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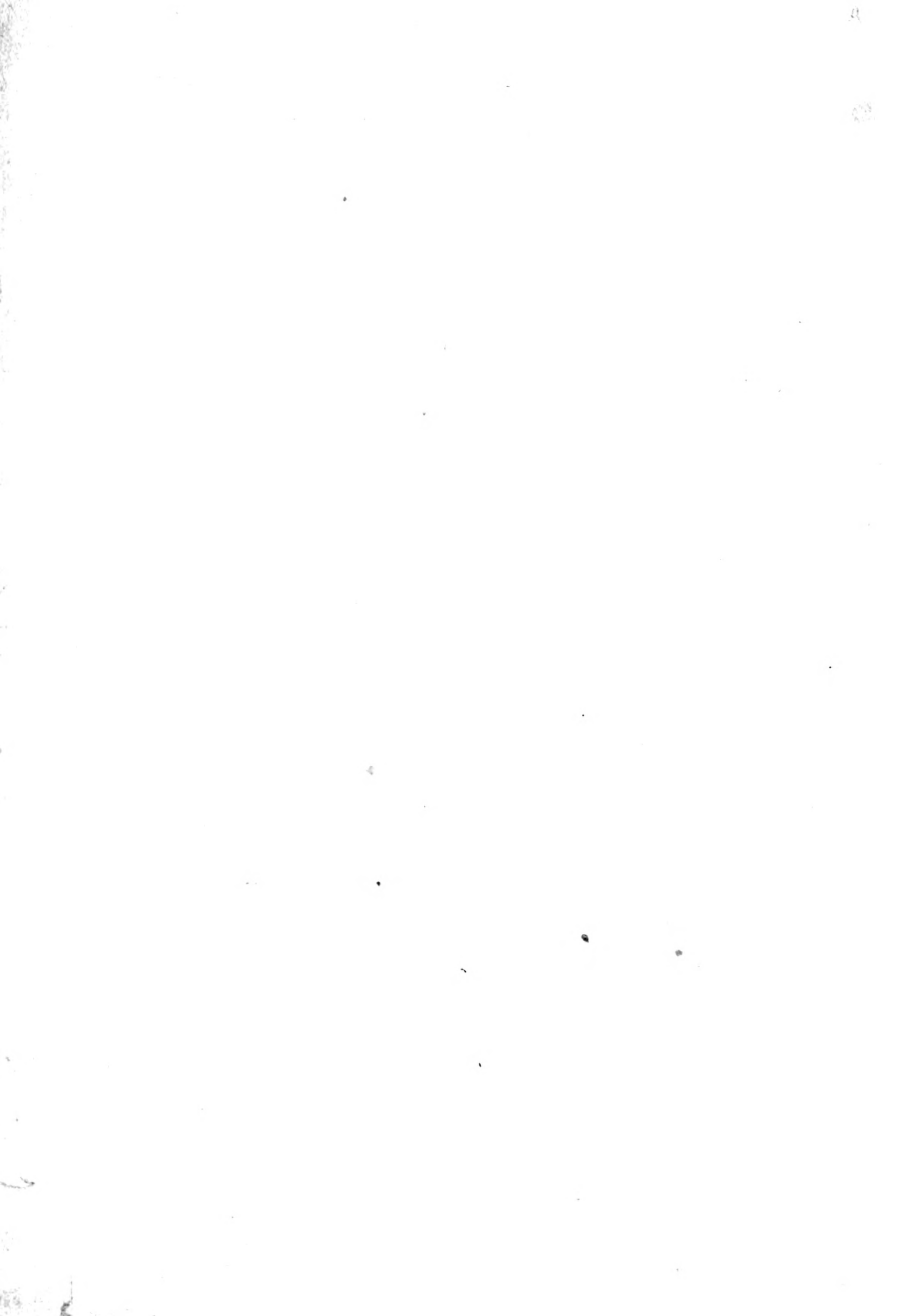


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THE
S A I N T S
ADVANTAGE:

O R
THE VVELL-FARE OF
THE FAITHFULL, IN THE
WORST TIMES.

A Sermon,

Preached at the *Hage* the 18. of *May*,

Before the most High, and Mighty Princesse,

ELIZABETH, by the Grace of GOD,

*Queene of Bohemia, Countesse Palatine of
the Rhene, Dutches of Bavaria, &c.*

*And onely Daughter to our Sovereigne
Lord King JAMES.*

By JOHN WING, an unworthy Minister of the Gospel, and Pastour to the English Church at *Flushing*
in ZEALAND.

2 Cor. 1. 3. 4.

3. Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation.
4. Who comforteth us in our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.

L O N D O N,

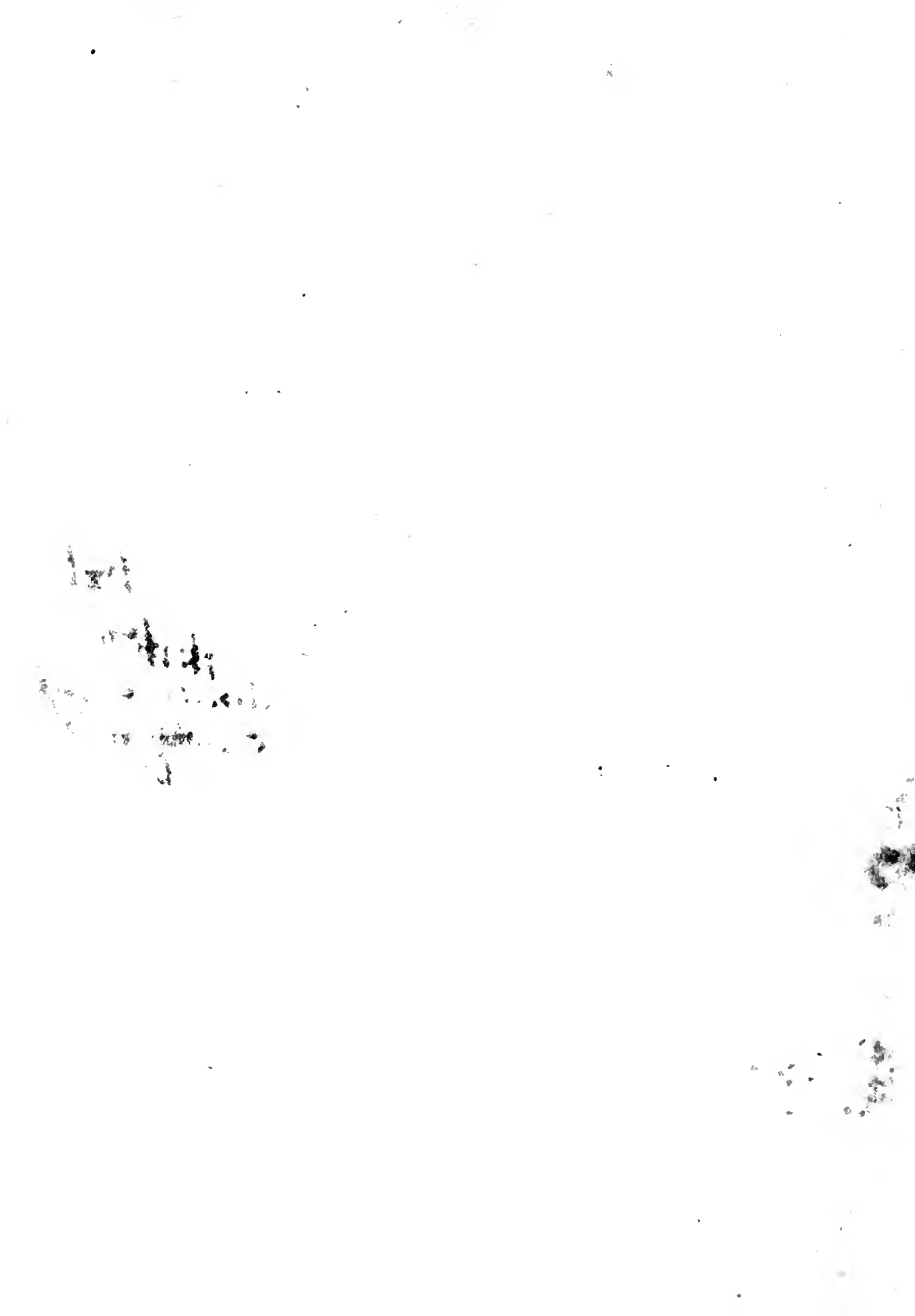
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TO
THE MOST, HIGH,
AND MIGHTIE PRINCESSE,

ELIZABETH, by the grace of GOD,
Countesse Palatine of the Rhene, &c.

JOHN WING, Pastour of the *English* Church at
Flushing in *Zeland*, wisheth all encrease of grace, and peace,
and whatsoever may enlarge all present happines on earth,
and assure that which is eternall in heaven.

MOST GRACIOVS PRINCESSE,



INasmuch as it pleased
your most excellent *Ma-
iestie*, to vouchsafe a *Gra-
cious* eare to the weake vt-
terance of these *Medita-
tions*, I am comfortably
encouraged to present a

more compleate discovery of them, to your
Princely eyes, not that I account them worthy
(as they are mine) of the *least* looke of *Ma-
iestie*;
but trusting *wholy* to that clemency and favour,
which I humbly entreat, may shine from you,
vpon this my poore endeavour; it having (next
to the honour of the most high God) her one-

ly respect, and ayme, at your *Maiesties* present, and future condition; a true *type* whereof, is here tendered by him, whose soule doth daily sue vnto the *King of Kings*, that as he hath measured vnto, (and you haue shared with,) *Moses*, and *David*, many tribulations in the entrance of their honour, and renowne, and after made them so much the more *famous*, *admired*, and *victorious*: So it, might please the same Lord to alot you the sweete happinesse of *their* issue, which was most blessed and glorious; to alay the distaste of that bitter beginning, which (vnto nature) seemeth somewhat tarte, and grievous; and together with that peerelesse greatnesse which they enioyed on earth; the same glory and joy, which they possesse in heaven. The *Great GOD* of heaven and earth blesse, with the richest *abundance*, and *combination* of his rarest, and best blessings, your *Royall Head*, and *Husband*; your *Highbnesse*, all your hopefull *Plants*, and *Princely posteritie*, that your *Crowne* may yet flourish, your enemies may ever perish, and you all, may be made *mirrors* of *Maiesty*, and *Royaltie*, to all Generations.

Your MAIESTIES in all
duety to be commanded,

JOHN WING.



TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFULL,
And most worthy Gentlemen,

Sir Francis Barrington, Sir Thomas Bar-
rington, and Sir William Massam,
Knights, and to their vertuous
LADIES.

JOHN WING, Wissheth all continuance, and en-
crease of *temporall* happinesse on earth, which
may assure, and further, that which is
eternall in the Heavens.

Right Worshipfull, and Right well-beloved,



*I*t is now some good space of time since
God gaue me the happines, and opportu-
nitie, to be made knowne vnto you, and
from time to come, to taste, and receiue
those fruits of your favour and loue;
which hows euer, I leaue to the Lord (out of his loue) for a
full recompence of reward, to be given vnto every of you,
in due time; yet, I could not but out of my dutie so acknow-

ledge the same, as I might both make knowne your worthy examples for others to imitate, and trace, in these dead and unworthy times; and also give evidence to your selves, of my true and unfeigned thankfulness, so deeply engraven, as no distance of place, or durance of time, (I hope) shall ever be able to abolish. Receiue I beseech you all, this myte, as the moddell of my hearts desire towards you, and of your estate with that God, who having enriched you with that glorious Advantage, and Prerogatiue, to be called his Saints, will so over-rule all evils, incident to his, that their very damages, shall become matter of

1 Tim. 6. *gaine and advantage. He who hath sayd [Godlinesse*
6. *is gaine, [and shewed the powerfull perswasion thereof,*
Phil. 3. 7. *in their practise, who haue [accounted the things that*
8. *were gaine vnto them, losse and dung for*
Christ,] make you in Christ, happy gainers, by your grace,
and godlinesse, with the happiest of his owne, vnder hea-
ven, for the present, during your pilgrimage here; and in
heaven, in full possession for ever, and ever. To his grace
I commend you all, and all that are yours; daily desiring
you may be partakers of his glory through him, who was
Rev. 1. 18. *dead, and is aliuie, and beholde he liueth for evermore,*
in whom I rest ever

Yours to my utmost,
for any service.

JOHN WING.



To the Christian Reader.

Beloved in the Lord, seeing promise is debt, and performance alone the onely discharge that can giue plenary satisfaction; I must (at present) deale as poore debtors oft-times are enforced, to pray where they cannot pay, and to entreat yet longer time, for that which was due long a-goe. It is nere foure yeares, since I began to engage my selfe vnto thee, for the perfecting of my Matrimoniall Treatise, then (in part) published. To this day, I confesse I haue not finished the same, for I met with such cumberance, hinderance, and inconvenience, in that little, which was but as a Preface to the rest, that I durst not adventure to set vpon the remainder, being the farre greater part. Yet, I am not out of all hope, ere long to doe it; and in the meane time, I thought good to send this Sermon abroad, wherein I haue endeoured the cure, of one of the most common sores, that hath come to my obseruation in these euill times; to wit, the hard conceit, that not onely the vngodly doe harbour of Gods people, but they of themselues, especially if outward things goe hard with them, and the times doe not fauour, but distaste, and frowne vpon them. Beholde here, a man that was taught of God, to know so much of the very meanest estate of the members of Christ, that he willingly left to be mightie in the world, to make one among them in their meanenesse, and misery; and by his practise made it manifest, that his persuasion was quite contrary to the base opinion of men, touching the Saints of God. And if he were led vnto this excellent estima-

tion by extraordinary inspiration from God, is it not extraordinary impietie, to thinke or speake otherwise of them? Surely, so farre as God did informe the one, Satan doth insatuate the other. Reade and ponder the particulars, and pray to that God for me, to whom I am, and shall be a suiter for thee, for thy present, and future well-fare.

Farewell in the Lord,
in whom I am thine.

JOHN WING.



THE SAINTS ADVANTAGE:

OR

The well-fare of the Faithfull, in the
Worst Times.

H E B R. II. 26.

*Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than
the treasures in Ægypt.*



T is not much materiall vnto vs,
neither will it be worth our
time and labour, to looke af-
ter the *Writer* of this *Epistle*,
seeing it is past question, that
the *holy Ghost* was the *Autor*
of the same. And therefore we
will not trouble our selues, or
you, with any needlesse and

fruitlesse search, what man of *God* it might be that pen-
ned it, seeing we are throughly perswaded that *God* him-
selfe inspired it; who having great abundance and varic-
tie of diuine *Secretaries*, might employ whom he pleased

in this service, and yet not be pleased to tell vs w^{ho} it was, whom he did employ in the same. It is not the les *ca-*
nonicall, or *authentike*, because we cannot tell who wrote
it: the matter of it is known to be *gods*, though no *name* of
any man of God, be prefixed there-vnto. The which,
since the Lord in great wisdom hath concealed, how
can we without grosse folly endeavour to discover it? he
having thought *good* to hide it, it must be thought *evill*
in vs to make enquirie after it.

What; cannot a good message of glad tydings be wel-
come from our best friend, vnlesse wee may know the
messengers name that brought it? Or shall not a *Patent*
(from the *King*) contayning matter of *profit*, or *prefer-*
ment; or a *Pardon* of some foule fact, bee accepted and
beleaved, if withall we may not be certified (by name)
which of the *Secretaries of State* did write it? would not
all the world censure it for vnreasonable absurdity, ab-
surd incivility, yea, and for most vncivill, and insuffera-
ble insolency, if a man should stand vpon these tearmes
with his *bettors*, and thus refuse the meanes of his wel-
fare? were not such a one well *worthy* to bee wofull, for
want of that which he so *unworthily* refused? And if thus
it be, in these temporall occurrents, which can concerne
but our present externall advantage, it must of necessity
bee so much the more *evill*, and intollerable, in these
spirituall affayres, by how much in them, we haue to do
with him, whose excellency and glory doth surmount
all mens; and in those passages, which both in their
owne nature, and in their consequence to vs, doe infi-
nitely and incomparably exceede, all the benefits of this
present life, as being concerning the eternall, and in-
conceivable happines of our whole man for ever and e-
ver in the heavens.

Had any important point of holy information depen-
ded

ded vpon the notice of the *Pen-man* of this part of scripture, we should assuredly haue knowne who he had bin, for we haue great reason to beleecue that our good God would not haue withholden any good thing from vs: we may therefore wel conclude that no thing could be gotten by it, seeing the *most wise God* will not let vs know it; and what idle and senselesse *busi-bodies* are wee then, to make our selues such worthles & vnprofitable worke, as will not pay for the time which is spent about it, nor yeelde any advantage, if it were finished, and the *Writer* revealed.

The more are men to be blamed; (*Divines* especially, and the *best* most of all), who make so much a-doe about this particular, as if the *authoritie*, or *nullitie* of this *Epistle* lay vpon the *Writer*, rather then vpon the *Authour* of the same. It would weary and tyre any man, and make him to mourne in his very soule, to see how men of eminent excellency, and worthy parts, haue toyled in this *titular*, (I had almost sayd, *triuiall*) businesse, disputed betweene *Papist* and *Papist*, betweene *Protestant* and *Papist*, yea, betweene *Protestant* and *Protestant*, as if it were a matter of more then words or names (as *Gallio* sayd), and of some mighty consequence, when as indeede it is not, neither hath any inference of any force or fruit annexed vnto it, whose name soever it beare.

