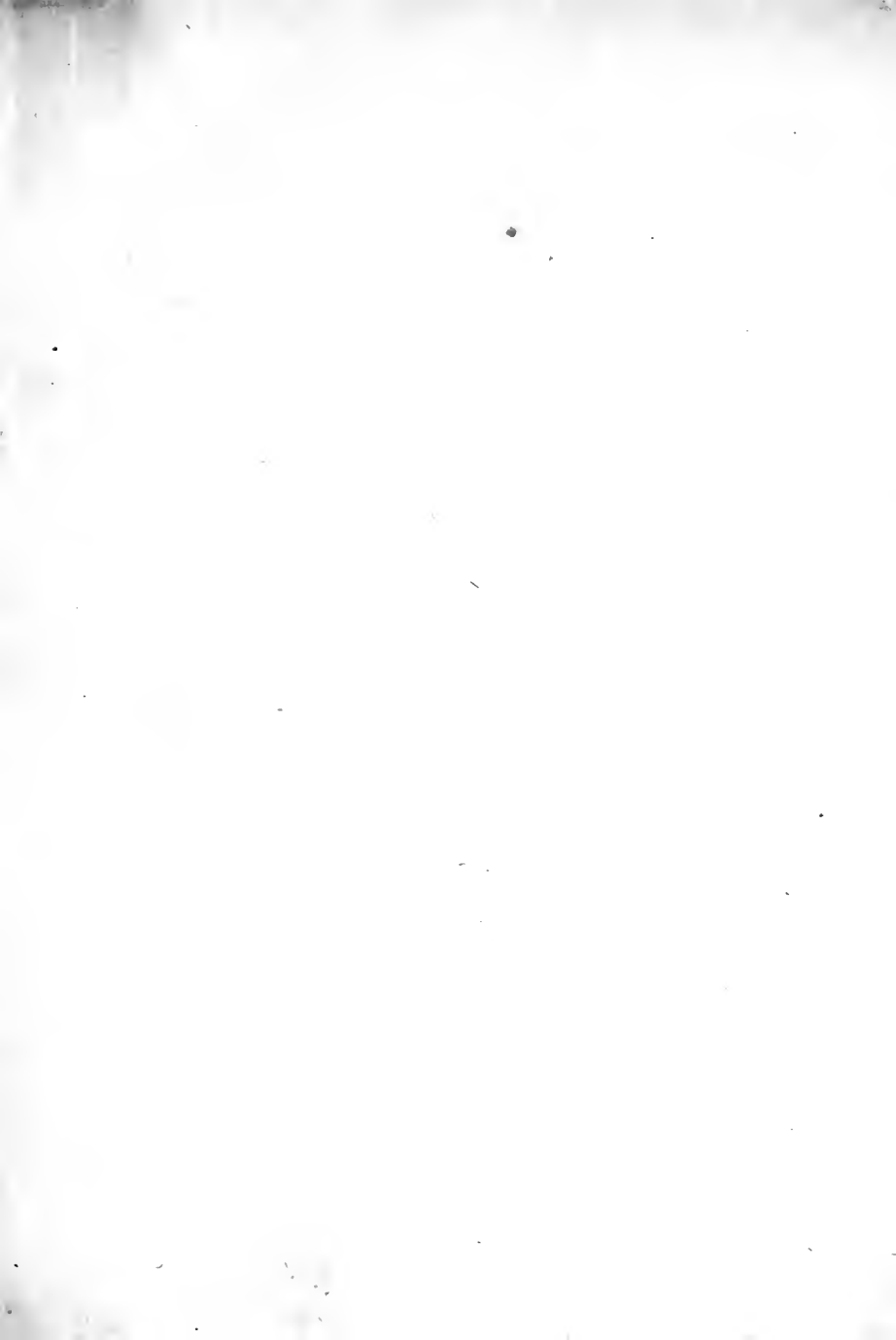
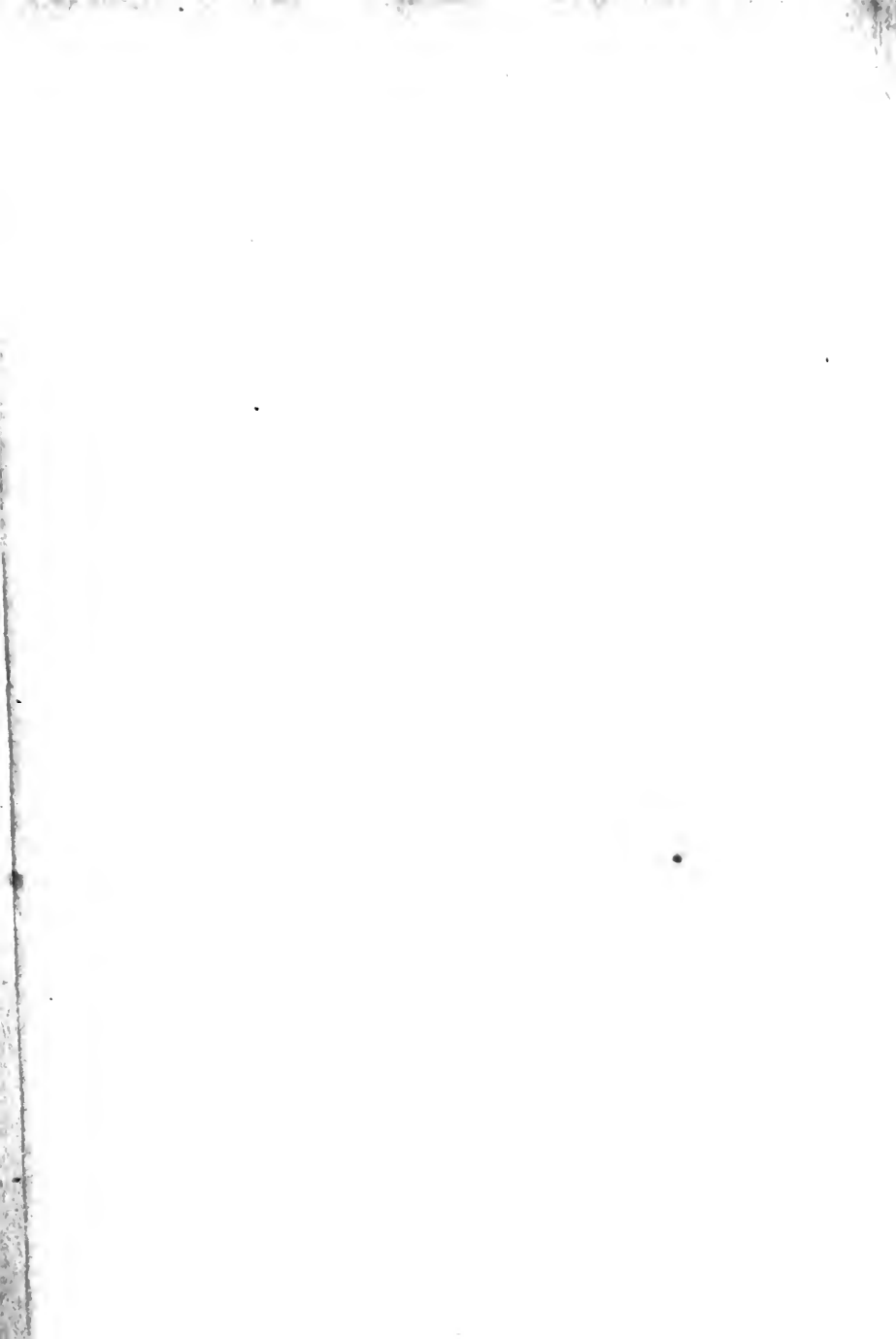


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THE
SAINTS SVRE
AND PERPETVALL
GUIDE.

OR,
A Treatise concerning the
WORD.

Which, as the *Israelites* Cloud, conducts
us from *Ægypt* to *Canaan*; whereunto wee
must take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in
a darke place, till the Day dawne, and the Day
starre arise in our hearts.

BY
That Reverend, Learned, and Godly Minister
of Christ Iesus, ROBERT BOLTON, Bache-
lour of Divinitie, and late Preacher of
Gods Word at Broughton in
Northampton-shire.

IOHN 3. 20, 21.

*Every one that doth evill, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,
lest his deeds should be reproved.*

*But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may
be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

LONDON,
Printed by E. Purflow, for Rapha Harford, in
Queenes-head-Alley in Pater-Noster-Row, at
the Signe of the Gilt Bible. 1634.

THE
STATUTE

OF
THE
PARLIAMENT

IN THE
FIRST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE THE THIRD

FOR THE
REPEALING AN ACT

INTITLED
AN ACT

T. R.

B6945A



TO
THE RIGHT
WORSHIPFULL,

JOHN CRVE, Esquire, one of
his Majesties Iustice of the Peace
and *Quorum*, &c. for the Countie of
NORTHAMPTON:

C. C. wisheth increase of Grace and Peace
in CHRIST, here; and eternall
Glory hereafter.

RIGHT WORSHIPFULL,



OTH Law and well
approved Custome
hath long establish-
ed it, That the Heire
should succeed in *uni-
versum jus defuncti*, and
have interest, title,
and just claime to all

Sylvest. Sum.

the possessions and rights of the party de-
ceased: yea, they adde also, that *hereditas*

(22)

transit

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

transit cum onere, the Inheritance cannot be severed from the troubles and incumbrances that goe along with it. Vpon which ground, seeing it hath pleased your worthy Father, Sir *Thomas Crue*, (who is now at rest with CHRIST, which is * *exceedingly farre more better* than all other excellencies the Lord had here graced him with) with much favour and willingnesse to undertake the Patronage of these Posthumous Writings in his life time; my earnest desire unto your Worship is, (who are *Patri heres ex asse*, and, I doubt not, but also * *secundum promissionem*) that you would administer in these, as a parcell of his goods and chattels, (as they call them) and succeed in the protection of them: That as the memorie of your naturall Father is preserved and honoured in them, so the honour and glory of your spirituall may be promoted and advanced by these.

Besides which premisses, I hope that the very Name of that worthy and faithfull Minister of IESVS CHRIST, Master *Robert Bolton* (*τὸ μαργείρς*, that late brightshining Starre in the Firmament of our Church;

* πολλὰ μᾶλλον

* εὐχριστῶν.

* 1. 23.

* Gal. 3. 29.

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

Church ; a man both well knowne and approved of you , as being a neighbour Minister, and so greatly renowned for his Learning and Labours in his former Writings , amongst all them that have read them , that they may acknowledge it to be more truly said of him, that was sometimes spoken of *Aristotle*, * That his very Pen was dipt in Vnderstanding , and all kind of Learning was the Inke that hee wrote withall, in regard of that profound wisdom and refined knowledge and eloquence that flowed from it :) I say, I am confident, that his very Name will make an easie way for his Writings unto your Worship ; who for the care and endeavour to advance the glory of God, and to further the welfare and edification of his Church, and for the love to godly and painefull Ministers , and the godlinesse professed, preached, and practised by them, and many other gracious endowments wherewith the Lord hath enriched you, have the love and admiration and high estimation of all those that feare God, that know you, or have heard of you.

* τὴν κἀλαμίαν
εἰς τὸν νοῦν
ἔβαλε.
Epigram.

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

This confidence hath emboldened me to present these ensuing Treatises unto your Meditation, and Patronage, beseeching the Lord of his mercie to sanctifie them to your owne and the Churches benefit, and to blesse your selfe and all yours with all spirituall Blessings in hea-

venly things, in **I E S U S**

C H R I S T.

Your Worships humbly devoted,

in all holy endeavours,

C. C.



TO
THE CHRISTIAN
READER.

GOOD READER,

N Cannot denie, but that the Arguments handled in these three following Treatises, are common, and the ordinarie subject both of many Sermons and printed Bookes in these dayes: yet wee know, that the commonest Meates doe yeeld the most wholesome nourishment, whereas new-found Disbes doe but clogge the stomacke, and fill the body with unwholesome humours. Besides, if the sound and new manner of handling common things may commend them, (as it ever * did) then I hope, that this worke will be welcome unto thee. Thou knowest well, I doubt not, the singular dexteritie of this Reverend and able Minister of IESVS CHRIST, by his former writings, in handling the Scripture, how hee shewed himselfe (as Paul exhorteth Timothy, 2 Tim. 2. 15. to be) a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Onely understand not by the right dividing of the word, the subtle and curious

* καινὰ, καινῶς.

ὀρθοτομεῖν τὸ λόγον; quid sit.

To the Reader.

chopping and mincing of the word by Dichotomies, Divisions, and Sub-divisions, (too ordinarie in these dayes) but (as the meaning of the word is, and the Syriacke version confirms it) to handle and preach the word aright, i. as M. Beza expounds it well; For the Doctrine it selfe to omit nothing that makes for the clearing of it; to adde nothing of his owne, to diminish nothing, to mangle nothing, to wrest nothing; lastly, to consider diligently what the capacitie of the hearers is able to beare, and whatsoever may tend to edification; or, as learned Fuller expounds it, to set open or make plaine as it were the right way of the Word of Truth. so this worthy Author hath done, he hath traced out and opened the right way of truth and holinesse out of the holy Scriptures.

His Writings I may justly commend for three or foure notable excellencies (to name no more.)

First, For their cleare discovering of sinne, and their exact searching and sifting of a Christians heart, to plucke off the Vizard of all sorts of Hypocrites, and to bring to light, and lay open to the eyes of the world, by the Touchstone of Truth, their counterfeit and unsound Graces, and to find out the endlesse windings and labyrinths of spiritual guile in self-deceiving hearts. This he doth excellently by the cleare light of Gods word, which hath an admirable vertue this way, Heb. 4. 12. being a discerner of the thoughts & intents of the heart, and putting a cleare difference betweene the precious and the vile.

Secondly, for the Stile, as being full of divine eloquence, his Lips and Pen dropping abundance of the sweetest of that word, which is sweeter than the Honey or the dropping Honey-combes, Psal. 19. 10.

Thirdly,

Annot. Bez. in
locum.

Encl. Misc. Sacra.
l. 3. c. 16.

κεκτηθε ενδυ-
μησηται.

To the Reader.

Thirdly, *The Author being a man so well versed in ancient Writers of the Primitive times, thou mayest finde in his Bookes (no small taste whereof, you have in this) a much better use made of their Labours, than is made by many Divines; seeing he hath proved abundantly out of them the strict points of sanctification. His Quotations indeed in these last, seeme not so numerous as in his precedent Workes: the reason is, because in these, for the most part, the Authors are onely quoted, their words not produced, as not having some of them, and the rest not of the same Edition; so that his References little helped us to his intended Matter.*

Fourthly, *I may not omit that (which in other Writers is commonly accounted blame-worthy, but in him a singular excellencie, and commendable) his long digressions from his maine matter in hand; proceeding, I conceive, out of the abundance of his heart, and long experience in Gods wayes: as those that by long travelling in a way, are well acquainted with it, can finde out all the by-ways and blinde paths about it; which our Author hath excellently done: So, that by his digressions out of the ordinarie Road, he is more likely to set a wandering Soule into the right way againe.*

Now, for the preventing or removing of all prejudicate Opinions which may arise concerning these ensuing Treatises, (as though, Strumpet-like, any Bastardly Brood unlawfully begotten, should be fathered and fastened upon so truly Seraphicall and Divine a Pen-man) this I can more than promise (verbo Ministri) That there is nothing in them, for matter or manner, either spuriously, or surreptitious; nothing but what is genuine, and the Authors owne; the immediate issue of his working Braine,
and

To the Reader.

and flowing from his owne so loſtie Pen. Which may be a ſeaſonable aduertisement unto thee for the future, from whom and which way thou art to expect, upon the further perusal of his scattered Manuscripts, what else shall be deemed worthy to be polished, and so published. If there be any thing in that which is here presented to thy view, that likes not thee, because not like the Author, failing for depth of learning, or varietie of eloquence; blame not him deceased, (who being dead, yet speaketh) but impute it to the substituted surviving Midwife, that had not leisure sufficient, it being come to the Birth, to attend its bringing forth. I meane, my selfe; who for the multitude of distractions and pressing occasions, since these writings were intrusted to me, as also for the imperfectnesse and defect of the Coppies, could not spend so much time and paines in the exact perusing, polishing, and perfecting of it, as I should and would have done: which must be the Apologie to plead for pardon. But yet I have not beene wanting to cull out such spare houres as I could, to bring this worke to light, and to prepare it for the Presse, as also for thy view and benefit; which, I hope, thou wilt finde, by the due and diligent reading and practising of it. which I commend unto thy selfe, and thy selfe, with the worke, unto the Lords Blessing.

Thine in Christ Iesus,

C. C.



THE
 S A I N T S
 S V R E A N D
 P E R P E T V A L L
 G V I D E.

PSAL. 119. VER. 105.

*Tby Word is a Lampe unto my feet, and a
 Light unto my paths.*

OF all other parts of the holy Bible, this Booke of the *Psalmes*, (penned for the most part by *David*, the sweet Singer of *Israel*, and a man after Gods owne heart) is stufte and fill'd with greatest plentie and varietie of precious Lessons and instructions unto eternall life. The choice and flower of all things profitable and comfortable for the right course of a Christian

The Contents
 and the benefit of the
 Psalmes in generall.

stian life, is therein briefly contained, and very movingly and feelingly exprest. In them we may be acquainted with the Majestie and Mysteries of God, with the Sufferings of Christ, with unfained Repentance, unwearied Patience, spirituall Wisedome, and wonderfull Courage of the godly man, and true Christian. In them we may behold the terrors of Wrath, and the anguishes of an afflicted Conscience, the comforts of Grace, and great Deliverances, the wonderfull workes of Providence over this World, and the promised Ioyes of that World which is to come. In a word, all good necessarily to be either knowne or done, or had, is plentifully, as out of a rich Treasure, reveal'd and offer'd unto us in these heavenly Songs of *David*.

Of the 119.
in particular.

Amongst which, this 119. *Psalme* (a part of which I have now read unto you) is, as it were, a precious Jewell, or cleare Crystall; wherein wee may see the right temper and state of true godlinesse, and sinceritie, the markes and properties of all true worshippers of God, the zeale and affections of all faithfull Christians, the very lively Anatomie and laying open of a good and gracious Soule.

The Division
of it.

This whole *Psalme* doth consist of 22. Parts or Portions of Staves, or Octaves, even just so many as there be Letters in the Hebrew Alphabet; and every Portion containeth in it eight Verses; and every Verse of every Portion, or Staffe, begins with the same Hebrew Letter. The which speciall and extraordinarie penning and disposing of the

the Psalme, doth declare and set out unto us these three things :

1 The diligent intention of mind, and carefull meditation of the Author, in the framing and composing of it.

2 The preciousnesse and worth of the matter contain'd in it ; in that it pleased the Spirit of God to deliver it in choice and speciall order.

3 A desire and purpose, that it might more easily be learn'd by heart, and committed to memorie , and often and earnestly meditated and thought upon, being set downe unto us in so faire and easie order of the Hebrew Letters.

This Part, or Portion, which wee have now in hand, is the foureteenth ; and doth containe in it many worthy and gracious Lessons for our instruction and devotion in heavenly things, proposed unto us out of the praetice and Christian carriage of this holy Prophet, and *Man of God, David*, a perfect patterne of all true zeale and pietie.

In the thirteenth Portion, immediately going before, *David* had delivered specially two things.

First, How by his love, reading, study, and meditation in Gods Word, he had attained most excellent knowledge, wisdom, and understanding; so that thereby he was become *farre more wise than his enemies*; that is, than *Saul* and all his politike Courtiers and Counsellors of State. Hee had *more understanding than his Teachers*, than the great Doctors, and Rabbins; for all their deepe Learning being not sanctified unto them. He understood more than the grave and ancient men, for all

Three Lessons to be learned thence.

Two things observable in the 13. Part.

1

How *David* became wiser than his enemies.

the worldly wisdom and great experience they had gathered in many yeeres, and through length of dayes. Where, by the way, take this Lesson.

Doct.

True wisdom to be had only from and in the Word.

The Reason.

Because other wisdom provides only for the body, but this for the soule.

There is no wit or policie, not all the Learning in the World, or worldly wisdom, can make a man truly wise, (that is, wise unto salvation) but onely a powerfull and working knowledge out of the holy Word of God.

The Reason is : Because all other wisdom doth onely provide for the Body, for a temporall happinesse in this life, for a few and evill dayes, and leaves the Soule in a sinfull and wretched estate; shortly, in the day of Visitation, to be overtaken and fearefully confounded with strange astonishments, horrors, and despaire; and hereafter, wofully to be tormented amongst wicked Devils in the Lake that burnes with fire and Brimstone for evermore. But wisdom out of the Word of God doth so furnish a mans Soule with Grace, and all holy Vertues, that in despite of all creatures, hee may live comfortably in this Vale of teares, and in endlesse joyes in the World to come.

Now (I pray you) tell me, whether is truly the wiser man; hee, that for an inch of time makes much of his wretched Body; that must shortly rot in the grave, and be devoured of Wormes, and turned into dust; but in the meane time lets his immortall Soule, that can never die, sinke into the Dungeon of everlasting woe and miserie: or hee, which by taking sound and saving counsell and direction out of the Word of God, and how-
soever

Soever he be hated and neglected of this vaine World, yet yeelding chearefull and constant obedience thereunto, provides unspeakable comfort, rest, and blessednesse both for Body and Soule, through all eternitie?

Secondly, In the second part and foure last Verses of the former Portion, *David* sets downe the fruit, use, and benefit which sprung from his divine knowledge. It sweetned his heart with much comfort, and sound contentment, and cheared him with *joy unspeakable, and glorious*, amidst all crosses and discomforts; it bridled and restrained him *from every evil way*; it kept and preserved him in the paths of righteousnesse; it bred in him a hatred and loathing of the wayes of error, falsehood, and hypocrisie. Where, by the way, I would give you this other Lesson.

We must labour and be sure that we draw our knowledge in Gods Word into practice, action, and exercise; otherwise, it will not onely be unprofitable and unfruitfull unto us, but indeed bring upon us a greater and more fearefull condemnation. For, *He that knowes his Masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*, Luke 12. 47. All our knowledge is in vaine, except by the power of it our inward affections be sanctified, our words seasoned with grace, our actions and conversations guided with spirituall wisdome and unfained sinceritie.

After *David* had thus, in the former Portion, layd downe unto us, and confessed what excellent knowledge he had got out of the Word of God,

2

He sets downe the fruits of his knowledge

1 Pet. 1. 8.

Doct.

All our knowledge must be practisall.

Luke 12. 47.

The fourteenth Part explained.

and the precious fruit and benefit he had reaped and enjoyed by it : Now,

In the first Verse of this present Portion, hee makes, as it were, a protestation and profession, that he is wholly and onely enlightened and led in all his wayes by this holy Word of God, as by a Light or Lanterne : The brightnesse thereof doth not onely bring him into the wayes of righteousness, and blessed estate of Christianitie, but doth also conduct and guide him in all the paths and particulars of his life and actions, in all the parts and passages of his speciall calling : For he saith, *Thy word is a Lampe unto my feet*] that is, whereby I see and discern the way to Heaven, and the narrow path through the Kingdome of Grace; *and a Light unto my paths*] that is, a guide to direct me in every particular step, at every turning, that so I may keepe a straight course, and the readie way to the Kingdome of Glory.

That *David* had thus wholly yeilded and resigned up himselfe to be guided and governed by the glorious Light of Gods holy Word, appears in the Verses following.

1
Vers. 106.

First, in *Vers. 106.* by a solemne Oath and sacred resolution to keepe Gods righteous judgements, and an unfained and constant purpose to performe the same; *I have sworne, and will performe it, that I will keepe thy righteous judgements.*

2
Vers. 107.

Secondly, in *Vers. 107.* by his paciencie and sufferance of wrongs, disgraces, and afflictions, which the wicked and prophane World heaped upon him; for his profession of holinesse and sinceritie.

ceritie. For, except he had loved and followed the Light of divine Truth, whensoever the fire of persecution and tribulation, because of the Word, had beene kindled against him, hee had shrunke backe and fallen away; *I am afflicted very much, quicken me, O Lord, according to thy Word.*

Thirdly, in *Vers. 108.* by the offerings of his mouth, and calves of his lips; that is, the spirituall sacrifices of prayers, thanksgiving, and gracious Vowes for Gods service, which with a free and fervent spirit, and earnest desire of acceptation, he continually offered unto the Lord; *O Lord I beseech thee, accept the free-will offerings of my mouth, and teach me thy judgements.*

Fourthly, in *Vers. 109, 110.* by his stedfastnesse and sticking to the Law and Word of God, though hee was beset and strongly incompassed with Inares, with dangers, and with death it selfe: *His soule was continually in his hand;* that is, hee was ready and resolved every houre rather to part with his life, than with a good Conscience; to shed his blood, rather than to forsake the Truth and Commandements of God: *My soule is continually in my hand, yet doe I not forget thy Law: The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I erred not from thy Precepts.*

In the two last Verses, upon the former reasons hee concludes the Point; That his heart and inward affections do dearely embrace Gods blessed Word, as a most rich and lasting Inheritance; as his sweetest and greatest joy; and, that hee bends all the powers of his soule, and best endeavours; to be led with, and to follow the Light thereof even

3

Vers. 108.

4

Vers. 109, 110.

5

Vers. 111, 112.

1 Tim. 6. 16.

Shee markes
to distinguish
a godly man
and an hypo-
crite.

I:
Vers. 105.
A godly man is
guided by the
Word in all
his wayes.

A naturall
man not at all.

Or in part.

unto the end, untill it bring him to immortalitie and *Light*, that no man can attaine unto: Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoycing of my heart: I have inclined my heart to performe thy Statutes alway, even to the end.

Thus you see in generall the meaning of this Portion.

Before now I descend unto particulars, and come to gather Notes severally from the Verses in order, let vs take notice, I beseech you, (for our instruction and examination of our owne soules) of sixe notable markes, and signes, by which a true Christian may be discerned from a Temporizer; a sincere server of God, from a carnall Gospeller.

The first I gather out of the first Verse: Every sonne and servant of God doth with humilitie, chearefulnesse, and obedience, yeeld and submit himselfe to be wholly and onely directed and guided by the Light of Gods Word, in all his wayes, both generally, of Christianitie, and particuarly, of his speciall calling; as *David* here did. But the naturall man, that is not yet entred into, or acquainted with the state of Grace, is led and guided in his courses onely by the Light of Reason, and worldly Wisedome; by good Meanings, without ground and warrant out of the Word; by a blind and ignorant Devotion; by the Multitude, Examples, Custome of the Times, and such like blind Guides. But if he take any advice and direction out of the Word of God, it is but in part, by halfes, and for a times.

A second

A second ariseth out of the second Verse: Every Child of God doth not onely promise, vow, and purpose to forsake and abandon all his knowne sinnes, to watch carefully and conscionably over all his wayes; to delight in and to sort himselfe with godly and gracious companie, to have a respect to all his Commandements, and to keepe his righteous Iudgements; but hee doth also truly and throughly performe it: hee goes through-stitch with his spirituall affaires, and with constancie and courage walkes in a settled course of Christianitie. But the unregenerate man, not yet soundly seasoned with the power of Grace; howsoever he hath sometimes good motions and purposes arise in his heart, to forsake his former evill wayes; and to fall to godlinesse; howsoever in the time of Sicknesse, of some great Iudgement; or when his Conscience is terrified by the Ministerie of the Word, when he seriously thinks upon the day of his death, and of that great and last Iudgement, or the like; hee makes Vowes with himselfe; perhaps, that hee will be a new man, and change his courses: But when he is once out of danger againe, when he comes to the point, and practice, he is not so good as his word, he doth not pay and performe his former Vowes and purposes; hee is presently choaked againe with worldly Cares, and drowned in earthly Pleasures: And so all his goodnesse is as a morning Cloud, and as the morning Dew it goeth away.

The third marke lyeth in the third Verse: Every Child of God doth with contented patience; with

2

Verf. 106.
He performs
all his Vowes.

An unregenerate man doth
not pay them.

Hof. 6. 4.

3

Verf. 107.

He patiently
suffers perfec-
tion for the
Word.

2 Tim. 3. 12.

The carnall
Gospeller
spares him-
selfe.

Act. 14. 22.

4

Vers. 108.

He is frequent
in praying and
praying.
The other not.

with strong dependance upon Gods providence, with rejoycing in his sufferings, beare and endure many miseries and pressures layd upon him, for his profession and practice of sinceritie. He well knowes out of the Word of God, and fees by his owne experience, *That all which will live godly in Christ Iesus, shall suffer persecution,* 2 Tim. 3. 12. And therefore he makes up his account with the World, and is at a point with all that is under the Sunne; hee is perswaded, *that all the afflictions of this life are not neere worthy the glory which shall be revealed,* Rom. 8. 18.

But the carnall Gospeller he thinkes it is good sleeping in a whole skin; he lookes for a Gospel of ease, for a soft and silken service of God; for a Church (as one speakes) *all of Velvet*. And therefore, rather than he will suffer any losse, or worsening, any diminution or disparagement in his outward estate, in his reputation, wealth, and worldly happinesse, he will *make shipwracke of a good Conscience*; he will yeeld to the corruptions of the Times, and with the greater part, rest and repose himselfe peaceably and pleasantly upon his Bed of ease, and carnall securitie: never considering, that the Crosse is the Christians triumph; that Christ himselfe was crowned with Thornes; and, that *wee must through many afflictions enter into the Kingdome of Heaven,* Act. 14. 22.

A fourth marke may be gathered out of the fourth Verse: The prayers and prayings of God, in the mouth of Gods Child, are frequent, free, and fervent; but with the carnall Gospeller, they are

are very rare, cold; and formall. The Reason is; Gods Child is very sensible of his corruptions, and wants, hee still longs and gaspes for more grace, with a spirituall taste he sweetly relishesth Gods great mercie and goodnesse unto him; he hath the love of God and the spirit of prayer shed into his heart by the Spirit of Adoption; and therefore his heart is as full as the Moone, of godly motions and meditations, which like a continuall Spring sends out groanes and sighes unutterable, many zealous and faithfull prayers and thanksgivings unto his gracious God with a free and feeling affection. But the carnall Gospeller, because his understanding was never enlightened, his heart never truly humbled, his affections never sanctified; because he hath no sence of his wretched estate, nor present feeling of grace, nor sound hope and assurance of happinesse in Heaven; why, therefore he hath no great mind, or heart, or list to prayer; hee hath no great delight, or exercise, in this holy businesse: and if he doe pray (which is but seldome, and coldly) it is but lip-labour, and lost labour; because it is without faith, and feeling; for fashion, custome, or company, because he was so taught in his youth; or that he superstitiously thinkes, the very worke wrought, and a number of prayers solemnly said over, will sanctifie him.

A fifth marke may be gathered out of the sixt and seventh Verses: The Child of God doth not onely passe through with patience, for the profession of Gods truth and sinceritie, lesse and infe-

The Reason,

5-
Verf. 109, 110.

He will lose
his life for
God.

riour miseries; as losse of goods, losse of friends and reputation with the World, slanders, disgraces, and wrongs: but hee also *holds his soule* (as it were) *continually in his hand*, as David here sayes of himselfe; readie (if need be, and the times so require) even to shed his blood vnder the Sword of Persecution, or to lay downe his life in the flames, rather than to dishonour so mercifull a God, to betray his holy Truth; or, by his backsliding and falling away, to hazard that Crowne of Glory, which by the eye of faith he hath already in sight. But the carnall Gospeller, in time of peace and plentie, while he lives quietly, and at ease, without crosse or trouble, in faire and Sunshine dayes, may perhaps be a stout and peremptorie Professor, but hee ever shrinks in the wetting; he pulls in the head in the fierie triall: ever, *when trouble or persecution commeth, because of the Word, by and by he is offended.*

A temporarie
is offended.

Mat. 13. 21.

6

Vers. 111, 112.
A Child of
God counts
the Word his
greatest Treas-
ure.

* Vers. 162.

* Vers. 72.

The Reason.

The sixt marke is gathered out of the two last Verses: The Child of God holds his Word farre more deare than any precious Treasure, than the richest Inheritance, than * *great Spoyles*, than * *thousands of Gold and Silver*: It is the joy of his heart; and therefore it inclines and inflames his affections with love and zeale to doe Gods will, and fulfill all his Commandements. And no marvell though the true Christian find most sound and unconceivable delight in the Word of God, the Doctrine of Heaven: For by it, he is borne anew, and made heire of Heaven: by the Light of it, he sees his Name written in the Booke of Life,
never

never to be riced out by man, or Devill; all the sweet and gracious promises of salvation and comfort revealed in it, are sure his owne: So that thence he knowes, and is perswaded undoubtedly, that after a few and evill dayes spent in this miserable life, he shall remaine and reigne eternally in the glory of God, of Christ Iesus, the blessed Spirit, and the holy Angels. But it is otherwise with the carnall Gospeller; for whatsoever shew or protestation he makes to the contrary, yet indeed in his heart, affections, and practice, hee preferres his pleasures, riches, and profit, before hearing of Gods Word, sanctifying his Sabbaths, and obedience to his Commandements. And no marvell: for because hee yet never lived the life of faith, but is a meere stranger to the mysterie of godlinesse, hee hath no true interest nor found assurance in the joyes of another World; and therefore feeds onely and fills himselfe with transitorie and earthly contentments.

Now I beseech you (beloved in Christ Iesus) let every one with singleness of heart and sinceritie examine his owne Soule, and the spirituall state of his Conscience, by these signes and marks which I have now delivered to you, out of the example and precedencie of the Christian affections and holy disposition of *David*, a sanctified man, and a principall patterne of pietie and zeale for all faithfull ones. *Know you not* (saith the Apostle) *that Iesus Christ is in you, except you be reborn?* So undoubtedly, if Iesus Christ be in you, if you be of *Dauids* stampe and temper, that

A Christian man hath such assurance in the good things of the world to come, that he can easily moderate his affections as touching earthly and transitorie things. It is otherwise with an Hypocrite.

And why?

2 Cor. 13. 5.

is, already possessed of the state of grace, and marked out by the Spirit of sanctification, for the glory that shall be revealed; you doe find in some good measure these markes and signes of an holy man in your selves.

1. That you are enlightened and guided by the Word of God in all your wayes.

2. That you have not onely good motions and purposes for a zealous and constant service of God; but doe faithfully, with sinceritie and integritie of heart performe the same.

3. That you suffer joyfully and patiently afflictions and disgrace in the World, for the testimonie of Gods Truth, and profession of sinceritie.

4. That you freely and faithfully, with much feeling and fervencie of spirit, offer dayly prayers and prayes unto the Lord.

5. That you had rather part with the dearest and most precious things in this life, nay, life it selfe, than leave the service of God, and the testimonie of a good Conscience.

6. That you have more comfort and delight in hearing, reading, meditating, conferring of, and applying unto your owne soules the holy Word of God, than in the treasures and glory of the whole Earth.

Such markes as these you must finde in your selves, if you ever meane or hope to finde true contentment in this life, or the comforts of Heaven in the life to come.

Now I come to a more speciall and particular

con-

consideration of every Verse in order; and thence to gather such Notes and Doctrines, as may best instruct us in the way to Heaven.

First, *David* tells us in the first Verse; That *Gods Word is a Lanterne to his feet, and a Light unto his paths*: Which, that you may better understand, I will tell you the meaning of the words, and explaine unto you the severall tearmes.

First, the *Word* may be taken three wayes.

1 For the substantiall Word of God, the second Person in the Trinitie, *Ioh. 1. 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.*

2 It may be taken for the written and sounding Word; as it onely strikes the eare, and informes the understanding, but it is not conveyed, neither sinkes it into the heart by the powerfull assistance and sanctified concurrence of Gods Spirit, it being not prayed for to the conversion and sanctification of the whole man. And so the Word is heard and understood of many, that shall never be saved, but returns unfruitfull.

3 It may be taken for the working and effectuall Word, as it is *the power of God unto salvation*; as it is rightly understood, applyed unto the heart and Conscience, possesse of the thoughts and affections, and practised in the life and conversation. This Word thus understood, inlived, managed, and powerfully applyed by the Spirit of God, was a Light unto *Davids steps*; and so is a guide unto the paths of all true Christians, to the worlds end.

That you may understand how the Word is a Light, you must consider,

1
Vers. 105. explained.

The Word is taken three wayes.

2
For the substantiall Word.

The written and sounding Word.

The effectuall Word.
Rom. 1. 16.

2
What is meant by Light?

1 That

John 1. 4.

Mat. 5. 14.

Phil. 2. 15, 16.

Prov. 4. 18.

Christ originally.

Mal. 4. 2.

2
Ministers, ministerially.

Revel. 1. 20.

Act. 26. 18.

1 That Christ is called *Light*, *Ioh. 1. 4.* The Ministers are called the *Light* of the World, *Mat. 5. 14.* The faithfull are *Lights*, *Phil. 2. 15, 16.* *The way of the righteous* (saith Salomon, *Prov. 4. 18.*) *shineth as the Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* The Word of God is also called a *Light*; as in this place. But first,

Christ is *Light* of himselfe, and originally; he is the Fountaine and everlasting Spring of all the *Light* of Grace and Glory, both in Heaven and Earth; Hee is called, *The Sunne of Righteousnesse.* The Sunne, you know, hath his *Light* rooted in his owne faire Body, and receives that from none other; and with that, hee enlightens the Moone, the Starres, the Aire, the Earth, & all the World: Even so the blessed Sonne of God, *the Sunne of Righteousnesse*, hath in himselfe, and from himselfe, the *Light* of all Wisdome and Knowledge, Mercie and Comfort; and from him floweth and springeth whatsoever *Light* of Glory is revealed unto his blessed Saints and Angels in Heaven, or whatsoever *Light* of Grace is shed into the hearts of his sonnes and servants here upon Earth.

2 The Preachers of the Word are Ministers and Messengers of this *Light*; and therefore are but *Light* ministerially. They are as *the Starres*, and so they are called, *Rev. 1. 20.* They receive all their *Light* from the *Sunne of Righteousnesse*, CHRIST IESVS, and either doe or should convey and cast their borrowed beames upon the earthly, cold, and darksome hearts of the people of God, that they might *turne from Darkenesse*

to Light, from the power of Sathan unto God, Act. 26. 18.

3 The Word is Light instrumentally; which being powerfully sanctified unto us for our salvation, and being holden out unto us by a conscionable Ministerie, is as a Candle or Torch, to guide us through the darknesse of this World, unto our eternall Rest.

The Word instrumentally.

4 Lastly, the faithfull are Lights *Subjective*; because they receive this Light into their Vnderstandings, (whereby they see the Wonders of Gods Law, the Secrets of his Kingdome, and the great Mysterie of Godlinesse, and the way to Heaven;) into their Consciences, (whereby they have their sinfull miserable estate by nature discovered unto them, and the way to Christ for remedie and salvation;) into their affections, (whereby they are enkindled with zeale for Gods truth, honour, and service,) into their actions, and conversation, whereby they shine as Lights in the world, amid a naughtie and crooked generation, Phil. 2.

The faithfull are the subjects of this Light.

15. And after the Sunne of Righteousnesse once arise in their hearts, like the Sunne in the Firmament, they shine more and more in all holy Vertues, unto the perfect day, untill they reach the height of Heaven, and the full glory of the Saints of God.

Phil. 2. 15.

In the third place, [*by Feet*] is meant his minde and understanding, his affections, thoughts, actions, his whole life, all his wayes. All these in *David*, were guided by the Light of Gods Word.

3
What is meant by Feet.

4

What, by *Paths*.

Lastly, by *Paths*, are meant every particular step, every turning and narrow passage in his speciall calling: For this Light, the Word of God, doth not onely guide a mans feet into the way of peace, and put him in the right way to Heaven; but also goes along with him, in lightens and directs every step, that his feet doe not slide: It so informes him with spirituall wisdom, that hee layes hold on every occasion for the glorifying of God, describes every little sinne, and appearance of evill; disposeth every circumstance in his actions, with a good conscience, and warrant out of Gods Word.

The meaning
of the Verse.

This then is the meaning of this Verse. *David*, the man of God; had the Word of God working powerfully upon his soule, as a Light: that is; As a Lampe is to the life and safetie of the body, in darke and dangerous places; so was this Light to the life and salvation of *Dauids* soule, in the darkeness of this World; and shadow of death: To guide his feet and paths; that is, his mind, affections, thoughts, actions, his whole life, all his wayes, and every particular step and passage thereof.

This Verse being thus understood, let us now come to gather some Lessons and Doctrines for our instruction.

The first shall be this:

Doct. 1.

There is no man can hit the way to Heaven, or walke in the paths of Righteousnesse, through the Kingdome of Grace in this World; unto the Kingdome of Glory in the World to come; except he be inlightened, informed, and instructed in the holy Word of God.

vlll.1

(5)

The

The second Note wee gather out of this Verse, shall be this :

The Word of God is a Light, not onely to guide us into the way to Heaven, and instruct us in our generall calling of Christianitie; but also to leade us along in a course of godlinesse, and to direct us particularly in our speciall calling.

I will first follow the former Doctrine; which in few words, and plainly, I thus propose unto you.

No man can at first finde the entrance, or after hit the way to Heaven, except he be enlightened and led along by the holy Word of God. For *David*, as here wee see, a man of great worth, and understanding, otherwise excellently and extraordinarily qualified; could not find out, or follow any other Guide, or direction to Heaven, but onely the Light of Gods Word.

The Reasons of this Doctrine, may be these which follow.

The first may be taken from the insufficiencie and inabilityie of all other meanes, to bring us to Heaven: as,

1. All the greatest Learning and deepest knowledge in the World, will stand us in little stead in this businesse: Otherwise it had gone well with many ancient Heathens and Philosophers of old, who sadowed as deepe, and reached as high in the depths and mysteries of all humane Learning and knowledge, as the light of Reason and strength of Nature could possibly bring them: And yet they were utterly strangers to the life of

Doct. 2.

Doct. 1.

Reason 1.
No other
meanes can
bring us to
Heaven,
Not humane
Learning.

Eph. 2. 12.

Rom. 1. 22.

1 Cor. 1. 20.

Iere. 10. 14.

Not worldly
wisdom.
The wisdom
of Gods Book,
& mans brain,
stand at odds,
with an ever-
lasting oppo-
sition, Rom. 8. 7.

* 1 Cor. 1. 19.

2 Sam. 16. 23.

grace, and without God in the world. When they pro-
fessed themselves to be wise, they became fooles, saith
Paul, Rom. 1. 22. They were puffed up with a
little vaine-glorious knowledge here upon Earth,
and got them a Name amongst men: But, alas,
what was this? When as for the want of the
Light of Divine Truth, they lost their Soules in
another World, and their Names never came in
the Booke of Life. *where is the wise?* (saith
Paul in another place) *where is the Scribe? where
is the Disputer of this world?* As if hee should
have said: All the knowledge of the greatest
Doctors and learnedest Rabbins in the World,
without Grace, vanisheth into nothing, into
vaine-glory, emptinesse, and aire; nay, casts
them with greater horror, and confusion, into
the Pit of Hell. *Every man* (saith Ieremie) *is
a Beast by his owne knowledge*, נבער כל-אדם מדעת, Iere. 10. 14. Except, besides all other know-
ledge, he be enlightened from above, and have
that Divine knowledge sanctified unto him, hee
can come no neerer the happinesse of Heaven,
than a very Beast.

2. Worldly wisdom and policie is so-farre
from making men wise unto salvation, that it is
not onely starke foolishnesse with God and good
men, but it doth strongly set it selfe and is at en-
mitie against God. Therefore, saith God; *I will
destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will cast away the
understanding of the prudent*, * 1 Cor. 1. 19. *Ahitophel*
was so wise even in the affaires of Kingdomes, and
businessse of State, that *the counsell which hee counselled*
in

in those dayes, was like as one had asked counsell at the Oracle of God; and yet all this great wisdom in the end ended in extreme folly: for upon a little discontent and disgrace in the World, he saddled his Asse, and went home unto his Citie, and put his household in order, and hanged himselfe, 2 Sam. 16. 23. & 17.

2 Sam. 17. 23.

23. Although the end of all worldly wisdom be not so shamefull in the eye of the World, yet undoubtedly it is most miserable and wofull in the World to come, except their wisdom be sanctified and over-ruled by the Light of Gods Word. Carnall wisdom can neither preserve a man from death, nor prepare him to die blessedly: it cannot stay his Life from going, neither can it stop the Curse from comming; it cannot deliver him from damnation in the World to come, but rather encreaseth the grievousnesse of his punishment: for in this life it hath kept possession against heavenly wisdom, it made him incapable of all good instructions, it made him impatient of any rebuke, and held him in ignorance and disobedience all his life.

3 No good meanings or intentions, without knowledge and warrant in the Word of God, will ever serve our turne for salvation; nay, indeed they are abominable and hatefull in Gods sight. Howsoever, thousands deceive themselves in this point. *Vzzah* had a good meaning, in 2 Sam. 6. 6. when hee put his hand to the Arke of God, and held it; for the Oxen did shake it: but notwithstanding, the Lord was very wroth with *Vzzah*, and God smote him in the same place, and there hee

Not good meanings.

2 Sam. 6. 6.

Luk. 9. 54, 55.

1 Sam. 15.

Ioh. 13. 8.

Not will-wor-
ship.

Col. 2. 23.

died. *James* and *Iohn* had good meanings, when they called for fire from Heaven to consume the Samaritan, that would not entertaine Christ; but *Iesus* rebuked them, and told them, *they knew not of what spirit they were.* *Saul*, in 1 *Sam.* 15. had a good meaning, when he spared *Agag*, and the best of the Sheepe, and of the Oxen, to sacrifice them unto the Lord; but notwithstanding *Samuel* tells him, that *he had done wickedly in the sight of the Lord,* and that *the Lord had rent the Kingdome of Israel from him that day.* *Peter* had a good meaning, when in *Ioh.* 13. 8. he would not suffer Christ to wash his feet; but *Iesus* answered him, and told him, *If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.* Good meanings then are wicked missings of the true service of God, except they be guided by knowledge, warrant, and ground out of the Booke of God. Let no man then tell of his good meaning, if he be ignorant in the Will and Word of God; for certainly it will never serve the turne, it will never hold out in the Day of Christ *Iesus*.

