

A

TREATISE

OF

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

COMPARED.

IN TWO PARTS:

I. OF FALSELY PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE.

II. OF TRUE SAVING KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE.

I. AGAINST HASTY JUDGING, AND FALSE CONCEITS OF KNOWLEDGE; AND FOR NECESSARY SUSPENSION.

II. THE EXCELLENCY OF DIVINE LOVE, AND THE HAPPINESS OF BEING KNOWN AND LOVED OF GOD.

WRITTEN AS GREATLY NEEDFUL TO THE SAFETY AND PEACE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN, AND OF THE CHURCH: THE ONLY CERTAIN WAY TO ESCAPE FALSE RELIGIONS, HERESIES, SECTS, AND MALIGNANT PREJUDICES, PERSECUTIONS AND SINFUL WARS: ALL CAUSED BY FALSELY PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE, AND HASTY JUDGING, BY PROUD, IGNORANT MEN, WHO KNOW NOT THEIR IGNORANCE.

By RICHARD BAXTER;

Who by God's Blessing on long and hard Studies, hath learned to know that he knoweth but little, and to suspend his Judgment of Uncertainties, and to take great, necessary, certain Things, for the food of his Faith and Comforts, and the measure of his Church Communion.

- “A wise man feareth and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth and is confident.”
 PROV. xiv. 16.
- “But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve by his subtlety; so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ.” 2 COR. xi. 3.
- “The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? We speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world.” 1 COR. i. 25. 20; ii. 6.
- “Study to shew thyself approved to God; a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.” 2 TIM. ii. 15, 16.
- “Cum ista quærentur, et ea sicut potest quisque conjectat, non inutiliter exercentur ingenia, si adhibeatur disceptantia moderata, et absit error opinantium se scire quod nesciunt. Quid enim opus est ut hæc et hujusmodi affirmentur, vel negentur, vel definiantur cum discrimine, quando sine crimine nesciantur?”
 AUGUST. ENCHIRID. Cap. 59. (De Corporibus Angelorum.)

TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
SIR HENRY ASHHURST;
AND THE
LADY DIANA HIS WIFE.

SIR,

YOUR name is not prefixed to this Treatise, either as accusing you of the sin herein detected, or as praising you for those virtues which good men are more pleased to possess and exercise, than to have proclaimed, though they be as light that is hardly hid: but it is to vent and exercise that gratitude which loveth not the concealment of such friendship and kindness, as you and your Lady eminently, and your Relatives and her's, the children of the Lord Paget, have long obliged me by; and it is to posterity that I record your kindness, more than for this age, to which it hath publicly notified itself, during my public accusations, reproaches, sentences, imprisonments, and before and since: who knoweth you that knoweth not hereof? And it is to renew the record of that love and honour which I owed to your deceased father formerly, though too slenderly recorded, to be the heir and imitator of whose faith, piety, charity, patience, humility, meekness, impartiality, sincerity and perseverance, is as great an honour and blessing as I can wish you, next to the conformity to our highest Pattern. And though he was averse to worldly pomp and grandeur, and desired that his children should not affect it, yet God that will honour those that honour him, hath advanced his children, I believe partly for his sake: but I entreat you all (and some other of my friends whom God hath raised as a blessing to their pious and charitable parents and themselves) to watch carefully lest the deceitful world and flesh do turn such blessings into golden fetters, and to be sure to use them as they would find at last on their account.

And as you are a Member of the present House of Commons, I think the subject of this Treatise is not unnecessary

to your consideration and daily care: that when proof, and notorious and sad experience telleth us what distractions have befallen Church and State, by men's self-conceited, erroneous rushing upon sin and falsehood, as if it were certainly good and true, and how little posterity feareth and avoideth this confounding vice, though history tell us that it hath been the deluge that in all ages hath drowned the peace and welfare of the world; you may be wary, and try before you venture, in doubtful cases; especially where the sacred and civil interest of this and many other lands, doth probably lie on the determination. Do you think all that ventured upon the actions and changes, that have tossed up and down both churches and kingdoms, by divisions, persecutions and wars, had not done better to suspend their judgments, till they could have more certainly determined? *Who* should proceed more cautiously than *bishops*? And *where* rather than in *councils*? And in *what* rather than about *faith* and *public government* and *order*? And had bishops and councils torn the church, and empires, and kingdoms, as they have done by aspiring after superiority, and by contentious writings, and condemning each other, and by contradictory and erroneous, and persecuting canons; or by raising wars and deposing princes, ever since four, five, or six hundred years after Christ, if not sooner, if they had known their ignorance, and suspended in such dangerous cases till they were sure?

I know you are none of them who dare pretend to a certain knowledge, that all those oaths, declarations, covenants, practices imposed by laws and canons on ministers and people in this land, in the Act of Uniformity, the Corporation Act, the Vestry Act, the Militia Act, the Five Mile Act of Banishment, &c. are so good and lawful, as will justify the execution of them, and the silencing, ejecting, ruining, and judging to lie from six months to six in the common jails till they die, two thousand as faithful ministers of Christ as any nation hath under heaven, unless they forbear to preach the Gospel to which they are vowed, or venture their souls on that which they fear to be sins so great as they are loath to name: when Christ will sentence them to everlasting punishment, who did not visit, feed, clothe him in the least of them whom he calls his brethren. Before men silence conditionally the whole ministry of such a kingdom, and actually two thousand such, while the wounding,

dividing consequents may be so easily foreseen, and before men deliberately and resolutely continue and keep up such battering engines on pretence of Uniformity and obedience to men, and before they venture to own this to that Lord who hath made other terms of Church Unity and Peace, it nearly concerneth them to think, and think on it a thousand times: A suspended judgment is here safer than preference and confident rage.

And also they that desire an abolition of Episcopacy, should a thousand times bethink them first what true and primitive Episcopacy is, and whether the 'Episcopi Gregis,' or 'eorum Præsides,' or true Evangelists, or Apostolical General Bishops, disarmed and duly chosen, be any injury to the church? And whether the Jews had not been a national Christian church under the Twelve Apostles and Seventy, if they had not rejected Him that would have gathered them as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.

They that cannot deny that Christ settled a superior rank of ministers, appointing them besides their extraordinaries, the work of gathering and overseeing many churches, promising therein to be with them to the end of the world, and that only Matthias must make up the national number of such, though Justus had been with Christ as well as he, must be the provers that this rank and imparity was reversed by him that did institute it, if they affirm it: and not without proof charge Christ with seeming levity and mutability, as settling a form of Ministry and Government, which he would have continue but one age; much less must they impose such an unproved affirmation as the terms of Church Concord.

Woe, woe, woe! how effectually hath Satan almost undone the Christian world, by getting in naughty ministers and magistrates, where he could not utterly extirpate Christianity by arms! thereby making rulers and preachers the captains of the malignant enemies of seriousness in that religion which they profess and preach themselves; and if in such hypocrisy they convert a soul, they hate him as an enemy for believing them; and thereby tempt religious men to mistake the crime of the naughty preacher, as the fault of the office, and to oppose the office for the person's sake; and so Ministry and Christianity are despised by too many.

The shutting of their church-doors, and condemning to scorn and beggary, and gaols, those that were as wise and faithful as themselves (unless fearing heinous sin made them worse,) should have been by the persecutors long and deeply thought on, twenty eight years ago; and ever since, by them that believe that Christ will judge them. And so should all doctrines and practices that tend to unwarrantable separations and divisions by others. Things of this moment should not be ventured on, nor Papists made both lords and executioners by our distracted combats with each other, and the miserable nation and undone church left to no better a remedy than a 'non putaremus;' and to hear the worldly tyrants, and the tempted sufferers accusing each other, and disputing when the house is burnt, who was in the fault.

I think he was most faulty that could most easily have helped it, and would not: but if great and rich men will be the strength of the factious, as they have most to lose, they may be the greatest losers.

All this hath been said, to tell you how nearly the doctrine of this book, for necessary doubting and a humble understanding, and for Christian love, and against pretended knowledge and rash judging, doth concern the duty and safety of this Nation, Church and State.

My late book of the "English Nonconformity" fully evinceth this, and more; but blinding prejudice, worldliness and faction, give leave to few of the guilty to read it.

I rest your much obliged Servant,

RICHARD BAXTER.

July 31, 1689.

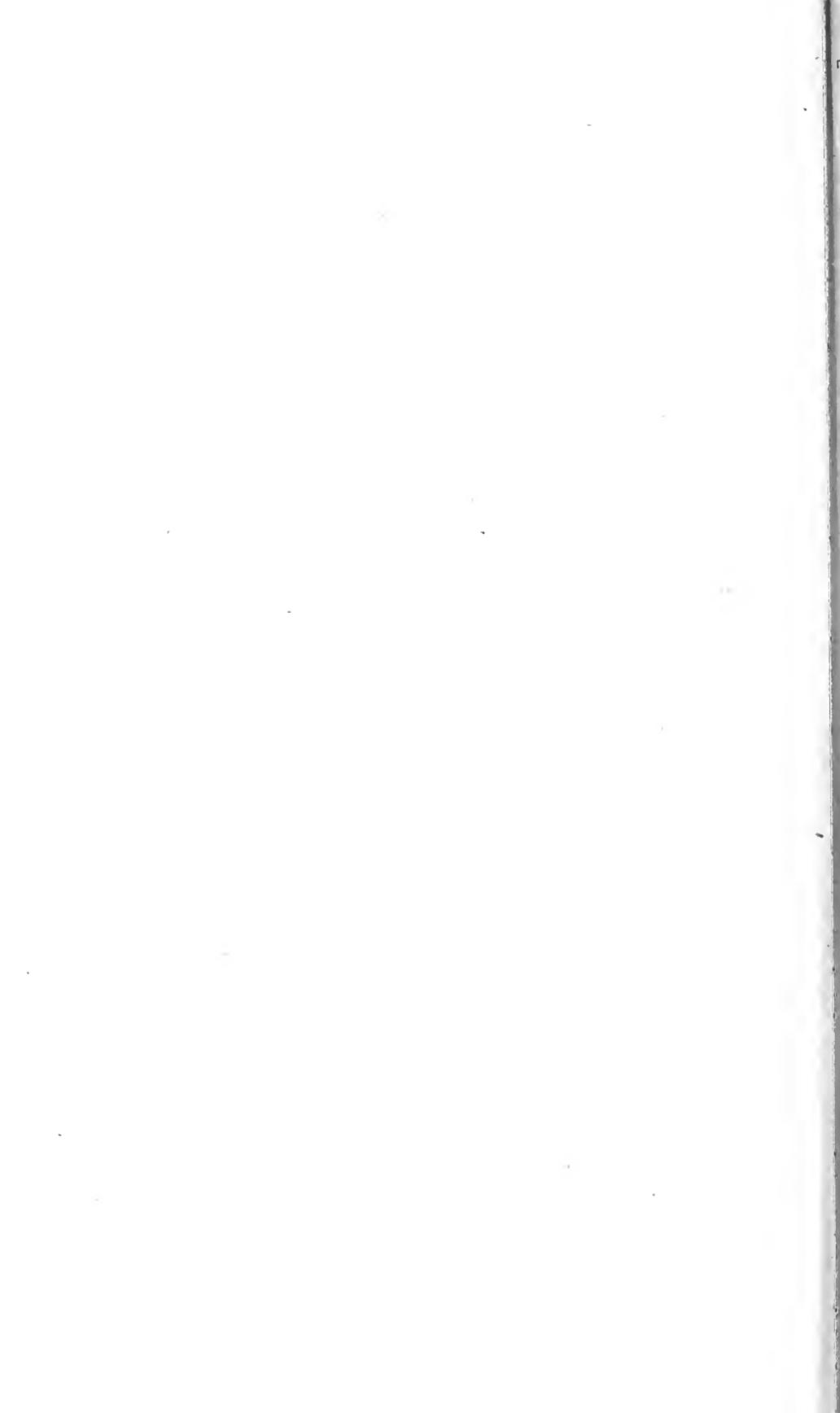
TO THE READER.

READER,

UPON the review of this book, written long ago, I find, 1. That it is a subject as necessary now as ever; experience telling us that the disease is so far from being cured, that it is become our public shame and danger, and if the wonderful mercy of God prevent it not, is likely to be the speedy confusion and ruin of the land. 2. As to the manner of this writing, I find the effects of the failing of my memory, in the often repeating of the same things, with little diversification: but I will not for that cast it away; considering, 1. That perhaps often repeating may make the matter the better remembered; and if it do the work intended, no matter though the Author be not applauded. 2. And men may think justly that what is often repeated dropped not from the Author inconsiderately, nor is taken by him to be small and useless; but is that digested Truth which he would most inculcate. 3. And those who blame their weakness who accuse the Church Liturgy of too much repetition, I suppose will not be much offended with it in our writings, while the dulness and forgetfulness of many readers maketh it needful.

R. B.

August 3, 1689.



KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

COMPARED.

PART I.

OF FALSELY PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE.

1 CORINTHIANS viii. 2, 3.

And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him.

CHAP. I.

The Scope and Text opened; what Philosophy or worldly Wisdom Paul depresseth; and why.

THE calamitous divisions of the Churches of Christ, and the miscarriages and contentions of too many particular brethren, having been sad upon my thoughts above forty years, by this time, without imputation of hastiness and rash judging, I may take leave to tell the world, what I have discovered to be the principal cause^a, which is *falsely* PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE, or IGNORANCE of IGNORANCE, or a proud unhumbed understanding, confident that it knoweth that which it knoweth not. And consequently what must be the cure, if our calamity be here curable, viz. To know as much as we can; but withal to know how little we know, and to take on us to know no more than we do know, nor to be certain of our uncertainties.

The text which I have chosen to be the ground of my

^a Had I been supposed to have written this book to hide my sloth and ignorance, men would not have neglected my "Methodus Theologiæ, and Catholic Theology," through mere sloth, and saying, that it is too high and hard for them.

discourse, is so plain, notwithstanding some little difficulties, that did not the nature of the disease resist the clearest remedy, so many good people had never here often read their sin described, as insensibly as if they read it not.

The chapter hath so much difficulty, as will not stand with my intended brevity to open it: I refer you to expositors for that; whether they were the Nicolaitans, or any other sort of heretics that the apostle dealeth with, I determine not. It is plain that they were licentious professors of Christianity, who thought that it was the ignorance of others, that made them judge it unlawful to eat things offered to idols; and that their own greater knowledge set them above that scruple. A mixture of Platonic philosophy with Christianity, made up most of the primitive heretics, and for want of a due digestion of each, too much corrupted many of the Greek doctors of the church. The unlearned sort of Christians, were so much despised by some of the philosophical heretics, that they were not thought worthy of their communion; for as Jude saith, they "separated themselves, being sensual, having not the Spirit," but more affected philosophical fancies: which made Paul warn men to take heed lest any seduced them by vain philosophy; not using the name of philosophy, for that solid knowledge of God's works which is desirable, but for the systems of vain conceits and precepts which the word was then used to signify, as every sect derived them from their masters. And so the apostle taketh knowledge in this text; not for solid knowledge indeed, but for Gnosticism or philosophical presumptions; such as even yet most philosophers are guilty of, who take a multitude of precepts, some useful, some useless, some true, and some false, and all but notionally, or to little purpose, and joining these do call them philosophy. And Paul tells them, that opinionative and notional knowledge (were it true, like the devil's faith) is of no such excellency as to cause them to shelter their sins under the confidence and honour of it, and despise unlearned conscientious Christians; for such knowledge by inflation often destroyeth the possessors, or becomes the fuel of the devilish sin of pride, when love buildeth up ourselves and others to salvation. And to conceit that a man is wise because of such knowledge, and so to overvalue his own understanding, is a certain sign that he is destitute of that knowledge

in which true wisdom doth consist; and knoweth nothing with a wise and saving knowledge, as every thing should be known: and indeed a man's excellency is so far from lying in vain philosophical speculations, that the use of all true knowledge is but to bring us up to the love of God, as the highest felicity, to be approved and beloved by God; and those unlearned Christians that have the spirit of sanctification, without your vain philosophy, have knowledge enough to bring them to this love of God, which is a thing that passeth all your knowledge, or rather to be known of God as his own, and loved by him. For our felicity lieth in receiving from God, and in his loving us more than in our loving him; but both set together, to love God, and so to be loved of him, are the ultimate end and perfection of man; and all knowledge is to be estimated but as it tendeth to this.

This being the plain paraphrase of the text, I shall stay no longer on it, but thence deduce and handle these two observations.

Doct. I. Falsely pretended knowledge is often pernicious to the possessor, and injurious to the church. And overvaluing one's own opinions and notions, is a certain mark of dangerous ignorance.

Doct. II. A man is so far truly wise, as he loveth God, and consequently is approved or loved by him, and as he loveth others to their edification.

