are in the faith, &c., you are unapproved Christians. Either you have yet only a mere form of Christianity, and, like false coin, or reprobate silver, are but hypocrites and counterfeits; or if you be Christians in truth, yet you are unexperienced Christians, and without proof of it to yourselves.

Some may reply, If I find upon trial that I am a counterfeit, may I not then judge myself to be a reprobate?

No. For, first, you may err in judging of yourself. Secondly, if you do not err, you can judge only this, that you are not yet in a state of grace: but in the use of the means, you may be. God can as well convert an hypocrite, as a pagan. For though now you be dross and refuse, you may ere long be pure gold. For God, in making vessels of honour, does more than all earthly kings, and all their goldsmiths can do: for they, by their prerogative and skill, can make current coin, and rich vessels, if they have pure metal to work upon: but they cannot make good metal of base stuff, nor make gold of brass. But such is the power of God's word and Spirit, that whereas they find you base and drossy stuff, they, by imprinting the character and stamp of God's image upon your hearts, do transform you into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18. As soon as you are truly anointed with this Spirit, you shall become good gold and silver vessels of honour, fitted for the Lord's use whereunto you were appointed.

SECT. 6. FEARS ARISING FROM LATE REPENTANCE,
ANSWERED.

THERE are yet others, who object fearfully, saying that they are cast-aways, and that God will not have mercy on them, because now it is too late; they have passed the time and date of their conversion, they therefore will not use, or at least have no heart in using God's means to convert them, such as prayer, reading, hearing the word, &c.; nor yet willingly will suffer others to pray either with them, or for them; and all because they think it is now too late, and in vain; mistaking this, and such other Scriptures: Because I have called, saith God, and you have refused—they shall call on me, and I will not answer, Prov. i. 24, 28; and because they think they sin when they pray, and hear the word, and that the more means is used to save them, their condemnation shall be the more

increased. Thus Satan and a fearful heart delude many.

It must be acknowledged, that God would have all men walk and work while they have light, John xii 35, because the night will come on, when no man can work, John ix. 4. And whilst it is called to-day, Heb. iii. 15, he would have every one return, and accept of grace offered, and not to harden their hearts against it. And our Saviour bewails Jerusalem, because they despised the day of their visitation, Luke xix. 42—44. All which shows, that God has his set period of time, between his first and last offer of grace, which being passed, he will offer it no more; and that justly, because they took not his offer when they might. And this time is kept so secret with God, that if he offer grace to-day, who can tell whether he will offer it to-morrow; or whether he will offer it again? Who knows whether God will take him from the means of salvation, or will take the means of salvation from him? All this our holy and wise God has revealed in his word, to make men wise to take the opportunity and time of grace while it is offered. Wherefore, whosoever have neglected their first times and offers of grace, have sinned and played the fool egregiously; for which they have cause to be much humbled. But for you to conclude hence that the date and time of your conversion is out, this has no sufficient ground. For it is not possible for you to know, that your time of conversion is past all recovery. But you should rather for the present time believe, and hope that it is not passed. Indeed, presumptuously to put off receiving grace until to-morrow, is foolish and dangerous; but if God give you time till to-morrow, that you live, and it can be said to-day; so long as you yet live, and the means of salvation are not from you, either in their exercise, or out of your remembrance; but you do yet live to hear what God has commanded you to do, and to hear what good things he yet offers unto you with Christ; or if the means be taken from you, or you are detained from them by sickness, &c., so long as you yet live to call to remembrance what God

has commanded you to believe and do, you cannot say the time is too late, if you do yet condemn yourselves for refusing grace heretofore, and are now willing and desirous to accept of it. Moreover, would you now, with all your heart, use the means of salvation, and endeavour to believe and repent, if you thought it were not too late? And does it grieve you that you have neglected the opportunity? And would you gain and redeem that lost time, if you knew how? Then, I dare in the name of God assure you, that the date of your conversion is not expired. It is not too late for you to turn unto the Lord. While it is to-day, I may boldly say, harden not your heart: which, if you do not, you must know that now is an acceptable time, now is the day and time of your salvation, Heb. iii. 15. At what time soever God does send his ministers unto you, by whom God does beseech you, they entreating you, as now I do, in Christ's stead, that you would be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20, this is the accepted day, if you will be intreated by them, 2 Cor. vi. 2; the day wherein God will accept of you is not passed. Moreover, at what time soever, and by what means soever, any man shall humble himself for sin, and seek the grace of God in Christ Jesus, the date of God's acceptance of him is not expired. Learn this in the example of Manasses, and many others, who refused grace in their younger time, yet were converted in their age, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10, 12, 13. You have God's express word for it, who saith, From the days of your fathers, that is, for a long time, ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them; return unto me, and I will return unto, saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. iii. 7.

But may not a man pray too late, and seek repentance, in vain, as Esau did, who found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears? Heb. xii. 17. Did not the foolish virgins seek to enter into the bride chamber, but were not admitted? Matt. xxv. 11, 12. And did not our Saviour say, Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able? Luke xiii. 24.

No man can ask grace and forgiveness of sins too

late, if he ask for grace and power against sin heartily: but a man may ask a temporal blessing, or the removal of a temporal evil, when it may be too late.

As for Esau's careful seeking of repentance, you must understand it not of his own repentance from his profaneness, and from other dead works, but of his father Isaac's repentance: he would have had his father to change his mind, and to have given him the birth-right, which was already bestowed upon Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 34, 38.

Whereas the foolish virgins did seek to enter into the bride chamber when the door was shut; know, that this is a parable, and must not be urged beyond its general scope, which is to show, that insincere professors of Christianity, such as have only a form of godliness, without the power of it, although they will not live the life of the righteous, yet they wish their end might be like theirs, Numb. xxiii. 10; and because of their outward profession of Christ's name in this life, they securely expect eternal life; but forasmuch before their death, they did not provide the oil of truth and holiness, therefore at the day of judgment, they shall be disappointed of entering into heaven, which in the time of their life, they did so much presume on.

The same answer may be given unto that place, Luke xiii. 24. Yet you mistake, when you say, that Christ saith, Many shall strive to enter, and shall not be able. He saith strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say to you, shall *seek* to enter, and shall not be able; he does not say, Many shall *strive* to enter.

There is a great difference in the signification of the words striving and seeking; seeking imports only a bare professing of Christ, hearing the word, and receiving the sacraments. For thus did the men spoken of by our Saviour, who are said not to be able to enter. But to strive to enter, is to do all these and more; it is to strive in seeking for him, so that they take up their cross and follow him; they give their hearts to him, as well as their names; they are hearty and sincere in praying, hearing, receiving; they strive

to subdue their lusts, which offend Christ, and strive to be obedient to his will, as well as to believe his promises, and to hope for happiness; this is to strive, Hosea vi. 3. Now never one did thus strive in seeking to enter, though it were the last day in his life, that was rejected, and not received. Wherefore say not, It is too late, but say, The more time I have lost, the more cause is there now that I should seek my salvation in earnest, and not lose time in questioning, whether I may be accepted or not.

SECT. 7. FEARS OF MISUSING THE MEANS OF GRACE,
REMOVED.

AND whereas you said, you are afraid to use the means of salvation, for fear of increasing your guilt and condemnation thereby; hereby you may see, that this is but the malice and subtilty of the devil, by keeping you from the means, to keep you from salvation, Psa. lxxiii. 13. For it is most false to say, that to pray, hear the word, &c., is to increase your sins, because you cannot perform them as you should, and as you would. I am sure, it is a greater sin in you to forbear these necessary duties out of despair that they shall not profit you, or that you shall not be accepted of God. You should think thus: If I do not use the means of salvation, I shall certainly perish everlastingly; but if I do pray, hear, &c., I may be saved; therefore, in obedience to God, I will do as well as I can. But little does a man know how well he may do through the strength of Christ, if he would endeavour; neither can a man conceive how acceptable a little endeavour shall be, if he do but desire to be true in his endeavour. For as God's power is seen in a man's weakness, so is God's grace seen in a man's insufficiency, 2 Chron. xxx. 18—20; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. When we are weak, then God in us can be strong. And when we in humility like our services worst, then, through Christ, God may be best pleased with them. But, whatever you do, neglect not, nor absent yourselves from exercises of religion; for the weakest ob-

servances, where is truth, are far more acceptable than entire omissions. Wherefore, if as you say, you would not increase your sin, and thereby your damnation, be willing to use, and to join with others in the use of all good means of salvation; then, if you be not saved, yet you shall have the less punishment. But you may be assured, that if in obedience to God's commandments you shall pray, hear the word, receive the sacrament, and have communion and conversation with those that fear God, you shall be saved in the end, believing in Christ Jesus.

If you do not yet feel benefit and comfort, when you use these means of salvation, according to your desire, yet you must wait the good hour both of grace and comfort, even as the impotent people did, who lay waiting for the angel's coming to move the waters, that they might be healed of their diseases, at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 3. For if, when God hides his face, you will wait and look for him, Isa. viii. 17, then God will wait his time to be gracious, and blessed shall you be that wait for him, Isa. xxx. 18. It may be, it comes justly upon you, that God should make you wait his leisure, and cause you to buy wisdom with dear experience, because you did once account it an easy matter to believe and repent, and therefore you did not take the first offers, but made God wait. If it were thus, yet despair not of grace; only be humbled. For God does not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us after our iniquities, Psa. ciii. 10, but according to his rich mercy and promise, made to us in Christ Jesus.

SECT. 8. FEARS ARISING FROM DOUBTS OF GOD'S LOVE
REMOVED.

THERE are many, who have true proofs that they are the chosen of God, and have reason to think that God not only can, but will do them good; yet because they will deny that to be bestowed upon them, and to be in them, which indeed is, therefore they fear,

and are causelessly disquieted. I would have such to consider, first, whether they have not in them already evident proofs and signs of God's effectual love towards them in Christ? These will acknowledge, that it is most true, that if they were sure God did love them, they should not fear; but this is all their doubt, that God does not love them.

(1.) Doubts of God's love because of afflictions, removed.

Some give this reason of their doubt; God has and still does severely afflict them; yea, ever since they have professed the name of Christ, they are in something or other chastened daily; insomuch, that they seem to be in the condition of those whom God threatened to curse in every thing, they put their hands unto, Deut. xxviii. 20. Therefore, say they, God does not love us.

Such weak and inconsiderate reasonings are incident to those whom God truly loves. Did not the holy men of God reason, and conclude thus? But when God's children do thus, it is in their haste; before they are well advised what they think or say, Psa. xxxi. 22; cxvi. 11. And whence is it? Is it not from their ignorance and weakness, being carried away by sense? So foolish was I, and ignorant, saith the prophet, &c. Psa. lxxiii. 13, 14, 22. But when they come to themselves, and learn by God's word and Spirit, that it is not outward prosperity will make wicked men happy, neither is it outward affliction that can make a good man miserable; then they will neither applaud nor envy the prosperity of the wicked, nor yet misconstrue, nor repine at their own afflictions. For they learn, that no man can know God's love or hatred by any outward thing, that does befall the sons of men in this life, Eccles. ix. 1, &c.

They learn, that God does often smile on his enemies, and that he does often frown upon, is angry with, and does correct those whom he dearly loves, even as a father does his children, Prov. iii. 12; Rev. iii. 19.

They learn by the word likewise, that God has

excellent ends in all this, even in respect of them, and for their good; namely, for trial of their graces, for prevention of sin, and to remove sin, by bringing them to repentance, Rom. vii. 12, that they might be made partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. Besides, herein he does much glorify himself, showing that he is wonderful in counsel, excellent in working, Isa. xxviii. 29; causing the affliction to work for his glory, in his people's good; yea, you may learn by your own experience, that the child of God in his infirmity and passion, when he is under the rod, may let go his hold of God; yet, that God, in his love and compassion towards his people, will hold him fast by his right hand, and will not leave him; but will guide him with his counsel, until he receive him into glory, Psa. lxxiii. 23, 24. This is God's method with his children; wherefore none from hence has cause to question God's love, but rather to conclude it.

(2.) Fears of the want of grace, on account of worldly prosperity.

There are others, and it may be the same, when the tide of affection is turned, who, because they prosper, and are not in trouble as other men, conceive that God does not love them. For it is said, As many as he loves, he rebukes and chastens, Rev. iii. 19, and he chastens every son whom he receives, Heb. xii. 6.

See, a fearful and doubtful heart will draw matter to feed its fears and doubts out of any thing. But know, God is a wise and good Father; he knows when to strike, and when to hold his hands.

In such cases as the following, God does not usually afflict his children with his heavy rod.

First, When they are infants, babes in Christ, or, if they be grown to years, when they are spiritually weak or sick, and cannot bear correction, then, though they be froward, and deserve strokes, God does forbear, and is inclined rather to pity.

Secondly, When they are good children; that is, when they show that they would please him, by endeavouring to do what they are able, though it be with

much imperfection; then God will not strike, but spares them, as a father spares his only son, that serves him, Mal. iii. 17.

Thirdly, When forbearance of punishment, and when fruits and tokens of kindness will reclaim his children from evil, and prove sufficient incentives unto good; God in this case also, like a wise and loving Father, had rather draw them by the cords of love, Hosea xi. 4, than drive them with the lashes of his displeasure. Thus you see God may love his children, and not be always afflicting them.

Well, do you prosper? Then take notice of God's goodness towards you with thanksgiving; study and endeavour therefore to be the more obedient. If you cannot, yet grieve because you cannot be more thankful and more obedient. Then, because prosperity has made you to be better, or at least to desire to be better, hence you may assure yourselves, that your prosperity is not given you in wrath, but in love. But take heed; quarrel not with God, because he forbears to afflict you; either make this use, that you be good, and amend without blows; or else be sure the more is behind.

(3.) Doubts of God's love, from inward horrors, and distresses of mind, removed.

As the fore-mentioned persons did question God's love, from considerations taken from their outward conditions; so there are very many, who, besides what they conclude from outward crosses, conclude also from their inward horrors and distresses of conscience, and from their intolerable perplexities of soul, that God does not love them; they think that their distress is other, or greater than the affliction of any of God's children; therefore they want peace, fearing that God does not love them.

Those to whom God does bear special love, may be so far perplexed with inward and strange terrors and discomforts, that they may think themselves to be forsaken of God. Thus David complains: Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Psa. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. Yea, not only David,

but Christ Jesus himself, and his church, did in their sense and feeling, take themselves to be forsaken of God, Matt. xxvii. 46; Cant. v. 6; Isa. xlix. 14; yet none that are wise will say, that these were destitute of God's love, or were ever quite forsaken, though never so much perplexed and cast down; yet, in their own feeling and sense, in the agony of their spirits, they did thus think or speak, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

God has most holy and blessed ends, in many times leading and leaving his children in such straits, that they are altogether without any sense of his love.

First, It may be a just correction of them, for their not showing love to God, and because they do in part forsake him by their sins. This is therefore to humble them, and to make them know themselves, and to bring them to repentance. God may be pacified towards them in the main, yet for a time show them no countenance: as David, though his anger was appeased towards Absalom, yet for a time he would not let him see his love, for he would not let him come into his sight; that Absalom might be more humbled, and might the more detest his sin, 2 Sam. xiv. 24.

Secondly, God exercises his beloved ones with many fears, horrors, and doubts, to prevent that spiritual pride which else would be in them, and that self-sufficiency which else they would conceive to be in themselves. If they should always have a sense of inward and spiritual comforts, and should not sometimes have pricks in the flesh, and buffetings of Satan, they would be exalted above measure, and would be something in themselves, in their own opinion, 2 Cor. xii. 7. But when there is such difficulty in getting and keeping of grace and comfort, and when they find what need they have of both, and how neither can be had but from God, in and by Christ, it will make them empty themselves of all things in themselves, that they may be something in Christ. And then, when they have grace and comfort, they will acknowledge themselves to be beholden to God for the same.

Thirdly, God withholds from his children, the sense of his favour to try the sincerity and truth of their

sole dependence on him; trying, whether, because God seems to forsake them, they will forsake him; whether, like king Joram, they will say, Why shall they wait upon God any longer? 2 Kings vi. 33; and whether they will, with Saul, betake them to unlawful means of help, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 7. Or whether, on the other side, they will say, with Job and David, Though God kill us, or forget us, yet we will trust in him, hope in him, and praise him, Job xiii. 15; Psa. xlii. 9, 11, who, they are persuaded, is, and will show himself to be, the health of their countenance, and their God. God uses to leave his children, as, in another case, he left Hezekiah, to try them, and to know what is in their hearts, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

Fourthly, God withdraws himself for a time, that they may learn to esteem more highly of his favour, and to desire it more, when by the want of it, they find by experience, what a hell it is to be without it; and that they may be more thankful for it, and be more careful, by studying to please God, to keep it when they have it. This holy use, David and the church made of God's forsaking them, as they thought, for a time, Psa. lxxx. 18, 19; Cant. iii. 2, 5, 6; ii. 7; viii. 4. It made them seek more diligently after God, promising that if he would turn to them, they would not go back from him; resolving, by his grace, to cleave more closely unto him.

But know this to your comfort, when God most withdraws himself and forsakes you, it is but in part, in appearance only, and but for a time. He may, for the cause before mentioned, turn away his face, and forbear to show his loving countenance; but he will not take his loving-kindness utterly from you, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, Psa. lxxxix. 32—34. What God said to his afflicted church, that he saith to every afflicted member thereof: For a small moment have I forsaken thee: but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath have I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer, Isa. liv. 7, 8. Hence it is that in your

greatest extremities, your faith and hope shall secretly, though you feel not their work, preserve you from utter despair. As it was with David, and with our blessed Saviour, Psa. xxii. 1, who, although these words of theirs to God, Why hast thou forsaken me, argue fear, and want of sense of God's love; yet these words, My God, my God, do argue a secret alliance and hope, Matt. xxvii. 46.

(4.) Doubts of God's love on account of extraordinary afflictions, removed.

And whereas you say, that no man's grief or troubles are like yours, partly by reason of outward afflictions, and partly by inward temptations and distresses, give me leave to deal plainly with you, it is a foolish and a false speech. Talk with a thousand thus troubled, they will also say thus: No man's case was ever as mine is, nor as bad. Will any that have but common sense, think this to be true? Most of these must needs be deceived. You feel your own distresses, but you cannot fully know what another feels.

If you would rightly look into the distresses of others, who were better than yourselves, as they are recorded in Scripture, you would not think thus. As for outward afflictions, upon whom did God ever lay his hand more heavy than on his servant Job? Job i. Had not Paul also his trouble without, of all sorts, and terrors within, &c. 2 Cor. xi. 23—33. And, if you consider sorrows, fears, and distresses of all sorts, were yours such as David's were, or more than his? I pray, what mean these, and many more such speeches? My bones are vexed; my soul is vexed. But thou, O Lord, how long?—I am weary with my groaning.—Mine eye is consumed with grief, it waxes old, Psa. vi. 2, 3, 6, 7. Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in time of trouble? Psa. x. 1. How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord; for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? Psa. xiii. 1. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My

strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue cleaves to my jaws, and thou hast brought me to the dust of death, *Psa. xxii. 14, 15.* My bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, *Psa. xxxii. 3, 4.* There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. Mine iniquities, that is, the punishment of mine iniquities, are gone over my head, they are too heavy for me, *Psa. xxxviii. 3, 4.* Thus, and much more, does he complain: I am weary of my crying, my throat is dry. Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God, *Psa. lxi. 3.* So Asaph, My sore ran, and ceased not, my soul refused to be comforted, *Psa. lxxvii. 2.*

What think you now? Were not Job, Paul, and David, in God's love and favour, notwithstanding all this? It may be, you will reply, However the matter of their trouble might be greater than yours, yet they could remember God, they could pray to him, they had faith and confidence in God in their distresses, all which you want; therefore herein your case is worse than theirs.

Consider yourselves well, I speak only to you that are truly humbled for sin, and it is to be hoped that in some measure you shall find the like grace, faith, and confidence in you, as was in them; if you see it not, be grieved for the want thereof; endeavour to do as you see they did in their distresses, only be not discouraged, and all shall be well. But take notice, I pray you, that sometimes David neither did, nor could pray, as he conceived of his own prayer, any otherwise than in roaring and complaining, at which time, he saith he kept silence, *Psa. xxxii. 3.* But when he could confess his sins, and pray, then he had some apprehension that God had forgiven him his sin, *Psa. xxxii. 5;* and for all Asaph's remembering of God, yet even then he was troubled, and his spirit was overwhelmed, and he saith, his soul refused comfort, *Psa. lxxvii. 2, 3;* and David saith unto God, When wilt thou comfort me? *Psa. cxix. 82.* I grant, it was his fault, yet it was such a fault as was incident to one

beloved of God. Moreover, I deny not that Job and David had faith and hope in God; but these graces in them were oftentimes overclouded with unbelief and distrust; as appears in their various passionate exclamations; at which times their faith appeared to others in their good speeches and actions, rather than to themselves. And the Psalmist confesses, that those his faithless complaints were in his haste, and from his infirmities, Psa. xxxi. 22; lxxvii. 10.