4 No will-worship, or will-service, or voluntarie Religion, as the Apostle calls it, *Col.* 2. 23. which is forged and framed out of a mans owne braine, humour, and conceit, without ground or warrant in the Booke of God; though it be performed with never so glorious a shew of zeale and paines, yet it is not any way availeable for our spirituall good, and eternall happinesse: nay indeed, it is most odious in the eyes of God, and ever lyable to a very high degree of his wrath and vengeance.

Baals Prophets, 1 Kings 18.28. were so hot and hastie in their will-worship, that they cut themselves with knives, and launcers, till the bloud gushed out upon them. The Papiſts they whip themselves, they vow Continencie, perpetuall Povertie, and Regular Obedience; and yet is the profession and practice of both, bloudie and idolatrous. When the Iewes worshipped God after the devised fashions of the Gentiles, though their meaning was to worship nothing but God, yet the Text saith, they worshipped nothing but Devils, Deut. 32.17. And God there protests, that therefore a fire was kindled in his wrath, that should burne unto the bottome of Hell, and set on fire the foundations of the mountaines. So hated of Almighty God is all service and worship devised by the wit and will of man, without warrant in the Word of God.

5 Lastly, not the Word of God it selfe in the Letter, without the spirituall meaning, and the finger of Gods Spirit to apply it powerfully to our soules and consciences, is any sufficient rule of life, or able to bring us into the Light of Grace. This appeares in *Nicodemus*, who was a great Doctor in the Law, and the Prophets, a chiefe Master and Teacher in Israel; yet was a very Infant and Ideot in the power of Grace, and mysterie of godlinesse. For all his learning in the Letter of the Law, he had not yet made one step towards Heaven; for hee was not onely ignorant of, but had a very absurd and grosse conceit of the new birth; which is the very first entrance into the Kingdome of Grace. For when Christ told him, hee could

1 King. 18. 28.

Deut. 32. 17.

Not the Word
it selfe in the
Letter, with-
out the mea-
ning.

Iob. 3. 10.

Ves. 4

not be saved; except hee were new borne, hee strangely and foolishly replies; *How can a man be borne, which is old? How can he enter into his mothers wombe againe, and be borne?* Thus you see, there can no other meanes be named, or thought upon; not all humane Knowledge, nor worldly Wisdome, nor good Meanings, nor Will-worship, nor the Word it selfe in the Letter, which can leade us into the wayes of Righteousnesse, or bring us unto Heaven; but onely the Light of Gods lioly Word, holden out unto us by a profitable Ministerie, and the power of the Spirit.

Reason 2.

The Word workes regeneration; without which, no salvation.

What regeneration is?

1 Pet. 1. 23.

A second Reason of my Doctrin may be this: No man can ever see the Kingdome of God, except he be borne againe, except he be a new creature, a new man, as is plaine in Christs words unto *Nicodemus*. For our new birth, or regeneration, is the necessarie passage from Nature to Grace; from prophanenesse, to sinceritie: It is that whereby wee are wholly sanctified and set apart unto God, from the sinfull corruption of our naturall birth, and the evill fruits thereof, to serve God in our whole man, both body, soule, and spirit. Now you must conceive, that this new birth must necessarily spring from the *immortall Seed of the word of God*; for so it is called, 1 *Pet. 1. 23*. It is the Seed of our new birth, salvation, and immortalitie. And you may as well looke for Corne to grow up in your fields without sowing, without casting any Seed into the furrowes, as to looke for Grace to grow up

in

in your hearts, or to reape the fruit of holineffe, everlasting life; except this immortall Seed, the Word of God, be first cast into the furrowes and fallow ground of your hearts, and be there received with reverence and attention, nourished with prayer and meditation, and fructifie in your lives and conversations. Hence it is, that Gods Word is called, *The Word of Salvation*, *Act. 13. 26.* *The Word of Grace*, *Act. 14. 3.* *The Word of Life*, *Phil. 2. 16.* *The Power of God unto Salvation*, *Rom. 1. 16.* For there is no power of Grace, or spirituall life, to bee had ordinarily upon Earth, or salvation and eternall life to be hoped for in Heaven; except a man be enlightened with the knowledge, and enlived with the power of the holy Word of God. There is no entering into the Kingdome of God, except a man bee new borne; except hee bee first renewed in his spirit, soule, and body: And there is no new birth, without the *immortall Seed, the Word of God. And therefore, without knowledge and direction in the Word of God, no salvation.

The third Reason of my Doctrine, is this: The Word of God hath only the power and propertie to search into and to sanctifie the whole man, even to the inmost thoughts and the secret cogitations of the heart. All the devices and imaginations of mans heart lye without the walke of humane justice, and censure: no word or writing of man is able to bridle them, or bring them within compasse; no Law of Nature, or Nations, can affright

Act. 13. 26.

Act. 14. 3.

Phil. 2. 16.

Rom. 1. 16.

* See *Deaving,*

pag. 325.

1 Cor. 4. 15.

Jam. 1. 18.

Reason 3.

The Word is able to sanctifie the whole man.

2 Cor. 10. 4.

Heb. 4. 12.
opened.The Word is
said to be live-
ly in three re-
gards.

It quickens.

It lasts for
ever.
Psal. 119. 89.It disperseth it
selfe, and sear-
cheth into e-
very part of
the soule.

or restrain the freedom and wanderings of thoughts: onely the Word of God can amaze, search, and sanctifie them. *The weapons of our warfare* (saith Paul) *are not carnall, but mightie through God to cast downe Holds; casting downe the imaginations, and every thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivitie every thought into the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. The word of God* (saith the Apostle to the Hebrewes) *is lively and mightie in operation, and sharper than any two-edged sword; and entreteth through, even to the dividing asunder of the soule and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart, Heb. 4. 12.*

The Word of God may be said to be living or lively in three respects.

1 Because, whereas we naturally live under the shadow of death, and in the darkeness of sinne, it quickens us with a new and spirituall life, it cheares and comforts us with heavenly Light.

2 The Word may be called Living, because it selfe is immortall, and lasteth for ever; as doth the living and eternall God, the Author of it.

3 But most especially, and agreeably to the place in the Hebrewes, it is called *lively*, because it enters with great power and secret insinuation into every part and power both of soule and body: So that as our life is scattered and dispersed into every little part, and least veine in us, and we feele it both in paine and pleasure; even so the vertue of the Word of God pierceth into every member, into the most secret and hidden Closet of the heart,

heart, either to breake and bruiſe with terror and aſtoniſhment the very bones, & crush the ſinewes of the ſinfull ſoule; or to fill them with marrow and fatneſſe, and to reſreſh the affections of the truly penitent with joy unſpeakable, and glorious. God tells us in *Jeremy*, that his Word is like fire; and therefore it can eaſily inſinuate into all the creekes and corners of our corruptions; it can fully and clearly enlighten our Conſciences, and diſcover unto us the ſinfulneſſe of the moſt lurking and ſecret thoughts.

Jer. 23. 29.

Thus you have this firſt Doctrin plainly proved and confirmed unto you.

No man can at firſt finde the entrance, or after hit the way to Heaven; except he be enlightened and led along by the ſaving knowledge of the holy Word of God.

No other meanes, which the power of Nature, Wiſedome, Learning, or the whole World can afford, will ſerve the turne in this buſineſſe of Salvation. It is the Seed of our new birth (as I told you;) there can be no growing of grace, or reaping of glory; without it: It hath onely power to ſhake, ranſacke, and ſearch into the inmoſt ſecrets of the heart: It onely can ſanctifie us both inwardly and outwardly, both in ſoule and body, both in thoughts and actions; without which, both inward and outward holineſſe, no man ſhall ever ſee the face of God.

Now I come unto the Uſes of this Doctrin. And in the firſt place, it may ſerve for confutation of the Papiffs, thoſe great empoyſoners and murderers

Uſe 1.
Confutation
of Papiffs,
who keepe the
Word in an-
knowne.
Tongue.

therers of infinite soules of men. Is the Word of God as a Lampe, and a Light, without which wee cannot see the first step, or set one foot aright towards Heaven? Why then, sinfull and pestilent is their practice, who hide this blessed Light from the people of God, in an unknowne Tongue; and by their bloudie Inquisition, damme up the holy Fountaines of heavenly Truth, which should spring up in every mans heart unto eternall life: Whose cruell and craftie Religion (for, bloud of Princes, and cursed Policie, are the principall supporters of Poperie) teacheth them to blind-fold and hood-winke the poore Laitie in forced ignorance, lest they should know Gods will, or any way to Heaven, but theirs; which indeed is the right, direct, and desperate downe-fall into the Pit of Hell: So that millions of soules live no lesse without Scriptures, than if there were none; and wofully walke in this World, through darkenesse of sinne, shadow of death, and ignorance both of God and his Word, unto endlesse and utter darkenesse in the World to come. The Prophet *David* tells us, in *Psal. 119.* *That the Law of the Lord is perfect, and giveth wisedom unto the simple: The Commandements of the Lord is pure, and giveth light to the eyes.* In this place hee tells us, That the Word was a Lampe unto his feet, and a Light unto his paths. Christ himselfe, *Iohn 5. 39.* bids us, *Search the Scriptures:* even all, without exception; so many as looke for eternall life. Not lightly, and at leisure to reade them, but with diligence to dive into them; for so the word signifies

Psal. 119. 7, 8.

Iohn. 5. 39.

nifies in the Originall: To seeke for the right knowledge, and true sense of them, *as for Silver, and to search for it as for Treasures.* The Noblemen of Berea, *Act. 17. 11.* searched the Scriptures dayly, whether those things were so, that were preached unto them. Saint Peter, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* calls the Word of the Prophets, *a Light, which shineth in a darke place, to which wee should take heed.* But the Pope, and his Factors, teach other Lessons. The Catholike Church (saith one of their chiefe * Champions, out of the Councell of * Trent) forbids the reading of Scriptures by all, without choise, or the publike reading, or singing of them in vulgar Tongues. The wise will not here regard (say the Rhemists in their Preface to their Testament) what some wilfull people doe mutter, that the Scriptures are made for all men. And soone after, they resemble the Scriptures to Fire, Water, Candles, Knives, and Swords; which are indeed needfull, &c. but would marre all, if they were at the guiding of other than wise men: And this is indeed one of their principall reasons:

Many abuse the Scriptures by ignorance, infirmitie, or malice, to Errors, Heresies, Schismes, and their owne destruction: therefore they are not to be read of all, without choise.

I answer; they might as well reason thus: Many men abuse Meat and Drinke, by surfering and excessse, to the destruction both of their soules and bodies: therefore men are to be deprived of Meat and Drinke. Some men are infected with the Pestilence, by drawing in corrupted and empoysoned

Prov. 2. 4.

Act. 17. 11.

2 Pet. 1. 19.

* *Beñ. de Verb. Dei, 2. cap. 15. At Catholica Ecclesia, &c. * Sess. 22. ca. 8. Can. 9.*

Obiect.

The Scriptures are ready to be abused by the ignorant, to error, heretic, &c.

Answer.

So may Meat be abused, and the Aire infected: yet they are not to be taken away.

poysoned aire : therefore the aire is to be taken away, and removed. But as those men which are deprived of Meat and Drinke, presently languish and pine away, and die a temporall death ; and those that enjoy not the benefit of the aire, are presently stifled, for want of breath : even so, all those that want the spirituall Food of their soules out of the Word of God, and the holy inspirations of his good Spirit builded thereupon ; howsoever they be fat and flourishing in their outward estates, yet they are full leane and lanke in their soules ; and if they so continue, must needs die an eternall death, and perish everlastingly. Let us then learne to detest and hate the bloudie Politic of the Synagogue of Rome, which cruelly keeps from many thousand Soules that blessed Light of Gods Word, which should lead them to eternall life. They indeed pretend other Reasons : But the truth is, if the Word of Truth should be permitted and published to all, there would be old running out of Babylon ; all their Pompe and Politic would downe ; their shamefull Iuglings and Cousenages, their strong Delusions and Impostures would be laid open, in the sight of the Sunne. The Princes of the Earth, that have so long beene drunken with the wrath of her empoysoned Wine, would no longer commit Fornication with her. The Merchants would buy no more her Wares ; but would stand as farre off from her, for feare of her torment, weeping, and wailing. No marvell then, though the Papists labour might and maine, and to this end maintaine

maintaine a bloudie Inquisition, to suppress this Light of Gods Word, lest it should discover their darknesse, and hasten their destruction.

A second Vse, is for terror, feare, and amazement to all them that doe not live and delight in the Light of Gods holy Word, but yet are walking in the darknesse of ignorance, and in the shadow of death. *The whole world, and every man in particular, lyes in darknesse;* that is, in ignorance, under sinne, and so subject and lyable to damnation and eternall death. There is no way to come out of this state of Darknesse, Damnation, and Death; but by the Knowledge, Light, and Ministerie of the Word. Hence it is, that *Act. 26. 18.* it is *Pauls* charge, and hee is sent to this purpose, *to open the eyes of men, that they might turne from Darknesse to Light.* And *Paul* himselfe, *Eph. 5. 8.* speaks thus unto the Ephesians; *Yee were once Darknesse, but now yee are Light in the Lord; walke as Children of the Light.* Out of *1 Pet. 2. 9.* it appeares, that all Gods Children are called out of *Darknesse into marvellous Light.* Why then, fearefull and most wretched is the state of all those, who by the Light and knowledge of Gods Word are not translated and guided out of this Darknesse. For, as in Darknesse,

1 There is much feare, *horror, and discomfort; a man cannot enjoy the lightsomenesse of Heaven, the comfort of the creatures, the companie of men: Even so ignorant men, not enlightened with saving knowledge, are utterly without all hope of Heaven; they have no sight

Vse 2.
Of terror to them that delight not in Gods Word.

1 Iob. 5. 19.

Act. 26. 18.

Eph. 5. 8.

1 Pet. 2. 9.

The state of those that are in Darknesse.

He is in feare.
* Gen. 15. 12.

or taste of the endlesse joyes thereof; they have no companie or conference in heavenly matters with true Christians; they have no comfort or interest in the Covenant of Grace, or Promises of Salvation: But Feare, Horror, and Despaire are most justly treasured up for them *against the Day of Wrath, and of the declaration of the just Judgement of God.*

Rom. 2. 5.

He knowes
not whither
he goes.
Job. 12. 35.

The state of
ignorant men.

2 *He that walketh in the Darkenesse (saith Iohn) knoweth not whither he goeth:* He cannot discern his way; he seeth not what is behind, or before him; he cannot descry or discover the dangers which are round about him: But especially, if the wayes through which he passeth, be slipperie, steepe, and rockie, full of pits and holes, he is in danger at every step, by some grievous fall, to crush his body, bruise his bones, or breake his necke. It is just so with every one that lives in ignorance of Gods Word, and Truth; he cannot possibly discern the way to Heaven, amongst the many by-paths of iniquitie; he cannot judge in spirituall matters betwixt right and wrong, good and evill, Light and Darkenesse, Christ and *Belial*, prophanenesse and sinceritie; though there be behind him, a Life spent in much wickednesse, lewdnesse, and ignorance; before him, Despaire, Hell, and eternall Damnation; about him, the World, with a thousand baites and pleasures, to intice and intangle him in sinne; Sathan, like a roaring Lyon, readie every houre to seize upon his Soule, and to teare it in pieces, while there is none to helpe; all the creatures armed, and in a readinesse,

readinesse, with whole Armies of Plagues, and Vengeance, to be revenged upon him, for dishonouring God, by ignorance in his Word: Yet hee sees none of all this. Hee neither knowes, fees, or suspects these many dangers, with which he is compassed; but goes on plodding, with ungrounded confidence, and wicked securitie, in the way of wickednesse and destruction: hee passeth, with much desperate boldnesse, through many dangerous and fearefull wayes; wherein, at every step, he wounds his Conscience with one sinne or other in the meane time, and at length falls headlong, and suddenly, body and soule, into the Pit of Hell. This is certainly the miserable and wofull state of all those that live in spirituall Darkenesse, and are ignorant in Gods Word, and the wayes of godlinesse. It may be they may flatter, please, and perswade themselves, that their case is good enough; that, when they heare of Heaven, and those everlasting pleasures at Gods right hand, they thinke notwithstanding that they shall come thither at length; though they know never a foot of the way, take no direction by the Light of Gods Word, nor set one step, by new obedience, towards that place of blessednesse. But indeed and truth they doe very fearefully deceive and over-shoot themselves: And their case is just, as if a man should fall asleepe upon the edge of some high and steepe Rocke; and there dreame, that he is made a King, attended with a glorious Trainee of Nobilitie, furnished with sumptuous Pallaces, and stately Buildings, enriched

Simile.

riched with the Revenues, Sovereignetic, and Pleasures of a whole Kingdome: But upon the sudden, starting up, and leaping for joy, falls irrecoverably into the mercilesse and devouring Sea; and so loseth that little comfort, which he had in this miserable life. Many wretched men lye and sleepe and snort in ignorance and spirituall blindness; thinking, that skill in the Booke of God, and points of Religion, belongs onely to those that are Booke-learned; entertaining much vaine hope of salvation, without all truth or ground: But when upon their Death-bed, their Consciences are awakened by the finger of Gods justice, out of the slumber of sinne, they then too late find and see, that all was but a Dreame; for they suddenly fall and sinke into despaire, horror, and endlesse desolation. The state then of ignorant men, though perhaps they little thinke upon it, or take it to heart, is most fearefull in this life, and will be most horrible hereafter. In this World; because they are unacquainted, and untaught in Gods Truth, points of Religion, and way to Heaven; they neither know their owne miserie, the great mysterie of godlinesse, or meanes to salvation; and therefore *live as aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the Covenant of Promise, without hope, and without God in the world:* Which is a miserie of all miseries; *They are condemned alreadie:* For as it is, *Iohn 3. 18. He that beleeveth not in him, is alreadie condemned.* And *Saint Paul saith, Rom. 10. 14. How shall they beleev in him, of whom they have not heard; and how shall they*
heare.

*Eph. 2. 12.**Joh. 3. 18.**Rom. 10. 14.*

heare, without a Preacher? So, that without knowledge in Gods Word, there can be no faith; and without faith, there is no salvation. You may further see a notorious Linke of many wretched mischiefes, which arise from ignorance, Eph. 4. 17, 18, 19. *Vanitie of mind, and darkenesse of understanding* are naturally in all men; for wee are all starke blinde, and utterly dead, in respect of matters of Heaven, and spirituall affaires. From thence comes, grosse Ignorance of God, and all godlinesse; and this Ignorance, if it be not removed and dispelled by the Light of Gods Word, is the root and cause of strangenesse from the Life of God: Hardnesse of Heart; Searednesse of Conscience, and want of Feeling; an itching, wantonnesse, and eagernesse to sinne; a committing of any sinne, without remorse, occasion being offered; an unsatisfiednesse and greedinesse in the pursuit of sinfull pleasures, and *in fulfilling the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life.* These are the bitter and poysoned fruits of Ignorance, and want of knowledge in the Word of God, and way to Heaven. And what is to be expected hereafter, appears 2 *Theff.* 1. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord Iesus will shew himselfe from Heaven, with his mightie Angels, in flaming fire, rendring vengeance unto them that doe not know God, and which obey not the Gospel of our Lord Iesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!* Seeing then the comming of the Lord will be so terrible and fearefull to the ignorant, so that they shall

Eph. 4. 17, 18, 19.

The fruits of ignorance.

1 Iob. 2. 16.

2 Theff. 1. 7, 8, 9.

1 Cor. 2. 9.

desire the Mountaines to fall upon them, that they might hide themselves from the fierce wrath of the Lord, and not behold his fearefull countenance; and that they shall wish full many times, they had never bene borne; how ought every man, which lives without the Light and knowledge of Gods holy Word, feare and tremble? And yet, God knoweth, hee cannot conceive the thousand part of those horrible torments which the ignorant and wicked persons endure for ever. For as the heart of man cannot comprehend those blessed and glorious joyes, which God hath prepared for those that love him; so the woe, torments, and endlesse vexations, which shall be poured with wrath and vengeance upon the head of the wicked, infinitely passe the understanding of man: None can conceive how horrible they are, but onely he that feeles them. It very deeply then concernes you (Beloved in Christ Iesus) as you tender the everlasting good and happinesse of your owne soules, to labour by all meanes to be instructed and inlightened by the holy Word of God, which is holden out unto you, as a Lampe and Torch, to leade you through this Vale of Teares, and World of Darkenesse, to the blessed fruition of the most glorious and everlasting Kingdome of Heaven. Otherwise, if you will needes continue in ignorance still, marke what is your wofull state and condition: howsoever you may seeme to shine outwardly, to the eye of the World, or in your owne conceits, in pleasures, in plentie, in civill honestie, in outward mirth, and other

other worldly contentments; yet, in deed and truth, your life is a life of darkenesse. *The god of this world, the Prince of Darkenesse, hath blinded the eyes of your mindes, that your Vnderstandings are not onely darkened, but you are Darkenesse it selfe,* Eph. 5. 8. Your workes are the workes of Darkenesse, your way is the way of Darkenesse; you are fettered and enchained in the power of Darkenesse, *Coloss. 1. 13.* In the darkenesse of crosses and afflictions of this life, you shall be without any glimpse of true comfort and refreshing from the Lord: upon your Death-beds, you shall meete with nothing but darkenesse of despaire and horror: in the Grave, Sathan will guard you with the Barres of the Earth, as in a Bed of hopelesse Darkenesse, untill the Iudgement of the great Day. And that Day will be unto you, *a Day of wrath, a Day of trouble and heavinesse, a Day of destruction and desolation, a Day of Clouds and blacknesse:* as it is, *Zeph. 1. 15.* And at the last, you are to be cast, body and soule, from the presence of God, and joyes of Heaven, into utter Darkenesse, there to be tormented amongst wicked Devils, for ever and ever. This is certainly the state of all ignorant men, and those that will not be enlightened with saving knowledge out of his Word: There is nothing to be expected of them; but Darkenesse, Sorrow, Despaire, and Horror.

A third Vse of this Doctrin, may serve for admonition to all those, who by the Light of Gods Word have alreadie found and are entred

(d 3)

into

2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

Ephes. 4. 18.

Ephes. 5. 8.

Prov. 4. 19.

Coloss. 1. 13.

Zeph. 1. 15.

Vse 3.

Admonition to take the Word for our guide.

into the way to Heaven; that they would suffer themselves with humilitie, obedience, and constancie, to be led along in a course of sanctification, by the holy guidance and direction thereof; that they would shine dayly more and more in all Christian vertues, exercises, and duties. For it is the propertie of all those which are become new creatures, who are washed from their finnes, sanctified, and new-borne by the immortall Seed of the Word, and the Spirit of Grace; to long after, and earnestly desire the sincere Milke of the word, that they may grow thereby in knowledge, comfort, and new obedience. A new-borne Babe will be pleased and satisfied with nothing but the Pap; not Gold, Pearles, or any thing else will content it: even so a new-renewed Soule doth ever hunger and thirst after the sacred and sincere Milke of Gods holy word, as Saint Peter calls it, that it may dayly gather strength in grace; otherwise, as the Child, so it would languish, pine away, and die. He that growes not, and goes not forward in grace, had never true grace. He that faithfully labours not to feed his soule with spirituall food, never passed the new birth. *The way of the righteous* (saith Salomon) *shineth as the Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day,* Prov. 4. 18. For if the Day-starre of saving knowledge once appeare unto a man, and *the Sunne of Righteousnesse arise in his heart*; they never set, untill they bring him unto that glorious Light above, that no man can attaine unto. He proceeds and profits in the great mysterie of godlinesse, in faith,

repent-

I Pet. 2. 2.

Prov. 4. 18.

Mal. 4. 2.

repentance, and sinceritie; he growes from vertue to vertue, from knowledge to knowledge, from grace to grace, untill hee become *a perfect man in Christ Iesus*. It may be, as the fairest Sunne may sometimes be over-cast, and darkened with Clouds, and Mists; so the holinesse of a godly man may be over-clouded and disgraced sometimes, by falls into a sinne, upon infirmitie, ignorance, heedlesnesse, or the like: But, if he be so overtaken; after his passing through sorrow and griefe of heart for the same, and his rising againe by repentance; hee shines farre more brightly and pleasantly both to God and man, in sinceritie and all holy graces; he afterwards runnes a more swift and setled course in the race of sanctification. So that ordinarily all Gods children *shine as Lights in the world, in the midst of a naughtie and crooked generation*, being once inlightened with saving knowledge; and they still waxe brighter and brighter, untill at last they come to shine *as the brightnesse of the Firmament, and the Starres in Heaven, for ever and ever*. Looke to it then, I beseech you: whosoever hath already given his Name unto Christ, tasted of the good Word of God, and received into his soule some glimpses of heavenly Light; let him be sure to follow hard towards the Marke, for the Prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Iesus: Let him set his best desires, affections, and endeavours, to grow and proceed in all holy knowledge, in the Light of Gods Word, and chearefull obedience unto the same. For it is a speciall note

Eph. 4. 13.

Phil. 2. 15.

Dan. 12. 3.

and marke of a man that is truly religious, to goe forward, and encrease in grace and understanding: Hee must be like the Sunne, which, rising in the East, enlargeth his glorious light and heat, untill he reach the height of Heaven. But, as one well notes; the true Christian must not be like *Hezekiahs* Sunne, which went backward: If a man back-slide, waxe worse, and fall away from good beginnings, he addes weight unto the wrath of God, and doubles his damnation: Hee must not be like *Ioshuahs* Sunne, that stood still. It is so farre to Heaven, and the way so narrow, so rough, and full of dangers and difficulties, that he which stands at a stay, will light short: The Bridegroome will be entred in, and the Gate shut, before he come. Hee that hath so much grace, that hee desires no more, did never truly desire any: And he that endeavours not to be better, will by little and little grow worse, and at length become starke naught. He therefore must be like *Dauids* Sunne, that great and glorious Gyant of the Heavens, that like a Bridegroome comes out of his Chamber, and as a Champion rejoiceth to runne his Race. One grace in Gods child, begets another; and one holy action, performed with sinceritie of heart, doth inflame his affections with love and zeale, with courage and resolution, to undertake moe, and to goe through-stitch with all the affaires of God, and good causes. For he alone knowes the invaluable worth, and inestimable price of heavenly Jewels; and therefore he is ravished with their beautie, and growes unsatiabie in his desires
and

Ijai. 38. 8.*Iosh.* 10. 12.*Matth.* 25. 10.*Psal.* 19. 4, 5.

and longings after them. He is still toyling and labouring in the Trade of Christianitie, for more gaine of grace, encrease of comfort, and further assurance and securitie of the joyes of Heaven. Sith hee hath already tasted and fed upon celestiall and spirituall food, he findes in that such unutterable sweetnesse, and pleasant relish, that hee for ever after hungers and thirsts after it. If then you would be assured, that you are in the way to happinesse, be sure to be led on by the Light of the Word in all heavenly knowledge, spirituall wisdome, and holy obedience.

A fourth and last Use of my Doctrine, is for instruction to all; whether they be naturall, or spirituall; ignorant, or instructed in the Word of God: That they make it their chiefe and principall Christian care, zealously, and conscionably, and constantly to heare, attend, and understand the holy Word of God; and to be guided and conducted by the Light thereof in all the passages of their life, and wayes of their conversation.

1. And in this point, I will, first, lay downe unto you certaine Motives, that may induce and stirre you thereunto.

2. Cautions, or Cavcats, to fore-arme and fore-warne you of Lets, and Temptations, that may with-draw you there-from.

3. Lastly, some needfull instructions for your right carriage therein.

One Motive, to stirre us up to a reverend regard and attention, in hearing the Word of God; to a love and liking of the heavenly knowledge therein.

Use 4.

Instruction.

See Chrysost. in
Math. pag. 76.

Motives.

1

con-

The Word is a
Love-Letter
from God.

*Quid est autem
Scriptura sacra,
nisi quadam Epi-
stola Omnipoten-
tis Dei ad creatu-
ram suam? Greg.
Epist. lib. 4.
Epist. 48.*

1 Tim. 3. 15.

Simi'e.

contained, and to a sound and sincere practice of it, in our lives and conversations, may be this : The Word of God is, as it were, *an Epistle or Letter* (as one of the Fathers calls it) *written from God Almighty* unto us miserable men, published by his owne Sonne, sealed by his Spirit, witnessed by his Angels, conveyed unto us by his Church, *the Pillar and ground of Truth*, confirmed with the bloud of millions of Martyrs, which hath already brought thousands of soules to Heaven, and fills every heart that understands it, and is wholly guided by it, with Light and Life, with Grace and Salvation. Now let us imagine a man to have a Letter sent unto him but by an Earthly King, or some great Prince in the World ; wherein hee should have a Pardon granted him for some capitall Crime, and high Offence, whereby hee were lyable to a terrible kind of death ; or wherein hee should be fore-warned of some great and imminent danger hanging over his head, and readie every houre to fall upon him ; or, wherein hee should have assured and confirmed unto him, under the Kings Seale, some rich Donation, or great Lordship. Now I say, if a man should receive but a Letter from some high and mightie Potentate upon Earth, wherein any of these favours should be conveyed unto him ; how reverently would he receive it ? how thankfully would he accept of it ? how often would he reade it ? how warily would he keepe it ? how highly would he esteeme of it ? Why, in this royall and sacred Letter sent from the King and great Commander both of Heaven and

and Earth, all these favours, and a thousand more joyes and comforts, are conveyed unto every beleever and practiser thereof. In that, we are forewarned, lest by our ignorance, impietie, and impenitencie, wee fall into the Pit of Hell, and everlasting horror: In that, we have promised and performed unto us the pardon and remission of all our finnes, whereby wee justly stand guiltie of the second death, and the endlesse torments of the damned. By the vertue of it, we are not onely comforted with grace in this World; but shall undoubtedly be crowned with peace, glory, and immortalitie in the World to come. Such a Letter as this, hath the mightie and terrible God, most glorious in all Power and Majestie, who is even *a consuming and devouring fire*; sent unto us miserable men, by nature wretched and forlorne creatures, Dust and Ashes: why then, with what reverence, chearefulness, and zeale, ought wee to receive, reade, heare, marke, learne, understand, and obey it?

A second Motive, may be the precious, golden, and divine matter which is contained in the Booke of God, and that true and ever-during happinesse, to which it onely can bring us. There is nothing proposed and handled in the Word of God, but things of greatest weight, and highest excellency: As, the infinite majesty, power, and mercy of God; the unspeakable love and strange sufferings of the Sonne of God, for our sakes; the mighty and miraculous working of the holy Spirit upon the soules of men. There is nothing in this Treasury, but Orient Pearles, and rich Jewels; as, promises of
grace,

2

The matter contained in it, is excellent and precious.

grace, spirituall comfort, confusion of sinne, the triumph of godlines, refreshing of wearied soules, the beautie of Angels, the holinesse of Saints, the state of Heaven, salvation of sinners, & everlasting life. What Swine are they, that neglecting these precious Pearles, root only in the Earth, wallow in worldly pleasures, feede upon vanities, transitorie trash, and vanishing riches, which in their greatest need will *take them to their wings, like an Eagle, and flie into the Heavens?* Besides, the Word of God is only able to prepare us for true happinesse in this world, and to possesse us of it, in the world to come. It only begets in us a true, intire, and universall holinesse; *without which, none shall ever see the face of God,* or the glory of Heaven: for it is impossible, hereafter to live the life of glory & blessednes in Heaven, if we live not here the life of grace and sincerity, in all our waies. It is called *the immortall Seed,* because it regenerates and renews us both in our Spirits, Soules, and Bodies: *in our Spirits;* that is, in judgement, memory, & conscience: *in our Soules;* that is, in our will and affections: *in our Bodies;* that is, in every member. If the Prince of this world hath not blinded the eyes of our minds, and that we be not reprobats, as concerning salvation, it only is able to inlighten our understandings, to rectifie our wills, to sanctifie our hearts, to mortifie our affections, to set *Davids Doore* before our lips, *that we offend not with our tongues;* to set *Iobs Doore* before our eyes, *that they behold not vanity;* to manacle our hands & feet with the cords and bands of Gods Law, that they do not walke or worke wickedly: nay, and it is able to furnish

Heb. 2. 14.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

Psal. 141. 3.

Iob 31. 1.

furnish and supply us with sufficiency of spirituall strength, to continue in all these good things, and in a godly course vnto the end. And if we be once thus qualified, we are rightly fitted and prepared for the glory that is to be revealed. As before, this holy Word did translate us from the darknesse of sinne, into the light of grace; it can now much more easily, with joy and triumph, bring us, from the light of grace, to the light of immortalitie, and everlasting pleasures at Gods right hand.

A third Motive may be this: Wee must be judged by the Word of God at the last Day. *If any man* (saith Christ, *Ioh. 12. 47, 48.*) *heare my words, and beleeeve not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world: He that refuseth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, it shall judge him in the last Day.* Whensoever wee shall come to judgement, and appeare before Gods Tribunal, (and wee little know how neere it is) two Bookes shall be layd open unto us; the one, of Gods Law; another, of our owne Conscience: The former, will tell us what wee should have done; for the Lord hath revealed it to the World, to be the rule of our faith, and of all our actions: The other, will tell us what wee have done; for Conscience is a Register, Light, and Power in our Vnderstanding, which treasures up all our particular actions against the Day of Triall; discovers unto us the equitie, or iniquitie of them; and determines of them, either with us, or against us.

Now

3

We must be judged by the Word.

Ioh. 12. 47, 48.

Conscience, what it is.

Psal. 19. 7.

Hof. 12. 8.

Now we must not take any exception against the first; that is, the Law of God: *For the Law of God (saith David, Psal. 19. 7.) is perfect, converting the soule: The testimonie of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.* Wee cannot against the second; that is, the Booke of our Conscience: for it was ever in our custodie and keeping; no man could corrupt it; there is nothing writ in it, but with our owne hands. Now, in what a terrible fearefull case will a man be at that Day, when he shall see the Booke of God layd open before him; in the Light whereof hee should have led all his life, and by which he is now to be judged; and yet know himselfe to have had no knowledge, but to have beene a meere stranger in it? Though *the great things of the Law* were many times published and preached unto him, yet hee counted them but as a *strange thing*. Every mans Conscience is naturally corrupt, defiled, and uncomfortable; and can endure and digest reasonable quietly the rage of disordered affections, many vile corruptions, and sinfull actions: and therefore, at the last Day, when it shall be awakened, opened, examined, it will bring forth nothing, but the Worme that never dyes, strange confusion, and condemnation; except it hath beene formerly in this World enlightened, purged, and sanctified by the Word of Grace, and the Bloud of the Lambe. Most accursed then, and forlorne, will be the state of every ignorant man, when he shall appeare before the Iudge of all the World: When he lookes upon his Conscience, he shall finde nothing

thing but guilt, and horror: when upon the Law, and upon the Word of God, after which he should have lived, and by which he must now be judged; it will be to him but as a *sealed Booke*; hee will see nothing but his owne ignorance, blindnesse, and strangenesse in it: And therefore, all the Plagues and Curses denounced in it against ignorant, wicked, and unrepentant sinners, shall be his portion, in the Lake that burnes with fire and Brimstone for evermore. This ought then to stirre up every man, with all care and Conscience, to store himselfe, while he hath time, with saving knowledge and holy obedience unto that Word, which must be his Iudge in the last Day: Nay, and let him take heed unto his feet, and looke unto his behaviour, when hee enters into the House of God: For in that Day he must answer and be countable for every Sermon that he hath heard, and for every Lesson he hath beene taught out of the Booke of God: If they have not enlightened his understanding, they have hardened his heart; if they doe not now reforme him, they will hereafter confound him; if he doe not profit by them, he shall be sure to be plagued for the neglect of them: For Gods Word is unto every man that heares it, either *the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death*: It is a *two-edged Sword*; it either kills the sinne, or the soule; it must and shall prosper in the worke for which it is sent. God will rayse glory, hee will winne honour unto himselfe, from every man. If hee cannot be glorified, by his conversion, and salvation; hee will glorifie his

OWNE

Eccles. 5. 1.

2 Cor. 2. 16.

Heb. 4. 12.

Isa. 55. 11.

owne Name, in his deserved overthrow, and just confusion.

4
A fearefull
judgement
shall befall the
not hearers
and praefisers
of the Word.
Math. 10. 14, 15.

A fourth Motive may be; That horrible and fearefull punishment and destruction, which at length will certainly befall all negligent and contemptuous hearers, and those that practise not the power thereof in their lives and conversations. *Whosoever* (saith our blessed Saviour) *shall not receive you, or heare your words; when yee depart out of that house, or that Citie, shake off the dust of your feet: Truly I say unto you, it shall be easier for them of the Land of Sodome and Gomorrah, in the Day of Iudgement, than for that Citie.* The infamous abominations, the damnable and crying finnes of the Sodomites are knowne unto all: Who hath not heard of those fouds of fire and Brimstone, which swept them away, as the hatefullest creatures that ever lived upon the Earth? How ruffall then, and how lamentable will be their condition, who are lyable and subject to more horrible plagues than these? Wee should therefore consider, that the negligent, irreverent, and unprofitable hearing of the Word of God, is a sinne of a farre greater weight, and more fearefull consequence, than we ordinarily imagine. When wee heare the Ministers, and Embassadors of God, delivering his mind, and revealing his Will unto us, out of such places as these, we are to conceive, that in a neerer and more speciall manner, wee stand in the presence of the great God of Heaven and Earth, who is clothed with infinite terrour, power, and majestic; and thereafter, we ought to proportion

proportion our behaviour and carriage, with reverence, humility, and obedience to so great a presence. Earthly Princes will not endure contempt and disgrace at their subjects hands : They cannot abide to have their Majestie and authority lightly set by, their lawes and commands to be neglected and troden under foot : Why then should the Lord of glory, of justice and power, beare such indignities at the hands of sinfull men, which are his most abject vassals, and contemptible creatures ? Certaine it is, if wee weigh aright the greatnesse of that God, before whom wee stand, and our owne vilenesse, wee should hold it most just, if he should presently in the place where we stand, punish and plague our sleepeinesse, talking, wandring thoughts, and irreverent carriage at hearing his Word, with some sudden and remarkable vengeance, to be a spectacle & example unto others, for neglecting so great salvation. It is Gods great mercy that such plagues and judgments are respited, suspended, and deferred ; for even all the curses in the booke of God doe naturally, deservedly, and in the course of Gods justice, belong unto the negligent hearer, and disobedient unto the Word of God. *All these curses (saith Moses Deut. 28. 49.) shall come upon thee and pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed, because thou obeyest not the voice of the Lord thy God.*

I come now in the second place to the temptations and lets whereby a man may be hindered from hearing the Word of God, profiting by it, and a conscionable practising of the same.

Simile.

Deut. 28. 49.

Hinderances
from profiting
by the Word.

Let I.
Atheisme.

Some thinke
the Word to
be but a hu-
mane policie.

A removing of
this.

It may bee
discerned by a
proper, natu-
rall, and inher-
rent Majestie
from all hu-
mane writings
and imitatory
delusions and
impostures of
Satan; such as
is the Alcaron

The highest in impiety, and most horrible, is a
spiee of Atheisme, which Satan suggests into
worldly men, whereby they wickedly, and very
blasphemously thinke, that the sacred Word of
God, is but a politike invention and devise to
keepe men in awe and order, in Cities and so-
cieties, and to preserve them from wildnesse and
outrages. But I would gladly know whose worke
and invention it is, if it be not Gods Almighty?

It is not mans.: For it directly and strongly op-
poseth against the streame of his sensuall de-
lights, and earthly pleasures: It curbs his most
desired contentments, and crosseth the naturall
bent of his affections.

It is not Satans.: For he in all ages hath fiercely
and furiously set himselfe against it; and it is the
engine that batters and beats downe his king-
dome of darknesse.

It is not any Angels, or other creatures.: For the
* Majestie, excellencie, miraculous efficacie, and
wonderfull power of Gods Word, is farre above
the reach and capacity of any creature; transcen-
dent to all created understandings, and finite
comprehension. Besides, the famous miracles, the
many visions, the true fore-telling of things to
come, the inward, lively and effectuall workings
upon the soules of the elect, and many other sin-
gular and sacred markes & characters of divinity
stamped upon it, doth plainly shew, that it is the
alone holy invention of Gods divine, pure and
infinite understanding, and revealed to the world
for the enlarging of Gods glory, and the salva-

tion

tion of many a thousand soules; for the confusion of the kingdome of Satan, and just condemnation of the children of hell. Take heed then in the name of God, that you give not entrance or entertainment to any such fearefull blasphemous temptation, whereby the love and zeale to Gods Word may be cooled, or you grow lesse carefull in purchasing and practising the knowledge and power of it. This let layes hold onely upon men of a reprobate sense, and those that are already marked out for certaine damnation.

A second let and hinderance from hearing the Word of God, is recusancie, the cozenage and imposture of Popery. For such is the wickednesse and cruelty of that superstition and mystery of iniquity, that it labours might and maine to keepe all the world close prisoners in the dungeon of darknesse and ignorance, and for ever to deprive them of the light of the Gospell. The prophane professors of this bloody Religion, hold ignorance to be the mother of devotion, and a very dangerous thing for simple people to pry into the Booke of God. And so they doe more safely and securely feed their followers with their owne damnable principles of treason, rebellion, disloyalty and disobedience to lawfull Kings. So they lead ignorant people which way, and as farre as they will in the kingdome of darknesse, even to beleeve that blowing up of whole states, and killing of Kings, are very glorious acts, and merit the brightest crowne of immortality, and the highest feat in heaven. I hope in the Lord

Let 2.
Recusancie.

there is none of you, but with all his heart hates and detests this bloody, murtherous, and Idolatrous generation; and will by no meanes suffer his right eye of knowledge in Gods Word to be put out by these cursed Ammonites.

Adde here another let, which is Separatisme, See *Ta. pag. 79.*

Let 3.
Hardnesse of
heart, and de-
speratensse
in sinning.

A third let and hinderance, is the height of hardnesse of heart, and most damned desperatenesse in sinning, when men are become so greedy of fulfilling their sinfull pleasures, that they drinke up sensuall delights like water, draw on iniquity like cords of vanitie, and sinne as with cartropes: For then they beginne to say with themselves, even to God himselfe, with them in *Job 21. 14, 15.* *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we should pray unto him? And with those to whom Isaiah in his fifth Chapter denounceth a fearefull woe; Let him make speed, let him hasten his worke, that we may see it, and let the counsell of the Holy one of Israel draw neare and come, that wee may know it.* Men that are possessed with such a rebellious and scornfull spirit as this, neither much care for God or his Word, threats or promises, judgements or mercies, heaven or hell. No marvell then though they set light by Gods ministers, and seeke not for instruction in holy knowledge, and heavenly wisdom. That wee may be preserved from this horrible and desperate case, and so fearefully hardning our hearts against the Word of life and salvation,

Job 21. 14, 15.

Isa. 5. 19.

A preservative
against this.

salvation, we must be very carefull and watchfull, that wee give not way, passage, and entertainment to wicked thoughts, and the first sinfull motions: for in this manner, a man proceedes to the height of sinne, and a reprobate sense. There first ariseth in his Heart an idle and wandering thought of some unlawfull thing; as of Lust, Covetousnesse, Pride, Malice, prophaning the Sabbath, Cozening, and circumventing his Brother; and such like. Secondly, it begins to allure, entice, and conferre with the Will. Thirdly, the Will doth, as it were, take it by the hand, and is tickled, pleased, and delighted with it. Then followes Consent: Consent sets the affections on foot, and plots the accomplishment and practice of it; and sinne practised with pleasure, brings Custome. Custome sharpens a mans wit, and makes him looke about, how to excuse it: From excusing sinne, hee growes to defend it: Defence of sinne, makes him obstinate, and resolved to continue in it: Obstinatenesse begets boasting, and glorying in it. And if a man once become impudent, and take a pride in sinning, there presently follows a brazen Brow, and whorish fore-head, an yron sinew in the necke, a heart as hard as the nether Millstone, a seared Conscience, and a reprobate sense. These are the steps, by which a man riseth into the Seat of the scornfull: And upon the top of these stayres, Sinne sits in the greatest triumph and soveraigntie; and banisheth out of a mans heart, all feare of God, love to his Ministers, and zeale unto his Word.

The degrees
in sinne.

I

A motion to
sinne.

2

The Will inti-
ced.

3

Delight.

4

Consent.

5

Practicc.

6

Pleasure.

7

Custome.

8

Excusing.

9

Defending.

10

Continuance.

11

Boasting.

12

A reprobate
sense.

Let 4.

A conceit, that Gods Law, like mens Lawes, takes hold of, and will condemne onely notorious sinners.

A fourth Let and hinderance from hearing Gods Word, and yeelding entire obedience unto it, is a very pestilent and politike conceit, which possesseth the hearts of very many, whereby they are perswaded, That Lawes divine are but like humane or mens constitutions: As these execute none, but chiefe Malefactors; so these Decrees of God will at last condemne none, but infamous and notorious sinners. And therefore, if they be but pettie Offendors, or onely maintaine but one sweet sinne in themselves; if they be not of the worst sort, though they be not so forward hearers of Sermons, so Scripture-wise, or hold such a strict course of holinesse in their conversation: yet they thinke with themselves, their case is good enough, and that it will goe well enough with them at last. Hence it is, that they are cold, and carelesse, in esteeming of hearing, and conforming themselves to the Ministerie of the Word. But let no man deceive himselfe: The destruction of the negligent hearer of the Word of God, and the disobedient to the Gospel of Christ Iesus, shall be as the destruction of * *Sodome*, and farre more grievous. He that lyes and delights in any one knowne sinne, of which his Conscience is convicted, is in a fearefull case. *Without faith, it is impossible to please God:* and, *without holinesse, no man shall see the face of the Lord.* And none hath either faith, or holinesse, without saving knowledge out of Gods Booke. Without the New-birth, and continuance in grace unto the end, no man shall be saved: And, sincere obedience to a constant and

This Let is removed,

Mat. 11. 23, 24.

Heb. 11. 6.

Heb. 12. 14.

and conscionable Ministerie of the Word, is a meanes both to beget, nourish, and continue saving grace. And, let mens conceits be what they will; as sure it is, as God is in Heaven, not one jot or tittle of all the Plagues and Curses registred in Gods Law, but shall be severely executed upon all ignorant and unrepentant sinners, and poured upon the hairie scalpe of all such as goe on still in their wickednesse.