I. The first is but the same that Solomon thus expresseth, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit; there is more hope of a fool than of him." (Prov. xxvi. 12.) And Paul elsewhere, "Be not wise in your own conceits." (Rom. xii. 16; xi. 25; and Prov. xxvi. 5. 16.) For it is certain that we are all here in great darkness, and it is but little that the wisest know; and therefore he that thinks he knoweth much, is ignorant both of the things which he thinks he knoweth, and of his ignorance. Therefore "Let no man deceive himself: If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise:" (1 Cor. iii. 18:) To be "wise in this world," is the same with that in the words following, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." And (1 Cor. i. 19—22.) "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," &c. "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this

world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom," &c. So chap. ii. 4—8. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words (or probable discourses) of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God: Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught: But we speak that wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory (even Christ the wisdom of God, chap. i. 24.) which none of the princes of this world knew.——"

In all this, note—1. That there is a wisdom which Paul placeth Christianity itself in:—2. That this is to know God in Christ objectively, and to be taught of God by Christ and his Spirit efficiently.—3. That there is a wisdom which Paul comparatively vilifieth.—4. This is called the "wisdom of this world" (or age).—5. That most plainly he meaneth by it, that which then was called learning and philosophy; which the Greeks did value, and by which they judged of the Gospel; which comprehended the methods of all the sects, Epicureans, Academics, Peripatetics and Stoics; but not their true morals, but their physics, and logic, and metaphysics; which Laertius and others tell us how variously they held.—6. That Paul doth not absolutely prohibit such studies, nor yet despise any true knowledge.—7. But he vilifieth this philosophy on these accounts. (1.) Because it was the exercise of a poor, low, insufficient light: they did but grope after God in the dark, as Acts xvii. 27. (2.) Because it was mostly taken up with inferior things, of small concernment comparatively: as things corporeal are good in themselves, and when sanctified and made subservient to things spiritual; so the knowledge of physics is to be esteemed: but as things corporeal yet are objectively the snare and ruin of those that perish, and therefore the world to be renounced and crucified, as it is our temptation, an enemy, or competitor with Christ; just so it must be with natural philosophy. (3.) Because it was greatly overvalued by the world, as if it had been the only wisdom,

when indeed it is of itself but an indifferent thing, or fit but to make a by-recreation of, till it be made to serve to higher ends; even as riches, honour and pleasure are overvalued by worldlings, as if they were the only felicity; when in themselves they are but more indifferent things, and prove beneficial or hurtful as they are used. Therefore Paul was to take down the pernicious esteem of this kind of philosophy, as preachers now must take down men's esteem of worldly things, however they are the works and gifts of God. And as Christ would by his actual poverty and sufferings, and not by words only, take down the esteem of worldly wealth and pride; so Paul by neglecting and forbearing the use of artificial logic, physics and metaphysics, would depress their rate. (4.) Because that there was abundance of falsehood mixed with the truth which the philosophers held; as their multitude of different sects fully proves. (5.) Because the artificial, organical part was made so operous, as that it drowned real learning instead of promoting it; and became but like a game at chess, a device rather to exercise vain, proud wits by, than to find out useful truth. As to this day when logic and metaphysics seem much cultivated and reformed, yet the variety of methods, the number of notions, the precariousness of much, the uncertainty of some things, the falsehood of many, maketh them as fit for boys to play with in the schools, and to be a wood into which a sophister may run, to hide his errors, as to be a means of detecting them. And therefore a knavish cheater will often bind you strictest to the pedantic part of the rules of disputation, that when he cannot defend his matter, he may quarrel with your form and artifice, and lose time by questioning you about mood and figure. (6.) Because by these operous diversions the minds of men were so forestalled or taken up, as that they had not leisure to study great and necessary saving truth: and if men must be untaught in the doctrines of life, till they had first learned their logic, physics, and metaphysics, how few would have been saved! When at this day so many come from our Universities after several years' study, raw smatterers in these, and half-witted scholars, whose learning is fitter to trouble than to edify: and if Scripture had been written in the terms and method of Aristotle, how few would have been the better for them! But great good must be common.

And as Paul on all these accounts sets light by this philosophy, so he calls it, the wisdom of this world:—1. Because this world was its chief object:—2. And the creatures were its only light:—3. And it led but few to any higher than worldly ends:—4. And it was that which worldly men, that were strangers to heavenly light and holiness, did then most magnify and use.

Yet as Christ, when he said how hard it was for a rich man to be saved, did not make riches absolutely unlawful, nor to have no goodness nor usefulness at all; but teacheth men, if they are wise, not to overvalue them, and to be too eager for them; so is Paul to be interpreted about philosophy, or the wisdom of this world. (For it is not only craftiness for worldly ends that he so calls.)

And as God, when he denieth his servants riches and worldly fulness, doth it not because he taketh it to be *too good* for them, but because it is not *good enough*, and therefore he will give them better; even the heavenly riches, and honour and delights: even so when Paul comparatively vilifieth philosophy, it is not as being really a wisdom too high for Christians, but too low; nor doth he depress reason, or extol ignorance; but would lead men to the truest learning, the highest knowledge and improvement of reason, the only wisdom, from trifling, pedantic, unprofitable notions, and ludicrous loss of time and studies.

It is not therefore for want of wisdom that the Scripture is not written according to the philosophers' art. Though Erasmus overvalued his grammaticisms, it was not for want of learning in philosophy, that he so much despised the philosophical schoolmen! so that speaking of the Bishop of London, who maligned Dr. Colet, and was a subtle Scotist, he saith of *such*: 'That he had known some of them whom he would not call knaves, but he never knew one of them whom he could call a Christian.' Vid. Mr. Smith's Life of Dr. Colet, by Erasmus. A smart charge: I suppose he meant it of them, rather as *Scotists* than as *bishops*.

And therefore the apostle aptly joineth both together, (1 Cor. i. 26,) "Not many wise men after the the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" seeming to equal worldly wealth and greatness, with worldly wisdom or philosophy, as to the interest of religion and salvation. And the foolish wits that think he spake against learning, be-

cause he had it not, may as truly say, that he spake against worldly wealth and greatness because he had it not; for the possession, use and knowledge of worldly things, are near of kin. But they knew not Paul so well as Festus, who thought him not unlearned, though he thought him mad. Nor was it the way of worldly wealth and greatness which he chose.

Doubtless neither Christ, nor Paul, did speak against any real knowledge, but, (1.) Against nominal, pretended knowledge, which was set up to divert men from real knowledge; and was full of vanities and falsehoods. (2.) And against the overvaluing of that learning, which is of little use, in comparison of the knowledge of great and excellent, and necessary things. For knowledge is valuable according to its object and its use.

The knowledge of trifles for trivial ends, is itself a trifle. The knowledge of things great and necessary for great and necessary ends, is the great and necessary knowledge. And therefore how unmeasurably must the knowledge of God and our eternal happiness, excel the pedantic philosophy of the Gentiles. However Christians may sanctify and ennoble this by making it a help to higher knowledge. And therefore the Platonists and the Stoics were the noblest philosophers; because the former studied the highest things, and the other the necessary means of felicity, amending of men's hearts and lives.

But in the present text the thing which the apostle reprehendeth is, the esteeming of a man's self to be wiser than he is; and taking himself to be a wise man because of his trifling philosophical knowledge. And he would have them know that till they knew nobler things than those, and were guided by a nobler light, they were very fools^b.

I have looked over Hutten, Vives, Erasmus, Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubone, and many other critical grammarians, and all Gruterus's critical volumes. I have read almost all

^b A countryman having sent his son to the University, when he came home asked him what he had learned. He told him he had learned logic. He asked him what that logic was, and what he could do with it: and it being supper-time, and the poor people having but two eggs for supper he told them that he could prove that those eggs were three: This is *one*, saith he, and that is *two*, and *one* and *two* are *three*. The father gave him the better, and told him that his art was useful, for he had thought himself to have gone without his supper, but now, saith he, I will take *one* egg, and your mother the other, and take you the third. Such kind of logic the world hath gloried in as learning.

the Physics and Metaphysics I could hear of: I have wasted much of my time among loads of historians, chronologers, and antiquaries; I despise none of their learning. All truth is useful; mathematics, which I have least of, I find a pretty manlike sport. But if I had no other kind of knowledge than these, what were my understanding worth! what a dreaming dotard should I be! Yea, had I also all the codes and pandects, all Cujacius, Wesenbechius, and their tribe at my fingers' ends; and all other volumes of civil, national and canon laws, with the rest in the Encyclopædia, what a puppet play would my life be, if I had no more!

I have higher thoughts of the schoolmen, than Erasmus and our other grammarians had: I much value the method and sobriety of Aquinas, the subtlety of Scotus and Ockam, the plainness of Durandus, the solidity of Ariminensis, the profundity of Bradwardine, the excellent acuteness of many of their followers; of Aureolus, Capreolus, Bannes, Alvarez, Zumel, &c.; of Mayro, Lychetus, Trombeta, Faber, Meurisse, Rada, &c.; of Ruiz, Pennatus, Suarez, Vasquez, &c.; of Hurtado, of Albertinus, of Lud. à Dola, and many others: but how loath should I be to take such sauce for my food, and such recreations for my business! The jingling of too much and too false philosophy among them, often drowns the noise of Aaron's bells. I feel myself much better in Herbert's Temple; or in a heavenly treatise of faith and love. And though I do not, with Dr. Colet, distaste Augustine above the plainer fathers, yet I am more taken with his Confessions, than with his grammatical and scholastic treatises. And though I know no man whose genius more abhorreth confusion instead of necessary distinction and method; yet I loathe impertinent, useless art, and pretended precepts and distinctions, which have not a foundation in the matter.

In a word, there is a Divine knowledge, which is part of man's felicity, as it promoteth love and union, and there is a solid knowledge of God's word and works, a valuable grammatical knowledge, and a true philosophy, which none but ignorant persons will despise. But the vain philosophy, and pretended wisdom and learning of the world, hath been, and is, the cheat of souls, the hinderer of wisdom, and a troubler of the church and world.

CHAP. II.

What Wisdom and Esteem of it, are not here condemned.

THE order which I shall observe in handling the first doctrine shall be this; I. I will tell you negatively what wisdom, and esteem of our own wisdom, is not here condemned. II. What it is that is here condemned. III. What are the certainties which we must hold fast, and make our religion of. IV. What degrees of these certainties there are. V. What are the uncertainties, which we must not pretend to be certain of; and the unknown things which we must not pretend to know. VI. What are the mischiefs of falsely pretended knowledge. VII. What are the degrees or aggravations of this sin. VIII. What are the causes of it. IX. What are the remedies. X. What are the uses which we should make of this doctrine.

I. What wisdom, and what esteem of our wisdom is not here condemned?

Ans. 1. Not any real useful knowledge at all, whilst every thing keepeth its proper place, and due esteem, as is said.

2. That which of itself primarily is of so small use, as that it falleth under the contempt of the apostles, yet by accident, through the subtlety of Satan, and the viciousness of the world, may become to some men in some measure necessary. And here cometh in the calamity of divines. Of how little use is it to me in itself to know what is written in many hundred books; which yet by accident it much concerneth me to know! And if God restrain him not, the devil hath us here at so great an advantage, that he can make our work almost endless, and hath almost done it already; yea, can at any time divert us from the greatest truth and works, by making another at that time more necessary.

If he raise up Socinians, our task is increased; we must read their books, that we may be able to confute them; so must we when he raiseth up Libertines, Familists, Seekers, Quakers, and such other sects. If he stir up controversies in the church, about Government, Worship, Ceremonies,

Circumstances, Words, Methods, &c., we must read so much as to understand all, that we may defend the truth against them. If Papists will lay the stress of all their controversies on Church History, and the Words of Ancients; we must read and understand all, or they will triumph. If Schoolmen will build their theology on Aristotle, all men have not the wit with the Iberian legate at the Florentine Council in Sagyrophilus, to cry against the preacher, 'What have we to do with Aristotle?' But if we cannot deal with them at their own weapons, they will triumph. If cavillers will dispute only in mood and figure, we must be able there to overtop them, or they will insult. If the plica, scurvy or other new diseases do arise, the physician must know them all, if he will cure them. And hence it is that we say, that a lawyer must know the law; and a physician must know physic, medicine, &c. But a divine should know all things that are to be known; because the diseased world hath turned pretended knowledge into the great malady, which must be cured: but is the thing itself of any great worth; is it any great honour to know the vanity of philosophical pedantry; and to be able to overdo such gamesters, any more than to beat one at a game at chess, or for a physician to know the plague or leprosy?

3. Yet indeed, as all things are sanctified to the holy, and pure to the pure; a wise man may and must make great use of common, inferior kinds of knowledge: especially the true, grammatical sense of Scripture words, the true precepts of logic, the certain parts of real physics and pneumatology; for God is seen in his works as in a glass: and there to search after him and behold him, is a noble, pleasant work and knowledge. And I would that no Israelite may have need to go down to the Philistines for instruments of this sort.

4. It is not forbidden to any man to know that measure of wisdom which he truly hath; God bindeth us not to err, nor to call light darkness, or truth error, or to belie ourselves, or deny his gifts. 1. It is desirable for a man absolutely to know as much as he can, preferring still the greatest things, and to know that he knoweth them, and not to be sceptical, and doubt of all. 2. It is a duty for a converted sinner comparatively to know that he is wiser than he

was in his sinful state, and to give God thanks for it. 3. It is his duty who groweth in wisdom, and receiveth new accessions of light, to know that he so groweth, and to give God thanks, and to welcome each useful truth with joy. 4. It is the duty of a good and wise man comparatively to know that he is not as foolish as the ungodly; nor to think that every wicked man, or ignorant person whom he should pity and instruct, is already wiser than he; every teacher is not to be so foolish as to think that all his flock are more judicious than himself. In a word, it is not a true estimate of the thing or of ourselves, that is forbidden us; but a false. It is not belying ourselves, nor ingratitude to God, nor a contradiction, to know a thing, and not to know that I know it, nor an ignorance of our own minds, which is commanded us under the pretence of humility; but it is a proud conceit, that we know what we do not know, that is condemned.

CHAP. III.

II. *What Pretended Knowledge is condemned, and what Philosophy and Learning it is that Paul disliked.*

MORE distinctly, 1. It is condemnable for any man to think himself absolutely or highly wise: because our knowledge here is so poor, and dark, and low, that compared with our ignorance it is little: we know not what or how many, or how great the things are which we do not know; but in general we may know that they are incomparably more and greater than what we do know; we know now but as children, and darkly, and in a glass or riddle. (1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.) In the sense that Christ saith, none is good but God, we may say that none is wise but God. For a man that must know (unless he be a very sot) that he knoweth nothing perfectly in the world; that he knoweth but little of any worm, or fly, or pile of grass which he seeth, or of himself, his soul or body, or any creature; for this man to assume the title of a *wise man*, is arrogant, unless comparatively understood, when he is ignorant of ten thousandfold more than he knoweth, and the predominant part denominateth. The old inquirers had so much modesty, as to arrogate no higher name than Philosophers.

2. It is very condemnable for any man to be proud of his understanding: while it is so low, and poor, and dark, and hath still so much matter to abase us. He knoweth not what a dungeon poor mortals are in, nor what a darkened thing a sinful mind is, nor what a deplorable state we are in, so far from the heavenly light, no, nor what it is to be a man in flesh, who findeth not much more cause of humiliation than of pride in his understanding. O how much ado have I to keep up from utter despondency under the consciousness of so great ignorance, which no study, no means, no time doth overcome. How long, Lord, shall this dungeon be our dwelling! and how long shall our foolish souls be loath to come into the celestial light!

3. It is sinful folly to pretend to know things unrevealed and impossible to be known. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children for ever, that we do them." (Deut. xxix. 29.) "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. xi. 34.) And how many such compose the theology of some, and the philosophy of more.

4. It is sinful folly to pretend to know that which is impossible or unrevealed to him, though it be possible and revealed to others. For as the eye, so the understanding must have its necessary light, and due constitution and conditions of the object, and of itself; or else it cannot understand.

5. It is sinful folly to pretend to certainty of knowledge, when either the thing is but probable, or at best, we have but doubtful opinions or conjectures of it, and no true certainty.

6. It is sinful folly to pretend that we know or receive any thing by Divine faith (or revelation) when we have it but by human faith, or probable conjecture from natural evidence. As soon as men are persuaded by a sect, a seducer, or a selfish priest, to believe what he saith, abundance presently take such a persuasion for a part of their religion, as if it were a believing God.

7. It is sinful folly to take on us that we know what we know not at all; because we do but know that it is knowable, and that wise men know it, and as soon as we understand that it should be known, and that wise men conclude it to be true, therefore to pretend that we know it to be true.

8. And it is sinful folly to pretend that we truly know or apprehend the thing or matter, or incomplex object, merely because we have got the bare words, and second notions of it, which are separable from the knowledge of the thing. All these are false and sinful pretences of knowledge which men have not.

But because Paul so warneth us to take heed of vain philosophy, and atheists and infidels deride him for speaking against the wisdom of the world, as if he spake against learning, because he had it not; and because the disease which he attempted to cure, remaineth among scholars to this day, and instead of a cure, many condemn the physician; and dislike Christ himself and the Gospel, as defective of the learning which they overvalue; I will once again, and that more distinctly tell you some few of the faults of our common learning; even now that it is cultivated and augmented in this age, that you may see that Paul did not injuriously accuse it, or Christ injuriously neglect it^c.

I. Natural imperfection layeth the foundation of our common calamity; in that it is so long before sense and reason grow up to a natural maturity, through the unripeness of organs, and want of exercise, that children are necessitated to learn words before things, and to make these words the means of their first knowledge, of many of the things signified; so that most furnish themselves with a stock of names and words, before ever they get any true knowledge of the matter.

II. And then they are exceeding apt to think that this treasury of words and second notions is true wisdom, and to mistake it for the knowledge of the thing: even as in religion we find almost all children and ignorant people, will learn to say by rote the Creed and Lord's-prayer, and Commandments, and Catèchism, and then think that they are not ignorants, when it is long after, before we can get them to understand the sense of the words which they can so readily speak; yea, though they are plain English words, which they use for the most part in ordinary discourse.

^c M. Antoninæ, l. 1, sect. 17. Doth thank God that he made no greater progress in Rhetoric, Poetry, and such like studies, which might have hindered him from better things, if he had perceived himself to have profited in them. And (in fine) quod cum Philosophandi cupiditas incessisset, non in sophistam aliquem incidirim, nec commentariis evolvendis, vel syllogismis resolvendis, vel Meterologicis discutendis tempus deses contriverim.

III. When children come to school, also their masters teach them as their parents did, or worse; I mean that they bestow almost all their pains to furnish them with words and second notions: and so do their tutors too often at the University. So that by that time they are grown to be masters of a considerable stock of words, grammatical, logical, metaphysical, &c., and can set these together in propositions and syllogisms, and have learned *memoriter* the theorems or axioms, and some distinctions which are in common use and reputation, they are ready to pass for Masters of the Arts, and to set up for themselves, and leave their tutors, and to teach others the like sort and measure of learning, which they have thus acquired. Like one that sets up his trade as soon as he hath gotten a shop full of tools.

IV. And indeed the memories of young men are strong and serviceable so many years sooner than their judgments, that prudent teachers think it meet to take that time to furnish them with words and organical notions, while they are unmeet to judge of things; even as pious parents must teach them the words of the catechism, that when they grow riper, their judgments may work upon that which their memories did before receive. And in this they are in the right upon two suppositions. 1. That distinguishing things obvious and easily understood from things remote, abstruse and difficult, they would teach them those of the first sort with the words, though not the second: and while they make haste with the languages they would not make too much haste with the notions and theorems of the arts and sciences. 2. That they still make them know that words as to matter are but as the dish to the meat, and all this while they are but preparing for wisdom and true learning, and not getting or possessing it; and that unless they will equalize a parrot and a philosopher, they must know how little they have attained, and must after learn *things*, or not pretend to know any thing indeed. As children learn first to speak and then learn what to speak of.