How say you now? Is it not thus with you? Are you not like others of God's children, off and on, up and down? You would pray and cannot; you would believe, but, as you think, cannot; you would have comfort, but cannot feel it. Only you feel a secret support now and then; and now and then, you see and feel a glimpse of God's light and comfort; for which you must be thankful, which you must cherish by all means, and with which you must rest contented, waiting until God give you more.

You should know and consider, that this is an old device of Satan, to make you believe that your case is worse, or at least much different from the case of any others, because he knows that while he fixes this upon your mind, no common remedy, which did cure and comfort others, can cure and comfort you. For you will still ask, Was ever any as I am? And if God's ministers and people cannot say, yea; and that such an instruction, and such a promise in the word did help him; then you conclude that you are incurable.

But, last of all, let it be supposed that your case is worse than any body's else, is there not a sovereign balm in God's word, Jer. viii. 22, a catholicon, or universal remedy, that will heal all spiritual diseases? God's word is like himself, to a believer, an omnipotent word, Mark ix. 23. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Gen. xviii. 14. Neither is there any spiritual disease too hard for his word and Spirit to cure. When Christ healed the people with his word, did it not heal even such as were never known to be cured before?

They made no question, whether he cured the same before. Indeed, Martha failed in this; for she said of her brother Lazarus, being dead, Lord, he stinketh, for he has been dead four days, John xi. 39, 40; she conceived her brother's case to be desperate, and that none in his state could be restored to life. But Christ blamed her for want of faith; and by his word he as easily raised Lazarus from being dead so long, as he cured Peter's wife's mother, when only sick of a fever, Mark i. 31.

It is not the greatness of any man's distress whatever, that can hinder from help and comfort; but only, as then in curing men's bodies, so now in curing and comforting men's souls, nothing hinders the cure, but the greatness of unbelief in the party to be cured, Mark vi. 5, 6; for all things are possible to him that believes, Mark ix. 23.

You will yet reply, Indeed, here lies the difficulty, in unbelief.

Well, be it so. If unbelief be your disease and trouble, do you think that God cannot cure you of unbelief, as well as of any other sin? But know, that if, with the poor man in the gospel, you feel your unbelief, and complain of it, and confess it unto God, saying, Lord, I have cause to believe; Lord, I do, I would believe, help thou my unbelief, Mark ix. 24; if you also will wait until God give you power to believe, and to enjoy comfort in believing, for faith makes no haste; this is both to believe in truth, and is a certain means to increase in believing.

Wherefore let not Satan, nor yet a fearful heart, make you to judge your case to be desperate and remediless, either in respect of God's power or will, though you are yet in distress, and feel in you much fear and unbelief. Seek to God, and with patience wait the good time of deliverance and comfort; and in due time, you shall have help and comfort, as well as others.

(5.) Doubts of God's love, because prayers are not answered, removed.

There are yet some, that fear God does not love

them, because they have prayed often and much: but God has rejected their prayers, and not answered them.

There are many just causes, why God may reject, or at least not grant your prayers; and yet may love your persons.

For, first, It may be you ask amiss, either asking things unlawful, or asking things inconvenient for the present, or in asking to have good things, temporal, or spiritual, in that quantity and degree, which God does not see fit for you as yet; or you ask good things to an ill end, as to satisfy some lust, as pride, voluptuousness, covetousness, &c., James iv. 3. Or, lastly though you failed in neither of the former, yet you failed in this, you were doubtful, you did not ask in faith, you did not believe you should have the things so asked; whosoever thus fails in asking, let them not think to receive any thing in favour from the Lord, James i. 6, 7. And it is a fruit of God's love, when he does not answer prayers so made; for it will cause you to seek him and to pray to him in a better manner, that you may be heard.

Secondly, God does many times in love and mercy hear his children's prayers, when they think he does not. God hears prayers many ways; you must observe this, else you will judge that he does not hear your prayers, when yet indeed he does. Sometimes, yea, always when it is good for you, he gives the very thing which you pray for. Sometimes he gives not that thing which you ask; but something much better. As, when you ask earthly and temporal good things, he grants them not, but instead thereof gives you things spiritual and eternal; likewise, when you ask grace in some special degree, such as joy, or comfort in God, or the like, it may please him not to let it appear that he gives the same unto you; but instead thereof, he does enlarge your desires, and he gives humility and patience, to wait his leisure, which will do you more good than that which you prayed for. So, likewise, when you pray that God would free you from such a temptation; God does not always rid and

ease you of it; but he, instead thereof, gives you strength to withstand it, and keeps you, that you are not overcome by it. Thus Christ was heard in that he feared, Heb. v. 7; so he said to the apostle, My grace is sufficient for thee, 2 Cor. xii. 9; which is better than to have your particular request. For now God's power is seen in your weakness, and God has the glory of it; and you hereby have experience of God's power, which experience is of excellent use.

Likewise you may desire to have such or such a cross or affliction removed; yet God may suffer the cross to remain for a time, but he gives you strength and patience to bear it; wisdom and grace to be less earthly, and more heavenly-minded by reason of it. There was never any, that, with an humble and holy heart, made lawful requests, according to the will of Christ, believing he should be heard, but, though he were a man of many failings in himself, and did discover many weaknesses in his prayer, was heard in that he prayed, either in what he asked of God or in what he should rather have asked; either in the very thing, or in a better.

I would have you therefore leave objecting, and questioning whether God loves you; consider this: has he not loved you, who has given his only begotten Son for you and to you, John iii. 16; who has washed you in his blood, Rev. i. 5; having given him to die for your sins, and to rise again for your justification, Rom. iv. 25; and has hereby translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son, Col. i. 13; having also given unto you to believe in his name, Phil. i. 29; hereby making you his children, inheritors with the saints in light? Col. i. 12. What greater sign can there be of the love of God towards you; and what better evidence can you have of God's love in justifying you, than the evidence of your faith, Heb. xi. 1, whereby you are justified? Rom. iii. 28.

(6.) A removal of false fears, from the deficiency or weakness of faith.

All men will grant, that if they were sure they had faith, they should not doubt of their justification, nor

of God's love to them in Christ. But many doubt that they have no faith, or if they have any, it is so little, that it cannot be sufficient to carry them through all oppositions to the end, unto salvation.

If you have any faith, though no more than as a grain of mustard-seed, you should not fear your final estate, nor yet doubt of God's love; for it is not the great quantity and measure of faith that saves; but the excellent property and use of faith, though never so small; Luke xvii. 6. For a man is not saved by the worth of his faith, by which he believes; but by the worth of Christ, the person on whom he believes. Now the least true faith does apprehend Christ entirely, to all the purposes of salvation; even as a little hand may hold a jewel of infinite worth, as well, though not so strongly, as a larger. The least infant is as truly a man, as soon as ever it is endued with a reasonable soul, as afterward, when it is able to show forth the operations of it, though not so strong a man; even so it is in the state of regeneration. Now you should consider, that God has babes in Christ, as well as old men, 1 John ii. 12; feeble-minded as well as strong; sick children as well as healthy, in his family, 1 Thess. v. 14; Rom. xiv. 1, xv. 1. And those that have least strength, and are weakest, of whom the Holy Ghost saith, they have a little strength, in comparison, yet they have so much as, through God, will enable them in the time of greatest trials, to keep God's word, and that they shall not deny Christ's name, Rev. iii. 8. Also know, God, like a tender father, does not cast off such as are little, feeble, and weak, but has given special charge concerning the cherishing, supporting, and comforting of these more than others, 1 Thess. v. 14. And Christ Jesus will confirm and increase, and not quench, the least spark of faith, Matt. xii. 20.

This which I have said in commendation of little faith, is only to keep him that has no more from despair. Let none hereby please or content himself with his little faith, not striving to grow, and to be strong in faith. If he do, it is to be feared that he has none at all; or if he have, yet he must know that he will

have much to do to live, when he has no more than can keep life and soul together, and his life will be very unprofitable and uncomfortable, in comparison of him that has a strong faith.

SECT. 9. REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS THINK THEY HAVE NO FAITH, CONSIDERED.

BUT you will say, (1.) you are so full of fears and doubtings; (2.) you are so fearful to die, and to hear of coming to judgment; and (3.) you cannot feel that you have faith, you cannot feel joy and comfort in believing, therefore you fear you have no faith.

First, If you, having so sure a word and promise, do yet doubt and fear so much as you say, it is your great sin, and I must blame you now, in our Saviour's name, as he did his disciples then, saying, Why are ye fearful, why are ye doubtful, O ye of little faith? Matt. viii. 26. But, to your reformation and comfort, observe it, he does not argue them to be of no faith, but only of little faith, saying, O ye of little faith, Matt. xiv. 31. Thus you see that some fears and doubtings do not argue no faith.

Secondly, Concerning fear of death and judgment, some fear does not exclude all faith. Many from their natural constitution are more fearful of death than others. Yea, pure nature will startle and shrink to think of the separation of two so near, so ancient, and such dear friends as the soul and body have been. Good men, such as David and Hezekiah, have showed their unwillingness to die. And many, upon a mistake, conceiving the pangs and pains of death in the parting of the soul and body to be most torturing and unsufferable, are afraid to die. Whereas unto many, the nearer they are to their end, the less is their extremity of pain; and very many go away in a quiet swoon, without pain.

And as for being moved with some fear, at the thought of the day of judgment; who can think of that great appearance, before so glorious a Majesty,

such as Christ shall appear in, Matt. xvi. 27, to answer for all the things he has done in his body, without trembling? 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. The apostle calls the thoughts thereof "the terrors of the Lord." Indeed, to be perplexed with the thoughts of the one or the other, argues imperfection of faith and hope, but not an utter absence of either.

You have other and better things to do in this case, than to make such dangerous conclusions, viz. that you have no faith, &c., upon such weak grounds. You should rather, when you feel this over-fearfulness to die and come to judgment, labour to find out the ground of your error, and study to endeavour to reform it.

Unwillingness to die, may proceed from these causes:

First, From too high an estimation of, and too great a love to earthly things of some kind or other; which makes you afraid, and unwilling to part with them.

Secondly, You may be unwilling to die, because of ignorance of the superabundant and inconceivable excellencies of the happiness of saints departed, which if you knew, you would be willing.

Thirdly, Fear of death and coming to judgment, does, for the most part, rise from a conscience fearful of the sentence of condemnation, being without assurance, that when they die they shall go to heaven.

Wherefore if you would be free from troublesome fear of death and judgment, learn,

(1.) To think meanly and basely of the world, in comparison of those better things, provided for them that love God; and use all the things of the world accordingly, without setting your heart upon them, Psa. lxii. 10, as if you used them not, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. (2.) While you live here on earth, take yourselves aside often in your thoughts from the cares and business of the world, and enter into heaven, and contemplate deeply the joys thereof. (3.) Give all diligence to make your calling and election, and right unto heaven, sure to yourselves, 2 Peter i. 10, 11:

but let me give you this needful item, that you be willing and ready to judge it to be sure, when it is sure, and when you have cause so to judge. Let your care be only, through faith in Christ Jesus, to live well, joining unto faith, virtue, &c., and you cannot but die well, 2 Peter i. 5. Death at first appearance, like a serpent, seems terrible; but by faith, you may see this serpent's sting taken out, which when you consider, you may, for your refreshment, receive it into your bosom. The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56; but the law of the spirit of life in Christ has freed you from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. I confess, that when you see this pale horse, death, approaching, it may cause nature to shrink, but when you consider that his errand is to carry you with speed to your desired home, unto a state of glory, how can you but desire he should remove you out of this vale of misery, that mortality might be swallowed up of life? 2 Cor. v. 4.

If you would do this in earnest, you would be so far from fearing death, that you would, if it were put to your choice, with the apostle, choose to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is the best of all, Phil. i. 23; and so far from fearing the day of judgment, you would love and long for Christ's appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8; waiting with patience and cheerfulness, when your change shall be, Job xiv. 14. Endeavour to follow these directions; then, if you cannot prevent those fears, and conquer them as you would, yet be not discouraged, for fears and doubts in this kind do flow many times from strength of temptations, rather than from weakness of faith.

Moreover, what if you cannot attain to so high a pitch in your faith as Paul had, are you so ambitious that no other degrees of faith shall satisfy you? Or are you so foolish, as thence to conclude that you have no faith?

Thirdly, Whereas you say, you are without feeling, therefore you fear you have no faith; I acknowledge that want of a feeling sense of God's favour, is that which does more trouble God's tender-hearted chil-

dren, and make them more doubt of God's love, and of their justification, than any thing else; whereas I know nothing that gives them less cause.

(1.) In what true faith consists.

For first, What do you mean by feeling? If you mean the enjoyment of the things promised, and hoped for, by inward sense; this is to overthrow the nature, and put an end to the use of faith and hope. For faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. And the apostle saith, Hope that is seen, is not hope, Rom. viii. 24. Indeed, faith gives a present being of the thing promised to the believer, but it is a being, not in sense, but in hope and assured expectation of the thing promised: wherefore the apostle, speaking of our spiritual conversation on earth, saith, We walk by faith, not by sight, 2 Cor. v. 7. These two, faith and feeling, are opposite one to the other in this sense; for when we shall live by sight and feeling, then we shall cease to live by faith.

(2.) The difference between faith and assurance.

Secondly, If by feeling you mean a joyous and comfortable assurance that you are in God's favour, and that you shall be saved, and therefore, because you want this joyous assurance, you think you have no faith, you must know this is a false conclusion.

For faith, whereby you are saved and brought into a state of grace, and this comfortable assurance that you are in a state of grace and shall be saved, differ much from each other. It is true, assurance is an effect of faith. Yet it is not inseparable from the very being of faith, at all times. For you may have saving faith, yet at sometimes be without the comfortable assurance of salvation.

To believe in Christ to salvation is one thing, and to know assuredly that you shall be saved is another. For faith is a direct act of the reasonable soul, receiving Christ, and salvation offered by God with him. Assurance rises from a reflex act of the soul, namely, when the soul by self-inquiry, and the help of God's Spirit, can witness that it has the afore-mentioned grace of faith, whereby it can say, I know that I

believe in Christ Jesus; and I know that the promises of the gospel belong unto me. The holy Scriptures are written for both these ends, that first faith, and then assurance of faith and hope should be wrought in men. These things are written, saith John in his gospel, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name, John xx. 31. Again, these things have I written, saith the same apostle in his Epistles, to ye who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe, that is, continue to believe, and increase in believing, on the name of the Son of God, 1 John v. 13.

A man is saved by faith, but has comfort in hope of salvation by assurance; so that the being of spiritual life, in respect of us, does subsist in faith, not in assurance and feeling. And that is the strongest and most approved faith, which cleaves to Christ, and to his promises, and rests upon his truth and faithfulness, without the help of feeling. For, although assurance gives unto us a more evident certainty of our good estate, yet faith, even without this, will certainly preserve us in this good estate, whether we be assured or not.

Hence it is, that although reason, as it is now corrupt, will still be objecting, and will be satisfied with nothing but what it may know by sense, John iii. 4; yet faith, even above and against sense, and all natural reasoning, Rom. iv. 19, 20, from a reverence to God's command, who bids to believe and trust in him, and a persuasion of the truth and goodness of the promises will give credit unto, and rest upon the bare, naked divine witness of the word of God, for his sake that does speak it, Heb. xi. 8, 11.

Secondly, There is a certainty of evidence; namely, when the thing believed is not only said to be true and good, but a man does find it so to be by sense and experience, and is so evident to man's reason, convincing it by force of argument, taken from the causes, effects, properties, signs, and the like, that it has no-

thing to object against the thing proposed to be believed. The certainty of adherence is the certainty of faith. The certainty of evidence is the certainty of assurance.

This certainty of assurance and evidence is of excellent use, for it makes the Christian fruitful in good works, and does fill him full of joy and comfort: therefore it must by all means be sought after, yet it is not of itself so strong, nor so constant, nor so infallible as the certainty of faith and adherence is, 2 Peter i. 8, 10. For sense and reason since the fall even in the regenerate, are weak, variable, and their conclusions are not so certain, as those of pure faith; because faith builds only upon divine testimony, concluding without reasoning or disputing, yea, many times against reasoning, Rom. iv. 18, 19; Heb. xi. 11.

So that notwithstanding the excellent and needful use of assurance, it is faith and adherence to Christ and his promises, which, even in fears and doubts, must be the cable we must hold by, lest we make shipwreck of all, when we are assaulted with our greatest temptations; for then many times our assurance leaves us to the mercy of the winds and seas, as mariners speak. If you have faith, though you have little or no feeling, your salvation is yet sure in truth, though not in your own apprehension. When both can be had, it is best, for then you gain most strength and most comfort, giving you cheerfulness in all your troubles; but the power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in his naked word and promise, is that to which you must trust.

See this in the examples of most faithful men; for when they have been put to it, it was this that upheld them, and in this was their faith commended. Abraham against all present sense and reason, even against hope, believed in hope, both in the matter of receiving a son, and in going about to offer him again unto God in sacrifice. He denied sense and reason, he considered not the unlikelihoods, and seeming impossibilities in the judgment of reason, that ever he should have a seed, he being old, and Sarah being old and barren;

or having a seed, that he should be saved by that seed, since he was to kill him in sacrifice, Heb. xi. 17—19. He only considered the almighty power, faithfulness, and sovereignty of him that had promised, he knew it was his duty to obey and wait, and so let all the matter concerning it rest on God's promise, Rom. iv. 18—21. For this his faith is commended, and he is said to be strong in faith, Rom. iv. 20.

Job and David, or Asaph, showed most strength of faith, when they had little or no feeling of God's favour, but rather the contrary. Job had little feeling of God's favour, when for pain of body he said, Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and in anguish of soul he said, Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and takest me for thine enemy, Job xiii. 14, 24. Yet then this adherence of faith caused him to cleave unto God, and say in the same chapter, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, verse 15. When David said to God, Why hast thou forgotten me? Psa. xlii. 9, his assurance was weak; yet even then his faith discovered itself, when he saith to his soul, Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God, Psa. xlii. 11. You see then that the excellency of faith lies not in your feeling, but, as the Psalmist speaks by experience, in cleaving close unto the promise, and relying on God for it, upon his bare word. For he saith, It is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God, Psa. lxxiii. 28. This was that which secretly upheld him, and kept him in possession, when his evidences and assurance were to seek.

Wherefore, Believe God's promises made to you in Christ, and rest on him; even when you want joy, and feeling comfort. For having faith, you are sure of heaven, though you be not so fully assured of it as you desire. It will be your greatest commendation, when you will be dutiful servants and children at God's commandment, though you have not present wages, when you will take God's word for that. Those are bad servants and children, who cannot go on cheer-

fully in doing their master's or father's will, except they may receive the promised wages, in good part beforehand, or every day; or except they may have a good part of the promised inheritance presently, and in hand. Feeling of comfort is part of a Christian's wages and inheritance, to be received at the good pleasure of God, that freely gives it, rather than a Christian duty. To comfort and stay ourselves on God in distress, is a duty, but this joyful sense and feeling of God's favour, is a gracious favour of God towards us, not a duty of ours towards God. It argues too much distrust in God, and too much self-respect, when we have no heart to go about his work, except we be full of feeling of his favour. He is the best child, or servant, that will obey out of love, duty, and conscience; and will trust in God and wait on him for his wages and recompence.

Thirdly, When you say, you cannot feel that you have faith or hope, you mean, as indeed many good souls do, you cannot find and perceive, that these graces are in you in truth, which, if you did, you would not doubt of your salvation. My answer is, if faith and hope be in you, then if you would judiciously inquire into yourselves, and feel for them, you may find and feel them, and know that you have them; for, as certainly as he that sees bodily, may know that he sees; so he that has the spiritual sight of faith, may know that he has faith. Wherefore try and feel for your faith, and you shall find whether it be in you, yea or no.

(3.) The nature and properties of saving faith.