A fifth Let and hinderance of hearing the Word of God, is an excessive and immoderate delight, and an eager and earnest pursuit of the sinfull pleasures of a mans sweet sinne. * By a mans sweet sinne, I meane that, which his corrupt nature hath singled out, and made speciall choise of, to follow and feed upon, with greatest delight and sensuall sweetnesse; which, by custome and continuance, hath taken deepest root and surest hold in his heart: upon which, all his affections and desires are carried with sharpest edge, heat, and headlongnesse; and to which, hee makes all occasions and circumstances, friends and acquaintance, Religion and Conscience, all the powers both of soule and body, and outward estate, serviceable and contributorie, as to that which chiefly rules and reignes in him. This sweet sinne, in some, is Worldlinesse, Earthly-mindednesse, and Covetousnesse: In others, it is Voluptuousnesse, Lust, and Vncleannesse; Pride, Pleasures, Drunkennesse, or such like. Now certaine it is, carnall, prophane, and unregenerate men, doe many times preferre the pleasures of their sweet

Psal. 88. 26

Let 5.
An eager pursuit of a mans sweet sinne.
* What is meant by a sweet sinne.
Quemadmodum nemo tam peccatus, aut flagitiosus invenitur: quin ab aliquo vitio magis quam ceteris abhorreat; sic nemo tantae sanctitatis est, quin ad unum aliquod peccatum, quam ad cetera, propensior sit. Cart. p. 1262.

and most delightfull sinne, before the comforts of Gods House, the Congregation of the Saints, and the preciousnesse of the Word preached. And therefore, howsoever they may ordinarily come to Sermons, (though it be rather for fashion, and of custome, than with heartie and true devotion). yet if some speciall gaine and profit be to be layd hold upon at that time; if some extraordinary pleasure, feasting, pastime, and companie be then to be enjoyed; they make no Conscience to turne their backs upon the House of God, and the Ministerie of the Word, even upon the Sabbath day: so, for a little sinfull pleasure, or worldly contentment, wretchedly abandoning Gods holy Ordinance, and the necessarie meanes of their owne salvation.

That many men are thus wickedly hindered from hearing the Word of God, appears in *Math. 22.* and *Luke 14.* The glorious magnificence, and rich comforts of heavenly Cheare in the House of God, are notably set out unto us there, by divers circumstances, in the Parable of the great Feast. First, it was a Wedding Feast; which usually is full of joy, comfort; and great solemnitie. Secondly, it was made by a King; and therefore, like unto himselfe, Royall, and Princely, in plentie and varietie, answerable to his State and Greatnesse. Thirdly, it was made at the Marriage of a Kings sonne; which would make it yet farre more sumptuous, full of pompe, and noble entertainment, than if it had beene for a servant, friend, or ordinarie person.

Math. 22.
Luke 14.
 The Parable
 of the great
 Supper set out
 by 3. circum-
 stances.

1

2

3

By all this, is meant the Ministry of the Word, and Gospel of Christ Iesus; wherewith every faithfull man is feasted, made Gods sonne, and married to Christ himselve for ever, *in righteousnesse and in judgement; in mercie and in compassion.*

This Feast being in full readinesse, Servants are sent out, to invite Guests: But for all the glory, comfort, and magnificence prepared for them, in this Wedding, and Royall Feast; many refuse to come, and make excuse: One saith; *he hath bought a Farme, and must needs goe to see it:* another hath bought *five Yoke of Oxen, and goes to prove them:* another hath *married a wife, and therefore he cannot come:* another is busied about *his Merchandise,* buying and selling, and can hardly spare so much time.

Thus one sinfull delight or other, profit, pleasure, companie, or the like, doe many times stay and hinder prophane and worldly men from hearing the Word of God, and from this spirituall and heavenly Feast in his House; whereby their soules might be satisfied, *as it were with marrow and fatnesse;* with the comforts of grace, and a taste of the joyes of Heaven. It is very strange, that any man should be so bloudie and cruell to his owne soule; that, whereas by the breaking of the Word of Life unto him in such places as this, he might have it furnished with spirituall strength, towards everlasting life: yet for some earthly pelfe, and temporall pleasure, absenting himselve, he suffers it to starve in ignorance and prophanenesse; the immediate and certaine passages to eternal death.

Let

What is meant
by it.

Hof. 2. 19.

Luke 14. 18.

19.

20.

Math. 22. 5.

Psal. 63. 5.

A counter-
poyson against
this.

Let a man imagine with himselfe, when he purposes and resolves to absent himselfe from a Sermon, that hee layes, as it were, in the one Scale of the Weights, the glorious Majestie, presence, and honour of God; the comfort, happinesse, and salvation of his owne Soule: and in the other, a little wretched pleasure, or profit; and so suffers this miserable Vanitie to weigh downe so infinite a Majestie.

1.
Gods House is
the Presence-
Chamber of
the King of
Glory.

For, first, Gods House, where his Word is faithfully preached, is, as it were, the Presence-Chamber of the everlasting King of Glory. Here he sits in a Chaire of State, with more speciall and eminent Power and Majestie, as anciently he sate betweene the Cherubins.

2
Christ is there.
Math. 18. 20.

Rev. 1. 12.

Secondly, Christ himselfe is here present: For, *wheresoever two or three are gathered together in his Name, he is in the midst of them.* And so he is said, *to walke in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks;* and with speciall power and providence to direct and guide these holy Exercises.

3
The Spirit is
there.

Thirdly, the holy Spirit of God is present, in our Assemblies; plentifully shedding into the hearts of the faithfull, the rich Treasures of Wisdom and Grace.

4
The Angels
are there.
1 Cor. 11. 10.

1 Pet. 1. 12.

Fourthly, the blessed Angels of God are here; as appeareth, 1 Cor. 11. 10. not onely to doe service unto the Lord, unto the Elect, and unto his Ministerie; but also, after a sort, to solace and rejoyce themselves in the beautie of Gods House, and in the Mysteries published in the Gospel: as appeares, 1 Pet. 1. 12.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Gods holy Saints here present themselves ; in whom, all our delight and comfort ought to be : for they onely are truly excellent, allyed unto Christ, and heires of Heaven.

Lastly, here alone ordinarily are to be had Blessings, Life, and Salvation: for the Word preached is the ordinarie meanes to beget the unconverted unto God ; by inlightening their eyes, opening their eares, softening their hearts, planting faith in their soules, and holinesse in their conversations : so that, of the children of wrath, they become the sonnes of God. Hence it is, that it is called, *a Ministerie of Reconciliation ; of Peace ; a Word of Grace ; of Salvation, and of Life.*

If a man be already converted, and in the state of grace, he may receive these Blessings by it : It is a powerfull meanes of the Spirit,

To encrease his knowledge in heavenly things, and the affaires of the Soule ; by dayly clearing his judgement from ignorance and error, by informing it with spirituall wisdom, and all necessarie truths, and needfull knowledge.

To adde strength, and vigour, and encrease unto his faith ; that hee may grow and proceed ; from the infancie and weakenesse in Christianitie, to tallnesse and perfection in Christ.

To preserve him from luke-warmenesse, worldlinesse, and securitie ; to recall him from his wandrings and strayings out of the way of sincerity ; to settle, comfort, and confirme him in a godly course.

To prevent his falls, and relapses ; because by it hee is furnished with Christian armour, against tempta-

5

The Saints are there.
Psal. 16. 3.

6

The effect of the Word to the unconverted.

2 Cor. 5. 18.

Eph. 6. 15.

Act. 14. 3. &

20. 32.

The benefit of it to Converts.

1

It encreaseth their knowledge.

2

Their faith.

3

It preserves them from luke-warmenesse.

4

It prevents relapses.

temptations; he is resolved in all doubts, and cases of Conscience; he is admonished of all crooked wayes, occasions, and down-falls to iniquity.

To reclaim him from back-slidings; to raise and recover him out of falls, and to restore him to his first love; by discovering unto him the foulness and danger of sinne, the power of his owne infirmities, the bitter root of Originall sinne, the pestilent and impoysoned fruits thereof; and by dayly urging the blessings of true repentance, and the practice of a good Conscience.

Most absolutely to guide and conduct him in the way of righteousnesse, and whole course of Christianitie; to furnish him with zeale and uprightnesse in all holy duties and services of God; with faithfulness and conscience, in the discharge and executions of his calling; with holy meditations, when he is alone; with harmlesse behavior, and Light of good example in company, and amongst others; with wisdom and care, ever intirely to sanctifie the Sabbath, and to teach and pray with his family. Marke now, I beseech you; sith the Ministry of the Word is ever graced with so glorious presence, and such incomparable blessings as I have now reckoned up unto you; he that turnes his back upon a Sermon, for the injoying of profit, pleasures, pastime, companie, feasting, or any other worldly and by-respect; he wilfully forsakes the salvation of his owne soule; he casts behind him all these happy blessings and comforts, tendered unto him by the Ministry of the Word; he throws himselfe desperately out of the presence of God Almighty,

Christ

5

It recovers
them, being
fallen.

6

It will, guide
them aright
in all their
wayes.

Christ Iesus, the Holy Spirit, his blessed Angels, the congregation of Saints, into the power and clutches of Satan, into the company of wicked and prophane men, upon the just indignation and revenge of all the creatures, upon the wrath and curse of God, and the shipwracke of a good conscience. Take heed then I beseech you, how you bee drawne by any worldly affaires from the hearing of the Word, especially on the Sabbath day, lest thereby you make it plaine, that you preferre your owne particular, before the glory of God; earthly gaine, before a Crowne of immortality; a little vanishing pleasure, before the endlessse joyes of heaven; and that yee yet lie and delight in one sweet sinne or other, which keepes all saving grace out of your soules.

A sixth let and hinderance from hearing the Word of God, are certaine prophane and unwarrantable perswasions and conceits, which are entertained and harboured in the hearts of ignorant and wilfull people.

Some of them thinke with themselves that there is no such great need of following Sermons, and frequenting holy assemblies, especially if at the same time they be not ungodly busied and exercised at home; and therefore they aske; What can we not save our soules, and come to heaven, unlesse we trudge and trot so often to Church? Have we not the Bible, and other good bookes at home to reade upon? Can we not pray and praise God at home?

They might as well aske; Can wee not have a harvest

Let 6.
Carnall conceits and objections.

Object.
May we not be saved without hearing the Word preached?

Answer.

No more than
wee can reape
without low-
ing, or live
without food.

Simile.

Eph 4-11, 12.

Obiect. 2.

Frequent
preaching is
not so neces-
sary.

Answ.

It is a signe of
a gracelesse
heart to loath
the heavenly
Manna.

harvest unlesse we have a seed time, and raine, yea, both the former and the latter raine ? Or can we not live except we have meat ? Certainly no. No more can any man be truly sanctified and saved, nor live either the life of grace here, or expect the life of glory hereafter, unlesse he follow the ordinary meanes appointed and sanctified by God for his salvation : Except he submit himselfe to that policy and order which God with great wisdom hath established in his Church. Would a man be taken for a good subject, who should peevishly oppose himselfe against a law agreed upon and commanded by the King and State, for the great good of the Common-wealth ? God himselfe hath appointed a publike Ministry in the Church ; Pastors and teachers for the gathering of the Saints, and all that belong to life, and is it fit that any private exercise should crosse Gods publike ordinances ? No ; It is both inconvenient and wicked, and Gods blessing is never to be looked for, upon any action and exercise, though never so good in it selfe, if his will be not obeyed.

I, but some will say ; It is good indeed sometimes now and then to heare a Sermon ; but what needs so much preaching, and Sermon upon Sermon ; Would they have us Saints and Angels upon earth ?

Wretched is that man which is weary of the Word of life. And hee hath no true taste of holy things, which loaths this spirituall Manna, though never so often reigned from heaven. There

is no saving and true knowledge of God in that man, who desires not to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Iesus Christ. Would we not thinke him mad and distracted that should thus reason against his owne life? I hope I have eaten meat enough heretofore, and furnished my selfe with sufficient strength, so that I now need no more, and therefore I will neither eat nor drink more while I live. Even just so doth he reason and plead against the life of his soule, who complaines of too much preaching, and too many Sermons. *David*, that blessed King, and holy Prophet, who was advanced both in knowledge and holinesse, above the ordinary reach and perfection of men, and lived as an Angell upon earth; yet he acknowledgeth himselfe greatly to stand in need of stirring up, by meanes ordained of God for that end. As we may gather out of *Psal.* 84. and in many other places. In that Psalm he makes a most grievous and mournfull complaint, that he is debarred and banished from all access unto the publike worship and service of God; holding himselfe in this respect more miserable than some of the bruit creatures, which had liberty to build their nests, and lay their young neare the Altars of the Lord; which benefit he could not now enjoy. Now if this man of God so longed and laboured after the meanes of grace and comfort; what ought those to doe, who are of little or no faith; who are but Novices and petites in the Schoole of Christ; who are but babes in Christianity, or utterly without grace?

Simile.

Psal. 84.

Object. 3.
Our fore-fathers had no preaching, yet are saved.

Ans.
Their condemnation shall be easier.

2 Cor 4 3, 4.

2

We are bound to blesse God, who hath dealt more graciously with us.

Object. 4.

Ans.

I, but our fore-fathers (will others say) were never troubled with so many Sermons, and yet we hope they are well, and in Heaven.

Our fore-fathers wanted the meanes, and that full glorious Noone-tide of the Gospell of Iesus Christ, which we by the grace and mercy of God enjoy. And therefore whosoever of them perished without them, shall certainly be beaten with fewer stripes, than those that shut their eyes against the faire and blessed Sun-shine of Gods holy truth, which is shed round about us, and *if it be hid, it is hid onely to those that perish, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of their minde.* Besides, if it so pleased the Lord in his just and secret judgement to suffer some of our fore-fathers to live and die under the tyranny and darknesse of Antichrist; how much are we bound to blesse God, that we are borne and brought up in the light of the Gospell; and what heavie plagues and great damnation doe wee bring upon our selves, if wee neglect or despise so great salvation.

I, but yet further, (will some say) wee have lived some of us fortie, some thirtie, some twenty yeares, without so much preaching, and yet have holden good credit and reputation in the world, and prospered in our wayes, would you now have us so forward in running to Sermons?

Strange it is to see how wise the simplest are in matters of the world, about their temporall state, but how simple and blinde the wisest worldlings are in the affaires of Heaven, and about their
greatest

greatest, spirituall, and eternall good. Let us suppose a man to have lived long in a poore Cottage, and now at length to have some great and rich Lordship befallen him; doe you thinke hee would reason thus: Why, I have lived some thirtie or fortie yeeres now already in this low estate with good contentment, and credit, amongst my neighbours; and therefore here I will rest, the rest of my dayes; I am too old now, to change my former estate? Would such a foole as this, be found in a whole Countrey? And yet many Countries are full of such fooles, in respect of spirituall advancement, and the salvation of their soules. Me thinks, those that have long lived in ignorance, and blindness, should rather conclude thus: Have I thus long and so fearefully lived without God in the World, without knowledge of his Truth, faith in Christ, and Conscience of my wayes? Oh, then it is more than high time now at length to awake out of sleepe, and to open mine eyes, and to imbrace this glorious Sun-shine of the Gospel, which the Lord of his great mercy hath brought unto me, that so I may be enlightened to eternall life.

As for prospering in the World, that is no marke of a good soule; nay, it is commonly the Let of the wicked, not to be plagued like other men, but to bring their enterprises to passe, *Psalme 73*. Nay, yet further: There is no greater Curse can befall any man, than to prosper in the World, and be out of the way to Heaven.

I, but (will others say) to the attaining of eternall

Object. 5.

(f)

life,

What needs so much adoe? The whole dutie of man is soone learned.

Answ.

It is soone said, not so soone done.

*Eccles. 12. 13.
Math. 22. 40.*

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

life, what needs so much adoe, so much preaching, catechising, expounding, conferring, meditating, teaching and praying with our families, which are so much and so often urged upon us? When all comes to all, this is the summe and end of all; *To feare God, and keepe his Commandements; That we love God above all, and our neighbour as our selves:* And we hope we can doe this, without all this adoe.

To feare God, and keepe his Commandements, (which is the whole dutie of man, as the Preacher speaks in his last chapter) and to love God above all, and our neighbors as our selves; (*upon which hangeth the whole Law and the Prophets, as Christ tells us, Math. 22.*) are indeed soone spoken, but not so easily, truly learned; and most hardly, sincerely practised. Is it enough, thinke you, to make a man a good Carpenter, or Mason, to say; That, that is soone learned; and, I know as much as the best workman can teach or tell me: To build an House, is nothing but to lay the foundation, to reare the walls, and cover it with a Roofe? Is it enough to make a good Husbandman, to say; I know as much as the best Husbandman can teach me; for Husbandry is nothing else, but to sowe and reape? Is it enough to make a good Preacher, to say; It is no such great matter, to make a Sermon; I know as much in that point, as the best Scholler amongst them can tell me: To preach, is nothing else but to expound the Text, gather Doctrines, and make use and application to the hearts & consciences of the hearers? But it would be long before these idle and emptie vaunts would build Houses, fill Barnes, or
save

save Soules. There is farre more required to these businesses, than so: There is to be undergone much toile and labour, much care & trouble, expence and exercife, before any of these workes can be rightly accomplished. It is even so in the great worke of salvation, and the attainment of Heaven. The state of grace, and trade of Christianitie, is not so easily purchased & practised. There goes more to saving of a soule, than bold & ignorant brags: than to say; If that be all, I hope I can quickly and easily learne to love God above all, & my neighbor as my selfe: For before these, there goes many things; as, knowledge of Gods will, and Word; a thorow view of our owne misery & corruptions, in the glasse of the Law; strange agonies, and sore pangs in the new-birth, and sorrow for sinne, refreshings and coolings by the mercies of God, and merits of Christ; faith, repentance, sanctification, a blessed & holy change in the whole man, both body, soule, and spirit. And then follows new obedience; which consists in the uprightnesse and sinceritie of our owne hearts; a conscionable and charitable carriage towards our neighbors, and a zealous constancy in all religious duties and right service of God: which must be universall, in respect of the object; that is, we must walk in all his Commandements: totall, in respect of the subject; that is, we must serve him in all the powers of our soule, and parts of our body; in our thoughts, words, and actions: In all which things, and holy courses, if a man be not particularly instructed, experienced, & practised, his love of God and his neighbour is but in word and tongue, not

Things required, before a man can love God or man.

How our service to God must be qualified.

A triall of our
love to God.

A triall of our
love to our
neighbour.

Object. 6.
Tumults and
divisions, dis-
quietnesse and
discontent-
ment accom-
panies your
preaching.

indeed and truth. A man, if he be disposed, may quickly perceive and discern the truth or hollownesse of his heart in this point. God hath straitly commanded an entire sanctification and keeping holy of the Sabbath. Let a man then consider, if he suffer himselfe to be drawne away from holy Exercise on that day, by pleasures, profit, pastime, companie, ease, idlenesse, or other worldly occasions; why, then he preferres meere vanities, and the desires of his owne heart, before the glory and honour of God; and so doth not love God above all. The true love of a mans selfe, doth chiefly & principally consist in furnishing himselfe with saving knowledge, sinceritie of heart, godlinesse of life, a good Conscience, and spirituall comfort, against hee come to Iudgement. Now, if hee love his neighbour as himselfe, he is not still talking with him of worldly matters; but especially labours with him for his conversion, entertainment of grace, and encrease in godlinesse. If these be not his cares, both for himselfe and his neighbour, he truly loves neither. Thus may a man examine himselfe through all the Commandements in particular; and see, whether it be so easie to love his neighbour as himselfe, and God above all.

I, but where there is so much preaching, there is much disquietnesse and discontentment: for men are abridged of their former ancient pastimes, and pleasures, and urged unto more strictnesse of life. When as all was well before, in much quietnesse and peace, the preaching of the Word breeds new stirres and contrary affections in men.

No marvell, though there be much struggling and striving, great noyse and stirre, before the *strong man* in the Gospel can be dis-armed and dispossessed of his Holds; that is, before Sathan, having long reigned in the hearts, and sat in the Consciences of ignorant and prophane men, will be cast out, by the Preaching and Power of the Word. This conquest costs full deare; it will not be had, without the losse of our dearest delights; without shedding the very hearts-bloud of our beloved and bosome-sinne; which flesh and bloud will not yeeld unto, without blowes and bloudshed. You may assure your selfe, where the Light of Gods Truth begins once to peepe out, and the power of grace to worke, for the driving away darknesse, and subduing prophanenesse; you shall be sure ever there to have three fierce and implacable enemies, and opposites, to start up; Sathan, wicked men, and a mans owne corruptions. While men lye in sinne, ignorance, and under the shadow of death, Sathan lets them alone, meddles not much with them, never troubles or disquiets them, but procures them all temporall happinesse, and carnall contentments, that can be; (for he knowes full well, if they so continue, they are sure his owne, and children of endlesse perdition:) But if once, by the power of the Word, they be enlarged out of the slaverie of sinne and death, and lay hold upon salvation, and the glorious libertie of the Saints; why then he begins to bestirre him selfe like a madded & enraged Lion, and labors with all his malice and policie to hinder and dash such proceedings.

Ans.

There is good reason for it.
Luke 11:21,22.

Sathan hinders the Word.

So doe wicked
men,

And a mans
owne corrup-
tions.

Ephes. 6. 15.

Luke 12. 49.
Matth. 10. 34.
Luke 12. 51.

Isa. 42. 23.

The Gospel is
not the cause
of troubles,
but mens cor-
ruptions.

And in this Conspiracie, hee joynes unto him-
felfe wicked and reprobate men, to rayle, revile,
and rage against sinceritie: I, and besides, a mans
owne corruption, and sinfull flesh, doth fret and
fume, when it feelles it selfe curbed and snaffled
by the Law of the Spirit.

The Gospel indeed is a *Gospel of Peace*: But
of what Peace? Of Peace with God, with good
men, and a mans owne Conscience; of the *Peace*
that passeth all understanding: But it ever proclaimes
open warre against wickednesse, prophanenesse,
and corruptions; it will have no peace with im-
pietie, carnall securitie, and rebellion unto the
Lawes of God: Hence it is, that our Saviour tells
us in the Gospel, that *he came not to send Peace into*
the Earth; but rather, Fire, Debate, and the Sword:
that is, Wheresoever his Word is published
powerfully, and conscionably, with fruit and ef-
fect upon the soules of his elect; there, by acci-
dent (as they say) it stirres up much rage and bit-
ter opposition against Gods children. For, as
there is no true inward peace unto the wicked;
so, in this World, there is no outward peace unto
the righteous: but commonly they are still ex-
ercised with one crosse and temptation, or other;
either the Devill, or wicked men, are still plot-
ting or practising mischiefe and miserie against
them.

But you must conceive, that the disquietnesses
and troubles that arise at the preaching of the
Word, are not caused by it, but by mens corrup-
tions. Would any man thinke, that *Saint Paul*,

or his Preaching, were in fault, because there was much adoe, and an hurly-burly almost wherefoever he came; and not rather the wicked Infidels, which could not endure to have their sinnes reprov'd? Neither the Sower, nor the Seed, *Math. 13.* are to be blamed, that it doth not prosper and fructifie; it is the ground that is onely in fault: which is either stonie, or thornie, or barren; or else, it is the envious man, that soweth Tares: The Sower doth onely his dutie, and the Seed is pure and precious; it is mens corruptions, and prophane hearts, that causeth all the stirre. Amongst foure kinds of Grounds, there is but one at the most (as appeares in the Parable of the Sower, *Math. 13.*) in which the immortall Seed of the Word takes root, prospers, and fructifies: Onely the good and honest heart profits by Preaching; to all others, it is the *savour of death unto death*: And whom it doth not humble, it hardneth; whom it makes not so meeke as a Lambe, and like a little Child in humilitie, it makes as fierce and furious as a Lion, against the power of grace wrought in others, and against the profession and practice of sinceritie. No marvell then, though where the Word of Truth begins to beare sway, there be many times much adoe, and resistance by carnall and prophane men.

I, but (will some say) this Word is brought unto us by weake and fraile men; sometimes by those, who are of notorious and infamous life and conversation: and therefore wee have lesse heart to beleve and obey them. If wee had the Word

Math. 13. 4, 5,
7, 12.

Object. 7.
The Word is brought to us by weak, sometime; by wicked men.

published by an Angel, or an Apostle, or some more excellent and powerfull meanes, and Embassadours, wee should more easily and willingly heare, beleeve, and obey them.

Ans. 1.

It is Gods goodnesse, to speake to us by men, like to our selves.

Exod. 20. 19.

It is Gods great mercie unto us, that it pleaseth him so farre to condescend to our infirmitie, as to open unto us the rich Treasures of his heavenly Word, by men of the same condition and frailtie, and subject to the same passions with our selves. Hee might by terrible and astonishing Voices, out of Lightnings, Thunders, and Earthquakes, able to breake the hardest Rocks, and stony Mountaines, (as he did in the giving of the Law) force us to obedience: Or he might send his Angels, armed with power and puissance, to execute present vengeance upon all those which doe not presently submit themselves to the Scepter of his Christ, and Soveraigntie of his Word. But in great mercie and compassion unto us, hee chuseth rather to teach us by a still and soft Voice; by a more faire, familiar, and fit instruction for us, even by such as our selves, of our owne nature, frailtie, and condition.

2
It is his love so to honour mankind, as to make men his Embassadours.

Herein he shewes his great love unto us, in that he vouchsafeth to put his fearefull and glorious Word into the mouth of a mortall and sinfull man. What an honour and advancement is it unto mans nature, unto mankind; that the high and mightie God of Heaven and Earth should single them out for so glorious a service; sanctifie their Tongues, to deliver his good pleasure, and newes of salvation unto the sonnes of men?

That

That hee should acquaint and put them in trust with such high mysteries, and heavenly matters, of so soveraigne and saving use, both to themselves and others?

But it may be, besides common frailtie and infirmitie, the Minister and Messenger of the Word is of lewd and prophane life, and condition.

If he be, more is the pittie; the scandall of the Ministerie is the greater, and his owne damnation more smarting and terrible. See *Psal. 50. 16, 17; &c.* But notwithstanding, the prophanesse of the Preacher is no priviledge to the hearer, either of negligence or disobedience. *He that turnes his eare from hearing of the Law truly preached (though by a Pharise) even his prayer is abominable, Prov. 28. 9. Hee that despiseth the word, shall be destroyed, Prov. 13. 13. Hee that obeyeth not the Sonne, in his Ministers lawfully sent, though not sanctified themselves, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Christ himselfe, in the Gospel, bids his followers to observe and doe whatsoever they were bid by the Scribes and Pharises, which sate in *Moses Chaire*; but not to doe after their works; for they said, and did not. Every Minister is to be heard, received, and followed, so farre as he followes and delivers to the Church the Truth of God, and Doctrine of the Apostles. For therein he is an *Angel of the Lord of Hosts*, and *Embassadour in the stead of Christ*. And all the parts of the Ministerie in his hand (he following the Word) shall as certainly be accomplished, as if an Angel, or Christ

1 Tim 4 16.

The Ministers prophanesse is no priviledge of disobedience to the Word.
Prov. 28. 9.

Prov. 13. 13.

John 3. 36.

Matt. 23. 2, 3.

Mal. 2. 7.
2 Cor. 5. 21.

Christ

See Eccles. 37.
18.

Luke 22. 43.

Luke 10. 16.

Christ from Heaven should presently and potently execute them. If hee denounce Judgements against sinne, it is as if the voice of God himselfe should be heard from Heaven; as if the Lion of the Tribe of Iudah should roare. If he poure the Oyle of comfort into a wounded and distressed Conscience, it is as sure and certaine, as soft and sweet to the beleeving soule, as if the Angels should comfort him, as they did Christ in his Agonie; or, as if Christ himselfe should mercifully reach out his glorious hand, through the Clouds, and binde up his broken heart and bruised Conscience with a Plaister of his owne precious Bloud. If hee instruct, admonish, reprove, exhort, perswade, from ground and warrant out of the Word; it is all one, as if Christ himselfe should doe it: who hath said; *He that heareth you, heareth me.*

Let men therefore pretend what they will; if they will not heare, beleve, and obey the Lord, speaking in the Ministerie of the Word, though the meanes and Messengers be never so base and vile, fraile, weake, and sinfull. Let an Angel come from Heaven, a Devill from Hell, or a man from the dead; yet would they not beleve. For, if a man were truly humbled, hee would tremble at Gods Word, of whomsoever hee heard it. If hee had a spirituall taste, hee would relish the heavenly food, whosoever ministred it. If hee had Gods holy Spirit, hee would know and acknowledge his Sword, which is the Word of God, in whose hand soever he saw it. And untill he have this

this spirit, a spirituall taste, and an humble heart, hee will not beleeve, especially with effect, fruit, and practice, let him pretend whatsoever he will; neither Angels, nor men; dead, nor living; *Moses*, nor the Prophets; *Peter*, nor *Paul*; not Christ, nor God himselfe; if the one were living againe upon Earth, or the other would be pleased, or it were possible, to speake immediately to him.

For conclusion of this Point, let us know, That the Ministerie of the Word is Gods Ordinance; which dependeth not upon the worthinesse of him who delivereth it; neither is it made void and un-effectuall, by his weakenesse and wickednesse: but it hath it vertue, force, and power from the blessing of God, and from the inward operation of his Spirit; who applyeth it to the hearts and consciences of men, and thereby illuminates their understandings, begetteth faith in them, and all sanctifying and saving graces.

I, but (will some say) it is a very wearisome, tiring, and tedious thing, to be tyed to the hearing of so many Sermons, to meditate of them, conferre of them with our neighbours, teach them our families, and practise them; which are urged upon us, as necessarie Christian duties.

It is a strange thing, and sore case, that some men will not be perswaded to take halfe so much paines to goe to Heaven, and eternall Rest, as many thousands to goe to Hell, and everlasting torment. How many tyre and torture themselves with carke and care, with much toyle and travell, to heape up those riches, which in the meane time
are

See *Downams*
C. H. pag. 362.

Object. 8.
This course is
wearisome.

Answ.
Many will not
take such
paines to goe
to Heaven, as
others doe to
goe to Hell.

JAM. 5. 3.

are matter of much vexation unto them ; and hereafter will be witnesses against them, and eate their flesh as it were fire, as *James* speakes ? How many spend their wits, their spirits, their time, that they may become some-body in the World, and climbe by indirect and unlawfull meanes, and steps unto those high places, from whence hereafter they must be hurled with greater confusion, and a more fearefull downe-fall, into the Pit of Hell ? How many waste their wealth, weaken their strength, consume their marrow, fill their bones with rottenesse, and their bodies with diseases, with lust and uncleannesse, with following the *Whorish woman*, whose paths lead unto the dead ; with tarrying long at the Wine, and pouring in of strong Drinke : for which, at length, they shall be sure to be filled with drunkenesse, and with sorrow, even with the Cup of destruction, and trembling ; they shall drinke of it deepe and large, and wring it out to the dregges ? How unwearied have Idolaters ever beene in the wicked worship of their false gods ? And many Heretikes, in the false worship of the true God ? In thrusting towards Hell, they neither spared cost, nor charge ; losse, nor labour : They have beene prodigall both of lives, and living ; of bloud, and children. You know, amongst the Iewes, some mingled the rufull cryes of their dearest children with Musicke and melodie, lest they should be moved to compassion, while they were cast into the fire, to be burned up in sacrifice unto the Idoll *Moloch*. Scribes and Pharises compasse Sea and Land,

PROV. 2. 18.

MAT. 23. 15.

Land, to make a Profelyte. Baals Priests lanced and cut their flesh before their Idoll, untill the blood gushed out. The blinded Papists at this day whip themselves, waste their goods, and consume their bodies with wearisome Pilgrimages, to see some counterfeit Reliques, and rotten Bones, or to visit accursed Idols, and Popish Saints: Nay, some of them transported with a more bloudie rage, and furious spirit of Antichrist, suffer as it were with senselesnesse, with desperate and damned boldnesse, most horrible and exquisite torments, for butchering of Kings; for which they hope to merit Heaven, and to sayle through a Sea of Royall blood to the Haven of endlesse rest; though indeed and truth, they justly light short, and sinke, before they are aware, into the deepest Lake of the hottest fire, and most consuming flame of Hell. Now, I pray you, shall these services of Sathan be followed and pursued with such heat and eagernesse, with such paines and paciencie of all miseries and vexations; and shall not the Lords owne Ordinances, and the true worship of the true God have power to make us step out of our doores with paciencie, and pleasure, to heare the Lords will revealed unto us, to receive salvation to our soules, and a Crowne of immortalitie to our heads? Can some be content to toyle day after day, fare hard, breake their sleepe, eat the Bread of carefulnesse, and all to heape up a little wealth, perhaps, with the losse of their owne soules, and sometimes they scarce know for whom; and shall not wee with joy and cheare-

chearefulnesse passe through holy Exercises, for the enriching of our soules, wherein true and lasting comfort is onely to be found, and whereby we may lay up for our selves Treasures in Heaven, durable Riches, a Bag that cannot wax old, a Treasure that can never faile, *Prov. 8. 18. Luk. 12. 33.* unmixed joyes, endlessse peace, and blessed immortalitie, presently to be entred upon after death, and then to be enjoyed for ever and ever? Shall rebellious Superstition, and the Doctrine of Devils, and killing Kings, harden the Papists against any crosses, and tortures; and shall we be tyred with the peaceable Exercises of sound & saving Religion? God forbid. In whomsoever the true love of God and Christ hath taken up the heart, there their Gospel, and Word, and services are sweeter and more tastfull than all outward delights. Little touch of Religion, or sense of Salvation hath hee, that comes unto with unchearefulnesse, and staves with wearinesse at the Ministerie of the Word.

Object. 9.
There was never good world since preaching came in.

I, but (will some say) it was never good World since so much preaching came amongst us; when there was lesse preaching, there was more plentie: and therefore, it seemes, there is little good in it. Since this new Religion was on foot, (for so some ignorantly and maliciously call it, though it be as old as God himselfe, whose eternall Truth it is; as old as the Patriarks and Prophets, as Christ and his Apostles) there hath beene (say they) more scarcitie of all things, more Plagues, Famines, strange apparitions, extremitie of seasons, and other Iudgements, than ever our fore-fathers saw,

saw, or heard of. Hospitalitie, Charitie, Pastimes, and Plentie were banished with the old Religion; for so they call the bloudie and idolatrous Heresie of Poperie.

This hath ever beene the complaint of Idolaters, and the wicked, against the Truth of God; as it is now of the Papists & prophane men amongst us, against the glorious Light of the Gospel, that shines round about us. When *Jeremy, chap. 44.* had reproved the Jewes, and denounced Gods Judgements against them for their Idolatry, they answer him thus, in *vers. 16.* * *The word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not heare it of thee; but we will doe whatsoever thing goeth out of our mouth: as, to burne incense to the Queene of Heaven, and to poure out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, both we and our fathers, our Kings and our Princes, in the Cities of Iudah, and in the streetes of Ierusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and felt no evill. But since we left off to burne incense to the Queene of Heaven, and to poure out drink-offerings unto her, we have had scarcenesse of all things, and have bin consumed by the sword, and by the famine.* The very same complaint was made of the wicked Heathens and Infidels, at the first plantation of Christian Religion among the Gentiles. * *Tertullian*, an ancient Father, tells us in his time; If there were any inundation and overflowing of Tibris, a great River in Rome; if there were any extraordinarie and uncouth Hayle, or Frost, or any other miserie or calamitie; all the fault was presently laid on Christ, and the Christian Religion.

Answ.

This hath alwayes beene the complaint of Idolaters.

* Marke that, I beseech you; for it is the very language of the Papists at this day.

Jer. 44. 16.

* *Apologetico. Vid. Calv. in ltr. 330.*

Austin. Epist.
122.

Luke 12. 47, 48.

Our Times de-
serve greater
judgement,
than the for-
mer Times of
ignorance, for
three reasons.

John 3. 19, 20.

It appears also by *Austin*, another ancient Father, in his 122. Epistle, that there were wicked complaints and murmurings against the Christian Faith, in his time; the Infidels were still crying, that before the Doctrine of Christ was published to the World, mankind was not vexed and distressed with so many troubles and garboyles. To which, the good Father doth there excellently answer; Out of *Luke* 12. 47, 48. easily, saith he, may they thence take their answer: *The servant that knew not his Masters will, and yet did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; but he that knew his Masters will, and prepared not himselfe, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

Hence then may wee clearly see the reason why our Times, in all reason, should be more visited with Iudgements, than former dayes of ignorance.

1 *Because that the Light of the Gospel is come amongst us; and many love Darknesse rather than that Light, because their deeds are evill: for every man that doth evill, hateth the Light, neither commeth to the Light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.*

2 *Because the Gospel is not so thankfully received and entertained, as so excellent a Blessing and precious a Treasure ought to be.*

3 *Many that heare it, live not after it: Perhaps, onely make a shew of godlineesse; but deny the power thereof, in their lives and conversations. So, that negligence and disobedience to the Word of God, is the true cause of those Iudgements*

ments and miseries, which are wickedly & wrongfully pretended to be a cause why they have so little care to attend and obey it.

As for Hospitality in the time of Popery, it did not so much spring from the truth of Religion, as

1. From a superstitious opinion of redeeming their sinnes, and purchasing Heaven by almes-deeds.

2. From an excessive cheapnesse of all things, by reason of the scarcity of money.

3. From the superfluitie of the wealth, riches, lands and impropriations, the price of the bloud of soules, which Monasteries, and other religious, or rather superstitious houses, had immeasurably and unconscionably ingrossed and got into their hands. And when they had ingrossed the world to themselves, (as one sayes) they seemed liberall in giving something; like unto some vaine-glorious theeves, which having robbed wealthy Merchants, bestow some pence upon beggers.

As for works of Charity: Certaine it is, and a reverend and learned man of our Church hath proved it, and it will more clearly appeare hereafter; *That the charitable benevolence; bountifull liberalitie, large expences in building and enlarging Colledges, and erecting Hospitals, Libraries, Free-schools, and many other works of charity, and fruits of faith, since the light of the Gospell began to shine amongst us, may compare with, if not farre excell any time of the like or longer continuance in any age.*

As for greater dearth & higher price of all things

Popish Hospitality, upon what grounds.

Simile.

Our times may compare with any for works of charity.

The reasons
of the higher
price of things
now.

De Rep. lib. 6.
cap. 2.

now, than in former times, it is a cleare and plaine case, that the reason is ; that the great store and plentie of treasure which is walking in these parts of the world, farre more in these our dayes, than ever our forefathers have seene in times past. Who doth not understand of the infinite summes of Gold and Silver which are gathered from the Indies, and other Countries, and so yearly transported into these coasts ? And this is confest to be the true cause of the same unancient dearnessse of all things, even in other Kingdomes also, where Popery is professed. *One Bodin, a great Polititian of France, tels us, that the common people are much deceived, who thinke that the price of Corne, Cattell, and other necessaries, should hold the same rate it did of old. They doe not understand and consider, that the price of things is more by ten parts (saith he) than it was anciently, by reason of the plenty and abundance of Gold and Silver, which is brought out of the west Indies into Europe, whereby it comes to passe that money is lesse esteemed, for plenty of any thing lessens the estimation of it.*

Besides, for our owne Countrey, wise men have observed another particular reason. For (say they) immediately after our coine, in the time of King *Henry* the eighth, the prices of all things generally among all sorts of people rose ; for that they thinke, that the alteration of the Coine was the chiefe and principall cause of an universall dearnessse of things. And why our English Coine being restored by our late *Queene*, that blessed Saint of glorious memory, to its former purity and

and perfection, the prices of all things fall not backe to their old rate, they give sufficient reasons.

As for pastimes, Playes, and other fearefull prophanation of the Sabbath, it is a good signe the power of grace is there planted by the Word, from whence they are banished and abandoned. They are fit pleasures for Papiſts, which have no comfort in the joyes above; and well agreeing to the darknesse of superstition. But the light of the Gospell dispels such vanities, and Gods children have all their pleasures in holy exercises upon the Sabbath day.

This last objection then of Papiſts and prophane men; That the world is worse since there was so much preaching, is idle, vaine, and frivolous.

Many such like conceits, perswasions and objections as these, which I have now reckoned up unto you, there are abroad in the world, and in the hearts of prophane men, by which they are hindred from hearing the Word of God, with that heart, zeale and diligence as they ought.

Now I come to acquaint you with some slights and temptations of Satan, whereby he labours to bereave us of the blessings and benefits of profitable hearers, and to hinder the effectuall working of the Word in our consciences and conversations.

A first plot and practice of Satan, is to keepe men from diligent hearing the Word; If he cannot that way prevaile, in a second place he labours

Satans sleights to hinder the effectuall working of the Word.

He would keepe them from the Word.

Or else hinder
the power of it

Hee keeps
them from at-
tending.

to make the Word in vaine, fruitlesse, and unprofitable unto them. And that hee doth, by such meanes as these :

1. If by the grace of God we breake thorow all lets and snares which might withhold us from holy assemblies, and hearing of the Word; then Satan, that he might make it uneffectuall for our conversion and salvation; first, labours to worke in us a negligent carelesnesse and heedlesnesse, in listning to those things which are delivered, and that by a kinde of heartlesnesse in holy things, by dulnesse of spirit, drowinesse, sleepinesse, gazing about, talking, or such like. And such hearers as these, are never a whit moved or affected with the Word preached, but remaine in the same state as they were before. There is neither passion or impression wrought upon them for the present, nor any thought of it, profit or practice afterward.

* In this depth he uses to fill our minds with barren melancholy, or to make men post off reproofes, and apply them Pharisaiically all the while to others. He fills our minds either with worldly, or else with impertinent unseasonable thoughts.

2 * But if he cannot speed this way, but that we rouze up and addresse our selves to heare the Word of God, as desiring with care and good conscience to profit thereby: Why then, in a second place, hee seekes by all meanes to fill our heads and hearts with idle musings, and wandring thoughts, which may distract and steale away our minds from attending to the Word. And that he doth, either by offering and suggesting to our consideration and memory, the world, and the vanities thereof, as our affaires and businesse, our profits and preferments; those pleasures and delights wherein our corrupt affections finde most

most sensuall sweetnesse : Or, if this will not prevaile ; by casting into our mindes very craftily and cunningly, things which in their owne nature may be good, honest, and religious : But because they are thought upon out of due and convenient time, they deprive us of the profit of the present holy Exercise ; which ought for the time, onely and wholly to take up our mindes.

If this yet will doe no good ; but that wee marke diligently and attentively, all the while, what the Minister delivers unto us from God, for our good : why then, in a third place ;

1 In some, he makes it uneffectuall, by nourishing in them a neglect of reading the Scriptures, and ignorance in the Principles of Religion : so that though they attend never so well, and stare the Minister in the face ; yet they understand not the Sermons they heare. Let the younger sort therefore, to prevent this mischiefe, acquaint themselves with the Scriptures from their youth ; by the example of *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Salomon*, *Prov.* 31. 1, &c. *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 24. See also *Psal.* 119. *Prov.* 2. 1. And let the miserie upon *Elies* House, terrifie negligent and indulgent Parents ; see 1 *Sam.* 2. 1, 2. &c. In this depth, the Word is either buried as it is brought forth, or dies at the Church doore.

2 In others, he earnestly endeavours utterly to extinguish and abolish all thought of it ; quite to drive and banish it out of their heads, so soone as they have heard it. And that thus : If mens hearts be hardned through u beleefe, or custome

3

Some understand not what they heare.

In others, Satan steales it away immediately.

Simile.

Or the World
steales away
their hearts.

Mat. 4. 19.

in sinning, and like the High-way in the Parable of the Sower; then the Evill one comes immediately, and catcheth the Seed of the Word so soone as it is sowed, and stealeth it out of the heart. As we may see many times Birds hovering greedily after the Sower, to snatch away the Corne, before it be covered with Earth, or take root in the ground: even so Sathan, the ravenous Crow of Hell, waites all opportunities to pecke up the Seed of the Word out of the hearts of men, before it sinke into their affections, or fructifie in their conversations. Or otherwise, if the World hath stolne mens hearts out of their bodies, so that they have no hearts left within them, for matters of Holinesse, and Heaven; but are wholly set upon Gaine, and exercised in Covetousnesse: then needes not Sathan much to bestirre himselfe; he knowes full well, that worldly Cares will presently choake the Seed of the Word. As soone as the Sermon is heard, and ended, and they turned their backs upon the Church, there comes immediately into their heads whole swarmes of earthly thoughts, and they are presently plunged over head and eares into the cares and plottings of earthly businesse. So that these men, whom Sathan conquers by this temptation, never meddle with meditation, conference, or talke about the points handled by the Preacher, by which the Word of God should be better, as it were, digested, and prepared for practise. Nay, they have no delight at all to heare others repeat the Sermon; but are very wearie of the

the place and companie, and never pleased, untill they bring them back againe unto talke of worldly matters and prophane discourses.

If this yet will not serve the turne, but that the Word gets within a man, and workes upon his understanding; so that by his diligent hearing of it, meditation, and conference, he furnishes himselfe with competent knowledge in the Booke of God, and Divine Truth: why then, Sathan casts about another way; which is, to make him to content himselfe with a bare fruitlesse knowledge, without practising the power of it in his life and actions; to rest contented with an abilitie to talke and discourse onely upon points of Religion, and places of Scripture, without inward sanctification, and subduing the will and affections to new obedience, and sincere exercise of Christianitie. So that, for all his knowledge, he neither meddles with Conversion, nor mends in his Conversation.

He labours here, first, to hinder his Conversion, by planting in his heart a prejudice and disconceit against,

- 1 Preaching the Law.
- 2 Distinguishing severall estates of unregenerate men, *Math. 13.* the three Reprobate Grounds.
- 3 The differencing the Children of God, and the Children of the Devill, by speciall markes and notes, *Math. 5. Psal. 15. &c.*
- 4 Pressing the Doctrine of Christ, of pressing in at the strait Gate, *Luke 13. 24. & 4. 28.* And

(84)

gathe-

4

He labours to keepe them from practising what they know.

1

He would hinder their conversion sundry wayes.

gathering from Scripture those which shall be saved, into a short summe.