V. And the great mischief is, that multitudes of those notions that are taught us are false, not fitted to the things, but expressing the conceptions of roving, uncertain, erroneous, bewildered minds. Words are the instruments of communication of thoughts. And when I hear a man speak,

I hear, perhaps, what he *thinketh* of things, but not always what they are. Our universal notions are the result of our own comparing things with things. And we are so wofully defective in such comparings, that our universal notions must needs be very defective, so that they abound with error.

VI. And the penury and narrowness of words is a great impediment to the due expressing of those poor confused conceptions which we have ; for a man can think more aptly and comprehensively than he can speak. And hence it cometh to pass, that words and universal notions are become like pictures or hieroglyphics, almost of arbitrary signification and use, as the speaker pleaseth. And, as a multitude of school-distinctions tell us, you can know little by the grammatical use or etymology of the words, what the meaning of them is in a theorem or distinction, till the speaker tell it you by other words.

VII. And the conceptions of men being as various as their countenances, the same words in the mouths of several men, have several significations. So that when tutors read the same books to their scholars, and teach them the same notions, it is not the same conceptions always that they thus communicate.

VIII. And when all is done, ‘*recipiter ad modum recipientis.*’ It is two to one but the learner receiveth their notions with a conception somewhat different from them all. And when he thinks he hath learned what was taught him, and of his teacher’s mind, he is mistaken, and hath received another apprehension.

IX. And the narrowness of man’s mind and thoughts is such, that usually there must go many partial conceptions to one thing or object really indivisible: so that few things, or nothing rather in the world, is known by us with one conception, nor with a simplicity of apprehensions answerable to the simplicity of the things: and hereby it cometh to pass that inadequate conceptions make up a great part of our learning and knowledge. And, yet worse, our words being narrower than our thoughts, we are fain to multiply words more than conceptions, so that we must have ten conceptions perhaps of one thing, and twenty words perhaps for those ten conceptions. And then we grow to imagine

the things to be as various as our conceptions, yea, and our words: and so learning is become confused error, and the great and noble actions of the fantastical world, are a pitiful confused agitation of phantasms, and, whether fortuitous or artificial, a congress of atoms, sometimes digladiating, and sometimes seeming by amicable embraces to compose some excellent piece of art. And things seem to us to be multiplied and ordered as our conceptions of them are. And the Scotists may yet write as many more treatises 'de formalitatibus,' before men will understand indeed what a 'conceptus formalis' with them is, and whether diverse formalities be diverse realities, or only 'ejusdem conceptus inadequati.' But thus learning is become like a puppet-play, or the raising of the dust.

X. The 'entia rationis' being thus exceeding numerous, are already confounded with objective realities, and have compounded our common systems of logic, metaphysics, and too much of physics: so that students must at first see through false spectacles, and learn by seducing notions, and receive abundance of false conceptions, as the way to wisdom; and shadows and rubbish must furnish their minds under the name of truth, though mixed with many real verities. For young men must have teachers; they cannot begin at the foundation, and yet every one learn of himself, as if none had ever learned before him: he is like to have but a slow proficient, that maketh no use of the studies and experience of any that ever learned before him. And he that will learn of others, must receive their notions and words as the means of his information.

XI. And when they grow up to be capable of real wisdom, O! what a labour is it, to cleanse out this rubbish, and to unlearn all the errors that we have learned, so that it is much of the happiest progress of extraordinary successful studies, to find out our old mistakes, and set our conceptions in better order one by one: perhaps in one year we find out and reform some two or three, and in another year one or two more, and so on. Even as when at my removal of my library, my servant sets up all my books, and I must take them half down again to set them in their right places.

XII. And the difficulty of the matter is our great impediment, when we come to study things. For, 1. Their

matter, 2. Their composure, 3. Their numbers, 4. Their order and relations, 5. And their action and operation, are much unknown to us.

XIII. 1. The substance of the *spirits* is also little known, as tempteth Sadducees to dream that there are none. The notion of a spirit to some, through ignorance, is taken to be merely negative, as if it signified no more, but *not corporeal*. The notion of *immateriality* is lubricious, and he that knoweth not the true bounds of the signification of *materia*, knoweth not what it is to be immaterial. The purest spirit is known only by many inadequate conceptions: one must answer the similitude of matter, in fundamental substantiality; another must be answerable to that of forms of simple elements; and another answerable to accidents. And though nothing be so notorious of spirits as their operations, and from the acts we know the virtues or powers, yet that these virtues are not accidents, but the very essential form, and that they are (in all spirits) one in three, and many other things concerning their essentiality, are quite overlooked by the greater part of philosophers; and those few that open it, do either with Campanella, lose it again in a wood of mistaken, ill-gathered consequences; or with Lullius drown it in a multitude of irregular arbitrary notions; or with Comenius, give us a little undigested, with the mixture of crudities and mistakes; or with our learned Dr. Glisson de vitâ Naturæ, confound spirits and bodies, and make those spirits which are the vital constitutive principle of compounds, to be but the inadequate conception of bodies, as if they were all simply and formally vital of themselves, and for a body to be inanimate were a contradiction, or impossible. And they that treat more nobly of spirits (as Mr. Got and many Platonists), do it so immethodically and confusedly, as greatly disadvantage the learner.

And yet to treat of bodies without treating of the spirits that animate or actuate them, is a lame, deluding, unedifying thing. As it is to treat of a kingdom, an army, a school, without mentioning a king, a captain, or a schoolmaster; or as to describe a gun, without any mention of gunpowder or shooting; or a clock or watch without the poise or spring, or motion; or a book, or words without the sense; and so of a man without a soul or reason, or a brute without any life or sense. I mean when we speak of compound beings,

and not merely of corporeity in the notion, as abstracted from all vital moving principles.

XIV. 2. And what the true notion of matter or corporeity itself is, it is but darkly and uncertainly known, how confidently soever some decantate their moles or quantity, divisibility or discerptibility, and impenetrability: whether fire be material, and divisible and impenetrable, and how far fire and spirits herein differ, and so spirits and bodies, and how far sensible must enter the definition of 'corpus,' is not easily known.

XV. 3. Nor do we well know the nature of the simple corporeal elements; whether they agree only in materiality, quantity, and divisibility, and impenetrability; and whether they differ only in magnitude, shape, sight and con-texture of parts; or by any essentiating formal virtues, or both; or (as Mr. Got thought) by a differencing proper spirit.

XVI. 4. How little of the Divine artifice is known in the composition of mixed bodies! (And we know of no existent simples in the world, that are not found only in compositions.) All men confess that every plant, every worm, or fly; every sensitive, yea, every sensible being, is so little known to us, as that the unknown part far exceedeth the known.

XVII. 5. And we are not agreed of late of the number of the very elements themselves; much less of compounds; of which, while we know so few, that which we do know is the more defectively known; because (as in knowing of letters and syllables) the knowledge of one thing is needful to the true and useful knowledge of another.

XVIII. But the order and relations of things to one another is so wonderfully unsearchable, and innumerably various, as quite surpasseth all human understanding. Yea, though ORDER and RELATION constitute all morality, policy, literature, &c., so that it is as it were that world which human intellects converse in, and the business of all human wills and actions, yet few men know so much as what ORDER and RELATION is: nay, whether it be any thing or nothing. And though health and sickness, harmony and discord, beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice, consist in it, and heaven and hell depend upon it, and law and judgment do make and determine it: yet is it not easy to know what it is by

an universal notion ; nor whether it be truly to be called any thing at all. We doubt not but ORDER should be a most observable predicament, in the series of human notions or 'nominanda;' but yet I doubt not much but that Gassendus, who would make 'tempus' and 'spatium' two of his predicaments, doth describe to them that entity which they have not.

XIX. And though undoubtedly action is a noble predicament, and whatever the Cartesians say, requireth more causation than 'non agere' doth, yea, is itself the causation of the mutations in the world ; yet men scarcely know what to call it. Some say it is 'res;' others, it is but 'accidens rei;' and others, 'modus rei:' some say, it is 'in passio;' some say it is 'in agente;' some say it is neither, but is 'agentis :'
some say immanent acts are qualities, as Scotus, &c.

XX. And which is yet worse, the very name, accident, mode and quality, are but general, unapt notions not well understood by any that use them, nor suited meetly to the severals contained under them. And when we call a thing, or nothing, a quality, accident or mode, we are little the wiser, and know not well what we have said. Sure I am that they are exceedingly 'heterogenea' which Aristotle compriseth in the very predicament of quality. And Gassendus thought all accidents may be as well called qualities or modes.

XXI. And which is yet worse, all human language is so wofully ambiguous, that there is scarcely a word in the world that hath not many senses; and the learned world never came to agreement about the meaning of their common words, so that ambiguity drowneth all in uncertainty and confusion.

XXII. And which is yet worse, the certain apprehension of sense and reason, is commonly by men called learned, reduced to, and tried by, these dreaming ambiguous names and universal notions; and men are drawn to deny their certain knowledge, because they know not by what universal term to call it, *e. g.* I know as far as is useful to me, by *seeing* what light is; but whether it be 'substantia, accidens, modus,' &c., or what to call it universally, few know! And no wonder, for their universal notions are their own works or 'Entia rationis,' fabricated by the imperfect comparing of things with things, by ignorant understandings; but the

sensibility of objects and the sensitive faculty and the intellect are the works of God. I know much better what light is by seeing it, than I know what an accident or a quality is.

So I know by *feeling* what heat is, I know what motion or action is, I know what pain and pleasure is, I know what love and hatred is, I know partly what it is to think, to know, to will, choose and refuse; but what is the right universal notion of these, what true definition to give of any one of them, the most learned man doth not well know; inso-much, as I dare boldly say, that the vulgar ordinarily know all these better without definition, than the most learned man living can know them by definitions alone.

And here I will presume to step aside, to say as in the ears of our over-doing Separatists, who can take none into Christian communion, that cannot tell you how they were converted, or at least give them a fair account or their understanding all the Articles of the Faith, in words that are adapted to the matter: I tell you, 1. That the knowledge of words, and second notions and definitions, is one thing, and the knowledge of matters and things is another. 2. And it is the knowledge of the things, and not of the words, that is primarily and absolutely necessary to salvation. 3. And that many an illiterate, ill-bred person understand things long before they can utter their understandings in any intelligible words. 4. And therefore if any man do but these two things: 1. By yea or nay, do signify to me, that he understandeth the truth, when I put the matter of nothing but the baptismal covenant into my questions; 2. and do manifest serious willingness accordingly, by avoiding evil, and using God's means; I dare not, I will not refuse that person from the communion of the church; though I would do as much as the most rigid censurer to bring such up to greater knowledge.

XXIII. And on the other side, men are made to think that they know the things because they know the names and definitions; and so that they are learned and wise, when they know little the more by all their learning. For to be able to talk over all the critical books, and lexicons, and grammars, all the logical notions and definitions, is nothing but organical knowledge; like the shoemaker that hath a shop full of lasts (and that most of them unmeet for any man's foot), but never made a shoe by any of them. And false and

confused and idle names and notions, fill the learned world with false, confused and vain conceptions, which common country people escape, so that it costeth many a man twenty years' study to be made more erroneous than he would have been, by following an honest trade of life.

XXIV. Nay, our very articles of faith and practice which salvation lieth on, are commonly tried by these arbitrary organical notions; whole loads of school volumes are witnesses of this. Though the schoolmen, where our grammarians deride them as barbarians, have often done well in fitting words to things, and making the key meet for the lock: yet old terms and notions and axioms too often go for current; and overrule disputes, when they are not understood, nor are proper or univocal. What work doth Aristotle make with Actus and Potentia, and the schoolmen after him! What abundance of darkness do these two words contain in all their writings! And for want of other words to supply our needs, what abundance of distinctions of Actus and Potentiæ are the Scotists and other schoolmen fain to use! What abundance of disputes are kept up by the ambiguity of the word *cause*, while it is applied to things so different, as *efficiency*, *constitution* and *finality*! The like may be said of many more. And then when it cometh to a dispute of the Divine nature, of the soul, of the most weighty things; these confounding notions must overrule the case. We must not have an argument for the soul's immortality, but what these notions check or vitiate; no, nor scarcely for an attribute of God.

XXV. And it is so hard a thing to bring men to that self-denial and labour, as at age thoroughly and impartially to revise their juvenile conceptions, and for them that learned words before things, to proceed to learn things now as appearing in their proper evidence; and to come back and cancel all their old notions, which were not sound, and to build up a new frame, that not one of a multitude is ever master of so much virtue as to attempt it, and go through with it. Was it not labour enough to study so many years to know what others say; but they must now undo much of it, and begin a new and harder labour? who will do it?

XXVI. And indeed none but men of extraordinary acuteness and love of truth, and self-denial and patience, are fit to do it. For, 1. The common dullards will fall into the

ditch when they leave their crutches. And will multiply sects in philosophy and religion, while they are unable to see the truth in itself. And indeed this hath made the Protestant churches so liable to the derision and reproach of their adversaries. And how can it be avoided, while all must pretend to know and judge, what indeed they are unable to understand!

2. Yea, the half-witted men, that think themselves acute and wise, fall into the same calamity.

3. and the proud will not endure to be thought to err, when they plague the world with error.

4. And the impatient will not endure so long and difficult studies.

5. And when all is done, as Seneca saith, they must be content with a very few approvers, and must bear the scorn of the ignorant-learned crowd; who have no way to maintain the reputation of their own wisdom, orthodoxy and goodness, but by calling him proud, or self-conceited, or erroneous, that differeth from them by knowing more than they. And who but the truly self-denying can be at so much cost and labour for such reproach, when they foreknow that he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow?

XXVII. by these means men's minds that should be taken up with God and his service, are abused and vilified, and filled with the dust and smoke of vain, and false, and confused notions. And man's life is spent (as David saith) in a vain show. And men dream waking with as great industry, as if they were about a serious work. Alas, how pitifully are many of the learned world employed.

XXVIII. By this means also men's precious time is lost: and he that had time little enough to learn and do things necessary, for the common good, and his own salvation, doth waste half of it on he knoweth not what. And Satan, that findeth him more ingenious than to play it away at cards or dice, or than to drink and revel it away, doth cast another bait before him, and get him learnedly to dream it away about unprofitable words and notions.

XXIX. And by this means the practice of goodness is hindered in the world; yea, and holy affections quenched. While these arbitrary notions and speculations, (being man's own) are his more pleasant game; and studies and pulpits must be thus employed, and heart and life thus stolen from God.

Yea, it is well if godliness grow not to be taken by such dreamers, for a low, dull, and unlearned thing; yea, if they be not tempted by it to infidelity, and to think (not only the zealous ministers and Christians, but even) Christ and his apostles to be unlearned men, below their estimation.

XXX. And by the same means the devilish sin of pride will be kept up, even among the learned; yea, and by the preachers of humility: for what is that in the world (almost) that men are prouder of, than that learning which consisteth in such notions and words as are afore-described? and the proudest man, I think, is the worst.

XXXI. And by this means the sacred chairs and pulpits will be possessed by such men, whose spirits are most contrary to a crucified Christ, and to that cross and doctrine which they must preach. And when Christ's greatest enemies are the Pastors of his Churches, all things will be ordered and managed accordingly; and the faithful hated and abused. Though I must add, that it is not this cause alone, but many more concurring, to constitute a worldly, wicked mind, which use to procure these effects.

XXXII. And by false and vain learning, contentions are bred and propagated in the churches. None are instruments so apt, and none have been so successful, as all Church History recordeth, and the voluminous contentions of many such learned parties testify.

XXXIII. And this is an increasing malady; for new books are yearly written, containing the said arbitrary notions of the several authors. And whereas real and organical learning should be orderly and conjunctly propagated, and *things* studied for themselves, and *words* for *things*, the systems of arts and sciences grow more and more corrupted, our logics are too full of unapt notions, our metaphysics are a mere confused mixture of pneumatology and logic; and what part hath totally escaped?

XXXIV. And the number of such books doth grow so great that they become a great impediment and snare; and how many years' precious time must be lost, to know what men say, and who saith amiss, or how they differ!

XXXV. And the great diversity of writers and sects increaseth the danger and trouble, especially in physics; by that time a man hath well studied the several sects, the Epicureans and Somatists, the Cartesians, with the by-parties,

(Regius, Berigardus, &c.) the Platonists, the Peripatetics, the Hermetics, Lullius, Patricius, Telesius, Campanella, White, Digby, Glisson, and other novelists; and hath read the most learned improvers of the more current sort of philosophy, (Scheggius, Wendeline, Sennertus, Hoffman, Honorat. Faber, Got, &c.) how much of his life will be thus spent! And perhaps he will be as far to seek, in all points saving those common evident certainties, which he might have learned more cheaply in a shorter time, than he was before he read them. And will wish that Antonine, Epictetus, or Plutarch had served instead of the greater part of them. And will perceive that physics are much fuller of uncertainties, and more empty of satisfying usefulness than morality, and true theology.

XXXVI. By such false methods and notions men are often led to utter scepticism, and when they have found out their own errors, they are apt to suspect all the substance of sciences to be error. And he speeds well that cometh but with Sanchez to a 'nihil scitur,' and he better that cometh but with Cornelius Agrippa, to write vanity and vexation upon all the sciences: for many come to infidelity itself, and some to atheism; and, as Dr. Thomas Jackson noteth, by such distrust of men and human things, are tempted into a distrust or unbelief of Christ; or perhaps with Hobbes grow to cry down all learning besides their own, which is worse than the worst that they decry.

XXXVII. And by all this, Princes and States are tempted to hate learning itself, and banish it as a pernicious thing: as the case of the Turkish, Muscovian, and some other empires testify.

All this I have said, not to dishonour true learning, which I would promote with all my power; but to shew the corruption and vanity of that philosophy and human false learning, which Paul and the ancient writers did decry; and why the Council of Carthage forbade the reading of the Gentiles' books, and reproached Apollinarius, and other heretics for their Gentile learning.

Of the great uncertainty of our physics and metaphysics, almost all the chief authors themselves make free confessions. See Suarez, *Metaph. disp.* 35, pp. 219. 221. 237; Fromondus de *Anim.* p. 63; Gassendus often; and who not.

Pious Bonaventure hath written a tract "de Reductione

Artium ad Theologiam ;” and another “ de non frequentandis quæstionibus ;” “ Cornel. Agrippa de Vanitate Scientiarum,” is well worth the reading beforehand to prevent men’s loss of time.