For this cause, (1.) Try whether you ever had the necessary preparatives, which ordinarily make way for the seed of faith to take root in the soul. (2.) Consider the nature of saving faith, and whether it has wrought in you accordingly. (3.) Consider some consequents and certain effects thereof.

First, Concerning the preparatives to faith. Has the law shut you up, in your apprehension, under the curse, so that you have been afraid of hell? And has the Spirit also convinced you of sin by the gospel, to

the wounding of your conscience, and to the working of true humiliation, causing the heart to relent, and to desire to know how to be saved? And if after this you have denied yourself, as to your own wisdom and will, power and goodness, and received and rested on Christ alone for salvation, according to the nature of true faith, as follows, then you have faith.

If you doubt you were never sufficiently humbled, then read Section X., of this Chapter.

Secondly, Consider rightly the nature and proper acts of faith, lest you conceive that to be faith which is not, and that to be no faith which is.

You may know wherein true saving faith consists, by this which follows: whereas, man being fallen into a state of condemnation by reason of sin, thereby broke the covenant of works, it pleased God to ordain a new covenant, the covenant of grace, establishing it in his only Son, Christ Jesus, expressing the full tenor of this his covenant in the gospel, wherein he makes a gracious and free offer of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom this covenant is established, and with him the covenant itself, with all its unspeakable blessings, unto man. Now when a man burdened with his sin, understanding this offer, gives credit, and assents thereunto, because it is true, and approves it, and consents to it, both because it is good for him to embrace it, and because it is the will and commandment of God, that he should consent for his part, and trust to it; when therefore a man receives Christ Jesus thus offered, together with the whole covenant, in all its duties and privileges, so far as he understands it; resolving to rest on that part of the covenant made and promised on God's part, and to stand to every branch of the covenant, to be performed on his part; thus to embrace the covenant of grace, and to receive Christ, in whom it is confirmed, is to believe.

This offer of Christ, and the receiving him by faith, may clearly be expressed by an offer of peace and favour, made by a king unto a woman, that is a rebellious subject; by making offer of a marriage between her and his only son, the heir apparent to the crown,

who, to make way to this match, undertakes by his father's appointment, to make full satisfaction to his father's justice in her behalf, and to make her every way fit to be a daughter to a king. And for effecting this match between them, the son, with the consent and appointment of his father, sends his chief servants a wooing to this unworthy woman; making offer of marriage in their master's behalf, with the clearest proofs of their master's good-will to her, and with the greatest earnestness and entreaties, to obtain her good-will, that may be. This woman at first, being a bond-woman unto this king's mortal enemy, and being in love with base slaves like herself, companions in her rebellion, she aptly sets light by this offer; or, if she consider well of it, she may doubt of the truth of this offer, the match being so unequal and so unlikely on her part; knowing herself to be so base and unworthy, she may think the motion to be too good to be true; yet, if upon more advised thoughts, she does take notice of the danger she is in while she stands out against so powerful a king in her rebellion, and does also see and believe, that the king's son is in earnest in his offer to reconcile her to his father, and that he would indeed match with her; thereupon she considers also that it will be good for her to forsake all others, and take him; and that especially because his person is so lovely, and every way worthy of her esteem. Now when she can bring herself to believe this, and resolve thus, though she comes to it with some difficulty, yet if she give a true and hearty consent to have him, and to forsake all other, and to take him as he is, to obey him as her lord, and to take part with him in all conditions better or worse; though she come to this resolution with much ado, then the match is as good as made between them; for hereupon follow the mutual embracing of, and interest in each other.

The application is easy throughout: I will only apply so much as is for my purpose, to show the nature of justifying faith.

God offers his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, yea, Christ Jesus by his ministers offers himself in the gospel,

unto rebellious man, to match with him, 1 Cor. ii. 2; only on this condition, that forsaking his kindred and father's house, Psa. xlv. 10, forsaking all that he is in himself, he will receive him as his head, husband, Lord, and Saviour, Rom. vii. 4. Now, when any man understands this motion, so far as to yield assent and consent to it, and to receive Christ, and cleave to him, John i. 12, then he believes to salvation; then the match is made between Christ and that man; then they are betrothed, nay married, and are no longer two, but are become one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

By all this you may see, that in saving faith there are these two acts:

1. An assent to the truth of the gospel, not only believing in general, that there is a Christ, believing also what manner of person he is, and upon what condition he offered himself to man as a Saviour; but also believing that this Christ graciously offers his love and himself to the Christian's self in particular.

2. An hearty approbation of this offer of Christ, with consenting, and hearty embracing of it, as our own peculiar duty and privilege; resolving to take him wholly, and fully as he is; accepting of him according to the full tenor of the marriage covenant, not only as a man's Saviour, to defend him from evil, and to save him and bring him to glory; but as his head to be ruled by him, as his Lord and King, to worship and obey him, Psa. xlv. 11; believing in him, not only as his priest to satisfy, and to make intercession for him, but also as his prophet to teach, and as his king to govern him; cleaving to him in all estates, taking part with him in all the evils that accompany the profession of Christ's name, as well as in the good, Luke ix. 23.

The first act is not enough to save any; the second act cannot be without the former: where both these are, there is a right receiving of the gospel, there is true faith.

The principal matter lies in the consent and determination of the will in receiving of Christ; which, that may be without exception, know,

1. It must be with an advised and considerate will; it must not be rash, and on a sudden, in your ignorance, before you well know what you do. You must be well advised, and consider well of the person to whom you give your consent, that you know him, and that you know the nature of this spiritual union, and what you are bound unto by virtue of it, and what it will cost you, if you give yourself to Christ, Luke xiv. 28, 31.

2. Your consent must be with a determinate and complete will; with a present receiving him, even with all the heart, Acts viii. 37. It must not be a faint consent, in an indifferency whether you consent or no; it must not be in a purpose, that you will receive him hereafter; but you must give your hand and heart to him for the present, else, it is no match.

3. Your consent must be with a free and ready will; it must not be with a forced and constrained yielding, against the will; but, howsoever, it may be with much opposition and conflict, yet, you must so beat down the opposition, that when you give consent, you bring your will to do it readily and freely, with thankful acknowledging yourselves unspeakably obliged to the Lord Jesus Christ all the days of your life, that he will vouchsafe to make you such an offer.

When consent is rash, faint, and forced, this will not hold good any long time; but when your consent is advised, full, and free, out of true love to Christ, as well as for your own benefit; the knot of marriage between Christ and you is knit so fast, that all the lusts of the flesh, all the allurements of the world, and all the powers of hell, shall not be able to break it.

By this which has been said concerning the nature of faith, many, who thought they had faith, may see that yet they have none.

For they only believe in general that there is a Christ and a Saviour, who offers grace and salvation to mankind, and hereupon they presume. This general faith is needful, but that is not enough; it must be a persuasion of God's offer of Christ to a man in particular, that the will in particular may be induced to consent. There must likewise be that particular con-

sent of will, and accepting of Christ, upon such terms as he is offered. They that receive Christ aright enter into the marriage covenant, resolving to forsake all others, and obey him, and to take up his cross, and to endure all hardships with him, and for him, as shame, disgrace, poverty, hatred in the world, and all manner of reproach; this they consent to, and resolve upon for the present, and from this time forward, for the whole time of their life; which things many neither did, nor intended to do, when they gave their names to Christ; they only received him as their Jesus, one by whom they hoped to be saved and honoured, expecting that he should endow them with a fair jointure of heaven, but they did not receive him as their Lord. In doing thus, they erred in the essentials of marriage. For they erred in the person, taking an idol Christ, for the true Christ. They erred in the form of marriage; they took him not for the present, nor absolutely, for better for worse, as we say, in sickness and health, in good report and ill report, in persecution and in peace, forsaking all other, never to part, no not at death. Wherefore Christ does not own those foolish virgins, when they would enter the bride-chamber, but saith, I know you not, Matt. xxv. 12, because there was no true consent on their part, they had no faith; and their contract or marriage with Christ was only in speech, but was never legal, or consummated.

By this which has been said, others who have faith indeed, may know they have it, namely, if they so believe the covenant of grace established in Christ, that with all their hearts they accept of him and it, so that they sincerely desire and purpose to stand to it on their parts, as they are able, and rest on it so far as it concerns Christ to fulfil it. For this is faith.

Unto this, some fearful souls will reply; If we have no faith, except to an assent unto the truth, we do also receive Christ offered, with a deliberate, entire, and free consent, to rest on him, to be ruled by him, and to take part with him in all conditions; then we doubt that we have no faith, because we so hardly brought ourselves to consent, and find ourselves so weak in

our consent, and have been so unfaithful in keeping promise with Christ.

Truth, fulness and firmness of consent of the will to receive Christ may stand with many doubtings, and with much weakness and sense of difficulty, in bringing the heart to consent. For so long as there is a law in your members warring against the law of your mind, you can never do as you would, Rom. vii. 23. If you can bring your hearts to will to consent and obey, in spite of all oppositions, this argues hearty and full consent, and a true faith, Isa. i. 19. Nay, if you can bring the heart but to desire to receive Christ, and to enter into covenant with God, made mutually between God and you in Christ, and that it may stand according to the offer which he makes unto you in his word, even this argues a true and firm consent, and makes up the match between Christ and you. Even as when Jacob related the particulars of an earthly covenant, into which he would have Laban enter with him, Laban's saying, I would it might be according to thy word, gave proof of his consent, and did ratify the covenant between them, Gen. xxx. 34. If you can therefore, when God offers unto you the covenant of grace, commanding you to receive Christ, in whom it is established, and to enter into this covenant; if, I say, you can with all your heart, say to God, I would it might be according to thy word; the covenant is mutually entered into, and the match is made between Christ and you.

And whereas it troubles you, that you cannot be so faithful to Christ, as your covenant binds you, it is well you are troubled, if you did not also make it an argument that you have no faith; for in that it heartily grieves you, that you cannot believe, nor perform all faithfulness to Christ, it is an evident sign that you have faith. You must not think that after you are truly married to Christ, you shall be free from evil solicitations by your old lovers; nay, sometimes a kind of violence may be offered, by spiritual wickedness, unto you, so that you are forced to many evils against your will, Rom. vii. 19; as it may befall a

faithful wife, to be forced by one stronger than she; yet if you give not full consent unto them, and suffer not your heart to follow them, your husband Christ will not impute these forced evils unto you.

Yet, let none by this take liberty to offend Christ in the least thing, for though Christ love you more tenderly and more mercifully than any husband can love his wife, yet know, he does not dote on you; he can see the smallest faults, and will sharply, though kindly, rebuke and correct you for them, if you do them presumptuously. But he esteems none to break spiritual wedlock, so as to dissolve marriage, but those whose hearts are wholly departed from him, and are set upon, and given to something else, Heb. iii. 12. If you thus look into the nature of faith, I speak to a soul troubled for sin, you may know and feel that you have it.

(4.) True faith may be discerned by its effects.

You may know a lively faith likewise, by most certain consequences and effects, I mean not comfort and joy, which are sometimes felt, and sometimes not; but by such effects, which are most constant, and more certain, and may be no less felt than joy and comfort, if you would search for them; amongst others, I reckon these:

1. You may know you have faith by your grieving for, and opposing of the contrary; if you feel a fight and conflict between believing and doubting, fear and distrust; and in that combat you take part with believing, hope, and confidence, or at least desire heartily that these should prevail, and are grieved at heart, when the other gets the better; if you feel this, do not say, you have no feeling. Do not say, you have no faith.

This conflict, and desire to have faith, gave proof, that the man in the gospel, who came to Christ to cure his child, had faith. I believe, Lord, saith he, Lord, help mine unbelief, Mark ix. 24. Do not say, as I have heard many, This man could say, I believe; but we cannot say so. I tell you, if you can heartily say, Lord, help my unbelief, I am sure, any of you

may say, I believe. For, whence is this sense of unbelief, and desire to believe, but from faith?

2. You may know you have faith, I speak still to an afflicted soul, which dare not sin wilfully, inasmuch as you will not part with that faith which you have upon any terms. I will ask you, who have given hope to others, that you do believe, and that doubt you have not truth of faith and hope in God, only these questions, and as your heart can answer them, so you may judge. Will you part with that faith and hope which you call none, for any price? Would you change present states with those who presume they have a strong faith, whose consciences do not trouble them, but are at quiet, though they live in all manner of wickedness? or at best are merely civilly honest? Nay, would you, if it were possible, forego all that faith, and hope, and other graces of the Spirit, which you call none at all, and return to that former state, wherein you were in the days of your vanity, before you endeavoured to leave sin, and to seek the mercy of God in Christ Jesus in good earnest? Would you lay any other foundation to build upon, than what you have already laid? Or is there any other person or thing, whereon you desire to rest for salvation and direction, besides Christ Jesus? If you can answer, No; but can say, with Peter, To whom should we go? Christ only has the words of eternal life, John vi. 68; you know no other foundation to lay, than what you have laid, and have willed, and desired to lay it right; you resolve never to pull down what you have built, though it be but a little; and it is your grief that you build no faster upon it. By this answer you may see, that your conscience, before you are aware, witnesses for you, and will make you confess that you have some true faith and hope in God, or at least hope that you have. For, let men say what they will to the contrary, "they always think they have those things, which by no means they can be brought to part with."

3. If you would have sensible proof of your faith and justification; look for it in the most certain effect, which is in your sanctification. Do you feel your-

selves loaded and burthened with sin; and your hearts distressed with sorrow for it? And do you also perceive yourselves to be altered from what you were? Do you not bear good will to God's word and ordinances? . And do you desire the pure word of God, that you may grow in grace by it? 1 Peter ii. 2. Do you love and consort with God's people, because you think they fear God? 1 John iii. 14. Is it your desire to approve yourselves to God, in holy obedience? And is it your trouble, that you cannot do it? Then certainly you have faith, you have an effectual faith. For what are all these but the very pulse, breath, and motions of faith? James ii. 22, 26. If you feel grace to be in you, it is a better feeling, than feeling of comfort; for grace, in men of understanding, is never separated from effectual faith, but comfort many times is; for that may rise from presumption and false faith. Grace, only from the Spirit of God, and from true faith.

SECT. 10. FEARS CONCERNING THE TRUTH OF SANCTIFICATION, REMOVED.

IT is granted by all, that if they are truly sanctified, then they know that they have faith, and are justified; but many fear they are not sanctified, and that for these seeming reasons:

(1.) Fears of not being sanctified for want of deep humiliation, answered.

First, Some fear they are not sanctified, because they do not remember, that ever they felt those wounds and terrors of conscience, which are first wrought in men to make way to conversion; as it was in them who were pricked to the heart at Peter's sermon, Acts ii. 37; and in Paul, Acts ix. 6; and in the jailor, Acts xvi. 29. Or if they felt any terrors, they fear they were but certain flashes, and forerunners of hellish torments; like those of Cain, Gen. iv. 13, and Judas, Matt. xxvii. 3, 4.

As it is in the natural birth, with the mother, so it

is in the spiritual birth with the child. There is no birth without some travail and pain, but not all alike. Thus it is in the new birth with all that are come to years of discretion. Some have so much grief, fear, and horror, that it is intolerable, and leaves so deep an impression, that it can never be forgotten; others have some true sense of grief and fear, but nothing to the former in comparison, which may easily be forgotten.

There are causes, why some feel more grief and fear in their first conversion than others :

1. Some have committed more gross and heinous sins than others ; therefore, they have more cause and need to have more terror and humiliation than others.

2. God sets some apart for greater employments than others, such as will require a man of great trust and experience ; wherefore God, to prepare them, exercises such with the greatest trials, for their deep humiliation, and for their more speedy and full reformation, that all necessary graces might be more deeply and firmly rooted in them.

3. Some have been religiously brought up from their infancy, whereby, as they were kept from gross sins ; so their sins were subdued by little and little, without any sensible impression of horror ; grace and comfort being instilled into them almost insensibly.

4. Some by natural constitution and temper of body, are more fearful, and more sensible of anguish than others, which may cause that although they may be alike wounded in conscience for sin, yet they may not feel it all alike.

5. There may be the like fear and terror wrought in the conscience, of sin, in one as well as another ; yet it may not leave the like lasting sense and impression in the memory of the one, as in the other ; because God may show himself gracious in discovering a remedy, and giving comfort to one, sooner than the other. As two men may be in peril of their lives by enemies ; the one, as soon as he sees his danger sees an impregnable castle to step into, or an army of friends to rescue him ; this man's fear is quickly over

and forgotten; the other does not only see great danger, but is surprised by his enemies, is taken and carried captive, and is a long time in cruel bondage and fear of his life, till at length he is redeemed out of their hand. Such a fear as this can never be forgotten.

You may evidently know, whether you had sufficient grief and fear in your first conversion, by these signs. Had you ever such, and so much grief for sin, that it made you dislike sin, and to dislike yourself for it, and to be weary and heavy laden with it; so as to make you heartily confess your sins unto God, and to ask of him mercy and forgiveness? Has it made you to look better to your ways, and more careful to please God? Then be sure, it was a competent and sufficient grief; because it was a godly sorrow to repentance, never to be repented of, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Again, are you now grieved and troubled, when you fall into particular sins? Then you may be certain, that there was a time when you were sufficiently humbled in your conversion; for this latter grief is but putting that grief into further act; whereof you received an habit in your first conversion.

If you can for the present find any proof of conversion, it should not trouble you, though you know not when, or by whom, or how you were converted; any more than thus, that you know God has wrought it by his word and Spirit. When any field brings forth a crop of good corn, this proves that it was sufficiently ploughed: for God does never sow, until the fallow ground of men's hearts is sufficiently broken up.

Now as for those who remember that they have had terrors of conscience, and, it may be, ever and anon feel them still, who fear that these were not beginnings of conversion, but rather beginnings of desperations and hellish torments; you should know, that there is a great difference between these and those.

1. Those fears and horrors, which are only flashes and beginnings of hellish torments, are wrought only by the law and spirit of bondage, giving not so much as a secret hope of salvation. But those fears, which make way unto, and which are the beginnings of conver

sion, are indeed first wrought by the law also, yet not only, for the gospel has, at least, some share with them; partly to melt the heart, broken by the law, partly to support the heart, causing it by some little glimpse of light, to entertain a possibility of mercy. Compare the terrors of Cain and Judas, with those of the men pricked at Peter's sermon, with Paul's and the jailor's, and you shall see both this, and the following differences.

2. The former terrors and troubles are caused, either only for fear of hell, and the fierce wrath of God, but not for sin; or, if at all for sin, it is only in respect of the punishment. These tending to conversion, are also caused through fear of hell, but not only; the heart of one thus troubled is grieved because of his sin, and that not only because it deserves hell, but because by it he has offended and dishonoured God.

3. Those, who are troubled in the first sort continue headstrong and obstinate, retaining their usual hatred against God, and against such as fear God, as also their love to wickedness: only, it may be, they may conceal and smother their rancour, through the spirit of restraint, that for the time it does not appear; but in the other will appear some alteration towards goodness; as, whatsoever their opinions and speeches were of God's people before, now they begin to think better of them, and of their ways. So did they in the Acts; before they were pricked at heart, they did scoff at the apostles, and derided God's gifts in them, Acts ii. 13; but afterwards said. Men and brethren; they thought reverently of them, and spoke reverently to them, Acts ii. 37. See the same in Paul, in his readiness to do whatsoever Christ should enjoin him, Acts ix. 6. The jailor, also in this case, quickly became well affected to Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. 24, 30, 33.

4. The former sort, when they are troubled with horror of conscience, fly from God, and seek no remedy, but such as is worldly and carnal, as company-keeping, music, and other earthly delights, as in building, and in their lands and livings, according as

their own corrupt hearts, and their vain companions advise them, whereby sometimes they stupefy and deaden their conscience, and lay it asleep for a time. Thus Cain and Saul allayed their distempered spirits, Gen. iv. 17, &c., 1 Sam. xvi. 17. And if they had some godly friends, who shall bring them to God's ministers, or do themselves minister to them the instructions of the word, this is tedious and irksome to them; they cannot relish these means, nor take any satisfaction in them. But the other are willing to seek to God, by seeking to his ministers, Acts ii. 37, to whom God has given the tongue of the learned, to minister a word in season, to the soul that is weary; and though they cannot presently receive comfort, will not utterly reject them, except in case of melancholy, which must not be imputed to them, but to their disease, Isa. l. 4.