5 And by making him make **G O D** all of Mercie.

And mending in his Conversation, by motives unto presumption.

If this will not prevaile, but that a man endeavours to draw his knowledge into practise, and settles himselfe with care and conscience to reforme his former wayes and courses of iniquitie: why then Sathan plots and practiseth, with all the cunning and policie he hath, to make him rest in a slight, superficial, and partiall reformation; to content himselfe with an unsound, or unsaving conversion. For, by the way, I must tell you, there may be many conversions, changes, and alterations in a man, from worse to better; and yet he not truly sanctified, not become a new creature, nor possessed of the state of grace, and glorious comforts of true Christians.

1 He may be changed, from a notorious sinner, to a civill honest man: whereas he hath beene before furious, and desperate in lewd courses, hee may grow more sober and moderate in his carriage: And yet, for all this, continue in his ignorance, and a meere stranger to the wayes of godlinesse.

2 From civill honestie, he may passe on to a formall Christianitie, and become an outward Professor; and outwardly doe, and performe religious services: and yet lye in his sinnes, and want the power of inward sanctification.

3 Yet

See *Yates*, pag. 173. & 229.

2

Broad, pag. 100.

5

He would have them rest in a partiall reformation, and superficial conversion.

Severall unsound changes.

In these cases, Truth is the truest Touchstone, to discern a true convert from all states of unregeneration. See *GONGE*, p. 130.

3 Yet further, by a generall power of the Word, and inferior working of the Spirit, he may in some sort be outwardly reformed, and in some measure inwardly enlightened; hee may have understanding and joy by the Ministerie of the Word, and may doe many things after it, and forsake many finnes. Herod is said, *Mark. 6.* to have revered *Iohn*, to have heard him gladly, and to have done many things: And yet for all this, hee may come short of a sound conversion; if hee suffer some maine corruption, some one sweet sinne, or other, to reigne in him, which hee still feedes upon with delight, and sensuall sweetnesse; if hee doe not wholly and entirely resigne and give up himselfe, his spirit, soule and body to the Lords service, and to please him in all things; and with repentance, and resolution, forsake all his knowne finnes. For this is a certaine Rule and Principle with * Divines; *That true turning unto God, and the advised and willing remaining in the practice of any one evill, which is discovered to a mans Conscience, by the Light of Gods word, to be a sinne, cannot stand together.*

These changes a man may have, and thus many passages, from worse to better; and yet the great and glorious worke of regeneration not wrought upon him. For where there is a sound conversion, and through-reformation, there a man is wholly sanctified, and set apart unto God, from the sinfull corruption of his naturall birth, and the evill fruits thereof, to serve God in his whole man, both body, soule, and spirit. He shakes hands with all finnes; he sells all for the precious Jewell of the Gospel; he

Mark. 6. 20.

* See *Hieron.* p. 158. *Marbury* in his Sermon at *P. C. Dod* upon the Commandements, p. 10. *Dike*, p. 195. *True Watch*, p. 61.

Fruits of a true conversion,

he regards not sinne in his heart, but hath a regard to all Gods Commandements.

Now sith Sathan, that old Serpent, knowes full well, that it will never serve the turne for a man to part but with part of his finnes; that his case is fearefull enough, whatsoever good, or good deeds seeme to be in him, if he yeeld not to the worke of the Holy-Ghost, for the leaving but of any one knowne sinne, which fighteth against the peace of his Conscience; he knowes, that he hath haunt and hold enough in a mans Conscience, and affections; that hee hath sufficient interest and claime to his damnation, if he can but keepe his sweet sinne in heart, and alive in him. And therefore, when any by the Ministerie of the Word is moved to settle and addressse himselfe to a reformation of his wayes, and to redresse his former wicked life; he puts in, might and maine, to preserve in his vigour, and soveraigntie, one secret delightfull sinne, or other, at least, in the heart and affection of him, that goes about to reforme himselfe: He singles out one corruption, or other, to which hee findes a man most addicted; and this he conceales, and fenceth with all the policie that he hath, that if by any meanes it may escape unrepented of, unmortified, and unmedled with.

Mark. 6. 17.

Thus he dealt with *Herod*: *Herod*, by the preaching of *Iohn*, reformed himselfe in many things; but Sathan made sure to keepe him his owne, by that one sinne of Incest. *Naaman* the Syrian, no doubt, beleaved, and followed the Prophet in many things; but he desired onely, *that the Lord would*

2 King. 5. 18.

be

be mercifull unto him, when he went into the house of Rimmon. The young man in the Gospel, in his outward carriage was unreprouable; but that one secret sinne of worldlinesse, banished him out of the presence and Kingdome of Christ. In this point, Sathan labours to perswade men to deale with God in the forsaking of their sinnes, as *Ananias* dealt with the Apostle, in parting with his Money. It was a custome, you know, in the Primitive Church; because of the necessitie of the Times; that many, out of a zealous and extraordinarie love unto the Gospel, sold their Lands, and brought the price, and laid it downe at the Apostles feet. *Ananias* amongst the rest, would needes seeme as forward & zealous in this glorious worke of Charitie, as any other: He sold his Lands indeed, and brought in the Money, and tender'd it at the Apostles feet; but yet secretly, suspecting Gods providence, and doubting lest himselfe, perhaps, at length should be brought into want, hee kept backe one part of the price of his Possession; making shew notwithstanding, to have brought in all. So it is in many, by the malice of Sathan, and bewitching enticements of naturall corruption, in the forsaking of their sinnes. In a true Conversion indeed, when a man is about to buy the Pearle of great price & unvaluable worth in the Gospel, the Doctrin of Salvation, the Way to Life, and Graces of Gods Spirit; he makes an universall sale of all his sinnes; he selleth (as the Text saith) *all that he hath*: not some piece of his sinfull Possession, but even the very whole Lordship, the entire Inheritance.

Math. 19. 20.

Act. 5.

Math. 13. 44.

Simile.

Inheritance. But it is otherwise with those whom Sathan inveagleth, and ensnareth in this point. Hee is well enough pleased, that they shall seeme to be as forward in the reformation and amendment of their lives, as any other; and indeed, that they shall be reformed in good part, and carry some love and affection toward the Word, and Ministers; so that he may keepe hold and possession but in one corner of the heart: For he knowes, that that is enough to keepe the whole man, body and soule, his owne. If he can stay but one sinne unsold, he knowes the man continues still, by the course of divine Law, a bondslave of Hell. By one little hole a ship will sinke into the bottome of the Sea. The stab of a Pen-knife to the heart, will as well speed a man, as all the Daggers that killed *Caesar* in the Senat-house. The soule will be strangled with one Cord of vanitie, as well as with all the Cart-ropes of iniquitie: only, the more sins, the more plagues, and fiercer flame in Hell: but he that lives and dies impenitent in one, it will be his destruction. One dramme of poyson will dispatch a man; and one reigning sinne will bring him to endlesse woe and miserie. Let us take heed therefore, when we goe about reformation of our selves, lest we be surpris'd & overtaken by this malicious craft of Sathan. Let us resolve upon a through-reformation, which is only and ever undertaken, with a purpose not to hold on in the willing practice of any one knowne iniquitie, or sinfull course. Which, when we shall carefully & earnestly go about, Sathan will be sure to set upon us, as *Pharoah* did upon *Moses* and *Aaron*:
When

When the Lord had commanded them to goe three dayes journey in the Defart, to doe service and sacrifice unto him, that by all meanes hee might hinder them in this holy businesse.

1. He would have them to stay in the land, and to doe sacrifice there. Nay (saith *Moses*) it is not meet to doe so; for then wee should offer unto the Lord our God that which is abomination unto the Egyptians.

2. Sith this would not then serve, but that they would needs out of the Land; *I will let you goe* (saith *Pharaoh*) *that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wildernesse; but goe not farre away.* But *Moses* would yet none of this, he would not abate a foot of the journey the Lord had appointed.

3. Why then (saith *Pharaoh*) if you will needs goe so farre, I am content your men shall goe; but, as it is fittest, your children shall stay at home. Nay (saith *Moses*) *we will goe with our young and with our old, with our sonnes and with our daughters, with our Sheepe and with our Castell will we goe.*

4. Well (saith *Pharaoh*) I will yeeld so farre unto you, your children shall goe with you to serve the Lord, onely your sheepe and your Cattell shall abide at home.

Nay (saith *Moses*) *our Cattell also shall goe with us. There shall not an hoefe be left.*

Now when all this would not doe, when *Moses* would not accept of any capitulations, conditions, restrictions, or limitations in holy businesse, and the service of God, (for he was at a point; resolute; he would not leave so much as an hoefe behinde:)

Satan deales with men, as *Pharaoh* did with the Israelites.

Exod. 3. 25.

Vers. 28.

Cap. 10. 9.

Vers. 24.

hinde.) Now, I say, when all the enticements and policies of *Pharaoh* would not prevaile to keepe *Moses* from serving and sacrificing unto God, and that precisely and strictly, according to his owne appointment and commandement, but that to this end, at length he wrung himselfe and all the Israelites, out of the bloody teeth of this persecuting Wolfe; why then *Pharaoh* armes himselfe with rage and fury, with six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of *Ægypt*, with fifty thousand horsemen, and two hundred thousand footmen, as a Jewish Historian writes, purposing with bloody thirst to devoure at once, and swallow up quicke, even all the Israell of God: But you know the conclusion was; the Lord of Heaven gave a most glorious deliverance to his owne people, wherein his bottomlesse goodnesse, and infinite mercy shall shine cleare and bright for ever, in all generations of the Church upon earth, and through alleternity in Heaven: But upon their enemies he brought such a strange and terrible confusion in the Red Sea; which may strike astonishment and trembling into the heart and loynes of all prophane persecutors of godlinesse to the worlds end, and amaze the very maliciousst fiend in hell, while that Kingdome of darknesse stands.

Even just thus doth Satan deale with all those who desire to bee conducted by the light of the Word, out of the *Ægypt* and slavery of ignorance, sinne, prophanenesse; and who are resolved frankly and freely to give themselves, soules and

Exod. 14. 7.

Iosephus.

See Broade. pag.
141, &c.

and bodies, to Gods service, and to enter a settled course of holinesse and sanctification; hee useth all meanes and policies to keepe and detaine them in his Kingdome of darknesse. If he cannot hold them in his chiefe palace and Court as it were, where sinne especially raignes and revels it, yet he will so farre hamper them, that at least they still hover upon the confines and borders of the Regions of death. If they will needs bee meddling with reformation of their sinfull lives, and that he cannot helpe it, but something must be done, he is content to yeeld unto them upon some termes or conditions, that they cast him not quite out of their consciences, but suffer him to sway and raigne in their hearts, by some one gainfull or delightfull sinne or other.

Satan would condition with men in their conversion.

1. If they will needs feare God, he stands not much upon it, but that they may doe it outwardly, and in profession, so that they will continue in *Egypt*, within the Kingdome of darknesse, and lie still in their sinnes, and under the shadow of death.

2. If this will not content them, if they will not rest here, but will needs out of the Kingdome of darknesse, and dominion of death, why he is not much against it, but that they may goe the halfe way; that is, he will suffer them to forgoe and forbear the outward practice and perpetration of many sinnes, so that inwardly their heart and affections harbour, nourish & embrace them still, and feed upon with a sensuall and delightfull remembrance, the sinfull pleasures of iniquities formerly committed.

3. If they desire and endeavour to become new men, both inwardly and outwardly, to be sanctified in actions and affections, to serve God both in soule and body, he will yet yeeld so farre, that they may be rid of some sinnes both in heart and practice, as perhaps of sinnes of custome; but then he will be a suitor and solicitor unto them, to retaine other sinnes, as perhaps sinnes of nature. For example: It may be they may both forbear the outward practice, and also inwardly loath swearing, drunkenness, and other such like sinnes of custome; but they will nuzzle in the bosome of their affections, pride, lust, anger, and such other sinnes, the naturall birth as it were of originall corruption.

4. But if they also conquer these, why then he tempts them mainly to continue at the least in worldlinesse. * For this in many mens hearts hath greater power, and beares more sway than nature, or naturall affection. He will secretly suggest unto them, that upon an eager and excessive pursuit of gaine and riches, depends their life and livelihood, their credit and reputation, their contentment and happiness in the world; so that perhaps at last of all, after all this, they rest and settle themselves upon sinnes of advantage, as usury, oppression, unlawfull and excessive gaining, earthly-mindedness, serving the Times, and such like.

5. But if by the grace of God any be so blessed from God above, as resolutely to passe thorough all these traines and temptations, and like strong

* Foure infallible marks of covetousnesse:

1 Carking:
2 Strained bowels to the necessities of the Saints, or any truly poore.

3 Too much businesse in the world.

4 Injustice, or using of injurious or indirect courses of getting wealth

See *Wtately*,
p. 1230.
Gard. of Spirit.
Flow. 2. part.
pag. G 4.

strong *Samsons*, breake through all these Cords and Cart-ropes of iniquitie and vanitie; so that they will not yeeld an ynch to that cruell *Pharaoh* of Hell, nor leave so much as an Hoofe behinde them, in his Kingdome of Darknesse: why then, this spirituall *Pharaoh* presently armes himselfe with all the crafts and policies of Hell, with Legions of Fiends, and Princes of the Darkenesse of this World; with all his malice, against the salvation of the soules of men; with the fire and furious rage of prophane wretches; with the sharpe swords and impoysoned arrowes of lying and slanderous tongues; and with all other advantages, which either the lowest Hell, or the wide wicked World can afford. And thus appointed, hee pursues and persecutes, with bloodie and implacable furie, all those who have escaped out of this captivitie, farre more eagerly and enviously than ever *Pharaoh* did the Israelites: That either hee may bring them backe againe into his bondage, or else take them quite away, and destroy them; that they may not attaine the full Light of the Saints, nor doe long service unto the Lord. And certainly, if all the power of Hell, the strongest temptations, the scourge of tongues, the Worlds malice, the spightfull spirit of prophanesse, the frownings of friends, the scornfull insolencies of enemies, the cursed and enticing cryes of our old companions; if wicked men or damned Devils be able to prevaile, he will be sure to stay them, before they enter into the state of grace, and true blessednesse. But yet, if a man put on

Pauls armour, in *Eph. 6.* *Davids* royall courage, *Psal. 3. 6.* *Moses* princely zeale, and truly Christian valour, that *he will not leave a hoose behinde*; that is, that he will not leave one corruption unmortified, one affection un sanctified, one rebellious action unreformed, one knowne sinne unrepented of, and un forsaken; one holy dutie unperformed, one Commandement unobeyed: Why then, hee may looke for a more glorious spirituall deliverance; than *Moses* had a temporall: Hell, and confusion, shall swallow up all his * enemies; but into his heart, in the meane time, shall be shed and plentifully powdered comfort, joy, and peace; and upon his head shall a Crowne of immortalitie flourish for ever hereafter.

* See *Isa. 25. 10.*

I have stayed very long upon the fifth plot and practice of Sathan, whereby he labours to make the Word heard, unpowerfull and un effectuall for the salvation of our soules: For, I know, it is much and often exercised, and with great successe; and by it, he prevailes with very many. When by diligent hearing of Gods Word, faithfully urged upon them, they are driven, and doe adresse themselves to a reformation and amendment of their sinfull lives; he mightily endeavours to hinder, disquiet, and interrupt them in it; to make it a reformation unto them but in part, and by halves; unsound, and unfaving: So that, it may be, they may forsake sinnes of Custome, as Lying; Swearing, Drunkenesse, and such like; but keepe sinnes
of

of Nature, as Pride, Lust, Anger, and the like: Or, it may be, they may forsake both these two kindes of sinnes, and yet keepe sinnes of Advantage; as Oppression, unlawfull Gaining, grinding the faces of the Poore, serving the Time, and such like: Or, they may leave all these, and yet keepe sinnes of Companie; as, idle and vaine Talking, filchie Ieasting, rayling against and slandering their Neighbours, uncharitable judging and censuring their Brethren, and the like. It may be, they may be carefull in their generall calling of Christianitie; but carelesse and unfaithfull in those particular places and callings, wherein God in his providence hath set them: Or contrarily; they may be of Christian behaviour abroad, and in publike; as at Sermons, and in the Church: but unconscionable at home, and in their private families; never teaching, or praying with them: They may seeme zealous in the Commandements of the first Table, and about the service of God; but in the second, and towards their Neighbour, unmercifull, unconscionable; and uncharitable: Or, they may deale justly and honestly with others, but be utterly voide and destitute of the knowledge and feare of God.: They may bee outwardly reformed, but inwardly full of hollow-heartednesse, and hypocrisie: They may leave all other sinnes, onely keepe one behinde; which is called a mans sweet, delightfull, and bosome-sinne.

If Sathan can prevaile with a man any of these

wayes, hee keeps him his owne: for hee that is soundly converted; justified, and sanctified indeed, must needs be out of love with every sinne, with the whole course of iniquitie; and with sincerity and chearefulnesse embrace the entire body of Christianitie, and have a regard to all Gods Commandements.

6 Now I come to a sixt sleight and devise of Sathan, whereby hee labours to make the Word fruitlesse and unprofitable unto us. If he cannot stay us in our reformation, but that we will needs through, and cast away all sinnes; why then, hee seekes by all meanes to hinder our continuance, and constancie. If the Seed of the Word be received with joy, and spring up for a time; that is, be practised for a while; he rayseth up some persecution, tribulation, or crosses, whereby it is presently blasted, withers; and comes to nothing. The uncleane spirit may for a time goe out of a man, and walke throughout drie places; but if it be possible, he will returne with seven other spirits worse than himselfe: and the end of that man, is worse than the beginning. A man may flye from the pollution and filthinesse of the World, as it is, 2 Pet. 2. 20. but by the policie of Sathan, hee may be tangled againe therein: He may be washed (as it is in the same place) for a while, and yet after wallow againe in the myre of sinne: He may be endued with an inferior sanctification of the Spirit, Heb. 10. 29. and yet after, by the malice of Sathan, tread under foot the Sonne of God: Hee may have a generall participation of the Holy-Ghost,

Sathan would hinder perseverance.

Math. 13.

Math. 12. 43.

2 Pet. 2. 20.

Heb. 10. 29.

Ghost, *Heb. 6. 4.* and yet after a time fall away, to the very despiting of the Spirit of Grace. I speake not this, as though that any once effectually called, truly sanctified, possessed of the state of grace, and enrolled among the Saints, can possibly become a cast-away; it cannot bee: for if once by the power of speciall grace, a man be built upon the Rocke; not the Gates of Hell, not all the powers of Darkenesse, nor strongest assaults of Satan, shall ever prevaile against him. Heaven and Earth shall sooner be removed, than any of Gods servants. For if Gods eternall Decree of Election be unchangeable; if his Covenant be everlasting, and inviolable; if his Truth cannot change, nor his Mercie faile, nor his Power be weakened; if the sacred Seale of the blessed Spirit shall stand; if the precious blood and fervent prayers of *Christ Iesus* can prevaile; if his Scriptures doe not lye, and deceive; if his sanctifying Grace cannot die, and perish; if Himselfe cannot cease to be: then undoubtedly, if a man be once his, he is his for ever; if he be once truly his servant upon Earth, he shall for ever hereafter be a glorious Saint in Heaven. My meaning therefore in this point, is onely this: There is a glimmering Light of the Spirit, some manner of taste of the sweetnesse of Christ, a kind of change, which may be wrought in a man by the preaching of the Word, and yet he not truly and constantly converted, but may by the malice and policie of Satan be repossessed by uncleane spirits, and repolluted with the filthinesse of the World.

*Heb. 6. 4.**Math. 16. 18.*

Difference
betweene a
false and sa-
ving change.

Gen. 19. 26.

Thus we may discern this changeable change (that I may so speake) and the saving change of Gods servants: If, after we have given our Names to Christ, and begun to professe and practise sinceritie, we passe on, and continually grow in grace, and stand for Gods honour and service, against all commers, friends or foes, losse or disgrace, oppression or slanders, men or devils; why then, undoubtedly, we have the sanctifying Spirit of God, and saving grace; which makes his Children like Trees betwixt the Rivers of Waters, fruitfull in goodnesse, and as bold as Lyons, in good causes. But, if after wee have begun well, wee looke backe with *Lots* Wife; if wee fall in love againe with those sinnes which wee have forsaken; if Rubbes and Crosses in the World, will turne us out of the way to Heaven; and our righteousness be but as the Morning Dew, which a little heat of Persecution will drie up: why then, our change was changeable, and not that of Gods children. The Seed of the Word, which wee received with joy, was never deeply rooted in good and honest hearts; wee were onely temporarie Converts, not new creatures; temporizing Professors, not true Christians; and our End is like to be worse than our Beginning; and our Plagues more, than if we had never begun.

Let every man take heed then, in the Name of God, lest by the traines and temptations of *Sathan* he be turn'd backe againe from any good course; lest after he be washed, he wallow againe in the myre of worldlinesse, and worldly vanities;
and

and after hee hath escaped the filthinesse of the World, lest he be againe entangled therein. Let us beware of longing after those sinnes, which we begun in some measure to reforme; let us not lust againe after the flesh-pots of Ægypt, like the Israelites, after we be in some good sort enlarged from the bondage of sinne, and tyrannie of the hellish *Pharoah*. *Lots Wife* being delivered out of *Sodome*, was surpris'd with a sensuall remembrance of the pleasures and vanities of the place which shee had left, of the ease and prosperitie which shee there enjoyed; and so look'd backe upon it: But shee was therefore presently turned into a Pillar of Salt, *Gen. 19.26.* there for ever to be a monument and fearefull spectacle of Gods terrible judgements against all back-sliders. If the uncleane spirit be cast out of a man by some degrees of reformation, and good beginnings of amendment of life, and have after leave and libertie to returne; he brings with him seven Devils worse than himselfe, and makes a man farre worse than he was before. Much better were it for any man never to have knowne or stept into the way of righteousness, than afterward to turne from the holy Commandement of God, and out of a course of Christianitie. It is a fearefull Curse, to continue in hardnesse of heart, prophanenesse of life, and sinfull courses: But to leave them for a little, and to sinke backe againe, is to have *Gods Curse* bitter against them, if they repent not, and the fire of Hell made more hot for them. First, sicknesses are curable; but relapses are very dangerous,

(h 4)

2 Pct. 2. 21.

Heb. 6. 4, 6.

gerous, if not irrecoverable. *If a man* (as it is Heb. 6.) *hath once beene enlightened, and then fall away, it is impossible to be renewed by repentance.* I know that place principally to be understood of the highest degree of Apostacie, and falling away; but hee that falls away from any good course, and good beginnings, falls towards that irrecoverable fall, and makes himselfe more incapable of repentance, than if he never had been enlightened, or stept into the way of Truth: And it is just with God, to punish such with a reprobate sense, and hearts *that cannot repent.*

Rom. 2. 5.

It then deeply and neerely concernes us; for once wee have felt the sweetnesse of Grace, and *tasted of the Powers of the world to come;* to drinke deeper of the Waters of Life, and to *follow hard towards the marke, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Iesus.* When wee feele any good motions and purposes arise in our hearts, let us labour to follow them, to nourish them, to blow them up, to make a fire of them; lest they onely but make a flash, and passe away as the Lightning. Let us put them in practise with zeale, and constancie, that we be not as the unfaithfull Waters, which in the Summer are dried up; or as the dead Trees, which perish in Winter: but that we remaine whole and sound, pure and perfect, as the living Waters and Olives of the Lord, that ever shed forth their sweetnesse and fatnesse. Let us make a Covenant, even a *Covenant* (as the Scripture speaketh) of Salt, durable, and perpetuall, with the Lord, to live before him in holinesse

2 Cor. 13. 5.

holinesse and righteousnesse all the dayes of our life: For to him that goes through with his holy businesse, that fights the good fight of Faith, finisheth his course, and overcomes; to him, and to him alone; shall all those glorious Blessings be performed, which are promised in the first Chapter of the Revelation: To eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God; Not to be hurt of the second Death; To eat of the Manna which is hid, and to have the white Stone of Victorie given him; To have power given him to rule over Nations, and to be lightened with heavenly brightnesse, like the Morning Starre; To be clothed with white array, (that is, with heavenly Glory,) and to have his Name continued in the Booke of Life; To have a Pillar made in the Temple of God, (that is, a firme and unmoveable place of eternall Glory;) To sup with Christ, and to sit with him upon his Throne for evermore. Thus shall hee bee honoured and crowned with the excellencie, fulnesse, and varietie of all glory, joy, and happinesse, who enters with sinceritie, and couragiously ends his Race of Holinesse, and conquers in his spirituall Fight. But all fearefull men, (as it is, Rev. 21. 8.) who slinke backe for feare of Men, or love of the World, or to serve the Times; all faint-hearted men in the Lords Battails, and that fall away from good beginnings; they shall be punished with unbelievers, with the abominable, with Murthers and Whore-mengers, with Idolaters and Lyars, in the Lake which burnes with fire and Brimstone; which is the second Death.

2 Tim. 4. 7.

Rev. 1.

Rev. 21. 8.

Hee strives, if hee cannot make them to fall totally and finally, that they may fall partially, and as frequently as he can.

Sathans policie.

7 But, if by the grace and mercie of God, we quit our selves like men, and hold on comfortably and constantly in a settled course of godlinesse; yet, for all this, Sathan hath not done: though he can doe us no deadly hurt, yet he will still doe his worst; for his craft and spight is endlesse. If he see there is no hope of bringing us backe againe into his bondage, or making us any more vassals and slaves to sinne; yet he will labour to lay stumbling-blockes in our way, to bring us upon our knees: now and then, to turne us out of the right path; sometimes, even to over-turne us with some greater and more dangerous fall; hee will lay his traines to intrap and intangle us, if it be possible, in some old sweet sinne: Which, that hee may bring about, hee will use the benefit and advantage of custome, because before our calling, wee have much practised it; of the frailtie of our owne corruptions, because they have most delighted in it; of our old companie, because wee have formerly ofteneft committed it with them. He will leave no opportunitie, advantage, or circumstance omitted, and unassayed, to hale us back into one or other speciall sinne, of our unregeneration. If this will not stop, hee will follow all occasions, enticements, and temptations, the tide of our owne affections, the streame of the times, if by any meanes hee can cast us into some grosse and scandalous sinne. These are Sathans plots and practises against those, who hold on in a constant course of holinesse: if they will not bee brought to tumble themselves againe in the myre
of

of sinne, and sinfull pleasures, yet he will doe what hee can, now and then, to spot and staine their Christian lives with some grieuous fall, or other; that so, to his utmost, hee may bring upon them Gods disfavoure, and angry countenance, disgrace and disconceit amongst their brethren, discomforts and feares of heart within themselves. But if a man, first, by keeping fresh in his minde the uncertainties and vanities of this vaine World: secondly, by carefull and continuall watching over his deceitfull heart: thirdly, by exercising and practising with diligence and delight, all holy meanes of preserving grace, and starving sinne; as reading, hearing, conference, meditation of the Word of God; Prayer, publike and private; with himselfe, and with his family: fourthly, by declining prophane, unprofitable, and unchristian companie, and acquaintance; and frequenting, with joy and fruit, the fellowship of the Saints: fifthly, by an humble entertainment, nourishment, and practice of the good motions of the Spirit: sixthly, by a dayly examination of the state of his Conscience, and reparation of the decays of Grace: seventhly, by his godly jealousy over little sinnes, and present renewing repentance after every slip. I say, if by such meanes as these (which are notable preservatives against the poyson of sinne) a man fence himselfe from grosse and scandalous falls; or else, if by the politike malice of Sathan, and weakenesse of his owne flesh, he be overtaken with some fouler sinne; and yet notwithstanding, besides pangs of griefe, and
anguish

Preservatives
against sinne,
whereby Gods
children keepe
themselves
from grosse
falls.

1

2

3

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* See *Gouge*,
p. 171, 172.

The good that
they get by
their falls.

anguish of spirit, for grieving his gracious God, hee looke better to his feet, and run faster in the Race of sanctification after his fall; if his falling into sinne teach him these good lessons, which in such cases are ordinarily learned of all true Christians; for all things, even * sinne it selfe, makes to the best in Gods Children.

1 Hee learnes by his fall, to distaste his pride, and selfe-conceit, to let fall his Peacockes traine, and despaire of his owne strength.

2 To depend only upon God, the Word of his Grace, and the power and perpetuall influence of his Spirit, for his standing upright in the wayes of Righteousnesse, and preservation from most fearefull and dangerous downe-falls.

3 To cling closer about him; to claspe faster hold with the hand of faith upon the glorious Passion and meritorious justice of Christ; with much heartinesse and zeale to seeke and sue unto him for his speciall aide and assistance against Satans temptations, his owne corruptions, and outward occasions of sinne.

4 To blush and be ashamed of himselfe; for that he having had his soule washed with the precious blood of Christ, and having received so great favour, mercy, and pardon at the hands of God, yet hath wretchedly and unthankfully defiled it againe; and so wofully and wickedly abused his extraordinary love and kindnesse.

5 With more resolute vow, protestation, and practice, to renounce and abandon Satan; with more perfect hatred, and detestation, to loath and abhorre

abhorre all manner of sinne; *the Garment spotted of the flesh, and all appearance of evill.*

Jude 23.
1 Theff. 5. 22.

6 To become watchfull, and wise; by taking speciall notice of all the motives, temptations, meanes, occasions, baites, allurements to that sinne, into which hee fell; for the avoiding and declining of it afterwards.

7 To thinke charitably of other men, that fall, and are suddenly overtaken in any offence; not to be too eager, hot, and censorious against them; but out of his owne experience, to give them comfort, instructions, and directions, and to labour to restore them with the spirit of meeke-nesse. Now, I say, if a man be either fore-armed and fenced (as I said) from falls; or else, after his fall, weepe bitterly, repent sincerely, watch afterward more carefully, walke more zealously; and out of his spirituall wisdom, make that use and benefit of his fall, as I have told you: then hee may have comfort, that Sathan gets no great advantage this way.

8 Like a fierce cruell Dragon, sith he cannot devoure the Womans Child so soone as ever it is brought forth; that is, he cannot repossesse and reigne againe in a true Christian and regenerate man, brought forth by the power of the Word, in the Wombe of the Church; he therefore casteth out of his mouth, after him, floods of outward crosses and vexations. If he cannot wound him in his soule, yet he will vex him in his body, goods, and good name: if he cannot hinder him of Heaven, he will give him little rest or quiet upon

He sends forth floods of persecution and affliction after them.

Rev. 12. 4, 15.

upon Earth : if hee cannot bring him into disgrace and disfavour with God, he will be sure to rayse him hatred enough, malice, and discountenance amongst men : He will doe his worst, to fill and loade him with all outward discomforts and discouragements ; as povertie, sicknesse, slanders, scoffings, raylings, reproaches, contempts, and a thousand other persecutions.

Comfortable considerations against afflictions.

I

From Gods Decree, the example of the Saints, and the Sonne of God himselfe.
Ast. 14. 22.

But in such cases as these, let every child of God comfort, refresh, and hold himselfe in heart, cheare, and courage, by such considerations as these.

First, it is a Decree of Heaven, resolved upon and ratified by the Lord our God, confirmed by the experience of all the Patriarkes and Prophets, of the Apostles and professors of Christ, of all the Saints and servants, nay, and of the Sonne of God himselfe ; that, *through many tribulations wee must enter into the Kingdome of Heaven.* So often therefore as wee shall see any miseries or afflictions comming towards us, for our profession of sinceritie, and righteousnesse sake ; let us acknowledge them to be as so many most certaine and infallible markes, that we are in the right way to Heaven : through which, if we but walke a little further with patience, we shall descry a Crowne of Glory, which is our owne for ever ; of which, all the afflictions and pressures of a thousand Worlds are not nere worthy.

Rom. 8. 18.

2

From the gracious effects of afflictions, for our good.

Secondly, though by this meanes, by these outward crosses and afflictions, Sathan dischargeth upon us the very gall of his bitterness, the poyson of his malice, and arrowes of his spight ; yet, by the

the mercifull and medicinall hand of God, they are returned upon his owne head, they strike through the heart of sinne, and become as precious restoratives, to repaire in us the decayes of spirituall life: for in Gods children, crosses and afflictions have these worthy effects and workings.

1 They start us out of our securitie, carelesse, and coldnesse, which by little and little may grow upon the best: They breed in us a conceit and sense of our owne wants, and the necessitie of Gods providence and protection: They adde Oyle unto the flame of our first love, put life into our religious exercises, and power and spirit into our prayers.

They make us watchfull, &c.

2 They curbe and controule the pride, insolencie, and impatiencie of our nature: They coole and kill the heat, headlongnesse, and intemperancie of our affections: They weaken indeed the whole old *Adam* in us, with all his lusts, concupiscence, and venome; but give strength to the new man, with all his godly and gracious motions, holy and heavenly actions.

Humble, &c.

3 They make us with indignation to spit in the very face of this vaine, deceitfull, and flattering World; the temporall love of which, is the eternall losse both of bodies & soules in the other World: They happily weane us from the love of it; and make us willing to part with her paps; to bid all her enticements adiew, and to trample under feet the fading pleasures & vanities thereof: they make us to teare our groveling hearts, and rent our dull affections from the Earth, to which they cleave;
and

To contemne the World.

and are glued so fast, and to life up both our heads and hearts to Heaven, and to the glory which is to be revealed, longingly to desire the comming of Christ, the Life that lasteth, and to be clothed with our House, which is from above.

To see further into the mysterie of godlineſſe.

4 Lastly, they are as sharpe and precious eyesalves, to cleare and enlarge the spirituall sight of our soules, too much dimmed and darkened with earthly dust, and with gazing too long on the painted glory of the World; that so wee may see further into the great mysterie of godlineſſe, deeper into the masse and dunghill of our owne corruptions and frailties, wider upon the vanities of the World, and higher into the happineſſe of Heaven, and that great Beautie, Glory, and Majestie above: They serve unto us as fowre Sawces, and bitter Wormewood, to bring us out of love with our sweet finnes, and to breed a distaste in our mouth against transitorie delights: They are as sharpe pruning-knives, to lop and cut away the excesses, vanities, and unnecessarie cares that grow upon us; and so to trimme us, that wee may bring forth more profitable, plentifull, and fairer fruits in godlineſſe and Christianitie.

Thus Sathan is disappointed in his plots, and policie; his malice makes a medicine for our soules: hee purposeth and hopes, by crosses and afflictions to turne us backe, or make us wearie in our course of holineſſe; but by the mercy of God, they become as spurres, to pricke us forward in our Christian Race; and as hedges to keepe us in, from wandering out of the way.

bus

Now,

Now, in a third place; That Gods child may not too much be cast downe, or put out of heart, for crosses and persecutions rayfed against him for a profession, and the practise of sinceritie; let him consider, that howsoever Sathan and wicked men be the instruments, and executioners, which maliciously procure, and immediately inflict miseries and vexations upon the children of God; though they be the meanes to lay tortures and torments upon their bodies, crosses and losses upon their goods and outward estates, spots and impression and crueltie upon the face of their harmelesse innocencie, slanders and disgraces, imputations and staining aspersions upon their reputations and good names; sometimes terrors, temptations, and amazements upon their minds: Yet in all these, our gracious God hath the chiefe stroke, a principall hand, and the greatest sway; he directs, limits, and moderates the rage and furie of all our enemies, whether they be Devils or men, as it pleaseth him; and ever certainly to the singular good of his children, if they be patient and faithfull. *Miserie (saith Job, chap. 5. 6.) commeth not forth of the Dust, neither doth afflictions spring out of the Earth.* Neither indeed, principally and originally from Man, the Lord of the Earth; nor from the Prince that rules in the Aire; nor from the Host of Heaven: God himselfe is the chiefe commander, guider, and director of all vexations, and ill of punishment that befalls any man; and inflicts it, for our sinnes and corruptions, upon the reprobates, as

3
Though Satan and his instruments be the instrument to afflict, yet God is the principall Agent, who will order all for their good.

Job 5. 6.

appeares in *Pharoah*, for their further hardening and confusion; upon his elect, for their conversion and correction.

Let us then, in all our sufferings and afflictions, stirred up against us for sticking to sinceritie, and keeping a good Conscience; lift up our eyes to the mightie Lord of Heaven and Earth: who, by the strong Arme of his Omnipotencie, holds fast in a Chaine, *Sathan*, that raging Lion, and great *Goliath*, that hee cannot stirre one Linke further than hee will give him leave; hee cannot goe a haire breadth beyond his Commission: Nay, and that which hee is suffered to doe, makes one way or other for our farre greater good. Let us consider, what a loving and tender-hearted Father hath us under his correction; and holds in his hand the furie of *Sathan*, the malice of men, the power and particular stings of all creatures; as Rods and Scourges, to reforme and amend us; to keepe us in a course of holinesse, and in the right way to Heaven. His fatherly love and tenderheartednesse unto his, and such as feare him, doth in dearenesse and unchangeablenesse as farre surpasse the most compassionate bowels of any earthly father, as God surpasseth man; and, an infinite nature, a finite creature. The kindnesse of a mother to her child, is nothing to that love which God beareth to a true Christian. *A mother may forget her child, and not have compassion upon the sonne of her wombe.* But God neither can, nor will forget him. The stonie Rockes and Mountaines sticke fast and sure unto their foundations; but
Gods

Gods love to his child, is farre surer and sounder. The Mountaines shall remove, and the Hills shall fall downe (saith God by *Isaiah*) but my Mercie shall not depart from thee; neither shall the Covenant of my Peace fall away, saith the Lord, that hath compassion on thee. Can any man stoppe the course of the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres? Can hee change the Seasons of the Day and the Night? No more can any creature, or a world of creatures, stoppe and turne aside the streames of Gods endlesse mercies and favours to his faithfull servants. If you can change (saith God by *Jeremie*) if you can change the courses of the Sunne, and of the Moone, and of the Starres; if you can breake my Covenant of the Day, and my Covenant of the Night, that there should not be Day and Night in their season; then may my Covenant be broke unto David, my servant; then will I cast off all the Seed of Israel: *Ier. 31. 33.* You may therefore make sure of it; every sanctified and sincere man is ever in Gods sight, for his good and preservation; hee is graven upon the palme of his hand, hee is set as a Signet upon his arme, and as a Scale upon his heart. God is ever farre more sensible, tender, and compassionate of the sighes, teares, and miseries of his children, than any man can be of the pricking of the precious ball and apple of his owne eye. Wee have his Promise, sealed with the precious bloud of his owne Sonne, bound with an Oath; That so, by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible that God should lye, wee might have strong consolation; That, hee will never faile and forsake his; That, hee

Isa. 54. 10.

Ier. 31. 33.

Isa. 49. 16.

Cant. 8. 6.

Zach. 2. 8.

Heb. 6. 18.

Heb. 13. 5.

1 Cor. 10. 13.

will never lay more upon them, than hee will make them able to beare. Hee gives them comfort in all their afflictions, deliverance from them, and benefit by them. In all troubles, hee most certainly either quite frees them; or graciously preserves them, in them; so farre as is best for his glory, and their good; and usefull for the Church, and his other children.

Let no child of God then be dismayed or discouraged for any crosses, slanders, or persecutions, which befall him for his profession, and practice of holinesse and sinceritie. Though Sathan hath his worke in them, and prophane and wicked men a part; yet our gracious God, so loving and tender-hearted a Father, hath the principall stroake and chiefe finger in them: Sathans worke, and end is, to vex and discourage.

*It is evermore the worke of the Devill, (saith one of the * ancient Fathers) that hee may with Eyes teare the servants of God; and by false Opinions spread concerning them, may defame their glorious name; that such as are bright in the light of their owne Conscience, may be darkened and disgraced by the reports of others.*

Wicked and prophane men, because they are in Darkenesse, and their workes are evill, they cannot endure the children of Light, and their holinesse of life. For this is the root and fountaine of all their malice and crueltie; as appears, 1 Ioh. 3. 12. *Cain slew his brother; and wherefore slew he him? Because his owne workes were evill, and his brothers*

* Cyprian. Epist.
ad Antonian.
lib. 4. 20.

Why the wicked hate and persecute the godly.

1

1 Ioh. 3. 12.

thers good. Hence growes and springs all the furie and rage, all the wrongs and slanders, which are wont to be layd on true Christians : They are hated even for their very goodnesse, and because they will not runne with the wicked unto the same excesse of riot : They are filled with contempt and reproach, with the mockings of the wealthy, and despightfulnesse of the proud, because they will not sweare, swagger, lye, poure in strong drinke, prophane the Sabbaths, follow the fashions and corruptions of the Times. In a word, because they will not be prophane in this World, and damned in the World to come. And besides, I know not how, wicked men thinke, that by the commonnesse of sinne, their sinfull courses become more commendable; and, that the multitude of offenders makes them more excusable, and their offences pardonable. *It is the comfort* (saith an ancient * Father) *of evill men, to carpe at the good; thinking, that by the great number of offenders, the guilt of their faults is diminished and abated.*

But Gods worke and end, in all false reports unjustly raysed against his children, and in other crosses whatsoever; is to stirre up and revive in them zeale, devotion, and faithfulnessse, in praying, praying, and serving him; to purge out of them the drosse and relickes of some old sinne; to humble them, and to bring them to a true denying of themselves; to trie their faith, patience, and constancie; or for their greater good, one way or other.

1 Pet. 4. 4.

2

* Jerome.

Gods aime in his childrens afflictions.

4

Afflictions are
no strange
things.

The Saints
have gone
before us.

Heb. 11. 36, 37.

Nay, Christ
himselfe.

Math. 20. 23.

Math. 10. 16.

A fourth consideration, whereby the true Christian may be kept in heart and comfort against all crosses and calumniationes which hee shall meete with, in his course of holinesse and sanctification, is this: It is no strange thing that doth befall him, when he is persecuted for sinceritie; but the very beaten way to Heaven, trodden by all such feet, as ever walked in faith and obedience. *Abel* begun in this Cup of Persecution, and vexation, for his service to God; to all those who would give their Names to Christ, or fight under his Banner to the Worlds end. The Patriarkes and Prophets, and holy men of old, followed and pledged him: They were tryed by mockings and scourgings, by bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were hewen asunder, they were tempted, they were slaine with the sword; they wandered up and downe in Sheepes-skins, and Goats-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented; whom the World was not worthe of; they wandered in Wilderneses, and Denes, and Caves of the Earth. Nay, Christ Iesus himselfe, the Sonne of God, and our blessed Saviour, drunke deepe and large of this Cup; it was the Baptisme wherewith he was baptized. His Apostles and Disciples followed; they endured all the bloudie and mercilesse cruelties, which fierce and furious Wolves are wont to inflict upon silly and harmelesse Sheepe: for they were sent out into the World, as Sheepe amongst Wolves. There come after, and drinke of the same Cup, millions of blessed men and women, under the primitive Persecutions: Of which, some were scalded,

scalded, some burned, some broyled, some hanged, some beheaded, some throwne downe from rockes upon stakes, some stabbed in with forkes, some racked, and torne in pieces, their tongues cut out, their eyes bored out, their flesh twitched off with Pinsons, womens breasts seared off with hot yrons, pricked under the nayles with Needles, and a thousand more wayes tormented, with as great varietie and exquisitenesse, as politike malice could devise, and prophane crueltie execute. If wee passe along from thence; even to these Times; yea, and if our eyes were so enlightened, that we could looke upon the state of Gods children, and their way to Heaven, even to the Worlds end; we should ever be able to trace them along by the teares of Brine, and blood, which are powdered out and spilt for the profession of Gods Truth, and practice of holinesse. This then is, was, and ever will be, the lot and portion of all those who are fitting and preparing for Heaven. They are ever persecuted one way, or other. If by reason of the milde and peaceable Times, they fight not unto blood, and passe the fierie Triall; yet they shall have their troubles, oppressions, and disgraces; at least, they shall be ever sure to be payd home with the scourge of tongues: they shall be loaden with slanders, and false reports; they shall be made a gazing-stocke, a by-word, and Table-talk; a scorne, reproach, and derision to them that are round about them: as *David* was, *Psal.*

Psal. 79. 4.

79. 4. Which being so, why should not a common case, in the cause of God, breed a common

comfort in true Christians? Why should any of them thinke much to drinke of the same Cup, that the dearest Saints and soules, now blessed with the Lord, have begun to them in; and of which, all that will be saved, even to the last day, must taste, and follow? Why should any man, that truly loves God, or lookes for the joyes of the other World, seeke or desire a priviledge above all the children of God, that ever were; and even above the Sonne of God himselfe, Christ Iesus? Most unworthy is hee of the glorious comforts of Grace, of the inward Peace, that passeth all understanding, and of that Glory which is to be revealed; who, for a slanderous tale, a lying tongue, a reproachfull tearme, or the feare and face of any mortall man, slinkes back from a bold profession of sinceritie, and from the true service of the living God.

In sufferings and afflictions for Gods cause, there is not onely matter of patience, but even occasion of glory. They are like starres in the forehead, honourable maimes, conformities to Iesus Christ, Liveries of a Christian souldier.

Fifthly, let him consider, that his momentanie crosses and afflictions cause an exceeding and everlasting weight of glory. Let his vexation be never so grievous, his persecutors never so great, and mightie; neither they, nor that, can last long. For the life of man, and all the glory thereof, doth passe away like a Ship in the Water, whose tract cannot be scene againe; like an Arrow through the aire, or a Weavers Shuttle through his worke;

like

2. Cor. 4. 17.

Afflictions are but short, and they worke a weight of glory.

like a fading Flower, suddenly plucked up and withered, like Grasse, like Smoake, like a Dreame, like a Bubble of the Water. Though a Christian therefore be never so deeply plunged into * mi-
 series, he shall abide but a while under the waters of affliction; the day of redemption cannot be farre off. Though he should passe through the teeth of wilde Beasts, upon the sword of the Tyrant, through the flames of fire; though his braines should be dasht against the walls, his limbes lye scattered in the streets, and his blood runne downe every channell: yet shall he, ere it be long, gloriously rise againe, in despight of all the powers of Darkenesse, and bloudinesse of cruell men. Hee shall entirely be restored, by the mightie and immediate hand of God; hee shall be clothed with Light, and immortalitie; his blood shall be re-
 venged, and *all teares wiped from his eyes*; and there shall be set upon his head a Crowne of everlasting joy, peace, and happinesse.