CHAP. IV.

III. *What are the Certainties that must be known and held fast, and why.*

It is none of the apostle’s meaning that men should be mere sceptics : nor am I seconding Sanchez’s ‘ nihil scitur,’ unless you take science for adequate science, or in a transcendent notion, as it signifieth that which is proper to another world, and therefore may be denied of this. He can neither play the part of a Christian or of a man, who doubts of all things, and is assuredly confident of nothing.

That our discourse of this may be orderly and edifying, it is of great use that I first help you rightly to understand what *certainty* is. The word is ambiguous, and sometimes is applied to the object, and sometimes to the act and agent. The former is called *objective certainty* ; the latter *subjective certainty*.

The Objective is either certainty of the thing, or certainty of evidence, by which the thing is discernible or perceptible to us ; and this either sensible evidence, or rational ; and the latter is either self-evidence of principles, or derived evidence of consequences.

Subjective certainty is also either considered in the nature of it, or in the degree ; and as to the nature it is either the senses’ certainty, or the intellects’ ; and this is either of incomplex objects, or complex : the first is either of sensible objects, or purely spiritual : the second of principles, or of conclusions. Of all these there are certainty.

The degrees are these : It being first supposed that no human apprehension here is absolutely perfect ; and therefore all our certainties subjective are imperfect ; the word therefore signifieth not only a perfect apprehension, but it signifieth ‘ non falli,’ not to be deceived, and such an apprehension of the evidence as giveth us a just resolving and

quieting confidence. And so, 1. The due objects of sense, and, 2. The immediate acts of the soul itself, are certain in the first and highest degree. I know certainly what I see clearly, so far as I see it: and I know certainly that I think, and know, and will. The next degree of certainty is of rational principles, and the next of consequents.

It is likely in a scheme you will more easily understand it.

CERTAINTY being an ambiguous word, is either,

I. *Objective*: which is,

- I. Of *Being* of the Thing; which is nothing but *Physical Verity*.
- II. Of Evidence; which makes Things *Perceptible*; and it is Evidence,
 - 1. Sensible; viz.
 - 1. To the External Senses.
 - 2. To the Internal Senses.
 - 2. Intelligible,
 - 1. Of the Being of Things, viz.
 - 1. *Quod sint*,
 - 2. *Quid sint*,
 - 3. *Qualia sint*,
 - 2. Of Complex Verity, which is,
 - 1. Things sensed and imagined; as colours, light, heat, &c.
 - 2. The Acts of Intellection and Will.

II. *Subjective Certainty*; by which I am certain of the Object; Considerable,

- I. In its Nature; viz. Certainty.
 - 1. Of Sense,
 - 1. Of the Outward Senses, when they are not deceived.
 - 2. Of the Inward Sense and Imagination.
 - 2. Of the Intellect; which is,
 - 1. Of Beings,
 - 1. Sensed and imagined.
 - 2. Of the Acts of the Soul.
 - 2. Of the Complex Verities.
 - 1. *Quod sint*.
 - 2. *Quid sint*.
 - 3. *Qualia sint*.

N. *Qu.* Whether there be not a third sort of *Certainty* both *Objective* and *Subjective*; viz. *Goodness* not sensible, *Certainty* apprehended by the Intellectual Soul, not only *sub ratione Veri*, sed *et Boni*? And whether the *Will* by its *Natural Gust* have not a Complacential *Perception* of it as well as the Intellect? (*Vid. Pemble Vindic. Grot.*)

II. In the Degrees of Certainty; which are the Order following:

- 1. Sense perceiving the *Object* and *itself*, is the first perceiver; and hereof the surest.
- 2. Imagination receiving from Sense, hath more requisites to its Certainty.
- 3. Intellectual about Things sensible, hath yet more requisites to its Certainty; viz. 1. That the Object be true; 2. The Evidence sensible; 3. That the Sense be sound, and the Medium and other Conditions of Sense be just; 4. That the Imagination be not corrupt; 5. That the Intellect itself be sound.
- 4. But Intellection about *itself* and *Volition* hath the highest Certainty.
- 5. We are surer of the *Quod*, than the *Quid* and *Quale*; as that *we Think*, than *What* and *How*.
- 6. We are more certain of self-evident Principles than the Consequences.
- 7. Consequences have various degrees of Evidence and Certainty.

A few propositions may further help your understandings.

I. All things in the world have their certainty physical of being; that is, it is a certainty, or a truth that this thing is.

II. The thing which is most commonly called *objective certainty*, is such a degree of perceptibility or evidence as may aptly satisfy the doubting intellect.

III. Evidence is called infallible; 1. When he that receiveth it is never deceived; and so all truth is infallible truth; for he is not deceived who believeth it: 2. Or when a man cannot err about it. And there is no such evidence in the world, unless you suppose all things else agreeable.

IV. The perception is called infallible, 1. Either 'quia non falsa,' because it is not deceived: and so every man is infallible in every thing which he truly perceiveth: 2. Or because it cannot or will not err. And so absolute infallibility is proper to God; but 'secundum quid' in certain cases, upon certain objects, with certain conditions, all sound men's senses and intellects are infallible.

V. Certainty of evidence consisteth in such a position of the thing evident, as maketh it an object perceptible to the faculty perceiving; to which many conditions are required. As, 1. That the thing itself have such intrinsic qualifications, as make it fit to be an object. 2. That it have the due intrinsic conditions concomitant.

1. To the nature of an object of perception it is necessary, 1. That it be a thing which in its nature is within the reach of the perceiving faculty; and not (as spirits are to sense) so above us, or alien to us, as to be out of the orb of our perception. 2. That they have a perceptible quantity, magnitude or degree. 3. That, if it be an incomplex term and object, and not an universal of the highest notion, it be 'hoc aliquid,' and have its proper individuation. 4. That it have some special distinct conformity to the distinct perceiving faculty. In sum, that it be 'Ens, unum, verum, bonum, vel hisce contraria reductive et per accidens cognita.'

2. To the extrinsic conditions, it is necessary, 1. That the object have a due site or position. 2. And a due distance; neither too near nor too far off. 3. And that it have a due medium, fitted to it and the faculty. 4. And that it have a due abode or stay, and be not like a bullet out of a gun, imperceptible through the celerity of its motion.

VI. That the perception of sense be certain, it is neces-

sary, 1. That the organ be sound, in such a measure as that no prevalent distemper undisturb it. 2. That it be not oppressed by any disturbing adjunct. 3. That the sensitive soul do operate on and by these organs; for else its alienation will leave the organ useless: as some intense meditations make us not hear the clock. 4. That it be the due sense and organ which meeteth with the object; as sounds with the ear, light with the eye, &c., besides the aforesaid necessities.

VII. Common *notitiæ* or *principles* are not so called, because men are born with the actual knowledge of them; but because they are truths, which man's mind is naturally so disposed to receive as that upon the first exercises of sense and reason, some of them are understood, without any other human teacher.

VIII. Even self-evident principles are not equal, but some of them are more, and some less evident; and therefore some are sooner, and some later known. And some of them are more commonly known than others.

IX. The self-evidence of these principles ariseth from the very nature of the intellect which inclineth to truth, and the nature of the will which essentially inclineth to good, and the nature and posture of the objects, which are Truth and Goodness in the most evident position, compared together, or conjunct; some call it instinct.

X. It is not necessary to the certainty of a principle, that it be commonly known of all or most. For intellects have great variety of capacities, excitation, helps, improvements, and even principles have various degrees of evidence, and appearances to men.

XI. Man's mind is so conscious of its own darkness and imperfections, that it is distrustful of its own inferences, unless they be very near and clear. When by a long series of *ergos* any thing is far fetched, the mind is afraid there may be some unperceived error.

XII. He therefore that holdeth a true principle as such, and at once a false inference which contradicteth it, is to be supposed to hold the principle first and fastest, and that if he saw the contradiction he would let go the consequent, and not the principle.

XIII. He that denieth the certainty of sense, imagination, and intellective perception of things sensed as such,

doth make it impossible to have any certainty of science or faith, about those same objects but by miracle. And therefore the Papists denying and renouncing all these (sense, imagination and intellective perception,) when they say, that there is no bread or wine in the Sacrament, do make their pretended contrary faith impossible. For we are men before we are Christians, and we have sense and intellects before we have faith, and as there is no Christianity but on supposition of humanity, so there is no faith, but on supposition of sense and understanding. How know you that here is no bread and wine? Is it because Scripture or Councils say so? How know you that; by hearing or reading? But how know you that ever you did hear or read, or see a book or man; by sense or no way? If sense be infallible here, why not there? You will say that sense may be fallible in one case, and not in others. I answer, either you prove it infallible from nature, even by sense and intellective perception of and by sense, or else by supernatural revelation. If only by this revelation, how know you that revelation? How know you that ever you heard, read or saw any thing which you call revelation? If by a former revelation, I ask you the same question 'in infinitum.' But if you know the certainty of sense by sense and intellective perception, then where there is the same evidence and perception, there is the same certainty. But here is as full evidence and perception as any other object can have. 1. We see bread and wine. 2. We taste it. 3. We smell the wine. 4. We hear it poured out. 5. We feel it. 6. We find the effects of it; it refresheth and nourisheth as other bread and wine. 7. It doth so by any other creature as well as by man. 8. It corrupteth. 9. It becometh true flesh and blood in us, and a part of our bodies; even in the worst: yea, part of the body of a mouse or dog. 10. It is possible for a mouse or dog to live only upon consecrated bread and wine. Is his body then nothing but Christ? 11. In all this perception the objects are not rare, but commonly exhibited in all ages; they have all the conditions that other sensible, evident objects have, as to sight, magnitude, distance, medium. 12. And it is not one or two, but all men in the world of the soundest senses, who sense and perceive them to be bread and wine. So that here is as full evidence as the words which you read or hear can have to ascertain us.

Object. 'But if God deny sense in this case and not in others, we must believe sense in others and not in this.'

Answ. But again I ask you, How you know that God biddeth or forbiddeth you any thing, if sense be not first to be believed?

Object. 'But is it not possible for sense to be deceived? Cannot God do it?'

Answ. 1. It is possible for sense to be annihilated, and made no sense; and it is possible that the faculty, or organ, or medium, or object be depraved, or want its due conditions, and so to be deceived. But to retain all these due conditions, and yet to be deceived is a contradiction; for then it is not the same thing; it is not that which we call now formally sense and intellect, or sensation and intellection. And contradictions are not things for Omnipotency to be tried about. God can make a man to be no intellectual creature; but thereby he maketh him no man: for to be a man, and not intellectual, is a contradiction. And so it is to be men, and yet to have no sense nor intellect, that can truly perceive sensible objects as before qualified: therefore they unman all the world, on pretext of asserting the power of God.

2. But suppose that all sense be fallible, and intellection of things sensible, yet it is the first and only entrance of all things sensible into the mind or knowledge of man; and therefore we must take it as God hath given it us, for we can have no surer: no sensible thing is in the intellect which was not first in the sense. Whether my eyes and ears and taste be fallible or not, I am sure I have no other way to perceive their objects; but by them I must take them and use them as they are. All the words and definitions in the world will not give any man without sensation, a true conception of a sensible object.

3. Such absurd suppositions therefore are not to be put, What if God should tell you by his Word, that all the senses of all men are deceived, in one thing, or in all things? would you not believe him? It is not to be supposed that God will give us all our senses and intellective perception by them, to be our discerners of things sensible, and then bid us not believe them, for they are false; unless he told us, that all our perceptions are false; and our whole life is but deceit. And I further answer, if God tell me so, it must

be by some word or writing of man or angel, or himself; and how should I know that word, but by my sense?

But the great answer which seemeth to satisfy Bellarmine and the rest, is, that sense is no judge of substances, but of accidents only; therefore it is not deceived.

But, 1. It is false, that sense perceiveth not substances: It is not only colour, quantity, figure, which I see; nor only roughness and smoothness which I feel; nor only sweetness which I taste; but it is a coloured, extended, figured substance which I see; a rough or smooth substance which I feel, and a sweet substance which I taste: and if the accident were the only primary object, the substance is the secondary and certain. Else no one ever saw a man, a tree, a bird, a plant, the earth, a book, or any substance; but only the colour, quantity or figure of them. No man ever felt or touched or felt a body, but only the accidents of it.

2. And I pray you, tell me how substances come to the understanding, if they were never in the sense: prove a substance without sensation as a medium, if you can. Do you perceive any substances intellectually or not? If not, why pretend you that there are any? If yea, it must be either as conclusions, or as intellectual principles, (which are both logical complex objects, and therefore not substances) or as the immediate immaterial objects of intellection (which is only the soul's own acts), or what is by analogy gathered from them; or else the objects of sense itself. It can be none of the former; therefore it must be the latter: and how can the understanding find that in sense which was never there?

If it be said that it is there but by accidents; I answer, 1. That is false, though said by many: I do as immediately touch substance as accidents, though not substance without the accidents. 2. Whether it be there by the meditation of the accidents, or immediately itself, we are sure that the understanding no otherwise receiveth it, than as the sense transmitteth it; we must know material substance as it is sensed, or not at all.

We see then what a pass this Roman religion bringeth the world to. That they may be Christians, they must believe (and swear by the Trent oath) that they are not men; and that they may have faith, they must renounce their senses, and that they may be sure God's word is true, (and

the church's decrees,) they must be sure that they are sure of nothing; and how then are they sure of that? And while they subvert all the order of nature in the world, they pretend that God can do it, and therefore we are to believe that he doth it, merely because these doctors can call themselves the Church, and then can so expound the Scripture. When it is God's settled order in nature, that a man as an animal shall have sense to perceive things sensibly by, and as a man shall have understanding to receive from the imagination and sense these objects, we must now suppose that God hath quite overturned the course of nature, either by making sense no sense, or the object no object, or the medium no fit medium; and yet this is to be believed by men that have nothing but the same senses to tell their understandings that it is written or spoken, or that there is a man in the world.

Suppose we grant it to be no contradiction, and therefore a thing that God can do, no man can question but that he must do it as a miracle, by altering and overturning nature's course. And shall we feign, 1. Miracles to become ordinary things, through all the churches in the world, and every day in the week, or every hour to be done? 2. And miracles to be made a standing church ordinance? 3. And every one in the church, even all the wicked, and every mouse that eateth the host, to be partaker of a miracle? 4. Yea, that every such man and mouse, may all the week long live on a continued miracle, while accidents without substance do nourish them, and turn to flesh and blood? 5. And all this ordinary course of miracles to be wrought at the will of every priest, be he never so ignorant or wicked a man? 6. And yet the same words spoken by the holiest of the Protestant pastors will not do the miracle. 7. But if a Papist priest should be unduly ordained, or forge his own Orders, sobeit the church think him truly ordained, he can do the miracle. All this must be believed.

And the plague of all is, all men must be burnt as heretics, or exterminated, that cannot believe all this, and disbelieve their senses. And yet worse, all temporal lords must be dispossessed of their dominions, who will suffer any such to live therein, and not exterminate them.

An epicure and a sensual infidel, who think man is but of the same species of brutes, do but unman us, and leave us the honour of being animals or brutes. But the Papists do

not leave us this much, but must reduce us to a lower order, and teach us to deny our sense itself; and torment and kill them that will not do it.

And what is it that must persuade us to all this? Why merely a 'hoc est corpus meum,' as expounded by the Councils of Lateran and Trent. And is not David's "I am a worm and no man," (Psal. xxii. 6,) as plain; yea, and that in a prophecy of Christ? Must we believe therefore that neither David nor Christ was a man, but a worm? Is not "I am the Vine, and ye are the branches," (John xv. 1, 2,) as plain? Must sense be renounced and ordinary miracles believed for such words as these?

And doth not Paul call it bread (1. Cor. xi.) after consecration three times in the three next verses? And is not he as good an expositor of Christ's words as the Council of Trent?

And when did God work miracles which were mere objects of belief against sense? Miracles were done as sensible things, thereby to confirm faith, and that which no sense perceived was not taken for a miracle.

To conclude, when the apostle saith, that "flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God," (plainly speaking of them formally as now called, and not as they signify sin,) and consequently that Christ's body is now in heaven a spiritual body, and not formally flesh and blood, yet must the bread and wine be turned into his flesh and blood on earth, when he hath none in heaven?

And by their doctrine no baker nor vintner is secured, but that a priest may come into his shop or cellar, and turn all the bread and wine in it, into Christ's body and blood: yea, the whole city or garrison may thus be deprived of their bread and wine, if the priest intend it; and yet it shall not be so in the Sacrament itself, if the priest intend it not. But I have staid too long in this.

XIV. Next to the act of cogitation and volitation itself, and to the most certain objects of sense, there is nothing in all the world so certain, that is, so evident to the intellect, as the being of God: he being that to the mind which the sun is to the eye, most certainly known, though little of him be known, and no creature comprehend him.

XV. That God is true, is part of our knowing him to be perfect, and to be God; and therefore is most certain.

XVI. That man is made by God and for God ; that we owe him all our love, obedience and praise, that we have all from him, and should please him in the use of all, with many such like, are ‘notitiæ communes,’ certain verities, received by nature, some as principles, and some as such evident conclusions as are not to be doubted of.

XVII. That the Scripture is the word of God, is a certain truth, not sensible, nor a natural principle ; but an evident conclusion drawn from that seal or testimony of the Spirit, antecedent, concomitant, impressed and consequent ; which I have often opened in other treatises.

XVIII. That the Scripture is true, is a certain conclusion drawn from the two last-mentioned premises, viz. That God is true, ‘verax,’ and that the Scripture is his word.

XIX. Those doctrines or sayings which are parts of Scripture evidently perceived so to be by sense and intellectual perception, are known to be true, by the same certainty as the Scripture in general is known to be true.

XX. To conclude then, there are two sorts of certain verities in Theology. 1. Natural principles with their certain consequents. 2. Scripture in general, with all those assertions which are certainly known to be parts. And all the rest are to be numbered with uncertainties, except prophetic certainty of inspiration, which I pass by.

CHAP. V.

IV. *Of the several Degrees of Certainty.*

1. As certainty is taken for truth of being, it admitteth of no degrees : all that is true, is equally true.

2. But certainty of evidence hath various degrees : none doubteth but there are various degrees of evidence : all the doubt is whether any but the highest may be called certainty.

And here let the reader first remember that the question is but ‘de nomine,’ of the name, and not the thing. And next, the evidence is called certain, because it is certifying aptitudinally. It is apt to certify us.