And in application of the remedy, as there were two parts of the grief, so they must find remedies for both, or they cannot be fully satisfied. First, They were filled with grief for fear of hell; for the removing of which, the blood of Christ is applied, together with God's promise of forgiveness to him that believes, and a commandment to believe; all this is applied to take away the guilt and punishment of sin. Secondly, They were troubled for sin, whereby they dishonoured and displeased God; now unless also they feel in some measure, the grace of Christ's Spirit healing the wound of sin, and subduing the power of it, and enabling them at least to will and strive to please God, they cannot be satisfied. As it was with David, though God had said by the prophet, The Lord has put away thy sin, that is, forgiven it, 2 Sam. xii. 13; yet he had no comfort until God had created in him a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within him, Psa. li. 10. Whereas if fear of hell be removed, it is all that the former sort care for.

5. As for the first sort, it may be, while they were afraid to be damned, they had some restraint of sin, and, it may be, made some essays towards reformation; but when their terrors are over and forgotten, then like the dog, they return to their vomit, and like

the sew that was washed, to their wallowing in the mire of their wonted ungodliness, 2 Peter ii. 22. But as for them, whose terrors were preparations to conversion, when they obtain peace of conscience, they are exceedingly thankful for it, and are made by it more fearful to offend. And although they may, and often do fall into some particular sin or sins, for which they renew their grief and repentance; yet, they do not fall into an allowed course of sin any more. Thus much in answer to the first doubt of sanctification.

(2.) Fears of not being sanctified from the intrusion of many evil thoughts.

Secondly, There are many who doubt they are not sanctified, because of those swarms of evil thoughts which are in them; some whereof, which is fearful for them to think or speak, are blasphemous, unnatural, and inhuman; calling God's being, truth, power, and providence into question; doubting whether the Scripture be the word of God, and others of this nature, having also thoughts of laying violent hands upon themselves and others, with many more of that and other kinds of evil and blasphemous thoughts, such as they never felt at all, or not so much, in their known state of unregeneracy, before they made a more strict profession of godliness; and such as, they think, none that are truly sanctified are troubled with.

To resolve this doubt, know that evil thoughts are either put into men from without, as when Satan does suggest, or wicked men do solicit to evil, 1 Chron. xxi. 1; thus Job's wife, Curse God and die, Job ii. 9; or they rise from within, out of the evil concupiscence of man's own heart, Matt. xv. 19; and sometimes they are mixed, coming both from within and without.

Those which come only from Satan, may usually be known from them that arise out of man's heart, by their suddenness and incessantness: namely, when they are repelled they will sometimes return again a hundred times in a day. Also they are unreasonable and unnatural; strange and violent in their motions; receiving no check, but by violent resistance. Whereas, those which altogether, or in great part, are from

man's own corrupt heart, they usually arise by occasion of some external object, or from some natural cause, and are not so sudden and incessant, nor so unnatural and violent.

Now all those evil thoughts, or thoughts of evil rather, which are from Satan; if you consent not unto them, but abhor and resist them with detestation, they are not your sins, but Satan's, and theirs that put them into you. They are your crosses, because they are matter of trouble to you, but they are not your sins, because they leave no guilt upon you. They are no more your sins than these thoughts, Cast thyself down headlong, and fall down and worship me, viz. the devil, were Christ's sins, if you consent not, but resist them, as Christ did, Matt. iv. 5, 9.

You should carefully observe this. For if the devil was so malicious and presumptuous, as to assault our blessed Saviour with such devilish temptations, injecting into him such vile and blasphemous notions and thoughts; should you think it strange that he does perplex you with the like? And for all this, you have no cause to doubt, whether Christ were the Son of God or no, though the devil made an *if* of it, and it was the thing the devil aimed at; why then should it be doubted that any of Christ's members may be thus assaulted? And yet, surely, they have no cause for this to question, whether they be sanctified, or in a state of grace. For these vain thoughts in them are so far from being abominable evils, that, being not consented to, they are, as I said, not their sins.

It is a piece of the devil's cunning, first to fill a man full of abominable thoughts, and then to be the first that shall put in this accusation and doubt, viz. Is it possible for any child of God, that is sanctified with God's Holy Spirit, to have such thoughts? But consider well, that an innocent Benjamin may have Joseph's cup put into his sack's mouth, without his knowledge or consent, by him, who for his own ends intended thereby to accuse Benjamin of theft and ingratitude, Gen. xlv. 2, 4, 15. Was Benjamin any

thing the more dishonest or ungrateful for this? No! Satan does not want malice or cunning in this kind to play his feats. Where he cannot corrupt men, yet there he will vex and perplex them.

But let it be granted, that these blasphemous and abominable thoughts, which trouble you are indeed your sins, either because they arise from your own evil heart, or because you did consent to them. If so, then you have much cause to grieve and repent, but not to despair, or to say you are not God's child; for it is possible for a sanctified man to be made guilty, either by outward act, or by consent and approbation, or by some means or other, of any one sin, except that against the Holy Ghost; and yet if he confess and bewail his sin, and repent, believe, and ask mercy, it shall be forgiven him; for he has our Saviour's word for it. Matt. xii. 31, 32.

And whereas you say you were not troubled with such abominable thoughts before you made profession of a holy life; I answer, this is not to be wondered at. For before that time, the devil and you were friends; then he thought it enough to suffer you to be proud of your civil honesty, or, it may be, to content yourself with a mere form of godliness, because that you were free from notorious crimes, as adultery, lying, swearing, &c. For when he could by these more plausible ways lead you captive at his will, he saw you were his sure enough already, what need was there then, that he should solicit you any further, or disturb your quiet? But now, that you have renounced him in earnest, and that he and you are opposites; you may be sure, that he will attempt by all means to reduce you into your old state: or if he fail of that, yet as long as you live, so far as God shall permit, he will do what he can to disturb your peace, by vexing and molesting you.

Moreover, God does permit this, for divers holy purposes:

1. To discover the devil's malice.
2. To chasten his children, and to humble them, because they were too well conceited of the goodness

of their nature in their unregeneracy, or might he too uncharitable and censorious of others; and too presumptuous of their own strength, since they were regenerate.

3. God likewise permits these buffetings and winnowings of Satan, both to prevent pride, and other sins, and to exercise and try the graces of his children; to give them experience of their own weakness, and of his grace towards them, and strength in them, even in their weakness; preserving them from being vanquished, although they fight with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness. For God's strength is made perfect in man's weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Remedies against evil and blasphemous thoughts.

That Christians who are troubled with blasphemous, and other abominable thoughts, may be less troubled, or at least not hurt by them, follow these directions.

(1.) Proofs of the being of God.

First, Arm yourself with evident proofs that there is a God, that there is a divine, spiritual, absolute, and independent Being, from whom, and to whom are all things, and by whom all things consist.—Next, Confirm yourself in a sure persuasion that the Bible and holy Scriptures are the pure word of this only true God. Then labour with your heart, that it so reverence and love God and his will, as to be always ready to rise against every motion to sin, especially these of the worse kind, with loathing and detestation.

First, To be assured that there is a God, consider first the creation, preservation, and order of the creatures. How could it be possible that such a world could be made and upheld, or that there should be such an order, or subordination among creatures, if there were not a God? The heavens give their influence into the air, water, and earth; these, by virtue hereof, afford means of comfort and support to all living creatures, Psa. xix. 1; civ. The creatures without sense serve for the use of the sensitive; and all serve for the use of man; who, although he be an excellent creature, yet of himself he is so impotent, that he cannot add one cubit to his stature, Luke xii.

25; nay, he cannot make one hair white or black, therefore could not be the maker of these things, Matt. v. 36.

Moreover, if the creatures were not limited and ordered by a superior Being, they would devour one another, in such a manner as to bring all to confusion. For the savage beasts would eat up and destroy all the tame and gentle, the strong would consume the weak, Job xxxviii. 10, 11; the sea, if it had not bounds set to its proud waves, would stand above the mountains, Psa. civ. 6; and the devil, who hates mankind, would not suffer a man to live at any quiet, if there were not a God, one stronger than the strongest creatures, to restrain Satan, and to confine every thing to its place and order. How could there be a continual vicissitude of things? How could we have rain and fruitful seasons, and our souls be filled with food and gladness, if there were no God? Acts xiv. 15—17. Thus, by the creation, the invisible things of God, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, Rom. i. 20; for by these things, which are thus made, and thus preserved, he has not left himself without witness, that God is, and that he made all things for himself, even for his own glory, Prov. xvi. 4.

Secondly, If all things came by nature, and not from a God of nature, how then have miracles, which are many times against nature, and do always transcend and exceed the order and power of nature, been wrought? For nature in itself does always work even in its greatest works, in one and the same manner and order. For nature is nothing else but the power of God in the creatures, to support them, and to produce their effects in due order. Wherefore if any thing be from nature, or from miracle, it is from God; the one from his power in things ordinary, the other from his power in things extraordinary; wherefore, whether you look on things natural, or above nature, you may see there is a God.

Thirdly, Look into the admirable workmanship of but one of the creatures, namely, your own soul, and particularly into your conscience: whence are your

fears that you shall be damned? What need it; nay, how could it trouble you, for your blasphemous thoughts and other sins, if it were not privy to itself, that there is a God, who will bring every thought into judgment? Eccles. xii. 14.

Fourthly, Make use of the eye of faith, whereby you may see God, who is invisible, and that more distinctly, more certainly, and more fully, Heb. xi. 27. Remember that it is the first principle of all religion, which is first to be learned, namely, That God is, that all things are made by him, and that he is a rewarder of all those, who so believe this, that they diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 3, 6.

2d. Proofs of the divinity of the Scriptures.

1. That you may assure yourselves, that the Scriptures are the word of God; consider, first, how infallibly true they relate things past, according as they were many hundred years before; also in foretelling things to come many hundred of years after, which you may see to have come to pass, and daily do come to pass accordingly; which they would not do if they were not God's word.

2. They lay open the particular and most secret thoughts and affections of man's heart, which they could not do, if they were not the word of him, that knows all things; in whose sight all things are naked and open, Heb. iv. 12, 13.

3. They command all duties of piety, sobriety, and equity, and do prohibit all vice, in such a manner as all the writings and laws of all men laid together, neither do, nor can do, Psa. xix. 7.

4. As the Scriptures discover a state of eternal damnation unto man, and condemn him to it for sin, Gal. iii. 22; so they reveal a sure way of salvation, Rom. i. 17; which is such a way as could never enter into the imagination and heart of any man, or of all men together, without the word and revelation of the Spirit of God, who in his wisdom found out, and ordained this way, 1 Cor. ii. 9.

5. The Scriptures are a word of power, almighty beyond the power of any creature; pulling down

strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 4—6.

6. Lastly, The Scriptures have an universal consent with themselves, though penned by divers men; which proves that they are not of any private interpretation; but that these holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Peter i. 20, 21. Much more might be said to this point, but this may suffice.

Helps against unnatural and violent suggestions.

Against temptations to lay violent hands upon yourself and others, you must have these or the like Scriptures in readiness: Thou shalt not kill, Exod. xx. 13; and, See thou do thyself no harm, Acts xvi. 28; and such like. And that you may be prepared against all other vile temptations, possess your heart beforehand with this, that these are great wickednesses against God, against your God. When Joseph could say, Shall I commit this great wickedness and sin against God? no temptations could prevail against him, Gen. xxxix. 9. Thus much for forearming yourselves against blasphemous and vile thoughts and temptations.

In the second place; when you are thus armed, whensoever these blasphemous and fearful thoughts rise in you, or are forced upon you, take heed of two extremes:

First, Do not contemn them, so as to set light by them; for this gives strength to sin, and advantage to Satan.

Secondly, Be not discouraged, nor yet faint through despair of being free from them, in due time; or of withstanding them in the meantime. For then Satan has his end, and his will of you.

But carry yourself in a middle course; pore not too much on them, dispute not too much with them presume not of your own strength; but by lifting up of your hearts in prayer, call in God's aid to resist and withstand them; present some suitable Scripture to your mind, such as is directed against them, whereby

you may with a holy detestation resist them, according to Christ's example, with, It is written, Matt. iv. 6, 7. Now when you have done this, then, if it be possible, think on them no more.

Thirdly, Endeavour at all times to make conscience in the whole course of your life of your thoughts, even of the least thoughts of evil, yea of all thoughts, and this will be a good means to keep out all evil thoughts, 2 Cor. x. 5. If it cannot prevail thus far; yet you shall have this benefit by it, when your heart can testify for you, that you would in every thing please God, and that you make conscience of less sinful thoughts than those vile ones with which you are troubled; then you may be sure that you may be, and are God's children, and are sanctified, notwithstanding those blasphemous thoughts and devilish temptations.

(3.) Doubts of sanctification from the prevalence of some gross sin.

Again, Some doubt they are not sanctified, because they have fallen into some gross sin; it may be, into worse than those which they committed in their state of unregeneracy.

I answer such; you are in a very ill case, if you do not belie yourselves; and if so, you are in an ill case, because you do belie yourselves. I advise you that have thus sinned in either, to repent speedily, and to ask forgiveness. God by his Spirit does as well call you to it, as he did Israel, saying, Return to the Lord—thou hast fallen by thine iniquity,—take with you words, and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all our iniquity, and receive us graciously; then will God answer, I will heal your backsliding, I will love you freely, Hosea xiv. 1—4. You say, that you are backslidden; suppose it were so, he saith, I will heal your backslidings, &c., read Jer. iii. 12, 13. Micah vii. 18, 19.

You must not doubt, but that gross sins committed after a man is effectually called, are pardonable. It is the devil's policy to cast these doubts into your heads, so wholly to drive you to despair, by shutting out all

hope of grace and mercy, that you might have no thought of returning and seeking unto God again; but believe him not: he is a liar, John viii. 44. For it may befall one that is in a state of grace, to commit the same gross sins after conversion, which he did before, if not greater than the same. Did not David, by his adultery and murder, exceed all the sins that ever he committed before his conversion? 2 Sam. xi; 1 Kings xv. 5. Did not Solomon worse in his old age than ever in his younger days? 1 Kings xi. 4, 5. Did Peter commit any sin like that of denying and forswearing his master, before his conversion? Matt. xxvi. 74. Why were the falls of these worthies written, but for examples to us, on whom the ends of the earth are come? 1 Cor. x. 11, 12.

First, That every one who stands should take heed lest he fall.

Secondly, That if any are fallen into any sin by any occasion, he might rise again as they did, and not despair of mercy.

No man, though converted, has any assurance, except he is specially watchful, and except he have special assistance of God's grace, to be preserved from any sin, except that against the Holy Ghost; but if he be watchful over his ways, and do improve the grace of God in him after conversion, seeking unto God for increase of grace, then he, as well as the apostle Paul, may be kept from such gross sins as are of the foulest nature, otherwise not, 1 Cor. iv. 4.

Indeed, they that are born of God, have received the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit, that seed of grace, which ever remains in them. Whence it is that they sin otherwise in a state of regeneracy than they did before; insomuch that the Scripture of truth, notwithstanding the after sin, saith, that whosoever is born of God sins not, 1 John iii. 9; not that they are free from the act and guilt of sin, for in many things we sin all, saith James, James iii. 2; but because they sin not with full consent, Rom. vii. 15, &c. They are not servants to sin; they do not make a trade of sin, as they did in their unregeneracy, John viii. 34.

Rom. vi. 16, 18, 19, 20, 22. Neither do they sin the sin unto death, 1 John v. 17, 18, which all unregenerate men may, and some do. Yet for all this, it may, and often does come to pass, that, partly from Satan's malice and power, partly from the remains of corrupt nature, and partly from God's just judgments on many, because of their negligence and presumption, their conceit of their own strength, or their censoriousness and unmercifulness to them that had fallen, that true Christians may fall into some particular gross sin or sins, for matter, greater than ever before conversion.

(4.) Doubts of sanctification from the want of affectionate sorrow for sin; and the defects of repentance.

Others yet complain and say, they fear they have not repented, they feel that they cannot repent; for they cannot grieve as they ought. They can pour out floods of tears, more than enough for crosses, but many times they cannot shed one tear for sin. They do nothing as they ought to do. They live in their sins still. How then can they be said to have repented, and to be sanctified?

If by doing as you ought, you mean perfectly fulfilling every point and circumstance of the law, never any mere man did thus; if you could do as you ought, what need have you of Christ Jesus as a Saviour and an Advocate?

But if by doing as you ought, you mean a doing according as God, now, qualifying the rigor of the law by the graciousness of the gospel, does require of you, and in Christ will accept of you; namely, to will and endeavour in truth to do the whole will of God; then, if you will, desire, and endeavour to mourn for sin, to repent, and obey as you should, you may truly be said to do as you ought, Isa. i. 19. And in this case, look by faith to the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, your surety and redeemer, Rom. viii. 4.

And as for weeping at crosses, sooner or more than for sins, this does not always argue more grief for one than for the other: for weeping is an effect of the body, following much the temper thereof; also sense apprehends a natural object, or matter of bodily grief, in

such a manner, that the body is wrought upon more sensibly, than when a spiritual object of grief is only apprehended by faith. Wherefore bodily tears flow easily from sense of crosses, and more hardly from thoughts of sin: for spiritual objects do not ordinarily work passions in the body so soon, nor so much, as bodily and sensible objects do. Grief for a cross is more outward and passionate; thence tears; but spiritual grief is more inward and deep, in which cases, tears lie so far off, and the organs of tears are so much contracted, and shut up, that they cannot be fetched or wrung out, but with much labour. When you are bidden in Scripture to mourn and weep for your sins, nothing else is meant, but to grieve much, and to grieve heartily, as they do, who weep much at outward calamities. Besides it is not unknown that even in natural grief, dry grief is many times greater than that which is moistened, and overflows with tears. And some soft effeminate spirits can weep at any thing, when some harder spirits can weep at nothing. As the greatest spiritual joy is not expressed in laughter, so neither is the greatest spiritual grief expressed in tears. God regards the inward sighing of a contrite heart, more than the outward tears of the eyes, *Psa. li. 17.* An hypocritical Saul, being overcome with kindness, *1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 18,* and a false-hearted Ahab, being upon the rack of fear, *1 Kings xxi. 27, 29,* may in their qualms and passions weep, and externally humble themselves, and that in part for sin; when a dear child of God may not be able to command one tear. The time when God's children have most plenty of tears, is when the extremity and anguish of grief is well over, namely, when their hearts begin to melt through hope of mercy, *Zech. xii. 10.*

And as for leaving sin altogether; Who ever did it in this life? Who ever shall! Since there is no man that lives, and sins not, *2 Chron. vi. 36.* But mistake not, you may through God's grace have left sin, when yet sin has not left you. For whosoever hates sin, and resolves against it, and in the law of his mind

would not commit it; but is drawn to it by Satan, and by the law of his members: and, after it is done, does not allow it, but disclaims it with grief; this man has left sin, Rom. vii. 23. And if this be your case, it may be said of you, as the apostle said of himself: it is not you that do evil; but it is sin, that dwells in you, Rom. vii. 20.

(5.) Doubts of sanctification on account of dulness in spiritual duties.

Many yet complain, they cannot pray, read, hear, meditate, nor get any good by the best companies, or best conferences which they can meet with. They are so dull, so forgetful, so full of distraction, and so unfruitful, when they go about, or have been about any thing that is good, that they fear they have no grace at all in them; yea, it makes them sometimes to forbear these duties; and for the most part to go about them without heart.

It is not strange that it should be so with you; so long as there is a Satan to hinder you, and so long as you carry about the old man and body of sin in you. Moreover, do you not many times go about these holy duties remissly, negligently, only customarily, without preparation thereunto, not looking to your feet, and putting off your shoes before you approach unto God's holy things, and holy presence? Do you not many times set upon those holy duties in the power of your own might, and not in the power of God's might; or have you not been proud, or too well conceited of yourselves, when you have felt that you have performed good duties with some life; or, are you sure, that you should not be spiritually proud, if you had your desire in doing all these? Further, do you not miscall things; calling that, no prayer, no hearing, &c., or no fruit, because you do them not so well, nor bring forth so much, as in your spiritually covetous desires you long to do, and have? If it be thus with you, then first mend all these faults, confess them to God, and ask mercy. Next be thankful for your desires, to pray, read, hear, &c., and for your longing to do all these as you should; prosecute those desires, but

always in the sense of your own insufficiency, and in the power of God's might; then all the fore-mentioned duties will be performed with less difficulty and more fruit and comfort.