Sixtly, comfort unspeakable, and glorious; may spring up in the heart of Gods child, amidst his sufferings for the cause of God, out of a consideration, That in all afflictions, without excep-
 tion; Christ suffereth with him. *Paul* was the mirror and miracle of all Christians, for the variety and gloriousnesse of his sufferings; you may see a strange and unmatched Catalogue of them; *2 Cor. 11. 23. &c.* He was in stripes above measure, plenteously in prison, in death oft. Of the Jewes, five times received hee fortie stripes, save one; he was thrice beaten with Rods, he was
 once

* As many times they are. See *David*, *Psal. 69. 1, 2.*

Rev. 7. 17.

6

Christ doth suffer and sympathize with his children in affliction. See *1sa. 63. 9.*

2 Cor. 11. 23, &c.

once stoned, he suffered thrice shipwracke; night and day was he in the deepe Sea: In journeying, he was often; in perils of Waters, in perils of Robbers, in perils of his owne Nation, in perils among the Gentiles, in perils in the Citie, in perils in the Wildernesse, in perils in the Sea, in perils among false Brethren; in wearinesse, and painefulnesse; in watching often; in hunger, and thirst; in fastings often; in cold, and in nakednesse. Yet all these, and what other crosses and afflictions befell him, he calls and accounts them the sufferings and afflictions of Christ. *Now (saith Paul, Col. 1. 24.) now rejoyce I in my sufferings for you; and fulfill the rest of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his Bodies sake, which is the Church. And 2 Cor. 1. 5. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth through Christ. Lazarus, in all his povertie, contempt, sicknesse, sores, or what other miseries, suffered nothing wherein Christ was not partaker of his grieffe and sorrow. So sweet and blessed a consent and sympathie is there betwixt Christ, the Head, and all true Christians, his members; that so long as the great mysteric of that mysticall Vnion stands true and sure, (which is for ever) all holy men, and servants of God, in all their sufferings for the Name of Christ, profession of his Truth, and practice of sinceritie, shall have Christ himselfe partner and partaker of their miseries; which is able to refresh the heaviest heart, in the greatest extremities.*

I have stayed long upon this point; to wit, how Sathan labours might and maine, by crosses and

Col. 1. 24.

2 Cor. 1. 5.

and slanders, to discourage Gods child, and to stop his course in the wayes of righteousness; and in laying downe some comforts against them: because thousands, at the very first entrance, or after some small continuance, are wofully turned backe from grace, and sinceritie, by temptations, reproaches, and troubles rayfed against them; by their owne rebellious flesh, Sathan, and prophane men.

Now, in a ninth place, if all this will doe no good; if the heat of persecution inflame the zeale of the true Christian; if reproaches and afflictions be so farre from daunting and dulling his forwardnesse, that they set an edge upon his affections, and adde strength to his resolution, in proceeding in the glorious state of Christianitie: Why then, the last sleight and temptation of Sathan, to hinder the sanctifying power and successe of the Word, and to make it fruitlesse and unprofitable, is spirituall Pride; which, by his malicious cunning, and hellish Alchymie, hee extracts even out of his graces and vertues; out of such sweet flowers, he rayfes poyson: and sith he cannot keepe goodnesse utterly out of the soule, he uses it selfe as an instrument, to weaken & wound it selfe. For when a man is most endued and enriched with extraordinarie gifts, holy graces, and spirituall strength; Sathan seekes most busily to make him proud of them, and to puffe him up with an over-weening conceit of his owne worth; that so himselfe may lose the comfort of them, his brethren the fruit of them, and God the glory of

9
Satan hinders
the working of
the Word, by
spiritual Pride.

of them. This spirituall Pride, is the same in our corruptions and sinfull affections, that the Shirt is in our Clothing; that is to say, it fits the closest unto us, and is last put off: *it is the white Devill* (as a worthy Divine calls it.) That sinne doth lye, and insensibly insinuate it selfe; and lurkes amid our graces, and good actions, as a dead Fly in the Apothecaries Ointment. It is, as it were, Sathans last intrenchment, which hee holds the longest, and with most resolute and desperate pertinacie, and is hardiest driven out; much spirituall wisdome, a great measure of humilitie, and the whole Armour of God is required to this combate. For he is so endlesse, and exercised in the point; that, if we be so humble, that he cannot make us proud of any thing else, he will labour to make us proud even of our humilitie; and proud, that we are not proud of our gifts.

Except a Christian continually and carefully watch over his heart, and guard it with humilitie, and a lowly conceit of himselfe; this privie Pride may steale upon him, before he be aware.

And first, it may spring out of a consideration of the excellencie of his estate, and the varietie of his peculiar blessings, and speciall priviledges, which the ungodly men neither can, nor doe enjoy. For when he is once translated from Darknesse to Light, from prophanenesse to sinceritie, from Nature to Grace; out of the Dominion of Sathan, into the Kingdome of Christ, by the great worke of regeneration: hee is presently *made partaker of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. hee

Spirituall
Pride may
arise in Gods
children.

I

From a confi-
deration of
their priviled-
ges.

Priviledges of
the godly.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

is entitl'd, by the right of the Sonne of God, to an inheritance immortall, and undefil'd, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the Heavens for him. While hee is thus looking upon himselfe, possessed of this happinesse, and planted in this glorious Paradise; Sathan is secretly blowing the coales of his hidden corruption, to enkindle and rayse there-out an over-weening conceit of his owne worth, and to puffe him up with pride of his owne gifts and graces; whence may ensue two foule and hatefull inconveniences: For so hee may grow by little and little to justifie himselfe too much, whereby Gods glory may be lessened and darkened; and to despise his Brethren, whereby his exercise of charitie may be hindered.

This spirituall Pride may occasionally, and by accident, spring out of a godly and gracious care, to keepe and preserve himselfe unspotted and undefil'd in his happy and glorious state of grace, and regeneration. For while he is easting with himselfe, and concluding upon some sound and substantiall course of holinesse and obedience in the wayes of godlinesse; Sathan labours might and maine, to draw him to a singularitie of unwarrantable conceits and opinions; that by a tedious and unnecessarie pursuit and possession thereof, he may keepe him cold and uncomfortable in the practice of the chiefe and most materiall duties of Christianitie; and to make him place the height of Religion, and heat of zeale, in continuall conference and most peremptorie defence

1 Pet. 1.4.

2
From their care, to keepe themselves undefil'd.

Against separation from our Church.

defence of some groundlesse fancies; from whence Sathan busily strives to toll him out, to separation. Which course of separating from, and condemning our Church, in the judgement of our sincerest Divines, is full of pride, contention, and confusion.

1 For first, certaine it is, our Church, in that most exquisite and worthy confession of Faith contained in the Articles of Religion, doth hold and professe all substantiall points of Divinitie as soundly, as any Church in the World, none excepted, neither in this Age, nor in the primitive times of the Church.

2 Secondly, it hath communion with, and testimonie of all other true Churches.

3 Thirdly, in it are to be had the meanes of salvation, in a powerfull and plentifull manner: and in the bowels thereof, even they that goe out of our Church, if they be truly converted, received that precious and blessed vigour, which is able to quicken them to eternall life.

4 Fourthly, a Church may be a true Church, though it should have spots, and blemishes; though there be some Swine and Dogges in it. In *S. Pauls* time, the Corinthians were called the Church of God, *1 Cor. 1. 1, 2*. And yet, at that very time, were some in an Heresie, some in Incest, some that had not repented of their filthinesse, *2 Cor. 12. 20, 21*. The like may be said of the Churches of Asia, *Rev. 2. 3*.

Fifthly, though outward prosperitie, worldly honour, and plentie, be rather the lot of false, hereticall,

hereticall, and Apostaticall Churches, than an individuall and necessary mark of the true Church; yet, if unto our unparallel'd Peace, both for duration and entirenesse, we adde our many and miraculous deliverances, strange defeatments, and preventions of Popish Plots; of their Bulls, Conspiracies, and hostile Invasions; of their Powder, Poysons, Daggers, Dags, and all manner of execrable attempts, machinations, and underminings, which either Hell could devise, or that desperate and bloody Faction adventure upon, and manage: I say, if all these be put together, and well weighed; it is impossible, but that wee should therein see, acknowledge, and adore the speciall finger of Gods holy providence, upholding his owne Arke amongst his owne people; and pointing out to all the World, the truth of that Church, upon whose side, and for whose safetie and glory hee so mightily stands. This most extraordinarie grace and favour of Divine assistance, having not in one thing, or two, shewed it selfe, nor for some few dayes or yeeres appeared; but in such sort, so long continued, our manifold sinnes and transgressions striving to the contrary: What doth it else import, or what can wee lesse thereupon conclude, than that God would thereby tell and teach the World, That the thing which hee blefseth, defendeth, and keepeth so strangely, cannot but be of him; and his saving and sacred Truth?

Ill doe they then, who transported with a pang of spirituall Pride, abandon, forsake, and separate from

from our Church, as though Gods true worship and salvation were not there to be found. You see how Sathan by spirituall Pride may carry and cast a man, from a setled and sound course of holinesse and sinceritie, upon the dangerous Rockes of singularitie and separation. But understand me aright, what I meane by singularitie. I meane that onely which ariseth out of privie Pride, is upholden by selfe-will, and obstinatenesse, and many times ends in separation; and hath neither ground nor defence from sound judgement, spirituall wisdome, or true tenderesse of Conscience, joyned with humilitie, and willingnesse to be rightly informed. I meane not singularitie, in respect of holinesse and unspottednesse of life, in respect of difference and distance from the sinfull fashions of the times: For in this sense, every man that will save his soule, must be singular. Hence it is, that our Saviour asketh his followers, in *Math. 5.* *what singular thing they doe*, if they doe but as the Publicans doe? As if hee should have said: You that will be Christians, must be of a more heavenly temper, and higher straine, than the most men, and the greater part of the World: You must be singular, and shine as Lights amid a naughtie and crooked generation. Hence is it, that Gods children ever were, and ever will be, *Signes and wonders, Miracles and Monsters*, in the opinion and censure of most, amongst whom they live; gazing stockes, both by reproaches and afflictions, *Heb. 10. 33.* *Behold* (saith *Isaiah, Chap. 8. 18.*) *I and the children whom the Lord hath given*

given me, are as signes and as wonders in Israel, by the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Sion. I am become (saith David) as it were a monster unto many, (or, to the great men of the World, as some render it) *Psal. 71. 7.* And in another Psalme, *Psal. 79. 4.* Wee are a reproach to our neighbours, even a scorne and a derision unto them that are round about us. But especially you may see in *wisd. 2.* (though the Booke be Apocryphall) what is the counsell and conceit of the wicked about the oddenesse and singularitie of the Saints: *Let us defraud the righteous* (say the wicked) *for hee is not for our profit, and hee is contrarie to our doings; hee checketh us for offending against the Law, and blameth us as transgressors of Discipline; hee maketh his boast to have the knowledge of God, and hee calleth himselfe the sonne of the Lord: Hee is made to reprove our thoughts. It grieveth us also to looke upon him: for his life is not like other mens, his wayes are of another fashon; hee counteth us as bastards, and hee withdraweth himselfe from our wayes, as from filthinesse; hee commendeth greatly the latter end of the just, and boasteth that God is his father.*

Psal. 71. 7.
 &
79. 4.

Thus, as Gods children and godly men are indeed more excellent than their neighbours; and singular, in respect of their sanctification and sinceritie: so they are scorned and reviled by the World, and the greater part of men, as odde fellowes, and such as must have wayes by themselves, and a tricke above others. They are pointed at, as matter of scorne and contempt; they are set up, as markes of slander and oppression;

1 Cor. 4. 9.

and gazed upon, as strange creatures. *Wee are made* (sayth Paul, 1 Cor. 4. 9. meaning himselfe, and other of Gods faithfull servants) *a gazing-stocke unto the world, and to the Angels, and to men.* And no marvell though it be so: For, besides that all prophane and unregenerate men are naturally incagered, and intraged with implacable malice and hatred against Gods Children; they are, in all places, but few in number; which makes them more noted, and pointed at.

Gods children
are but few.

That they are but few; besides many certaine demonstrative Reasons out of Scripture; it may thus plainly appeare: as a good Divine tells us.

1 First, let there be taken from amongst us, all Papiests, Atheists, and scorers of godlinesse, and Religion.

2 Secondly, let there be removed all notorious and infamous evill livers; as Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Usurers, Worldlings, Deceivers, proud persons, prophaners of the Sabbath, Gamesters, and all the prophane and ignorant multitude.

3 Thirdly, let all those be passed over, that are but onely civill honest men, and meddle not with any profession, or practise of holinesse; without which, no man must see God.

4 Fourthly, set aside all grosse Hypocrites; who for advantage, or by-respects, are outwardly religious, but inwardly corrupt, hollow-hearted, and abominable.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, let there be sorted out and rejected all carnall Protestants, formall Professors, backsliders, cold and unzealous Christians; who falsely thinke, that they may both enjoy the World, and a good Conscience too; live pleasantly on Earth, and yet save their soules at last; and, that it is not necessarie to hold any such strict course of holinesse, to come to Heaven. Let all these kinde of men, I say, (all which in one measure, or other, are in the state of death, and under the power of Sathan) be separated and shoaled out; and how many doe you thinke will remaine amongst us, sound, sincere, faithfull, and zealous professors, and practisers of saving Truth, the power of Grace, and holy Obedience to all Gods Commandements? For such onely are Gods servants, and in the state of Grace. Let a man come into any Towne, Village, Citie, or Corporation, and let all such men as are before mentioned, be removed; and how many should he finde of these last? They would certainly be thinne scattered, and like the Grapes after the gathering of the Vintage, two or three in the top of the upmost boughes, and foure or five in the high branches. Singularitie then of sanctification, is no fruit of Pride, but an inseparable marke and necessarie state of true Christianitie.

I come now to a third ground, whence Sathan may rayse a temptation to privie Pride: When a man is faithfull, and diligent, in the discharge and executions of his civill calling;

3
Sathan tempts to Pride, by a distasting of a mans particular calling.

hee may cast a conceit into his head, that such base, earthly, and worldly employment, and spending his time, is disgracefull and derogatorie to the providence of God, and his Christian libertie; and, that it hinders him in his calling of Christianitie, and duties of Religion. Whence may follow dangerous effects of spirituall Pride; quite leaving, or neglect, discontent or distaste of his civill calling. And so his heart and affections may bee put quite out of order, and deceive themselves, in the very maine point of making towards Heaven.

4
From Gods
providence.

Examples in
particular.

Sathan, by his subtrill malice, may worke out matter and occasion of spirituall Pride, from the speciall providence of God, conducting the Christian the best and the neere way to Heaven. To give example, in some particulars.

I When God, out of his great wisdom and mercie, humbles him with afflictions and prickes, the swelling of his Pride; when hee cuts and loppes away his vanities, excesses, and superfluties, with some visitation, or other; and fills him with bitterneffe in this life, to the end hee might long for the life to come: Why then, Sathan labours mightily to kindle in his corrupt nature a flash of spirituall Pride, that hee may drive him to grumbling and impatience, and so make Gods fatherly corrections and chastisements fruitlesse and unprofitable to him; which in Gods children should ever worke amendment and comfort.

2 When

2 When the true Christian lookes about him in the World, and sees the wicked spreading themselves like greene Bay-trees, in worldly plentie, and pleasures; Sathan here thrusts in, and labours to cast into his minde a consideration of his owne worth; and that, how in respect of the wicked, he farre more, and rather, deserves the fruition and enjoyment of the creatures, and benefits and comforts of this life: because all wicked men are but usurpers, and intruders; himselfe being a true owner, by the right of Christ Iesus, Lord of the whole Earth: And that, whereas he stands for the glory, service, causes, and children of God; the wicked labour for nothing more, than the disgrace and ruine of goodnesse, and the upholding and enlargement of the Kingdome of Sathan. From such conceits as these, mixed with spirituall, hee easily drawes him on to fretting and repining at the prosperitie of the wicked men, and puts him into one of Davids fits, and pangs, *Psal. 73. 12. Loe* (sayth hee) *these are the wicked, yet prosper they alway, and encrease in riches: Certainly, I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in innocencie.* Or, at least, brings him to question with God; as it is, *Jer. 12. O Lord, if I dispute with thee, thou art righteous; yet let mee talke with thee, of thy Iudgements: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why are all they in wealth, that rebelliously transgresse? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root; they grow, and bring forth fruit.*

Psal. 73. 12.

Jer. 12. 2, 2.

3

3 When the Christian doth presently feele, or after call to minde Gods great mercies, gracious preventions, strange protection, wonderfull deliverances, against expectation, and beyond hope, vouchsafed unto him in his direction and conduction towards the glory that is to be revealed; then doth Sathan busily blow the Bellowes of his corrupt nature with the poysonous breath of his hellish malice, that so hee may puffe him up with spirituall Pride, and exalt him out of measure.

4

4 When he beholds and observes some sudden destruction, or fearefull judgement, to overtake and seize upon his enemies; Sathan may secretly sollicite him, out of a spice of spirituall Pride, to applaud and please himselfe in the ruine and miserie of his adversarie: which, besides the tainture of impietie, tastes deepely also of inhumanitie, and is quite crosse and contrarie to the practice and protestation of holy *Iob, Chap. 31.*

Job 31.

21.

In that Chapter, hee imprecates and invokes upon himselfe many fearefull Curses, if hee hath done so, or so. *Let mine arme (saith he) fall from my shoulder-blade, and let mine arme be broken from the bones, if I have done such and such things.*

29.

And after followes: *If I rejoyced at his destruction that hated me; or was moved to joy, when evill came upon him; or if I have suffered my mouth to speake evill of him, or to utter Curses against him.*

5

5 When the Christian is sadly and heavily musing upon his many troubles and distresses, which many times come thicke and three-fold upon

upon him, as fast and boisterously, as one wave overtakes another; so that he findes one vexation to be still a step unto another: Sathan then hee puts in, and seeing the season advantageous for his feats, and insinuations, workes what he can to make him take on; and out of a proud conceit of better deservings, to be wearie of waiting the Lords leisure; and out of the anguishes and agonies of his heart, to wish and desire death; especially to be rid and freed from those crosses and calamities, which unworthily haunt and persecute his innocencie. Holy *Iob* was strongly assayed with this temptation, *Chap. 3.* when hee cryed and said: *Let the day perissh wherein I was borne; and the night, when it was said, there is a man-child conceived, &c.* And so was the Prophet *Ionah*, *Chap. 4.* Therefore now (saith he) *O Lord, take I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die, than to live.*

*Iob 3. 3.**Ionah 4. 3.*

6 Sometimes, when the Christian is crossed and disappointed in his expectation, God wisely and sweetly diverting, moderating, and disposing all things to his owne glory, and to the true good of his children (though they doe not presently see, and acknowledge it;) Sathan steps in, and by the secret and insensible poyson of privie Pride, labours to suggest unto him, that he is prejudiced and disgraced; that so by his inward fretting, hee may make it plainly appeare, that hee prefers his owne particular credit, before the glory of God. Thus was *Jonas* tempted, in *Chap. 4.* Fearefull destruction was denounced by him from

6

God, against the Ninivites : They put on sack-cloth, humbled themselves, and repented ; God stayes his hand, forbears his Iudgements, which were proclaymed by *Jonah* : Therefore (sayth the Text) *that displeas'd Ionah exceedingly, and hee was angrie ; and hee prayed unto the Lord, and said, &c.*

5
Sathan makes men to pride themselves in their abilities and gifts.

When hee begins to observe, and admire himselfe for some speciall acceptation in Christian companie; for his abilities to pray, conferre, discover temptations; and the Devils depths; to presse an holy precisenesse, and mortifying points, &c. Oh then, too often a wide gap is opened in his deceitfull heart, for the Devils wild-fire of spirituall Pride. So that many times, an humble silent soule doth quickly out-strip such an one, doting dangerously upon his present perfections, in the substantialls of Christianitie.

Thus, and many moe wayes, doth Sathan labour by privie Pride, to weaken the power of Grace, and efficacie of the Word; to staine and disgrace the best Graces and godliest actions; to grieve the good Spirit, and coole their first Love, even in Gods children; after that, by the helpe of God, they have struggled through other temptations, and obtained much spirituall peace and Christian perfection in the doctrine of salvation, and wayes of godlinesse.

Preservatives
against spiri-
tuall Pride.

Before I passe from this point, I would propose some remedies against this swelling spirituall maladie of privie Pride, and some soveraigne considerations, to keepe downe the Christian heart,
and

and to preserve it in the sweet and peacefull state of a gracious humilitie.

First then, let every Christian, when hee first feeles any over-weening conceit, or proud perswasion of his owne worth, and spirituall graces, stealing into his heart; lift up the eyes of his minde, in a divine meditation, unto those brightest and purest eyes of God Almighty; which are ten thousand times brighter than the Sunne, and purer than puritie it selfe: so that they see the least and secretest infirmitie in its true and native foulness, and before them, our best righteousness is as a menstruous clout. If he soundly and sincerely entertaine this consideration, it will so humble him, and keepe him under, that he will rather be affrighted and surprized with feare and terror, for his many frailties and infirmities, than be lifted up with a conceit of his graces, and spirituall endowments.

When hee begins once proudly and selfe-conceitedly to gaze upon that little sparke of holiness hee findes in himselfe; let him presently turne backe the edge and eye of this dangerous speculation, upon the infinite puritie and endlesse perfection of God Almighty; before whom, the Cherubins and Seraphins, the Crowne of Gods workmanship, and the glory of creatures, doe hide and cover their faces, as not able to behold and endure the perfect brightnesse of his most pure and undefiled Majestie. In whose sight, the unstained splendour of the Heavens, and the glorious beautie of the Starres are uncleane, and foule;

1
Meditate upon Gods pure eyes.

Isa. 64. 6.

2
Upon Gods infinite perfection,

Isa. 6. 2.

Iob 25. 5.

foule; darkenesse, and deformitie. The Sunne, the fairest Body in the World, made all of beautie and brightnesse; if it were put neere unto that unaccessible and incomprehensible Light, which encompasseth the Lord of Heaven, it would vanish away as a darke some Moat, and Lumpe of Vanitie. Nay, in respect of God, those divine and heavenly creatures, the blessed Angels, pure and immateriall spirits, are chargeable with folly and vanitie. *Behold, he found no stedfastnesse in his Saints; yea, the Heavens are not cleare in his sight. How much more is man abominable and filthie, which drinketh iniquitie like water? Iob 15. 15, 16.* What art thou then, wretched man, that carriest about thee a Body of death? Shall not his excellencie make thee afraid, and his feare fall upon thee? *Behold (saith Iob) he will give no light unto the Moone, and the Starres are uncleane in his sight: How much more man, a Worme; even the sonne of a man, which is but a Worme? Behold, he found no stedfastnesse in his servants, and laid folly upon his Angels: How much more in them that dwell in Houses of Clay, whose foundation is in the Dust, which shall be destroyed before the Moth? These considerations are able to confound and cast downe below the Earth, and Dust, the greatest admirer and applauder of himselfe, for his graces, good actions, and spirituall perfections.*

Iob 4. 18.

Iob 25. 5, 6.

Iob 4. 18.

3

Compare thy
selfe with o-
ther Christi-
ans.

When the Christian is tempted to a proud conceit of his spirituall sufficiencies; let him compare himselfe with other Saints of God: which (perhaps) having beene lesse sinners than himselfe,

himselfe, in the time of their unregeneration ; and having lesse meanes, parts, occasions, and encouragements to glorifie God : yet excell him in zeale, sanctification, and the service of God. *Paul*, that great Doctor of the Gentiles, and glorious Angell upon Earth, for all his spirituall blessings, and incomparable graces, cries out, *Rom. 7. 24.* *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?* *David*, a man after Gods owne heart, and a speciall royall Mirror for varietie of spirituall excellencies, is so farre from being proud of his graces ; that hee is every where complaining of the burthen of his sinnes, spirituall povertie and want, and the miseries of his soule : *There is no health in my flesh,* (saith he) *because of thy displeasure ; neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sinne : for my wickednesses are gone over my head, and are like a sore burthen, too heauiy for me to beare.* For his reputation in the World, he tells us ; *that he was a worme, and no man ; a very scorne of men, and out-cast of the people.* In all times, the best Christians have ever beene most sensible of the weight of their sinnes, and corruption of their nature ; and from thence, entertained a lowly conceit of themselves. Where there is the greatest measure of sanctification, there is ever the greatest humilitie. If those then that be indeed in the highest favour with God, lesser sinners than our selves, and most sanctified, be of an humble and lowly minde, of a meeke and quiet spirit, which is before God a thing much set by, *1 Pet. 3. 4.* let us take heed how we be proud

*Rom. 7. 24.**Psal. 38. 3.**Psal. 22. 6.**1 Pet. 3. 4.*

of

of those graces; which, if we looke for Gods blessing upon them, and comfort from them, must bring forth in us humilitie and thankfulness.

4
Compare thy
selfe with Gods
holy Law.

Let him compare, and examine, and measure himselfe, his wayes, and workes, by the Law of God; and hee shall there finde much matter of humiliation, repentance, feare, and trembling, with continuall supply in abundance ministred unto him: so that there shall be no roome left for any proud and over-weening conceit of any good thing in him. That elect Vessell, and great Apostle, after he was regenerate, (for the unregenerate feele no such strife) found such a vast and wide distance betweene the Law, and his owne affections, and best workes; that for horror thereof, he cryed out; *Oh miserable man, that I am!* What spirituall good then is there in any of us, miserable wretches, wherein we should glory? Let our best workes be as glorious as we can imagine, let them be performed with never so great integritie and resolution, cover them with grace, derive them from the Holy-Ghost, dippe and dye them deepe in the bloud of Christ, put upon them all the rich attire, and Papall magnificence, with which the Church of Rome hath invested them; yet to the purest eyes of God, and in the cleare Crystall of his undefiled Law, they appeare to be foule, and spotted; impure, and like a menstruous clout. The measuring then of our selves by the Law and Word of God, is a notable meanes to keepe us in humilitie, and to make us *worke out our salvation with feare and trembling.*

Phil. 2. 12.

Let

Let him consider, what a foule and wretched, what a damned and an accursed creature hee had beene; had not his gracious God, out of the unsearchable depth of his infinite goodnesse and mercie, singled him out to be his ~~servant~~ upon Earth, and a Saint in Heaven. It was onely Gods free mercie, that before all eternitie, by the great Decree of his eternall election, marked him out for Heaven and endlesse joyes, from amidst the huge masse of all mankind. It was the same, that after caused him to send his owne and onely Sonne, out of his owne Bosome, and height of Majesty; that with his dearest and precious blood, hee might redeeme his Soule from the snares of Hell, into which hee was fallen, by *Adams* fall: which in due time, by the inward, speciall, and effectuall power of his unspotted Spirit, called him into his Kingdome of Grace, washed him, justified, and sanctified him, in the Name of the Lord Iesus. Else, otherwise, had not these everlasting and unconceivable Blessings beene cast upon him, by Gods free meere mercie, without all cause or motive from man, or any other created thing, out of his infinite Selfe; his case had beene unspeakably wofull: For he should have lived in this Vale of Teares, without God, without Grace, without Comfort, without Conscience; in Sinne, in Darkenesse, in Prophanenesse, in all Spirituall Miseries: And after the closure and period of these *few and evill dayes*, he should have beene endlessly divided and abandoned from the joyes and comforts of Gods presence, in chained

5

Consider what thou hadst beene, if God had left thee to thy selfe.

in chained without all redemption, to despaire and horror, and the hatefull fellowship of the Devill and his Angels: and (that which is the extremitie and upshot of all hellish miserie) hee should have had the fierce and horrible wrath and vengeance of God poured in full measure upon his body and soule; which would have fed upon them, as fire doth upon Pitch and Brimstone, for ever and ever. Out of these considerations, mee thinkes a man should rather with humilitie and thankfulness admire and magnifie the mercies of God, that hee is not alreadie a Fire-brand in Hell; than any wayes be puffed up with any worthinesse in himselfe, or dote upon his owne nothingnesse.

6

Consider the
fearefull effects
of Pride.

When a Christian is tempted to spirituall Pride; let him deeply and thorowly weigh with himselfe, what fearefull inconveniences and discomforts will ensue, if hee give way to such temptations: For so, many follow, in the course of Gods just judgement, upon spirituall Vanitie, and Pride; dullnesse, and deadnesse of heart; a restraint of the influence of the Spirit; a diminution and lessening, or a slumber and cessation of the operations of grace, a cooling of zeale, and falling from the first Love. Or, when hee sees us so presumptuously to trust to our strength, and stay our selves with our owne staffe; he may quite give us over, in some great temptation, to some grosse sinne; so that we may take the foile in the Conflict. And then, if wee once be over-taken with the old sweet sinne of our unregeneration,

Or

or be ensnared with some new notorious transgression; wee must of necessitie, to our great discomfort, enter againe the agonies of Soule, anguish of Conscience, and horror of Hell; wee must enter combate againe with all the powers of Darkenesse; wee must have our regeneration, regenerated; our new-birth, new-borne; and the precious bloud of the Sonne of God, as it were, shed for us againe. Wee turne thereby Gods favourable countenance from us, and the hearts and affections of true Christians: wee put againe a sting into our owne Consciences, and weapons into the hands of Sathan, to vex, wound, and torment us: wee barre and bereave our selves of Gods gracious protection, of the guard of Angels, of peace of Conscience, of joy in the Holy-Ghost, of boldnesse in our wayes, of reconciliation in the creatures, and of all the comforts of godlinesse. As a man tenders the preservation of his Soule, from all these spirituall miseries; let him take heed of entertaining a proud and over-weening conceit of his owne graces, gifts, or good actions.

Let him consider, that the more spirituall gifts and graces he hath received from the free mercie of God, the more will be required at his hands. Me thinkes, this should coole and allay any swelling conceit, or proud perswasion, that may arise in the heart; and not suffer a man to play with them, and dote upon them, or give him any leisure, with an over-weening and selfe-conceited flatterie, to gaze upon them, or to applaud and admire them

7

The more a man hath, the more he is accountable for.

them in himselfe, as though they were his owne ; but rather, with all vigilancie and solicitousnesse, with all care and good Conscience, to occupie and imploy them for his Masters greatest advantage.

There is no gift or good thing in any man, either of Nature or Grace, of body or minde, of wealth or honour, of reputation or authoritie in the World ; but he must give shortly a strict and exact account of the usage and imployment of it, before the impartiall and uncorrupted Tribunal of Heaven : And the more excellent his gifts and endowments have beene in any kind, he shall in proportion be answerable, and countable for the more. If the Lord hath enlightened, heated, and inspired any one with much saving knowledge, with a great measure of zeale, with a high Christian courage, and resolution ; he lookes and expects for great gaine of glory unto himselfe, many spoyles and conquests over his enemies, a blazing and exemplarie brightnesse, in holinesse of life ; much beautie and lustre to the Church, much good and comfort unto Christians : For much is required of them, to whom much is committed.

Luce 12. 48.

Let a man then not labour to make himselfe glorious, by those graces which are none of his owne ; but how, by glorifying God with them, in humilitie, faithfulnessse, and sinceritie, and by improving and making the best of them, for the Owners advantage, hee may make a comfortable account at that great Day.

Thus

Thus farre I have proposed unto you some Motives, to quicken and stirre you up to a conscionable and constant hearing and understanding of the holy Word of God ; and acquainted you with many sleights, lets, and temptations, which Sathan usually casts in our way, to hinder us therein.

Now, in a third place, I will lay downe unto you certaine rules, directions, and instructions, for your right, holy, and conscionable carriage, behaviour, and importment, in and about the hearing of Gods Word.

That the holy Word of God may be unto you the Word of Grace, the favour of Life unto Life, of power unto sanctification and salvation ; you must looke carefully and conscionably unto your preparation, before you come ; unto your carriage, while you are there ; and unto your behaviour, afterward.

First, for Preparation.

I am perswaded, the want and neglect of a due and profitable preparation, is the cause that thousands receive no benefit or blessing by the Word of Life ; but that the Sermons they heare, are registred, as in a Table of Remembrance, before God, as so many witnessess against them, for their more fearefull confusion and greater condemnation at the Day of Accounts.

I For hence it is, that to many it is the favour of death unto death ; because, before they come, they doe not addressse and prepare themselves for so glorious a Presence, and royall Embassage

(1)

from

I
Preparation
required to
profitable hea-
ring.

For want of
preparation,
the Word be-
comes to men,

I
The favour of
death unto
death.

from the King of Heaven: though they heare it with their outward eares, yet it hardens their hearts, makes them inwardly more peevish, grumbling, stubborne, rebellious, and refractarie to the power thereof, and prepares and ripens them for more heaue vengeance. It is of it selfe the Word of Grace, Salvation, and Life; a blessed preservative against Sinne and Death, Damnation and Hell: but by accident, if men doe not reverence it, tremble at it, and submit themselves to the power of it; it is a strong Hammer, and Iron Scepter, to harden their hearts more and more, like an Anvile, or Adamant; and at length, to breake them in pieces like a Potters Vessell. Though in it selfe, it be a saving and wholesome Medicine; yet men of a rebellious and stubborne humour and temper, turne it into Poyson.

2.
As Seed in
the high way
ground.

2 To some, this holy Word, by reason of unpreparednesse, is but as the water spilt upon the ground, and the breath of the Minister scattered in the Aire: If you call them to an account, after Sermon, how they have profited; they are as wordlesse, and witlesse, and indeed as gracelesse in repetition, as if they had beene deafe, asleepe, in a trance, or starke dead all the while.

3
Men are made
but onely for-
mall by it.

3 Others, by their rash and prophane rushing into the House of God, without all premeditation, reverence, or regard of that holy businesse they goe about; become hearers onely, of forme and custome, for fashon and companie. It may be, they may heare, attend, and understand what is delivered; but it breedes no more reverence,

im.

impression, or spirituall reformation, than an ordinarie Tale, or humane discourse: As though that holy toyle, and sacred breath, were spent onely to entertaine the Time, and busie mens eares for an Houre; and, not as Christ tells Paul, *To open their eyes, that they might turne from Darkenesse unto Light, and from the power of Sathan unto God,*

4 Vpon some, the Iudgement and Curse of comming without Conscience, and due preparation, doth so farre prevaile, and hath such power, that they become scorers and raylers against the Minister, or his Doctrin, or both; at every Sermon they catch something, that they may cavill at, deprave, and caluminate: And so, wickedly and wretchedly oppose their discourse, wit, and spirit of contradiction against the face of Heaven, and heart of Divine Truth. They wrangle and repine (in deed and truth, whatsoever their pretences or protestations may be to the contrarie) against that Great Majestie, whose Message it is; against that Holy Spirit, which should sanctifie them; and the Word of Grace, which should save them.

5 Others there be, even of good hearts and affections, Professors, and in some good measure practisers of the power of godlinesse; yet because they are carelesse and neglective of this needfull Christian dutie of preparation, are possessed with much deadnesse of heart, and dullnesse of spirit, at those holy Exercises. Their zeale, and fervencie, which should be quickened

4
Some become scorers.

5
Others are cold and deadhearted.

and inflamed at every Sermon, is dulled and benumbed with senselesnesse and fatietie: They doe not so tremble, or are cast downe with Divine Comminations and denouncements of Gods Iudgements against sinne, or so refreshed with the gracious promises of Life, and Salvation, as they ought to be: They doe not enjoy and reape the thousandth part of that delight, comfort, and benefit as they well might, by the Ministérie of the Word, because their hearts are not purged and prepared: They doe not with that chearefulnesse receive, with that sweetnesse taste and rellish, with that life and vigour digest the Food of Life: The eye of their minde, for want of premeditation, doth not so clearly see and discern the infinite beautie of that sacred Majestie represented unto them, or that glorious grace shining unto them, in the face of CHRIST IESVS: Their hand of Faith doth not with that feeling, and fastnesse, lay hold upon and claspe about, the rich Treasures revealed in the Gospell. In a word, they be-reave themselves of much good, blessing, comfort, and growth in grace, which they might and ought to have, by hearing of the Word, for want of due preparing, and disposing the heart thereto.

This dutie of Preparation then, though that it be not much thought upon, or ordinarily practised; yet it is of great necessitie and speciall use for all thole, which looke for benefit or blessing by the preaching of the Word.

There

There is no great Affaire, or of weight and consequence, eyther in Nature or Art, in necessarie businesses and civill Negotiations, or in matters of Complement, Ceremonie, and Enterview; but there is required some bethinking preparation and præ-dispositions, for the more happie and successfull accomplishment, execution, and performance: how much more in the affaires of God, matters of Heaven, businesses of eternitie, and salvation of mens soules?

The Ground must be manured and prepared for the Seed, if wee looke it should fructifie and prosper: how much more should our dull and dead hearts bee stirred up, and furrowed, as it were, with humiliation, reverence, and repentance; that by the grace of God, and the sanctifying power of the Spirit, it may lodge and take deepe root in them, and spring up to eternall life?

The Body must be fitted with a Preparative, and the humours, as it were, gathered unto a head, if wee desire the Physicke should worke forcibly and kindly, and rid us of their noxiousnesse, and superfluitie: how much more ought our Soules, with an impartiall and narrow inquisition, to be searched and layd open, before they receive the Water of Life, and spirituall Manna; that so they may more seasonably and soundly be washed and purged from corruptions and imperfections, preserved in spirituall health, and prepared for eternall life?

The Ground must be layd, and some imperfect

Preparation requisite in civill affaires, much more to the hearing of the Word.

Draughts, Shadowes, and resemblances premised, before a Picture can be done to the Life, or a full proportion and lively representation pourtrayed or presented to the eye; how much more ought the ground of our hearts to be fitted and prepared, that by the preaching of the Word, the Image of Christ Iesus may with a lively and fresh impression be stamped upon them?

Were a man the next day to goe about a businesse that mainely concerned eyther his life, or livelyhood; the state of his Lands, or danger of his life: Would not his minde be troubled before-hand? Would it not breake his sleepe the night before? Would he not be musing, and plotting, by what meanes he might worke out his deliverance, and safetie? what behaviour and carriage might be fittest, to winne favour and grace in so weightie an affaire? How much more ought wee, before wee intrude into the House of God, where matters of our greatest and highest interest, are proposed, handled, and debated by the Minister of the Word; even life eternall, and everlasting estate in another World? I say, how ought wee to thinke with our selves, how wee may make our soules fittest to understand and accept the Covenant of Grace, to receive the Seale of the Spirit, and to get assurance of that glorious and royall Inheritance in the Heavens?

Nay, yet further, even in matters of complement and enterview, there is wont to be preparation, especially if the presence and persons were the greater.

Ioseph, when he was sent for to goe before King *Pharaoh*, hee shaved his head, and changed his rayment, because hee was to appeare before so high and royall a presence.

Gen. 41. 14.

Queene *Hester* durst not presse into the presence of King *Ahashuerosh*, before shee had prepared her selfe.

Heb. 2. 12.

How much more ought wee to fit and prepare our selves, base and miserable wretches, Wormes and no men, as wee are, with feare and trembling, when wee come into the House and presence of the mightie Lord of Heaven and Earth; before whom, *the Seraphins hide their faces, the Nations are as a drop of a Bucket, and the inhabitants of the Earth as Grasse-hoppers*: especially, sith there hee offers and tenders unto us enlargement from the slave-rie of sinne, purgation from our pollutions, and a Crowne of life, upon that condition, that wee repent, forsake all our sinnes, and resigne up our selves in sincere and humble obedience unto all his Commandements?

Isa. 40.

Inducements we have, and Motives many, both from Precept, and Practice, in the Booke of God, for the performance of this Christian dutie of Preparation.

Motives to Preparation.

I

Precepts out of the Word for it.

I

Eccles. 4. 17.

Take heed to thy foot (sayth the Preacher) when thou enterest into the House of God, and be more neere to heare, than to give the sacrifice of fooles; for they know not that they doe evill.

Before thou set foot into the Church, to heare the Word of God, be sure to settle thy affections, that they be sober, moderate, and sanctified,

Before wee
heare, our
hearts must be
qualified with,

1

Softnesse.

2

Humilitie.
Iam. 4. 6.

Pfal. 25. 9.

Isa. 57. 15.

3

Honestie.

fit to entertaine the Word of life, and salvation; let thy heart be seasoned with, first, Softnesse; secondly, Humilitie; thirdly, Honestie; fourthly, Faith; fifthly, Teachablenesse.

First, if thou doe not preserve thy heart tender, soft, and flexible, the power of the Word will not make any such print or deepe impressiō upon it; all holy admonitions, reproofes, and instructions, will be unto thee as Arrows shot against a Stone wall.

Secondly, wee must bring with us an humble heart, to the hearing of the Word; for, *the Lord resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Them that be meeke, will he guide in judgement, and teach the humble his way.* The proud heart is so swelled with the winde of vanitie and vaine-glory, of selfe-love, and over-weening conceit, that there is left no roome in it for the precious Treasure of saving grace. If it eyther be puffed up with a conceit of knowledge, or a perswasion of holinesse enough, or a boisterous peremptorinesse against the power of the Word; the Water of Life will be unto it, but as Water poured upon a drowned man; or as a Seale thrust upon Water, which will receive no impressiō. A lowly heart, broken and bruised with Conscience of sinne, is a fit Seat for the mightie Lord and his saving graces, *Isa. 57. 15.*

Thirdly, wee must come with a good and honest heart; which hateth all corruptions, both in it selfe, and others; which hath no delight in any sinfull pleasures, or wicked vanities; which hath

no manner of purpose to live and continue in any one sinne whatsoever; but is readie and resolved, though it be much cumbred with it owne corruptions, the Worlds enticements, and Sathans craftinesse; yet to serve and please God, in all the wayes of his Commandements, and that sincerely and continually. All profitable and fruitfull hearers have such good and honest hearts, and are resembled by the good ground, *Luke 8. 15.* But that is a wicked and sinfull heart, and not fit to be wrought upon by the Ministerie of the Word, which purposeth and resolveth to cherish and maintaine but any one sinne whatsoever.

Luke 8. 15.

Fourthly, our hearts must be seasoned with Faith; otherwise, it will not sinke and soake into them with power and profit. The old Iewes heard the Word; but *it profited them not, because it was not mingled with faith in those that heard it, Heb. 4. 2.* The fearefull threatnings and thunderbolts of the Law, by Faith receive an edge to wound, and pierce and strike through our soules, with amazements and trembling. And Faith it is, that animates and inspires the promises of the Gospel with such a soveraigne sweetnesse, and powerfull comfort; that they are able, not onely to rayse and revive us from the depth and extremitie of remorse, and feare; but also to put us into a Paradise of spirituall pleasures, and possession of Heaven, as it were alreadie. But if the Word light upon a faithlesse heart, it dyes, it does no good.

4
Faith.*Heb. 4. 2.*

Fifthly, wee must bring with us into the Lords
Sanctuarie,

5
Teachable-
nesse.

Psal. 40. 6.

Sanctuarie, teachable and hearing hearts, that will willingly and readily open themselves, to receive the Lord of glory, with whatsoever hee shall reveale unto us out of his holy Word. *Sacrifice and burnt offerings (sayth David) thou wouldest not, but mine eares hast thou prepared.* As if hee should have said: Thou hast bored new eares in my heart, that I can now reverently attend unto, rightly conceive, and with an holy greedinesse devour the mysterie of grace.

With such hearts as these, must wee come to the hearing of the Word, if wee looke that it should be unto us a Word of power, salvation, and life; and not to be of the number of those, that offer the sacrifice of fooles, and yet know not that they doe evill.

Many there are certainly, which offer these foolish sacrifices; I meane, hearers, without care and conscience: Who, if they come into the House of God, and vouchsafe their presence in the place, and lend their eares to the Preacher for the time; they thinke themselves presently jolly fellowes, for matters of Religion; and that they are sanctified, as it were, by the Worke wrought, and their onely presence in that holy place: when as yet the Word hath had no more power, nor wrought more alteration upon them, than upon the Seats where they sate.

And that which makes these fooles much more miserable, and foolish, is this; *They know not that they doe evill:* as it is in the Text. They thinke their case good enough, that they are in the right course

course of Christianitie; and that no more is required, for matters of Heaven: when as, in respect of saving grace, they are wretched, miserable, and poore; and *blinde, and naked.*

Besides this place of the *Preacher*, the Evangelist *S. Luke, Chap. 8. 18.* bids us, *take heed how wee heare.* And good reason, in a matter of such great weight and consequence. For there is not a Sermon wee heare, but wee must be countable for it at the Day of our Visitation. God is countable unto us for every haire of our head; is it not reason, wee should be countable to him for those precious Lessons he reacheth unto us by the Ministerie of the Word? Assuredly, there is not a Sermon, which wee have heard fruitlessly, and without profit, but it will be a shrewd and sore witness against us at that Day.

Besides these Precepts, wee finde much practise in the Booke of God, of this holy dutie of Preparation, when any sacred businesse was to be undertaken.

Moses could not approach so glorious and sacred a Presence, or tread upon the ground, made holy by so great a Majestie as the Lord of Heaven and Earth, before he had *put off his shoes.* Neither ought wee to presume or presse into his Sanctuarie, where he hath promised his Presence in a solemne, speciall, and powerfull manner, and is readie to shower downe his blessings of salvation into all truly humble and prepared hearts; before wee have shaken off and cast from us all earthly incumbrances, and secret corruptions, all dulnesse
and

Rev. 3. 17.

2

Luke 8. 18.

2

Instances for
the practice of
Preparation.

MOSES.
Exod. 3. 5.

and deadnesse of heart, which makes us unworthy and undisposed to stand upon so holy ground, and utterly uncapable of all that heavenly Wisdom, and holy instructions unto eternall life, that are there taught, and tendred unto us; nay, turne the blessings of the Ministry into curses and condemnation unto us.

IOSHVAN.
Jesh. 3. 5.