3. And then the question will be devolved to subjective

certainty, whether it have various degrees. For if it have so, then the evidence must be said to have so, because it is denominated respectively from the apprehensive certainty.

And here 'de re' it must be taken as agreed, 1. That certainty is a certain degree of apprehension. 2. That there are various degrees of apprehension. 3. That no man on earth hath a perfect intellectual apprehension, at least, of things moral and spiritual; for his apprehension, may be still increased, and those in heaven have more perfect than we.

4. That there are some degrees so low and doubtful, as are not fit to be called certainty.

5. That even these lowest degrees with the greatest doubting, are yet often true apprehensions; and whenever they are true they are infallible, that is, not deceived: therefore this infallibility, which is but, not to be deceived, is indeed one sort of certainty, which is so denominated relatively from the natural truth or certainty of the object; but it is not this sort of certainty which we inquire after.

6. Therefore it followeth that this subjective certainty, containeth this infallible truth of perception, and addeth a degree which consisteth in the satisfaction of the mind.

7. But if the mind should be never so confident and satisfied of a falsehood, this deserveth not the name of certainty, because it includeth not truth. For it is a certain perception of truth which we speak of; and confident erring is not certainty of the truth.

8. As therefore the degrees of doubting are variously overcome, so there must needs be various degrees of certainty.

9. When doubting is so far overcome, as that the mind doth find rest and satisfaction in the truth, it may be called certainty. But when doubting is either prevalent, and so troublesome as to leave us wavering, it is not called certainty.

10. It is not the forgetting or neglect of a difficulty or doubt, nor yet the will's rejecting it, which is properly called certainty. This quieteth the mind indeed, but not by the way of ascertaining evidence. Therefore ignorant people that stumble upon a truth by chance with confidence, are not therefore certain of it. And those that take it upon trust from a priest or their parents, or good people's opinion, are not therefore certain of it. Nor they that say as some

Papists, 'Faith hath not evidence, but is a voluntary reception of the Church's testimony, and meritorious, because it hath not evidence; therefore though I see no cogent evidence, I will believe, because it is my duty.' Whether this man's faith may be saving or no, I will not now dispute; but certainly it is no certainty of apprehension. He is not certain of what he so believeth. This is but to cast away the doubt or difficulty, and not at all by certainty to overcome it.

11. When a man hath attained a satisfying degree of perception, he is capable still of clearer perception. Even as when in the heating of water, after all the sensible cold is gone, the water may grow hotter and hotter still. So after all sensible doubting is gone, the perception may grow clearer still.

12. But still the objective certainty is the same; that is, there is that evidence in the object which is 'in suo genere' sufficient to notify the thing to a prepared mind.

13. But this sufficiency is a respective proportion; and therefore, as it respecteth man's mind in common, it supposeth that by due means and helps, and industry, the mind may be brought certainly to discern this evidence. But if you denominate the sufficiency of the evidence, from its respect to the present disposition of men's minds, so it is almost as various as men's minds are. For 'recipitur ad modum recipientis;' and that is a certifying, sufficient evidence of truth, to one man, which to a thousand others is not so much as an evidence of probability. Therefore mediate and immediate sufficiency and certainty of evidence, must be distinguished.

From all this I may infer, 1. That though God be the original and end of all verities, and is ever the first 'in ordine essendi et efficiendi,' and so 'à Jove princàpium, in methodo syntheticâ;' yet he is not the 'primum notum,' the first known, 'in ordine cognoscendi,' nor the beginning 'in methodo inquisitivâ' (though in such analytical methods as begin at the ultimate end, he is also the first). Though all truth and evidence be from God, yet two things are more evident to man than God is, and but two: viz. The present objects of sense; and our own internal acts, of intellective cogitation and volition. And these being supposed, the being of God is the third evident certainty in the world.

2. If it be no disparagement to God himself, that he is less certainly known of us, than sensibles, and our internal acts, 'de esse,' it is then no disparagement to the Scripture, and supernatural truths, that they are less certainly known; seeing they have not so clear evidence as the being of God hath.

3. The certainty of the Scripture truths is mixed of almost all other kinds of certainty conjunct. 1. By sense and intellectual perception of things sensed, the hearers and seers of Christ and his apostles, knew the words and miracles. 2. By the same sense we know what is written in the Bible, and in Church History concerning it, and the attesting matters of fact; and also what our teachers say of it. 3. By certain intellectual inference I know that this history of the words and fact is true. 4. By intellection of a natural principle I know that God is true. 5. By inference I know that all his word is true. 6. By sense I know (intellectually receiving it by sense) that this or that is written in the Bible, and part of that Word. 7. By further inference therefore I know that it is true. 8. By intuitive knowledge, I am certain that I have the love of God, and heavenly desires, and a love of holiness, and hatred of sin, &c. 9. By certain inference I know that this is the special work of the Spirit of Christ by his Gospel doctrine. 10. By experience I find the predictions of this Word fulfilled. 11. Lastly, By inspiration the prophets and apostles knew it to be of God. And our certain belief ariseth from divers of these, and not from any one alone.

4. There are two extremes here to be avoided, and both held by some, not seeing how they contradict themselves.

I. Of them that say that faith hath no evidence, but the merit of it lieth in that we believe without evidence. Those that understand what they say, when they use these words, mean that things evident to sense, as such, that is, incomplex sensible objects are not the objects of faith, "We live by faith and not by sight." God is not visible: heaven and its glory, angels and perfected spirits are not visible. Future events, Christ's coming, the resurrection, judgment, are not yet visible: it doth not yet appear (that is, to sense) what we shall be: our life is hid (from our own and others' senses) with Christ in God. We see not Christ when we rejoice in him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

(1 Pet. i. 8.) Thus faith is the evidence of things not seen, or evident to sight. (Heb. xi. 1.) But ignorant persons have turned all to another sense; as if the objects of faith had no ascertaining intellectual evidence: when as it is impossible for man's mind to understand and believe any thing to be true, without perceiving evidence of its truth; as it is for the eye to see without light. As Richard Hooker saith in his Ecclesiastical Polity, 'Let men say what they will, men can truly believe no further than they perceive evidence.' It is a natural impossibility; for evidence is nothing but the perceptibility of the truth: and can we perceive that which is not perceptible?

It is true, that evidence from Divine revelation is often without any evidence 'ex natura rei:' but it may be nevertheless a fuller and more satisfying evidence.

Some say there is evidence of credibility, but not of certainty. Not of natural certainty indeed. But in Divine revelations (though not in human) evidence of credibility is evidence of certainty, because we are certain that God cannot lie.

And to say, I will believe, though without evidence of truth, is a contradiction or hypocritical self-deceit; for your will believeth not: and your understanding receiveth no truth but upon evidence that it is truth. It acteth of itself 'per modum naturæ,' necessarily further than it is 'sub imperio voluntatis;' and the will ruleth it not despotically; nor at all 'quoad specificationem,' but only 'quoad exercitium.' All therefore that your will can do (which maketh faith a moral virtue), is to be free from those vicious habits and acts in itself which may hinder faith, and to have those holy dispositions and acts in itself which may help the understanding to do its proper office, which is to believe evident truth on the testimony of the revealer, because his testimony is sufficient evidence. The true meaning of a good Christian, when he saith I *will believe*, is, I am truly willing to believe, and a perverse will shall not hinder me, and I will not think of suggestions to the contrary. But the meaning of the formal hypocrite when he saith, I will believe, is, I will cast away all doubtful thoughts out of my mind, and I will be as careless as if I did believe, or I will believe the priest or my party, and call it a believing God. Evidence is an essentiating part of the intellect's act. As there is no act without an object, so there is no object 'sub formali

ratione objecti,' without evidence. Even as there is no sight but of an illustrated object, that is, a visible object.

II. The other extreme (of some of the same men) is, that yet faith is not true and certain if it have any doubtfulness with it. Strange! that these men can only see what is invisible; believe what is inevident as to its truth, that is, incredible, but also believe past all doubting, and think that the weakest true believer doth so too! Certainly there are various degrees of faith in the sincere: all have not the same strength! Christ rebuketh Peter in his fears, and his disciples all at other times, for their little faith. "When Peter's faith failed not, it staggered, which Abraham's did not: "Lord, increase our faith," and "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," were prayers approved by Christ, I will call a prevalent belief which can lay down life and all this world for Christ and the hopes of heaven, by the name of certainty, which hath various degrees. But if they differ 'de nomine,' and will call nothing certainty but the highest degree, they must needs yet grant that there is true, saving faith, that reacheth to no certainty in their sense. Yea, no man on earth then attaineth to such a certainty, because that every man's faith is imperfect.

To conclude. Though all Scripture in itself (that is indeed the true canon) be equally true, yet all is not equally certain to us, as not having equal evidence that it is God's word. But of that in the next Chapter of the Uncertainties.

CHAP. VI.

V. *What are the unknown Things, and Uncertainties which we must not pretend a certain knowledge of.*

SOMEWHAT of this is said already, Chap. iii. But I am here to come to more particular instances of it. But because that an enumeration would be a great volume of itself, I shall begin with the more general, that I may be excused in most of the rest; or mention only some particulars under them as we go.

I. A very great, if not the far greatest part of that part of philosophy called Physics, is uncertain (or certainly false) as it is delivered to us in any methodist that I have yet seen;

whether Platonists, Peripatetics, Epicureans, (the Stoics have little, but what Seneca gives us, and Barlaam collecteth, I know not whence, as making up their ethics, and what in three or four ethical writers is also brought in on the by, and what Cicero reporteth of them) or in our novelists, Patricius, Telesius, Campanella, Thomas White, Digby, Cartesius, Gassendus, &c., except those whose modesty causeth them to say but little, and to avoid the uncertainties; or confess them to be uncertainties. To enumerate instances would be an unseasonable digression. Gassendus is large in his confessions of uncertainties. I think not his brother Hobbes, and his second Spinoza worth the naming. Nor the Paracelsians and Helmontians as giving us a new philosophy, but only as adding to the old. There needs no other testimony of uncertainty to a man that hath not studied the points himself, than their lamentable difference, and confutation of each other, in so many things, even in the great principles of the science.

Yet here no doubt, there are certainties, innumerable certainties, such as I have before described. We know something certainly of many things, even of all sensible objects. But we know nothing perfectly and comprehensively; not a worm, not a leaf, not a stone, or a sand, not the pen, ink or paper which we write with; not the hand that writeth, nor the smallest particle of our bodies; not a hair, or the least accident. In every thing nearest us, or in the world, the uncertainties and 'incognita' are far more than that which we certainly know.

II. If I should enumerate to you the many uncertainties in our common metaphysics, (yea, about the being of the science) and our common logic, &c., it would seem unsuitable to a theological discourse. And yet it would not be unuseful, among such theologians as the schoolmen, who resolve more of their doubts by Aristotle than by the Holy Scriptures; doubtless, as Aristotle's predicaments are not fitted to the kinds of beings, so many of his distributions and orders, yea, and precepts are arbitrary. And as he left room and reason for the dissent of such as Taurellus, Carpenter, Jacchæus, Gorkæus, Ritchel, and abundance more, so have they also for men's dissent from them. Even Ramus hath more adversaries than followers. Gassendus goeth the right way, by suiting 'verba rebus,' if he had hit righter

on the nature of things themselves. Most novel philosophers are fain to make new grammars and new logics, for words and notions, to fit their new conceptions, as Campanella, and the Paracelsians, Helmontians, (and if you will name the Behmenists, Rosicrucians, Weigelians, &c.) Lullius thought he made the most accurate art of notions; and he did indeed attempt to fit words to things: but he hath missed of a true accomplishment of his design, for want of a true method of physics in his mind, to fit his words to. As Cornelius Agrippa, who is one of his chief commentators, yet freely confesseth in his “lib. de Vanitate Scientiarum,” which now I think of, I will say no more of this, but desire the reader to peruse that laudable book, and with it to read Sanchez’s “Nihil Scitur,” to see uncertainty detected, so he will not be led by it too far into scepticism. As also Mr. Glanville’s “Sceptis Scientifica.”

As for the lamentable uncertainties in medicine, the poor world payeth for it. Anatomy as being by ocular inspection hath had the best improvement; and yet what a multitude of uncertainties remain! Many thousand years have millions yearly died of fevers, and the medicating them is a great part of the physician’s work; and yet I know not that ever I knew the man that certainly knew what a fever is. I crave the pardon of the masters of this noble art for saying it; it is by dear experience that I have learned how little physicians know; having passed through the trial of above thirty of them on my own body long ago; merely induced by a conceit that they knew more than they did; and most that I got was but the ruin of my own body, and this advice to leave to others:—*Highly value those few excellent men, who have quick and deep conjecturing apprehensions, great reading and greater experience, and sober, careful, deliberating minds, that had rather do too little than too much: but use them in a due conjunction with your own experience of yourself. But for the rest, how learned soever, whose heads are dull, or temper precipitant, or apprehensions hasty or superficial, or reading small, especially that are young, or of small experience, love and honour them, but use them as little as you can, and that only as you will use an honest, ignorant divine, whom you*

^d See a book written long since this, called “the Samaritan,” of excellent use, by Mr. Jones of Suffolk.

will gladly hear upon the certain catechistical principles, but love not to hear him meddle with controversies. So use these men in common, easy cases, if necessary, and yet there the less the better, lest they hinder nature that would cure the disease. If you dislike my counsel, you may be shortly past blaming it; for though their successes have tongues, their miscarriages are mostly silent in the grave. O how much goeth to make an able physician! but enough of such instances.

III. But though errors in politics the world payeth yet much dearer for, I must not be too bold in talking here. But I will confess that here the uncertainties are almost all in the applicatory part, and through the incapacity of the minds of men: for the truth is, the main principles of policy are part of the Divine law, and of true morality, and in themselves are plain, and of a satisfying certainty, could you but get men's heads and hearts into a fitness duly to consider and receive them.

IV. But to come nearer to our own profession, there is much uncertainty in those theological conclusions, which are built on such premises, where any one of these physical, metaphysical, or logical uncertainties are a part; yea, though it be couched in the narrowest room, even in one ambiguous term of art, and scarcely discerned by any but accurate observers. With great pomp and confidence many proceed to their *ergos*, when the detection of the fraud not only of an uncertain medium, but of one ambiguous syllable, will mar all. And the conclusion can be no stronger or surer, than the more weak and doubtful of the premises.

V. When the subject is of small and abstruse parts, far from the principles and fundamentals of the matter, usually the conclusions are uncertain. Nature in all matters beginneth with some few great and master parts, like the great boughs or limbs of the tree, or the great trunks and master vessels in our bodies; and from thence spring branches, which are innumerable and small: and it is so in all sciences, and in theology itself. The great, essential and chief integral parts are few, and easily discerned: but two grand impediments hinder us from a certain knowledge in the rest: one is the great number of particles, where the understanding is lost, and, as they say, seeketh a needle in a bottle of

hay, or a leaf in a wood; and the other is the littleness of the thing, which maketh it undiscernible to any but accurate and studious minds. And therefore how much soever men that trade in little things, may boast of the sublimity of them, and their own subtlety, their perceptions usually are accompanied with uncertainty; though in some cases an uncertain knowledge, known to be so, is better than none.

VI. Yea, though the matters themselves may be more bulky, yet if in knowing and proving them, we must go through a great number of syllogisms and inferences, usually the conclusion is very uncertain to us, whatever it may be to an extraordinary accurate and prepared mind. For 1. We shall be still jealous (or may be) lest so many terms and mediums, some of them should be fallacious and insufficient, and weaken all. And we are so conscious of our own weakness, and liability to forget, oversee or be mistaken, that we shall or may still fear lest we have missed it, and be overseen in something, in so long a course and series of arguings.

VII. Those parts of history which depend merely on the credit of men's wisdom and honesty, and are so merely of human faith, must needs be uncertain. For the conclusion can be no surer than the premises. All men as such are liars, that is, untrusty, or such as possibly may deceive. 1. They may be deceived themselves. 2. And they may deceive others where they are not themselves deceived. Every man hath some passion, some ignorance, some error, some selfish interest, and some vice. This age, if we never had known another instance, is a sad proof of this, that tears are fitter than words to express it. Most confident reporters totally differ about the most notorious matters of fact. I must not name them, but I pity strangers and posterity. If it come especially to the characterising of others, how ordinarily do men speak as they are affected? And they are affected as self-interest and passion leadeth them; with Cochläeus, Bolseck, and such others, what villains were Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, &c. with their most faithful acquaintance; what good and holy men, saving Luther's animosity! If the Inquisitors torment Protestants, or burn them, is it not necessary that they call them by such odious names as may justify their fact?

If they banish and silence faithful, holy, able ministers, they must accuse them of some villanies which may make them seem worthy of the punishment and unworthy to preach the Gospel of Christ! What different characters did Constantius and Valens, and their party on one side, and Athanasius, and the Orthodox on the other side, give of one another! What different characters were given of Chrysostom! How differently do Hunnerichus and Gensericus on one side, and Victor Uticensis, and other historians on the other side, describe the bishops and Christians of Africa that then suffered! They were traitors and rebels, and rogues, and enemies to the king, and heretics to Hunnerichus: but to others, they were holy, blameless men; and those were tyrants and heretics that persecuted them. What difference between the histories of the orthodox, and that of Philostorgius, and Sondius! What different characters do Eusebius and Eunapius give of Constantine! And Eunapius and Hilary, &c. give of Julian. What different characters are given of Hildebrand on one side, and of the emperors Henrys on the other side, by the many historians who followed the several parts! How false must a great number of the historians on one side be! I know that this doth not make all human faith and history useless: it hath its degree of credibility answerable to its use. And a wise man may much conjecture whom to believe. 1. A man that (like Thuanus) sheweth modesty and impartiality, even towards Dissenters. 2. A man that had no notable interest to bias him. 3. A man that manifesteth other ways true honesty and conscience. 4. Supposing that he was himself upon the place, and a competent witness.

But there is little or no credit to be given, 1. To a factious, furious railer. 2. To one that was a flatterer of great men, or depended on them for preferment, or lived in fear of speaking the truth, or that speaketh for the interest of his riches and honour in the world; or for his engaged personal reputation, or that hath espoused the interest of a sect or faction. 3. There is little credit to be given to any knave and wicked man. He that dare be drunk, and swear, and curse, and be a fornicator or covetous worldling, dare lie for his own ends. 4. Nor to the most honest man that taketh things by rumours, hearsay and uncertain reports, and knoweth not the things themselves.