Yet because in all these duties you travel heavenward up the hill, and your passage is against wind and tide, and with a strong opposition of enemies in the way; you must never look to perform them without sense of much difficulty and little progress in comparison of what you aim at in your desires. It concerns you therefore to ply your oars, and to apply yourselves by all means, to work out your salvation with fear and trembling; I mean, with fear to offend in any of the afore-mentioned duties, not in fear that you have no grace, because you cannot perform them as well as you should, and would, Phil. ii. 12. For since you feel and bewail your dulness, deadness, and unprofitableness in holy services, it argues that you have life, because no man feels corruption, and dislikes it, by corruption, but by grace. I am sure that such as have no true grace, can, and do daily, fail in all these duties, but either they find not their failings, or if they do, yet they complain not of them with grief and dislike. If you heartily grieve, because you do no better, your desires to do as you should do, are a true sign of grace in you, Neh. i. 11. For this duty is always well done, in God's account, where there is truth of endeavour to do well, and true grief that it is done no better.

And whereas you say, that by reason of want of spiritual life in holy duties, you have been made to neglect them altogether, I pray, what have you got thereby, but much grief, and uneasiness? But tell me, how is it with you? are you pleased with yourself in your neglect; or is it so that you can have no peace in your heart until you set yourselves diligently to do those duties again, as well as you can? If so, it is a sign that you are not quite destitute of saving grace.

(6.) Doubts of sanctification from sudden dulness after duties.

Others, when they have been at holy exercises, and

in good company have felt joy, and sweet comfort therein; but afterward, oftentimes much dulness has suddenly seized upon them; which makes them fear they have no root in themselves, and that their joys and comforts were not sound.

This dulness after fresh comforts may, and often does befall those, in whom is truth of grace, but commonly through their own fault. And to speak freely to you; it may be you were not thankful to God for your joys and comforts when you had them; but did ascribe too much to yourselves, or unto the outward means by which you had them. Or it may be, you did too soon let go your hold of these spiritual comforts, betaking yourself to worldly business, or to other thoughts, before you had sufficiently digested these, and before you had committed them under safe custody, insomuch that the devil finding your comforts lie loose, and unguarded, steals them from you; or else haply the Lord knows that you are not able to bear the continuance of your joys and comforts, but your hearts will be over-light and overjoyed, and exalted above measure, 2 Cor. xii. 7; therefore in his just chastisements, or in his loving wisdom, God may suffer deadness in this sort to seize you.

(7.) Doubts of sanctification on account of being outdone by others.

There are also some, who, when they perceive that some new converts to religion, who have not had half of the time or means to be good as they have had, yet outstrip them in knowledge, faith, mortification, and willingness to die; doubt of the truth of their own graces.

It is more than you can certainly know, whether they have more saving grace than you; for when with a charitable eye you look upon the outside of another's behaviour, and shall look with a severe and searching eye into the corruptions of your own heart, you may easily, through modesty and charity, think others better than yourselves, and it is good for you so to do; an error in that case, if you do commit it, is tolerable. Many also can utter what they have, it

may be, better than you, and can make a small matter seem much, and a little to go far, when many times you, in modesty, may not set forth yourself, or, if you would, could not.

But let it be granted, that many of short standing in the school of Christianity, have got the start of you in grace: if it was through God's grace accompanying their diligence, and from his just hand upon you, following your negligence, then they are to be commended, and you are to be humbled, and to be provoked unto an holy emulation by them to quicken your pace, and to double your diligence. But take heed that it be not your pride and self love, which causes you not to bear it, that others should be better than yourselves.

It may be that it is not your fault, but it is from God's abundant grace unto others, above that which you have received: for the Scriptures make it evident, that God gives unto several men differently, according to his good pleasure, Eph. iv. 7; Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 11. Hence it was, that David became wiser than his teachers, and ancients, Psa. cxix. 99, 100, and the apostle Paul attained more grace than those that were in Christ before him. God gives unto some five talents, when he gives unto others but two; he that has most given him, gains in the same space of time, twice as much as the other, yet he that gained but two talents had his commendation, and his proportionable reward of well-doing. For the Lord saith unto him also, Well done, faithful servant, enter into thy Master's joy, Matt. xxv. 21—23. For he improved his talents according to the measure of grace received, though he gained not so much as the other.

Take heed that your eye be not evil, because God is good, Matt. xx. 15. May not he give as much unto the last as unto the first, and more, if he please? We should rather be thankful for the increase of grace in others, than either to repine at them, or, without ground, to conclude against the truth of our own. For we are much the better, if we would see it, for other's graces; God's kingdom is enlarged and strengthened

thereby ; the common good of Christ's body, which is the church, gains by it. Now the more excellent any member of the body is, according to his gifts and place, the rest of the members should therein the more rejoice, 1 Cor. xii. 26.

(8.) Doubts of sanctification from a sense of the hardness of the heart.

Lastly, Many yet will say, that their hearts remain hard and stony, yea, they say, that they grow harder and harder ; wherefore they think that the stony heart was never taken out of them, and that they remain un sanctified.

Know, that there are two sorts of hard hearts.

One total and not felt, which will not be broken, nor brought unto remorse either by God's threats, commandments, promises, judgments, or mercies ; Zech. vii. 11 ; but obstinately stands out in a course of sin, being past feeling, Eph. iv. 19.

The second is, a hardness mixed with some softness, which is felt and bewailed ; this is incident to God's children : of this the church complains, saying unto God, Why hast thou hardened our hearts against thy fear ? Isa. lxiii. 17. Now when the heart feels its hardness, and complains of it, is grieved, and dislikes it, and would that it were tender like Josiah's, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, so that it could melt at the hearing of the word ; this is a sure proof that the heart is regenerate and not altogether hard, but has some measure of true softness ; for it is by softness that hardness of heart is felt, witness your own experience ; for before the hammer and fire of the word were applied to your hearts, you had no sense of it, and never complained thereof.

You must not call a heavy heart, a hard heart ; you must not call a heart wherein is a sense of indisposition to good, a hard heart ; except only in comparison of that softness, which is in it sometimes, and which it shall attain unto, when it shall be perfectly sanctified ; in which respect it may be called hard. Whosoever has his will so wrought upon by the word, that it is bent to obey God's will, if he knew how, and if

he had power; this man, whatsoever hardness he feels, his heart is soft, not hard. The apostle had a heart held in, and clogged with the flesh, and the law of his members, that it made him to think himself wretched, because he could not be fully delivered from it; yet we know his heart was a sound heart, Rom. vii. 24.

Among those that are sanctified, there remains more hardness in the heart of some than in others; and what with the committing of gross sins, and cursory and slight doing of good duties, and through neglect of means to soften it, the same men's hearts are harder at one time than at another, of which they have cause to complain, and for which they have cause to be humbled, and to use all means to soften it; but it is false and dangerous, hence to conclude that such are not in a state of grace because of such hardness in the heart; for as God's most perfect children on earth know but in part, and believe but in part; so their hearts are softened but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

SECT. 11. FEARS OF APOSTASY, REMOVED.

THERE yet remain many, who though they cannot reply to the answers given to take away their false fears and doubts; but are forced to yield, that they find they now are, or at least have been in a state of grace; yet, this they fear, that they are already fallen, or shall not persevere, but shall fall away before they die.

(1.) What kind of Christians may apostatize.

Concerning falling away from grace, first know, that of those that give their names to Christ in outward profession, there are two sorts:

The first sort are such, who have received only the common gifts of the Spirit; as first, illumination of the mind to know the mystery of salvation by Christ, and truly to assent unto it, Heb. vi. 4, 5.

Secondly, Together with this knowledge, is wrought in them by the same Spirit a lighter impression upon

the affections, which the Scripture calls a taste of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come, Heb. vi. 4, 5. By these gifts of the Spirit, the souls of these men are raised to an ability to do more than nature, and mere education can help them unto; carrying them further than nature or art can do, by working in them a kind of spiritual change in their affections, and a kind of reformation of their lives.

But yet all this while they are not ingrafted into Christ; neither are deeply rooted, as the corn in good ground, nor yet are thoroughly changed and renewed in the inward man, Matt. xiii. 21; they have at best only a form of godliness, but have not the power thereof, 2 Tim. iii. 5.

Now these men may, and often do fall away, not into some particular gross sins, of which they were sometime after a sort washed; but into a course of sinning; falling from the very form of godliness, and may so utterly lose those gifts received, that they may in the end become very apostates; yet this is not properly a falling from grace. It is only a falling away from the common graces or gifts of the Spirit, and from those graces which they did seem to have, and which the church out of her charity did judge them to have; but they fall not from true saving grace, for they never had any, Luke viii. 18. For if ever they had been indeed incorporated into Christ Jesus, and had been sound members of his body, and in this sense had ever been of us, as the apostle John speaks, then they would never have departed from us, but should no doubt have continued with us, 1 John ii. 19.

(2.) Of such Christians as shall persevere.

The second sort of those that have given their names to Christ, are such as are endued with true justifying faith, and saving knowledge, and are renewed in the spirit of their mind; whereby, through the gracious and powerful working of the sanctifying Spirit, the word makes a deeper impression upon the will and the affections, causing them not only to taste,

but, which is much more, to feed and to drink deep of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; so as to digest them unto the very changing and transforming them, by the renewing of their minds, Rom. xii. 2, and unto the sanctifying of them throughout in their whole man, both in spirit, soul, and body, 1 Thess. v. 23; so that Christ is indeed formed in them, and they are become new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17; being made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4.

Now concerning these: it is not possible that any of them should fall away, either wholly or for ever.

(3.) How far a Christian may decline in grace, and the causes thereof.

Yet it must be granted, that they may decline and fall back so far, as to grieve the good Spirit of God, and to offend and provoke God very much against them, and to make themselves deserving of eternal death. They may fall so far as to interrupt the exercise of their faith, Psa. xxxii. 3, wound their conscience, Psa. li. 8—11, and may lose for a time the sense of God's favour, and may cause him, like a wise and good father, in his just anger, to chide, correct, and threaten them, so that they may have cause to think that he will utterly reject them, and never receive them into his heavenly kingdom; until, by renewing their faith and repentance, they return into the right way, and do recover God's loving kindness toward them again.

That you may understand and believe this the better, consider what grace God gives unto his elect, and how, and from what they may fall: also you must observe well the difference there is between the sinning of the regenerate and unregenerate, together with the different condition wherein they stand, while they are in their sins.

In the first act of conversion, I speak of men of years and discretion, God by his word through his Holy Spirit does infuse a habit of holiness, namely, a habit of faith, and all other saving graces; thus, every child of God receives that holy anointing of the

Spirit, 1 John ii. 20; that which the Scripture calls the seed remaining in him, 1 John iii. 9.

Secondly, God by his gracious means and ordinances of the gospel does increase this habit and these graces.

Now, because every man that is truly regenerate, carries about with him the body of sin and corruption, and lies open daily unto the temptations of the world and the devil; a truly regenerate man may be drawn, not only into sins of ignorance and common frailty, but into gross sins; whereby the light and warmth of God's Spirit may be so chilled and darkened, that he may break out into presumptuous sins. Yea, upon his negligent use, or omission of the means of the spiritual life and strength, God may justly give him over to a fearful declension in grace and backsliding; yet the truly regenerate fall only from some degrees of holiness, and from certain acts of holiness; but not from the infused habit of holiness; that blessed seed ever remains in him, 1 John iii. 9. His falling is either only into particular sins, and into much failing in particular good duties; or if it be towards a more general defection, yet it is never universal from the general purpose of well-doing, into a general course of evil.

For the regenerate man does never so sin, as the unregenerate man does, although for matter their sins may be alike, yea, sometimes those of the regenerate, greater. There is great difference in their sins, and manner of sinning.

1. Regenerate men may sin through ignorance, but they are not willingly and wilfully ignorant, as are the unregenerate in some things or other, 2 Peter iii. 5.

2. Regenerate men may commit, not only the common sins of infirmity; into which, by reason of the remains of the lusts of the flesh, they fall often; such as rash anger, discontent, doubts, fears, dulness, and deadness of heart in spiritual exercises, and inward evil thoughts and motions of all sorts; but they may also commit gross sins, such as an open and direct breach of God's commandments; yet those are done

against their general purpose, as David did, for he had said, he would look to his ways, Psa. xxxix. 1; and he had determined to keep God's righteous judgments, Psa. cxix. 106. Yea, many times they are done against their particular purposes, as Peter's denial of his Master, Matt. xxvi. 35. They are not usually contrived, or thought on before, but fallen into by occasion, or are forced thereunto by the violent corruption of the affections, or sensual appetites, 2 Sam. xi. 2; 2 Gal. vi. 1. Moreover, they do not make a trade and custom of sin; these kinds of sins do not pass them any long time unobserved; but are seen, bewailed, confessed to God, and prayed against; and are burdensome and grievous to them, making them to think worse of themselves, and to become base in their own eyes because of them. But it is usually directly otherwise with the unregenerate in all these particulars, Gen. xxvii. 41; Micah ii. 1.

3. The regenerate may not only commit sins gross for matter, but presumptuous for manner, namely, they may commit them not only against knowledge and consent, but with a premeditated deliberation, and determination of will, as David did in the murder of Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 8—25. But it is seldom that a child of God does commit presumptuous sins; his general determination and prayer is against them, Psa. xix. 13. It is with much strife and reluctance of will, and with little delight and content, in comparison. He never sins presumptuously, but when he is drawn thereunto, or forced thereupon by some overstrong corruption and violent temptation for the time, as David was, being over eagerly bent to hide his sin, and to save his credit: for if he could by any means have gotten Uriah home to his wife, he would never have caused him to be slain, 2 Sam. xi. 8—13. And although presumptuous sins cast him into a deadness and numbness of heart and spirit, in which he may lie for a time speechless and prayerless, as it was with David; yet he feels that all is not well with him, until he have again made his peace with God, Psa. xxxii. 3, 4. And when he has the ministry of God's power-

ful word, to make him plainly see his sin, then he will humble himself and reform it, 2 Sam. xii. 18; Psa. li. 12, 13. The unregenerate are not so.

4. Lastly. A regenerate man may fall one degree further, namely, he may so lose his first love, that he may, though not fall into utter apostasy, yet decline from good very far, even to a coldness and remissness in good duties, even in the exercises of religion, if not to an utter omission of them for a time. The life and vigour of his graces may suffer sensible eclipses and decay. Asa, though a good king, went apace this way, 2 Chron. xv. 17, as appears by his imprisoning the good prophet, and in oppressing the people in his latter days, and in trusting to the physicians, and not seeking to God to be cured of his disease, 2 Chron. xvi. 10, 12. And Solomon, the truly beloved of God in his youth, went further back, 2 Sam. xii. 24; Neh. xiii. 26; giving himself to all manner of vanities, Eccles. ii. and in his old age did so doat upon his many wives, that he fell to idolatry, or at least became accessory, by building them idol temples, and accompanying them to idolatrous services, insomuch that it is said, they turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father, 1 Kings xi. 3—20. Yet there is a wide difference between these backslidings, and the apostasies of men unregenerate. For these do not approve nor applaud themselves in those evil courses, into which they are backslidden, when, out of the heat of temptation, they do think of them; neither have the regenerate full content in them, but find vanity and vexation in them, as Solomon did even in the days of his vanity. They do not in this their declined estate, hate the good generally, which once they loved, but look back upon it with approbation; and their heart secretly inclines unto a liking of it, and of them who are, as they once were; so that in the midst of their bad estate, they have a mind to return, but that they are yet so hampered, and entangled with the snares of sin, that they cannot get out. Lastly, They in God's good time, by his

grace, do break forth out of this eclipse of grace, by the light whereof they see their wretchedness and folly, and are ashamed of their backsliding and revolting; and they again do their first works; and with much ado, recover their former joys and comforts, though it may be never with that life, lustre, and beauty, as in former times; and this as a just correction of their sin, that they may be kept humble, and be made to look better to their standing all the days of their life by it. It is not so with the hypocritical professors, who were never truly regenerate; but quite contrary, as you may observe in the apostasies of Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 6, 7, &c. and of king Joash, 2 Chron. xxiv. 11, 18—23, and Simon Magus, and others.

(4.) The differences between the falls of the sincere and insincere.

These differences rise hence, because that the common graces of the unregenerate are but as flashes of lightning, or as the fading light of meteors, which blaze but for a while; and are like the waters of land-floods, which because they have no spring to feed them, run not long, and in time may be quite dried up.

But the saving graces of the regenerate receive their light, warmth, and life from the Sun of righteousness, therefore can never be totally or finally eclipsed. And they rise from that well and spring of living water which cannot be drawn dry, or so dammed up, or stopped, but that it will run more or less, unto eternal life, John iv. 14,

As the regenerate man does not sin in such a manner as the unregenerate, with all his heart, so neither is he, when he has sinned, in the same state and condition, which the unregenerate is in. He is in the condition of a son, who notwithstanding his failings, abides in the house for ever. But not so the other; who, being no son, but a servant, is for his misdemeanour turned out, and abides not in the house for ever, 1 John viii. 35.

Although the regenerate as well as the unregenerate draw upon themselves, by their sins, the simple

guilt of eternal death, yet this guilt is not accounted, neither does it redound to the person of the truly regenerate, as it does to the others; because Christ Jesus has so satisfied, and does make intercession for his own, that his death is made effectual for them, but not for the others, John xvii, 9, 15, 20. Their justification and adoption by Christ remain unaltered; although many benefits flowing from thence are, for a while, justly suspended; they remain children still, though under their Father's anger; as Absalom remained a son uncast off, not disinherited by David, when yet his father would not let him come into his presence, 2 Sam. xiv. 24. This spiritual leprosy of sin, into which God's children fall, may cause them to be suspended from the use and comfortable possession of the kingdom of God, and from the enjoyment of the privileges thereof, until they be cleansed of their sin by renewed faith and repentance. Yet, as the leper in the law, had still right to his house and goods, although he was shut out of the city for his leprosy; so the truly regenerate never lose their right to the kingdom of heaven by their sins, Lev. xiii. 46; 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. For every true member of Christ is knit unto Christ by such everlasting bonds, whether we respect the relative union of Christ with his members by faith to justification, which, after it is once made by the Spirit of adoption, admits of no breach or alteration by any means, Rom. viii. 15—17, 35; or whether we respect the real union of the Spirit, whence flows sanctification, which though it may suffer decay, and admits of some alteration of degrees, being not so strong at one time as at another, yet can never quite be broken off, as has been proved, 1 John ii. 27; iii. 9; these bonds, I say, are so strong and lasting, that all the powers of sin, Satan, and hell itself, cannot separate the weakest true member from Christ, or from his love, or from God's love towards him in Christ, Rom. viii. 33 to the end.

This strength of grace, that keeps men from falling totally or finally from Christ, does not depend upon the strength or will of him that stands, but on the

election and determination of him that calls, Rom. ix. 11.

(5.) Why the faithful shall not finally apostatize.

And whereas it may be demanded why a man, who being at his highest degree of holiness, did yet fall back more than half way, may not as well, or rather fall quite away?

I answer, it is not in respect of the nature of inherent holiness in him; for Adam had holiness in perfection, yet fell quite from it, Gen. i. 27; iii. 6. There is nothing in the nature of this grace and holiness, excepting only in the root whence it springs, but that a man may now also fall wholly from it. But it is because grace is now settled in man on better terms. For the little strength we receive in regeneration, is, in point of perseverance, stronger than the great strength which the first Adam received in his creation. Adam was perfectly, but changeably holy; God's children in regeneration are made imperfectly, but unchangeably holy, Jer. xxxii. 40. This stability of grace now consists in this, in that all who, by faith and by the Holy Spirit, are ingrafted and incorporated into Christ, the second Adam, have the spring and root of their grace founded in him, and not in themselves, as the first Adam had, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. They are established in Christ, Eph. i. 4. Wherefore, all that are actual members of Christ cannot fall from grace altogether; for as Christ died to sin once, and being raised from the dead dies no more, Rom. vi. 5—12, so every true member of Christ, having part with him in the first resurrection, dies no more, but lives for ever with Christ. For all that are once begotten again unto a lively faith and hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, are kept, not by their own power, unto salvation, but by the power of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 1 Peter i. 3—5.