Some will haue it to bee *Pauls*, and for prooffe they pleade: first, The stile, and straine of it to be so like *his*, euery where, that it must needs be *his owne* here: secondly, The close, or conclusion of this *Epistle* *cap. 13. 25.* being the same which *Paul* saith he saluted his friends, and shut vp all his *Epistles* withall: Thirdly, The authority of the Apostle *Peter* writing (as is thought) to the *Hebrewes* saying, *2. Pet. 3. 15. 16.* that *Paul* had written to

them, and seemeth to point at this Epistle, because of the obscurity and difficulty of divers things therein: and together with these, divers other observable things are instanced, and urged in the body of the Epistle, (too long for vs now to relate) which make much probability that *Paul* wrote it.

Some others againe will not haue it to be *Pauls*, but are perswaded some other holy man of God had the penning of it, and they plead: 1. That his name is not to it, whereas *Pauls* manner was to set his name to all that are vndoubtedly his: 2. That he, who wrote this *Epistle* seemeth not to haue had the matter thereof immediately from God (which *Paul* evermore had) but mediately from some other, who heard it from *Christ*, as the words *cap. 2. 1. 2. 3.* doe import: together with some other likely passages which doe improoue *Pauls* penning of it.

And this vnnecessary contouersie hath cost much time, & paines, even among men of great learning and godlines; who yet I am perswaded, cannot but know, that neither the *Inscriptions*, nor *Subscriptions* of these *Epistles* which haue beene written by severall *Apostles*, are, or can in any good reason be accounted *scripture*, considering how many iust exceptions may be alledged against sundry of both sorts, to make them mistrusted, and subject to vdeniable ambiguity, whereas all *Scripture* is absolutely infallible.

How is it then that men lay out their money for that which is not bread? and take such paines for things that cannot profit? Summe vp all the *Items* urged of either side, what will the *Totall* amount vnto, but this, that inasmuch as some probability lyeth on either part, there is assurance on neither. Againe, admit and suppose it were sure on one side, either the *affirmaine*, that it were *Pauls*, what are we the berter, or the wiser in the way to heaven for the certaintie hereof? or on the *negative* that

it was none of *Pauls*, but that *Luke* (as some thinke) or *Barnabas*, or *Clement* (as others conceiue) did pen it, what holines or happines is wonne, when all this is done? iurely none. The *most* that can come of the former is onely this, that we may call it [*the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrewes*] and put his name into our Coppies, as it is in all others except one (as one obserueth). The *least* that can come of the latter, is, that we leaue out *Pauls* name, and all names, and call it as we finde it [*the Epistle to the Hebrewes*] which title or inscription, being indifferent to either side, we will rest in the same as it is, without further contention or inquisition, seeing either *Pauls*, or any other name noted before, may be *probably put in*, and yet *safely left out*, let vs take it without any at all, and so proceed from the *writer*, to the *matter* contained in that which is written, especially in that little parcell which hath bene read, and in the revealing whereof, we intend (by *Gods* grace) to insist at this time.

And that we may the better come to comprehend what the will and mind of the Lord is therein, it shall be good to goe backe a little, to looke vpon the generall state of the whole Chapter, and to take such a view of the same, as may further vs in the particular of these words.

And what is this Chapter (being well considered) but a kinde of *Summary* or *Abridgement*, of the olde Testament in that part thereof especially, which is *historicall*, and containeth the discovery of things done in matter of fact, by those most famous *Worthies* of the Lord, the eminency of whose faith, and excellencie of the fruits of the same, haue here a most glorious remembrance, being left vpon an everlasting record that cannot faile, but mult and shall remayne to the *blest memoriall of those iust men*, the tryall of whose faith having bene more precious than gold, shall be found vnto (the Lords, & their owne) 1 Pet. 1. 7.

Prov.

praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Iesus Christ.

Of which *Worthies* (both men and women) wee haue here a particular *Catalogue*, many of them being (by name) personally expressed, from the beginning of the Chapter to the 33. *verse*: and others apparently included (though *not named*) from thence to the end. And in this *Catalogue* it pleaseth the holy Ghost to keepe an excellent *decorum*, in an orderly and methodicall distribution of the persons, according to the times wherein they lived, and the *Chronologie* of the world, in the most famous *Periods* of the same vnder the olde Testament.

Verf. 14

It beginneth with righteous *Abell*, *verf. 4.* who lived not long after the Creation (being the second from *Adam*) and goeth on from him to *Enoch* the seaventh from *Adam* (as *Iude* call's him :) and from *Enoch* to *Noah*, and so finisheth the first famous period of the world, from the *Creation*, to the *Flood*; and beginnes the second from the *flood* to *Abraham*, & the rest of those peereles *Patriarchs*, who lived after the *Flood*, and before the *Law* till *Moses*; who over-living them all, did finish the second famous period from the *flood* to the giving of the *Law*, and made entrance into the third, from *Moses* and the *Law* given, to the time of the *Iudges*: and so from thence-forward to the change of the civill government of the *Iewes*, from *Iudges* to *Kings*: and vnder their *Kings*, both during the time of their settled and peaccable state, and also thence, vnto those interrupted and miserable dayes, wherein *Captivitie* prevayled; both at the *first*, in part, to their disturbance once, and againe for a time; and at the last to the *totall* and finall downe-fall and over-throw of that Nation, as touching any visible face, either of *civill*, or an *ecclesiasticall* estate.

Now.

Now in this *Campe Royall*, of such as are here nimbred, named, and made glorious by the notable fruits of their faith; some haue renowned themselves (as servants) *actiuelly* by doing, others haue bene approved (as souldiers) *passiuelly* by suffering; but *Moses* (being the *man* in our *Text*) is truly interested into either condition, and hath made *double* declaration of his faith, in both kindes of those things that are reported of him, for wee finde both what he *did*, and what he *endured*, and so much of either, as doth manifest him for one of the rarest mirrours among those many, who are mustered and magnified here, to haue *fought the good fight of faith*; and that, in all those occurrents that came to passe (on his part) either before *Israel* went out of *Egypt*, or after; for within one of these two computations of time, all is comprehended which is recorded of him, and for which he is here applauded by the holy Ghost.

The powerfull worke of faith appearing in him before the *Israelites* departure from vnder *Pharaoh*, had a *two-folde* operation.

1. While he was yet a *Courtier*, (and great in Court too) being for so long time the adopted, and reputed sonne of *Pharaohs* daughter, in which time faith wrought in his heart a *gracious resolution*, to giue over that *glorious condition*.

2. When he put this resolution into practise, casting off the *Court*, and forsaking *Egypt* for a season, and afterwards returning by warrant from God, (and as the Lords *Ambassadour*) to worke out the peoples freedom: and these passages are particulated vnto vs, in the 24. 25. 26. and 27. Verses.

The further efficacy wherein his faith shined, after he had left *Egypt* altogether, and was gone thence
with

The Saints Advantage,

with Gods people, is evident in such relation as is made thereof, *ver. 28. 29.*

Our Text is a part of the former power of his faith, while he was yet in *Egypt*, wherein, (& that while he was yet a great *Peere*, among these *Pagans*) the Lord mightily, and *extraordinarily*, wrought in him immediately by himselve, without all ordinary meanes (that man can imagine) this *great* grace of *Faith*, which by a holy kinde of heavenly and divine *violence*, enforced him to these 3. Things which lye in these 3. Verses.

1. 1. To relinquish and renounce his whole estate, with all the honours, and advantages annexed therevnto, all which, although he had long enjoyed them, and they were many and great, at present, and might (possibly) have beene much greater afterward, through the hope of his further rising by meanes of the favour of *Pharaohs* daughter, yet faith makes nothing of these mightie things, but he freely forsaketh all, and willingly refuseth to be called or accounted *her Sonne*, *vers. 24.*
2. 2. To chuse (instead of this reiected honour & royaltie) the miserable and most afflicted state of the people of God, who were in the greatest slavery, and vnder the most grieuous tyranny that could be, *vers. 25.*
3. 3. To iudge and censure (and that with a righteous iudgement) both his former practises of *refusing* and *chusing*, to be lawfull, and good, & well pleasing to the Lord, *vers. 26.*

Faith wrought extraordinarily.

And this *third* is the onely thing, where-with we haue to doe, yet before we enter vpon it in *particular*, we haue one observable thing to note in the *generall*, to wit, That those graces which are immediately, and extraordinarily wrought in man by the Lord, doe carry mans heart extraordinarily towards the Lord. If God worke faith extraordinarily in *Abraham*, he will leaue his Countrey; he will

will sacrifice his son, *doe* any thing, *deny* nothing, at Gods command. If in *Moses* he will leaue all the honour, & riches, and happines in the world, and expose himselfe to any misery, danger, and infamy for the honour of God. The same might be sayd of *Ioseph*, of *Ester*, and many other, whose graces haue yeelded rare and wonderfull fruit, because they sprung from more then an ordinarie roote. The more immediate any mans graces are from God, the more admirable are the manifestatiōs of those graces before God.

But we intend not to stay here : let vs therefore set forward to this *third* effect of *Moses* faith in the wordes of the 26. *verse* (contayning the estimation of his sayd acts) and in them, we haue to consider 3. things.

The parts
of the text

1. The guide and ground of this his estimation, to wit, *Faith*, not common sence, nor carnall reason, for neither of these would haue endured any such proceedings.

2. The things esteemed, to wit, the *reproach of Christ*, and the *riches of Egypt*, and these being ballanced by *faith*, and layd one, against the other, the former is found to be much better, and farre beyond the latter.

3. The reason of this his opinion, which ariseth not from any respect of things *present* and *sensible*, but onely and wholly from the happy apprehension, and assurance, that he had of that *invisible*, and *infinite* recompence of rewarde layd vp for those who can forgoe all things for Gods glory.

And these are the parts of this *verse*, touching which, we shall not neede to make any stay vpon the interpretation of any of them, there being no obscuritie, or ambiguity, but all being easie and open to the meanest capacity : we will therefore hasten to the matter of instruction which they doe administer vnto vs.

And heere, in the very first word [*Esteeming*] (in as-
 much as his faith made him thus to *esteem*) wee might
 note vnto you, one excellent propertie, and power of
 true faith, which is, to alter the mind, opinion, and
 iudgement of man from that it was, touching the world,
 and all things therein; to *esteem* the best things therein
 so base, as to preferre and chuse the basest estate in the
 world, before that which in the eye of the world is the
 best. Time was, that *Moses* could make vse of, and pos-
 sesse the honours of *Egypt*, for forty yeares together, but
 now (vnto faith) affliction is better then promotion, sla-
 very then honour, he will rather be a captiue with Gods
 people, then a gallant *Courtier*, euen the son of a Kings
 daughter: he is now otherwise conceited, opinionated,
 and perswaded then before he was; *Faith* hath so altered
 the case with him, that he is nothing so minded as he was.

It is no marvell that the holy Ghost opposeth *faith*,
 and *sence*, and that the Apostle sayth [*we walke by faith,*
and not by sight] for they looked not on things that were
 seene, but lived by faith, which fed it selfe, and fastened
 them, on things not seene, and so they accounted and
 iudged all things base and vile, yea *losse* and *dung*, (yea
 as most loathsome and execrable excrements, as the
 word signifies:) and could well brooke to haue them-
 selues accounted the base offscouring of all things, tho-
 row the excellency of faith that was in them.

Let no man vainely boast of this vertue, or imagine he
 hath himselfe possesse of this singular grace, to whose
 mind, iudgement, and estimation, all things are not so
 base and abhominable, that he can (being put to it by
 God) most willingly abandon, and abhorre all riches
 and glory; and freely take vp all affliction, wretchednes
 and misery; yea, and rather (as our *Moses* heere) make
 a good choyse of the *worke*, then make an ill vse of the
 best.

social
 property of
 Faith.

Phil. 3^o 9^o

best, that the world can afford. True *faith* (where it is of a noble, heroicall, heavenly, and divine disposition, and carries the heart of man into *high contempt* of the things which before he had in *highest esteeme*, scorning in the least, to stoop to the greatest and most glorious lure, that can be offered of the things that are below, and doth disdain to looke after those advantages which are most deare vnto others.

But wee must not dwell here neither, neither is it our present purpose to prosecute this point, but to set forward vnto that whereon we intend (by Gods grace) to insist: and that is taken from the *second* consideration; which is of the things esteemed, and they (being compared one with another) the [*reproach of Christ*] is found farre to exceede, and to bee much better, then the *treasures in Egypt*.] From whence the maine thing which we haue to learne for our instruction is thus much-

That the worst estate of a childe of God, is better, then the best estate of any wicked man. Doctrin:

Note it well; wee say and avouch, that the worst estate of Gods childe, is better then the best of a wicked man.

For the better vnderstanding and beleewing of which point, because at *first sight*, it may seeme a strange *Paradoxe*, and a proposition impossible to be true; it shall be necessary before we come to proue the same, to explaine it before you, and to giue all men to vnderstand, what wee meane by the *worst estate* of Gods childe, and by the *best estate* of a wicked man.

And (in a word) *thus* we meane: that, looke what the world (that is, the men of the world) doe esteeme and iudge (on the one part) to be the meanest and most miserable state of any good man: and also what they themselves doe againe conceiue (on the other part) to bee

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our owne most happy and comfortable condition, that (on either part) we intend in this our instruction.

Now all men doe know, that the world doth repute affliction, disgrace, tyranny, persecution, and all kinde of cruelty, and slavery, to be the vnhappiest case a man can possibly be in: and on the other side, the honour, wealth, prosperity and abundance of all things which the heart of man can wish, when every thing goes with him as he would haue it, and all things settle vpon him to his soules content: this is adjudged the happiest state of him, or them that haue it. And this is that we account the best of the one; and the worst of the other, even that, which themselues doe account so, we aske no other interpreters of our meaning, then the men of the earth, in their ordinarie and vniuersall opinion.

And of these estates being thus vnderstood, we are to proue, and make good, that the former (*being the worst*) is better to a childe of God, then the latter (*being the best*) can be, to an vngodly man: yea, that the very gall and worme-wood, and the most *bitter* & envenomed things which the world can giue the godly to drinke; are happier, and more holosome to digest, then the *sweetest* portion of their cup, who are vngodly, when it is filled vp to the brym, and running over with all the rarest, and most pleasant compositions which the world can powre into it, of all manner of delicacies and delights that are to be desired, either for pleasure, or for profit, or for honour, or for ease, or for ought else, which may take vp & bewitch the mind, of a worldly man. And thus our meaning being explained, the matter remaineth now to be proved.

The full confirmation whereof, will soone arise out of the due consideration of our text, and the true contents of the same, in case we take such true notice of them as we ought.

Were there no other man but *Moses*,
 or example to make good the point but *he*
 which he hath here done; he onely were able
 the truth we teach against all *gainesayers* whatsoever; in-
 asmuch as we finde his practice to be of worthy appro-
 bation with God, and also worthy to be a most worthy
 president vnto vs from God, and that it is recorded, not
 onely for *his commendation*, but for *our imitation* also: in
 which act of his, let vs note these particular and singular
 passages, which may leade vs the more to belecue the
 truth we are to confirme.

First, how he was brought into the favour of *Pharaoh*,
 to wit, by a strange & extraordinary providence of God,
 disposing his Parents there to hide him, where the daugh-
 ter of *Pharaoh* must discover him, and in disposing her
 heart (having found him) to commiserate the miserable
 and helples condition of this forlorne and desolate in-
 fant, whom his owne father and mother durst not owne,
 or acknowledge, but being the *Kings decree* enforced to
 cast him out, the Kings daughter is directed by the Lord
 to pittie him for the present, and to provide to haue him
 nursed and nurtered, as her owne sonne, by adoption, for
 time to come.

Secondly, being thus adopted by her, and nursed, (by
 his owne mother as the almighty did order and manage
 it) she tooke further care and order for his education, so
 as he might be made meete for honour and advance-
 ment in her fathers house and service; whereas she might
 haue brought him vp, in some base and servile manner,
 according to the quality of a *Captives* child, yea, and the
 Lord filled him with vnderstanding and capacitie to be-
 come furnished in *all the learning of the Egyptians*.

Thurdly, being thus qualified, he came to eminency and
 grew great in Court; *Pharaoh* not refusing to preferre

1.

2.

Act. 7. 22.

3.

did not but (in all likelihood) know
 a new childe; and his preferment seemes to
 a great office of worth, and reueneue, and that
 should haue brought him in abundance of wealth; why else, are the
 treasures of Egypt (on *Moses* part) opposed to the re-
 proach of *Christ*? It may be he was *Lord-Treasurer of E-*
gypt. (Who can tell the contrary?)

4. *Fourthly*, being thus invested into honour, and wealth,
 he continued therein for no small time, but full *fortie*
Act. 7. 48. *years*, which length of time did so season him in the
 sweetnesse of what he had, as might (in all reason) make
 him most loth, and vnwilling to leaue the same.

5. *Fifthly*, having thus long enjoyed all this fauour, he was
 free to holde it still if he would, no man doth basely vn-
 dermine him by suborning *Pharaoh* against him, or by
 detection of him to haue beene a base *Ebrew bratt* from
 the beginning, and so to enrage the *King* against him for
 that he had crept in thus farre, and kept in thus long;
 neither is any thing attempted by any man, which might
 make *Moses* to be discontent with his present state, and
 so resolute in a humor to leaue it, but he might hold what
 he had at his pleasure, even for perpetuities.

6. *Sixthly*, adde to all these, that if he will be going hence,
 either *Egypt* will be too hot for him, or if he will carry
 therein, and ioyne himselfe to his owne people, he could
 not but see *Pharaohs* tyranny, and their misery much en-
 creasing.