But how shall strangers and posterity know when they read a history, whether the writer was an honest man or a knave; a man of credit, or an impudent liar? Both may be equal in confident asserting, and in the plausibility of the narrative. Mere human belief therefore must be uncertain.

From whence we see the pitiful case of the subjects of the King of Rome (for so I must rather call him than a bishop). Why doth a layman believe transubstantiation, or any other article of their faith? Because the Church saith it is God's word. What is the Church that saith so? It is a faction of the Pope, perhaps at Lateran, or forty of his prelates at the Conventicle of Trent. How doth he know that these men do not lie? Because God promised that Peter's faith should not fail, and the gates of hell should not prevail against the church; and the spirit should lead the apostles into all truth. But how shall he know that this Scripture is God's word? And also that it was not a total failing, rather than a failing in some degree, that Peter was by that promise freed from? Or that the Spirit was promised to these prelates which was promised to the apostles? Why, because these prelates say so! And how know they that they say true? Why, from Scripture, as before.

But let all the rest go. How knoweth the layman that ever the Church made such a decree? That ever the bishops of that council were lawfully called? That they truly represented all Christ's Church on earth? That this or that doctrine is the decree of a Council, or the sense of the Church indeed? Why, because the priest tells him so. But how knoweth he that this priest saith true, or a few more that the man speaketh with? there I leave you: I can answer no further; but must leave the credit of Scripture, council, and each particular doctrine, on the credit of that poor single priest, or the few that are his companions. The layman knoweth it no otherwise.

Quest. ' But is not the Scripture itself then shaken by this, seeing the history of the canon and incorruption of the books, &c. dependeth on the word of man?'

Ans. No; 1. I have elsewhere fully shewed how the Spirit hath sealed the substance of the Gospel. 2. And even the matters of fact are not of mere human faith; for mere human faith depends on the mere honesty of the

reporter : but this historical faith dependeth partly on God's attestation, and partly on natural proofs. 1. God did by miracles attest the reports of the apostles and first Churches. 2. The consent of all history since, that these are the same writings which the apostles wrote, hath a natural evidence above bare human faith. For I have elsewhere shewed, that there is a concurrence of human report, or a consent of history, which amounteth to a true natural evidence, the will having its nature and some necessary acts, and nothing but necessary ascertaining causes, could cause such concurrence. Such evidence we have that King James, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary, lived in England : that our statute-books contain the true laws, which those Kings and Parliaments made whom they are ascribed to. For they could not possibly rule the land, and overrule all men's interests, and be pleaded at the bar, &c., without contradiction and detection of the fraud, if they were forgeries : (though it is possible that some words in a statute-book may be misprinted.) There is in this a physical certainty in the consent of men, and it depends not as human faith, upon the honesty of the reporter ; but knaves and liars, have so consented, whose interests and occasions are cross, and so is it in the case of the history of the Scripture-books : which were read in all the churches through the world, every Lord's-day ; and contenders of various opinion, took their salvation to be concerned in them.

VIII. These things must needs be uncertain to any man, as to a particular faith or knowledge, which are more in number than he may possibly have a distinct understanding of ; or can examine their evidence whether they be certain or not. For instance, the Roman Faith containeth all the doctrinal decrees, and their religion also all the practical decrees of all the approved General Councils, that is, of so much as pleased the Pope, such power hath he to make his own religion. But these General Councils, added to all the Bible, with all the Apocrypha, are so large, that it is not possible for most men to know what is in them. So that if the question be whether this or that doctrine be the word of God, and the proof of the affirmative is, because it is decreed by a General Council, this must be uncertain to almost all men, who cannot tell whether it be so decreed or no : few priests themselves knowing all that is in those

Councils. So that if they knew that all that is in the Councils is God's word, they know never the more whether this or that doctrine, *e. g.* the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, &c. be the word of God. And if a heathen knew that all that is in the Bible is the word of God, and knew not a word what is in it, would this make him a Christian, or saint him?

You may object, 'That most Protestants also know not all that is in the Scripture.' *Ans.* True; nor any one. And therefore Protestants say not that all that is in the Scripture is necessary to be known to salvation; but they take their religion to have essential parts, and integral parts and accidents; and so they know how far each is necessary. But the Papists deride this distinction, and because all truths are equally true, they would make men believe that all are equally fundamental, or essential to Christianity. But this is only when they dispute against us; at other times they say otherwise themselves, when some other interest leads to it, and so cureth this impudency.

It were worthy the inquiry, whether a Papist take all the Bible to be God's word, and 'de fide,' or only so much of it as is contained particularly in the decrees of Councils? If the latter, then none of the Scripture was 'de fide,' or to be particularly believed for above three hundred years, before the Council of Nice. If the former, then is it as necessary to salvation to know how old Enoch was, as to know that Jesus Christ is our Saviour!

IX. Those things must needs be uncertain, which depend upon such a number of various circumstances as cannot be certainly known themselves. For instance, the common rule by which the Popish doctors do determine what particular knowledge and faith are necessary to salvation, is that 'so many truths are necessary as are sufficiently propounded to that person to be known and believed.' But no man living, learned nor unlearned, can tell what is necessary to the sufficiency of this proposal. Whether it be sufficient, if he be told it in his childhood only, and at what age? or if he be told it but once, or twice, or thrice, or how often? Whether by a parent or layman that cannot tell him what is in the Councils? Or by a priest that never read the Councils? And whether the variety of natural capacities, bodily temperaments, education and course of life

before, do not make as great variety of proportions to be necessary to the sufficiency of this proposal? And what mortal man can truly take the measure of them? And how can any man be certain what those points are which are necessary for him to believe?

X. Those things are uncertain which depend upon an uncertain author or authority. For instance, the Roman faith dependeth on the exposition of the Scriptures by the consent of the Fathers, and on the tradition of the Church, and the decrees of an authorised Council. And here is in all this, little but uncertainties.

1. It is utterly uncertain, who are to be taken for Fathers, and who not. Whether Origen, Tatianus, Arnobius, Lactantius, Tertullian, and many such, be Fathers or not. Whether such a man as Theophilus Alexandrinus, or Chrysostom was the Father, when they condemned each other. Whether such as are justly suspected of heresy, (as Eusebius) or such as the Romanists have cast suspicions on (as Lucifer Calaritanus called a heretic, Socrates, Sozomens, falsely called Navatians, Hilary, Arelatensis condemned by the Pope Leo, and Claud. Turonens. Rupertus Tuitiens. and such others). When the ancients renounced each others' communion, (as Martin did by Ithacius and Idacius and their Synod,) when they describe one another as stark knaves, as Socrates doth Theophil. Alexandrin. and Sulpitius Severus, doth Ithacius, which of them were the Fathers.

2. How shall we know certainly which are the true uncorrupted writings of these Fathers among so many forgeries and spurious scripts?

3. How shall it be known what exposition the Fathers consented on, when not one of a multitude, and but few in all have commented on any considerable parts of the Scripture, and those few so much often differ?

4. When in the doctrine of the Trinity itself, Petavius largely proveth that most of the writers of the three first centuries after the apostles were unsound, and others confess the same about the Millennium, the corporeity of angels, and of the soul, and divers other things; doth their consent bind us to believe them? If not, how shall we know in what to believe their consent, according to this rule?

2. And as to the Church, they are utterly disagreed among themselves, what that Church is which hath this authority.

1. Whether the Pope alone. 2. Or the Pope with a Provincial Council. 3. Or the Pope with a General Council. 4. Or a General Council without the Pope. 5. Or the universality of pastors. 6. Or the universality of the people with them.

3. And for a Council. 1. There is no certainty what number of bishops, and what consent of the comprovincial clergy is necessary to make them the true representatives of any church. 2. And more uncertain in what Council the bishops had such consent. 3. And uncertain whether the Pope's approbation be necessary. (The great Councils of Constance and Basil determining the contrary.) 4. And uncertain which were truly approved. 5. And most certain that there never was any General Council in the world (unless you will call the Apostles a General Council) but only General Councils of the clergy of one empire, with now and then a straggling neighbour, even as we have general assemblies and convocations in this kingdom. And who can be certain of that faith which dependeth upon all, or any of these uncertainties?

XI. That must needs be an uncertainty which dependeth on the unknown thoughts of another man. For instance, with the Papists, the priest's intention, which is the secret of his heart, is necessary to the being of baptism, and transubstantiation. And so no man can be certain whether he or any other man be baptized or not. Nor whether it be bread or Christ's body which he eateth. We confess that it is necessary to the being of a sacrament, that the minister do seem or profess to intend it as a sacrament; but if the reality of his intent be necessary to the being of it, no man can be certain that he ever had a sacrament.

XII. It is a hard thing to be certain on either side, in those controversies which have multitudes, and in a manner equal strength of learned, judicious, well-studied, godly, impartial men for each part. I deny not but one clear-headed man may be certain of that which a multitude are uncertain of, and oppose him in. But it must not be ordinary men, but some rare illuminated person, that must get above a probability, unto a certainty, of that which such a company as aforesaid are of a contrary mind in.

XIII. There is great uncertainty in matters of private impulse. When a man hath nothing to prove a thing to be

God's will, but an inward persuasion or impulse in his own breast; let it never so vehemently incline him to think it true, it is hard to be sure of it. For we know not how far Satan, or our own distempered fantasies may go. And most by far that pretend to this, do prove deceived. That which must be certain, must be somewhat equal to prophetic inspiration; which indeed is its own evidence: but what that is, no man can formally conceive but he that hath had it. Therefore we are bid to "try the spirits."

XIV. It is a hard thing to gather certainties of doctrinal conclusion from God's providences alone. Providential changes have their great use, as they are the fulfilling or execution of the Word; but they that will take them instead of the Scripture, do usually run into such mistakes, as are rectified to their cost, by some contrary work of Providence ere long: these times have fully taught us this.

XV. It is hard to gather doctrinal certainties from godly men's experience alone. Even our experimental philosophers and physicians find, that an experiment that hits oftentimes, quite misseth afterwards on other subjects, and they know not why. A course of effects, may often come from unknown causes. And it is no rare thing for the common prejudices, self-conceitedness, or corruption of the weaker and greater number of good people, which needeth great repentance and a cure, to be mistaken, for the 'communis sensus fidelium,' the inclination and experience of the godly; especially when consent or the honour of their leaders or themselves hath engaged them in it. In my time, the common sense of the strictest sort was against long hair, and taking tobacco, and other such things, which now their common practice is for. In one country the common consent of the strictest party is for Arminianism: in another they are zealously against it. In Poland, where the Socinians are for sitting at the sacrament, the godly are generally against it; in other places they are for it. In Poland and Bohemia, where they had holy, humble, persuading bishops, the generality of the godly were for that Episcopacy, as were all the ancient Churches, even the Novatians; but in other places it is otherwise. So that it is hard to be certain of truth or error, good or evil, by the mere consent, opinion, or experience of any.

XVI. But the last and great instance is, that in the holy

Scriptures themselves, there is a great inequality in point of certainty, yea, many parts of them have great uncertainty; even these that follow:

I. Many hundred texts are uncertain, through various readings in several copies of the original. I will not multiply them on Capellus's opinion; though Claud. Saravius, who got the book printed, and other worthy men approve it. I had rather there were fewer varieties, and therefore had rather think there are fewer; but these that cannot be denied must not be denied: nor do I think it fit to gather the discrepancies of every odd copy, and call them *various readings*. But it is past denial, that the world hath no one ancient copy which must be the rule or test of all the rest, and that very many copies are of such equal credit, as that no man living can say that this, and not that where they differ, hath the very words of the Holy Ghost. And that even in the New Testament alone, the differences or various readings, of which no man is able to say which is the right, are so great a number as I am not willing to give every reader an account of; even those that are gathered by Stephanus and Junius, and Brugensis, and Beza; if you leave out all the rest in the Appendix to the Polyglot Bible. In all or most of which we are utterly uncertain which reading is God's Word.

II. There are many hundred words in the Scripture that are ambiguous, signifying more things than one; and the context in a multitude of places determineth not the proper sense; so that you may with equal authority translate them, either *thus* or *thus*: the margin of your Bibles giveth you no small number of them. It must needs here be uncertain which of them is the Word of God.

III. There are many hundred texts of Scripture, where the phrase is general, and may be applied to more particulars than one: in some places the several particulars must be taken as included in the general. (And where there is no necessity a general phrase should not be expounded as if it were particular.) But in a multitude of texts the general is put for the particular, and must be interpreted but of one sort, and yet the context giveth us no certain determination which particular is meant. This is one of the commonest uncertainties in all the Scriptures. Here it is God's will that we be uncertain.

IV. In very many passages of the History of Christ, the Evangelists set both words and deeds in various orders, one sets this first, and another sets another first. (As in the order of Christ's three temptations, Matt. iv. and Luke iv. And many such like.) Though it is apparent that Luke doth less observe the order than the rest, yet in many of these cases it is apparent that it was God's will to notify to us the matter only, and not the order. And it must needs be uncertain to us, which was the first said or done, and which was last.

The same is to be said of the time and place of some speeches of Christ recorded by them.

V. Many of Christ's speeches are recorded by the Evangelists in various words^f. Even the Lord's-prayer itself. (Matt. vi. and Luke xi.) Besides, that Matthew hath the doxology, which Luke hath not (which Grotius and many others think came out of the Greek Liturgy into the text). And even in Christ's sermons on the Mount, and in his last commission to his disciples. (Matt. xxviii. 18—20; Mark xvi.) Now in some of these cases (as of the Lord's-prayer) it is uncertain whether Christ spake it once or twice: (though the former is more likely.) In most of them, it is plain that it was the will of God's Spirit to give us the true sense of Christ's sayings in various words, and not all the very words themselves: for the Evangelists that differ do neither of them speak falsely, and therefore meant not recite all the very words. If you say that one giveth us the true words, and another the true sense, we shall never be certain that this is so, nor which that one is. So that in such cases, no man can possibly tell which of them were the very words of Christ.

VI. There are many texts of the Old Testament recited in the New, where it is uncertain whether that which the penman intended was an exposition, or a proof of what he said, or only an allusion to the phrase of speech; as if he should say, 'I may use such words to express my mind, or the matter by.' As Matt. ii. 23, "He shall be called a Nazarene." So verse 16, 17; Rom. x. 6—8. 18, and others. I

^f It is most probable that Christ and the apostles then spake in the Chaldee called Hebrew, and so that the four Gospels are but translations of Christ's words, and so not the words, but the sense was Christ's: and what wonder then if the translating Evangelists use divers words

know the excellent Junius in his Parallels hath said much, and more than any other that I know, to prove them all, or almost all to be expository and probatory citations: but withal confessing that the generality of ancient and modern expositors think otherwise, he thereby sheweth a great uncertainty; when he himself saith not that he is certain of it; and few others thought it probable.

VII. There are many texts cited in the New Testament Septuagint, where it differeth from the Hebrew: wherein it is utterly uncertain to us, whether Christ and his apostles intended to justify absolutely the translation which they use, or only to make use of it as that which then was known and used for the sake of the sense which it contained. If they absolutely justify it, they seem to condemn the Hebrew, so far as it differeth. If not, why do they use it, and never blame it? It seemeth that Christ would hereby tell us, that the sense is the gold, and the words but as the purse; and we need not be over-curious about them, so we have the sense. As if I should use the vulgar Latin, or the Rhemists' translation with the Papist, because he will receive no other.

VIII. There are many enigmatical and obscure expressions, which a few learned men only can probably conjecture at, and few or none be certain of the full sense. If any certainly understand much of the prophecies in Daniel and the Revelations, it must needs be very few: when Calvin durst not meddle with the latter: and though most of the famous commentators on the Revelations are such, as have peculiarly made it their study; and set their minds upon it above all other things, and rejoiced in conceit that they had found out the true sense which others had overseen, (as men do that seek the philosopher's stone:) yet how few of all these are there that agree? And if ten be of nine minds, eight of them at least are mistaken. Franc. du Jon, the Lord Napier, Brightman, Dent, Mede, and my godly friend Mr. Stephens, yet living, (since dead,) with many others have studied it thus with extraordinary diligence, but with different successes: and Lyra with other old ones turn all quite another way. And then come Grotius and Dr. Hammond and contradict both sides, and make it all (saving a few verses) to have been fulfilled many ages since. And can the unlearned, or the unstudied part of ministers then,

with any modesty pretend a certainty, where so many and such men differ?

I know it is said, Rev. 1. 3. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: but that proveth no more than 1. That some of it (as ch. 1—3.) is plain and commonly intelligible. 2. That it is a desirable thing to understand the rest; and worthy men's endeavour in due time and rank; and he that can attain to certainty may be glad of it.

I pass by the darkness of many types and prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament, and how little the Jews or the apostles themselves, till after Christ's resurrection, understood them. With very many other obscurities, which yet are not written in vain, nay, which make up the true perfection of the whole.

IX. There are very many proverbial speeches in the Scripture, which are not to be understood, as the words properly signify; but as the sense of those proverbs then was among the Jews. But disuse hath so totally obliterated the knowledge of the sense of many of them, that no man living can certainly understand them.

X. There are many texts, which have words adapted to the places, the animals, the utensils, the customs, the coins, the measures, the vegetables, &c. of that place and time, which are some hard, and some impossible now to be certainly understood: and therefore such as Bochart, Salmosius, Casaubon, Scaliger, &c. have done well to add new light to our conjectures; but leaving great uncertainty still.

XI. Because the Jewish law is by Paul plainly said to be ceased or done away, it remaineth very difficult to be certain of abundance of passages in the Old Testament, how far they are obligatory to us. For when they now bind no otherwise than as the continued law of nature, or as re-assumed by Christ into his special law, where the latter is not found, in the former there is often insuperable difficulty. For most lieth upon the proof of a parity of reason, which puts us upon trying cases hardly tried, unless we knew more of the reason of all those laws. (As about vows and dispensations, Numb. xxx; about prohibited degrees of marriage, and such like; which makes divines so much differ about the obligation of the Judicials, (of which see Junius

vol. 1. p. 1861, &c. de Polit. Mos. observ.) and about usury, priesthood, magistrates' power in religion, and many such.

XIII. There are abundance of texts which only open the substance of the matter in hand to us, and say nothing about abundance of difficulties of the manner, and many circumstances, (as the manner of the Divine influx, and the Spirit's operation on the soul, &c.) And here all that which is unrevealed must needs be unknown.