Now, that a man effectually called, can never fall wholly or for ever from a state of grace, I, in a few words, reason thus. If God's counsel, on which man's salvation is founded, be sure and unchangeable, 2 Tim.

ii. 19, and if his calling be without repentance, Rom. xi. 29:

If God's love be unchangeable and alters not, but whom God once loves actually, him he loves to the end, John xiii. 1:

If Christ's office of prophet, priest, and king, in his teaching, satisfying, and making intercession for, and in his governing his people, be after the order of Melchisedec, unchangeable and everlasting, he ever living to make intercession for them, Heb. vii. 21, 24, 25; and if his undertaking, in all these respects, with his Father, not to lose any whom he gives him, cannot be frustrated, John vi. 39; Luke xxii. 32; John xvii. 15:

If the seal and earnest of the Spirit be a constant seal, which cannot be razed; but seals all in whom it dwells unto the day of redemption, Eph. i. 13, 14:

If the word of truth wherewith the regenerate are begotten, be an immortal seed, which when once it has taken root, lives for ever, 1 Peter i. 23, 25:

If God be constant and faithful in his promise, and omnipotent in his power, to make good this his word and promise, saying, I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from my people and children to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. xxxii. 40:

Then from all, and from each of these propositions, I conclude, that a man once indeed a member of Christ, and indeed in a state of grace, shall never totally or finally fall away.

The patrons of the doctrine of falling from grace, when they cannot answer the invincible arguments which are brought to prove the certainty of a man's standing in a state of salvation; make a loud cry in certain popular objections, such as are very apt to take with simple and unstable people.

They first come with suppositions, and ask this and like questions: If David and Peter had died in the act of their gross sins, whether should they have been saved or no?

I answer, we have an English proverb, What if the sky fall? Propositions are but weakly grounded on mere suppositions. Should they ask, What if they had died in the act of their sins? Well, say they had died in the act of their sin, they could not die in their impenitence; they in an instant might return to God, and rely on Christ: or at least, if sudden death had surprised them; their general repentance and faith in Christ which they had before their fall, would have been sufficient for them. For their justification and adoption were not impaired, though their sanctification was diminished. But we must believe God's promise, and the issue will be this, though we cannot always tell how, that God will so guide his children with his counsel, that afterwards he will receive them to glory, Psa. lxxiii. 24.

Secondly, They object violently, that this doctrine of not falling wholly from God, and of certainty of salvation, after a man is once in a state of grace, is a doctrine of licentiousness and carnal liberty, causing men to be negligent in the use of means of grace, and careless in their Christian course; for when they once know they shall not be damned, they will live as they list; say they.

First, I appeal to ancient and daily experience, both in ministers and people. For those who have been most assured of God's favour, and of their salvation, have been and are more frequent in preaching, more diligent in hearing, and in the use of all good means of salvation, than those of the other opinion, and have been most holy and more strict in their lives. But the doctrine of these, that teach falling totally and finally from grace, they being the patrons of free-will, on which all the fabric of their building hangs, is rather a doctrine opening a door to licentiousness. For thinking that they may repent if they will, they judge themselves not so unwise but that they will and shall repent before they die, therefore they take liberty to live as they list in the mean time.

Secondly, The Scriptures, the nature of saving faith, and all sound judgment, do reason quite con-

trary; for the certainty of the end does not hinder, but excite and encourage men in the use of all good means which conduce unto that end. Christ knew certainly that he should attain his end of mediatorship, viz. the salvation of men's souls; but this was no cause why he might be negligent in the means. Was there ever any more earnest in prayer, or more longing to finish his work, than our blessed Saviour, although he was infallibly certain that he should save and glorify man, and that God would glorify him? John xvii. 1. When Daniel knew certainly the time of deliverance out of captivity, he was not hereby carnally secure, and careless in the use of all good means to hasten it; but betook himself to fasting and prayers, that God's people might be delivered, Dan. ix. x. Because God assured David that he would build him a house, therefore, saith he, thy servant has found in his heart to pray, viz. that thou wouldest establish it, 2 Sam. vii. 27. What child is there, that has an ingenuous disposition, or any real goodness in him, will slight, and neglect to please his father, because he has assured him of a large inheritance, or because his inheritance is entailed upon him?

None but those who are indeed destitute of grace will ever wrest and pervert the doctrines of grace, making them to be unto them licences, and occasions of wantonness and sin, Jude 4; Rom. v. 21; so as to say, If where sin abounded, grace abounded much more; then, let us sin that grace may abound; and if we are not under the law but under grace, then let us sin, because we are not under the law but under grace, Rom. vi. 1, 15.

But as any man has truth of grace, the more he knows it, the more he reasons otherwise. Ezra having not only a hope, but the possession of that which God has promised; he does not say, Now we may live as we list, but saith, Should we again break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14. An honest heart makes the same inference from spiritual deliverances. The Scripture, from the abundance of God's grace, and from the certainty of it, does reason for grace and for

obedience. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live yet therein? Rom. vi. 2. And in another place the apostle John saith, We know that we are the children of God, &c., but what is the inference? Is it, we may now sin, and live as we list, because we know that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him? No, the holy apostle infers this, He that has this hope, purifieth himself as he is pure, 1 John iii. 1—3.

SECT. 12. SUNDRY DOUBTS REMOVED; IN PARTICULAR,
ABOUT FALLING FROM GRACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that has been said, concerning the certainty of perseverance in grace, after the Christian has been truly converted unto God; yet many will doubt they shall fall away;

(1.) Because they fear that all their religion has been but in hypocrisy, and in form only, but not in power; now such may fall away, as has been said.

If it were true, that all which you have done were in hypocrisy, then until you repent of your hypocrisy, and be upright, you may justly fear as much; yet you must not desperately conclude, that you shall fall away from your profession; but should rather be quickened and stirred up by this fear to abandon hypocrisy and to serve the Lord in sincerity; and hereby make your calling and election sure, that you may not fall; and then you have God's word for it, that you shall never finally perish, Psa. xv. 1, 2, 5.

Many think that they are hypocrites, who yet are sincere; wherefore try whether you be an hypocrite or upright, by the signs of uprightness before delivered, Chap. XI., Sect. I.

Only, for the present, note this; when was it known, that an hypocrite did so see his hypocrisy, as to have it a burden to him, and to be weary of it, and to confess it, and bewail it, and to ask forgiveness heartily of God; and above all things to labour to be upright? If you find yourselves thus disposed against hypocrisy, and for uprightness, although I would have you hum-

bled for the remainder of hypocrisy which you discern to be in you; yet chiefly I would have you to be thankful to God, and to take comfort in this, that you feel it, and dislike it: thank God therefore for your uprightness, comfort yourselves in it, and cherish and nourish it in you, and fear not.

(2.) Fears because of the decay of grace and comfort removed.

Others object, that they are already fallen far backward in religion; they do not feel so much zeal and fervency of affection to goodness, nor against wickedness; nor do they now enjoy those comforts and clear apprehensions of God's favour towards them, as they did in their first conversion.

It may be that you are declined in the ways of godliness, and have lost your first love, from whence all those inconveniences have arisen; but may it not befall any child of God to have lost his first love, as well as a whole church, the church of Ephesus? Rev. ii. 4. You could not from thence conclude that Ephesus was no church, neither can you hence conclude, that you are none of God's children, or that you shall not hold out unto the end. But if it be so, be willing to see your sin, and to be humbled, and repent heartily of it; following the counsel of Christ, remember whence you are fallen, repent and do your first works, Rev. ii. 5; and certainly God's child shall have grace to repent, Psa. lxxiii. 24, lxxxix. 30, 32; then you, enduring to the end, shall not be hurt of the second death, notwithstanding that sin of yours in losing your first love, Rev. ii. 11.

But it may, and often does happen, that a true child of God does in his own feeling think he has less grace now than at first, when it is not so; the reasons of his mistake may be these:

At the first a truly regenerate man does not see so much as afterwards he does. At first you had, indeed, the light of the Sun, but as at the first dawning of the day, whereby you saw your greater enormities, and reformed many things, yea, as you thought, all; but now since the Sun being risen higher towards the per-

fect day, shines more clearly, it comes to pass, that in these beams of the sun, as when it shines into a house, you may see more motes, and very many things amiss in your heart and life, which were not discovered nor discerned before; you must not say you had less sin then, because you saw it not, or more sin now, because you see more. For as the eye of your mind sees every day more clearly, and as your hearts grow every day more holy; so will sin appear unto you every day more and more, for your constant humiliation and daily reformation. For a Christian, if he go not backward, sees in his advanced lifetime more clearly, what is yet before him to be done, and with what an high degree of affection he ought to serve God, and to what an height of perfection he ought to raise his thoughts in his holy aim, which in the infancy of his Christianity he could not see; hence his error. Even as it is usual for a novice in the University, when he has read over a few systems of the arts, &c., to conceit better of himself for scholarship, than when he has more profound knowledge in those arts afterwards, for then he sees his difficulties, which his weak knowledge not being able to pry into, passed over with presumption of his knowing all.

Secondly, Good desires, and enjoyments of comforts are sudden, new, and strange at first, which suddenness, strangeness, and newness of change, out of a state of corruption and death, into the state of grace and life, is more sensible, and leaves behind a deeper impression, than can possibly be made, after such time that a man is accustomed to it: or than can be added by the increase of the same grace. A man that comes out of a close, dark, and stinking dungeon, is more sensible of the benefit of a sweet air, of light and liberty the first week, than he is seven years after he has enjoyed these to the full. Let a mean man be raised suddenly and undeservedly to the state and glory of a king, he will be more sensible of the change, and will be more ravished with the glory of his estate for the first week or month, than at ten years' end when he is accustomed to the heart and state of a

king, yea more, than if at ten years' end, double power and glory should be conferred on him.

Thirdly, God for special causes is peculiarly tender of his scholars, when they first enter into Christ's school: in like manner does he deal with his babes in Christ, before they can go alone, Isa. lxvi. 12.

Do not wise schoolmasters, the better to encourage their young and fearful scholars, show more outward expressions of affection and kindness towards them the first week that they come to school, yea, it may be, show more countenance and familiarity towards them their first week than ever after, until the time that they send them to the University? And has not a young child more attendance, and fewer falls in his or her infancy, while carried in the arms, or led in the hands of his father or mother, than when it goes alone? But when it goes alone, it receives many a fall, and many a knock; yet this does not argue less love in the parents, or less strength in the child now, than when it was but one or two years old.

Fourthly, Although God's trees, planted in his courts, Psa. xcii. 14, always should, and usually do in their advanced years, bear more and better fruit, than they did or could do in their youth; yet these, through a false apprehension of things, may judge themselves to be more barren in their age, than they were in their youth. It may be, you feel not in you that vigour, heat, and ability to perform good duties now in age, as you did in your younger days; but may not this arise from natural defects, as from want of memory, quickness of thought, or of natural heat and vigour of your spirits, all which are excellent handmaids to grace? You may observe this in older Christians, who have long walked with God, that in their age, they have these natural defects recompensed with better and more lasting fruit; as with more fixedness and soundness of judgment, more humility, more patience and experience, wherewith their grey hairs are crowned in the way of righteousness, 1 John ii. 12, 13. Look for these, and labour to improve yourselves in them in your age, and they will prove more bene-

ficial to you, than your fresh feelings, and your sensibly felt zeal in your younger times, Prov. xvi. 31.

(3.) Fears of backsliding and apostasy, from the examples of others, removed.

There are yet others, it may be the same, when they observe that many who are of longer standing than themselves, who have had much more knowledge, and have made a further progress in the practice of godliness than they, are yet fallen fearfully into some gross sin or sins; yea, some of them are departed from the faith, and have embraced with Demas this present world, either in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or pride of life, 2 Tim. iv. 10. They are some of them fallen to popery, or some other false religion; wherefore they fear that they shall fall away also, and that their hearts will deceive them in the end.

That the falls of others should make all that stand to take heed lest they fall, is the express will of God, 1 Cor. x. 12. It is a high point of wisdom for you to observe and do it. Likewise to fear so much as to quicken you to watchfulness and prayer, is an holy and commendable fear; but to fear your total or final falling away, only because some that have made profession of the same religion are fallen, is without ground.

For it may be, those whom you see to be fallen away, never had any other than a form of godliness, and never had more than the common graces and gifts of the Spirit. For if they be quite fallen from the faith, it is because they were never soundly of the faith, 1 John ii. 19. Moreover, grant some of them who are fallen, had saving grace; may they not, with David, Psa. li, and Solomon, Eccles., recover their falls? This you should hope and pray for, rather than by occasion of their falls, to trouble yourself with false and fruitless fear.

(4.) Fears of apostasy in times of persecution.

Lastly, Some yet fear, that if persecution should come because of the word and religion which they profess, they should never hold out, but shall fall away.

Do you thus fear? Then buckle close unto you the complete armour with the girdle of sincerity, exercise yourselves beforehand at your spiritual weapons: with all watchfulness preserve your peace with God, under whom, at such times, you must shelter yourselves, and by whose power it is that you must stand in that evil day, Ephes. vi. 11, 13, 14. But know that a child of God need not fear persecution with such discouraging and distrustful fear, neither should you; for this will but give advantage to your enemies of all sorts, and will make your hands feeble, and your hearts faint. Raise up your spirits, and chase away your fears thus: Consider the goodness of your cause. Consider the wisdom, valour, and power of him that has already redeemed you with his blood, who has already led captivity captive, who is your champion, and has engaged himself for you, until he has brought you to glory; I mean Christ Jesus, who is Lord of Hosts, under whose banner you fight in the whole Christian warfare. Consider likewise the faithfulness of God's promise, made to all his children, concerning his presence and help in time of persecution; commanding them not to take thought concerning it, having promised to give them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries shall not be able to resist, Luke xxi. 14, 15. Consider, last of all, the blessed experience which the holy martyrs have had of God's love and help, according to his promise, in their greatest persecutions and fiery trials. Observe the wisdom and courage of those who in their own nature were but simple and fearful. Read the Book of Martyrs next after the Scriptures for this purpose, and through God's grace, though you were naturally as fearful as hares, when you shall be called to it, you shall be as courageous as lions.

It is not hard for you to know now, whether you shall be able in time of persecution to stand fast and not fall away. If you now, in the peace of the gospel, can deny yourselves in your lusts, through love to God, and for conscience sake towards him, and can rather part with them, than with the sincere adherence to

Christ, then you shall be able, and you will deny yourselves in the matter of your life, if you be put to it in time of persecution, rather than deny Christ. For this first is as difficult as the latter; and the same love to God, and conscience of duty, which does now uphold you, and bear you through the one, will then rather uphold and bear you through the other. For in times of trial and suffering for his name, you may look for his more special assistance.

Wherefore I wish all who are troubled with false fears, to rest satisfied in these answers to their doubts: and I would have them give over calling their election, God's love, their justification, or their final perseverance into question: but rather fill yourselves with hope and assurance of God's favour, I speak still to burthened consciences, comforting yourselves therein; abounding in thanksgiving to God for what you have, rather than repining in yourselves, for what you want.

(5.) Fears arising from the deceitfulness of the heart, removed.

Yet I know there are some, as if they were made all of doubting, will object, my heart is deceitful I doubt all is not, I doubt all will not be, well with me.

If your heart be deceitful, why then do you believe it, when it casts in these doubts? and why do you trust to it more than unto the evidence of the word of God, and the judgment of his faithful ministers; who, by the word, give most satisfying resolutions to your doubts; which also administer unto you matter of assured hope and comfort?

(6.) Doubts from present weakness and fears answered.

Another will say, I do even faint in my troubles, and in my fears, and I am ready to give all over. What shall I do? What would you have me to do?

Your case is not singular, many others have been, and are in this case; it is no otherwise with you than it was with the Psalmist and Jonah; do as they in that case did: First, Give not over, but remember God, call upon him, give him no rest. Secondly Trust on him, and wait until you have comfort, Psal.

xxvii. 23, 24. That holy man of God said, My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Psa. lxxiii. 26. Likewise Jonah; I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again towards thine holy temple, Jonah ii. 4, 7. And again, When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came up unto thee, into thine holy temple; that is, as if he had said unto God, I prayed unto thee in the name of Christ, and thou didst hear me. When you walk in the darkness of affliction and inward discontent, He, to whom God gave the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in due season to him that is weary, gives you counsel, saying, Who is among you that fears the Lord, and obeys the voice of his servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God, Isa. l. 4, 10. Psa. xxvii. 23, 24. Observe it, he that fears the Lord, and obeys his voice, yet may be in darkness and have no light; what darkness is this, but that spoken of ver. 4. viz. an afflicted weary soul, without light or comfort? And men, thus distressed, must trust in the Lord, and stay upon their God.

(7.) Fears of not enjoying the promises, for not sufficiently performing the conditions.

Yet these poor souls, who, whether they should be sharply reprov'd, or pitied more, is hard to say; I am sure they deserve both, will yet object strongly, It is true, they that fear God and obey him, may trust in the Lord, and stay upon God. And he has made most rich promises to them that know him, and do fear and obey him. See, here is a promise with condition, saith one, I must fear the Lord, I must obey him, I know God will do his part, if I could do mine, but these I do not; what warrant then have I to look for comfort, or any thing at God's hand, for his promises belong not to me?

I know well, that with this doubt the devil does much perplex the afflicted souls of many of God's dearest children, and by it keeps off all the remedies which God's word can afford, so that they fasten not

upon them to do them good. For the propositions of the word are easily assented unto; but all the matter lies in the application to the wound. It is still put off with, This is true which you say, but it belongs not to me, for I do not fulfil the condition required on my part.

Wherefore that I may, by God's help, fully satisfy this doubt, and quite remove this scruple of scruples, it must be carefully observed, that God makes some promises with condition; and that he makes some absolute promises, without any condition on man's part. Would you know what promises only are made with condition to be fulfilled on man's part, and what promises are absolute?

Know that many promises in the word concern the end of man's faith, which is salvation itself, and the recompence and reward of well-doing, whether corporal or spiritual, whether it be temporal or eternal. These are made with condition; namely, to those, and only to those who believe in the name of God, and that love, fear, and obey him. For it does not consist with the wisdom and holiness of God, to bestow heaven and his good blessings upon any, until they be thus qualified and made meet to receive them.

Know secondly, and observe it diligently, that there are many promises in the word which concern God's free giving the said grace of fear and obedience, required as means to obtain the former promises of good things, even an ability to perform the condition in the fore-mentioned promises; I mean not such a power as that they may fulfil the condition if they will, or if they will not they may choose. But God has made absolute promises to give men power actually to will and to do the things required in the conditional promises, in such a manner that he will accept both will and deed, and in some cases the will for the deed, so as to fulfil those his conditional promises of salvation, &c. Heb. viii. 10; Phil. ii. 12.

That you may understand me fully, I will instance in some of the chief promises in this kind, made to every member of Christ, without exception. This is

the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, that is, with the whole church of God, Heb. viii. 10, a new covenant—and I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, Jer. xxxi. 31, 33. He does not say, he will be their God if they will be his people, but saith absolutely, they shall be my people. Which that they might be, both there and elsewhere, he has said absolutely, without condition, they shall be all taught of God, Isa. liv. 13; John vi. 45. He promises likewise, saying, I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 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, &c. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. And not for your sakes do I this, saith he, be it known to you, be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel, ver. 32. And again he saith, I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. xxxii. 40. Note this also, in very many places, God promises his blessing to them that fear him and keep his commandments; there he promises with condition; here he absolutely promises those on whom he intends to bestow these blessings, that he will put his fear in their heart, that they may be capable of them: and, which is more to the end that men might repent, believe, and live godly, which is the condition to which the promise of forgiveness and salvation is made, God declares that he has raised Christ, and exalted him to be a Prince and Saviour, to give this faith and repentance, that their sins may be forgiven, and their souls saved by him, Acts v. 30, 31. I pray consider well whether all these promises of this sort be not made absolutely on God's part, and without any condition on man's part.

Wherefore, whereas God has made many excellent promises of free and great rewards; as, to hear the prayers, and fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and to give life and glory to them that believe and obey him, and that hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope to the end; you see that here are promises of the first sort made with a kind of condition; but that God will give his people both to will and to do these things required in the condition, he has absolutely promised; as has been clearly proved.

If you yet reply and say, Are not these latter promises made under condition of our well using the outward means thereof, such as hearing of the word, prayer? &c.

God, indeed, commanded these means to be used; and, if we perform them aright, God will not fail to bless the good use of these means; but this well using them is not in our own power, neither is it a condition for which God is necessarily bound to give faith, and to plant his fear in our hearts, any otherwise than by his promise; but it is a condition by which he has ordained usually to give these graces to all who in the use of them shall wait upon him for them. For both the giving of his word, and the giving us minds to hear the word, and the opening of the heart to attend, and the convincing and alluring of the heart to obey; depend all upon those absolute promises, They shall be taught of God, and the rest before-mentioned, Isa. liv. 13.