Their burdens heavier,
Their task-masters fiercer,
Their bondage sorer.

And his owne among them, (if he will needes make
 one) to be more extreame and extraordinary than all the
 rest, because he left so much honour, and ease, & wealth,
 willingly to come to calamitie, & were pittie (would *Pha-*
raoh

Job say) but he should haue enough of it, that was so willing to it, and therefore let him (of all men) be most vexed, pursued and oppressed aboue others, who was so witles that he could not tell, when he was well, and tarry in that happinesse which was so graciously and freely conferrd vpon him, and wherein he might haue continued (through the Kings kindnesse and grace) the longest day of his life, and would not.

These few (with some others moe, that might be instanced) being layd together on a heape, doe make vp mightie evidence in the eye of carnall reason to condemne *Moses* of manifest folly in forsaking his present state, and following this course wherevnto he betooke himselfe at this time.

But bring them all (and all that can be pleaded to the same purpose) and let *faith* looke vpon them, that which was a *beame* before, is not so much as a *moath* now, nor worthy in any wise to be respected; this one grace melts all these great things into meere *nullities*, and makes nothing of every thing that was before vrged to this end: neither the kindnesse of the *Kings daughter*, nor the fauour of the *King her father*, nor all the great things he got by both, nor his long keeping of them, nor his vndoubted danger, and disgrace in leaving them, nor every of these alone, nor all of them together, could do any thing with *Moses*, but he is resolute, (by *faith*) to forgoe the best estate the earth could yeeld him, that he might partake with the worst, and most woefull condition of Gods people, and to shew it, the holy Ghost doth witnes, that he did willingly *chuse* the one, and *refuse* the other, being not forced (by flesh and blood) to either, that so the power of *faith* might fully and freely expresse it selfe in both, against all apprehensions, and obiections of man whatsoeuer.

And why should he haue done thus, if he had not knowne our *Doctrine* to be a most vndeniable truth? And how came he to know so much, but by the extraordinary instinct of Gods immediate illumination? Who revealed thus much to him and gaue him both *faith* to beleue it, and *conscience* to doe it accordingly, in spite of whatsoever might be suggested to the contrary. And why should not we fully assent to the truth hereof, seeing *God* hath gone before vs in discovering, and this man of *God* in doing, the same? Especially seeing besides *Moses* practice, *Gods* approbation, doth warrant vs; the Lord hath set to his hand (as it were) and confirmed, and commended this act of *Moses* vnto vs, as a fruit of that holinesse and pietie, which *was* in him, and *should* be in vs, who are commaunded to follow the faith of such, as (by *God*) are well reported of vnto vs, as this man is, who hath a most sauiour name, in the midst of this sacred Catalogue, wherein so many Saints of rare note, are recorded vnto vs, and as much (if not more) is spoken of his faith, then of many others, and more of this one fruit of the same, then of all the rest.

So that, that which is here written of this man, doth ratifie the matter we haue in hand, his practise (thus considered as we haue said) is plenary prooue of our point; it had bene apparant vanitie, and gyddinesse, not any power, or truth of godlinesse in him, if he had not done by *Gods* direction, who by his spirit informed his mind, and conformed his practice, and (by both) confirmed this vndoubted truth vnto vs: otherwise, it might haue well bene thought, he was more *brayne-sicke* then obedient, and bene led from this glory, to that misery, by *frenzie*, rather than by *faith*. But *faith* made glorious things vile, and vile things glorious vnto him, and so he left the *better* state which was (indeed) the *worse*, and chose

chose the *worse*, which was (indeed) the *better*, that all men might learne to know the lawfulness of his carriage herein, and the conscience of their owne, if in any such like case, God call them vnto the like course.

Now if besides this of *Moses*, we should muster vp more examples to this end, it were most easie, (but not very necessary) so to doe: this Chapter would furnish vs with a multitude of those that haue (in like manner) done worthily, and beene famous, for this very thing.

What thinke you of *Abraham*, how were his thoughts, how stood his heart this way? Was he not well in his owne Countrey? Could a man be better, then to dwell in his owne free land, and to haue so great abundance as he had of all good things? Yet he must leaue all this *fee-simple*, and whatsoever he had vpon it, to goe he knowes not whither, onely this he knowes, that whither so ever it is, he hath not a foote of ground, nor any thing at all there, but must come from a rich inheritance, and great estate, where he might commaund; to sojourne and be entertained as a stranger vpon curtesie, where he could get foode and lodging for his money. And this he did at Gods command, of his owne accord and vnconstrayned, as soone as he heard he did obey, which he had no reason at all to haue done, if faith had not *furnished* him with this perswasion, and *furthered* him to this practice: had he not knowne the *worst* place and state God called him *vnto*, to haue beene incomparably better then the *best* God called him *from*; he had never stirred his foote; but being convinced of this truth, and mooued of God, he went willingly out, as one that knew well, the worst that he could goe vnto to witnesse his obedience as a childe of God, would proue more happy to him, then all he could enioy and possesse vpon other termes.

It were but a fruitlesse filling vp of time, to adde more examples to a thing so evident, and vnderstandable as this truth is, we will therefore passe from these, to the *reasons* of the Doctrine, to vnderstand why these things are so, and how they come to passe; and herevnto we haue the more *reason*, because this that we teach, seemeth to be against all *reason*, and sence, that man can commonly conceiue.

I doe freely professe when *first* I apprehended it in my heart, it appeared like a strange *Paradoxe* to my selfe, a point, incapable of truth, impossible to be belceved; and therefore I doe not wonder that it should be so hard of digestion to corrupt nature, and carnall reason, and that it will not downe with so many: *Nature* cannot entertaine it, it is *grace* that must first rectifie nature, and then certifie it hereof. The Lord never put this opinion into any mans heart, nor vrged the practice of it at his hand, before he had refined his vnderstanding from the drosse and dotage, ignorance, and error, wherewith it stands defiled by *corrupt* nature: let vs then stop the *mouth*, yea, the *breath*, of flesh and bloud, and open the passages of the spirit of God, & giue free vent vnto them, and they will soone shew vs the way (and that by good reason too) to be thoroughly possessed of this point of truth, and that it is most worthy to be credited of vs, and embraced by vs.

And the reasons inducing vs herevnto, doe arise out of the due consideration, of a *double conclusion*, which we will propound and proue vnto you, that you may carry them in minde evermore, as *golden* and most precious remembrances, worthy to be engraven deeply and perpetually, in our hearts, that neither *Satan*, nor the world, might ever raze them out, but that they might remayne with vs all our dayes, euen till death. And the *conclusions* are these *two*.

1. No estate can be *evill* to a childe of God, but even his worst, is *good* for him, yea *best* vnto him.

1.

2. No estate can be *good* to a wicked man, but even his *best* is *evill* to him, yea *worst* for him.

2.

The very *worst* prooves well to a godly man, and *bad* is the *best*, to the vngodly. And in the cleare confirmation of these two *Conclusions*, the reasons of our Doctrine will most evidently arise vnto vs, for it cannot but follow, yea flow most naturally in the course of all sound argumentation, that, if the ones *evill* be *good* to him, and the others *good* become *evill* to him, then must the meanest estate of the former, be much more excellent, than the greatest happines of the latter.

Now either of these *Conclusions* reflecteth vpon vndeniable prooffe and demonstration.

For the *first* thus: That estate which commeth vnto a childe of God, accompanied with the infinite loue, wisdom, goodness, and power of God, must needs be best vnto him: But his worst estate commeth thus vpon him: Therefore it must needs be best to him. Nothing here is so much as questionable; for sence sayes the *first* Proposition is true, that what comes so, comes well. And the *Word of God* in the evidence thereof, and the *Worke of God* in the experience thereof, vpon all his afflicted ones, sayth the *second* is as true; the *third* (then) must issue vndoubtedly out of them *both*.

1. Conclu-
sion proe-
ved.

Againe, that estate which worketh towards the furtherance of our *best good of all*, must needs be best for vs; But the worst, the most woefull, and distressed state of every childe of God doth worke for the *best*: therefore it is *best* for him. In this argument all is sound, for no man can doubt of the *first* Proposition, and the Apostle puts the *second* out of doubt, where he sayth [*All things*, (and there he comprehends the worst things the world can

Rom. 8. 28. yeeld) *worke together for the best*:] the *Conclusion* then comes in of it selfe. And so the *first* ground is cleare.

2. Conclu- For the *second* thus. That estate which doth so harden
sion proo- mans heart, that he becommeth thereby least capable of
ved. *mercie*, and most lyable to *iusstice*, (and so furthereth his
utmost confusion, and eternall over-throw) must of ne-
cessitie be the *worst* for a man that may be: But a wicked
mans *best* estate doth thus: Therefore even his *best* estate
is miserable to him. No man can with any colour que-
stion the *first* Proposition; and God gives vs sound
Prov. 1. 32. confirmation of the *second*, where he sayth (*ease slayeth the
foolish, and the prosperitie of fooles destroyeth them*): here, by
the (*foole*) we must vnderstand the vngodly man, and by
(*prosperitie*) all that which he iudgeth most happie to
himselve in this life. Now if nothing bring a wicked
man sooner to destruction than that which he most affect-
eth, and desireth, surely, the same is *worst* of all for
him.

Again, that must needs be a mans worst estate, which
is *most accursed* of God to a man: But a wicked mans
best estate is *most accursed* of God vnto him: Therefore
his *best* estate cannot be but *worst* vnto him. The *first*
Proposition is easie, and evident (of it selfe) to be belee-
ved: The *second* is avouched by *Moses*, where he curseth
in the name of the Lord [*all the encrease, and store, and fruit
of a wicked man, whether of his body, or beast, or ground.*]
Now if his encrease be accursed, then the more he hath,
the more accursed he is, and as either himselve, or any
thing he hath aboundeth, so doth the curse of God a-
bound with it; if he grow from *hundreths* to *thousands*,
so also doe his curses multiply from the Lord, who hath
Deut. 28. *curst the blessings* of every vngodly person. And it is to
37. 18.
Mal. 2. 2. be marked, (as a most remarkable curse) that he is noe
cursed in the want of fruit, or barrenesse of his bodie,
beasts,

Note,

beasts, or ground, for that would every common man account a curse indeede, but, he is accursed in the possession, and prosperitic, and growth of these things; and this is a more *wofull*, by how much it is a more *wonderfull* curse, that a man should haue so much, and be so much the more vnhappy by having it. So then, if thus it be, then is a wicked mans *best* estate *worst* for him, because it is most accursed to him.

And thus these *two Conclusions* stand vpon cleare and unquestionable grounds, and are impregnable trutthes, and being so, our mayne *Doctrine* must needes issue from them both, as naturally as water from a fountaine; and that thus.

If no estate can be euill vnto a *good man* but even his *worst* is good vnto him; and (on the contrary) if no estate can be good to a *wicked man*, but even his *best* is euill to him; why then, it must needes come to passe, that the *worst* estate of Gods childe is *better* then the *best* of any wicked man: But both these haue beene abundantly proved and therefore the truth we teach, is fully confirmed; for can any man so much as once doubt at all, whether the meanest *good* estate be to be preferred to the greatest that is *euill*? or demurre whether he should chuse of the *two*, (if he were put to it) a *poore* and perplexed condition, which may helpe him to heaven, or a prosperous and *opulent* estate, which would hasten him to hell? Certainly this question would soone be affoyled, if it were put to any man (had he but common sence) to be determined, for even naturall reason would giue quicke resolution, that the *worst* of that whereby a man might be happy, were to be chosen and preferred, before the best of that which will procure a mans misery.

Why then, the *worst* of the one being *so good*, and the *best* of the other *so bad*, we cannot but yeeld to our *Doc-*

trine, being overcome by undeniable evidence, both of example, in him that hath tryed both estates by his owne experience; and of reason, approving that which he (vpon tryall) had practised, in refusing the *best* of the one, to choose the *worst* of the other. So that if we will belecue either *Moses* (who is the man that hath done it) to evidence the truth of his faith, or *God*, who hath magnified *Moses* in that which he hath done, to be truly faithfull, our mindes must be thoroughly settled in the assured perswasion of what we haue so plainly propounded, and proved so plentifully, and hold it fast vnto our owne hearts, as our dutie to doe the like, if the Lord shall cast any the like occasion vpon vs, and call vs forth, to try, and declare our faith, by being put to the practice of this truth, to see whether we will so esteeme the reproach of *Christ*, and the persecution of the Saints, that we will giue over and abandon, the riches of the earth, and the pleasures of sinne, to embrace the bitternesse of those that are beloved of *God*, before the sweetest delicacies of those who are abhorred of him. A time may come, when it may be our turne either to avouch this Doctrine by our conformitie therevnto, or deny the Lord who hath avouched it to be his truth. And cursed are they who stand convinced in *Conscience*, of any truth of *God*, wher-vnto they refuse to yeeld *obedience*.

We should doe all well then to doe (as the Wise-man Pro. 10. 14. sayth all wise men doe) to wit, [*lay vp knowledge*] even the knowledge of this particular, to bring it into practice, that our good workes sutable to it, may make good this word of *God* which hath shewed it to vs, and that therein, every man may become a *Moses*, to be thus faithfull before the Lord, as he was, in this thing.

And that we may be the better brought vnto it, and haue our naughtie hearts the more happily provoked to
the

the holy purpose of this heavenly practise; let vs now proceede from the apparant proofe of the point, to the powerfull application of the same, vnto all such, vnto whom it doth, or may any way appertaine: *that is*, all sorts of men, both *good and bad, Saints and sinners*; something it hath to say vnto either of them *severally*, asunder, and something to them both, *ioyntly* together. There is very little truth (if any at all) that *God* revealeth, but it lookes every way, and is of some important consequence to all persons whatsoever, if the sappe and iuyce of it be pressed and wrung out, as it ought to be.

Let vs then in the *first* place consider of what use it is to Gods owne people, and what fruit of comfort his blessed and beloved ones, doe receiue from the sacred truth which we haue sowne, for nothing but heavenly ioy, and sweete consolation, can be reaped and carryed in, to them from any thing which the Lord hath revealed from heaven; for it is written, [*Light is sowne for the righteous, and ioy for the upright in heart.*] *Use 1.*
Comfort
to Gods
children.

Psal. 97. 11.

And (to speake as the truth is) what childe of GOD can speake of this truth, or heare of it being spoken, without solace to his very soule, if he haue faith to beleeue the same? Certainly, if we be not comforted by it, it is onely because we are not confirmed in it; were wee well resolved of it, we could not but reioyce in the assurance thereof.

For why? What is it that troubles and perplexes a childe of God, but his present estate of misery and distresse; and the worse a mans misery is, the more woefull is our distraction through the same, and when it comes to the *worst*, many times we grow from distraction to desperation, and beginne to throw our selues into forlorne and hopeles and infernall conceits touching our present condition, and to giue over both our selues, and all expecta-

pectation of ever being any more happie; the present cloud of our calamitie, is so thicke and darke, that wee can see no sun-shine through it, nor dreame of any more good dayes during our liues, but make account to be perpetually miserable and vnhappy, and to be in so bad case, as none can be in worse, nor *many*, nay, scarce *any*, (as we thinke) in the like.

Now in this case, what can be more truely sayd to the *Saints*, then that of *Christ* to the *Sadduces*, [*Yee erre not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God:*] it is onely your ignorance that makes you ill conceited of the state you are in, and to mistake both it and your selues so much as you doe; did you vnderstand the Scriptures, and the power of this truth of *God*, as wee haue made it plaine, it would soone be seene, how wyde you were from the truth of your estate; for, whereas you thinke (now you are at worst) its scarce possible that any bodie should be so bad, this truth will tell you, and teach you to know, both that you are now no worse then any child of *God* may be; as also that no wicked man is, or can be so well at his *best*, as you are and shall ever be at your *worst*.

And indeede so much the more sweete and heavenly is the benefit of this doctrine, by how much it expels the deadly venime and poyson, of one of the most heauie and hellish temptations that doth vsually surprize the soule of them that are afflicted and humbled of *God*. And that is, the ayme and estimation, they haue taken of themselues and their estate, (not considered in it selfe, but) compared with others, who are wholly free, and feele no such sorrow or extremitie as they doe: And commonly the *Deuill* carries the eye, and settles the obseruation of *Gods* children, onely vpon such impious, and prophane persons, as escape the misery whereinto they

are fallen; and having fastned them vpon such an object, he then turmoyles the minde, and tyrannizeth ouer the thoughts, and doubles, yea multiplies the vexations of their soules, not so much that they are *in* distresse, but, most of all, that others are *out*, who are notoriously vngodly; and hereupon, their thoughts doe offer to fly in Gods face, as if he were nothing so gracious, or righteous, as he is magnified to be, seeing hee lets his *owne children* fare so ill, and suffers his enemies, who are *rebels* against him, and no better then *dogs* or *swine*, (in his account) to be as well as heart can wish: and it is *kindnes*, or *injustice*, in any earthly father to vse his children worse then his cattell? and if not, how much *lesse lone* and *more wrong*, must it be in him that is heavenly, who makes himselfe the mirrour of all mercy, and fauour: and then as *God* is thus censured, so are wicked men applauded, and the generation of the iust condemned.

Satan hath not set vpon a few with this suggestion, and there are not many who haue beene assaulted, but they haue beene *foyled*. The stoutest of *Gods* army haue thrunke shrewdly, and well neere fainted through frailty, a man would wonder to see such mighty champions so miserably dishartened, and discontented, when they haue taken notice how themselves haue beene afflicted, and other (most vngodly persons) exempted from the evils wherewith they haue beene heavily laden so long.