When *Ioshuah* was to make a strong and lasting impression in the hearts of the Israelites (whom after the death of *Moses*, he conducted to the promised Land) of the power and providence of God for his people, by that miraculous parting of the Waters of *Jordan*, for the transportation of the Arke; hee commanded the people to sanctifie themselves, to prepare, and compose their hearts; to admire and reverence with greater intention and amazement, that omnipotent Majesty that wrought such wonders for his chosen: For hearts emptied of worldly thoughts, and sanctified by heavenly meditation, are fit subjects for workes of Heaven, and divine impressions. How much more ought we to prepare our soules, before wee come into the Sanctuary of the Lord; sith there, they are either to be hardned for the Scepter of destruction, and made ready for the flames of Hell, if wee doe not prepare our selves, hearken, and obey: or else, to be softned and sanctified with saving grace, and fitted for a Crowne of Glory; if with reverence, humility, and obedience, wee submit our selves to the power of the Word? There, if wee be unconverted, the great and miraculous worke of the new-birth is to bee wrought

wrought upon them; if wee be new-borne, they are to be fed with the spirituall Manna, unto everlasting life.

The same *Ioshuah*, when the excommunicate and execrable thing was to be found out, and put from amongst them; which was the cause, they could not stand against their enemies: he commanded them to sanctifie themselves, that the Lord might prosper and poure his blessings upon that necessarie and weightie search and inquisition. How much more ought wee to prepare our selves, before wee step into the House of God; sith there is to be discovered and cast out those hatefull sinnes that fearefully incense Gods wrath against us, and make us weake in the Lords battrailes, and not able to stand against our spirituall enemies, the corruptions of our owne flesh, the enticements of the World, and temptations of Sathan?

Before the sacrifice, and anointing of *David* King of Israel, *Ishai* and his sonnes were sanctified: How much more ought wee to be prepared, before wee come before the Lords Prophets, and Embassadors; that there wee may be anointed *Kings and Priests unto our God?*

Iosiah, before the eating of the Paschali Lambe, did bid the people, not onely sanctifie themselves; but also prepare their brethren: How much more ought wee, when wee come to the Ministerie of the Word, to feede by faith upon that true Bread from Heaven, which giveth life unto the world; which if wee once foundly taste with belee-

Jesh. 7. 13.

SAMUEL.
1 Sam. 16. 5.

REV. 3. 10.

IOSIAH.
2 Chro. 35. 6.

Joh. 6.

The people,
before the gi-
ving of the
Law.

Exod. 19. 10.

Vers. 15.

believing hearts, wee shall not hunger, wee shall never thirst?

But the most famous and fittest place for my purpose, and preparation in that particular holy businesse of hearing the Word, is that in *Exod. 19. 10.* *The people were sanctified, and washed their clothes, and prepared themselves for two dayes, and the third day they were readie to attend what the Lord would say unto them.* As in that extraordinarie promulgation of the Law, the people were to be prepared extraordinarily; so, from proportion of that practice, and precedencie, ordinarie preparation is necessarie for the ordinarie preaching of the Word, if wee looke that it should powerfully and profitably worke upon our Consciences and affections. Their *washing of their bodies, and clothes, their abstinence from their wives*, and such solemne and ceremonious purifications, were typicall significations and representations unto us, that wee should weane our hearts from earthly thoughts, purge them from secret corruptions, and bring them faire and free, from sinfull spot and worldly entanglement, when wee come to heare the Lord speake unto us by his Ministers.

Holy men of God were wont, addressing themselves to prayer, to have their ejaculations, lifting up of their hearts, certaine short prayers, before they entred into that sacred and solemne action.

Besides Precept and Practice in the Booke of God, for Preparation; the profit is great, the benefits and blessings that redound unto us, and

3

The profit of
it.

and fall upon us by it, are excellent and precious. Looke in the latter end of the eleventh Chapter of *Iob*.

If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him. Iob 11. 13.

If iniquitie be in thine hand, put it farre away, and let no wickednesse dwell in thy Tabernacle. 14.

Then truly shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, and shalt be stable, and shalt not feare, &c. 15.

Preparation of the heart, is here the foundation and first step unto many glorious blessings. The heart must be first prepared, before other holy duties can be fitly performed, or Gods blessings expected:

In the first place; first, prepare thine heart; secondly, then poure it out in prayer, before the Throne of Grace; thirdly, then purge it from corruption; banish farre, and barre out all iniquitie; fourthly, next, be sure to reforme, instruct, and pray with thy family, or those that are about thee: Let no wickednesse, ignorance, prophanenesse, swearing, swaggering, drunkennesse, or the like, dwell in thy Tabernacle, harbour in thine house, or rowst neere thee.

And then open thy heart, and hands; for the Windowes of Heaven shall be set wide open, that all manner of spirituall comforts, all the blessings of peace and happinesse, may in abundance be showred downe upon thee; the rich Treasurie of everlasting Glory and Immortalitie shall be unlockt unto thee, and thou shalt row and tumble thy selfe for ever after, amid mountaines of hea-
venly

venly pearles, and golden pleasures; through Rivers, nay Seas of endlesse joyes, that no heart can comprehend, but that which is weaned from all worldly pleasures, and set apart and sanctified for holy services and businesses of Heaven.

Verf. 35.

Then truly shalt thou lift up thy face without spot.] Though thou hast lyen among the Pots, yet thou shalt be now as the wings of a Dove, that is covered with Silver, and whose feathers are like yellow Gold. Though thou be like the Kedarims, which dwell in Tents, the black-Moores; that is, by reason of thy sinne, subject to the condemnation of God, and deprived of his glory: yet shalt thou be in Christ, goodly and glorious, as those that dwell in exceeding glory, under *the Curtaines of Salomon*. Though thou be black with the remnants of originall corruption, and present infirmities; though the Sunne have looked upon thee, and parched thee with the scorching heat of sore affliction, and chastisements: yet shalt thou now shine like the Sunne in his strength, with the royall Robe of Christs righteousness, with fresh comfort, and lasting chearefulness.

Cant. 1. 5.

Thou shalt be stable, and shalt not feare.] Though the wicked tremble many times at their owne shadows, and the sound of a Lease shaken doth chase them, and strike a faintnesse into their hearts, and a trembling into their loynes; yet thou shalt never be afraid of anyevill tidings, whether they be forged by the spightfull and impoysoned tongues of prophane men, to defame and disgrace thee, or fetched out of the bottome

Pfal. 117.

Prov. 3. 24.

of

of Hell, by Sathans malice, to terrifie thee; though the messengers of miseries and mischiefs come thicke and three-fold upon thee, as they did upon *Iob*; though the Earth be moved, and the mountaines fall into the midst of the Sea; nay, though the whole World be on flames about thine eares, and the Heavens be rouled together like a Scrowle: yet shalt thou be stable, and shalt not feare, because thy heart is fixed, and beleeveth in the Lord.

Iob 5. 21, 22.

Psal. 46. 2.

Thou shalt forget thy miserie, and remember it as waters that are past.] Thy happinesse and comfort shall be so entire and unmixed, so absolute and overflowing, that the very remembrance of former miseries and terrors shall be drowned and devoured in the excesse and excellencie of that; even as the travels of a woman, in her joyes for a new-borne sonne: Or, if it be, that thy former discomforts sometimes steale into thy minde, they shall not be able to rest or remaine there, by reason of the predominancie of spirituall pleasures; but glide away as swiftly, as the head-long streame of the most hastie Torrent.

Vers. 16.

Thine age also shall appeare more cleare than the Noone-day; thou shalt shine, and be as the Morning.] The Morning is, the very Crowne of Time, and the beautie of the Day; the Poets call it, the * Rosie-finger'd Morning. When they labour to describe corporall Beautie to the life, and set it out in the best perfection and freshest colours that the utmost power and highest straine of wit and art can possibly devise; they take their Meta-

Vers. 17.

* ροσιδοστικη
 λος ημερ.

phors and amplifications from the ruddinesse and brightnesse of the Morning: And yet thou shalt be as faire as the Morning, with all Divine Graces, spirituall brightnesse, and beautie of thy Soule; nay, a Soule set thicke with spirituall Graces, is farre more faire than the Firmament, with all those Eyes of Gold, and fairest Lampes, that shine from it. Neither shalt thou be onely as the Morning, but as the Morning Sunne; thou shalt rise higher and higher in degrees of holinesse, and strength of Grace, untill thou comest to the highest point of perfection in this Heaven upon Earth, the Kingdome of Grace. And after thou hast finished thy course, and left behind thee the comfortable heat of thy gracious zeale, much Light from thy good example, and the sweet influence of thy holy life; upon thy death-bed, thou shalt sett with the sweetest and brightest beames of all heavenly comfort, into the immeasurable Ocean of endlesse joyes.

Verf. 18.

Thou shalt be bold, because there is hope; and thou shalt digge Pits, and shalt lye downe safely.] Thou shalt be assured of Heaven, and a Crowne of Glory hereafter, that thou shalt walke through this Valley of Misericordie like a Lyon; nor Devill, nor man, nor beast, nor any creature, shall affright or amaze thee. Cast thine eyes, supernaturally enabled, and enlarged with the Light of Faith, from East to West, into the bottome of Hell, and glory of Heaven; and thou shalt clearly see, that all is thine, by the purchase, right, and conquest of the Sonne of God: *The stones in the street shall*

Job 5. 23.

be

be at league with thee, the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee: The creatures shall be all sworne to thy safetie; the purest spirits, the ministers of God, shall be thy Guardians; Saints and Angels are alreadie in thy sight; Immortalitie hath lengthened thy dayes, and the glory of God is before thee in a Glasse.

When thou doest take thy rest, none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.] When the darkenesse of the Night encompasseth thee, thou shalt not be affrighted with terrors and apparitions; when blacknesse and silence, the habitation of feares and astonishment, shall pitch round about thee, thou shalt be lightsome with inward comfort; when all thy Sences, the scouts and watch-men for discovering dangers, and preserving thy safetie, shall be locked up; his providence, that neither slumbers nor sleepes, shall tenderly and carefully watch over thee; *whether thou die or live, whether thou sleepe or wake, thou art the Lords:* And therefore, when thou sleepest, thou shalt not be afraid; and when thou sleepest, thy sleepe shall be sweet: *Thou shalt not feare for any sudden feare, neither for the destruction of the wicked, when it commeth; for the Lord shall be for thy assurance, and shall keepe thy foot from being caught.*

Yea, many shall make suit unto thee.] Thou shalt be so encompassed with the blessings of God, so protected from above, so high in Gods favour, that many will come for shadow and shelter unto thee; they will looke for reliefe and comfort under the shadow of thy wings; thy power and

Ver. 19.

Rom. 14. 8.

Prov. 3. 25.

See Job 5. 21, 22.

authoritie shall be a refuge and repose for oppressed and disgraced innocencie.

All these blessings, and a thousand more, are built upon a through preparation of the heart, as upon the first foundation stone: Preparation is the very first step to all these degrees, and height of happinesse.

But on the contrarie part, if a man neglect preparing his heart, praying unto God, forsaking his sinnes, reforming his family; let him looke for nothing but Curses and Plagues.

But the eyes of the wicked (saith Iob) shall faile, and their refuge shall perish, and their hope shall be sorrow of minde.] They thinke, their formall and customarie service of God will serve the turne; and thereupon, with great greedinesse and confidence, expect and looke for the salvation of their soules after this life: but they shall waile, and gaze, untill their eyes sinke into their holes, and yet shall never be able to taste of true comfort: They may crie untill their tongues cleave to the rooffe of their mouth, with the foolish Virgins; *Lord, Lord, open unto us, Math. 25.* but the Gate of everlasting happinesse shall for ever be shut against them: They may struggle and strive, by the strength of their good meanings, and formall Christianitie, *to enter in at the strait Gate, but shall never be able.*

Their refuge shall perish.] They have stayed themselves upon broken staves of Reed, and now they will runne into their hands and hearts too, unto their vexation and horror.

And

Vers. 20.

Math. 25.

Luke 13. 24.

And their hope shall be sorrow of minde.] Their end shall be despaire, and horrible confusion.

I have stayed long upon the motives and inducements to preparation, before we come to the hearing of the Word, or undergoe any sacred businessse; and upon the necessitie, blessings, and benefits of so holy a dutie. The reason is, I would gladly stirre you up, and my selfe too, to a through and constant practise and performance of it: and, because the neglect and omission of it, is the cause that the Ministerie of the Word is not onely fruitlesse, and in vaine, unto thousands; but (which is a fearefull thing) the favour of death unto death unto them.

I come now to the speciall points considerable in preparation, before wee present our selves in this place to the hearing of the Word.

This preparation is an holy action, or exercise, which by examination of our Consciences, purgation of our hearts, prayer unto God, and private reading the Scriptures, maketh our soules fit Vessels to receive and entertaine the spirituall Treasures of Grace, and food of eternall Life, offered and tendered unto us by the Ministerie of the Word; that so they may be the more effectually and fruitfully wrought upon, and happily subdued to the power and practise thereof.

In this preparation, I consider and require especially these foure things: first, Examination of the Conscience; secondly, Purgation of the heart; thirdly, Prayer unto God; fourthly, Readinesse of heart, to receive every truth.

What preparation is.

Fourc things required in preparation.

I
Examination.

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Extraordina-
ric.

In time of
publike cala-
mitie.

2
When our fa-
milies are visi-
ted with some
speciall judge-
ment.

3
When wee our-
selves are af-
flicted in par-
ticular.

First, for Examination of the Conscience.

Examination is a dutie practisable by all true Christians; at many times, and upon sundry occasions.

It is either more extraordinarie; and that is, either in the time of solemne Fast, and generall humiliation, for some publike Plague and calamitie that lyes upon the State or Church. Wee are then seriously to search and ransacke throughly our Consciences, that wee may throw that or those sinnes out of our affections, practise, and allowance, which have their part in pulling downe those publike Plagues upon us.

Or, secondly, when our family is singled out, and visited with some speciall and extraordinarie scourge, and judgement: and then must we make an impartiall inquisition into our hearts; lest we be the *Achans*, which by our secret sinnes provoke Gods causfull wrath.

Or, when our selves in a more private and particular manner, are afflicted with some speciall vexation; as, by some maladie and miserie in our bodies, with some terrors and feares in our minds, or with some slanders, disgraces, and imputations upon our good names: when Gods hand is upon us any of these wayes, wee are presently to conceive, that the sinnes of our soules are the true causes of all the miseries and crosses which befall us any manner of wayes; and therefore wee are narrowly and exactly to enquire into our selves, and to cast out our secret beloved sinnes, those lurking rebels, the breeders of all our woe.

Besides,

Besides, examination of our hearts in these or the like cases; there is also a more ordinarie and usuall examination necessarie, and required of us, and that especially every day; that we may make the Score of our sinnes lesse, and our account shorter, against the Day of our Visitation; that wee may more entirely and comfortably preserve and enjoy Gods favour and protection, inward peace of Conscience, spirituall joy, and Christian chearfulness in all our affaires and passages.

2 Before wee come to receive, and be partakers of the holy Sacrament of the sacred body and blood of Christ; lest by neglect and omission of this dutie, we become unworthy receivers, and so eate and drinke our owne judgement, and damnation; nay, be guiltie of the innocent and precious blood of Christ Iesus; which one day will be an heavie and unsupportable burthen to our Consciences. To be guiltie of the sinfull blood of prophane men, is able to make the proudest heart and highest stomacke to tremble and quake like an Aspen leafe, and to strike through his soule; with restlessse horreur, and gastly sights. Who is able then to beare the guilt of guiltlesse blood? *Abels* innocent blood cryed for and pulled downe strange and desperate vengeance upon cruell *Cain*. How loud then will be the crie of the blood of the innocent Lambe of God? How will it ring in the eares of God the Father? How fearefully will it fill Heaven and Earth, untill it hath brought downe Plagues and Curses upon those wofull Soules, who irreverently and

2
Ordinarie:

1
Every day.

2
Before the Sa-
crament.

Simile.

Gen. 4. 13.

unpreparedly prophane so high and holy a my-
sterie ?

A third ordinarie examination, is before wee
presse into the House of God, and present our
selves before his Ministers and Messengers; to be
instructed in his will from Heaven, out of his
holy Word; lest this blessed Ordinance should
be accursed unto us. You may see in the Pro-
phet *Ezech. 14. 7,8.* how the Lord threatens that
person that comes to his Ministers to enquire of
them, or to be informed by them, and yet separates
himselve from the Lord, and sets up any Idoll in
his heart, and stumbling-blocke of his iniquitie,
before his face; that the Lord will set his face a-
gainst him, and make him a signe and a Proverbe,
and cut him off from the midst of his people.
Whence wee may well inferre, that it will be very
dangerous for any to come to the hearing of the
Word, without examination of his heart, whe-
ther there be any such stumbling-blocke of ini-
quitie in it, or no.

2 Because that examination of the heart; to
finde out our corruptions, tends especially to the
cleansing of it; therefore the second dutie before
the hearing of the Word, is the purgation or
cleansing of the heart, first, from sinne; which the
Scripture beats much upon, *1. 21. Lay apart all
filthinesse and superfluitie of naughtinesse, and receive
with meekenesse the ingrafted word, &c.* It is not
meerely lay apart, but put away quite and cleane
all filthinesse: and this is a fit preparative for the
hearing of the Word, as appears also by that pa-
rall

3
Before wee
heare the
Word prea-
ched.

The second
dutie besides
hearing, is
purging of
our hearts.

railell place, 1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2. *Wherefore putting away all malice, all guile and hypocrisie, and envie, and euill speakings, as new-borne babes desire the sincere Milke of the word.* And there is the same reason for any other sinne to be put away, that there is for these mentioned. As it is with the body, when the stomack is foule, and clogged with bad humours, wee should first purge it, before wee feede it; for otherwise, whatsoeuer we eate, doth but nourish and encrease the corrupt humours of the body: So it is with the soule, when it is stuffed or clogged with sinne; whatsoeuer is heard in the Ministry of the Word, shall be perverted and abused by it, and wrested to the destruction of it.

It is no wonder therefore, that those that live in dissolute or scandalous courses, those that are drunk on the evening before the Lords day, or spend it in gaming, or company keeping, or have bin acting of some foule sinne, and then repaire unto the Word; it is no wonder, I say, that such goe away never a whit the better, but rather worse than they came. Did you ever know any Salve so soveraigne, that would cure a wound that had a splint or an arrow-head remaining in it? Surely, every knowne sinne unrepented of, hinders the saving operation of the Word in any mans heart; yea, it will make the Word the favour of death unto a man. See to this purpose, *Ier.* 7. 9, 10.

Secondly; the heart must also be purged from all worldly cares and thoughts, which may divide or draw away the heart: *Math.* 13. 22. The cares of the World doe choake the Seed of the Word:

Luke

Luke 21. 34. The cares of this life doe surfet the heart. Now, as it is with a man in a surfet, hee is not fit to eat, neither can he digest any wholesome food: so, when as the heart is surfeted with worldly cares, it is unfit for any spirituall food. You know how it was with *Martha*, *Luke 10. 41.* Iesus said unto *Martha*, *Thou art troubled about many things, but one thing is necessarie: Martha had a clutter of many worldly matters, that made a great noise in her head, and hindered better matters, that she cared not for hearing.*

How then shall they profit by the Word, that doe jumpe out of their worldly businesse, and from busying their heads about their callings, into the House of God, to heare and to performe the Exercises of Religion? Truly, though they be never so diligent in hearing, yet their hearts will goe after their covetousnesse, *Ezech. 33. 31.*

3 A third dutie before the hearing of the Word, is Prayer; no good thing can be expected from God, as a blessing, if it be not sought by prayer, *Deut. 4. 7.* and wee finde it layd downe as a condition required, *Prov. 2. 1, 2, 3, &c.* *My sonne, if thou wilt receive my words, and encline thine eare to wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou cryest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, then shalt thou understand the feare of the Lord, and finde out the knowledge of God.* The reason is, *Vers. 6.* *For the Lord giveth wisdom, and out of his mouth commeth knowledge and understanding.* Because the Lord gives knowledge, therefore you must crie for it unto him. What

is

Thirdly, Prayer,
er, another
dutie.

is the reason that you do pray for your *daily Bread*, and a blessing upon it? Why, *Dent. 8. 3. Man lives not by Bread onely, &c?* If this be so, much more ought you to pray for a blessing upon your spirituall food.

Now for the particulars: First, you ought to pray for the Teachers, That they may so speake, as they ought to speake, *Col. 4. 3, 4.* so they are to pray for the power and peace of the Ministerie, *2 Theff. 3. 1, 2.* Secondly, you must pray for your selves, that through Gods assistance you may heare profitably, and be blessed in the hearing: *Ioh. 3. 27.* No man can receive any thing, except that it be given him from above. Therefore *David* prayed, *Psal. 119. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wonderfull things contained in thy Word.* *Isay 48. 17.* God sayth, *I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit:* Therefore no profiting by the Word, without seeking unto the Lord for it.

Now the prophanenesse of people in this case, is the generall cause that our Ministerie doth no more good: Few pray at all before they come to Church, either for the Minister, or for themselves; nay, few, even when they are in the Church, have any heart to joyne with the Preacher in the prayer that he makes before the Sermon: But the complaint of the Prophet may be taken up in this case, *Isa. 64. 7. There is none that calleth on thy Name, that stirreth up himselfe to take hold of thee.*

4. You must be sure to goe with an open heart, readie to receive every truth that God shall teach you

The fourth
dutie; open-
nesse of heart.

you in this Ordinance. *Act. 17. 11.* it is said of those noble Bereans, that they received the Word with all readinesse of minde, *i.* readinesse to receive every truth. And *Cornelius* said, *Act. 10. 33.* *Wee are all here present before God, to heare all things that are commanded thee of God.* It is well added (*that are commanded thee of God:*) not what any Minister shall teach, be he never so good, or so learned; nay, were he an Angell from Heaven, yet his Doctrine must be examined, *Gal. 1. 8.* But when there is such a disposition in us, as to receive both in judgement and practise whatsoever God shall reveale unto us out of his Word; this is a precious disposition.

But, alas; the most come to heare with prejudicate and fore-stalled hearts, they beare a secret grudge, and quarrell, against some strict Truth, or other; as, against the sanctification of the Lords Day, or Family-duties, or secret communion with the Lord, by prayer dayly, &c. And these imaginations seeme as strong Holds, to keepe Christ and his Truth out of their hearts, *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.* And thus men, that in their hearing doe limit the Spirit of God, would (if it lay in their power) say as those wicked men, *Isay 30. 10.* *to the Seers, see not; and to the Prophets, prophesie not right things unto us; speake unto us smooth things:* And those that said so, the Lord calls them despisers of his Word.

These are the maine and principall duties before the hearing of the Word.

Secondly,

Secondly; let me proceed briefly to those duties that are required in the hearing of the Word: Which wee must the rather stirre up our selves unto, because wee have naturally uncircumcised hearts, *Ier. 6. 10.* and are dull of hearing, *Heb. 5. 11.*

Now the principall duties in hearing, are five; which I will briefly set downe as may be.

I You must set your selves in Gods presence, whilest you are hearing of his Word: and consider with your selves, that it is God that you have to deal withall in this businesse, and not man; and that it is Gods Word, and not mans. It is the great commendation of the Thessalonians, *1 Thess. 2. 13.* that they received the Word as the Word of God. This was that wherby the Lord would prepare his people to receive the Law, *Exod. 20. God spake all these words.* And hee not onely gave the Law, but the whole summe of the Gospel with his owne voice, *Mat. 3. 17. Doe a voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Sonne, in whom I am well-pleas'd.* Yea; it is the Lord himselfe that speaks unto you in our Ministry, *Luke 10. 16.* So the Lord is present in a speciall manner, where his Word is preached, to observe and marke how it is received, or delivered; and either to blesse or curse the hearers, or speakers, accordingly. So that of this and such like places, it may be said as *Iacob* said of Bethel, *Gen. 28. 16, 17. Surely, the Lord is in this place: and, How dreadfull is this place? This is no other than the House of God, this is the Gate of Heaven.*

And

2

Duties required in the hearing of the Word.

I

To set our selves in Gods presence.

And truly, this apprehension of Gods presence in the Assemblies of his people, will worke three things in us.

First, keepe us in that awfull and reverent disposition of body and minde that is meet.

Secondly, it will preserve our hearts from roving and wandering thoughts, which are great impediments of hearing; *Psal. 119. 113. I hate vaine thoughts, but thy Law doe I love.*

Thirdly, it will make us to receive and obey that that shall be taught us; for so God hath beene wont to prepare his people, to receive his Word: yea, he said of his people, when they were thus affected, *Deut. 15. 29. Oh that there were such an heart in them, to feare me and keepe my Commandements alwayes.*

Now the want of this, is that which hinders abundance of benefit that the Ministerie of the Word would otherwise doe us: This is the root of all the mischief the Devill doth to poore soules, in the hearing of the Word; the practice thereof, is the fountaine of all our good. Many gracelesse wretches there are in our Assemblies, like him, *Luke 18. 2.* that neither feared God, nor regarded man; that despise the Church of God, yea, contemne the presence of the holy Angels, (*1 Cor. 11. 10.*) and of God himselfe in the Assemblies, who hath layd such a speciall charge upon us, *Lev. 26. 2.* to keepe his *Sabbaths*, and to reverence his *Sanctuarie*; and he addes this reason, *I am Iehovah.*

2 The second dutie in hearing, is diligent attention

2

Attention.

attention to that we heare: as it is said of our Saviour Christ, *Luke 19. 48.* *The people were very attentive to heare him;* or, as it is in the Originall, *they hanged on him:* as if their eares and mindes had beene tyed to his tongue; there was such a dependencie upon him. And that is a remarkable place, *Ezech. 40. 4.* *Sonne of man, behold with thine eyes, and heare with thine eares, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee.* See what attention is required: Hee bids him set his eyes and his eares, and his heart and all, upon that hee speakes; and not upon some things onely, but upon all that hee should declare unto him. So *Prov. 4. 20, 21, 22.* *My sonne attend unto my words, incline thine eare unto my sayings, keepe them in the midst of thine heart, for they are life to those that finde them:* i. looke as a condemned man will bearken to the Sentence of the Prince; every word hee speakes, being life or death: As the servants of *Benhadad*, when they were in their enemies power, *1 King. 20. 33.* they observed diligently whether any word of comfort would come from him, and they did hastily catch it. Thus, with such diligence and attention, such poore condemned creatures (as wee are) are to heare the Word of God.

Now to quicken attention; these meanes are profitable.

First, it is good to doe as they did, *Luke 4. 20.* They fastened their eyes upon Christ; so doe ye upon the Minister, and suffer them not to wander up and downe: A wandering

eye

eye is alwayes a sure evidence of a wandering heart.

Secondly, if ye doe not thus, it will be a good helpe for those that can write, to note the Word, as *Baruch* wrote from the mouth of *Jeremiah*, *Ier. 36. 4.* This holds the minde close to all that is said. Some object indeed, that it hinders affection in hearing: but though it may doe so in some, for the present; yet afterwards it will worke more lasting affections upon the Word. Onely they that use this helpe-meanes, must be carefull that they doe not presume upon their Notes so, as to neglect the recalling of what they have heard, (as many use to doe) and so lose all holy affections, and that impression that the Word would make upon their hearts.

A Caveat.

Thirdly, entreat the Lord to open thy heart, as he opened *Lydia's* heart, *Act. 16. 14.* Our hearts are shut up quite, and cannot attend unto any thing that is good, except that the Lord opens them.

Observe then another cause, why the Word is so unfruitfull unto many. Some are like the *deafe Adders*, that stop their eares against the voice of the *Charmer*, *Psal. 58. 4, 5.* And some sleepers there are, that faile in their attention, that the Devill usually rocks asleepe, when they come to heare; but they that are such, should know, that their damnation sleepees not, the Devill sleepees not: he comes to the Assemblies, to picke up the good Seed that is sowne; nay, he comes to picke up their foules indeed: for he cares not so much

for

for the Seed, but he will take your selves napping and your foules especially, and carry them to Hell. Besides, let them remember what befell *Eutychus*, *Act.* 20. 9, 10. he slept at a long Sermon, that lasted till midnight; but he was taken up dead, falling from the third Loft to the ground: What shall become of such then, that sleepe in the day time, at a Sermon of an houre long? And let them also take heed of that *Spirit of slumber*, that the Lord hath threatned to poure upon the despisers of the Word, *Isay* 29. 9, 10. The like might be said of our gazers and gapers about, and those that by their talking disturbe others, and hinder themselves: they shut their eares, and turne them away from God; and may justly expect, that he shall turne away his eares from them: as it is threatned, *Prov.* 2. 8, 9. *Zach.* 7. 13.

3 You must heare the Word with understanding and judgement; *i.* labour to understand what wee heare: And to this end, the Minister must have a speciall care to teach plainly, so as he may be understood, *Neh.* 8. 8. And Christ calls upon his hearers for this, *Math.* 15. 10. *Heare, and understand:* How should we else profit by that we heare? *Act.* 8. 36. *Vnderstandest thou what thou readeest* (saith *Philip* to the Eunuch:) so say thou to thine owne heart; *Vnderstandest thou what thou hearest?*

3
Heare with
understand-
ing.

Now the meanes to understand the Word, are these.

First, come to the Word, with a willing minde to learne: you know the Eunuch, *Act.* 8. though

he understood not what he read, yet because he had a minde to learne, how the Lord provided for him, and what a comfortable successe *Philips* Sermon had with him: Men love to teach willing schollers; so doth God, when we come with willing and readie mindes to be taught.

Secondly, exercise your selves in the truth of God, *Heb. 5.* last; you must by continuall use, get your senses exercised to discern both good and evill: but especially, be well acquainted with the principles and grounds of Catechisme; it is the want of this, that makes men that they understand not what is preached: They that are not first well nourished with Milke, will not be fit to receive and digest stronger meat: if the foundation be not well layd, it is in vaine to build.

Thirdly, walke according to Light; *Psal. 111. 10.* *A good understanding have all they, that doe his Commandements:* Then, if thou wouldest get a good understanding, and know the mysterie of godlinesse, walke according to knowledge, imploy that little knowledge thou hast well, and then there is a promise to give thee more.

Fourthly, be diligent in instructing and teaching thy family: If thou art set over others, a little knowledge will encrease greatly, by this meanes. *Gen. 18. 17, 19.* the Lord said; *Shall I hide any thing from Abraham? No:* And hee gives this reason; *I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keepe the way of the Lord.* If you teach your families, God will teach you.

Well;

Well; there are a sort of doltish hearers, that will heare, and seeme to be very attentive, from yeeres end to yeeres end, and be never a whit the wiser, *2 Tim. 3. 7.* The heavie judgement of God is upon many of them, that is mentioned, *Math. 13. 14.* And in them is fulfilled the Prophetic of *Isay*; *By hearing ye shall heare, and shall not understand;* and that, *Isay 27. 11.* *It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them, shall not save them; and he that formed them, shall shew them no favour.*

4 You must heare the Word with affection, and delight. It is said of Gods people in the Primitive Church, that they heard the Word gladly; and of Christs hearers, *Mark. 12. 37.* *they heard him gladly:* And it is noted for a great signe of grace, to heare the Word gladly, *Psal. 119. 162.* *I rejoyce at thy word, as one that findeth great spoyles.* *David* had beene a souldier; and ye know, that they that have lyen at the siege of a Citie a long time, and at the last take it, will rejoyce exceedingly in the spoyle of it: therefore he rejoyces in the Word, as they that doe divide the spoyles. And truly, whereas common people complaine of the badnesse of their memories; this would be a marvellous helpe to their memories, if they would heare with delight: therefore *David* sayth, *Psal. 119. 16.* *I will delight my selfe in thy Statutes, I will not forget thy word.* This delight he meanes will strengthen our memories.

Now contrarie to this, are a great number,
(n 2) that

4
Heare with
affection.

that heare without all delight, and account it a great wearineffe, *Mal. 1. 13.* and those the dullest houres, that they spend in hearing. Well, the Lord hath threatned, that the Word shall never doe us good, unlesse that wee attend to it with love and delight, *2 Theff. 2. 10, 11.* *Because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved; therefore God shall send them strong delusions, to beleewe Lyes.* A fearefull threatening, much to be considered in these dayes: For this is the reason, that Popish trumperies and hellish delusions have such entertainment, because God in his just judgement, gives up those to such strong delusions, that love not the strict Truth of the Word of God.

5
Heare with
application.

5 You must heare the Word, with application of it to your owne hearts, and lives; apply every truth to your selves, for your owne use and comfort, and terror and instruction: as it is *Iob 5.* last; *Heare this, and know it for thy selfe;* carry this truth home to thine owne heart: And,

First, there is no truth of God taught out of his Word, but it concernes every one of Gods people, and was intended for our use; *Rom. 15. 4.* *Whatsoever is written, is written for our learning.*

Secondly, there is no truth can be taught, to doe us good, unlesse that wee apply it: as no Plaister can doe the Patient good, unlesse it be applyed; no meat is able to doe us any good, be it dressed never so curiously, unlesse it be eaten and digested. This comparison is applyed by the
Prophet.

Prophet to this purpose, *Isa. 55. 2.* *Hearken diligently unto me, and eate ye that which is good: unlesse we eate it, it will doe us no good.*

Thirdly, the faithfull have been wont to apply all to themselves; as every member of the body drawes nourishment from the stomacke, to make it his owne: to which the Apostle alludes, *Eph. 4. 16.* So the Disciples of our Saviour did, *Math. 26. 21, 22.* When our Saviour had said, that one of them should betray him, they were exceeding sorrowfull, and began every one of them to say unto him; *Lord, is it I?*

And surely, the want of this application, is one great cause that the Word profits not, because they beleve it not, nor apply the Word unto themselves: *Heb. 4. 2.* *The word preached did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

Now one principall worke of faith, is to apply those things that are delivered in the Word: But this, the most hearers doe exceedingly faile in; either not applying, or mis-applying of the truth; shifting off all upon others, and taking little or nothing to themselves. As wee have a notable example of this, *Rom. 1. ult.* compared with *Rom. 2. 1.* In the former place, the Apostle speakes of some, that knowing the judgement of God, That those that doe such things, are worthy of death; yet not onely doe such things, but take pleasure in those that doe them: yet in the beginning of the next Chapter, you find the same men judging and condemning of others; yet thinking and

perswading themselves, that they (being guiltie of the same sinnes) shall escape the judgement of God. Why? but because they apply not to themselves, but mis-apply to others the things they heare.

Many such hearers there are in these dayes, which are very cunning in shifting off the threatenings of God against their owne Drunkenesse, and Whoredome, and Swearing, &c. yet very apt to pinne the same Word upon others. Well, these are not wise for themselves, and all their hearing shall doe them no good. Thus much of the duties required in hearing.

Now follow those duties that are required after hearing. And these are chiefly thus.

I. Wee must be very carefull to remember and keepe that which wee have heard, *Prov. 4. 4. My sonne, let thine heart retaine my words:* and, *Vers. 21. Keepe them in the midst of thine heart.* As a man that hath a Jewell, will be carefull to locke it up in the safest Chest hee hath, lest it should be stolne away: Which is the very comparison of the Wise-man, *Prov. 6. 20, 21. So Mary, Luke 2. 51. kept all the sayings in her heart:* and *David, Psal. 119. 11. hid the Commandements in his heart;* and hee gives the reason, *That hee might not sinne against the Lord.* And the truth is, that as meat that is eaten, if it remains not in the stomacke, it will never doe us good: so the best spirituall food that can be, except it be retained by us, will not profit us: *Luke 8. 15. The good Ground are they, which*
with

3
The duties after hearing.

I
We must remember it.

with an honest and good heart having heard the word, keepe it, &c.

Many there are, that are very carelesse of this dutie: They thinke they have discharged themselves abundantly, if they heare the whole Sermon attentively; as though there were nothing more required at their hands: Like our Saviours hearers, *Math. 22. 22.* *When they heard him, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way:* but wee never heare more of them. So many heare desirously, and with open and greedie eares: but, as wee say, it goes in at one eare, and out at another; it stayes not for any after-use, but a little present admiration. Others heare, and the Word smites them a little on their Consciences, and wounds; and one would thinke, some good thing would be wrought upon them: but they goe away, and the motion dyes. They are as men that are Seasicke, whilest the Word humbles them, and makes their Consciences to wamble within them; but they are as whole as a Fish, when as they are once landed at the Church doore: Or like unto Mettals, which are soft and plyable, whilest they are in the fire; so these are in the hearing: but shortly they loose all the efficacie of the Word, and become harder than before.

Well, let us in the feare of God, hearken diligently to the words of the Holy-Ghost, *Heb. 2. 1.* *That wee ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that wee have heard, lest at any time wee should let them slip,* or runne out (like riven Vessels:)

2
The second
dutie, Medita-
tion.

Why; what is the danger? *How shall wee escape, if wee neglect so great Salvation?*

2 Wee must meditate and seriously thinke of that that wee have heard; that is more than remembring. There is a great deale of difference betwixt the possessing of goods, and the using and imploying of them for our benefit; betwixt the laying up of garments in our Wardrobes, and the wearing of them upon our backes, to keepe us warme: this latter is done by meditation. *Prov. 6. 22, 23. My sonne, binde the Commandements continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy necke:* It is a phrase of speech borrowed from garments that are bound about the body; for meditation bindes the Word close to the heart. It is said of *Mary, Luke 2. 19. that shee pondered the words of the Angel in her heart:* and *David* was frequent in this dutie, *Psal. 119. 15. I will meditate in thy Precepts* (saith he:) And it was *Pauls* advice to *Timothy, 1 Tim. 4. 15. Meditate upon these things, give thy selfe wholly to them, that thy profiting may appeare to all.*

First, this is the way to make men profit by the Word of God; and that so evidently, that all may take notice of it, this is one great benefit of the Word meditated upon, *Iosh. 1. 8. Thou shalt meditate in the Booke of the Law day and night: To what end? That thou mayest observe to doe according to all that is written therein.*

Secondly, this course will argue unfained love unto the Word, *Psal. 119. 97. Oh how I love thy Law, it is my meditation all the day.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, this will greatly encrease our comfort in the Word, and cause us to feele much more sweetnesse in it; even as the chewing of our meat makes us to taste much more sweetnesse in it. *Psal. 119. 15, 16.* he saith; *I will meditate on thy Precepts, and have respect unto thy wayes, I will delight my selfe in thy Statutes*: Meditation ever brings with it delight.

Fourthly, this will greatly encrease our knowledge: *Psal. 119. 99.* *I have more understanding than my teachers*: Why? because *thy testimonies are my meditation*.

Now, if this be required after hearing; how is it possible that they should profit by the Word; that never scarcely thinke of it afterwards? It is noted of the Disciples, that though they had seene Christs mightie power in the miracle of the Loaves; yet because they considered not the miracle, their hearts were hardened: *i.* because they did not meditate upon it, they were never the better for it. And thus it usually speedes with those that are carelesse in the performing of this dutie.

3 Wee must conferre of that wee have heard, and repeat it amongst our selves, and examine the Scriptures about the truth of that that is delivered. I joyne them all together; for so they may well be, in the practice of them. For conference, *David saith, Psal. 119. 172.* *My tongue shall speake of thy word, for all thy Commandements are righteousnesse*. This was ordinarily practised by the Disciples of our Saviour Christ, when he had taught
how

3
The third duty
after hearing.
Conference
and Repetition.

how hardly rich men shall be saved, *Mark. 10. 26.* They were astonished out of measure, and said amongst themselves, Who then can be saved? So they conferred about another Sermon of our Saviour, *Ioh. 16. 17, 18.*

Now repetition of Sermons is especially required of them that have families, to repeat the Word unto them: *Deut. 11. 18, 19.* You shall lay up these my words in your hearts; and you shall teach them your children; speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house: yea, it is said to be the chiefest thing that the Lord had respect unto, in giving us his Word, and the knowledge thereof, that we might instruct our families in it. *Deut. 4. 10.* Gather ye my people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learne to feare me, and may teach their children. And this, if it were practised carefully, would both make children and servants more carefull to heare and to attend unto the publike Ministry; and better our memories, that wee may be much better able to retaine that which we heare: and it will also worke an inward feeling in us and our children, of that which we have heard. Therefore, *Deut. 6. 6, 7.* it is called the whetting of them upon our children; repetition doth set an edge upon their dulnesse.

Yea further, for the searching and examining of the Scriptures, we are commanded, *1 Theß. 5. 21.* to try all things, and to hold fast that which is good. And the example of those noble Bereans is commended unto us, *Act. 17. 11, 12.* that searched the Scriptures dayly, concerning those things that

that were delivered by *Paul*; Therefore many of them beleaved.

Therefore it is a grievous neglect, that people in these dayes are guilty of; that neither conferre concerning the Word, they are ashamed of it, and (which is a fearefull reproach unto them) the *Word of God is a reproach unto them, Jer. 6. 10.* nor yet repeat Sermons in their families; they are like *Martha, Luke 10. 41.* troubled about so many worldly occasions: nor yet examine and search the Scriptures: And therefore are easily carried about with every winde of Doctrine, and never established and setled in the Truth.

4. Wee are to put in practise whatsoever wee heare, till that our hearts and lives are quite changed by it: *Iam. 1. 22. Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers onely, deceiving your owne soules: i.* they cozen themselves by false reasonings and arguments, or by sophisticall Syllogismes, reasoning after this or the like manner.

4
A fourth duty,
Obedience.

παραλογίζο-
μενοια.

He that heares the word, is a good Christian.

But I heare the word, &c.

Or thus:

He that heares not, shall be damned.

But I heare the word:

Therefore I shall be saved.

But how doth this follow? For though the neglect or contempt of the Word is sufficient to condemne a man, yet the hearing of the Word is not sufficient to save a man.

Well, obedience is the end of hearing, *Deut. 5. 1. Heare, O Israel, the Statutes which I speake in*

your cares this day, that ye may learne them, and keepe them, and doe them. The like ye finde, *1am. 1. 25.* Yea, obedience to the Word must be speedie, without any delays, or procraftinations; as it is said of the Colossians, *Col. 1. 6.* that the Gospel brought forth fruit in them, from the very day they heard it, and knew the grace of God in truth. And the Prophet *David* retolved, *Psal. 119. 60.* *I made hast, and prolonged not the time to keepe thy Commandements.* And this is a singular frame of heart; because the putting of the Word in practise immediately, is a great advantage to the hearer: seeing then, the affections of the heart are quicke, and lively; which with delays dye, and decay very suddenly.

Now, alas, for the wonderfull paucitie of such obedient hearers; for very few doe practise any thing they heare, leave any sinne, or doe any dutie: and therefore they must needs prove like the *House built on the Sand*; when the time of tryall shall come, they must needs fall, *Math. 7. 27.* Againe, there are many that in hearing have good motions and purposes; but they are like the sluggard, that said, *Yet a little slumber, yet a little sleepe*; so, because they delay, they vanish and come to nothing: of whom, in respect of their spirituall povertie, it may be said which *Salomon* speakes;

*His povertie shall come as one that
travellèth, and his want as
an armed man.*

Prova. 24. 33, 34.

AN APPENDIX
OR ADDITION

to this Treatise of the
W O R D.

PROV. 13. 13.

He that despiseth the word, shall be destroyed.

BY the occasion of which words, let our Christian meditations be a little fastened upon the greatnesse of the sinne of contemning and despising of the Word. My meaning is, not to handle it as a Text, but onely to take a hint, to begin to lay downe the danger of this epidemick and ordinarie disease, that so exceedingly spreads in these dayes; and then to adde some meanes and directions, to make us to be preparedly and profitably conversant about so great an Ordinance as the hearing of the Word.

WE of this Land (let us now open our eyes to see it) have certainly most fearefully and cursedly sinned against God, and provoked his fierce wrath against us, by contempt

contempt of his holy Word ; by shutting our eyes against the heavenly Light of the Gospel, which hath beene brought amongst us ; by not prizing the Ministerie which we have now enjoyed a long time, nor profiting by it : nay, by wicked opposing it, with secret persecution at the least, and cruell mockings.

In the first place, consider the crie of this sinne, and the curses it brings , from such places as these.

E

First, *Isa. 29. 11.* and both before, and after : *And the vision of all (saith the Prophet) is become unto you as the words of a Booke that is sealed, &c.* So may I justly say : All the visions, revelations, discoveries of the mysterie of Christ, opening of all Gods counsels ; all the expositions, interpretations, applications of the Ministry of most places, have beene unto the most of us ; a fearefull thing I speake, but most true, and to be lamented with teares of bloud ; *as the words of a Booke that is sealed, which they deliver to one that can reade, saying, Reade this, I pray thee : Then shall he say, I cannot ; for it is sealed. And the Booke is given to him that cannot reade, saying, Reade this, I pray thee : and he shall say, I cannot reade.* That is, all the Sermons they shall heare, and all the heavenly Messages are brought them from God, shall be as a sealed Booke to a learned man, or an open Booke unto an Ideot. They shall stare in the face of the Minister, when he is clearly unfolding the great mysterie of godlinesse, and shall not be able to understand him ; they shall have their owne Conscience unript to the quicke,

by

by the power of the Word, and shall not perceive it; they shall have their sweet sinne discovered, and damned unto the pit of Hell, by evident and unanswerable demonstration out of the Booke of God, and yet have no power to leave it: For *the vision of the Prophets* (saith the Prophet in the fore-cited Chapter) *is become unto them as the words of a Booke sealed up.* And therefore, all the Doctrine of salvation, though it drop upon them as the raine, and still as the dew, shall be but unto their hearts as unto the hardest rockes; all holy admonitions and reproofes, as arrowes shot against a stone-wall; all sacred Lessons offered and urged upon their Consciences, be as a Seale stamp't upon water, which receives no impression. O most wofull and fearefull estate!

Secondly, *Isa. 28.9. whom shall he teach knowledge, &c.* This is not as many understand it, That people must have a little by little preached unto them, but it is a curse upon them. As if he should say: They are nothing fitter to the discipline of the knowledge of God, than infants newly weaned, to receive any instruction. *For Precept must be upon Precept, &c. Vers. 10.* As if he should say: They must be taught as little children, a little at once, and have oft repeated over and over; and yet they can learne nothing to doe them good, chiefly concerning their repentance, and escaping Gods Iudgements: I would to God it were not too evident, by long and dolefull experience; That our Ministerie hath done lesse good amongst the elder sott, and men of much worldly wisedome, for
bringing

bringing them to any sound and comfortable knowledge in Gods Word, than amongst little children.