Wherefore, let none of years think that without hearing, praying, and the right using of God's ordinances, that ever they shall have faith, and the fear of God wrought in them, or shall ever come to heaven. For we are commanded to pray, hear, &c. and that in faith, or else we can never look to receive any thing of the Lord, Heb. iv. 2; James i. 7. And doing what lies in man's power, in the right using the means of salvation is of great consequence, although it be not a sufficient cause to move God necessarily to give grace; for I am persuaded that the best should have more grace, if they would do what in them lay continually to make good use of the outward means

of grace; and the worst should be guilty of less sin, if they would do what in them lay to profit by the good use of the said means. And the neglect, or the abusing of the means, is a sufficient cause why God should not only withhold grace, but condemn men for refusing it, Psa. lxxxix. 11, 12; Matt. xxi. 43.

(8.) Fears of salvation, for want of such graces as God has promised, removed.

But some will yet say, Let all that has been said be granted, yet I find that God has not fulfilled these his absolute promises to me; for I do not yet fear God and obey him. How can I hope? How can I but fear my estate to be bad?

Let this for the time be granted, that God has not planted his fear in your heart, &c. as yet; may he not do it hereafter? Since he has made such excellent and absolute promises of grace, will you not attend to the appointed means of grace, and hope for the blessing of God in his own time? and will you not wait, and be glad if they may be fulfilled at any time? Times and seasons of God's communicating his graces are reserved to be at his own disposing, not at ours. It should be your care diligently to attend upon God's ordinances, and when you read or hear the word or will of God, to endeavour to believe and obey it; as when he saith, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Thou shalt believe in the name of the Lord thy God, and trust in his name. Thou shalt obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and serve him, and such like. Attend to the word carefully, and because his word is infallibly true, and excellently good, labour to believe and to approve it; and say within yourselves, These are true, these are good, this I ought to do, this I would believe and do, Lord help me, and I will do it; O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes, Psa. cxix. 5. In such exercises of the reasonable soul, it pleases God to give his grace, both to will and to do his commandments.

But, secondly, do not say you have not faith, nor the fear of God, and love to him, when in truth you have them. For what kind of duties are these, think

you? Are they legal, which require perfect, exact, and full degrees of faith, fear, and love? Or are they not evangelical, such as require truth and sincerity in all these, and not full and absolute perfection? If you have true desire to fear him, which is the one measure of the fear of God's people, Neh. i. 11; so if you desire to believe, Matt. ix. 24, and have a will to obey, Isa. i. 19, in the inmost longing of your soul, according to the measure and strength of grace in you; this, according to the tenor of the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is true and acceptable through Christ, for whose sake God does accept the will for the deed, in all such cases wherein there is truth of will and endeavour, but not power to do, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Furthermore, if you think that it is your well-doing which must make you acceptable to God, you are in a proud and dangerous error. Indeed God will not accept of you, if you do not endeavour to do his will; but you must propose to yourself another end, than to be accepted for your well-doing; you must do your duty to show your obedience to God, and to show your thankfulness, that God has pleased, and does please to accept you in his Son Christ; and that it is your desire to be accepted through him.

But I would have you, who are pressed with the load of your sins, to look judiciously and impartially into yourself; it may be, you have more faith, fear of God, and obedience, than you are aware of. Can you grieve, and does it trouble you that you have so little faith, so little fear of God, and that you show so little obedience? And is it your desire and endeavour to have more, and to do as well as you can; though you cannot do so well as you should? Then you have much faith, fear, and obedience. For to grieve for little faith, fear, and obedience, is an evident sign of much faith, fear, and obedience. For whence is this trouble and grief, but from God's saving grace? And to grieve for little, shows that you long for and would have much.

Let this suffice for a full answer to the principal

doubts, wherewith fearful hearts distress themselves continually. Never yield to your fears, wait on God still for resolution of your doubts in his best time; for it is not man that can, but it is God that both can and will speak peace to his people, not only outward, but inward peace, Psa. lxxxv. 8.

In the mean time, though you can have no feeling comfort in any of God's promises, yet consider God is the Lord, and that Christ is Lord of all, and you are his creature, owing to him all obedience, faith, and love: wherefore, you will, as much as you can, keep yourself from iniquity, and diligently strive to do his will, let him do with you as he pleases; yea, though he kill you, or though he give you no comfort till death, you will trust in him, and will obey him, and it is your desire to rest and hope in him as in your Redeemer; then, whether you know that God is yours or no, I am sure he knows you to be his; this is an argument of strong faith, and you are upon sure ground: The foundation of God remains sure: The Lord knows his; and who are they? Even all who professing his name, depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19. And whosoever in his heart would, he in truth does depart from iniquity.

(9.) Fears arising from manifold temptations, removed.

Something remains yet to be answered. Many say that, do what they can, they are assaulted still so thick with temptations, that they cannot have an hour's quiet.

What of that? Does it hinder your peace with God, that the devil, the world, and your lusts, God's sworn enemies, are not at peace with you? So long as you have peace of sanctification in this degree, that the faculties of soul and body do not mutiny against God's holy will, but hold a good correspondence in joining together against the fleshy lusts, which fight against the soul, you are in good case; I mean, when the understanding, conscience, and affections, are all willing to do their part against sin, their common enemy: not but that you will find a sensible warring and op-

position in all these, while you live here, even when you have most peace in this kind, but how? The unsanctified part of the understanding is against the sanctified part of the understanding; and the unsanctified will against the sanctified will, and so in all other faculties of the soul; the flesh in every part lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit in every part lusts against the flesh, Gal. v. 17. Now if your faculties and powers be ruled all by one spirit, you have a good agreement and peace within you, notwithstanding that the flesh does so violently war against the Spirit; for this warring of sin in your members against the Spirit, and the warring of the Spirit against sin, proves clearly that you have peace with God, and this war continued, will in time beget perfect peace.

But let no man ever look to have peace of sanctification perfect in this life; for the best are sanctified but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9; wherefore let no man, professing Christ, think that he shall be freed from temptations and assaults arising from within, or coming from without, so long as he lives in this world. Are not Christians called to be soldiers? Wherefore we must arm ourselves, that we may stand by the power of God's might, and quit ourselves like men against the assaults of our spiritual enemies, 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Is it any other than the common case of all God's children? 1 Cor. x. 13. Was not Christ himself tempted, that he might succour those that are tempted? Heb. ii. 18. Have you not a promise not to be tempted above that you are able? 1 Cor. x. 13. It is but resisting and enduring a while, yea a little while, 1 Peter v. 10; Heb. x. 37. Is there any temptation out of which God will not give a good issue? Has not Christ prayed that your faith fail not? Luke xxii. 32; John xvii. 15, 20.

Let us therefore keep peace in ourselves, that the whole man may be at agreement, and let us keep peace one with another, fighting against the common enemy, and the God of peace shall tread Satan and all enemies under foot shortly, Rom. xvi. 20; and then, through Christ, ye shall be more than conquerors,

Rom. viii. 37. You shall not only hold what you have obtained, but shall possess all that Christ has won for you. And the more battles you have fought, and in them, through Christ, have overcome, the greater triumph you shall have in glory.

SECT. 13. THE CHRISTIAN'S GROUND OF HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AGAINST ALL KINDS OF FEAR.

Now as a surplusage to all that has been said against groundless fears, which deprive poor souls of heavenly comfort; if any yet cannot be satisfied, but still fear that God is not at peace with them, I will propose a few questions, to which, if any soul can answer affirmatively, he may be assured of God's peace and love, and of his own salvation, whatsoever his fears or feelings may for the present be.

1. How stand you affected to sin? Are you afraid to offend God thereby? Is it so that you dare not wilfully sin? Is it your grief and burden that you cannot abstain from sin, get the victory over it, or deliver yourself from it so soon as you would, when you are fallen into it?

2. How stand you affected towards holiness and goodness, and unto the power of godliness? Is it your hearty desire to know God's will, that you may do it? Do you desire to fear him, and please him in all things? And is it your grief and trouble when you fail in well doing? And is it any joy to you to do well in any true measure?

3. How stand you affected to the church and religion of God? Are you glad when things go well in the church, though it go ill with you in your own particular? And are you grieved when things go ill in the church, when it may happen to be with you, as it was with good Nehemiah, Neh. i. 4; or Ichabod's mother, that all things go very well, or at least tolerably well, as to your own personal concern? 1 Sam. iv. 20, 21.

4. How stand you affected to men? Is it so that

you cannot delight in wicked men, because of their wickedness, but dislike them? Psa. xv. 4. Whereas, otherwise their parts and conditions are such, that you could much desire their company, Psa. xvi. 4. Do you love those that fear the Lord, and that delight in goodness, because you think they are good and are beloved of God? 1 John iii. 14; Psa. xvi. 3.

5. Can you endure to have your soul ripped up, and your beloved sin smitten by a searching minister, approving that ministry, and liking that minister so much the more? And do you, with David, desire that the righteous should reprove you? Psa. cxli. 5. And would you have an obedient ear to a wise reprover? Prov. xxv. 12.

6. Lastly, Though you have not always that feeling sense of your good estate, which is the certainty of evidence; nay, say you have it but seldom, or it may be, you can scarcely tell whether you have it at all; do you yet resolve, or is it your desire, and will you, as you are able, resolve to cleave to God, and depend upon Christ, and upon God's merciful promises made to you in him, seeking salvation in Christ by faith, and by none other, nor by any other means?

If you can answer, Yea, to all, or any one of these, you may assure yourselves that you are in God's favour, and in a state of grace. What though you cannot feel in yourselves, that you have this so sure as you would, by a full certainty of evidence, but it is your fault that you have it not so; yet you have it sure by the best certainty, namely, by a true faith in Christ, and an upright cleaving unto God. For when you are resolved not to sin wilfully and allowedly against God, and not to depart from him, whatever becomes of you; and it is your longing desire to please him: when I say, you stand thus resolved, and thus affected, then certainly God and you are joined together by an inseparable bond. When you hate what God hates, and love what God loves, and will what God wills; are not God and you at peace? Are you not nearly and firmly united one to another? What though this bond be somewhat secret and un-

seen to yourselves ; yet it is certain ; God knows you to be actually his, and will own you, when you seem to doubt it ; and will always hold you by your right hand, whether you feel it or no, Psa. lxxiii. 23. But why should you think that you are without evidence, when you cannot but feel that in truth you cleave thus to God, and stand thus affected to him ? Hence, if you were not wanting to yourselves, you might gain a most peaceable and joyous assurance, that you are in God's favour, and shall be saved. Thus much of removing the impediments.



CHAPTER XVI.

SHOWING THE MEANS TO ATTAIN THIS PEACE OF GOD.

IT yet remains, that I should show the helps and means to attain and keep this true peace of God, which passes all understanding.

SECT. 1. CAUSES OF ERROR IN MISJUDGING OF A PERSON'S STATE.

MEN often err in judging of their own estates, and in like manner in concluding that they have true peace, or not. If you would judge rightly, you must know what is necessary to the very being of a Christian, what not ; and this is to be learned only by the word of God. For many err herein, because they think that such and such things are necessary to the being in a state of grace, which are not ; and such and such things are sufficient to the being of a Christian, which are not.

Now you shall find, that it is truth of faith and other saving graces, not the great degree and quantity of them, that makes a Christian. And that it is not the

most forward profession and form of godliness, without the power and truth thereof, that will do it.

Nothing is more common than for persons to be in truth otherwise than they judge. For every man's own spirit, so far as it is sinful, is apt to give a false testimony of itself. David said, he was cut off from God, when he was not, Psa. xxxi. 22. The Laodiceans thought themselves in a good state, when Christ said they were wretched and miserable, Rev. iii. 17.

Now that you may not err in this great point, you must use all good means to have your judgment rightly informed: and then be willing to judge of yourself as you are, and of your peace with God as it is.

I told you, that the holy Scripture must be your guide, in judging what you should be, and what you are; I mean the Scripture rightly understood. Now to attain a right understanding of the Scripture, and ability to judge yourself by it, whether you be in a state of grace, from the knowledge whereof comes peace, look back to chap. viii. sect. iii. adding unto them the following directions.

SECT. 2. RULES FOR A RIGHT JUDGMENT OF OURSELVES.

1. OBSERVE a difference and distinction in true Christians, both in their different manner of calling, and estate after calling. Some are called in infancy, as Samuel, and John the Baptist: some are in middle and old age, as Abraham, and Zaccheus. Some called without sensible terrors of conscience, as those before mentioned. Some with violent heart-ache and anguish, as Paul and the jailor. In some, these terrors abide longer, in some a shorter time. And after conversion, all are not of like growth and strength. Some are babes, weak in judgment and affections; some strong men, strong in grace generally; but strong also in corruption in some particular. Some old men, so well grounded in knowledge, and confirmed in grace, that no lust gets head to prevail in them: also one and the same man may be sometimes in spiritual health

and strong, sometimes under a temptation, weak and feeble; sometimes can pray, &c., and enjoy comfort, sometimes not. Now, none must conclude he is no Christian, because he is not in every thing like others, nor at all times like himself.

2. Trust not your own judgment or sense, in your own case: whosoever would understand, and be wise according to the Scripture, must deny himself, and not lean to his own sense or wisdom, Prov. iii. 5; but must be a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18; you must bring your judgment to be ordered and framed by the Scriptures. You must not presume to put a sense of your own into the Scripture; but always take the sense and meaning out of it. It is presumption of a man's own opinion, and obstinacy in his own conceits, which spoils all in this case. And whence is this, but from his folly and pride? O, if you who are troubled in conscience could be every way nothing in yourselves; if you could be humbled, and not nourish this in you, you should soon know your state and comfort.

I know many of you will wonder that I should charge you with pride; you judging yourselves to be so base and vile as you do. Well, for all that, I will now prove to your faces, that it is humility you want; and that if you were not proud, you would judge of things otherwise than you do.

For you cannot believe in Christ, you say, because you cannot obey him, and be dutiful to him; if you could obey, then you could believe that he is yours, and you his; whereas, you must first believe in Christ, and take him for your Saviour and Lord, and believe he is yours, before you can obey him. Can a woman, or should a woman obey a man, and carry herself towards him as to her husband, before she believes that he is her husband? If you could obey as you should; O, then you think Christ would love you. It were well if you could love Christ, and obey him, as it is your duty. But to think he will not save you, because you have no goodness or worth in you to cause him to love you; is not this because you would

be something in yourself, for which Christ should bestow his love upon you? Christ marries you, not because you are good, but that he may make you good, and that you may know him, &c. Hosea ii. 19, 20.

But you do not see his work of grace in you, that he has made you good, therefore you doubt.

I answer, Though it may be in you, yet Christ hides it from you, because you would not renounce your own righteousness, and believe his mercy, power, and faithfulness. Bring your heart to this, and you have reason for it, for the Father gives him, and he gives himself to you in the word and sacraments; then you will love him, and obey him abundantly. Is not she a proud and foolish woman, who may have a king's son, upon condition that she strip herself of all her own goods, and let him endow her at his pleasure, yet will be whining and discontented with herself, because she has nothing of her own to bring to him, for which he should love her?

But you will still say, Christ has not endowed you with so much grace, as to be able to do as you would.

Content yourselves; if you could but see that he has married you to himself, you then would use the means which he has appointed, whereby he gives his graces; you would be thankful for what you have, you would pray and wait his pleasure for more, relying on his wisdom for how much, and when. If you do not thus, then you show your pride in preferring your own wisdom before his.

Let it be supposed that you are not proud, nor standing upon terms of having any goodness in you, for which Christ should love you; but you would with all your hearts be all that you are in him, and would be beholden to him for taking you, poor and base, as you are. Is there no other pride, think you, but when you judge well of yourselves, or would be thought well of for your goodness? Yes, there is another kind of pride, still as dangerous in this case of causeless doubting; and that is, to be well conceited of, and wedded unto your own knowledge, and to your own opinion in

judging yourselves. For instance, the holy Scriptures give you to understand, I speak still to such only as with all their souls would please God, yet can feel no comfort, that your state, in point of salvation, is good. And God's experienced children, yea, his faithful ministers, who dare not lie for God, much less to ease you, assure you according to the Scriptures, that your state is not as you say it is; but you think otherwise, and, having no sensible comfort, in your own judgment it is otherwise than either the Scripture or the ministers speak. Now when you will prefer your own opinion and sense, such as it is, before the judgment of God's word of truth, and before the judgment of God's ministers, judging according to his word, are you not highly conceited of your own opinion? And are you not strongly proud? Though, it may be, you thought otherwise.

Wherefore, if you understand things aright, you must have a mean conceit of your own understanding, of your own opinion, and of your own sense. For as you must deny your goodness, and be poor in respect of conceit of any goodness in you, if you would ever expect to have any goodness from Christ; so you must deny your own opinion, knowledge, sense, and wisdom, if you would know spiritual things aright, and become wise through Christ.

And that it may appear that you are not too well conceited of your own opinion concerning your spiritual condition, make use in this case of experienced Christians, but especially of judicious and godly ministers. Let no fear either of troubling them, nor yet of shaming yourself, hinder you. But do it according to these directions.

SECT. 3. DIRECTIONS FOR TROUBLED CONSCIENCES,
THEIR APPLICATION TO MINISTERS, OR OTHERS.

FIRST, Acquaint such an one with your case betimes; keep it not to yourself too long. For then like a bone long out of joint, and a festered wound, it will

not be so well, nor so easily cured; beside the vexation in the meantime.

Secondly, Deal plainly, truly, and fully, in showing the cause of your trouble; not doing as many, telling one part of your grief, and not another, which has been the cause that they have gone away without comfort. Either tell all or none in this case. If you think him not faithful, reveal nothing therefore to him: if you judge him a fit man, then show, as you would do your bodily maladies and diseases to a surgeon, or physician, if you would have them cured.

Thirdly, Believe them rather than yourselves in this case; hearken to them, and make use of their judgment and experience, and be not presumptuous of your own understanding and feeling. In times of your fears and doubts, be not rash and sudden in judging yourselves. The devil is a juggler, and your eyes are dazzled, and of all men you are the most unfit and incompetent to judge of yourselves in this case, for when groundless suspicion, and causeless fears have, like a headstrong colt, caught the bit in their teeth, they will, like to other passions, carry you headlong whither they list, contrary to all right reason and understanding. In such suspicion and fear of your estate, you are like a woman in the fit of her jealousy, who will pick matter out of every thing her husband does to increase her suspicion of him; if he be somewhat strange and austere, then, she says, he loves her not, but others better. If he be kind to her, then she thinks that this is but to dazzle and blind her eyes, that he may without suspicion give himself to others. Deal now ingenuously, and answer whether it is not, or whether it has not been so with you. I pray observe your absurd and contrary reasonings. When you prosper, thence you infer, Sure, God does not love me, for whom he loves, he corrects. When God corrects you, and lays upon you grievous afflictions, thence you conclude, Sure, God is wroth with me, and does not love me. If you be troubled in conscience, O, then God writes bitter things against you, you can have no peace. And when he gives you

quiet of mind, O, then you fear all arises from presumption, your case is naught, and it was better with you when you had trouble of mind. Is it not thus? Are you not ashamed that you have been thus senseless, and absurd in your own reasonings; and yet, this understanding, reason, and sense of yours must be hearkened unto, before the truth of God's word, and before the judgment of all men, though never so judicious. Will any body that is wise trust such a judgment? If an excellent physician for others, is seldom found to be the best physician for himself in a dangerous sickness, but will make use of one, it may be, inferior in judgment in physic to himself; for his own direction is not so well to be trusted in his own case; then, methinks, it should be your wisdom to make use of the judgment of others, and not follow your own sense.

But you will say, Shall I think otherwise of myself than I feel?

I answer; Aye, in some cases, or else you will be counted a wilful fool. As in the case of an ague, you taste your drink to be of an odd savour; before you had your ague, you knew it was well relished, and those who bring it, tell you it is the same; standers-by taste it for you, and say it is the same, and that it is excellently well relished. I hope you are wiser in such a case as this, than to conclude according to your feeling and taste; every one sees that the fault was in your palate, not in the drink. Even so is it with you, when the understanding is distempered with a shaking fit of groundless and faithless fear: wherefore, in this state, deny your own sense, and trust not your own judgment; but hearken unto the judgment of other men. And the rather, because God does therefore comfort men, and give them experience of his consolations, that they may comfort others in like cases, 2 Cor. i. 4. Also, he has given commandment to his more understanding and confirmed children, that they should comfort you, 1 Thess. v. 14; giving them to understand how it is with you in the matter of your soul, better than you can know of yourselves. Nay, God

has given to his ministers the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in due season to the soul that is weary, Isa. l. 4. Should not the judgments of these be regarded? But, which is most of all, God has not only given to ministers skill, to discern your state better than yourselves, but it is the duty of their office to declare to you, being penitent, the remission of your sins, John xx. 23; and to assure you, that, if it be with you, according as you thus relate your state to be, you are in God's favour, and in a state of grace.