David was so deeply discomfited hereat, that he began to conceit well of wicked mens estate, and to question (yea, and condemne) his owne, and all the people of *God*, concerning this thing, when he saw the prosperitie of sinners, and the misery of himselfe. Let himselfe giue vs evidence how he was gastard, and like to haue gone quite beside himself, yea to haue fallen right down,

Pfal 73. 1.
2. 3. 4.

the divell had so mislead him, and tript vp his heeles, that he was even gone and ready to giue over all: wee haue the particulars related by himselfe at large in the 73. *Pfalme*; where he tels vs, how this very thing had like to haue cost him an irrecoverable fall, & had wounded him almost incurably; and how much a-doe he had to bring his heart to the due consideration of this matter, and to *temper* his mind which was so mightily *distempered*, with *doating* on his owne distresses, and *dreaming* of their happines; and when he compared these together, (to wit, their welfare, and his owne affliction) he was in a heavy taking, and growing toward a hydeous resolution; even (as it were) *to hang his religion on the hedge*, and to ioyne himselfe to such as were hellishly irreligious, because at the present they were in better case then he. Neither was this temptation for a *little* time, nor did it, (during the time it held him) trouble him a *little*, but it stucke long by him, and bit the bone; insomuch that he could not either easily, or quickly, come to settle himselfe into better, or sounder thoughts, that he might stay himselfe vpon the truth. And why, (I pray you) did his owne *bad*, and their *good* estate, trouble and puzzle him so much? was it not because he was not either at all informed, or not well advised of this truth we teach from *God*, who hath avouched vnto vs) as wee haue heard) that the *worst* estate of his owne people, is incomparably beyond the *best* prosperity of wicked persons? Had *David* learned this lesson well, all this labour, and danger, had beene spared, and he had beene well able, to haue waded happily through the deepest temporary unhappines, the world could haue brought vpon him.

Nor was *David* the onely man in this conflict, but good *Jeremiah* (a man of no meane piety, or ordinary parts)

parts) he was also very sorely put too it in this particular, and never so neere a conquest in any *combate*, as in this: his owne mouth shall say how he was amazed, and put to a pittifull *non-plus*, when he considered, the course of *Gods* dispensation of these outward favours. That *God* Iere. 12. 1. was righteous he durst not deny, he knew it right well; 2. 3. but a reason why wicked men should be in rest & peace, and himselfe so wretched, hee could not any way comprehend: this he saw, that they were had in honour and admiration, he was in contempt and derision; hereat, he was at his wits end with wondring, and though he confess he durst not enter into disputation with *God*, yet hee is bold to aske him the question, and entreat him to tell him, how, and why, *they are in peace*, and are planted, & doe prosper, that *transgresse rebelliously*? whereas with him (and other of *Gods* holy ones) it was nothing so, but contrariwise all misery and calamity that could be, came vpon them; how this should be, he could not tell, he desires to talke with *God* about it, not being sufficient to answer and satisfie himselfe in this thing. And how came it to passe that a *Prophet* of *God*, of surpassing sanctity and holinesse, of extraordinary vnderstanding and knowledge, a man mighty in grace, of an impregnable spirit, was thus battered and beated downe with this weapon? why surely, for ought we can see, the onely reason was because he had not yet girt on the powerfull sheild of this precious truth, to saue him harmeles of the dreadfull dynt of that poysoned sword wherewith he hath hurt so many holy saints of the living *God*; had he beene armed with the evidence of this doctrine, and able to haue sayd, [*thus*] why? the very *worst* of a child of *God* is beyond the *best* of an vngodly man, this point had never made any scruple, nor beene occasion of any

doubt, or demurre in his mind, himselfe had beene soone satisfied, *Satan* had beene soone confuted, all, on all sides had beene so well resolved, that either there would have beene a quicke end, or no beginning of this businesse.

Vnto these *two*, it were too easie to instance many more (in Gods booke) *as great*, and *as good* as they, who have beene surprized in the same kinde, but it is needles to multiply more that have beene so assaulted, for we want not, (if wee looke well about vs) those that at this day, are in like manner tempted, the temptor having tryed this *bayte* and found it to ensnare so many, makes vse of it still, and ever will, because of the prevailing experience of the same. Doth hee not come vpon Gods people now, and (in like manner) vpbraid God to them, and them to themselves, hoping to make them weary of the way of God, and to encline to his course? what (saith he to a persecuted and afflicted *Christian*) is this the God you thus magnifie, for infinite *wisedome*, *power*, *providence*, *kindnes*, *loue*, *mercy* and *fauour*, that in all these he is *admirable*, yea *incomprehensible*? and are you those redeemed, and beloved ones, for whom all this (and I know not what more) is reserved? are you his *sons*, *daughters*, his deare *spouse*, yea neere as his owne *members*? if it possible, he should be thus good, and you in so ill case, and others whom he makes you belceue he abhors, and neglects, to enioy the common mercies which you want? How can this stand either with his *mercy*, or your *piety*? with his good promises or your godly practises? it cannot be but either *he* must not be the God you make account off; or *you* not the men you imagine your selues to be; certainly either his goodnes, or yours must faile, seeing so it is, that you are in *worse* case then they that are *starke* naught; were he such a God, or you such men, as is supposed, it would be otherwise then is

is, both with *you* and with *these wicked ones*, they should haue lesse prosperitie, & *you* more happines, you should be in *better* condition, and they in *worse*.

And if once he haue but brought vs to make question either of *Gods* goodnesse, or our owne, he hath enough, to make vs *wholy* miserable, in suspecting both the goodnesse of *Gods* nature, and of our *owne* grace, because he well knowes the Lord cannot endure, but doth abhorre, both his owne, and his childrens state to be mistrusted, in as much, as (besides, the detestable dishonour offered to his owne most glorious Maiestie, to be brought vnder the *distrust* and ieaiousie of his creature, as if he were not that he seemed to be) the *Deuill* is herein gratified, and his lymmes are applauded, and the gracious Saints, and sonnes of the most high condemned, as if those who by the Word of God seeme to be his *best* beloved, (in regard of the many glorious things that are spoken of them) should (by his worke) appeare to be most neglected, (in regard of the many grievous things that lye vpon them) and on the other side, such as are laden with many terrible threatnings in the Scriptures, should confute all that is therein denounced against them, by the perpetuall experience of a prosperous condition for the greatest part of their dayes.

And this was the thing about which *Iobs* friends lay at him so hard from day to day, and would haue had him given vp all, and granted him selfe an hypocrite, being perswaded themselves, and doing their best to perswade him, that it was an absolute impossibilitie, and a thing simply incompatible

Both with Gods iustice and mercy,

And with Iobs religion, and piety.

That he who was (by Gods owne mouth once and *Iob. i. 8.*

Iob. 2. 3. againe) commended to be the best, (one of them) in the world for goodnes, should become the woefull spectacle of the whole world for extraordinary evill of affliction and distresse. But *Iob* himselfe was wonderfull happie in this passage, and knew well how it was with him before the Lord, and all that they could vrge, did not make him start a *hayre* from his integritie ; hence he calls them miserable Comforters, and *Physitians* of no value ; and comforts himselfe with that assurance which his soule did finde in the vndoubted evidence of his eternall happinesse, which the eye of his faith could clearly, and comfortably discern, through the thickest of his present calamitie and tribulation.

He well knew (which we must all learne, and labour to know) that our present estate in this world is no good glasse, or spectacle to looke through, and to represent a childe of God *so* to vs, as the Lord lookes vpon him, and as before the Lord we must esteeme him ; no, nothing is more deceivable, and lesse to be trusted, then the *visi- ble* condition of any man, in respect of his *Temporalities*, which may *flow*, yea *overflow*, to the most prophane, and fall, and *ebbe*, even *a-dry*, to the last *drop*, from the heires of heaven, as most vsually they doe ; and though they doe, yet are they much more happie when they are wholly *emptie*, then the other can be in their most abundant fulnes ; and better in the *depth* of their misery, then the men of the world in their *highest strayne*, and *greatest streame* of prosperitie. And were our vnderstandings so enlightened herein, that we could be stedfastly settled in the infallible perswasion hereof ; this prevailling plea of the *Temptor*, would proue a meere nullitie, a very vanity ; and we should be able, not onely to endure, or holde out, in such a hard time, as we cannot shun (as divers of *Gods* deare

deare children haue done) but with *Moses*, rather make choyce of such a meane state, and forsake a better, to approue our obedience, then to dwell in the Tents, and enioy the delights of the vngodly, vpon *such tearmes*, as ordinarily their *tenure* is taken, and holden, (betweene the *diuell* and them) here in this world.

Let no mans *temporall condition* then, be the least occasion to call his *spirituall*, or *eternall* state into question, be it farre from every faithfull man to iudge according to such outward and vncertaine appearance, *God* never built his goodnesse to vs, nor our happines before him, vpon such *sand*, which will *swell*, and *sincke*, vpon the shift of every *wind*, and surges of every *tyde*, the foundation of his loue is more firme and vnmoouable. And know, there is no happines in the whole earth, good enough to be the *least token* of his *true* loue, nor any earthly euill vnder heaven, bad enough (even at the worst) to distemper the hearts of his elect, in the least, yea though all the poyson and malignitie thereof, were possible to be emptied vpon one man. He that hath assured vs that our *worst*, doth exceed the *best* of other men, would haue vs hearten our selues, and solace our soules herein, knowing that the true weight of this most worthy truth, will overpoyze and beare downe all temporary affliction that hangeth on, or presseth downe in this present euill world.

Be it graunted, (*for it cannot be denyed*) that the *worst* end of the staffe is in the hand of Gods people, and that it is *ill* with them, when worse men fare well, let the deuil haue thus much yeilded, if he will dispute the case; (*truth* is able to giue *error* some advantage, and yet *conquer* too) well, what will he herevpon interre? what shall be his forced and infernall Conclusion of this our free

concession? Why this, that Gods people are in *worse* case then wicked men; well, be it so, and what of that? Say, they are, will any thing follow to *their* true discomfорт, whose soules the Lord would not have made sad? if any thing more then this, let the devill say his *worst*, and produce, and presse it, to the *utmost*, but if this be *all*, all is *nothing*: Satan is confounded, *we* are confirmed, *wicked* men are befool'd, in all this; for why? though (in some earthly, and temporary sence) we may say, our case may be *worse* then theirs, and theirs *better* then ours, yet God hath given vs to know, that in spirituall and heavenly consideration, our *worst* is better then their *best*, and this Proposition we doe, and dare avouch, in the *face* of our fiercest adversary the devill, or the most furious of those tyrants which he provoketh against vs; who thought to inferre some hydeous and hopeles consequence out of these poore premisses, whereas nothing can issue from our perplexitie, and their peace, by any sound evidence, but that which will be

*Glorious to the Lord,
Joyous to his people,
Grievous to the ungodly, and
Mischievous to the devill himselfe.*

Who observing vs thus *completely* armed, against his mightiest engine, must now, either *with shame* give over his old trade of tempting, or *with sorrow* give over his idle hope of prevayling, and begin to thinke himselfe lesse able to conquer vs, and every childe of God (who hath this hope) to be *more then a Conquerour* through *Christ*, who hath loved them, and in his loue made thus much knowne vnto them, to make them *heartie*, in their *hardest* estate.

Rem. 8. 37.

And

And now (Beloved) is *the accuser of our bretheren* (and of our selues) *cist* out, and overcome; we haue *wonne*, he is *downe*, for at the *lowest*, he sees that we know our selues to be farre aboue all his lymmes, even all the *highest*, and *happiest*, they can be in: and seeing he perceives that we now vnderstand this truth, what hope hath he to make vs by any meanes *miserable*, seeing we can beleeue that we are more happie then any of his can be, in our greatest *mifery*.

And that we may be the better *enabled* in our selues to *ouerbeare* him, let vs descend from the *generall* notice hereof, vnto those *particular* instances of all kindes of e-vill wherevnto we are incident, and wee shall finde true cause *triumphantly* to out-face him in every of them, from one to another, as we may haue occasiō to enquire into them in order.

Put the case where you please, nay let *Satan* haue leaue (if you will) to particulate where *he* will, in those miseries, which he imagines may be most for *his advantage*, and *our damage*: whether *povertie*, or *captiuitie*, or *infamy*, or *tyranny*, or *death* it selfe; we shall sufficiently *solace* our selues, and *silence* him, in each of these.

Let vs looke a little into them severally: Is not the *Po- Povertie*.
vertie of a child of *God* better then the *wealth* of the wicked? Let *Lazarus* and *Dives* be the men that shall decide the matter; I dare say you haue read, and heard of them *both*, in *Gods* Booke; the *one* is described by his penury and want, the *other* by his superfluitie and abundance: the one fared deliciously every day, and was sumptuously arrayed in purple and fine linnen; the other had but rags (and scarce them) to cover him, and desired but the *offall* or *reliques* of the rich mans table to refresh his hungry body, and to fill his emptie belly. Now, (I pray you)

which of these *two*, was in the better case, and which of their two conditions would you chuse, all things considered? I suppose no man that hath heard *all the truth* that is tolde of them both, but he had much rather be in *Lazarus* poore state, then haue the riches of the other, and so the poverry of Gods childe, is happier then the vngodly mans abundance; and that which was here but *Parabolically* propounded, vnder these two persons, will be found *really true* betweene any two in the world, in their condition. [*Better is a little* (sayth *David*, first, and *Salomon* once and againe) *that the righteous hath, then the plentie and store of a wicked man, nay, of many wicked men.*] Our *least* doth much exceede their *most*, in every respect, whether of *money, meate, apparell*, or whatsoeuer.

Psal. 37. 16.
Pro 15. 16.
Cap. 16. 8.

Imprison-
ment.

Again, is not our *restraint* and *imprisonment*, better then their *libertie* and *freedome*? Let Gods childe be the prisoner, and the impious person be free at pleasure; a *prison* will be found happier to him, then a *palace* to the other. It may soone be tryed betweene *Peter*, and *Herod*, the one was in hard restraint, even in chaynes, the other might goe where he would; yet (I warrant you) he that reads the story of these *two*, and counts the *middle and both ends*, would rather be *Peter* in the loathsome dungeon, then *Herod* in the highest admiration. Base vermine deuoure *Herod* in all his pompe, magnificence, and royakie: the Angell of God guards *Peter* in restraint, and brings him out miraculously, and ioyfully; and this is left recorded of God to comfort vs (inasmuch as nothing is more against nature, then to be caged vp, and kept in) that we might know, that our *God* can make that *restraint* more happie to *his*, then another mans *enlargement* can be to him. The Bird that is kept in a cage is *safe*, and well provided for, of all things meete to make him sing, but the

Acts. 12.

the *Vulture*, and *Kyte*, often prey vpon those that fly in the open firmament of heaven.

Nay, say it come to *captiuitie*, (which is a strayne of extraordinary restraint) put case *Gods childe* be taken captiue, and kept in slavery, and that *Gods enemy* be the party in authoritie to detayne him *there*, and to tyrannize over him in a strange Land: I make no question but the *captiuitie* of *Gods people*, shall be found to be a condicion more truely comfortable, then another mans *eminency*, yea *soveraignity*, though he were the King of that Countrey wherein they are kept in bondage. *Daniell* and *Nebuchadnezzar* shall decide it, the one (viz: *Daniell*) was the *captiue*, the other was the *King*, let any man say (who hath considered what is sayd of them both) which of the *two* he would chuse to be. Surely, if the oddes had not bin extraordinary, in the comparision, and proportion of these estates, *Moses* had made no good match, in leaving to be a *Courtier* to become a *captiue*; but he well knew that the meanest and most oppressed *Israelite* in *Egypt*, was more happie then that mighty *Monarch*, that kept them vnder *Soveraignity* in a *Pagan*, is not cōparable to slavery in a *Christian*. Let *God* giue sentence by his revealed word, & it will be apparant to be a truth vndeniable and vndoubted. A *throne*, & a *crowne* cannot be so good to another, as a *cottage*, yea, a *dunghill* to those that are the *Lords*.

Againe, is not our *persecution* better then their *pleasure*? and are not our very *distresses*, beyond their *delights*? I thinke the *three children* in the fiery fornace, will soone satisfie vs for that, for they were in more comfortable plight in the midst of these fiercest flames, then he was who cast them in; and that the tyrant himselfe is forced to confesse, & also maketh decrees to confirme the same

vnto others, that out of his mouth, all men may know the *power* and *favour* of the Lord to his owne, in sweetening their extreamest bitternes; and his *wrath* and *vengeance* against all vngodly ones, in envenoming and poysoning their greatest sweetnes. God hath many precious comforts for the *persecuted*, but nothing but curses and plagues for *persecutors*. The very infamy and reproach, of such as suffer for the truth, doth surpasse the honour and reputation of those that cast contempt vpon them; for the Lord doth *renowne* the one, & *renounce* the other: Men fawne vpon mightie tyrants with *glorious titles*, but God doth frowne vpon them as base and ignominious persons. How many pages of his sacred booke are perfumed, with the odour of their *sweete names*, who haue beene disgraced for *God*? and how many stories doe record the *rotten*, & *stinking* memory of their oppressors? the one goe for glorious *martyrs*, the other for egregious and defamed *malefactors*. And this made some who

Acts. 2.

mockt the *Apostles* at the first, when they had *afterward* better bethought themselves, they left mocking, and became *Disciples*; they gaue over *reproaching*, and fell to *professing* the Gospel; and they had no reason *thus* to doe, had they not knowne that it had bin more excellent to haue bin an *infamous Christian*, then an *honourable infidell*.