3

Thirdly, *Ezech. 33. 30, 31, 32, 33.* And loe, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voice, &c. And is it not so with us? That even to some that seeme to be friends, and to delight in the Ministerie, the Word is become as if it had lost all power to turne them from their sinne, to the holy way; from plausible formalitie, to saving forwardnesse. Heare a Character of them, *Isa. 58. 2.* Yet they seeke me dayly, and delight to know my wayes, as a Nation that did righteousnesse, and forsooke not the Ordinance of their God: they aske of me the Ordinances of Justice; they take delight in approaching to God. They may heare the Word gladly, as Herod did, and perhaps observe the Messenger, &c. but they will not stirre an ynch further from sinne, and neerer to God: say what he will, let him preach out his heart, they will still hugge their bosome-sinne, and hold exactly their heartlesse formes and formall fashions in Religion, after five thousand Sermons: They are all unto them, as a lovely Song of one that hath a sweet voice; and leave no more impression upon their Consciences, than a pleasant Lesson upon the Lute, upon the care, when it is ended.

4

Fourthly, *Ier. 23. 33.* And when this people, or a Prophet, or a Priest shall aske thee, saying, what is the burthen of the Lord? &c. Nay, hath not the cursed sinne of loathing this heavenly Manna, beene found among us? Hath not our much Preaching
beene

beene accounted a burthen, a wearisomenesse, and a trouble? yea, as here it was once unto the Iewes; a matter of scorne, and reproach? The Lord complains grievously, in the quoted place, of this sinne; how they tooke up this custome amongst them, concerning the faithfull preaching of all the true Prophets, to aske scoffingly; *what is the burthen of the Lord?* Thus making a scorne of all the right discoverie of their sinnes, and the sound denunciation of Gods Iudgement, calling it by the name of a Burthen; the Lord chargeth them most severely, that they should not use that disdainfull speech any more. Hee tells them, how that they had perverted and abused the holy Word of the ever-living God, the Lord of Hosts: and withall directs them, what phrase of speech they should use, when they speake of his Word sent unto them by his true Prophets; That thus each should demand, in reverence of his Majestie: *what hath the Lord answered;* or, *what hath the Lord spoken?* And to leave off those reproachfull taunting termes, *what is the burthen of the Lord?* Or otherwise, hee would surely be avenged of them for this sinne; as we may see in the denunciation following.

Fifthly, *Ier. 7. 4, 8, 9, 10, 11. Trust not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, &c.* They rested upon the outward formes of Gods worship, without reformation. It is just our case. Many amongst us satisfie themselves, and thinke it will serve the turne for salvation, if they rest upon the Sabbath, heare the

Word, receive the Sacrament, and conforme to the outward exercifes of Religion; though they abide in their finnes, and have no acquaintance at all with the power of the Word, the Myfterie of Chrift, conversion to God, or holy conuerfation.

6

Sixtly, *Iſa. 6. 9, 10.* *Goe tell this people; Heare yee indeed, but vnderſtand not; ſee yee indeed, but perceiue not: make the heart of this people fat, and make their eares heauie, and ſhut their eyes; leſt &c.* Oh, this is heauie, that a Miniſter ſhould be ſent to a further hardening of a people! And yet it is juſt with God; and they ſhall feele it on their Bed of Death. The Theefe on the Croſſe was converted with a piece of a Sermon; they are not wrought upon after many yeeres: therefore it is juſt with God, as an act of iudgement, becauſe they would not come in, after ſo long a time, to give them over to ſuch iudiciall hardneſſe.

Conſider theſe things, and tremble all yee that haue any wayes ſtrucke at the face of Chriſt, by contempt of his Miniſterie. For the humbling of your ſoules into the duſt; for this horrible ſinne; peruſe in bleeding hearts, in ſecret, that blacke and bloudie Catalogue of fearefull provocations, which are ordinarily to be found in, and certainly ſet upon the Score of ſuch as hate to be reformed under a conſcionable Miniſterie. Which made Chriſt ſay, *Ioh. 15. 22.* *If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, &c.*

1

1. Deſpizing it; ſhutting their eyes againſt that glorious Light, erected in their faces, to leade

leade them to Heaven. See *Math. 10. 14.* *who-soever shall not receive you, nor heare your words, when yee depart out of that house, or Citie, shake off the dust of your feet.*

Here is a notable place, to affright all those that are unworthie partakers of the Ministerie. For the understanding whereof, take notice of these five points.

1 It is as if they should say ; Here I have gone a long journey, and have contracted dust and sand by my travell, and taken a great deale of paines ; and loe, here I shake off this dust, in witnesse, that you had Christ offered you, and you would not accept him.

2 To intimate unto them ; I care not for any of you, or yours ; but onely I seeke the good of your soules , I respect not so much as the dust ; I prize more the conversion of any of your soules, than all yours : and this dust shall witnesse it.

3 They shooke off the dust, as a witnesse : I will have nothing to doe with this Citie ; for I know, the Plagues and Iudgements of God will feize on this place, as it was with Sodome and Gomorrah ; I will have no communion and societie with these wicked people.

4 They did shake off the dust, to intimate that destruction should come upon them. For it is said, *Psalme 1.* That they should be driven away as the dust : As that is shaken with the winde, so shall they be with the wrath of God.

5 In testimonie and witnesse against them : This very dust shall be witnesse against them. Doe you thinke then, that their Sermons and Catechising shall not? If the dust that they gathered by their paines, will be witnesse; what will all their Sermons, and praying, and such paines be? Now this sinne of despising the Word, is a sinne above that of Sodome, *Vers. 15. Verily, it shall be more easie for Sodome and Gomorrah, in the Day of Iudgement, than for that Citie.*

2 2 Murmuring against it, *Ioh. 6. 41. Luk. 15. 2.*

3 3 Cavilling against it, *Act. 13. 45.*

4 4 Contemning it, *Ier. 44. 16. Act. 17. 18. What will this Babler say? They accounted Pauls precious preaching, vaine babbling.*

5 5 Mocking and scorning it, *2 Chron. 36. 16. Act. 2. 13.*

6 6 Persecuting it, *Math. 10. 23.* And so they become like mad Dogges throwne into a River, or tyed up in a Chaine, which doe snarle at, bite, and teare those that put out their hands to helpe, and set them free; fearing, they come to torture and to trouble them more. Iust so it is with many prophane wretches; which lye drowned in sinne, and chained in Sathans fetters: If a man put out his hand, by the Ministerie of the Word, to save them from sinking into Damnation, and to free them from the Snares of everlasting death; they rage and rayle, they barke and bite like mad Dogges, holding themselves to be disquieted, disgraced, and tormented before their time.

Thus

Thus you have seene the sixe Curses, and the sixe Sinnes, that the not profiting by the Word doth bring upon a people.

2 Now, in the second place, let me tender to your most serious thoughts some quickening Motives, for the stirring of you up to profit by the Word.

1 Some taken from the Word it selfe, the Ministerie whereof you have slighted.

What then is the blessed thing you have so wickedly abused? It is,

1 The *word of Salvation*, *Act. 13. 26*. No other Word, or created Power, can save your soules from Hell.

2 The *word of Truth*, *Eph. 1. 13*. There is error in all other Truths, whether Naturall, or Morall, or Politicall: and goe to any Art, there is weaknesse and infirmitie in the braine of man, that there can be no certaintie; but here is all Truth, and here is infallibilitie, you need not doubt of any.

3 It is called the *word of Life*, *Phil. 2. 16*. All other Learning whatsoever, when it hath furnished you with ornaments and parts, it leaves your soules starke dead in sinnes and trespasses. But this is a *word of Life*, it inspires spirituall Life, and brings eternall Life.

4 It is called a *word of Reconciliation*, *2 Cor. 5. 19*. Let the Sea runne nothing but Gold, and let Heaven and Earth be turned into Gold and Silver, and offered unto God, it could not reconcile us. If all the creatures would lose their being,

*Quid autem est
Scriptura sacra,
nisi quedam Epi-
stola Omnipoten-
tis Dei ad Crea-
turam suam?
Greg. Epist. lib. 4.
Epist. 84.*

be annihilated, and come to nothing; yet this could not save *Judas*, or any one reprobate: but the Word hath beene a blessed instrument, for reconciling many soules to God.

5 It is, as it were, an Epistle or Letter (as one of the Fathers calls it) written from God Almighty unto us miserable men; wherein hee writes his Will and Word, and sends it to us: the Ministers are the readers of it, and they bring the newes from Heaven. And what is the matter of it? Concerning eternall life, or eternall death, concerning the good of your soules. Now, if you had a private Letter come from the King, concerning your advancement, or your deliverance and forgiveness for some dangerous Treason, or both; how would you take this Letter, and how often would you reade it, with what willingness of affection? Now, here is an Epistle sent from Heaven, to advise you, that you are all Traitors and Rebels against Heaven, and yet here in this Letter, God offers the blood of his Sonne, and you may be reconciled: and will you neglect it? This is the matter of this Epistle; it brings matter of deliverance from the greatest Curse that can befall the creature, and the greatest advancement.

6 It is the bottomelesse Treasure of all high, sweet, and excellentest things: The Myserie of the Trinitie, the Majestic of God, the Love of God, and of Christ; his sufferings, the Spirits workings; the happinesse of the Saints, and the glory of Heaven, &c.

7 It must be our Iudge at the last day, *Ioh. 12.*
48. Every honest Sermon, is but the Word of God unfolded; and a bunch of Arrowes wrapped up, and unfolded, are all one.

8 It onely can cure a wounded Conscience, the greatest calamitie that ever the heart of man was acquainted with; and that which no Arme of flesh, or created Power, no man or Angel, can ease at all.

9 In it onely are to be had Deeds and Evidences, to shew for eternall Life; and Acquittances, for discharge from eternall Death.

10 It hath saved all the soules that are in Heaven, *Rom. 10. 13.*

11 It onely is the object of divine and infused Faith. Humane testimonies and authorities beget onely humane Faith: Therefore you must reverence this Word.

*Muscul. in Mas.
p. 365.*

2 Some Motives taken from the most fearefull and cursed estate of those who neglect and reject the Ministerie of the Word, hating to be reformed by it. Marke and take to heart thine unspeakable miserie, whosoever thou art, that despisest the Ministerie: Take a taste of it, in these passages.

2

1 They are deprived by this meanes of the love and favour of God, the onely fountaine of all comfort, peace, and glory; which is infinitely the dearest and most unvaluable losse, that can be imagined.

2 Of their part and portion in the bloud of Christ; one drop whereof, is incomparably more

worth than Heaven and Earth, men and Angels, or the creatures of a thousand Worlds.

3 Of the fatherly protection, care, and providence of the blessed Trinitie, the glorious guard of Angels, the comfortable communion of the blessed Saints, and all the sweet contentments that follow thence.

4 Of the quiet joy and tranquillitie of a good Conscience; a Jewell farre more worth than the whole World, were it all turned into one unvaluable Pearle of unvaluable price: and of all the heavenly illuminations, cherishments, and comforts, wherewith the Holy-Ghost is wont to visit and refresh the hearts of holy men.

5 Of the sweet peace and true contentment in this life, and of all comfortable right and religious interest to any of the creatures: For, without a good Conscience, there was never found joy in any mans heart, or sanctified enjoyment of any thing in the World; and never shall any man have a good Conscience, that gives allowance to any Lust, or lives delightfully in any sinne.

6 Of a Crowne of Life, the unspeakable joyes of Heaven, that immeasurable and endlesse comfort that there shall be had with all the children of God, Patriarkes, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, all our Christian acquaintance; yea, with the Lord himselfe, and all Angels; with Christ our Saviour and Lambe, slaine for us; the Prince of Glory; yea, the Glory of Heaven and Earth, and brightnesse of the everlasting Light, &c.

To these privative consequents, adde a serious consideration upon those terrible flaming places; *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. *Prov.* 1. 23, 24. *Isa.* 6. 9, 10. *1 Sam.* 2. 25. *Act.* 13. 46.

By continuing thy contempt, and rejecting the Light of the Gospel, thou mayest come, thou knowest not how soone, to sinne against the Holy-Ghost, as the Pharises did, *Math.* 12. 24, 31.

For sinne against the Holy-Ghost may be committed as well,

1 By those, who although they doe acknowledge and confesse the Truth, which they doe blaspheme; yet they have not yet professed it, or given up their names to it, as were those Scribes and Pharises: and there are many such in these dayes, who have not as yet given their name to the Truth, which yet notwithstanding being well knowne and acknowledged, they doe blaspheme.

2 As those, who have not only acknowledged in themselves the Truth that they blaspheme, but have professed the same before others, that are the favourers of Truth; as *Iulian*, *Porphyrus*, *Alexander* the Copper-smith, and many others: of which, you may see *Heb.* 6. & 10. So, many amongst us at this day.

3 Some taken from the survey of those judgements, which contempt of the Ministerie may bring upon the place where it is planted.

1 It may remove the *Candlesticke*, and be plagued with the utter losse of the Ministerie. Consider, *Math.* 8. 34. & 10. 13. & 21. 41.

2 They

3

2 They may have Prophets, but such as are *fooles*; they may have men of the Spirit, but those that be *mad*, *Hof. 9. 7.* By a *foole*, is meant not a naturall, but spirituall foole, *Prov. 1. 8. Jer. 4. 22. Isa. 5. 20.* By *mad*, is understood not a man out of his wit, or distracted in minde, but he that like a mad Dogge rageth and rayleth against the Truth of God, and sinceritie of his Saints; which is a great judgement.

3 They may enjoy faithfull Teachers, but to their further hardening, as the Israelites did *Isaiah, Isa. 6. 9, 10.* Which of all other judgements that God can inflict in this life, is the most fearefull.

4 By this meanes, they may make sad the heart and affections of their Teachers, that they cannot with that chearefulnesse as they desire, performe the offices of their Ministerie: Which as it discourageth the Teachers, (and will one day light heavie on the causers and procurers thereof) so it is unprofitable for the hearers, and deprives them of much good they might otherwise enjoy; as appeares, *Heb. 13. 17.*

4

4 Some from consideration of those confusions and desolations, which it pulls with great violence even upon whole Kingdomes. Looke upon such places as these: *2 Chron. 36. 16, 17, &c. Jer. 25. 3. &c. & Cap. 35. 15. Rev. 6. 4. &c.*

The glorious Light of those seven Candlestickes in Asia, mentioned in the *Revelations*, was long since, for their unfruitfulnesse, coldnesse, and contempt of the Word, turned into the darke

Mid-

Midnight of Heresie, Apostasie, and Mahometisme. Rome, that was anciently the glory of the Westerne Churches, lyes now drowned in Superstition, soaking in damnable Idolatry, and plunged over head and eares in the Doctrine of Devils. Many strong and noble Limbes of the reformed Churches in high Germanie have lye[n] for some yeeres in their teares of bloud, groaning under the mercilesse tyrannie of the bloudie Antichristians, and have wofully received the *marke of the Beast* againe. Now assuredly, it was the loathing the heavenly Manna, which made the Lord to *utter his Voice* before the Armie of the enemies at Prague, and other places. It was their spirituall coldnesse, which sharpened the Papists swords against them: It was their not entertaining the Truth, with the love and power of it, which gave the Imperiallists power over them.

Joel 2.11.

3 In a third place, take some helpes and remedies, to become profitable hearers and saving proficients by the Ministerie you enjoy; which hath thus long beene (it is a reproachfull and ruffull thing I speake) *the savour of death unto death* unto the most.

3

1 Be perswaded to beleeve and obey the blessed Commandement of our Saviour himselte, *Math. 6. 32. Seeke ye first the Kingdome of God, and the righteousnesse thereof, in the first place; and all other things shall be added to you.* To which bee quickened, by considering,

1

1 To what end wee came into this World.

What

What a wofull and bewitched people are they, who being reasonable creatures, having an understanding Light, like the Angels of God; having eyes in their heads, to fore-see the wrath that is to come; hearts in their bodies, that can tremble as the leaves of the Forest, which are shaken with the winde; Consciences, that are capable of unspeakable horror; bodies and soules, which can burne in Hell for ever: and yet some have lived twentie, some thirtie, some fortie, some sixtie yeeres; and yet to this day, have not learnt one sound spirituall Lesson, for the true good of their soules, either out of the Booke of God, the Booke of Nature, the Workes of God, or any other way? Why, to what end doe you thinke were you created, and put into this World? To eat, and drinke, and sleepe; to lye, and swear, and root in the Earth; to Dice and Card, and goe in the Fashion; to contemne the Ministerie; shamefully to belye, slander, and rayle upon Gods people, as too precise; to die, and then not to be damned? Assuredly, thou wast not borne, and placed upon the Earth, for to serve thine owne turne, to please thine owne heart, to follow thine owne wayes, to live for a while like a Beast in sensuall contentments, and then to goe to Hell. Certainly, thou wast sent into this World for some other end, for some greater businesse and important affaire; even for that *One necessarie thing*, Luke 10. 42. to know, serve, and obey thy God, and to save that precious Soule of thine in the Day of Christ; to seeke first the Kingdome of Heaven, to know and feele the vertue

See *Whately*,
pag. 123.

tue of Christs death and resurrection. This, I say, is that *One necessarie thing*: All other things are but respectively necessarie, so farre as they further this end; ought onely to be subordinate, and contributorie; nay, to be accounted but *drosse* and *dung*, to this, *Phil.* 3. 10.

2 Consider, that upon this moment depends eternitie.

3 *What is a man profited, if he shall gaine the whole world, and lose his owne soule?* *Math.* 16. 26.

4 The difference of the life and death of the Christian and Carnallist.

2 Take the counsell of the holy Apostle, *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, &c.*

1 By hearing it *in season, and out of season*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. Preachers and hearers, are relatives. Christian hearers in ancient times heard their Pastours day after day.

(1) ^a *Because yesterday wee made mention of the Theefe, &c.* faith *Ambrose*. Which implyes his preaching the day before.

(2) ^b *You that were here yesterday, &c.* Which implyes his preaching the day before. In another place: ^c *I suppose, you remember how farre we discoursed yesterday: from that very place, let us to day begin.*

Elsewhere he saith: ^d *From whence we spake much yesterday.* Againe; ^e *Yesterday we came even to that Verse, &c.* ^f *Yesterdaies Sermon was protracted, &c.*

ratem vestram, ex ipso loco hodie sumamus exordium. Idem in Psal. 24 Conc. 2. ^a *Unde hesternio die multum locuti sumus. Idem Expof. in Johan. pag 12.* ^b *Hesternio die perveneramus autem usque ad ipsum versum, &c. Idem in Psal. 43. Conc. 2.* ^c *Hesternio sermo protractus, &c. Idem in Psal. 58. Conc. 2.*

See my Booke of walking with God, pag. 158.

See *Chrysofome* upo the place.

About which, see *Chryf. tom. 5. serm. contra Gulam, p. 828, 829.*

2.

1.

See *Austin. conf. lib. 6. pag. 161.*

^a *Quoniam hesternio die de latrone fecimus mentionem, &c.*

Ambros. de sancto latrone, serm. 44.

^b *Qui hesternio die affuistis, &c.* *August. in Ps. 33. Conc. 2.*

^c *Quousque hesternio die disputatum sit, credo meminisse charitatem vestram, ex ipso loco hodie sumamus exordium. Idem in Psal. 24 Conc. 2.*

^a *Unde hesternio die multum locuti sumus. Idem Expof. in Johan. pag 12.*

^b *Hesternio die perveneramus autem usque ad ipsum versum, &c. Idem in Psal. 43. Conc. 2.*

^c *Hesternio sermo protractus, &c. Idem in Psal. 58. Conc. 2.*

¶ Posterior pars
Psalmi, de quo
hesternò die lo-
cuti sumus, &c.
Idem in Psal. 78.
Conc. 2.

h Hesternò die
Psal. brevior tra-
ctabatur, &c.
Idem in Psal.
142.

i Primùm igitur
persuadcamus, ut
iuramentorum
fuga in melius
mutationem fa-
ciat: etsi enim
heri & nudius
tertius de hac
vobis locus sum
maceriâ, neque
tamen hodie des-
sum, neque cras,
neque perendie,
eodem persua-
dere. Chrysost.
ad Pop. Antioch.

Hom. 5.
See him in
Math. 15. Hom.
53. pag. 304.
at *

* Movent me
quidem (fratres)
ad hunc sermo-
nem vespertina
spectacula, &c.
Basil the great,
Serms. in ebriet.

¶ The latter part of the Psalme, of which wee spake yesterday, &c. h Yesterday a shorter Psalme was handled.

(3) i First therefore let us perswade you, that you would amend and abandon your Oathes: For although I spake of the same matter yesterday, and the day before that; yet notwithstanding, I will not cease to day, nor to morrow, nor the day after that, to perswade the same things. Whence it appeares, that hee preached the day before, and the day before that; and would preach the day following, and the day after that.

(4) k Yesterdayes sight (Brethren) provoked me to this Sermon, &c. This Sermon was made upon Easter Monday; and no doubt, he had preached on Easter day.

(5) l Yesterday, &c. To day wee will discourse briefly of Baptisme, and the benefits that flow from thence to us: Although yesterday our speech did flow more hastily from us, both because the time did urge, as also least length of speech should beget disdain and satietie: for the satietie of speech is no lesse an enemy to the eares, than too much meate is to the body. These Orations were divine, and as Sermons; and this was made on the day immediately after an holy-day. The Greeke Church at that time celebrated the day of Christs Baptisme.

¶ luxum, quibus die Pasche populum affectum vidit, pag. 291. i Hesternò die &c. hodie de Baptismo ac beneficio inde ad nos promanante, breviter disseremus. Hesternâ luce nos oratio preterfluxit, tum quia tempus urgebat, tum ne satidium satietatemque sermonis prolixitas pareret. Sermonis quippe satietas non minus anibus inimica est, quam cibus immodicus corpori. Nazianzen. Tom. 2. Orat. 40. in sanctum Baptisma, pag. 614.

(6) ^m If you remember, in yesterdaies Sermon, &c. Chrysostome in his tenth Homily upon Genesis, exostulating with his people, because they were so few, tells them, That every houre of the day is feasonable to heare a Sermon; nay, the very night is not unfeasonable, for such a purpose: urging for prooffe thereof; the place I prest before, 2 Tim. 4. 2. and Pauls practice, Act. 20. preaching untill midnight. These are his words. ⁿ What means it, that there is a lesse assembly of you to day, and not so frequent a multitude of those, who flocke to us? For it is not so with spirituall things as with humane, which are divided to determined times: Every time of the day is fit for a spirituall Sermon. And what doe I say, the day time? yea, if the night should come upon us, it doth not prejudice or hinder spirituall teaching. For both Paul writing to Timothy, said: Be instant in feason and out of feason, &c. And againe, heare blessed S. Luke, saying: Paul being about to depart on the morrow, prolonged his Sermon to the middle of the night. Tell mee, I pray thee, did the time hinder? Was therefore his word of Doctrine hindered?

Austin sometimes preached thrice upon the same day. ^o Doe not wonder, deare Brethren, if I have preached thrice to day, God assisting me: There hath happened to day a fearefull chance, &c.

Et iterum audi beatum Lucam, dicentem: Discessurus crastino Paulus, &c. Sermonem produxit ad mediam noctem. Num tempus obsuit, dic queso? Num propterea doctrine sermo impeditus? ^o Non miremini, fratres charissimi, si hodie ter sermonem, Deo auxiliante perfecero. Accidit hodie terribilis casus, &c. Tom. 10. part. 2. ad fratres in Eremito, Serm. 33.

^m Si meministis hesternis sermone, &c. Bernard. in Psal. Qui habitat. &c. Serm. 12. pag. 546.

ⁿ Quidam sibi vult, quod minor est hodie vestri conventus & infrequens theatrum eorum qui ad nos conflunt? Non enim ut humane res, ita & spirituales ad definita tempora distincte sunt. Sermoni spirituali omne diei tempus idoneum fuerit. Et quid dico diei tempus? Neque si nox ingruat, spiritualis doctrine preiudicat. Propterea & Timotheus Paulus scribens dicebat, Insta tempestive, intempestive, &c.

Quemadmodum
si quis lucis huius
lychnæo aquam
inspergeret, aut
oleum duntaxat
eximeret, lucem
extingueret: Ita
habet & donum
Spiritus.

Facta est igitur
vespera, inquit,
& factum est
mane, dies unus.
Sed hi nostri de
illâ vesperâ ser-
mones ab hâc
vespera iam oc-
cupati, hic orati-
oni nostre finem
imponunt. Hex-
am. Hom. 2. ad
finem.

See Conc. 2. in
Psal. 88.

* Vnde Episcopii
necesse est in sin-
gulos ut sic di-
cam dies semen-
tem facere, ut ipsa
saliè assuetudine
doctrinæ sermonè
auditorum animi
retinere possint.
De Sacerd. 1.6.

Chrysoſtome in the Evening, as we may see in his eleventh Homily upon 1 *Theſſ.* 5. faith hee: *Even* as, if any one should cast water on the wicke of this Candle, or should onely take away the Oyle, hee would put out the Light; so is it with the gift of the Spirit. He tooke his example from the Lampe that burnt by him when he was preaching, and sayes; *You may quench this Lampe, by putting in water; and you may quench it, by taking out the Oyle.*

And great *Basil* also the like. *The Evening and the Morning* (saith he) *is made one Day.* But these our Sermons concerning that Evening, now begun from this Evening, doe here put an end to our words.

Chrysoſtome almost in all his Homilies upon *Genesis*, faith in the beginning of his Sermon: *Heri, &c. Yesterday I handled this or that, or the like.* See 1. *Hom.* 7. 2. *Hom.* 14. 3. *Hom.* 17. 4. *Hom.* 18. 5. *Hom.* 24. 6. *Hom.* 27. 7. *Hom.* 28. 8. *Hom.* 31. 9. *Hom.* 34. 10. *Hom.* 40. 11. *Hom.* 44. 12. *Hom.* 46. 12. *Hom.* 48. 13. *Hom.* 52. 14. *Hom.* 53. 15. *Hom.* 54. 16. *Hom.* 55. 17. *Hom.* 56. 18. *Hom.* 57. 19. *Hom.* 58. 20. *Hom.* 59. 21. *Hom.* 63. 22. *Hom.* 65.

Austin preached twice a day.

Object. Except perhaps they preached every day onely in Lent, &c. or besides the Lords day, but onely upon holy-dayes, and their Eves.

Answ. Heare *Chrysoſtome* speaking generally.

* *It is necessarie, that a Bishop should sowe his Seed every day, as I may so say; that at the least, by that dayly custome of Teaching, the mindes of his hearers may retaine his words.*

Austin

Austin hath the like. *The word of God, which is daily opened unto us, and after a sort broken to us, is our daily Bread: And as our bellies hunger for that Bread, so doe our mindes for this.*

Object. If former and Primitive Times were so full of Preaching, how commeth it to passe, that our dayes will scarce downe with twice a Sabbath? Sith the ancient Fathers preached dayly, how happeneth it, that many reputed great Schollers in these Times, preach so seldome? &c.

Answer. First, one Reason may be an affected humour of man-pleasing, or selfe-preaching; which is ambitiously pursued, and mightily prevailes abroad in the World.

This, King *James* out of his deepe and Princely wisdom, conceived to be the cause of so many dayly defections from our Religion, both to Poperie and Anabaptisme. He calls it *a light, affected, and an unprofitable kind of Teaching, which hath bene of late yeeres too much taken up in Vniversitie, Citie, and Countrey: In which* (saith he) *there is a mustering up of much reading, and a displaying of their owne wits, &c.* These are his owne words, in the Reasons of his direction for Preaching.

Now you must know, that to the scraping and patching together of the garish and gawdie paintings and unprofitable Pompe of a selfe-Sermon, there is required and ordinarily expected such a deale of curiositie, varietie of extraordinarie conceits, and trickes of wit; that it puts the Pen-man to a great deale of paines, and tortures his wit extremely. He dives with much adoe into the dung-

Verbum Dei quod quotidie nobis aperitur & quodam modo frangitur, panis quotidianus est: & quomodo illum panem ventres, sic istum esuriunt mentes. August.
Hom. 42. Ex. 50.

See Instructions of comforting afflicted Consciences, pag. 154.

See *Aust. Conf. lib. 6. cap. 6.*

hill of many a Popish Postiller, and phantasticall Frier, &c. For such, as *Tully* said of *Anthony*, do *magno conatu magnas nugas agere*; they sweat at it, with much vexing anxietie: And what then? *Parturiunt montes*, &c. they detaine & delude the itching eares of unjudicious hearers with a little ayrie nourishment, as the King speakes in the fore-cited place.

The painfulnesse then of this unprofitable way of Preaching; the irkesome tediousnesse of committing of it so punctually and precisely to memorie; the fearefulnesse of deliverie; and danger of being out; vaine-glorious doubting, that they shall not be applauded as they were wont; feare, lest the next time they should lessen their former reputation of wit and reading, &c.

Secondly, another Reason may be, because Ministers doe not so much meditate and study divine and heavenly things, but trouble themselves too much in the affaires of the World. Therefore the ancient Fathers, spending their time, wits, and understanding wholly upon heavenly things, diving continually into the mysteries of Gods Booke, and preaching dayly, were able to preach often, and excellently: by their Ministeriall diligence and faithfulness, they attained such a happie readinesse and habit, and so enriched themselves with heavenly store, that they were able, as occasion was offered, to *bring forth out of their Treasure things new and old*; whereupon they were enabled to preach sometimes upon short warning: So *Basil* preached his two Sermons upon the fixe dayes worke, when he had but that morning for meditation. Sometimes,

Per alium ad nos est Reverendiss. fratrem nostrum Basilium, Episcop. velut unum, de Laicis, &c. Greg. ep. 1.8. c. 11. & in Evang. Hom. 17. Col. 381. & Past. Cur. p. 2. Col. 1248. Rogatus quoque, (speaking of Austin) a nonnullis in eorum temporalibus causis, Epistolas ad diversos dabat; Sed hanc suam a melioribus rebus occupatione tanquam angaria deputabat. suam enim semper habere de his, quae Dei sunt, vel allocutionem vel colloquationem fraternae ac domesticae familiaritatis. Possid. de vit. Aug.

times, without any premeditation; so it seemes he preached his second Sermon. And so did *Austin* his Sermon, upon *Psal. 95*. It seemes there, his Brother *Severus* failing to come, he preached himselfe. And I have told you heretofore of a Sermon which he made upon a sudden; occasioned by an heavie accident. And these Sermons were such, that they have bin thought worthy by the Church from time to time, to be conveyed and communicated to posterity. For in all my discourse, I am so farre from giving any allowance to idle, impertinent, or any way unsubstantiall Preaching; that I hold it a very irksome, and loathsome, and wicked thing, lyable to that heavie Curse; *Cursed is he that doth the worke of the Lord negligently*. But let a man be well grounded before he begin, be godly himselfe, ply faithfully and painefully his Ministeriall charge, *in season and out of season*; and it is incredible to what he may attaine in the Point I pursue, by his much exercise, and Gods blessing upon it.

But yet some say;

First, That a man cannot preach well, under a quarter of a yeeres provision. See the truth hereof, in the fore-going Reasons.

Secondly; That often Preaching will make it too cheape, and contemptible; which to affirme, is a base and carnall wrangling, and confuted by the practice of the Fathers.

Thirdly, That Reading is to be preferred before Preaching.

Wee doe not denie, but that the Word read, is the rule of holinesse, may convert, the Spirit ac-

De Baptismo referat D. D. Donic.

See ad fratres in Exemo, Scrip. 33.

companying his Ordinance; and therefore is to have place, and due respect in the Congregation: but wee will not equall it to Preaching. If Reading were more excellent, and of greater force to convert, than Preaching; why are not the people converted, that have a Reader? To what end then serve Schooles of the Prophets? Wherefore should men studie the knowledge of Tongues, and Arts, to divide the Word aright, and to distribute to every mans present necessities? And why should Sathan rage more against Preachers, than Readers; except the Word powerfully delivered did not the more batter and beat downe his Kingdome? Besides, why did not Christ send out his Apostles with this charge, *Goe, reade*; but, *Goe, preach to all Nations*? Wherefore doth *Paul* pronounce a *Woe* to them that *preach* not the Gospel? And why did hee not charge his sonne *Timothy* before God, to *reade in season, and out of season*?

Object.

Yea, but may some say, The ancient Fathers were extraordinary men, and therefore no Patternes for our Preaching, &c. They were glorious Lights, and wee but Glow-wormes; they were Cedars, wee but Shrubs, &c.

Answer.

Let them be what they were, I as much reverence and respect them, as any man alive, if wee take truth and discretion with us. And therefore at this time, I will suppose (I say so, because I doubt not, but our Age hath brought forth as worthy Divines, if not worthier, as any of the ancient Fathers;) I say, I will suppose them to be as it were Gyants, and wee Dwarfes: Yet set a
Dwarfe

Dwarfe upon a Gyants shoulders, and hee will see further, and so might certainly wee, but for Slouth, Idleneffe, Worldlinesse, Ambition, and other such base and vile degenerations of these later Times.

It may be further objected, That there was more necessity of the Fathers frequent Preaching, especially in those Primitive Times, for more plentifull publishing and propagation of the Gospel, &c. and suppressing Heresies, &c.

Object.

Passingly weake, and untrue. There is farre more need of much Preaching now, than in former times. For wee live in the *last dayes*, wherein those *perillous times* are come upon us, which *Paul* fore-tells *2 Tim. 3. 1. &c.* and wherein *iniquitie* abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold, *&c. Math. 24. 12.* And at this day wee oppose the *Hydra* of all Heresies, Poperie; which opposeth even the whole Body of Christianitie. Againe, their Homilies are against Drunkennesse, Pride, Swearing, Luxury, Covetousnesse, love of the World, Vsfury, painted Faces, false Haire, Anger, Envie, Ambition, &c. All which sinnes, and many more, reigne and rage at this day with more hainousnesse, and an higher hand, than heretofore.

Answ.

2 A second meanes whereby the Word may dwell plentifully in us, is, by a constant and conscientious reading the Booke of God. This Exercise is commanded to Kings and Captaines, *Deut. 17. 17, 18, 19. Iosh. 1. 8.* who may seeme most priviledged, by their intanglement in many and weightie affaires.

2

Christ bids the Jewes, *Ioh. 5. 39. Search the Scriptures*, as the well-spring of eternall life. The Holy-Ghost commends the Jewes of Berea, as more noble than they of Theffalonica, because they received the Word with all readinesse of minde, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so, *Act. 17. 11.* See *Deut. 6, 7; 8, 9.* See many Motives to this dutie, before: It is the Word of Salvation, of Truth, of Life, of Reconciliation; a Letter from Heaven, a Treasurie of all excellent things: it shall judge us, it onely can heale a wounded Soule; it contains all our evidence for Heaven, and it is the object of divine Faith, &c.

Nay, and because the Papists have wickedly dammed up this Fountaine of Life from the common people, hear the judgement and zeale of Antiquitie, in pressing this dutie.

First, heare *Chrysostome*.

* Heare, I pray you, all yee Lay-men, (saith *Chrysostome*) get yee Bibles, a Medicine for your Soules, &c. You cast all upon our shouldiers. You ought onely to be instructed of us, but your wives and Children should be by you, &c. But now adayes, your Children preferre divellish Songs and Dancings, even as Cookes, and Caters, and leaders of Dances, but none knowes any *Psalme*.

The same *Chrysostome*, to stirre up men to diligent reading the Scriptures, maketh good this assertion; There is no affliction or miserie of body or soule, but may receive a Medicine out of Gods Booke.

I. A man heavie-hearted, and of a sad spirit, (saith hee) takes the Bible in his hand; after hee

bath

* Audite, obscuro, seculares omnes, comparate vobis Biblia, anime Pharmaca, &c. Omnia humeris nostris injicitis. Vos oportebat dumtaxat a nobis institui, uxores vero a vobis & liberos. Nunc vero Satanicas cantiones ac saltationes praeferrunt pueri vestri, quemadmodum Coci, & Obsonatores, & Cherearum ductores; Psalmum autem nemo novit ullum. *Chrysost. in 3. ad Coloss. Hom. 9. Col. 1054.*

hath met with that place, *Psal. 42. 11.* (*Why art thou cast downe, O my soule, and why art thou so disquieted within me? hope thou in God, &c.*) he is refreshed.

2 Another (saith he) is oppressed with extreme povertie, beholds the wicked wallow in worldly wealth, and flourish like a greene Bay-tree: But after hee hath cast his eye upon that, *Psal. 55. 22.* (*Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and hee shall sustaine thee, &c.*) he is comforted.

3 Another is hunted with calumnies and insidiations, &c. and no humane helpe will be had; the Prophet (saith hee) doth teach him what to doe, in these words: * *They did speake against me, but I prayed.*

4 Another is forsaken even of his friends and kinsmen, and contemned of those who were most beholding to him: Heare how the Prophet behaved himselfe in such a case, *Psal. 38. 11. &c. 13. &c.*

He concludes thus: * *Thou hast seene, whensoever any calamitie doth oppresse a man, how convenient an Antidote he may take from the Scriptures, and all care of this life may be driven backe, neither should we be grieved for any thing that falls out. Therefore, I beseech you, that you would come hither, and diligently attend to the reading of the holy Scriptures; not onely when you come hither, but even at home take the holy Bible into your hands, and goe reape the profit that is in them with great earnestnesse. Moreover, what that sensible Bread doth to increase bodily strength; that Reading doth to the soule; for it is spirituall nourishment, and makes the soule vigorou, &c.*

* *Ipsi detrahebant mihi, ego autem orabam.*
 * *Vidisti quomodo, quacumque calamitate humanam naturam premente, conveniens ex Scripturis antidotum accipere liceat, & omnis huius vitæ repellatur cura, neq; ab ullo quod accidit gravemur? Propterea obsecro, ut subinde hac veniatis, & divinæ Scripturæ lectionem diligenter ansuletis; non solum cum hoc veniatis sed & domi divina Biblia in manus sumite, & utilitatem in illis positam magno studio suscipite. insuper, quod ad augendas vires corporis sensibilis ille cibus facit, id animæ lectio facit. Spiritus enim alimentum est, & fortis redit animam. Chrysost. Rom. 29. in Gen. pag. 150.*

But wee may adde to *Chrysoftomes* Antidotes, these 16. more.

1 Art thou wearie of the wayes of vanitie; and comming on with a grieved and sorrowfull heart for thy sinne, to meet thy deare Redeemer; and doth the conceit of the number and hainoufnesse of thy transgressions, crosse and confound thy hopes of being received to mercy? Why then looke upon *Paul*; he shed the bloud of the Saints with extraordinarie rage and furie, *Act. 9. 1.* upon *Manasseh*, a man of prodigious impietic, *2 Chron. 33. 6.* upon some of *Peters* hearers, who crucified the Lord of Life, *Act. 2. 23.* If these will not serve the turne, looke upon *Adam*; who cast away himselfe, and undid all, and was the cause that all that issued out of his loines, unto the Worlds end, fell into the damnation of Hell: and yet all these, upon repentance, were received unto mercie. And therefore, if thou canst now heartily repent, feare no former sinnes.

2 Hast thou by the violence of Sathans temptations, the flie enticements of thine owne sinfull nature, and the cunning insinuations of thy former bosome-sinne, beene fearefully overtaken with some scandalous fall, since thou wast converted, and gave thy Name unto Grace; and upon illumination of thy conscience, remorse, and meditation of returne, thou art ashamed to look Christ Iesus in the face, because thou hast so shamed thy profession; and thou art so troubled with horror and conceit, that thy case is singular, that thou canst find no ease to thine humbled and sorrowfull heart?

heart? Why then looke upon *David, Peter, &c.* transcendent instances, that thou may not sinke into despaire.

3 Art thou plunged into the perplexities and fearfull apprehensions of a spiritual desertion? Art thou deprived of thy former comfortable feelings of Gods favorable countenance? Hast thou no comfort in prayer? &c. Looke upon *David, Ps: 77.*

4 It may be, upon thy Bed of Death, * when Sathan will make thy sinnes appeare farre more ugly and horrible to the eye of thy Conscience, than ever hee did before; and will perswade thee all he can, that all thy holy services unto God, and new obedience, was quite marred with Pride, Hypocrisie, and by-respects; I say, it may be then thy heart will quite faile thee, and thy conceit of Gods wrathfull and angry countenance for thy sinne, may so oppresse and confound thy soule, that thou mayest feare lest thou be forsaken: Why then thinke upon thy Saviours mournfull cry upon the Crosse; *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

5 It may be thou art a true-hearted *Nathanael*, in whose spirit there is no guile; hates all sinne heartily, both in thy selfe and others; desirest and laborest to please God in all things, and to keepe a good conscience before all things in the World; and yet thou findest and feelest in thy brest many times a heavy, sad, and unchearefull heart: why then, heare *David*, a man after Gods owne heart, of a more excellent spirit, and eminent graces, than thou art, complaining *Psal. 43. 5. why art thou so heavie, O my soule, and why art thou so disquieted within me?*

* See Sathans depth in this point, *Helpe to Devotion, p. 155.*

6 Art thou grievously troubled with the haunt and horror of some speciall sinne, of which thou canst not be so easily rid, and doest thou therefore goe mourning all the day? Why then looke also upon *David, Psal. 32.* In such a case, he *roared all the day, his bones were consumed, and his native moisture was turned into the drought of Summer.*

7 Art thou vexed to the heart, and fearefully haunted with some horrible and hatefull injections of Sathan; thoughts framed by himselfe immediately, and put into thee; perhaps tending to Atheisme, or to the dishonour of God in some high degree, or to the disgrace of his Word, or selfe-destruction, &c. or the like: thoughts which thou canst not remember, without horror; and darest not reveale, or name, for their strange and prodigious hatefulnessse? Why then consider, how this malicious Fiend dealt with the Sonne of God: He suggested unto his most holy and unspotted imagination, these propositions: first, Murther; Make away thy selfe, *Math. 4. 6.* secondly, Fall downe and worship the Devill, *Vers. 9.* What more fearefull and horrible apprehensions? And yet these were suggested to our blessed Saviour; to him perhaps more sensibly, to thee more secretly. * His pure and holy heart, incapable of sinne, did reject them with infinite contempt; and himselfe did utterly conquer and confound the Tempter, and that for thee, and thy sake too. And if thine heart rise against, abominate, abandon, grieve, and be humbled for them, they shall never be layd to thy charge, but set on
Sathans

* See *Dike*, of
Christ's temptations, p. 219.

Sathans Score. For all them, thou mayest goe on chearefully and comfortably in the course of Christianitie: And so doe. And let not Sathan attaine his divellish end by them; which is, to worke astonishment in thy minde, horror in thy conscience, heavinesse in thy heart, distractions in thy thoughts, &c. that thereby thou mayest be disheartened and disabled for the chearefull discharge and performance both of thy particular and generall calling. Or else, art thou long after thy conversion, assaulted with perhaps sorer spirituall pangs, and more horror, than at thy change? Consider *David, Iob, Hezekiah.*

8 Hast thou lost thy goods, or children? Doth the Wife that lyes in thy bosome, set her selfe against thee? Doe thy neere friends charge thee falsely? Art thou diseased from top to toe? Doe the Arrowes of the Almighty sticke fast in thy soule? Thy affliction is grievous enough, if thou hast any of these. But doe they all, in the greatest extremitie, concurre upon thee at once? Hast thou lost all thy children, and all thy goods? Doth thy Wife afflict thy afflictions? &c. If this be not thy case, thou comest short of *Iob*, a most just man, and high in Gods favour.

9 Hast thou given thy Name to Religion, and art a Professor of Grace; and art thou therefore villanously traduced with many slanderous nicknames, and odious imputations? Art thou called *Puritan, Precisian, Hypocrite, Humorist, Dissembler, &c*? Why, gracelesse wretches, when hee was
upon

upon Earth, called Christ Iesus, *Devill*. See *Math.* 10. 25. *Ioh.* 7. 20. Contemne thou therefore for ever, the utmost malice of the most scurrill tongue.

10 Art thou a loving and tender-hearted Mother unto thy Children, and hast thou lost thy dearest? Why, the blessed Mother of Christ stood by, and saw her owne onely deare innocent Sonne, the Lord of Life, most cruelly and villanously murdered upon the Crosse, and die a shamefull death before her eyes, *Ioh.* 19. 25.

11 Art thou a woman, who in the time of thy travaile art pressed with many wants; with want of comfortable companie, desired helpes, a fairer roome, and other worldly comforts and conveniences? Why yet comfort thy selfe with this; That holy Virgin, which brought into the World the Worlds Saviour, brought forth that blessed Babe in a Stable, and laid him in a Cratch, *Luke* 2. 7. It is very like, farre more poorely, in respect of worldly comforts, than the poorest sort of women amongst us; with lesse comfortable helpers, and in a lesse seemely and commodious place, for such a purpose.

12 Hath thy Faith lost its feeling; and besides, doth God looke upon thee with an angry countenance, and is thy heart filled with heaviness and horror? Yet for all this, let the hand of Faith by no meanes loose it hold-fast upon the precious sufferings and saving bloud-shed of thy deare Redeemer. Thou hast before thee, a matchlesse and transcendent precedent in this point.

Thus

Thus cries holy *Iob*, having, besides his unparalleled varietie and extremitie of outward afflictions, *the Arrowes of the Almighty* sticking fast in him, and drinking up his spirits; *Though hee kill me, yet will I trust in him, Cap. 13. 15.* So *Abraham, Rom. 4. 18.*

13. Doest thou, day after day, poure out thy soule in prayer before the Throne of Grace, with all the earnestnesse and instancie thou canst possibly; and doest thou still rise up dull and heavie, and uncomforted, without answer from God, or comfortable sence of his favour and love shed into thine heart? Why, yet pray still; assuredly, at length thou shalt be gloriously refreshed, and registered in the remembrance of God, for a Christian of excellent faith. See a patterne of rare and extraordinarie patience this way, *Math. 15. 23. &c.*

14. Doth the World, Sathan, carnall men, thine owne friends, formall Teachers, suppose and censure thee to be a dissembler in thy profession, and will needes concurrently and confidently fasten upon thee the imputation of Hypocrisie? Why, yet for all this, let thy sincere heart, conscientious to it selfe of it owne truth in holy services, like a strong Pillar of Brasse, beat backe and reject with noble contempt and glorious disdain, all their imployed Arrowes of malice and slander this way. Thou hast a right worthy patterne in the Booke of God, for this purpose. *Iob* had against him not onely the Devill, his enemy, pushing at him with his poysoned weapons; but even his owne friends, scourging him with their
tongues;

Job 27. 5, 6.

tongues; yea, his owne Wife a Thorne, pricking him in the eye; yea, his owne God miserably lashing his naked soule with Scorpions; powerfull motives, to make him suspect himselfe of former halting and hollow-heartednesse in the wayes of God: yet notwithstanding all this, his good and honest heart having beene long before acquainted with and knit unto his God with sinceritie and truth, makes him boldly and resolutely to protest; *That untill he die, he will never take away his innocencie from himselfe; that he would keepe his righteousness, and not forsake it, and that his heart should not reprove him for his dayes.*

15 Hast thou an untoward Wife, that is a continuall dropping and a perpetuall Goade in thy side? Heare *Iobs* complaint, *Cap. 19. 17. My breath is strange to my Wife, though I entreated for the childrens sake of mine owne body.*

16 Art thou vexed with a prophane dogged Husband? *Abigail*, a Wife, and precious woman, had a *Nabal* to her yoke-fellow.