I mean not that you should rest your faith upon any man's judgment; but when judicious men, being in better case to judge of you, than you are to judge of yourselves, shall by the word of God, and by authority from him, give you hope and comfort, you ought to comfort yourselves by these means.

Thus much I have said, that your judgment might be fitted to understand aright in what state you stand; which, if you will observe, it will be an excellent means towards the obtaining of peace.

Now I will show you by what means, you may have just cause and matter of your judgment to work upon, whence it may give you peace and comfort.

SECT. 4. MEANS TO GET AND PRESERVE TRUE PEACE.

IF you would have peace and comfort in your souls, then first and chiefly you must get and cherish the Spirit of God in you, that it may speak peace to you, and may give you matter for your spirit to work upon; whereby you may conclude, you are in God's favour. For, though I grant, that you can have no sure evidences of your adoption, say whatever can be said, until your spirits can witness that you are God's children; yet your spirits are not to be trusted in their witnessing, but only so far as the Spirit of God does witness to your spirits that it is so; that you are indeed his children, Whatsoever comfortable apprehension a man may have in himself of his good estate in grace, he can have no true joy and comfort, but by

the Holy Ghost, whose proper work it is to comfort, and who is therefore called the Comforter, John xiv. 16. For by him only a man can know, and by him a man may know, the things which are given him of God, 1 Cor. ii. 12.

But it will be said, The Spirit blows where it lists, how is it possible for any man by any means to get it?

In respect of man's own ability, it is as impossible for him to obtain the divine Spirit to dwell and work in his heart, as it was for those impotent folk, who lay waiting at the pool of Bethesda for the angel's coming to move the waters, to cause the said moving of the waters; yet they waited, the waters were moved, and they that continued patiently waiting at the pool were benefitted, John v. 3, 4. Thus if men will wait in the use of the means wherein and whereby God does give and continue his Holy Spirit to men, they may hope to enjoy this unspeakable blessing.

The first means to get the Spirit, is humility. To be sensible of the loss of that which once you had in Adam, you must mourn, and hunger and thirst after the Spirit, Matt. v. 3—6. If you will do thus, you may hope to receive the Spirit. For God saith, that he will pour water upon him that is thirsty, &c. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, saith he to the church, Isa. xlv. 3.

Secondly, That your heart may be stirred up to long for the Spirit, you must know that there is a Holy Ghost, and not only so, but you must know him to be God, and you must believe him to be the Comforter; and give him this honour and glory, as to believe in him, and conceive of him as the proper author of sanctification and comfort; this is the way to have the Spirit, and to be sure of it that you have it. Our Saviour saith, that the not knowing or believing hereof, is the cause why the world receive not the Spirit, John xiv. 17.

Thirdly, Be constant and diligent in waiting for the having, and for the increase of the gifts of the Spirit, in the holy exercises of religion, as, reading and meditating on the word of God, especially on the

blessed truths and promises of the gospel, &c. You must wait for it in the motions and stirring of God's word in you by God's means; then, as Cornelius and his company received it at Peter's sermon, Acts x. 44, and as the Galatians, at the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 5, so may you. For the gospel is called the ministry of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8.

Fourthly, Pray for the Spirit; and though you cannot pray well without the Spirit, yet since it is God's will that you should pray for it, set about prayer for it as well as you can; then God will enable you to pray for the Spirit, and you shall have it. For Christ saith, If ye that are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke xi. 13. As these are means to get the Spirit, so they are means to continue, nourish, and increase the graces of the Spirit.

Fifthly, If you would keep and nourish this Spirit, you must take part with it, in its conflicts with the flesh and sin: you must not resist, but willingly receive the comforts and motions of the Spirit, and must do your best to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. You must take heed that you neither grieve nor quench the Spirit. It is grieved, when it is resisted, crossed, or opposed any way, Eph. iv. 30, 31; 1 Thess. v. 19, 20. It is quenched as fire is, First, by throwing on water; all sinful actions, as they be greater or smaller, are as water. They do accordingly more or less quench and abate the Spirit's operations. Secondly, Fire may be quenched and put out by withdrawing of wood and fuel; all neglect, or negligent using of the word, sacraments, prayer, meditation, and holy conference, and communion of saints, do much offend and quench the Spirit; whereas the daily and diligent use of all these, through his concurring grace, does much increase and strengthen the life of God in the soul; whence must needs follow much peace and comfort.

Now when you have gotten this Holy Spirit, and have any proofs of the Holy Spirit's being in you, then you ought to rest satisfied in the Spirit's witness to

your spirit; your spirit should doubt no more. For even in this that God has given you his Spirit, the very being of it in you is a real proof, and the greatest confirmation that can be of your being in a state of grace. For when you have this Spirit, you are anointed, 1 John ii. 27; what greater confirmation would you have of being made kings and priests to God? Rev. i. 6. You are also by this Spirit sealed to the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. What greater confirmation can there be of God's covenant, and of his will and testament towards you? It is likewise the earnest of your inheritance, 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 14, which gives present being, and the beginning to the enjoyment of the blessings, and is the sure evidence of the full possession in due time. You are so surely God's, when he has given you his Spirit, that unless you can think he will lose his Spirit, the earnest of which he gave you, you can have no cause to think that he will lose, or not fulfil the promise of salvation made unto you, whereof his Spirit is the earnest, and part of the covenant.

This Spirit does witness to a man, that he is the child of God, two ways:

First, By immediate witness and suggestion. Secondly, By necessary inferences, by signs from the infallible fruits of the said Spirit. By which latter witness you may know the former to be a true testimony from God's Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, and not from a spirit of error and presumption. For this Spirit of adoption is a spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10; Rom. viii. 26; it is a spirit of holy fear, Isa. lxi. 3; and it is a spirit of holy joy, Acts viii. 8. Where it does testify that you are God's children, there it will give you new hearts, causing you to desire and endeavour to live like God's children, in reverend fear and love; leading you in the right way, checking you and calling you back from the way of sin; stirring you up to prayer, with sighs, desires, and inward groans; at least making you to confess your sins, and to ask and hope for pardon in the name of Christ, Gal. v. 22; Acts xxiv. 16; Isa. xxx. 21. And it

will still be quickening and strengthening you in the ways of godliness, and giving you no rest if you walk not therein. Thus much of the first and principal means of getting true peace and comfort.

Secondly, If you would have the invaluable jewel of peace, then abstain as much as possible from all gross and presumptuous sins; and from the allowance of any sin: for sin will produce fear, even as the shadow follows the body. And the more sin, the more guilt; and the less sin, the less guilt: now, the less guilt lies upon the conscience, the more peace, Psa. li. 14.

Thirdly, When you fall into sin, for who lives and sins not? then with all speed affect your heart with godly sorrow for it, cause it to be a burden, and a load and weariness to the conscience; but withal, comfort your heart with hope of mercy, forgiveness, and grace through Christ. Then with all humble submission you must seek unto God, the God of peace, but come to him by Christ Jesus, the Prince of peace, Isa. ix. 6, upon whom lay the chastisement of your peace, Isa. liii. 5. Ask repentance, grace, and new obedience. Believe in Christ. If you do all this, then you come unto Christ, and unto God by Christ, according to his commandment, and you have his sure promise, that you shall have rest to your souls, Matt. xi. 29. This do, for in Christ only can you have peace, John xvi. 33. This true application of Christ's blood and satisfaction, will so sprinkle the conscience from the guilt of sin, Heb. ix. 14, x. 12, that there shall remain no more conscience for sin, Heb. x. 2, that is, no more guilt which shall draw upon you any punishment for sin; whence must needs follow peace of conscience; because the conscience has nothing to accuse you of, guiltiness being washed away by Christ's blood, Heb. ix. 14. As soon as David, after his foul sins, could come thus to God, his heart had ease, Psa. xxxii. 1—5.

But when you have thus gotten a good and clear conscience, take heed of defiling it again, or giving it any manner of uneasiness; be as tender in keeping

your conscience unspotted and unwounded, as you are of the apple of your eye. Sin not against knowledge and conscience, and in any case smother not the good checks and motions of your conscience. For if being washed, you do again defile it, this will cause new trouble of heart, and you must again apply yourselves to this last prescribed remedy.

Fourthly, Christ having taken upon him the burden of your sins, which was intolerable, you must take upon you, and submit unto the yoke of Christ's service, which is light and easy, Matt. xi. 29. You must endeavour to do whatsoever he has commanded in his word and gospel, following his steps in all his imitable actions; in all humility and meekness, in all spiritual and heavenly mindedness. When you can thus subject yourselves to Christ in holiness, you shall have peace. For the Holy Ghost saith, The work of righteousness is peace, Isa. xxxii. 17; and again, he saith, To be spiritually-minded is peace, that is, brings with it peace, Rom. viii. 6. I comprehend Christ's yoke of the gospel in these three things, faith, hope, and love. As these three be in you, and abound, in the same degrees shall peace be in you, and shall abound.

Having faith in Christ, saith the apostle, we have peace with God, Rom. v. 1. It is God that justifies who shall lay any thing to your charge? Rom. viii. 33. For justifying faith is the ground and spring, from which only sound and true comfort does flow.

Hope will make you wait, and expect with patience, the accomplishment of God's sure promises, whereby it will hold you as steady, and as sure from wreck of soul, as any anchor can hold a ship. God does therefore give hope, that it may be as an anchor, sure and steadfast, Rom. viii. 25. Though while you are in the sea of this world it does not keep you so quiet, but that you may be in some measure tossed and disquieted with the waves and billows of fear and doubt, to try the goodness of your vessel, and strength of your anchor, &c., yet you shall be sure not to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, if you shall lay hold upon this hope set before you, Heb. vi. 18, 19.

And as for love, they that love the Lord shall have peace: you must therefore love God; love his ordinances and his people; love God with all your heart; love your neighbours as yourselves; love God's commandments. For great peace shall they have, saith the prophet, that love God's law, and nothing shall offend them, *Psa. cxix. 165.*

Whoever shall thus take up Christ's yoke, and follow him, shall find rest to their souls, *Matt. xi. 29*; and peace shall be upon them, as upon the Israel of God, *Gal. vi. 16.*

Fifthly, If you would have peace, use all good means whereby you may be often put in remembrance of the exhortations and consolations of God. They in the Hebrews were therefore disquieted, and ready to faint in their minds, because they forgot the exhortation, which said, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, &c., and because they forgot the consolation, which saith, Whom the Lord loves, he chastens, *Heb. xii. 5, 6.*

The principal means of being put in mind of God's consolations, are these following:

1. You must be much conversant in the Scriptures, by reading, hearing, and meditating thereon. For they were all written to that end, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, you might have hope, *Rom. xv. 4.*

The Scriptures of God, they are the very wells and breasts of consolation and salvation, *Isa. xii. 3. lxvi. 11.* The law discovers sin, and by its threats against you, and by relating judgments executed upon others, does drive you to Christ, *Gal. iii. 24.* The promises of the gospel made to you, and the accomplishment thereof to others, do settle and confirm you in Christ, whereby your heart is filled with joy and consolations. The gospel is called the gospel of peace, and the ministers of the gospel are said to bring glad tidings of this peace, *Rom. x. 15.* It is the bright shining light in the gospel, which will guide your feet in the way of peace, *Luke i. 79.*

2. Be much in good company, especially in theirs,

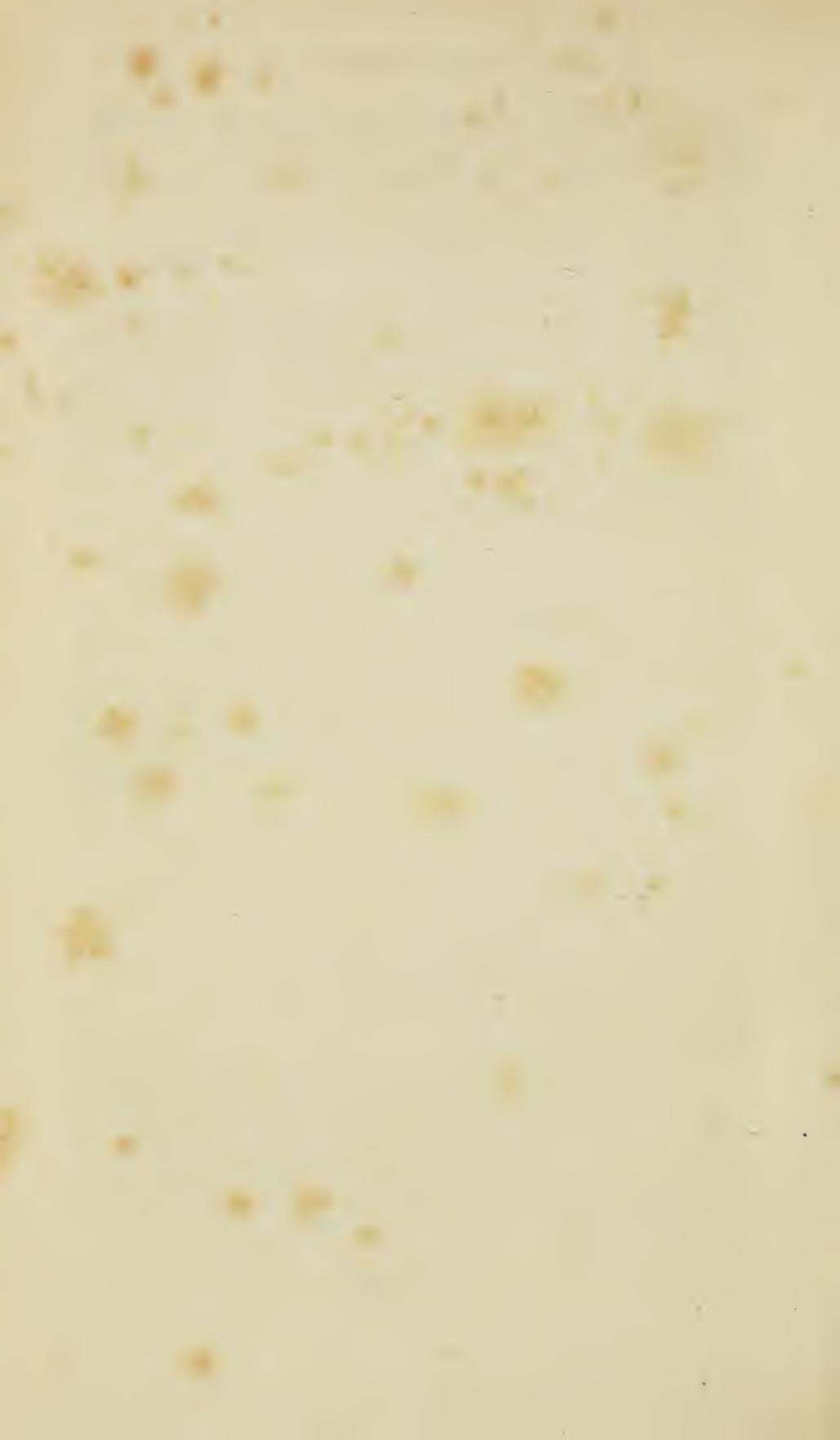
who are full of joy and peace in believing, whose example and counsel will mind you of joy and comfort, and will be of excellent use unto you, to establish you in peace.

Sixthly, and lastly, Acquaint yourself with God, concerning the course he uses to take with his children in bringing them to glory; acquaint yourself with God also in praying much for peace, unto him who is the God of peace, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation; then you shall have peace, and much good shall be unto you, Job xxii. 21. For it is God that speaks peace to his people, Psa. lxxxv. 8; wherefore assuredly his answer to him that asks peace, will be an answer of peace, even this peace which passes all understanding. God shall give you peace, and with it glory, even a glorious peace.

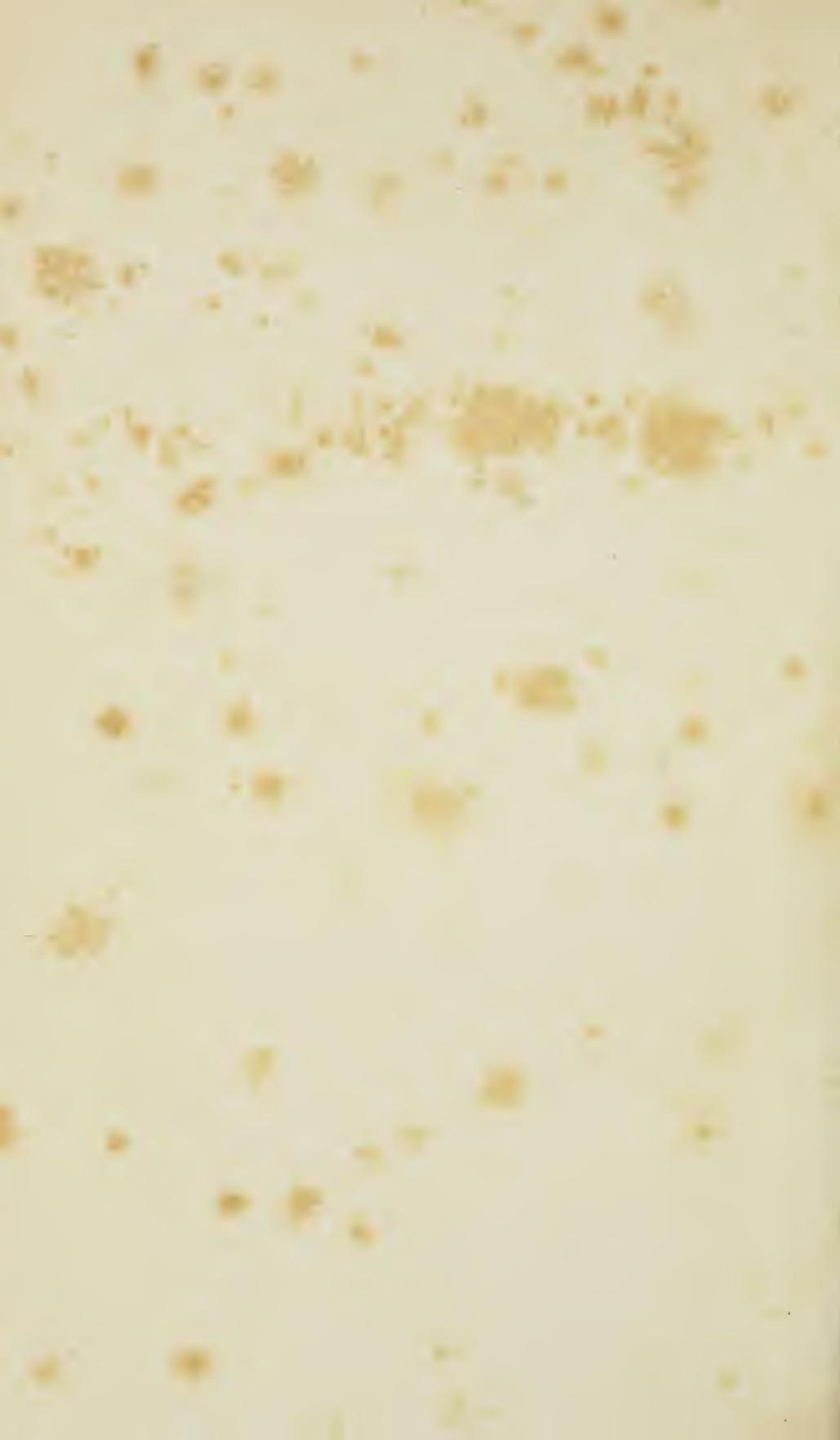
Thus, I have shown you the excellency of peace, together with the impediments, furtherances, and means of peace. Shun the impediments, improve the furtherances; and, I dare assure you, that although in this life you may still feel a conflict between faith and doubting, between hope and fear, between peace and trouble of mind; yet in the end you shall have perfect peace, Psa. xxxvii. 47. In the mean time, though I cannot promise you to have always that peace, which will afford you sense of joy; yet God has promised, that you shall have that which shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus; and what would you have more?

I thank God, I have reaped much benefit to myself in studying, and penning these directions. I pray God that you may reap much good in reading of them. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. "And the God of peace that brought again from the dead. our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Heb. xiii. 21.













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