Heb. 12. 4.

But passing over all these, and supposing the *worst* that can come, (if the *worst* doe come to the *worst*) if men must *resist to blood*, and that *Death* must end all the fore-said afflictions, of povertie, imprisonment, captivitic, persecution, infamy, and whatsoever can be endured in this life. Is not our *Death*, better then their *life*? yea, God hath said it, as it may appeare in that which he hath enforced from the mouth of a most wicked man to witnes it. What say you to *Balaams* wish, (and that vpon his best thoughts),

thoughts) when he had but the taste, and seene (as yet) but the glympse of the happines, and glory of Gods people? even *Balaam* who came of purpose to curse and maligne them, and therefore, (vato him) it may well be thought, the life of *Gods* people was as bad, as a death, & worthy of his vtmost excecration; yet no sooner had *God* shined a little vpon him, onely with some little *light*, (without al *life*) of this truth; but the man is more in loue with the *death* of the righteous, then with his owne *life*, & would gladly cease to *liue* as he did, to *dye* as they doe; his wish shewes enough to make this good with advantage, how earnestly doth he vtter it? [*Let my soule dye the death of the Righteous, let my last end be like vnto his*] and no man in cōmon sence can wish any thing but that which either is *indeede*, (or in his apprehension) for his owne well-fare. Moreover, how many singular respects are there wherein, the *death* of Gods childe is to be preferred to the *life* of a wicked man?

Num. 23.
10.

- Our death is precious;*
- Their death is vile:*
- Our death desireable;*
- Their life abhominable.*

Psal. 116.
15.
Psal 15. 4.
Phil. 1. 23.
2 Pet. 2. 10.

Thus in the *last enemy* which is death, we overgoe the vngodly, and are, (or ought to be) so farre from changing *liues* with them, that we will not giue *our death* (which is the *worst* that can befall vs in this world) for *their life*, which is the onely *darling* they desire beyond all other, to enioy vpon the earth.

1 Cor. 15.

And so we haue seene in all these particulars severally, how the oddes is ours in all respects, there's more to be got by our *greatest evils*, then by all their *best good*, instance where you will, its evident, in every thing which can be named, or conceited.

I will now speake but once more ; and that shall be of all, and every of our evils *summ'd* vpon together, and gathered into a *totall*, that as in the *Items* before, so now in them all at once, it may appeare, that the whole masse of our misery, or the greatest measure thereof, that can be *powred in, pressed downe*, even till it run over vpon vs, is more happy, & much better, then all the good things, that can be cast vpon wicked persons, yea though the whole world should empty all her fulnes, and excellency, to giue them the *largest* contentment, that could be wished.

And we will giue you sufficient security for the truth hereof, in one that is beyond all exception, to wit, *Iesus Christ*, who was a man of sorrowes, a mirrour of miseries, in whom all kinde of calamity did combine, and settled it selfe vpon his sacred person, (considering as he was man) seizing both vpon soule and body at once, & in inexpressible manner vpon both, and either. It would bee too tedious to particulate those severall passions which he felt, neither indeede is it more possible for vs to *declare them*, then to *endure them* : How was he handled, and humbled, *of God, of men, of devills?*

Of God, in iustice, seeing he suffered in mans stead.

Of men, in malice, being instigated by the diuell.

Of the diuel, in outrage, being permitted of God to afflict him.

The *severity* of Gods law, the *extremity* of mans cruelty, the vtmost of the diuels *tyranny*, was exercised vpon him ; betweene these *three* he carryed (*at once*) the *vengeance* of heaven, the *malignity* of the earth, and the *despite* of hell, all these *envenomed vyalls* being full of his fathers feircest wrath, and most dreadfull indignation euen to the loathsome lees, and poysonous dregs, were *powred*

powred vpon his precious soule and body, so that hee was *all over* drencht into the most wofull condition that a creature could be, as carrying the malediction of the most mighty God, and that whole curſe, which was due, (*by diuine law*) to man-kindes corrupt nature in the elect.

Now take him at the very *worſt*, and vtmoſt of all this euill, imagine him as betrayed by *Iudas*, apprehended by the *High Priests* ſervants, pynnioned, and arraigned before *Pilate*, and there reproached, blindfolded, bufeted, and every way moſt barbarouſly abuled, with thornes, rods, and whatſoever could be done to his ignominy, and miſery, follow him from thence to his *Croſſe* and thinke what he endured there, in *ſight* of all men, beſides the *unſeene ſufferings* of his ſoule, before in the garden, and now againe, which made him fill the firmament of heaven with ſtrong, and ſtrange cryes, as being *ſimply* inſufferable to a meere creature, (without the vtter deſtruction of the ſame) vnleſſe it had a *Diety* to ſupport it. And in this baſeſt, bittereſt, and moſt heauie condition, ſet by him ſome one among the ſons of the *mighty*, and conceit *that man* in a compleat contrariety to all this, put vpon *him* all the pompe, pleaſure, principality, power, honour, and whatſoever heart would haue; *dignifie* him with the dominion of the whole world, and let all the crownes vnder heaven be brought into one, and ſet vpon his head, nay, *dieſie* him) as *Herod* would haue beene) and make him the onely MONARCH of *mankinde* and that nothing may be wanting to his abſolute welfare in a temporary, and terrenall eſtate, let all *mynes* yeelde him *treasure*, all fruites giue him *pleaſure*; yea thinke him as much more happy about all men, as *Chriſt* was more miſerable then a

ny man. And when *these two* shall stand together (thus) in thy thoughts, say which of the *two* thou iudgest in better case, and in whethers estate thou wouldest chuse to stand; either in *Christs* at the *worst*, or this mans at the *best*. I make no question but every true Christian would quickly determine the case, and make his choise, and none but the *Atheist*, or infidell, would take any part with the other. Why then, is it not plaine that the greatest *heape* of most heavy vnhappines, being piled vp together, and throwne vpon the person of a childe of God, is more light, and easie to beare, beyond all comparison, then *mountaines*, or *mynes*, yea, or whole *worlds* of wealth, and whatsoever else of the best things, that can be either devised, or desired, to fill the sensuall heart of sinful man. These *two* then, (thus considered) doe cleare the case, and make our comfort vnquestionable, that all our cvill exceedeth all their good, and that therefore, though the Lord, doe please to lay his heavy hand vpon his *owne*, & to let those *profane* ones goe free, and vntouched, and so *to seeme* to be in better case then we, yet now wee see not onely by prooffe of *evidence*, but also by powerfull *experience*, that the *worst* we haue, is better then the *best*; our *miseries* are beyond their *mercies*, yea, our *hell*, exceeds their *heaven*, and so they *sillily* insult over vs, but we *justly* over them; and *Satan* is but a foole to turmoyle vs with these perplexed thoughts, of the wel-being of his vassals, and our ill condition, vnlesse hee could overturne, and take away the ground of this glorious truth, which overturnes him, and makes vs to glory and triumph in our most grievous tribulations, vnder the blessed hope of much present, and of infinite and everlasting felicity to come to vs, for ever and ever, in due time.

And beloved, vpon these premisses (*thus considered*)

wee ought to be so farre from wondering at our miseries, that we should rather turne all our admiration vpon our selues, and begin to wonder at our owne weakenes, ignorance, and infidelity, and to bewaile our wonderfull want of faith in this heavenly truth; which if it were well belceved, and applied of vs, might and would, be so farre from encreasing our cares, that it would rather cause vs to [*account it exceeding ioy when we fall into many tribulations*] and in stead of blessing vngodly men in our thoughts, at their *best*, wee would blesse God for the basest, and most deiected state whereinto it should please him to suffer them to cast vs: did we know all, we would soone be *wearie* of their *welfare*, and most willing to vndergoe that condition which is reputed most wretched and wofull.

James 1. 2.

Shall we lanch a litle further into the deepe, and discover the *rich, rare, and hidden* treasures of this heavenly truth? that by our knowledge of them, we may truely finde, that [*as our afflictions doe abound for Christ, our consolations shoulde abound, (yea superabound) much more, by Christ,* and also, that the further we wade in the particulars of our woe, we shall still descry more abundance of blessed ioy, and therein wee may *swime* and bath our selues, in our greatest bitternes, and by it, be sweetely saved from sinking in that *sea* of sorrow & distresse, wherein so many doe most miserably (*as in a bottomlesse gulfe*) drowne and overwhelme themselues *irrecoverably*. Assuredly if we come to survey the *happy, and worthy*, differences of our *worst* estate, and their *best*, and what singular & surpassing advantages we haue of them every way; wee should (at once) gather both much abundant assurance of this truth, and also evidence of incomparable comfort from the same: inasmuch as it will vndeniable-

2 Cor. 1. 5.

ly appeare, that in our *heavieſt* eſtate, our ſtate is ſo *heavenly*, as may, and will, (being rightly ballanced) wholly over-bear all diſcomforts that can come vpon vs; & teach vs to *trample* tribulation vnder our feete, as a thing more fit for our holy contempt and ſcorne, then for our carnall care or feare.

Let vs then make our approach, and drawe neere to ſome few, of thoſe *innumerable* particulars, which wee might readily produce; inſtancing in ſuch onely, as for evidence are moſt *unquestionable*, and for conſequence moſt *comfortable*. And the neerer wee come, the more will our ioy ariſe, and encrease vpon vs, by the bright beames of that bleſſed and celeftiall *light*, that ſhineth from heaven ſo *gloriously*, in every ſeverall *difference* and *advantage* betweene their *beſt*, and our *worſt* eſtate. For you muſt know, that as the *difference*, ſo the *advantage*, betweene our condition and theirs, is exceeding great, and beyond all dimension, yet we will ayme and gueſſe, as we are able, to vnfold ſuch as we ſhall find moſt plain, and moſt plentifull to our propoſe in hand. To come to them then: The firſt is this.

1. *A childe of God is bleſſed in his worſt eſtate, and an ungodly man is a curſed in his beſt.*

2 Advan-
tages.

Can there bee a *wider* difference, or a *worthier* advantage then this? the difference betweene things *bleſſed* & *curſed* of God, is the moſt that may be, for God makes theſe *two*, the vtmoſt extreames, both of all *naturall*, *ſpirituall*, and *eterna'l* good, and evill, and the advantage is the ſame with the difference, that is to ſay, as much as can be vttered or expreſſed: but let vs trie the truth hereof in this particular, whereof we ſpeake.

And that we may ſoone doe, for wee haue a moſt ſure word of our Lord and Saviour *Ieſus Chriſt* to ſecure our ſoules

soules of the same, Looke we into that part of his owne most excellent *sermon* which we finde *Luke 6.* where he bringeth in, both the righteous, and the sinner, and presenteth either of them unto vs, in their owne habite.

The godly at the worst, ver. 20. 21. 22. 23.

The vngodly at the best, ver. 24. 25. 26.

The former (*viz*: the faithfull) are considered in their *Poverty, Hunger, Sorrow, and Contempt*, but they are blessed in them all: no *Poverty* but blessed, [*Blessed be ye poore, ver. 20.*] no *Hunger* but blessed, [*Blessed be ye that hunger, ver. 21.*] no *Sorrow* but blessed, [*Blessed be ye that mourne, ver. 21.*] no *Contempt* but blessed, [*Blessed are ye when men revile you &c. ver. 22. 23.*] And (beloved) are not they a blessed people, and their state blessed every way, whose very *crosses, yea curses* (as the world accounts them) are blessed? Can they want any thing to make them *infinitely blessed*, who see very want of some blessings is *soblessed* to them? Had not he [*who is God to be blessed for ever*] preached this point, who could haue consented, & set to his seale that it had beene true? but himself was *hungry, and blessed; poore, sorrowfull, contemptible,* and blessed in *all these*, he spake what himself in *our nature* did feele, & what his members (partakers of his nature) by *grace* should feele; to wit, that if the world & the diuell will keepe them every way perplexed; he will ever keepe them (as God his father kept *him*) happy and blessed. If they must be *poore, and hungry, grieved, & defamed*, it shall be.

Blessed hunger,

Blessed povertie,

Blessed reproach, and

Blessed griefe,

doe the world and the Divell what they can, when they haue done their *worst* to Gods children, the *worst* they

can doe, shall be well, and happy to them.

The latter (viz: the profane) they, (on the other side) are set out to the *utmost*, the *most* is made of them that can be, we haue them brought in ruffling in their *Riches*, *Society*, *ollitie*, and *Honour*, but they are wofull in al these: no wealth but wofull, [*woe be to you that are rich: ver. 24.*] no fulnes but wofull, [*woe be to you that are full, ver. 25*] no mirth but wofull, [*woe be to you that laugh, ver. 25.*] no honour, but wofull, [*woe be to you when men applaud you, ver. 26.*] And are not they a wofull people, to whom all *wealth* and *welfare* is wofull whose very comforts & *blesings* (as the world accounts them) are *accursed*? Can they want any thing to make them *infinitely* miserable, whose very *mercies*, are *miseries* to them? The Lord hath entayled an eternall *woe*, to all those things wherein they place their *welfare*. Their *blesings* and Gods *curse*, cannot be severed; they are simply inseparable, and shall so cleaue vnto each other for ever, that as they can haue no ioy in any happines appertayning to *others*, so they shall haue none, in that which they possesse *themselves*; but whensoever they read, or heare any thing, out of Gods booke touching any temporall benefit comming towards them, it must be vnderstood *with a vengeance* adhæring to it, (so farre as their part goeth in it) before they shall enioy it.

Now what a *mercy* is it, to haue every *bitter* thing *sweetned*, every *evil* *blesed*? And what a *miserie* is it to haue every *sweete* thing *poysoned*, every *good* thing *accursed*?

This is our *first* advantage, and the odds standing vp on these tearmes, of an *evill* state *blesed*, and a *good* condition *accursed*, every *idiot* would soone determine which of the *two*, to chuse; Is not a *good* estate to be desired on any tearmes, & a *bad*, on none? I think every man would be

be glad of a *blesſing* vpon any condition, and entertayne a *curſe*, vpon none. And now judge (I pray you) betweene *Saints*, and *ſinners*, which of both are in better caſe, howſoever it ſtand with either of them, in the *beſt* the one may haue, & the *worſt* that can befall the other; and according to this apparant evidence, giue vpright ſentence, whether the *moſt unhappie* among the children of God, be not in more happy caſe, then the *moſt happie* among the children of this world.

And thus farre concerning our *firſt* advantage. The *ſecond* is this.

2. *A childe of God at his worſt, hath no true, or reall evill upon him, but onely the appearance, or outside of the ſame.* 2. Advantage.
A wicked man at his beſt, hath nothing but that which ſeemeth to be good, and is (indeed) evill.

And this advantage is moſt evident on either part, and vndeniable in both. For *firſt*, for the childe of God, he hath his part & intereſt in *Chriſt*, who having taken part of all the evils incident to the elect, hath by his own ſuffering and enduring of them, deprived them of their *venome* & *poyſon*, pulled out their *ſting*, and aboliſhed whatſoever was *truely evill* in them, and ſanctified them ſo, as that he *alone* did beare them as *curſes*, we (at the *moſt*, and the *worſt*) doe vndergoe them *onely* as *croſſes*; vnto *him*, they were as juſt puniſhments for vs, vnto *vs*, they are nothing but mercifull chaſtiſements: they were due to him (in our *nature*) by law, and became part of the *malediction* thereof; they come to vs, onely as tokens of kindnes and loue, ſo ſaith the ſpirit of God once and againe.

Pro. 3. 17.
 Heb. 12. 10.

Again, for the vngodly man, he is miſerably gul'd, and coſned, as concerning his condition, having ſome things which *ſeeme* to be *good*, but being well ſifted, and ſearched into, are found to be nothing but reall evils.

For

For why? we know, sinne and rebellion did not onely bring in *plagues, wants, and miseries*; but also it brought *mischiefe, and rottennes, and wretchednes*, vpon the good things God created for vs, and made them evill to vs, not in their *privation* alone, but even in our *possession* of them also, as was noted in the former advantage. Now this curle that by sinne cleaveth to the blessings of God, is (as was also aforesayd) inseparable, to the sinner; because his sinne is not remooved *from him*, or satisfied *for him*, by *Christ*, vnto God, in whom, he himselfe having no part or portion, but remayning vnder the power and rage of *sinne*, and right and possession of *Satan*, so doe also, all those things likewise which he doth enioy, remayne vnder the malediction of *Almightie God*, and in *them*, he is as much deceived as he is in *himselfe*, who though he seeme to be, (at least to himselfe) *as good as any*, yea, *it may be better*, (in his owne conceit) then the *best* of the Lords beloved ones; is yet, but a *lyme* of Satan, an ympe of hell, and no such man as he made account he was. So that himselfe is *no such person*, and all he hath, are *no such things*, as they are conceited to be, being reputed good, but discovered to be starke naught. Looke what wee are before the Lord, such are all things to vs which we haue, they can be no other in his sight.

Note.