XIII. There are many precepts which were local, personal, particular, and so temporary, and bind not universally all persons, at all times afterwards: such as the Rhechabites' precepts from their father, and such as the love-feasts, the kiss of love, women's veil and long hair, men's being uncovered, &c.^s Now it is very hard to know in all instances, whether the precepts were thus temporary or universal and durable: which makes divines differ about anointing of the sick, the office of deacons and deaconesses, the power of bishops, and extent of their dioceses, the eating things strangled, and blood, (against which Chr. Beckman in his Exercit. hath abundance of shrewd arguments, though few are of his mind.) In these cases few reach a certainty, and none so full a certainty as in plainer things.

XIV. It is very hard to be certain when, and how far examples of holy men in Scripture bind us: though I have elsewhere proved that wherever the apostles' practice was the execution of their commission for settling church orders, in which Christ promised them the help of his Spirit, their practice was obligatory. Yet in many instances the obligation of examples is very doubtful: which occasioneth the controversies about imitating John Baptist's life in the wilderness, and Anna, and about Lent, and about baptizing by dipping over head, and about the Lord's-supper, whether it should be administered to a family, or at evening only, or after supper or sitting in a private house, &c. And about washing feet, and many church orders and affairs.

XV. There are many things in Scripture that are spoken but once or twice, and that but as on the by, and not very

^s It is very hard to be sure what the apostles settled as an universal perpetual law, in church matters, and what they settled only as suited to that time and place by the common rule of doing all to edification: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, being a standing rule, it is hard to plead their use of any rites against common good: perhaps more is mutable than most think.

plainly: and we cannot be so certain of any doctrine founded on these, as on passages frequently and plainly written.

XVI. There are so many seeming differences in Scripture, especially about numbers, as that if they be reconcilable, few or none in the world have yet found out the way. If we mention them not ourselves, such paltry fellows will do it, as Bened. Spinoza in his *Tractatus Theolog. Polit.* I will not cite any, but desire the learned reader to consider well of what that learned and godly man, Ludov. Capellus saith in his *critic. Sacr.* l. c. 10. and l. 6. c. 7, 8^h. (I own not his supposition of a better Hebrew copy used by the Sept.) I think an impartial considerer of his instances will confess, that as God never promised all or any of the scribes or printers of the Bible any infallible spirit, that they should never write or print a word falsely, and as it is certain by the various lections, that many such there have been in many and most books; so there is no one scribe that had a promise above the rest, nor any one Hebrew or Greek copy, which any man is sure, is absolutely free from such miswritings. For how should we be sure of that one above all the rest? And I wish the learned reader to consider Bibliander's Preface to his *Hebr. Grammar*, and Casaubon's *Exercit.* l. s. 28. and Pellicanus's Preface to his *Comment. on the Bible.* Jerom on *Mic.* 5. 2. is too gross, de *Matth.* 2. 'Quod Testimonium nec Hæbraico nec 70 Interpretibus convenire, &c.' Let him read the rest that will, which is harsher; he that will not confess miswritings of numbers, and some names and words heretofore, as well as some misprintings now, doth but by his pretended certainty tempt men to question the rest for the sake of that, and injureth the sacred word.

XVII. We have not the same degree of certainty of the canonicalness or divineness of every book of Scripture: though they are all God's word, they have not all the same evidence that they are so. The New Testament had a fuller attestation from heaven for its evidence to man, than most of the Old had. And of the New Testament, it was long before many churches received the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second of Peter, Jude, Revelations, &c. Even in Eusebius's

^h Without approving all that is in it, I wish the reader to peruse Father Simon's second book, now newly printed in London.

days, in his Præpar. Evangel. he shewed that they were not received by all. And of the Old Testament, Moses, and the Psalms and Prophets have fuller attestation than the rest. And indeed, as it is probable that the Chronicles were written in or after Ezra's time at soonest; so they do in so many places differ in numbers from the book of Kings, where all would agree with the rest of the history, if those numbers were but reduced to those in the Kings, that if any man should doubt of the Divine authority of that book, that thereby he may be less tempted to question any others, I should not think his error inconsistent with salvation. Put but that man to prove what he saith, who asserteth that we have equal evidence of the divinity of the Chronicles, Canticles, Esther, as we have of Moses, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the New Testament, and you shall quickly find that he did but pretend an equal degree of certainty, which indeed he had not. The Papists pretend that they are as certain of the divinity of the Apocrypha, as we are of the rest. But they do but pretend a certainty, for interest and custom sake.

XVIII. Though it be held, that certainly the holy writers had no falsehoods in doctrine or history, but delivered us the truth alone, yet no one of them delivereth us all the truth, no not of many particular histories and speeches of Christ which they mention: and therefore we must set them all together for the understanding of them: (as in the instance of Christ's appearing and the angel's speeches after his resurrection.) And when all is done we have not all that Christ said and did, but all that was necessary to our faith and salvation. For as Paul citeth Christ, saying, "It is more honourable to give, than to receive," so John tells us, "that the world could not contain the books that should be written," we must take heed therefore how far we go with negatives, of such unmentioned things.

XIX. Though all that the holy writers have recorded is true, (and no falsehood in the Scripture, but what is from the error of scribes and translators,) yet we are not certain that the writers had not human infirmities in the phrase, method and manner of expression. It is apparent that their style, yea their gifts were various, as Paul oft openeth them, 1 Cor. 12, &c. Therefore Paul rather than Barnabas was the chief speaker. And Apollos was more eloquent than others:

hence some were of Paul, and some of Apollos, and some of Cephas : and Paul is put to vindicate his ministerial abilities to the Corinthians. Therefore though weaker men's gifts put no sinful imperfection into the Scriptures, yet a human natural imperfection of style, and order might be more in some than others. It is certain that they were not all perfect in knowledge and holiness. And how far every sermon which they preached was free from all that imperfection, (any more than Peter's carriage, Gal. ii.) we are uncertain. And how far their writings had a promise of being free from natural modal imperfections more than their preachings, we know not fully. And yet God turned this weakness of theirs to the confirmation of our faith; shewing us that heavenly power, and not human wisdom and ability did his work. As David's sling in conquering Goliath shewed God's power. And out of the mouths of babes doth God ordain strength, and the weak things of the world are used to confound the strong.

XX. Lastly, though all be certainly true which they have recorded, yet we have not the same degree of certainty, that no writer erred through lapse of memory in some less material passage, as we have that they infallibly delivered us the Gospel. But this I have said so much of already in a small book called "More Reasons for the Christian Religion," that I must now refer you thither for the rest.

Quest. But if there be so many things, either uncertain or less certain, what is it that we are or may be fully certain of?

Answ. 1. What you are or are not certain of yourself, you should know if you know yourself, without my telling you.

2. I deny not but you may come to a certainty of all those things which are never so difficult, that have any ascertaining evidence, if you live long enough, and study hard enough, and have extraordinary measure of Divine illumination: I do not measure others by myself: you may know that which I know not. God may bless your studies more, as being better men and fitter for his blessing: he may give you extraordinary inspirations, or revelations if he please: I am thankful for my low degree, and confess my ignorance.

3. But I have told you before what certainties we have. 1. We are certain of things sensible. 2. And of our elicit and imperate acts. 3. And of natural principles. 4. And

of clear inferences thence. 5. And of the truth of all the certain Holy Scriptures, which are evidently the Word of God. 6. And particularly therein of the plain historical parts. 7. And of all which is the main design and scope of the text in any book or chapter. 8. And of all that which is purposely and often repeated, and not only obscurely once spoken on the by. 9. Therefore we may be certain of all that is necessary to salvation: of every article in the Creed; of every petition in the Lord's-prayer, and every necessary common duty: we may be certain of the truth and sense of all the covenant of grace concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, his relation to us, and our relation and duty to him, and of the benefits of the covenant, of the necessity and nature of faith, repentance, hope, love, obedience, patience, &c. It is tedious to recite all; in a word, all that is of common necessity, and all (how small soever) which is plainly revealed and expressed. 10. And you may be certain of the fulfilling of much of this holy word already by sufficient history and experience.

CHAP. VII.

Inference 1. *The true Reason and Usefulness of the Christian Simplicity, in differencing the Covenant, and Principles of Religion, from the rest of the Holy Scriptures.*

IT hath ever been the use of the church of God, to catechise men before they were baptized; and therein to teach them the true meaning of the Baptismal Covenant, by opening to them the Creed, the Lord's-prayer, and the Decalogue: and when they understood this covenant they were admitted (upon consent) by baptism into the church, and accounted Christians and members of Christ, without staying to teach them any other part of the Bible, no not so much as the sacrament of the Lord's-supper.ⁱ (Though indeed the opening of baptism was the opening of the life of that; because it is the same covenant which is solemnized in both.)

ⁱ As Antonine saith, (in greater darkness) 1. 2. s. 5. ὁρᾷς πῶς ὀλίγα ἐστίν, &c. Vide quam pauca sint, quæ si quis tenuerit, prosperam ac divinam propemodum vitam degere detur: siquidem et dii ipsi nihil amplius exigent ab eo, qui ista observaverit.

By doing thus, the church notoriously declared that they took not all the Scripture to be equally necessary to be understood; but that the Covenant of Grace, and the Catechism explaining it, is the Gospel itself, that is, the essence of it, and of the Christian religion, and that all the rest of the Scriptures contain but partly the integrals, and partly the accidents of that religion. He is the wisest man that knoweth most and best; and every man should know as much of the Scriptures as he can. But if you knew all the rest, without this (the covenant of grace, and its explication) it would not make you Christians, or save you. But if you know this truly, without all the rest, it will.

The whole Scripture is of great use and benefit to the church. It is like the body of a man; which hath its head, and heart, and stomach, &c.; and hath also fingers, and toes, and flesh; yea nails and hair. And yet the brain and heart itself fare the better for the rest, and would not be so well seated separate from them: though a man be a man that loseth even a leg or arm. So is it here. But it is the covenant that is our Christianity, and the duly baptized are Christians, whatever else they do not understand. These are the things that all must know, and daily live upon.

The Creed is but the exposition of the three articles of the Baptismal Covenant. 'I believe in God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' Though the Jews that had been bred up to a preparing knowledge, were quickly baptized by the apostles upon their conversion, (Acts ii,) yet no man can imagine, that either the apostles, or other ministers, did use to admit the ignorant Gentiles into the covenant of God, without opening the meaning of it to them; or baptize them as Christians, without teaching them what Christianity is. Therefore reason, and the whole church's subsequent custom assure us, that the apostles used to expound the three great articles to their catechumens; and thence it is called the *Apostles' Creed*.

Marcus, bishop of Ephesus, told them in the Florentine Council, (as you may see Sgyropilus,) 'That we have none of the Apostles' Creed,' and Vossius de Symbolis, besides many others, hath many arguments to prove, that this so called was not formally made by the apostles. Bishop Usher hath opened the changes that have been in it. Sandford and Parker have largely 'de descensu,' shewed

how it came in as an exposition of the baptismal articles. Others stiffly maintain that the apostles made it; but the case seemeth plain. The apostles used to call the baptized to the profession of the same articles, (which Paul hath in 1 Cor. xv. 1—3, &c.) and varied not the matter. All this was but more particularly to profess faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Two or three further expository articles are put into the Creed since: otherwise it is the same which the apostles used; not in the very syllables or forms of words, but in the same sense; and the words indeed being left free, but seldom much altered, because of the danger of altering the matter. Of all the most ancient writers, not one repeateth the Creed in the same words that we have it; nor any two of them, in the same with one another. Irenæus once, Tertullian twice hath it; all in various words, but the same sense. That of Marcellus in Epiphanius, cometh nearest ours called the Apostles', and is almost it. Afterward, in Ruffinus and others, we have more of it. Yet no doubt but the Western Churches, at least, used it with little variation still. The Nicene Creed is called by some ancients the Apostles' Creed too: and both were so; for both are the same in sense and substance: for it is not the very words that are truly fathered on the apostles.

About three hundred years ago, Mr. Ashwell having published a book for the necessity and honour of the Creed, I wrote in the postscript to my "Reformed Pastor," edit. 2nd, a corrective of some passages, in which he seemeth to say too much for it, or at least to depress the Scripture too much in comparison of it. But long experience now telleth me that I have more need to acquaint men with the reasons and necessity of the Creed; seeing I find a great part of ignorant religious people much to slight the use of it, and say 'it is not Scripture, but the work of man:' especially taking offence at the harsh translation of that article, *He descended into hell*; which, from the beginning, it is likely was not in. It is the kernel of the Scripture, and it is that for which the rest of the Scripture is given us, even to afford us sufficient help to understand and consent to the covenant of grace; that our belief, our desires, and our practice may be conformed principally to these summaries. It is not

every child, or woman, that could have gathered the essential articles by themselves out of the whole Scripture, if it had not been done to their hands: nor that could have rightly methodised the rule of our desires, or gathered the just heads of natural duty; if Christ had not done the first in the Lord's-prayer, and God the second in the Decalogue.

Object. ' But I believe these only, because the matter of the Creed, and the words also of the other two are in the Scripture, and not on any other authority.'

Ans. If you speak of the authority of the author, which giveth them their truth, it is neither Scripture nor tradition; but God, for whose authority we must believe both Scripture and them.

But if you speak of the authority of the deliverers, and the evidence of the delivery; be it known to you, 1. That the Creed, Lord's-prayer, Decalogue, and the baptismal covenant, have been delivered down to the church from the apostles by a distinct tradition, besides the Scripture tradition: even to all the Christians one by one, that were baptized, and admitted to the Lord's-table, and to every particular church. So that there was not a Christian or church, that was not even constituted by them.

2. Be it known to you, that the church was long in possession of them, before it had the Scriptures of the New Testament. It is supposed to be about eight years after Christ's ascension, before Matthew wrote the first book of the New Testament; and near the year of our Lord, one hundred, before the Revelation was written. And do you think that there were no Christians or churches all that while? Or that there was no baptism? Or no profession of the Christian faith in distinct articles? No knowledge of the Lord's-prayer and Commandments? No Gospel daily preached and practised? What did the church assemblies, think you, do all those years? No doubt, those that had inspiration, used it by extraordinary gifts. But that was not all: those that had not, did preach the substance of the Christian religion, contained in these forms; and did pray, and praise God, and celebrate the Lord's-supper; provoking one another to love, and to good works.

3. Be it known to you, that these three summaries come to us with fuller evidence of certain tradition from God,

than the rest of the Holy Scriptures. Though they are equally true, they are not equally evident to us. And this I thus prove: 1. The body of the Scriptures were delivered but one way; but the Covenant, Creed, Lord's-prayer, and Decalogue, are delivered two ways. They are in the Scripture, and so have all the evidence of tradition which the Scriptures have: and they were, besides that, delivered to the memories of all Christians. If you say, that the Creed is not in the Scripture; or that the Scripture is not altered as it is: I answer, 1. That it is in the Scripture, as to the matter signified in as plain words, even of the same signification. 2. There is no alteration made, but a small addition, which is no disparagement to it; because the ancient substance is still known, and the additions are not new-made things, but taken out of Scripture. And yet if any heretic should deny that God is wise and good, and just and merciful; it were no dishonour to the Creed, nor weakening of its certainty, to have these attributes yet added to it.

2. These summaries, as is said, were far more ancient than the rest of the New Testament, as written and known, and used long before them.

3. These summaries being in every Christian's mind and memory, were faster held than the rest of the Scriptures: therefore parents could and did teach them more to their children. You never read that the catechisers of the people did teach them all the Bible, nor equally ask them, who Jared, or Mehaleel, or Lamech was, as they did who Christ was. Nor put every history into the Catechism, but only the historical articles of the Creed.

4. Therefore it was far easier to preserve the purity of these summaries, than of the whole body of the Scriptures; for that which is in every man's memory, cannot be altered without a multitude of reprovers: which makes the Greeks since Photius keep such a stir about 'Filioque' as to think that the Latins have changed religion, and deserved to be separated from, for changing that word. But no wonder that many hundred various readings are crept into the Bible, and whole verses and histories (as that of the adulterous woman,) are out in some, that are in others. For it is harder to keep such a volume incorrupt, than a few words. Though writing, as such, is a surer way than memory, and the whole Bible could never have been preserved by

memory : yet a few words might, especially when they had those words in writings also.

5. Add to this, that the Catechistical Summaries aforesaid, were more frequently repeated to the people, at least every Lord's-day. Whereas, in the reading of the Scriptures, one passage will be read but seldom, perhaps once or twice in a year : and so a corruption not so easily observed.

6. And if among an hundred copies of the Scripture, ten or twenty only should by the carelessness of the scribes be corrupted ; all the rest who saw not these copies, would not know it, and so they might fall into the hands of posterity, when many of the sounder might be lost.

7. And lastly. The danger of depravation hath no end ; for in every age the Scripture must be written over anew, for every church and person that would use it. And who that knoweth what writing is, could expect that one copy could be written without errors ; and that the second should not add to the errors of the first, as printers now do, who print by faulty copies. And though this danger is much less since printing came up, that is but lately. And the mischiefs of wars and heretical tyrants, burning the copies, hath been some disadvantage to us.

Object. ' Thus you seem to weaken the certain incorruption of the Scriptures.'

Ans. No such thing : I do but tell you the case truly as it is. The wonderful providence of God, and care of Christians, hath so preserved them, that there is nothing corrupted, which should make one article of faith the more doubtful. I assert no more depravation in them, than all confess ; but only tell you how it came to pass, and tell you the greater certainty that we have of the essentials of religion, than of the rest. And, whereas every man of brains confesseth, that many hundred words in Scripture by variety of copies are uncertain ; I only say, that it is not so in the essentials. And I do not wonder that Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Cicero, &c. have not suffered such depravations. For, 1. It is not so easy for a scribe's error to pass unseen ' in oratione ligata,' as ' in oratione soluta ;' in verse as in prose. 2. And Cicero, with the rest, was almost only in the hands of learned men ; whereas the Scriptures were in the hands of all the vulgar, women and children. 3. And the copies of these authors were comparatively but few : whereas every

one almost got copies of the Scripture, that was able. And it is most likely that some depravation should be found among ten thousand copies than among a hundred.

So that I have proved to you, that the Creed, Lord's-prayer, Commandments, and Covenant of Baptism, are not to be believed only because they are in the Scripture; but also because they have been delivered to us by tradition, and so we have them from two hands, as it were, or ways of conveyance; and the rest of the Scriptures but one, for the most part.