Thus these patternes and precedents in the Booke of God, purposely registred for the refreshing and recoverie of his chosen, in spirituall or temporall straits, are ordinarily proposed in a transcendent and matchlesse degree; that in their greatest extremities, by reflecting their eyes upon such examples, they may be preserved from despaire, have the stronger consolation, and not thinke their cases to be comfortlesse and singular. Let these considerations move us to be well read in these holy mysteries, and day and night exercised

in reading and meditating on them. But to our purpose, heare further what others say in this Point.

Secondly, heare *Gregorie the great.*

a What is the sacred Scripture, but a certaine Epistle of the omnipotent God to his creature? And surely, if a man should receive writings from his Emperour, he would not rest, he would not be quiet, he would give no sleepe to his eyes, unlesse he had first knowre what that earthly Emperour had written to him. The Emperour of Heaven, the Lord of men and Angels, hath sent his Letters to thee, concerning thy life; and yet (my vaine-glorious soune) thou dost neglect earnestly to reade those Letters. Studie them therefore, I pray thee, and dayly meditate upon the words of thy Creator: Learne the minde of God in the word of God, that thou mayest aspire more earnestly to eternall things, and that your minde may with greater desire be inflamed to the heavenly Kingdome.

Thirdly, *b* *Origen* teacheth, That the people should learne the Scriptures without booke.

Fourthly, *c* *Ierome* counfelleth, That by dayly reading the Scriptures, wee should get wisedome: His words import so much.

Fifthly, Read the Scriptures (saith *d* *Austin*) for that they were written to the end we should be comforted.

Sixthly, *e* *Ierome* writing to *Gaudentius* about the education of a yong maid, would have her at seven yeeres old, and when she begins to blush, to learne without booke the *Psalter*; and until she come to be marriageable, to make the treasure of her heart the Books of *Salomon*, the *Gospells*, *Apostles*, and *Prophets*.

viter. *Psalterium*, & usque ad annos pubertatis libros *So'omonis*, *Evangelia*, *Apostolos*, & *Prophetas*, sui cordis tibi sanum faciat. *Hieron. par. 3. tract. 15. Ep. ad Gaudent.*

a Quid ista Scriptura, nisi quaedam Epistola omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam suam? & certe sicubi esset gloria vestra a. l. bi constituta, & scripta iam Imperatoris acciperet, non cessaret, non quiesceret somnibus oculis non daret, nisi prius quid sibi Imperator terrenus scripisset, agnovisset. Imperator Caeli, Dominus hominum & Angelorum, pro vita tua tibi suas Epistolas transmisit, & tamen, gloriose filii, easdem Epistolas ardentem legere negligis. Stude ergo queso, & quotidie Creatoris tui verba meditare. Discere cor Dei in verbis Dei, ut ardentius ad aeterna suspires, ut mens vestra ad caelestia regna maioribus desiderijs accendatur. *Greg. tom. 2. Ep. lib. 4. c. 84. Col. 808.*

b *Hom. 4. in Lev.*
c *in Eccles. c. 10.*
d *in Psal. 33.*
e *Discat mem-*

Object. 1. But the Scriptures are hard to be understood, &c.

Ans. Heare,

(1) *Chrysoſtome.* ^f All things are cleare and plaine out of the holy Scriptures. Whatſoever things are neceſſarie, are manifeſt.

(2) *Ierome.* ^g The Lord hath ſpoken by his Goſpel, not that a few, but that all ſhould underſtand it. Plato wrote his writings, but not to the people, but to a few; ſcarce three underſtand him.

(3) *Cyrill.* ^h The Scriptures are profitably recommended unto us in an eaſie ſpeech, that they ſhould not goe beyond the capacitie of any.

(4) *Againe, Chryſoſtome,* who having ſaid much for often reading, and plaineneſſe of the Scriptures, concludes: ⁱ Who is there, to whom whatſoever is written in the Scriptures, is not manifeſt? Who is there, who hearing, that the meeke are bleſſed, the mercifull bleſſed, the pure in heart bleſſed, and the like, ſhall want a Maſter, that he ſhould learne any of thoſe things which are ſpoken?

Object. 2. But I am intangled with varietie of buſineſſes, I have no leiſure to ſpend time in reading Scripture, as you adviſe: I am ſtill buſied in my Trade, Husbandry, Merchandize, in ſome high roome, &c. I have a great charge, Wife, children, and family to care for: Let Schollers, Miniſters, Gentle-folkes, &c. that have more time and leiſure, ply ſuch buſineſſes, for I cannot.

^f Omnia clara ſunt & plana ex divinis Scripturis. Quaecunque neceſſaria ſunt, manifeſta ſunt.

Πάντα σαφῶς
χρῆσθαι τὰ τε-
ρὰ τῶν θεῶν
ὑπαρῶν: πάν-
τα τὰ ἀναγ-
καῖα, ἁπλᾶ.

In 2. ad Theſſ.
Hom. 3.

^g Dominus per Evangelia ſua locutus eſt, non ut pauci intelligerent, ſed ut omnes. Plato ſcripſit in Scriptura, ſed non ſcripſit populiſ, ſed pauca vix enim intelligunt tres homines. In Pſal.

86.

^h Contra Julian. lib. 7. medium circiter libri.

ⁱ Cui enim non ſunt manifeſta, quaecunque in Evangelio ſcripta ſunt? Quis autem audiens, Beatos

eſſe mites, beatos miſericordes, beatos mundi-cordes, ceteraque huiusmodi, deſiderabit præceptorem, ut aliquid eorum diſcat, que dicuntur. Tom. 2. de Lazaro, Cons. 3. pag. 876. See abundantly for this purpoſe, in Polan. Symphonía, pag. 38. &c.

Ans.

Answ. Who are more buſied than Kings and Captaines? and yet they are commanded to be diligent readers of Gods Booke. See *Deut.* 17. 13, 19. *Iosh.* 1. 8.

But *Chryſoſtome* makes this Objection, and answers it himſelfe excellently: * *what ſayeſt thou, Oh man? Is it not thy dutie to reade the Scriptures, becauſe thou art diſtracted with innumerable cares? Yea, it is thy dutie rather than others, &c.* In which Sermon alſo, he lets fall this confident aſſertion: * *Neither now can it be, it cannot be, I ſay, that any man ſhould attaine unto ſalvation, unleſſe he be continually conuerſant in ſpiritual reading.*

Object. 3. But, alas, I cannot reade.

Anſw. Heare then *Auſtin*:

¹ *Neither let this be ſufficient for you, that in the Church you doe heare diuine reading; but alſo in your houſes, either doe you your ſelues reade, or get others that can reade, and doe you willingly hearken.*

And he ſtirres them up to it, with theſe conſiderations:

(1) ^m *Remember, Brethren, (ſaith he) the ſaying of our Lord, in which hee ſaith; If a man ſhall gaine the whole world, and loſe his owne ſoule, what will it profit him?*

(2) ⁿ *what remaineth and abideth in a man, but that which every one, either by reading, or praying, or doing good workes for the ſalvation of his ſoule, hath layd up in the treaſure of his Conſcience?*

dum lucretur homo, &c. ⁿ (2) *Quid autem permanet in homine, niſi quod quiſque aut legendo, aut orando, aut bona opera faciendo, pro anime ſalute, in theſauro conſcientiæ ſue recondiderit. De Tem. Serm. 55. See Gregor. Moral. Dialog. lib. 4. cap. 14.*

* *Quid ais homo? Non eſt tui negotij Scripturas evolvere, quoniam innumeris curis diſtraheris? Imò tuum magis eſt quam illorum, &c. De Lazaro, Tom. 2. Conc. 3. p. 274.*

* *Neque unquam fieri poteſt: non poteſt, inquam, fieri, ut quiſquam ſalutem aſſequatur, niſi perpetuo verſetur in lectione ſpirituali.*

¹ *Nec ſolum vobis ſufficiat, quòd in Eccleſiâ diuinas lectiones auditis; ſed etiam in domibus veſtris aut ipſi legite, aut alios legentes requirite, & libenter audite.*

^m (1) *Recolite, fratres, ſententiam Domini noſtri, quâ dicit;*

Si totum mundum lucretur homo, &c.

Object. 4. But will not publike reading in the House of God serve the turne ?

Answ. By no meanes. Heare *Chrysostome* :

Therefore often doe I tell you before-hand, many dayes before the argument of which I shall speake, that in the dayes in the meane while, taking a Booke, and weighing the whole summe of the matter, after yee have understood what hath beene said, and what remains to be said, you may make your minde more fit to heare those things which afterward shall be declared; and that I alwayes exhort to, and will not cease to doe it, That you doe not onely attend here to those things which are spoken, but also when you shall be at home, you may dayly attend to the reading of holy Scriptures. Which thing I have not ceased to presse upon those who privately have talked with me.

Object. 5. But from this libertie of reading Scriptures, spring many Heresies.

Answ. P The sacred Scripture is not the cause of Heresies, but the ignorance of the holy Scripture. Heare *Chrysostome* :

Hence arose so many thousand evils, from the ignorance of holy writ: Hence sprung up so great a plague of Heresies.

Godly Bookes also, with which this Age is abundantly and plentifully enriched, must be diligently and profitably read.

• Eoque crebro vobis predicimus multus ante diebus argumentum de quo sumus loquenturi, ut his in medio diebus, sumpto libro, perpenſaque rei summâ rotâ, posteaquam intellecteritis, quid dictum sit, quid restet dicendum, mentem vestram instructiorem reddatis ad audienda quæ post differantur. Idque semper hortor, & hortari non desinam, ut non hic tantum attendatis ijs quæ dicuntur, verum etiam cum domi fueritis, assidue divinarum Scripturarum lectioni vacetis. Quod quidem & ijs, qui privatim mecum congressi sunt, non desinus inculcare. Tom.

2. de Lazaro,

Conc. 2. pag. 874. See to this purpose in the Answer to the third Objection, a little before. P See Pol. Symphon. pag. 60. where he proves this Assertion. Ἡ ἐπιτομή τῶν ἁγίων ἑσθλῶν καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων. Ἐπιτομήν ἢ πολλὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐβλάστησεν ἄνθρωποι. *Chrysoſt.* in prefat. in Epist. ad Romanos. Of which, see Rogers seven Treatises, pag. 289. The Epistle Dedicatorie to the Practice of Christianitie.

3 Another meanes by which the Word may dwell plentifully in us, is Conference. See *Deut. 6. 7. Luke 24. 19.* That of *Austin* before, pag. 210. in the second Reason of our seldome Preaching: That of *Chrysostome*, *walking with God*, pag. 248. *Rogers seven Treatises*, pag. 364. &c. my *walking with God*, pag. 86. &c.

3

4 A fourth meanes, is Meditation. Of which, see *Rogers seven Treatises*, pag. 235. &c.

4

Matter of Meditation.

Wee may meditate upon any part of Gods Word, on God himselfe, his Wisedome, Power, his Mercie; or on the infinite varietie of good things, which wee receive of his free bountie; upon his workes, and judgements; upon our sinnes, and the vilenesse of our corruption, that wee yet carry about us; upon our mortalitie, and changes in this World; upon our manifold afflictions of this life, and how wee may in best manner beare and goe through them, and the benefit thereof; upon the manifold and great priviledges which wee enjoy dayly, through the inestimable kindnesse of God towards us; upon the foure last things, but especially of those things that wee have most speciall need of.

See Practice of Christianitie, p. 289. &c.

Of the thing meditated upon, consider,

First, The definition, or description.

Secondly, The distribution, sorts, kinds, or parts.

Thirdly, Causes especially efficient, and finall.

(9 2)

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The fruits and effects which it bringeth forth.

Fifthly, The subject wherein it is, or about which it is occupied.

Sixtly, The qualities or properties adjoyned. And know, that oftentimes, in common practice, these three, the finall cause, the fruit or the effect, the use or propertie of a thing, are often confounded.

Seventhly, The contrarie.

Eighthly, The comparison.

Exemplifie in the joyes of Heaven; of which, see *Hall*: In sinne; of which, see *Practice of Christianitie*, pag. 293. Vpon this occasion, let us peruse, in this manner, Fasting, and the Plague.

5. A fifth meanes to profit by the Word, is Teaching, Praying with, and Catechizing your children and servants.

To which Dutie, be stirred up and strengthened, by

First, Scriptures; *Deut.* 4. 9. & 6. 7. & 11. 19. *Psal.* 78. 5, 6. *Exod.* 12. 26, 27. & 13, 14. *Iosh.* 4. 6, 7, 21, 22. *Deut.* 6. 20, 21. *Eph.* 6. 4.

Secondly, By the patterne and practice of holy Parents, from time to time. Consider for this purpose, the carriage of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 19. *David*, *Prov.* 4. 4. *Bathsheba*, *Prov.* 31. 1. *Lois and Eunice*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5.

Thirdly, By the authoritie of the ancient Fathers.

(1) Heare *Austin*.

^a Notwithstanding, my deare friends, in so great a difference of manners; and such abominable corruption, governe your Houses, governe your Children, governe your Families: As it behoves us to speake to you in the Church, so it pertaines to you to doe in your Houses; that yee may be able to give a good account of those who are under you. Again; ^b I pray thee, my Brother, I pray thee, shew to all under thee, of meere good will, from the least to the greatest in thy House, the love and sweetnesse of Heaven, the bitternesse and feare of Hell; and be thou solicitous and watchfull, because thou shalt render an account to the Lord for all those under thee, that are in thy House. Declare, charge, command, perswade them, that they would take heed of Pride, of Slandering, of Drunkennesse, of Fornication, of Luxurie, Anger, Perjurie, Covetousnesse, which is the root of all evill.

(2) *Nazianzen*. ^c Hast thou a Child? Let not wickednesse take advantage and occasion: Let it be endued with sanctitie, and consecrated to thy spirit from the very Cradle.

I know he meanes it immediately of Baptisme: but by Analogie, that binds also to have a care of religious education.

annuncies, & de eorum salute sollicitus & pervigil existas; quia pro omnibus tibi subiectis qui in domo tua sunt, rationem Domino reddes. Annuncia, praecipe, impera, suade ijs ut caveant se à Superbiâ, à Detractione, ab Ebrietate, à Fornicatione, à Luxuriâ, ab Ira, à Perjurio, à Cupiditate, quae est radix omnium malorum. Lib. de Salutar. Documentis, pag. 541. ^c *Infans tibi est? Ne ansam & occasionem arripiat improbitas: ab infantia sanctitate imbuatur, ab ipsis unguiculis Spiritui consecretur. Orat. 40. in S. Bapt.*

^a *Veruntamen, charissimi, in tantâ morum diversitate & tam deestabili corruptelâ, regite domos vestras, regite filios vestros, regite familias vestras. Quomodo ad nos pertinet in Ecclesiâ loqui vobis: Sic ad vos pertinet in domibus vestris agere, ut bonam rationem reddatis de his qui vobis sunt subditi. In Psal. 50. pag. 596.*

^b *Quaeso, mi frater, quaeso, omnibus tibi subiectis, & bonae voluntatis, in domo tua à maiore usque ad minimum, amorem & dulcedinem regni Coelestis, amaritudinem & timorem Gehennae*

Fourthly, by Reasons.

Reason 1.
From the end
of their being.

First, Thy Children sprung from thy Loines, and came into the World, to increase the number of Gods people, to learne the way to Heaven, and walke in it; not onely to uphold thy House, inherite thy Possessions, and convey thy Name to future Generations. The glorifying of our God, serving our Brethren in love, salvation of our owne Soules, are the chiefe ends why we live a little while in this World. Now Parents should be most solicitous to further their Children, for the attainment of the maine end, and most soveraigne good.

Reason 2.
Necessitie.

Secondly, Neglect of this Dutie, makes Parents worse to their Children, than to their Beasts: For,

1 They provide for their Beasts all things necessarie for them; but in their owne deare Children, they neglect that *One necessarie thing*.

2 They procure for, and put their Beasts to all things of which they are capable. Their Children are capable of Grace, and Immortalitie; and they never meddle, nor move them to looke that way, or lay hold upon eternall Life.

Reason 3.
Example of
Eli.

Thirdly, Let the remarkable and rufull example of *Eli*, be for ever a keene spurre in the sides of slouthfull Parents, to quicken them to this Dutie.

Reason 4.
Equitic.

Fourthly, Thou art farre more cruell than the Ostrich and the Dragon, and mayest be said to have suckt the brests of Tygres, and to be hewed out of the hardest Rocke; if having brought thy Children

Children forth into this World, limbes for the Devill, and fewell for Hell-fire, thou labour not might and maine, to get them new-borne the members of Christ, and freed from everlasting flames.

Fifthly, Grace onely is able to make thy Children truly obedient, serviceable, and everlastingly thankfull; having now a double tye; first, birth; secondly, new-birth. Then onely, and never before, doe they begin to pray for their Parents, to deale faithfully in their busineses, not to long for their death.

*Reason 5.
Profit.*

Sixtly, A conscionable and constant performance of this Dutie in their life time, will fill Parents hearts full of sweetest joy and heavenly comfort upon their Beds of Death; when they see, by their care and zeale for their spirituall good, that holy knowledge and wisdom planted in their Childrens hearts, which will bring them after them to eternall blisse: or howsoever, conscionnesse of a conscionable discharge of their Dutie in this respect, will infinitely refresh them.

*Reason 6.
Comfort.*

Seventhly, It is the way to make thy posteritie truly honourable, and to meet thee in Heaven. Those Children which are taught by thee, may teach the same things unto theirs, and those to others, &c.

*Reason 7.
Honour.*

Eightly, Thy Children neglected in this point, and so dying impenitently, will curse thee everlastingly in Hell, for thy bloudie inexpiable crueltie towards them in this kind.

*Reason 8.
Hurt.*

Reas. 9.

* Sed plerique
 hominum hec
 non reminiscuntur,
 qui filios suos
 ab infantia exterminant;
 qui filios suos & filias
 suas ab incurabulis non erudiunt,
 non corripiunt

à iuventute; non prohibent mala, non odiant pessima, non coercent illicita, non admonent timorem Dei, non comminantur iudicium Gehennæ, non vite æternæ introitum docent; non enim educunt eos in disciplina, atque eruditione Domini, quia non egerunt curam pro animabus eorum, neque solliciti sunt pro salute, vel perditione filiorum. Huiusmodi cum non erudiunt neque corripiunt filios suos, & ipsorum animam igni inexstinguibili in introitum tradunt, & semet ipsos in furorem iudicij demergant; omnia enim quæ deliquerint filij, de parentibus requiruntur, qui non erudierint, neque corripuerint filios suos. Huius evidens exemplum in Heu ostenditur, & in filiis eius, atque in alijs alibi. Origen. in lib. Job. 1.

- 6 6 The next meanes, is Prayer, *Prov. 2. 3,*
 4, 5.
- 7 7 The seventh meanes, is Practise. See *Iohn*
 7. 17.
- 8 8 The eight, is Experience. See *Dike of the*
 heart, pag. 69.
- 3 3 Be none of the reprobate grounds, *Math. 13.*
 of which, see *Dike, Taylor.*
- 4 4 Be none of those, who invited to the Mar-
 riage of the Kings Sonne, *Math. 22.* either, first,
 wilfully contemne, *Vers. 3.* secondly, or carelesly
 dis-esteeme, *Vers. 5.* thirdly, or cruelly persecute,
Vers. 6.
- 5 5 Reject all those Hellish temptations, which
 doe mightily keepe off the dint and power of
 the

See *Musculus*
 and others
 upon the
 place.

the most piercing Word ; and being entertained, will cause the Word preached to be but as the breath of the Minister scattered in the Ayre, and as Water spilt upon the Ground, which cannot bee gathered up againe. They are like those strong Holds of Sathan, mentioned 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. which being set up in any heart, will blunt the edge of this spirituall weapon, that it will doe no good. They be these that follow.

1 In the first place, and highest straine of impietie, the depth of our corrupt nature desireth, That there were no God : *The foole hath said in his heart, there is no God, Psal. 14. 1.* That is, hee labours for a resolution, and perswasion in his owne heart, That there is no Tribunall in Heaven, before which hee shall hereafter be arraigned ; no Treasurie of Plagues, and Woes in Hell, with which he shall hereafter be everlastingly fettered and enchained.

2 But if it so be, this spirituall foole cannot so abolish and extinguish those secret notions and apprehensions of a sacred and infinite Deitie, which are naturally implanted in the bowels of the most desperate and damned miscreant ; but that the terrors of the last Iudgement, and plagues of Hell, doe estsoones vex and bite his Conscience with restlesse remorse and stings : Why then ; in a second place, that hee may procure some ease and quiet to his wallowing in sensuall pleasures, hee labours might and maine to harden his for-head against Heaven,

to

to make his heart like the nether-Milstone, with his owne Soule-murthuring hand to put a hot Iron to his Conscience ; that so, if hee cannot blunder and blot out of his minde those naturall impressions of a God-head, yet at the least hee may extinguish and banish out of his heart all feare of that God, of his Iudgement-Seat, and vengeance against sinne : That so hee may rush like a wilde Horse into the Battaille, furiously and desperately upon all villanies and vanities, without all checke of Conscience, and controlement, from the terrors of the Iudgement to come. In this desperate and furious mood, he joynes himselfe with these Gyants of Babel, *Isa. 5.* who outrageously reare up Towers of Trealon and defiance against Heaven, and throw mountaines of pride and contempt one upon another, that they may climbe up to the Seat of God, and pull him out of his Throne, crying aloud towards Heaven ; *Let him make speed, let him hasten his worke, that wee may see it ; and let the counsell of the holy One of Israel draw neere, and come, that wee may know it.*

3

3 If this will not be, and that he finde no successe in setting himselfe against Heaven, (*who ever opposed himselfe against God, and prospered ?*) but that hee is crushed and confounded with the majestie and terror thereof: Why then, in a third place, hee fastens the fangs of his malicious and wrangling wit, and the furie of his prophane Atheisme, upon his true and holy Word : And that,

First,

First, Either by entertaining or harbouring a reprobate and blasphemous conceit, that the sacred Word of God is but a politike invention, and device of State, to keepe men in order, and moderation; to maintaine Order and peaceablenesse in Cities and Societies; and to preserve the World, and mankinde, from wildnesse and Barbarisme.

Secondly, Or by proportioning his carnall conceit of Gods pure and undefiled Law, to that which hee holds of the Decrees and Constitutions of men.

And if it be either so, or so, it is well enough; hee can, in the meane time, therewith still the cryes of his Conscience, and stop the mouth of that Worme that never dies, that it gnaw not too eagerly, and fiercely, to the dis-sweetning of his carnall contentments, and the making of his sensuall pleasures more unpleasant.

Now, would it not vex a man, to have the meat pulled out of his mouth, his chayne from his necke, his clothes from his backe, his limbes from his body, his right arme from his shoulder, his eyes out of his head? So it is with every unregenerate man, and such is his torture, when that two-edged Sword, the Word of God, strikes at his sweet sinne, and sensuall pleasures: And therefore no marvell, though hee strive and struggle, thirf and shield himselfe, by any meanes. Nay, the Lusts of the unregenerate man, are his very life. For, as every godly man liveth a double life; one of Grace, by the sanctifying power of the

See my discourse of true happinesse, pag. 58.

the Spirit; another, of Nature : So every wicked man hath a double life ; one, of Nature; and another, of corruption, by the cursed influence of Hell.

Nay, the sensuall delights of the sinfull man are dearer unto him than his life. Hence it is, (as wee may observe by experience) that sometimes a covetous man losing the Life of his life, the Wedge of Gold, and Hoords of Wealth, makes an end of himselfe. That the Wanton, because hee is rejected, and discarded from the object of his lustfull pleasures, findes no pleasure in life; but cuts off himselfe, by a violent and untimely death. That *Ahitophel* being disgraced, and over-topt in a point of Policie, (the crowne and pride of his worldly happinesse) put his household in order, and hanged himselfe.

Nay, and yet further, the prophane man prefers the sensuall pleasures of his heart, before the losse of his immortall Soule. For, how oft may wee see the honour of God, and everlasting blessednesse, put as it were in the one Scale of the Ballance, and a little transitorie Pleasure in the other ? And in this case, the unsanctified man suffering one sweet sinne or other to weigh downe the exceeding weight of heavenly blisse, the unvaluable treasure of a good Conscience, the infinite glory of God, and the salvation of his owne deare Soule, in that great Day.

This groweth out of our corrupt nature : For wee have all, even in the best of us, the source and seeds of all sinne. If the Lord should leave and
abandon

See *Burton* of
Melancholy,
pag. 214.

abandon us, to the full swing and sway of our owne corruption, and not either bridle us by his restraining Spirit, or blesse us with his sanctifying Spirit; wee might every one of us become as bad as *Iulian* the Apostata, who did maliciously abjure Christ; and as *Iudas*, who did perfidiously betray him. Naturally wee would wallow in sinne, without checke of Conscience, or controlment by the terror of the Iudgement to come.

4 But if hee cannot arme himselfe against the terrors of God, and truth of his Word; but that he must needs acknowledge the one, and believe the other: Why then, in a fourth place, with much spight and malice, he flies in the face of Gods Ministers, Embassadours, which are his tormentors before his time: And that,

First, Either against his Preaching, or against his Person: as, too obscure, or too plaine; too cold, or too boisterous; too particular, too personall, too precise, too imperious; too tart, and terrible; too full of Iudgement; tending to Sedition, against the State, or the like. And therefore he labours, not onely with his owne heart, to breed within himselfe a distaste and disconceit of it; but also puts to his helping hand, to stay and stop the free course and current of it from others. He cannot abide to have his sweet sinne strucke at still, and still to have his Conscience grated upon, by the Ministerie of the Word; and therefore he does what he can, to abandon and abolish it. When *Jeremies* Sermon, denouncing

cing Gods Judgement against Iudah and Israel, were brought unto the King, *Ier. 36. 23.* *Iehudi had not read past three or foure sides before him, but the King stamped and raged, hee presently tooke the Roule, and cut it with a Pen-knife, and cast it into the fire that was on the Hearth, untill all the Roule was consumed in the fire, that was on the Hearth.* In the 38. of *Ieremie*, when the Princes and Courtiers were nettled and stung with the downe-right dealing and holy severitie of *Ieremies* Preaching; they presently ranne unto the King, and traduced the blessed Prophet, to be a transgressor of Policie, and an enemie to the State. *Therefore the Princes said unto the King: Wee beseech you, let this man be put to death; for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of warre that remaine in this Citie, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: For this man seeketh not the wealth of this people, but the hurt.* And there you see what was the issue.

Thus Prophanenesse and Policie doth ever interpret the Doctrine of Life, and powerfull application of the Word, to be the Source and Seeds of Faction and Sedition; to be incompatible with the civill State, and the very cut-throat of Kingdomes and States imperiall. *Paul*, as wee may see in the 24. of the *Acts*, for his upright dealing, was nick-named a *Seditioner*, and a *troublers of the State*. Certainly (saith *Tertullus*) *wee have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of Sedition among all the Iewes throughout the world, and a chiefe maintainer of the sect of the Nazarites.*

Thus

Thus the Word of Life, and newes of salvation from Heaven, is many times charged with Novelty, Sedition, and Heresie. But that which by the construction of carnall conceits, may be tearmed Heresie, Faction, and Precise, is the very right way to Heaven. *I confesse* (saith Paul) *that after the way (which they call Heresie) so worship I the God of my Fathers, &c.* So may many good Christians, and godly Ministers, say in these Times to the men of this World; After the way, which you call Precisenesse, Singularitie, and Faction, doe wee truly serve the living God, and save our soules.

Secondly, Or if the authoritie and power of his Preaching doth so astonish and confound him, that hee hath no heart to meddle that way, or oppose against it; yet at least, rather than not be malicious, hee will discharge his furie against his person.

Hence it is, that a faithfull and conscionable Minister commonly, wheresoever hee lives, is an eminent marke whereat Prophanenesse and Politie, Malice and Crueltie, Hell and the World, discharge the utmost of their rage and poyson. Hee above all others, is sure to be wrongfully loaden with slanders, disgraces, lying imputations, and all manner of foule indignities; and many times by the baser sort, which is more intolerable. If hee be but halfe so honestly carefull, in providing for his family, as the carnall worldling is cursedly carking, hee is covetous: If powerfull in his Preaching, hee is imperious:

If

If hee oppose against the finnes of the Time, hee is factious : If hee be faithfull in his Ministerie, hee is too precise, and plaine : If hee comes home to mens Consciences, hee is too particular, and undiscreet. In a word, if hee were *Paul*, hee should be a *pestilent fellow*; if *CHRIST IESVS*, blessed for ever (a horrible thing!) hee should be *Belzebub* : For so that glorious Lord, and blessed Servant, was nick-named and branded by the prophane World.

Hence it is, that the generation of the prophane and wicked Crue doe ever furiously band themselves together, to transpland and root out a conscionable Minister, whensoever God brings him amongst them. Like an unquiet and raging Sea, they continually foame out spitefull speeches, filthie and shamefull slanders, and lay things unto his charge, hee never knew : That so, by discouraging him in his Ministerie, weakening his hands, and breaking his heart, they may any wayes be rid of him : Or else, by picking unnecessarie Quarrels against him, they labour by Authoritie, and strong hand, to throw him out of his place. For their malice against a powerfull Minister, is endlesse, and implacable.

It is ever the propertie of un-ingenuous phaneness, to hate and feare a faithfull and conscionable Preacher as ill as the Plague, and so to esteeme of him. This appeares, by *Tertullus* censure of *Paul*; *Certainely* (saith hee) *wee have found this man a pestilent fellow* : When indeed

deed himseſſe was a pernicious Orator, and abuſed his curſed Eloquence, to the confuſion of Goodneſſe. In the Originall, the word ſignifies, *the Plague*. The *Plague*, that great affrighter, and terror of the ſonnes of men, is not halfe ſo terrible and vexing, as is that man to a carnall heart, which preaches *with power and authoritie, and not as the Scribes* and formall Doctors; and no marvell. The *Plague* threatens but onely the feares and pangs of a temporall death, and takes but away the naturall Life; but the powerfull Word, from the mouth of a conſcionable Miniſter, doth ſtrike to the very heart of a carnall man, the terrors of Hell-fire and everlaſting Vengeance, and doth labour to bereave him of his Life of Corruption, and Pleaſures; which, as I told you before, is more ſweet and deare unto him, than his Life of Nature.

And hereupon it is, that as you ſee Townes and Cities buſily beſtirre themſelves, watch and ward, diligently enquire, and examine paſſengers, to keepe out the *Plague*; ſo it is the policie and practice of thoſe places, where Drunkards, Swaggerers, Worldlings, and prophane men ſwarme, joyntly to conſpire and band together, for the baniſhing of godly Miniſters, and driving them out of their Coaſt. CHRIST IESVS himſeſſe, who ſpake as never any man ſpake, was ſo uſed by the Swiſh Gadarens; as you may reade in the fifth of *Luke*. Paul and Barnabas, that glorious paire of worthy Paſtors, were ſo uſed by the rebellious and ſtiſſe-necked Iewes, *Act. 13.* whereupon

Ευρίστες γὰρ τὸν
ἄνδρα τοῦτον ἡγο-
ροῦν.

they told them to their faces, That thereby they judged themselves unworthie of everlasting life. Then Paul and Barnabas (saith the Text) spake boldly, and said; It was necessarie, that the word of God should have first beene spoken unto you: But seeing you put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life, loe wee turne unto the Gentiles. The Booke of God, Ecclesiasticall Stories, experience of our Times, doe plentifully verifie and confirme this Point.

5 But if so be, this Spirituall Foole, whom wee have carried along through so many steps of impietie, cannot have his will against the Preaching and the Person of the Minister; but that he sees the Power of the Word, which he cannot decline, is like continually to vex him, to strike through his loynes, with feare and trembling still to grate upon his Conscience for his sweet sinne; to discern and discover the very thoughts and imaginations of his heart; or that hee is more ingenuous and faire-conditioned than other unregenerate men (for sometimes sweetnesse and lovingnesse of naturall disposition doth bridle men from raging against the power of holy Doctrine, and sinceritie of an honest man:.) Why then, in a fifth place, hee

First, Either resolves (as many doe) to give the Preacher hearing indeed, and perhaps reverent attention too; but with this secret reservation, That hee shall not stirre and move him with all his Preaching; That say what hee will, hee shall never perswade him, that this or that sinne

is so hainous as hee makes it ; hee shall never drive him from the Fashions of the Times, and Customes of his Fore-fathers ; hee shall never bring him out of conceit with good-fellowship. So, that as the deafe Adder stoppeth his eares against the Enchanter, charme hee never so wisely ; so shuts hee the eares of his heart against the Word of Life : and though it sounds dayly lowd and strongly in his eares, yet will he by no meanes suffer it to sinke feelingly and powerfully into his soule. Those men which rest upon this step of impietie, and in this degree of prophanesse, though they heare Sermon upon Sermon, yet are they still the same men : They are Lyers still, they are Drunkards still, they are Vsurers still, they are Swearers still, they are luke-warme Professors still, &c. they are still as they were. Though these sinnes have againe and againe been cryed against, and many times reprov'd, and their Consciencs convinced ; yet the Word which is preached amongst them, hath no more power, nor wrought more alteration upon them, than upon the Seats where they sit : Though the glorious Light of the Gospel shine faire and bright upon them, yet they lye still hard frozen in their dregs, and starke blinde in matters of Heaven : Though the Hammer of the Word beat often upon their hearts, yet it doth not breake and bruise them, but more and more harden and emmarble them, like an Anvill and Adamant : Though they be washed with many plentifull Showers from Heaven, yet they still continue

blacke Moores, and Leopards; still full of the blacknesse of Hell, and spots and pollution of Sathan.

Let those that are such among you, in the Name of God beware in time: for assuredly, the Damnation sleepeeth not, the Day of Reckoning and every mans particular Iudgement is very neere; and then we must be answerable and countable for every Sermon wee have heard: Every Sermon will then stand up, either to witnesse for us, or against us; for every one wee heare, either advanceth us a step neerer towards Heaven, or throwes us a stayre lower downe towards Hell.

Secondly, Or if hee cannot so fence himselfe against the keene edge of the Word, that two-edged Sword, which day after day is layd to the root of his corruption; nor so hide his head from the heat of that glorious and sacred Sunne of Truth, which every Sabbath shines on his face; but that the sharpe Arrowes of the Word of Truth and Righteousnesse doe pierce his heart, and Sword of Spirit gets so farre within him, that it strikes and astonisheth his Conscience: Why then hee,

First, Either strives and struggles against it, by shifting and shielding himselfe with Distinctions, Exceptions, Excuses, carnall Reasons, Restrictions, Limitations, false Glosses, private and partiall Interpretations, and opposing one place of Scripture, in his owne false and enforced Sense, against the true meaning and naturall power of the

the Word in another place, as I have told you largely before. So wretchedly and unhappily is hee wedded to the sinfull pleasures of this vaine World, that hee will wrest his wit, the Word of God, or any thing, to wrest out of his heart those piercing Arrowes of the Word of Truth, shot by the hand of a skilfull Archer; which if he would suffer to search and sinke, would fetch out the poyson of his naturall corruption, mortifie his lust, and save his soule.

Secondly, Or if hee have not wit and understanding to furnish himselfe fitly with probable Interpretations, formall Distinctions, and plausible Exeptions, (for this abilitie onely befalls prophane men of better parts, and more understanding:) Why then, being resolved not to submit to the power of the Word, nor to forsake his carnall contentments, hee takes this course; hee surfets so immoderately, and drinks so deepe of sensuall pleasures of that bosomesinne to which hee is so much wedded, that hee casts his Conscience asleepe, drownes his heart in earthly delights, and so goes on at all adventures, and throwes himselfe upon Gods mercies, without all ground or warrant, with such conceits as these: That hee hopes hee shall doe as well as others, who are farre worse and more wicked than himselfe: That God, no doubt, will be mercifull to one sinne: That all his other good parts and good deedes will countervaile and make amends for one infirmitie, (for so hee will call it, and conceive of it, though it be a grosse and grievous
(r 3) sinne:)

sinne:) That one sinne will not require so great repentance, but that it may be well enough done on his death-bed, and such like.

Thus I have acquainted you by the way, with the steps of impietie, and degrees of prophane-nesse, wherein unregenerate men, which hate to be reformed, and refuse to yeeld up themselves to bee mastered and guided by the Power and Light of the holy and heavenly Word of the true and ever-living God, doe unhappily rest and repose themselves, to the eternall confusion both of their soules and of their bodies: Which you must take heed of, if you would profit by the Word.

6. 6 Discover and defeat all those Snares of Sathan, that wee have formerly mentioned to you in this Discourse, *pag. 83.* under the fourth Vse.

7. 7 Dejest and demolish those two strong Holds of Sathan; first, Carnall Reason; secondly, Corrupt Affection; which I thus define: It is the actuated strength and rage of originall pollution, which furiously executes the sensuall and unreasonable determinations of corrupted Carnall Reason; stands at open defiance, and professes open hostilitie against Grace, goodnesse, and good men, and courses of sanctification; feedes upon so long, and fills it selfe so full with worldly vanities and pleasures, that growing by little and little incorrigible and untameable, it breedes and brings forth, as it naturall issue, Despaire, Horror, and the Worme which never dies.

By Carnall Reason; I understand the whole speculative power of the higher and nobler part of the Soule, which wee call the Vnderstanding, as it is naturally and originally corrupted, and utterly destitute of all Divine Light; and doth afterward, through it owne sinfull working and sensuall discourse, grow wise in the World and earthie affaires, but disconceitfull and opposite to the wayes of God, and heavenly wisdome, by concluding and commending to it selfe false Principles, from deluded sence, and deducing false conclusions from true Principles, and by a continued exercise and experience in contemplation of Earth, and passages of worldly Policie.

By Corrupt Affection, I meane and comprise all the active inferior powers of the Soule, Will, Affections, Sence, as they are polluted and empoysoned in the puddle of originall corruption; and afterward being fleshed in sensuall pleasures, and enfiereed by Sathans suggestions, become the furious executioners of all the sinfull decrees and un sanctified determinations of the mis-guided understanding and wisdome of the flesh.

8 In hearing the Word, be sure,

First, ^a To give earnest heed, Heb. 2. 1.

Secondly, ^b To consider seriously, 2 Tim. 2. 7.

Thirdly, ^c That wee be not in this respect like leaking Vessels, and have Sieve-like memories, Heb. 2. 1.

Fourthly, ^d To keepe the Word with much adoe, with great contention and colluctation, Luke 8. 15.

8

^a Περὶ ἧς. Adhibere animum, advertere animum.

^b Νῆπι. Mente agitare, in animo versare.

^c Μῆντοι παραπύουμι. Nequando persuasimus, ut Terentianus ille Parmena, se plenum esse rimarū dicit, qui huc & illuc persuasit.

^d Καταξεν. Notanda est vis huius vocabuli, quo significatur, non sine magno certamine posse istud bonum semen aservari, luctante carne, ac Diabolo adversus spiritū Dei, novum hostitem, & capitalem ipsorum inimicū.

9
See Perkins,
Vol. 1. p. 455.

9 Suffer the Spirit of Bondage to have its worke upon thee. Conclude horror upon thy heart, by the working of the Law, from such places as these; *Deut. 29. 19, 20. 2 Theff. 1. 8, 9. Rev. 21. 8.*

10

10 Whenthy Conscience is once throughly wounded by the preparative worke of the Spirit of Bondage, and all thy finnes, even those in which thou hast taken greatest delight, become heavie and a grievous burthen upon thy heart; then let that heavie heart of thine receive spirituall warmth, refreshing, and life,

First, By perusing the Lord Iesus in all the passages of his Love, Sufferings, and Satisfactions, from his comming from the Bosome of his Father, untill his returning unto his right hand againe; especially hanging upon him, bleeding and dying, and crying under the burthen of our finnes, *My God, my God, &c.* and so conquering and concluding, *It is finished.*

Job. 19. 30.

See Marrow of
the Oracles of
God, p. 228, & c.

Secondly, By a feeling survey and sure setting upon all the Promises of Life, sealed with his righteous blood.

See *Ibid.* p. 326,
& c.

Thirdly, By cleaving to Gods sweetest Name, which is to forgive iniquitie, transgression; and sinne, *Exod. 34. 6, 7.*

See *Randalls*
Cygn. Cant. p. 28.
My Walking
with God, p. 10.

Fourthly, By resting with all thankfull and joyfull acknowledgement, and rejecting resolutely all scrupulous and fearefull injections, upon that blessed Myserie of Gods free grace, which reacheth from everlasting to everlasting.

11 Then

II Then ever after walke watchfully and fruitfully in the path which is called holy.

Now for continuall growing and profiting by the Ministerie, in that new and blessed course, and for thriving by the food of the Word which thou enjoyest, take these directions, looke unto these things.

First, Looke to the dressing of it; that thy spirituall Cooke be cunning, and conscionable. Otherwise, it may sometimes turne into ranke poyson unto thy Soule, fill thee with winde, and puffe thee up with a causelesse good conceit of thy selfe; impaire thy spirituall health, keepe thee stunted, as it were, and at a stay, &c. Nay, an ill spirituall Cooke, by his jugling Trickes, may make thee beleeve all thy life long, that thou growest in Grace, and shalt goe to Heaven; and thou art starke dead in sinnes and trespasses, and shalt be damned.

Secondly, The emptying and disburthening of the Stomacke of thy Soule, of all Humours, Passions, Prejudice, Crosses, Troubles, Temptations, &c. or any thing that will hinder the puritie and power of the Word from taking possession of thy Soule: even the Honey-combe, the sweetest thing in the World, is loathsome, as the Wise-man sayth, to a full stomacke. Thou must bring an Heart and Head, like two emptie Buckets, to draw with greedinesse and joy the Water of Life out of the Wells of Salvation.

Thirdly, To procure and rayse an Appetite
(15) before

II

See *Crisost.*
Tom. 2. p. 682.

See *Relloche* in
Johan. p. 377.

before thou come : from consideration ; first, of its Necessitie : Where the Word of God is not preached, the people perish ; as you had it in the former Treatise. Secondly, Excellencie : It is farre more precious than purest Gold, dearer than thousands of Gold and Silver. Thirdly, Sweetnesse : It passes the Honey, and Honey-combe. *David*, in his absence from the meanes, holds the Swallow and Sparrow happie Birds. Fourthly, Profit : It builds up the inner man, &c.

Fourthly, The Reception of it ; That it ever be entertained with farre more attention and reverence, than if wee were hearing the mightiest Monarch in the World speaking immediately unto us, by personall compellation, about the weightiest affaire, and neereliest concerning us : That it be ever heard as the Word of the mightie and ever-living God.

Fifthly, Retention. The most wholesome and soveraigne meat, if presently voided, nourisheth not at all ; many fall into a Consumption of Grace, by reason of weakenesse this way. They are hot and fierce to get unto a good Sermon, and they doe well, to be carefull thereabout ; but their forwardnesse and fervencie cooles and expires, when the Sermon is done. They after, have little more to doe with it, save onely to say it was a good Sermon : As, many have an unsatiabable appetite in devouring meat, who cannot keepe it for any space of time. The retentive power of the Soule then must be strengthened,
and

and exercis'd, or else the attentive and attractive addes but more deadnesse to a spirituall Atrophie.

Sixtly, Concoction. By repetition; either in way of conference, with our neighbours, and Christian friends; or in way of examination, with our Wives, Children, Servants, Schollers, or other inferiours. But principally, by that, first, excellent Exercise of Meditation, which is the very life of profitable Hearing; and the want of it, the death of all good Lessons: It inflames the heart with a kindly heat, to practise; as in brooding, the Hen inspires heat, and begets life: secondly, and by the heat of Prayer; that both warmes the heart, fits the food, and brings a blessing upon both.

Seventhly, Digestion. By application of the points unto our owne particular; by sorting the particulars of the Sermon, unto our owne necessities; for the conquering of this Lust, ruling of that Passion, leaving this Sinne, performing that Dutie, &c.

Eightly, Practice. Walking in the strength of it afterward; which makes it our owne, and keeps the Soule in health, and growth, and comfortable temper.

And thus wee may constantly grow by the Ministerie of the Word; which is the principall publike Banquet, which the Lord hath provided for feeding his Childrens Soules.

The Sacraments are a second Service.

Even by the first, that is, Baptisme, wee may
grow,

See Chrysost. in
Johan. Hom. 31.
pag. 103.

Let us rumin-
ate (of the
Scripture, viz.)
and as it were
chew the cud,
that wee may
have the sweet
juice, spirituall
effect, marrow,
honey, kernell,
taste, comfort
and consolati-
on of them,

11. Homily for
reading Scrip-
tures.

Wee must, *Ite-
rum de memoriâ
quasi de utero, re-
vocare & rumi-
nare, & retrac-
te.* Chrysost. or
rather the un-
certaine Au-
thor, in *Matth.*
Hom. 41.

grow, not onely when wee feele it in our owne bodies; but also, when wee see it administred unto others. And therefore, the custome which hath prevailed in most places, of neglecting and contemning this part of the Food of our Soules, is to be severely censured, and sharply reproved.

By the second, that is, the Lords Supper, wee may thrive excellently, if wee follow those Directions in my Preparative to it: To which I referre you, in the succeeding Treatise.

FINIS.





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