But shall we heare the *Holy Ghost* speake in this point, and that from them (or rather *in them*) whose experience doth *actually* iustifie that which we doe avouch. Looke (I pray) and obserue, yea admire, the Apostle *Pauls* evidence in this particular, he was a man that had tryed the *worst* that could be endured, and the *worst* (he saith) of that he felt, is onely *this*, that it onely *seemed* to be worse then *indeede* it was found to be; nay, (on the contrary,) that it was but a *shaddow* of evill, and a meere *appearance*

pearance thereof, without any *substance*, or reall sence of ^{2 Cor. 6. 8.} the same at all. Take we notice of his words, as we finde ^{9. 10. 11.} them, and we shall see this point impregnable: he speaks (purposely) of his miseries, persecutions, and distresses, of all sorts, and in them all, what saith he? why even this, that the *worst* of them were not the things themselves they seemed to be, but onely some *shewes*, or outsides of them: their sorrow was no more but this, [*As sorrowing and yet all wayes reioycing*] their povertie but this, [*As being poore, yet making many rich*] their want but thus, [*As having nothing, yet possessing all things*] and so of the rest, insomuch, that he breaks out most affectionately, *ver. 11. O Corinthians, &c.* As if he should say, Oh deare Christians, if you did but know how *well* it is with vs at our *worst*, how the Lord doth grossely infatuate the *Divell*, and befoole wicked men, in suffering them to conceit how vnhappy we are, through the evils they cast vpon vs; and how he doth graciously comfort vs, in taking away the *evill*, of all these *evils* from vs, so as that, wee are nothing so afflicted, or distressed, as they dreame vs to be, but (on the quite contrary) wee are cheared, comforted, and encouraged, that we can, and do reioyce exceedingly, in the vtmost extremities of *all*, that they are able by might, or malice, to inflict vpon vs: if this were but knowne to you as it is felt of vs, you would reioyce together with vs, and be perswaded (as we are) that no more misery can come to a true *Christian* for the profession of Religion, then may remayne, and well consort with all the ioy, peace, solace, and happinesse, which heart can wish. And in this declaration the Lord hath enlarged our hearts to tell you *that truth* which the world cannot receiue, nor belecue; to wit, that the *worst* we can *endure*, may consist, with the *best* wee can *desire*. The *mischiefes*

men bring vpon vs, of sorrow, want, &c. are but *Pictures* or *images* of these things; but the ioy, fulnes, &c. the Lord giues in the midst of them all, are true; and reall, found, and substantiall consolations.

But now on the other side, for the vngodly, it is not so with them: all their good things are evils *indeede*, how good soever they seeme to be. Haue we not shewed them to be all *in the generall* denounced as curses to them, from Gods owne mouth, *Deut. 28.* And if we come to *particulars*, will not every severall *blesing*, prooue a *curse* vnto them, vpon due search?

Pro 14. 13. They haue *myrth*, but such as [*in the midst whereof the heart is heauie*], and doe they not droope many times inwardly, when outwardly they are frolike and iouiall? God saith they doe, and some of them haue shewed it to be too true; it is but *mock-myrt* they haue, lent them *by Satan*, to delude them a little while, and to be taken from them *by God*, at a moments warning, whensoever he shall but offer to frowne vpon them in the least.

They haue *wealth*, (and the world sayes, that they who haue that, haue the blessing of God) but what is their wealth? *Seemingly good*, yea that which makes them the best men, in mens iudgement: but if you will be iudged by *God*, who hath spoken it, he calis it by so many *odious Epithets*, as must needs perswade any man that it is nothing lesse then *good indeed*: take a few for a taste, is it not called

Hurtfull, *Eccle. 5. 12.*

Deceitfull, *Mat. 13. 22.*

Dangerous, *1 Tim. 6. 17.*

Filthy lucre, *1 Pet. 5. 2.*

Vnrightheous mammon, *Luk. 16.*

With a multitude more of most *loathsome* appellations

to the same purpose, by any one of which, nothing that is *truely good*, was ever entitled.

And what we say of their *wealth*, and *myrth*, might be sayd of the *honour*, and *pleasure*, of these men, and of all their contentments whatsoever; all and every of which, vpon true and serious inquisition, would be found no such matters, as they are made account to be, in the weake imaginations of wicked men; but things, quite contrary to the great opinion they haue of them.

Now what a *wide difference*, and what a *worthy advantage* is here? that a childe of Gods *worst*, is but *seeming euill*, and *true good*, and an vngodly mans *best*, is but *seeming good*, and *true euill*? Surely a little deliberation would serue, to a full resolution of any mans choice of these *two*, which he would haue, whether the former condition, or the latter. And this is our *second* advantage. The *third* followeth. And that is this.

3. *That the soule of a childe of God is safe, in the worst estate he can be in, in this life; but a wicked mans soule is in most danger when his estate is at best.* 3. Advantage.

Let the Lord speake for *both*, out of his blessed Word, we know he will not, nay, cannot but say true for either side. For the faithfull and their safetie *first*. Christ foretels *Peter* of as much misery as might befall him, when he signifies vnto him, that [*Satan had a desire to wynnow him* (with the rest) *as wheate*] that is, throughly, exactly, to the vtmost; by which words he meant to giue *Peter* to vnderstand what miseries he was like (for the truths sake) to vndergoe, and how it came to passe accordingly, by Gods permission of the *Deuill*, and the power, and malice of his adherents, the story of his denial before *Christs* death; and the relation of his life, and death, in the booke of the *Acts of the Apostles*, doth abundantly

Verf. 32. evidence, and declare. But wherewith did *Christ* comfort *Peter*, when he told him of this outward discomfort and danger? why even with this very thing, [*But I haue prayed for thee, that thy faith faile not*] which was as much as to say; though many persecutions, and perils may surprize thee, to the endangering of thy life, even vnto the death, yet know, thy soules estate shall be secured, the power of grace in thee, the assurance of glory to thee, shall in no wise faile, that shall stand fast for ever, whatsoever becommeth of thy temporall part, which will perish.

Ioh. 10. And not to *Peter* alone, was thus much spoken, but our *Lord Iesus Christ* sayd as much to all that are of vp-right hearts, when he spake that Parable of the Shepheard and the Sheepe, whereof we reade in the Gospell. He compares himselfe to the good Shepheard, & his Saints, to his *Sheepe*: now because no creatures doe more miscarry through the violence, crueltie, and outrage, of devouring beasts, then *sheepe* doe, and none are in so much danger to be torne in peeces as they, and no *sheepe* that men haue, are in halfe the danger that *Christ*s *sheepe* are; *Christ* doth of purpose provide, to prevent (I say not the danger it selfe, as if he meant, that never, *Wolfe*, or *Beare*, should come neere his fold, but) that *fear*, that might follow the danger, wherevnto they are incident, saying, [*my Father who gaue them to me is greater then all, and none can take them out of my Fathers hand*] As if he should tell them, it were very possible, easie, and ordinary, for tyrants to breake into the fold, and fetch away a *sheepe*, or two, and scatter (if not devoure) a whole flocke; but (sayth *Christ*) though your fleeces should be shorne, yea though your flesh should be torne, and you taken from *house to house*, yea from the earth; yet know, that your *best* part is *safest*, your soules shall none be able to touch, or take

out of my Fathers hand, who holdeth you fast, and will not let you goe from himselfe, vpon any tearmes; but will [*hold you by his right hand, and guide you by his counsell, and afterwardes bring you to glory,*] though it may be through the *Butchers* hands.

Psal. 73.
23. 24.

And the Apostle *Peter* himselfe tells vs, (it may well be out of the happy experience, of the feeling of that which *Christ* sayd to himselfe before) that the Saints of God in those times did reioyce (and that in the midst of many heauie temptations) with ioy *unspeakable and glorious*, because they were secured (touching their soules estate) of that immortall, and never fading inheritance, which was reserved for them (*through the favour of God*) in the heavens, and they preserved (*through the power of God*) vnto it. In some *uncomfortable* heavines they were, because of their present afflictions, but the ioy they felt by this blessed assurance of their soules estate, was so much, that it was *unspeakeable*.

But now for the vngodly and the sinner, on the other side, the case is altered with *them* in this thing; his bodie and state, may be both very secure, and every thing may goe with him, as hee would haue it, he may be planted, and rooted, and growe rancke and encrease *mightily*, in all contentments to the desire of his heart, but in the meane while, though all his externall things seeme to be built on the *rocke*, yet his soules estate is founded on the *sand*, and that so *loosely*, that every puffe of winde, every waue of water, beares it downe, by reason of the perpetuall perill wherin it is.

We haue too many witnesses of this woful truth: *A whole world* fell at once, when they thought themselues firme, & fast in the daies of *Noah*; neither were the bodies of the

1 Pet. 4. 6. all neerer *drowning*, then the soules (I will not say of all, for the Apostle seemes to me, to controule it, but) of the most of them, were to *damnation*.

Isa. 5. 15. The *Prophet Isaiah*, brings in a merry crew of such as neither *cared* for, nor *feared*, any thing, but passed their time with merriment and mulicke, and so exceeded in iollity as it past : but on a suddaine, the next newes we heare of these *good-fellowes*, is that [*Hell had enlarged it selfe, and opened her mouth without measure to receiue them*] as if hell were hungry for them, and could not be satisfied till it had them ; and are not they in most danger, after whom hell is thus eager ?

The *rich glutton* in the Gospell, was so well lin'd, and growne so warme in his wooll, having jnn'd all his corne, enlarged every barne, and brought all things so about, that now he was at hearts-ease, and could let himselfe a *lease* for many yeares, of peace, safetie, fulnes, and all kinde of contentment ; as if he thought, that not a man among a thousand was better vnder-laid then himselfe, and that, *as David once dream'd* his rocke was made so strong, that there had beene no stirring of it ; alas, what plight was his soule in, all this while ? No sooner had he breathed out the words that argued his conceited *safetie*, but instantly another voyce was heard from heaven, a voyce *dolefull, heauie, and terrible*, arguing his *dangerous*, nay, his *desperate*, nay, his *damned* estate, now imminent, and hanging over his head, and immediately to be executed vpon him, [*thou foole this night shall they take away thy soule*] was ever man *neerer* mischief, that thought himselfe *so farre* from it ? he talkes of many yeares happines ; God tels him of that perdition that the Prophet speakes of [*destrustion shall come vpon the wicked, and he shall not see the morning thereof*] that is, such confusion as shall

shall soone come, and make quicke dispatch of all, when it doth come.

Thus are the soules of Gods Saints bound fast vp [*in the bundle of life*] by the Lord himselfe, the Lord of life; who hath *bound* himselfe, and his holinesse, to saue them wholly harmeles, at the *worst* that can come vnto them in this world. But for the soules of wicked persons, they are in wofull plight, in their bodies best estate, and lie so scattered, neglected, & vnregarded, (as things of naught) that *God* in iustice, lets them alone to be seized by *Satans* malice, to be a prey to that devouring Lyon, who will soone make everlasting havock of them in hell.

And this is the *third* difference, and the Saints *third* advantage, beyond all vngodly men, wherein how easie is it to determine, who hath the better end, or which is the happier state? any man that hath but a mans soule, indued *with reason*, will soone preferre safety to danger in themselves, but whosoever hath a Christians soule seasoned *with Religion*, will preferre the former vpon any tearmes, even the very *worst*, and accept the latter vpon no tearmes, no not the *best*. The *fourth* advantage followeth.

4. *A childe of God at the worst hee can be in, in this world hath no true cause of feare: And a wicked man at his best, is in a state most fearefull.* 4 Advan-
tage.

The most afflicted condition of the faithfull is voyd of feare, and the fayrest estate of a wicked man is full of feare. Gods booke giues abundant testimonie of both; fully freeing the Saint from feare, and filling the sinners heart with little else. Let vs take notice of that which is revealed for the people of God in this particular.

The Prophet *Isaiah*, foretels marvellous misery vnto the Church, vnder the names of fire, and water, both Ifay 43. 11.
2. 3.

which doe resemble, both great distresses, and great abundance of them also: you know they are merciles and outragious creatures, that doe wholly burne, and viterly ouerturne, all they preuaile vpon; and like vnto them must the calamities be, that are likened (to vs) by them. Now, though the very naming of *fire*, and *water*, of *floods*, and *flames*, (especially to this end, to be *metaphors* of more heavy miseries) were enough to terrifie and affright men, and to cause feare to overflow all hope of any happines; yet the Lord will in no wise haue his children afraid, but layes it vpon them by expresse inhibition here, (as he also doth many a time else where) [*Feare not O Iacob my servant*] and because this might seeme an exceeding *strange* iniunction, he giues them a *strong* and excellent reason for it: [*For I am with thee, the waters shall not drowne, the fire shall not burne thee &c.*] Behold, when he tels them of things most *fearefull*, he will not haue them feare at all.

And the *Apostle* is of the same mind, with the *Prophet*, writing to the Church at *Philippi*, (and in those daies, the times were terrible, tyranny and extreame persecution prevailed exceedingly vpon all such, as could be found to professe *Christianity*) and exhorting them [*in nothing to feare the adversaries*] (for [*our*] is not originally expressed). Obserue how *generall* the exhortation is, both touching the adversaries, and the things to be feared in them [*in nothing, feare the adversaries*] let them be *who* they may be, never so merciles, scierce, or inhumane: let their rage be *what* it will be, never so vile, villanous, dyreful, yea diabolical, yet whē both are come to the *most*, & *worst*, that can be, neither is worth fearing.

In like manner, *Iohn* writing to the Church of *Smyrna* giues them the same comfortable counsell, and encouragement

agement, against their persecutions now approaching, saying, [*Feare nothing that thou shalt suffer*] and yet he tels them that their tribulation shall be so extreame, and extraordinary, as if the *divell* were broke loose among them, and come from *hell it selfe*, to make the earth a kinde of *hell* vnto them, (for in what sence their tormentors are called *Divells*, their torments may be called *hell*) and yet he would not haue them feare, at all, though he tell them of that which would feare, yea affright, yea (almost) amaze any body, to thinke that their enemies are *divells*, that is, so exceedingly surpassing and beyond all ordinary oppressors, that none is *bad enough* to represent them, but the *divell* himselfe.

These are the *generall acquittances* that the Lord hath given his seruaunts to free them from all feares in al afflictions: yea, let them seeme never so *fearefull*, or *infernal*, they are not all of them (no not at the worst) worth fearing in the least. [*Thou drewest neere* (saith good Ieremiah) *in the day of my trouble, and saydest vnto me Feare not,* Lam. 3. 57. *and that when I was, in the low dungeon.*] [*Though I walk* 56. 57. *in the valley of the shadow of death,* (that is, in the most discomfortable state of death it selfe) yet I will feare no euill] saith good David. And in a word) our Lord Iesus Psa. 23. 4. *Christ* gaue this for one among those many most gracious lessons he left behind him, [*Feare not them,* (let the men be as many, as mighty, as malicious, as they may be) Mat. 10. 28 *that can kill the body*] (be their maner of killing, as tyrannous, torturous, yea barbarous, and cruell as it can be) as if hee would say, neither persecutors, nor persecutions of any kinde, are cause of any feare in the faithfull; hee who spake it (*as man*) well knew what hee sayd; (*as God*) and therefore we stand bound to obey him as *Christ*, both *God* and *man*; knowing right well, that if any thing

thing in mans power, might haue beenc iust matter of feare, to the faithfull, hee would not haue layd this injunction vpon them; but being *man*, and acquainted with humane frailty, and being *God*, having command ouer such corruptions, as hee knew would flow from the same; he forbids *all feare*, in *all cases*, because no such feare in vs, can consist with the freedome of his graces; for as true *loue*, so true *faith* [*casteth out feare,*] & so doth every saving grace which he hath giuen vs.

1 Iohn

But now on the 'other side the feare of the profane doth overflow him at his *best*, and in the fullest streame of his externall happines, it breakes in vpon him to the disturbance of his heart, yea to the fearefull destroying of himselfe, even when he feares nothing.

Pharaoh followed *Israell* with a resolved mind to re-possesse and re-enslaue them vnto him for ever, he hath all the successe, heart can wish, the sea is holden vpp for him, by the same *miraculous* hand of the *Almighty*, which kept it for his owne people to passe ouer, why should he feare any *ordinary* danger of drowning who had an *extraordinarie* meanes of preservation? and now that hee sees God to seme (at least) to fauour him, he is bold & adventurous, and feares not, but hee may follow them close; but you know the *fearefull* issue of this *feare-les* attempt, to wit, his owne, and his peoples helple overthrow, in the midst of that sea, wherein he supposed himselfe as safe, as Gods Saints were, and besides the woefull perishing of his body, the losse of his soule was most heavy of all.

Belsazzar, was were he would be (you know) when hee had his Princes, his Peeres, his Wiues, and Concubines, about him, to *quaffe*, *swill*, and *carouse*, in the sacred vessells of Gods house; how *frolicke*, *iouiall*, and *merry*
that

that King was, we may easily conceiue, and how farre he had put away all feare of any dismall accident from him, we may also well imagine. Howbeit beholde, when he suspected, nay surmized, nothing, that might any way disaffect, much lesse amaze him, he hath such a suddaine, and dreadfull obiect in his eye, as the like hath never beene heard, or read off before; a mooving hand, writing *wofull things* against him on the wall; and therewith was he so distempered, terrified, and in such a taking, as his *chattering teeth*, his *throbbing heart*, his *knocking knees*, (and the rest of his *quaking* members though not mentioned) may signifie the state of his perplexed spirit, and distracted minde.

It were most easie to multiply many of this fearefull crew, whom the Lord hath accursed many wayes, and among the rest, with such forlorne, nay infernall *feares*, as many a time are threatned vnto them from him, who is *FEARE* it selfe, even the most *fearefull and terrible GOD*, who hath shewed all men, how farre he can, and doth, and will, forever, keepe them (even at their *best*) vnder the bondage of *base feare*; shewing himselfe vnto them evermore, both in his *word*, by those terrifying titles of a *Judge*, an *Avenger*, a *Consuming fire*; and in his *worke*, by those amazing, and soule-distracting *accidents*, which doe most vnexpectedly overtake them, and are (as it were) the very *beginnings of hell*-vnto them, wherein there shall be an infinite and endles (I say not *consummation*, but) *combination*, of all *fearefull things* for ever to abide, and abound, vpon them.

And this is the *fourth difference*, betweene the righteous and the irreligious, and the *fourth advantage* wee (who are Gods) haue of the other. The faithfull are *free* from feare, the profane are *full* of it; it hath scarce,

And ought not to haue at all) *abeing*, in those that are the Lords, and belong to his loue, and in the rest nothing is more powerfull, not onely *being* in them, but being the greatest *predominant* that beareth rule, and overbeareth; both themselues (and that when they are *best at ease*;) and all those things wherein they do most boast, and *blesse themselues*, as their manner is to do. And which of these *two* to take, is most easily, and quickly determined, by any man who is not feared out of his wits. The *first* advantage followeth.

3. Advan.
page.

5. *That the very worst that ever befell any child of God in this world, was sent of purpose to prevent the worst of all, (viz: perdition in the world to come) but the best that ever wicked man had, was but to helpe him the nearer to hell.*

1 Cor. 11.
32.

The Scripture is plaine and plentiful for either part, we will take a tast of both. The *Apostle* writing to the *Corinthians* (& in them to all true *Christians*) doth assure vs that what correction or chastisement, we endure here, is to saue vs from confusion for ever, [*we are* (sayth he) *chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world*, the Lord doth, as good parents, doe to bad children, bestow many a whipping vpon vs, to saue vs from hanging; his sharpest rod, is but to prevent a sharper sword, is it not better to smart then to bleede? or to bleed a little by the gracious hand of a good father; then to bleed to death by the severe hand of a rigorous executioner?

Psal. 118.
17.

Surely there was somewhat in it, that *David* tels vs it was so [*good for him that he had beene afflicted,*] which intimates he had beene in an ill case, if it had not beene so: And what may be that [*sweete fruit that comes to such as haue beene* (not once, (or so) smitten, but) *exercised often under affliction?*] if it be not this we speake of? Or what

Heb 11.8.

colour

colour of reason can be rendred, why we should not onely *reioyce*, but even *glory* in tribulation, if it were not a sanctified and assured means to escape destruction? [*Thy Rod and thy Staffe* (saith good *Dauid*) *they comfort me.*] Why? how so? it were a sencelesse speech and vntrue, if he had not told vs before, that the Lord was his Shepheard, and dealt with him as carefull Shepheards doe, vse the *rod*, & *staffe*, to saue them from the *beare*, and *wolfe*, and there vpon he tels vs, that no danger can affright him, because the Lord (*by correction*) delivers him, from the ruine whereinto els he would run: Better the Shepheard *smite*, then the wolfe *bite*; they are *good stroakes* that keepe vs from the *pawes* and *iawes* of the deuourer. And this was smelt of one of *Iobs* friends long before these dayes, who tels him, (and God tels vs in him) that when the Lord meaneth to [*saue a mans soule from the pit, &c. he chasteneth him with paine, &c.*] scourging him *severely*, that he may saue him *graciously*: And wherin, but in this alone, could his *loue vnto vs*, and his *chastisement of vs*, goe together?

Rom.

Iob. 33. 18.
19.

Isa. 6. 9. 10.

But on the vngodly mans part, you haue heard before, that his best estate helpes him to hell, nothing doth more further his eternall misery, then the things he accounts his greatest mercy. What said the Lord to *Isaiah*: [*Make the heart of this people fat, their eares heauie, &c.*] Let them remaine insensible of any instruction, incapable of any humiliation; stirre them not, never trouble them, but giue them their owne way and will, that they may be at hearts ease; but to what end is all this granted? why, that their endlesse misery may be hastened, to prevent their *saluation*, which they *refused*, to procure their *damnation* which they *deserued*. And the same sayd *Christ* (out of this *Prophet*) to those of his time, who resting in the *same condition*, were reserved to the *same destruction*.

Doe we not reade of some that were free from all miseries, and had a kinde of exemption from all afflictions, all their dayes, and passed their time as merrily, as ever men did, (in ryot and revelling,) and the next newes we heare of them, is their everlasting overthrow for ever and ever? What was it which was sayd to *Dives* being in hell-torments, even this, [*Thou in thy life time hadst thy pleasure, &c: but now thou art tormented.*] As if he should say, thy pleasure, ease, delicacy, &c. were the things that hastned this perdition wherein thou art. And you must imagine this one to be the *emblem*, or person *representative* of all that *eat ones* that ever came or shall come into hell: nothing is a surer *Harbinger* of eternall damnation to an ungodly man, then his freedome from temporall affliction.

Did you not heare before, that [*Therefore hell had enlarged her selfe and opened her mouth, &c.*] Because it seemed most greedy to devoure the fattest, and greatest, of those that were never taken downe, nor abated, by any earthly calamitie, as if such men were the sweetest morsels, hell could haue?

And doe you not reade againe on the contrary; that, [*Therefore the Saints of God are in his glorious presence day and night for ever, and ever, and haue all teares wiped from their eyes,*] because *they came out of great tribulation and persecution, and had beene so miserably handled here in this world, that being so thynne, and leane, so poore, and bare, for Christ, they might the better (even for that cause) come to be partakers of this celestially blessednes with Christ.*

And this is the *first* difference, and the Saints *first* advantage, and it is no *meane*, but a *mightie* oddes that wee haue of them herein: Our *temporall* misery preuenteth

our *eternal*; their *temporary* happines doth hasten their *everlasting* misery. What man *in his right minde*, would not soone say, which of the two he would take, whether the *worst* of this world, with assurance of *no evill* in that which is to come; or that which may be *best* here, with certaintie of the *worst* that hell can yeeld him afterward. Alwayes we see, a childe of *God* at his *worst*, hath his *best* estate behind, and a wicked mans *worst* is to come, when he hath had the *best* this world could afford him. This earth is *our hell*, (even all the hell we shall haue;) *heaven* shall surely follow it. It is *their heaven*, (even all the heaven they can haue) and *hell* must be, shall surely ensue, and succede it. And this is our *fift* advantage. The *sixt* and *last* followeth, and that is this.

6. *That a childe of God at his worst, even in all his evill whatsoever, is evermore in actuall possession of all his excellencies: but a wicked man, hath nothing but ignominy and basenes, at his best, even in all his honors.* 6 Advantage.

Take a childe of *God*, and conceit him to be cloathed with all the calamitie and contempt, you can imagine; suppose him vnder all the reproach and misery, that is possible to be put vpon him, yet now in *G O D S* account he is,

*A childe of God,
An heire of heaven,
A coe-heir with Christ,
A King, and more then a Conquerour.*

And indeede more then can be vttered by vs, or conceived by himselfe, according to that of the Apostle: [*we are now the sonnes of God, but it doth not appeare what we shall be.*] As if he should say, we know we haue a state to come, whose excellency cannot be knowne here; all the world cannot devise a *name* good enough to declare

1 Ioh. 3. 2.

Col. 3. 3. it; the vtmost here is to be called *the sonnes of God*; but what we shall be, is such a state as can be called by *no name* on earth, we haue [*a life which is hid with Christ in God*] and till he be revealed from heaven, at his second comming, the glory of this our condition cannot be discovered.

But on the other side, how base and worthlesse, contemptible and contumelious, is every vngodly man, in the midst of all his glory and renowne, and all the applause the world puts vpon him? he that takes notice by what rearmes the *Holy Ghost* doth enstille them, cannot but say, we say the truth, at least in part; for their *full infamy* being *infinite*, that is also reserved, till the *infinite honour* of the elect shall be manifested. In the meane time are they not called,

Children of hell,

Slaves of Satan,

Vile persons,

Dogs, swine, vipers, yea Diuels.

With many other more, of the like *loathsome kinde*, inspired by the Lord, penned by his secretaries, recorded in his scriptures, preached by his messengers, and remaining for ever, as the righteous brands; and most proper appellations, that *God* himselfe hath put vpon them, & which they must beare from him, who is *too great*, and *too good*, to vn say, one *iot*, or *tittle*, of that he hath spoken.

To instance particular persons were to little purpose, all that are mentioned by name, or comprehended, and meant, in that pcceres Catalogue which we haue in this Chapter, though they were exposed to the worst and vtmost contempts that could be, for *infamy*, and to the most tyrannous and villanous torments that could be for *extreamitie*; yet the *worst word* wee heare of them is this:

[All

[*All these dyed in the faith, and obtained a good report.*] And againe [*Of whom the world was not worthy*] Verf. 13. *loc,* a world 39. [*nay more then a world*) of honour, in two or three Verf. 38. words, for the *whole world*, (to wit, of *worldly* and *ungodly persons*;) is not valued at the *worth* of one childe of *God*, no not by *God* himfelfe, *who* hath bought them at a *high price*, yet gaue no more for them, then he thought them *worth*, and hath made knowne their worth to the world, by the *price* he bestowed on them, *viz.* the *most precious bloud* of his *onely Sonne*, which it pleased him not to thinke *too good*, to be given for the purchase of their redemption, and glory. So that they are not *over valued*, at this *invaluable* rate, seeing the most wise *God* out of his owne wisdom, and loue, hath set thus much vpon them, and in not accounting the world worthy of them, hath also pleased (through the merits of the Lord that bought them) to accoūt them *worthy of the world to come*, and of all that *glory, immortalitye, life, and blessednes* there, which all the wit, reason, and vtmost reach, of mortall man, is not so much as able once to guesse at; for it being so absolutely infinite, it doth infinitely surpasse all possibilitie of man to ayme at it, much lesse comprehend.

Rev.

On the contrary now, where shall the *ungodly* and the *sinner* appeare? or what shall be accounted of them, if the Lord come to giue sentence vpon them at the *very best* of their estate? What are they worth? how are they esteemed before him? why *nothing, vanitie, yea, lesse then nothing, lighter then vanitie*; more vile then the basest vermine they tread vpon, yea more vile then the earth which harboureth both them and all *base vermine* whatsoever; no creature so bad as they, vpon the whole earth, onely the *Diuell* in hell, he is somewhat worse, & by *how much* he is worse then they, (because he made them naught.)

Pfal.
Isa. 40.

by

by *so much* are they worse then all other creatures, who were by them, and for their sakes, *accursed*.

Job

To bee entituled *dogs, swyne, vipers* and such like, is onely to shew their basenes, as these creatures seeme to vs, not as they are in themselves; for so saith *Job*, [*they are not to be compared to the dogs of my flocke;*] for these creatures, God made them *exceeding good*, onely sin (*their sin*) hath made them so *naught*, as wee vsually account them to be, in themselves they haue no sinne, nor ought els that is bad, but onely by them, by whose sins they are corrupted, and degenerate from that *noble excellency*, and those *notable qualities* of their nature, which once they had, when they had an estate as pure in nature, as wee our selues in our created condition. Now therefore as the *Diuell* onely is worst of all, because he made wicked men so bad, so they (next him) are the worst in the world, because all other things are imbas'd by them.

Besides, take the *mightiest* among the men of the world, haue not their names perished with them? and are become as rotten as their bodies? yea worse? because whereas the *carcase* is consumed in the earth and anoyes none, their name liues like *carryon* about ground vnburied, & stinks more, and more strongly from one age to another, and shall liue to rott through all generations to come for ever, till they shall be againe raysed out of rottennes; to liue and meete their living *loathsome* names before the Lords iudgements seate, who shall then, and there, put an end to both, by throwing both, into the bottomlesse pit of endles perdition, they being the men that must rise (to fall) to everlasting shame and contempt.

To particulate *Cayne, Saul, Ahitophell, Ahab, Iudas*, or the rest of that *beard-rolle* of branded persons whom the living and most glorious *God*, hath marked for remarkable

able infamy, were not to much purpose, and wee haue had occasion to note them before: it sufficeth to know, that their glory is with shame, and that all the *reputation* they haue had with men at the *greatest*, hath but made their *reproach* greater with God. Men haue heaped honourable titles of greatnes vpon them to dignifie and renowne them, which haue beene but the poore vapours of their *ayery words*, breathed out either for *fear* or for *flattery*, and haue vanished in the very vtterance; & God hath laden them with heavy, and most ignominious appellations; which his mouth having *spoken*, and his pen having *written*, must remayne to cleaue for ever, vnto that *most vnworthy*, and *miserable memoriall* which the world hath of them, who knowes them by no names, or titles, but onely by those that are worse then *none at all*.

And touching both (in this last difference) it may be well and safely observed, that the *worse words* the world hath given Gods Saints, the *better* and *more glorious titles* are given them of *God* him selfe: and the more men haue renowned the other, the more hath the Lord abhorred them, and made them abominable, to all eyes & cares.

His owne *Sonne* (our Saviour) when in the dayes of his flesh he dwelt among vs, had as bad, yea, and farre worse language given him, then any that ever lived; he that reades his life, knowes how oft he was abused, and most basely vilified, he *was a Samaritane*, he *was mad*, he *had a diuell*, &c: but the *Lord God* (his father, and our father,) hath given him a name aboute all names, and honor and glory aboute all principalities and powers; and so much the more gloriously exalted him, by how much among men he was become the scorne, and contempt of the people. And in like maner doth he deale with *Christians*

stians (as he did with *Christ*) according to the eminency of their pietie (for which, *the greater it is*, they suffer greater reproach,) he giues them more excellent glory, even in the eyes of men, as we might shew in many examples. And this is our *sixt* and last *Advantage*.

And now (beloved and longed for in the Lord) what shall we say to these things? here we haue had a *short*, and *summary* survey of those singular, and celestiall advantages, that the Lords people haue, (even at their *worst*) of all vngodly men at their *best*. I say a *short* and *summary* survey of them, for if we should enlarge our selues in the discovery of them so farre as we might, *when* should we haue done? or *where* should we end? or, if we could manifest them as they are, (*which mortalitie cannot doe*) there could be neither *end*, nor *measure*, of our Discourse; nay, it might be truely sayd of these excellent things, as the *Evangelist* speaketh of the rest of the acts, and sayings of *Christ*, which are written, that [*the whole world would not containe the bookes, &c.*] that must containe, the full declaration of those infinite things, wherein the true comfort of the Saints doth consist; for they are (in truth) *unutterable*, nay indeed, *unsearchable*, as the *Apostle* doth plainly signifie when he sayth [*he heard (being wrapt into the third heaven) things not to be uttered.*] And if of the mysteries and secrets of the Gospel (which eis-where he speaketh of,) much more may it be most truely sayd of the consolation, benefit, and reward of the *faithfull* and *persecuted* professors of the same, that they are such [*As eye hath not seene, eare hath not heard, nor haue entred into the heart of man to apprehend,*] the *naturall* man is meant in the former, the *spirituall*, may be vnderstood in the latter. For *grace* is as vnable (mixt with infirmitie) to comprehend *heavenly* things that are *glorious*, as *nature* (voyde of grace)

grace) is, to conceiue aright, and reach those that be *ho-ly* and *gracious*. Why then, what shall we say to these heavenly things, thus *heaped vp* together, to make vs wholly happy? If the Lord haue laid them vp in *his bocke*, should not we lay them vp in *our bosomes*? And blesse him abundantly who hath so over-abūdantly blessed vs with these benedictions, which are sent vs, so to sweeten the bitterest cup of our calamitic, that we might drinke the bottome of it with all chearfulnesse and reioycing? what sayd the good Prophet of God oncc, in a case of this kinde, [*Reioyce O heaven, and be ioyfull O earth, breake forth into prayes O yce mountaines, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and shewed mercy vpon his afflicted*] and even this, may and ought all Gods people now to speake (concerning the premisses) in the particulars that we haue re-vealed.

How came the *good Christians* of the primitiue times, when persecution was so sore and extreame, not onely (as was noted before) [*to reioyce, but even to glory in tribulation?*][*to suffer with ioy (yea with much ioy) the spoyling of their goods?*] To goe from the Consistory with bloudie shoulders, yet [*glad hearts, reioycing that they were accounted worthy to vndergece the worst for Christ?*] And the Apostle who was so abundant, aboue all the rest, (not onely in the *labours*, but in the *sufferings* of the Gospel, also) telleth vs plainly [*Great is my reioycing, I am full of comfort, I haue (not onely abundantly ioy, but) ioy over-abundant in all my tribulations.*] These are strange words, yet true, and such as he saith, he hath alreadie in possession, and not onely in some *lighter* afflictions, but in his *heaviest* distresses, even in *all* his tribulati-

Rom. 5. 3.
Heb. 10. 34.
Act. 5. 40.
41.

2 Cor. 7. 42

To haue Great ioy,

To be full of comfort, yea

To be over-full, or to over-abound,

is such a strayne of speech, as never fell from man, by any *sence* or *reason* of flesh and bloud, but onely from the *spirit* of God, and the *power* of his grace, which had perswaded his soule of the *sweetnesse* of this saving truth that we teach; that a man at his *worst* should not onely be full, but *over-flow* with comfort and ioy, which is more then any wicked man can say of his *best*, for all the happiness vnder heaven cannot *fill*, much lesse *over-fill* the heart of man, he cannot be satisfied, much lesse can he be *glutted* *indeede*, or *surfet* in truth, with all temporall delights, he that had the largest share in them of any *mortal* man that ever lived, (even *Salomon*) tels vs they cannot giue full contentment, and againe [*the eye cannot be*

Eccles. 5.
10.

satisfied with seeing, nor the eare with hearing, &c] but here, at our *very worst*, we haue our measure of ioy and solace, pressed downe to the *bottom*, filled vp to the *brim*, and running over vpon vs, from the Lord, who telleth vs, that these light and short troubles, (doe not onely thus consist with our great reioycing here present, but) they [*procure vnto vs in heauen, an exceeding excessiue* (for so the words doe sound in their true sence) *eternall waight of glory:*] Lo, what words the *Holy Ghost* vseth to expresse these things to vs, [*exceeding,*] [*excessiue,*] to giue vs to know, that these being the *greatest words* which can shew any thing to vs, the things intended in them, are *greater* then *all words* can expresse.

2 Cor. 4.
17.

1 Thes. 5.

16.

Phil. 4 13.

And why then doe we *droope*, or *faint* vnder any thing (dearly beloved?) how ill doth sorrow or feare (of this sort) become a *Saint*? who is not onely commanded to [*reioyce in the Lord, euermore,*] but hath reason given him so to doe, in the things (thus farre) declared by vs.

Questi-

Questionlesse, if we could settle our thoughts vpon these diuine things, they would produce very diuine effects in our hearts, and put vs (as it were) into heaven beforehand, (*in part,*) and make vs much the more meete, for the absolute possession of the perfections thereof in due time.

And this is the *first vse* of this most worthy point of truth, wherein though we haue seemed long to insist; yet know, it is such good being here, (as *Peter* once sayd) that wee could even build Tabernacles in the blessed comfort of the same, as finding it to be much harder to get out, then to goe on further in the discovery hereof, wherein a faithfull man is (after a sort) *transfigured*, and mounted aloft farre beyond all *mortalitie, misery, & vexation*, of men, or diuels in this world; which now, (thus rayed) either he seeth not, or if he do, he beholdeth them as farre vnder his feete, with a Christian, and holy contempt, and himselfe hath (his heart being settled on these things) his seate *on high* with the Lord, and his blessed and beloved ones, vnto whom he seemeth to be translated, in the sweete apprehensions of his soule, while he is conversant in these sacred, and supernaturall meditations; and beholdeth the *glorious face* of God, shining vpon him, and his owne heart so dazeled with the *heavenly lustre* of this most blessed light, that he cannot well tell (for the time) where he is, whether *in the body or no*, his soule soaring aloft, and finding such inconceivable contentment in these consolations.

But we must put an end to our discourse of these comforts, and leaue the rest, to that time when we shall come into *actuall* and full possession of *endlesse life*, where wee shall enjoy the infinite fulnesse of those things, whereof, all that can be sayd of the *best* things that are *here*, are,

but the *beginnings*, and first fruits, of that which we shall haue *there*.

2 Use.

Terror to
Persecutors

And so we come to a *second use* of this blessed truth which concerneth wicked men, vnto whom wee must change our note, and *sing another tune*, from the true consequence of the same; for it soundeth (as all heavenly truth doth) *heavily*, in their cares, and was not more *sweetely musically* to the Saints, then it is *dolefully miserable*, to sinners. We neede not say much to them, the losse of all the afore sayd happines and felicity of the faithfull, is more then a little, inasmuch as we haue seene, (as wee haue gone all *a-long* from one passage to another,) their misery and unhappines, hath still beene entwisted (*oppositely*) to the ioy of Gods chosen, and entayled thereunto; so that they are not onely *deprived* of so much ioy, as hath appeared to the faithful in every particular, from point to point; but are further *assured* of as many, and as great mischeifs, as our mercies doe amount vnto; every *comfort* to vs, carrying with it a *curse* also vnto them.

Yet over and aboue all that wee haue sayd, there is somewhat more falling vpon them, (to their further terror) from this truth; and that is meant vnto the persecutors and tormentors of Gods people, who doe full often affright, and terrifie, those whom they haue in their power, with big, and bitter words, with cruell, and cursed speakings; viz: that *this*, and *that* they will doe, & they shall, (I, that they shall) well know, that it is in their power to exercise their pleasure, and to haue their will vpon them: Iust, as insolent and imperious as *Pilate*, [*knowest thou not that I haue power to binde thee, &c.*] and these tyrants will impryson, will torture, will kill, what will they not *doe*? and what shall not Gods childe *endure*, if either *vile words*, or *villanous deedes*, may put them into dread,

dread, distraction, yea, desperation?

But wilt thou know, O thou vaine man], and vile miscreant, how idly all this is vttered to terrifie him, who can by vertue of the glorious light of this gracious truth, triumphantly retort all this vpon thy selfe, to thine owne terror and amazement of heart, and tell thee to thy teeth, that seeing the *worst* of Gods childe is better then the *best*, of any wicked man, therefore all thou canst say, or doe, cannot make him halfe so miserable as thy selfe art, who dost thus menace the members of *Iesus Christ*. When thou hast *spett out* all thy malice, *squed up* all the venyme, *spent*, and emptyed vpon them, all the malignity and gall the Diuell ever engendered, and encreased in thee; yet even then, thou hast not made him halfe so *unhappy*, as thou now art in thy *conceited happines*, and exemption, from all these extremityes.

And the poore distressed *Martyr* of the *Lord Iesus*, may say in the tryumph, of a true and powerfull faith, O *Tyrant*, or *Oppressor*, know, that now in this agony, in these anguishes, I will not change states with thee, my case is better then thine, althou canst doe, cannot make me so bad as thy self, my tortures are to bee preferred to thy pleasures, my racks, chaynes, scourges, &c. cannot make me so miserable, as thy palace, prosperity, ease, honour, and power makes thee: I am more ioyous vnder all these great grieuances, then thou canst bee in all thy greatest glories: doe thou persecute I will icy, doe thou afflict I will pray; smite thou, I will smile; my God hath laid a sweete, a soveraigne, a healing, yea a heavenly plaiester, to all these bitter sores, which fully cures them, and comforts me. namely, that he hath taught me to learne, that which now, I haue lea ned to feele, that my worst estate, is better then thy best, the sweetnes of which lesson, makes all evils easie to swallow, and of quicke, and comfortable digestion, even at the extreamest,

treamest, that they can be. And herein I joy, and will joy, maugre all the divells in hell, and hell-hounds on earth.

Would not this, (or the like speech vnto this) make the eares of Tyrants to *tingle*, and their hearts to *tremble*? would it not vex and torture their very spirits within them, to heare these voyces sounding from the mouths of those, who are vnder their heavy vexations?

Certainely, it would worke one way or other with them, if they could but belceue it; either it would cause repentance vnto salvation, and make them weary of their wickednes, & most willing to become as one of *them* whom they thus abuse; or to fret and fume, and gnaw out their owne bowels, to see themselues defeated in all the impious purposes, which being to make the Lords people most miserable of all men, can not by the *most*, and *worst*, and *all*, they can doe, make them any way so miserable as themselues, who (*in their owne opinion*) are more happy then any. Doe you thinke it would not make their hearts to *boyle*, yea to *burne* within them, and *chafe* them so throughly, that they should bee forced to *foame* at mouth, with indignation, and distemper? Were a man but in their bosomes, to see how they fret, and vex *inwardly*, when they perceiue, *God himselfe* to laugh them to scorne in heaven, and *his people* to laugh at them on earth, to see, that all the mallice and villany the Diuell can arme them withall, cannot make anothers estate *at worst*, so bad then their owne, *at best*; then would something appeare, as the effect and efficacy of this truth, which wee haue told them, it may be they would cease their bloody hands against the blessed of the Lord, and begin to lay them on themselues, as *Iudas*, (and some other of their *predicessors*,) haue done. But our *God*, the *God of heaven*, doth suffer the *Diuel*, the [*God of this world*

to blind-fold their eyes that they should not see,] or know, or acknowledge this truth, and so by the ignorance thereof, they worke out, at once

Their owne perdition, and

Our salvation, and make

Us, blessed Martyrs,

Themselves, accursed Malefactors,

Phil. 2. 28.

in despite of all that they (*contrarily*) intend; and hereof, if they might, or could be perswaded, no question were to be made, but they would quickly become, either *better, or worse.* But it is misery enough that they cannot be brought to belecue the same; oh, what saith the Apostle [*If our Gospell be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*] A 2 Cor. 4. 3. heauey sentence, inasmuch as by ignorance (especially *wilfull* of any truth, *more sinne* is multiplied against God, *more service*, is done to the *Diuell*, more mischief to *men*, and (consequently) more plagues heaped on, and wrath Rom. 2. stored vp against the day of wrath, to be powred by the mightie arme of *Almightie God*, vpon the heads of all those, that haue thus encreased their impieties before him, who shall not escape the full poyson of all those his *envenomed vialls* which he hath revealed from heaven, to be reserved in hell for them.

But we will now *leau*e these men, as men *left of God*, and not so happie as once to giue *vs the hearing*, or the *Lord*, the *beleueing* of this truth; but given over to be *drunke* with their owne *delusions*, to their owne damnation, perswading themselves so well of their owne euill estate, and being so ill perswaded of the good, and blessed condition of Gods children, that they meane to continue as they are, and to proceede in their impietie against the Lord, & oppression against his people, till they haue wrought out, their owne eternall confusion by *both*, and

provoked the dreadfull indignation of the *Lord God*, to come vpon them to the vttermost, through this *double iniquitie*, committed against his highest Maiestie.

3. Use.
Instruction
to all men.

And in our *last use* we will turne our speech to all manner of persons, endeavouring to doe our best, to giue them that true information, which floweth from this Point whereof we now treat, and the premisses of the same, which haue beene so particularly and plentifully related, at large vnto vs.

And the consequence of this truth for matter of instruction, looketh *both* at the Saints of God *themselues*, and also at all *others*, that are not yet revealed to be such.

For the *former*, viz: those who haue beene already found and approved to be faithfull, whose happy interest is therefore vndeniable in this heavenly truth, it calls for their constant, continuall, and perpetuall *perseverance*, in that their estate of grace and holinesse, the *worst* whereof, is so good, as we haue heard. For if our first being in grace (while we are yet but *babes*, or *beginners* therein) do giue vs assurance of so much consolation, doubtles, if wee continue and hold out to the end, as we grow, and goe on, in grace, so doth the sweete savour of this happinesse increase and multiply vpon vs. But I hope the discovery of the comforts aforesayd, is such, as may saue me the labour, of any further pressing of this point vpon them, and that their state of the blessednesse of them is so pleasant, as they haue *sensible Arguments* within them sufficient, both to perswade them to tarry where they are; and to oppose, and repulse all suggestions to the contrary. And therefore I will not persue them with more words, for whose sakes especially, all that is past, hath beene vitered, and whose settled resolutions touching their state of grace, are such, and

To vnmoveable as was the *Apostles*, who sayd, [*I am sure, Rom.8.38. that neither death, nor life, nor Angells, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the loue of God, which is in Iesus Christ our Lord.*]

This was his, of *himselfe*, and the *Romanes*; this is, and ought to be ours, of *our selues*, and of all *true Christians*; and therein we will rest, and turne our *last speech*, vnto those that yet are *not turned* to the Lord, by any visible manifestation of that faith, the vertue wherof, doth giue them their part, and portion in the saving peace, & comfort of that which hath bene vttered.

And what can we vrge (*either more, or lesse*) vpon them, then that they should now (*at last*) learne to leaue their former sinfull, and vngodly condition, and cleaue to the Lord, in the power and truth of sinceritie, and sanctification; that in as much as they are not yet *Canonized* of the Lord for Saints, nor haue their *names written in the booke of life*, (so farre as their life sheweth vnto men) they might now (*once*) bethinke themselues what they are, and come out of that estate, wherein they cannot be happie.

And what more *weightie*, or *worthy* argument can we vse, then this which is so powerfull to perswade, if it be duely pondered of them: For it is drawne from that which nature affecteth, and desireth (*in all men*) aboue *all things*, to wit, the having of a *good*, yea the *best* estate, and condition, that is to be had in this world, & a much more better, in heaven, then can be had vpon any termes here. And can there be a better estate, then that? or any so good as that? which

Is impossible to be bad, at the worst, and

The worst wherof, is better then the best of any other.

Beholde, out of this estate *all prosperitie is misery*, and in it, *all misery is prosperitie*: haue we not made it more then manifest, by such abundance of most *infallible, diuine, and vndoubted* evidence, as neither *diuels*, nor men, can colourably gaine say? And is not such a state worth seeking among those to whom it is *solely, and wholly*, appropriated of the Lord? Who would not be a *Saint* vpon such tearmes, and embrace pietie, because of the precious and peerelesse *blesseynesse*, it brings with it, vpon a mans *uniuersall* state here, and that which is *eternall* in Heaven? Why, let men learne to reason and dispute thus.

If there be a sort of people, who are in such a state as hath beene sayd, the *worst* whereof is simply good, and incomparably *better* then the *best* estate of any other whatsoeuer; what doe I, what am I, out of that societie? I see my selfe miserable (as I am) at *my best*, I will surely out of my selfe, and striue with all my strength to be one of those men, among whom the *meanest* fare so well, when they are in the *worst* estate that can be.

And if (thus) *God* make vs able to beginne to argue (for his glory) against our selues, when these first propositions be well vnderstood, and applyed of vs, we shall be able (by his grace) to frame more comfortable premisses, and to goe forward in this *diuine disceptation*, with consideration of those further things, the conclusion and inference whereof, will minister vnto vs yet *more courage*, to cleaue vnto the Lord in the communion of his Saints.

For why? the *former argument* was taken from the *miseries, grieuances, persecutions, and oppressions* of Gods people, and yet it is powerfull, and able to conclude, both a *necessitie*, (and includeth also an *excellency*) of our
sepa-

separation from sinners, to become of that number who are so happie, in their very *miserie*: but *this latter* may be taken from the *graces* of the same men, from whose distresses alone, we reasoned before; and for the *further wooing*, and *faster glewing* of vs vnto the heavenly corporation, of such as are happily incorporated into *Christ Iesus*, it may (in the second place) be framed thus.

If the *worst* of Gods people, *viz*: their troubles, miseries, and oppressions, be such as doe exceede all the well-being of other men, if in their *grievances* and vexations, it goe so well with them, how happie must these men be considered in their *graces*, and the employment of them? if their bitter sorrowes be so *sweete*, how will the *sweete sap*, and savour of Gods spirit taste, and relish in them? if out of crueltie, tyranny, and all manner of euill so much good may issue, when they haue to doe with wicked and vnreasonable men, who can conceiue the consolation that shall accrew vnto them, in the free and peaceable exercise of their *graces*, wherein they deale onely with Gods owne Maiestie, and such of their fellow-brethren and sisters, as are truly gracious with themselues? If the troubled waters, which are so muddied with the foule fruit of *Satans*, and mens malice, may yeelde such joy, what will flow from the blessed influence of God himselfe thinke yee, when he shall leade them to those Welles of salvation, whence they shall *draw freely*, and *drinke their fill*, of those pure christall streames, which himselfe hath distilled? Surely every man must needes (in all reason) thinke, that if their *worst estate* of griefe and misery be *so good*, this of grace and peace, cannot but be *better*, and yeeld sweeter fruit then the former; & so the *best estate* of a wicked man

being so farre behinde their *worst*, must needes be much more behind this, and vtterly incomparable there-vnto.

And yet, though this be *much*, the *most*, and *best* of all, is yet to come, viz: their state of *glory*, which shall be the reward both of their *grievances*, and *graces* alio; and from that, a man whose heart were set aright, might *lastly* reason thus.

These men (*Gods Saints*) were happier then I, at the *worst* of their miseries, even in the midst of their enemies; They were yet more happy then so, when with their *God*, and with each other among themselves, they might peaceably vse their *graces*; the least of these two, was more then a little beyond my best: But their *best* of all, being yet to come, *to wit*, their blessednes and glory in heaven, with the *God* of heaven; what shall I conceiue of their inconceivable felicitie, then and there? and how infinitely vnhappy am I, that am so short of the *good* they haue, in their *very euill*? and am not yet so farre, as to be equall with them in their meanest, and most afflicted condition? Surely it being so well with them in their *grievances*; it cannot but be much better with them in their *graces*, and *best of all*, in their *glory*. O the hydden (*yet heavenly*) estate of these holy ones; which is so heavenly, that it must be *hidden*, there being no possibility on earth to reueale it. *Who* would be out of that state, wherein is so much excellency, that every *euill* therein, is exceeding *good*, and every *good* exceedeth each other? If a mans heart be not *chained* to the *Diuell*, and by the *Diuell*, to the *world*, to be kept here, in that perpetuall *prison* of infidelity, and profanes, which will bring him to that *perdition* which is due there unto; hee cannot but be drawne out of himselfe, and his sinfull state, with this *three-fold sorde*, and be tyed fast for ever (as one enamoured

Or, *The faithfulls Well-fare.*

red and enflamed) to the *Lord God*, in the fellow ship of
those *his Saints*, who having bene faithfull before him
heere, (both in *doing* his will, and *trusting* for the same)
have now received the wages, & most *rich* faith, and *per-
fiance* in the Kingdome for which they *perished*, where-
in they shall see *him as he is*, and with *him*, in the *Kingdome* 1 John 3. 2.
Sonne, his eternall *spirit*, his beloved *Sonnes*, in that life
and immortality, blisse, and felicitie, which *God* who is
faithfull, hath *performed* to them, *promised* to us, and to all
the rest of his *holy ones*, keeping them, who are *already* Heb. 12.
12.
in actual possession, not absolutely perfect (*achiving* it
without us) till we shall be brought vnto *them*, and both
they, and *we*, (and all the elect) vnto the *Lord our God*,
at the last day, to be *conspire* in that *curse*, and eter-
nall *perfection* of glory, the *hope* whereof, gives us hart,
and males vs; *vayte*, and sigh in our soules, heking and
longing for th at glorious appearance of his, which shall
make vs to appeare in glory with him, for ever and ever.

A M E N.

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