I will say yet more, because it is true and needful. If any live among Papists, that keep the Scripture from the people; or among the poor Greeks, Armenians, or Abas-sines, where the people neither have Bibles commonly, nor can read; or if any among us that cannot read, know not what is in the Bible; yea, if through the fault of the priest, any should be kept from knowing that ever there was a Bible in the world: yet if those persons by tradition receive the Baptismal Covenant, the Creed, Lord's-prayer, and Commandments, as God's Word; and truly believe, and love and practise them; those persons shall be saved; for they have Christ's promise for it: and the very Covenant itself is the gift of Christ, and life to consenters. Whereas, he that knoweth all the Scripture, can be saved only by consenting to, and performing this same Covenant: but having greater helps to understand it, and so to believe it and consent; he hath a great advantage of them that have not the Scripture; and so the Scripture is an unspeakable mercy to the Church. And it is so far from being too little, without the supplement of the Papists' Traditions and Councils, as that the hundredth part of it, as to the bulk of words, is not absolutely itself necessary to salvation.

Yet I say more: if a man that hath the Scripture, should doubt of some books of it, whether they be the word of God, (as of Ruth, Judges, Joshua, Chronicles, &c.); yea, if he doubted of all the Old Testament, and much of the New; yet if he believe so much as containeth all the Covenant of Grace, and the aforesaid summaries, though he sin, and lose much of his helps, yet he may and will be saved, if he sincerely receive but this much. The reason is before given. Though no man can believe any thing truly, who believeth not all that he knoweth to be God's word; yet a man may

doubt, whether one thing be God's word, who doubteth not of another, by several occasions.

And here you see the reason, why a particular or explicit belief of all the Scripture itself was never required of all that are baptized, nor of all, or any man that entered into the ministry. For the wisest doctor in the world doth not attain so high. For no man hath a particular, explicit belief of that which he doth not understand. For it is the matter or sense that we believe: and we must first know what that sense is, before we can believe it to be true. And no man in the world understandeth all the Scripture.

Yea, more, it is too much to require as necessary to his ministry, a subscription in general, that he implicitly believeth all that is in the Bible which you shew him. For, 1. Many faults may be in the translation, if it be a translation. 2. Many errors may be in the copy, as aforesaid.

Nay, such a subscription should not, as absolutely necessary, be required of him as to all the real Word of God. For if the man by error should doubt whether Job, or the Chronicles, or Esther were canonical, and none of the rest, I would not be he that should therefore forbid him to preach Christ's Gospel. I am sure the ancient Church imposed no such terms on their pastors, when part of the New Testament was so long doubted of; and when some were chosen bishops before they were baptized; and when Synesius was chosen a bishop before he believed the Resurrection. I would not have silenced Luther, Althamer, or others that questioned the Epistle of James.

What then shall we say of the Roman insolence, which thinketh not all the Scripture big enough, but ministers must also subscribe to many additions of their own, yea, and swear to traditions and the expositions of the Fathers, and take whole volumes of Councils for their religion? No wonder if such men do tear the churches of Christ in pieces.

1. By this time, I hope, you see to what use Baptism, and the Summaries of Religion are. 2. And of how great use Catechising is. 3. And that Christianity hath its essential parts. 4. And how plain and simple a thing true Christianity is, which constituteth the Church of Christ; and how few things, as to knowledge, are necessary to make a man a Christian, or to salvation. Multitudes of opinions have been the means of turning pastors and people from the

holy and diligent improvement of these few truths in our practice; where we have much to do, which might take up all our minds and time.

CHAP. VIII.

Inference 2. *Of the Use of Catechising.*

THOUGH it be spoken to in what is said, I would have you more distinctly here note the use of Catechising.

1. It collecteth those few things out of many, which the ignorant could not themselves collect. 2. It collecteth those necessary things which all must know and believe that will be saved. 3. It containeth those great practical things which we have daily use for, and must still live upon, which are as bread and drink for our food. Other things may be well added; the more the better, which God hath revealed. But our life, our comfort, and our hope, are in these. 4. And it giveth us the true method or order of holy truths; which is a great advantage to understand them. Not but the things themselves have the same orderly respect to one another in the Scripture, but they are not delivered in the same order of words.

Therefore, 1. Catechisms should be very skilfully and carefully made. The true fundamental Catechism is nothing else but the Baptismal Sacramental Covenant, the Creed, the Lord's-prayer, and the Commandments, the summaries of our belief, desires and practice. And our secondary Catechism must be nothing else but the plain expositions of these: The first is a Divine Catechism: The second is a Ministerial Expository Catechism. And here, 1. O that ministers would be wiser at last, than to put their superfluities, their controversies and private opinions into their Catechisms, and would fit them to the true end, and not to the interest of their several sects! But the Roman Trent Catechism (and many more of theirs) must needs be defiled with their trash, and every sect else must put their singularities into their Catechisms; so hard is it for the aged, decrepit body of the diseased church, for want of a better concoction of the common essentials of Christianity, to be free from

these heaps of unconcocted crudities, and excrementitious superfluities, and the many maladies bred thereby.

I deny not but a useful controversy may be opened by way of Question and Answer: but pretend it not then to be what it is not, milk for babes. "Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations." (Rom. xiv. 1.) The servant of the Lord must be apt to teach, but must not strive.

2. And it is not commonly believed how great skill is needful to make a Catechism, that the method may be true, and that it may neither be too long for the memory, nor too short for the understanding; for my part, it is the hardest work save one (which is the full methodising and explaining the whole body of divinity,) that ever I put my hand to; and when all is done, I cannot satisfy myself in it.

II. Why is not Catechising more used both by pastors and parents? I mean not the bare words unexplained without the sense, nor the sense in a mere rambling way without a form of words; but the words explained^k. O how much fruit would poor souls and all the church receive by the faithful performance of this work, would God but cure the profaneness and sloth of unfaithful pastors and parents which should do it. But I have said so much of this in my "Reformed Pastor," that I may well forbear more here.

CHAP. IX.

Inference 3. *The True Preservative of Puzzled Christians, from the Errors of False Teachers, who vehemently solicit them to their several Parties.*

IT is the common outcry of the world, 'How shall we know which side to be on? And who is in the right among so many, who all with confidence pretend to be in the right?'

Answ. Your preservative is obvious and easy; but men usually bestow more labour and cost for error and hell, than for truth and heaven. *Pretend not to faith or knowledge before you have it,* and you are the more safe. SUSPEND

^k Since this I have published a book called the "Catechising of Households."

your judgments till you have true evidence to establish them. 1. It is only Christians that I am now instructing; and if you are Christians, you have already received the essentials of Christianity, even the Baptismal Covenant, the Creed, the Lord's-prayer, and Decalogue. And I need not tell you, that moreover you must receive all those truths in nature and Scripture, which are so plain, that all these dissenting sects of Christians are agreed in them. And when you have all these, and faithfully love and practise them, you are sure to be saved, if you do not afterward receive some contrary doctrine which destroyeth them. Mark then which is the *safe religion*. As sure as the Gospel is true, he that is meet for baptism before God, is meet for pardon of sin; and he that truly consenteth to the Baptismal Covenant, and so doth dedicate himself to God, is made a member of Christ, and is justified, and an heir of heaven. Your Church Catechism saith truly of all such, that in baptism each one is made a 'member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of heaven.' So that as sure as the Gospel is truly, every true baptized Christian, whose love and life doth answer that faith, shall certainly be saved.

Ask all parties, and few of them but impudent designers can deny this. Well then, the Baptismal Covenant expounded in the Creed, Lord's-prayer and Commandments is your Christian Religion. As a Christian you may and shall be saved: that a true Christian is saved, all confess. But whether a Papist be saved, is questioned by the Protestants; and so is the salvation of many other sects by others. You are safe then if you take in nothing to endanger you. And is it not wisdom then to take heed how you go further, and on what grounds, lest you overrun your safe religion?

Object. 'But then I must not be a Protestant; for the Papists say, that they cannot be saved.'

Answ. A Protestant is either one that holdeth to the ancient, simple Christianity without the Papists' manifold additions; or one that positively also renounceth and opposeth those additions. In the first sense, a Protestant and a mere Christian is all one; and so to say, that a Protestant cannot be saved, is to say, that a Christian as such cannot be saved. If it be the mere name of a Protestant that the Papist accounteth damnable, tell him that you will not stick with him

for the name : you are contented with the old name of Christian alone.

But Protestantism in the second sense is not your religion, but the defensative of your religion ; as flying from the plague is not my humanity or life, but a means to preserve it. And so Protestants are of many sizes : some oppose some points, and some others ; some more, some less, which the Papists have brought in : and yet they are not of so many religions.

But whoever condemneth you, if Christ save you, he doth but condemn himself as uncharitable. Christianity is certainly a state of salvation ; but whether Popery be, or whether the Greek opinions be, or whether this or that difference and singularity stand with salvation, is the doubt. Cast not yourself then needlessly into doubt and danger.

Object. ‘ But then you will have us be still but infants, and to learn no more than our Catechisms, and not to learn and believe all that God hath revealed in his Word.’

Answ. No such matter. This is the sum of what I advise you to.

1. Hold fast to your simple Christianity as the certain terms of salvation : 2. Receive nothing that is against it : 3. Learn as much more as ever you can : 4. But take not men’s words, nor their plausible talk for certifying evidence ; and do not think if you believe a priest, that this is believing God ; nor if his reasons seem plausible to you, and you are of his opinion, that this is Divine knowledge. If you do incline to one man’s opinion more than another, tell him that you incline to his opinion, but tell him that you take not this for Divine knowledge, or any part of your religion. If you will needs believe one side rather than another, about Church history, or the matters of their parties’ interest, tell them, I believe you as fallible men ; but this is none of my divine faith or religion. To learn to know, is to learn scientific evidence, and not to learn what is another man’s opinions, nor whether they are probable or not ; much less to read a Council’s decrees, or the propositions of a disputing system, and then for the men’s sake to say, this is orthodox : nor yet because it hath a taking aspect. To learn of a priest to believe God, is one thing ; and to believe him, or his Party, Church, or Council, is another thing. Learn

to know as much as you can; and especially to know what God hath revealed to be believed: and learn to believe God as much as you can: and believe all your teachers, and all other men as far as they are credible in that case, with such a human belief as fallible men may justly require. And where contenders do consent, suspect them the less. But where they give one another the lie in matters of fact, try both their evidences of credibility before you trust them, and then trust them not beyond that evidence.

But still difference your divine faith and religion from your opinion and human faith; and let men solicit you never so long, take not on you to know or believe till you do; that is, not beyond the evidence. I do but persuade you against presumption and hypocrisy. Shall I say, **SUSPEND TILL YOU HAVE TRUE EVIDENCE**, and you are safe! Why if you do not, you will know never the more, nor have ever the more Divine faith: for I can mean no more than **SUSPEND YOUR PRESUMPTIONS**, and do not foolishly or hypocritically take on you to know what you do not, or to have a faith which you have not. If you can know truly, do it with fidelity, and be true to the truth, whoever offer it, or whatever it cost you. But suspend your profession or hasty opinions and conceits of what you know not.

Object. ‘But every side almost tells me that I am damned if I do not believe as they do.’

Ans. By that you may see that they are all deceived, at least save one (which ever it be) while they differ, and yet condemn each other. 2. Thereby they do but give you the greater cause to suspect them, for by this shall all men know Christ’s disciples, if they love one another. Right Christians are not many masters, as knowing that themselves shall have the greater condemnation else; for in many things we offend all. And the wisdom which hath envy and strife, is not from above, but from beneath, and is earthly, sensual and devilish, introducing confusion and every evil work, (James iii. 1; 15, 16.) Christ’s disciples judge not, lest they be judged.

3. By this you may see that unless you can be of all men’s minds, you must be damned by the censures of many. And if you can bear it from all the sects save one, why not from that one also?

4. But I pray you ask these damning sectaries, ‘is it

believing your word, and being of your opinion that will save me? Or must I also know by scientific evidence that you say true, and that God himself hath said what you say: if he say that believing him and his party, (though he call it the Church) is enough to save you, you have then less reason to believe him: for unless he can undertake himself to save you, he cannot undertake that believing him shall save you? If he say, 'God hath promised to save you if you believe me,' believe that when he hath proved it to you.

But if it be knowledge and Divine faith which he saith must save you, it is not your believing his word or opinion that will help you to that. I would tell such a man, 'help me to knowledge and faith, by cogent or certifying evidence, and I will learn and thank you with all my heart.' But till I have it, it is but mocking myself and you to say that I have it.

Object. 'But the Papists herein differ from all other sects: for they will say, that if I believe the Church concerning Divine Revelations, and take all for Divine Revelation which the Church saith is so, and so believe it, then I have a Divine faith.'

Ans. 1. And is this to you a certifying evidence that indeed God revealed it, because their Church saith so? If their Church agree with Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Coptics, Abassines, Protestants, and all other Christian churches, then it will be no part of the contest in question; and it is a stronger foundation of the two, to believe it, because *all* say it, than because *they* say it. But if they differ from the rest, know their proof that their Church can tell God's mind, and not the rest of the Christian world. And that about a third part of the Christians in the world have such a promise which all the rest have not. 2. And how doth their Church know that it is God's word? Is it by any certifying evidence, or by prophetic inspiration? If by evidence, let it be produced. Is it not revealed to others as well as to them? Must not we have a faith of the same kind as the Church hath? If so, we must believe by the same evidence as that Church believeth. And what is that? It is not their own words: doth a Pope believe himself only? or a Council believe themselves only? Or hath God said, 'You shall be saved if you will believe yourselves, and believe that I have said all that you say I have said?' Where is there such a promise?

But if Pope and Council be not saved for believing themselves, how shall I know that I shall be saved for believing them, and that one kind of faith saveth me, and another them.

I ask it of each particular bishop in that Council, is he saved for believing himself or the rest? If no man be saved for believing himself, why should another be saved for believing him? And the faith of the Council is but the faith of the individual members set together.

Object. 'But they are saved for believing themselves as consenters, and not singly.'

Ans. All consenters know nothing as consenters, but what they know as individuals. And what is the evidence by which they know, and are brought to consent? Must not that evidence convince us also?

Object. 'But the present Church are saved for believing not themselves but the former Church.'

Ans. Then so must we: it is not the present Church then that I must believe by a saving faith: but why then was the last age saved, and so the former? and so on to the first? Is any thing more evident than that all men must be saved for believing God, and that his word must be known to be his word by the same evidence, by one man and another? And that evidence I have proved in several treatises to be another kind of thing than the decree of a Pope, and his Council.

But if it be not evidence, but prophetic inspiration and revelation by which the Council or Church knoweth God's word, I will believe them when by miracles or otherwise they prove themselves to be true prophets; till then I shall take them for fanatics, and hear them as I do the Quakers.

Should I here stay to bid you ask them, as before, how you shall be sure that their Council was truly General, and more authentic and infallible than the second at Ephesus, or that at Ariminum, or that at Constance and Basil, &c. And whether the more general dissent of all the other Christians from them be not of as great authority as they that are the smaller part? And how you shall be sure of that? And also how but on the word of a priest you can know all that the Church hath determined? with abundance such questions, of the meaning of each Council, the ambiguity of words, the error of printers, the forgery of publishers, &c.

I should help you to see, that saying as a priest saith, is not knowing the thing, nor believing God.

Stop therefore till you have evidence: follow no party as a party in the dark: or if probability incline you more to them than to others, call not this Certainty, Religion, Divine Faith. Thus your faith will be faith indeed, and you will escape all that would corrupt and frustrate it. The business is great. God requireth you to refuse no light: but withal he chargeth you to believe no falsehood, nor put darkness for light: much less to father men's lies, or errors, or conceits on God, and to lay your salvation on it, that they are all God's word. How dreadful a thing is this if it prove false! Is it not blaspheming God¹?

No man in his wits then but a partial designer can look that you should make haste, or go any further than you have assuring or convincing evidence. If you know that any sect doth err, you need no preservative: if you do not, tell them, 'I am ignorant of this matter, I will learn as fast as I can; not neglecting greater matters; and I will be neither for you, nor against you, further than I can know.'

And as to the former objection, of being still infants, I further answer, that as feigned knowledge is no knowledge, so manhood consisteth not in being of many uncertain opinions; no not so much in knowing many little controverted things, as in getting a clearer, more affecting, powerful, practical knowledge and belief of our Christianity, and the great and sure things which we know already; and in love and obedience practising of them. He is the strongest Christian who loveth God best, and hath most holiness; and he knoweth God better than any others do.

By this much you may see that the world is full of counterfeit faith, and knowledge, and religion; even fancy and belief of men, and their own opinions, which go under these names. One turneth an Anabaptist, and another a Separatist, and another an Antinomian, and another a Pelagian, and another a Papist, when if you try them you shall find that they neither understand what they turn to, nor what they are against: they do but turn to his side, who hath the

¹ Fathering errors on God, and saying that he saith what he never said, and forbidding or commanding what he doth not, is the most direct breach of the third commandment. To father lies on God, is the taking of his name in vain.

best advantage to persuade them, either by insinuating into their affections, or by plausible reasonings; they talk for one doctrine, and against another, when they understand neither; much less discern true evidence of their truth. And as for the Papists, what wonder is it, when their religion is to believe as the Church believeth? And what the Church believeth, they know not but by believing a priest: and then though they know not what the Church believeth, some say they are Catholics; and others, that this implicit faith is that in the virtue of which all the explicit must proceed. And if God may but be allowed to be equal herein with their Church, and so that all may be saved who implicitly believe that all that he saith is true, though they know not what he saith at all, then I think few infidels would perish that believe there is a God.

Reader, I advise thee therefore as thou lovest thy soul, 1. Not to neglect or delay any true knowledge that thou canst attain. 2. But not to be rash and hasty in judging. 3. Nor to take shows and men's opinions, or any thing below a certifying or notifying evidence of truth, to make up thy Christian faith and knowledge. 4. And till thou see such certain evidence, suspend, and tell them that solicit thee, that thou understandest not the matter, and that thou art neither for them nor against them; but wilt yield as soon as truth doth certainly appear to thee.

If an Anabaptist persuade thee, yield to him as soon as thou art sure that God would not have believers' children now to be infant-members of his Church, as well as they were before Christ's coming; and that the infants of believing Jews were cut off from their church-state; and that there is any way besides baptism appointed by Christ, for the solemn initiating of church-members with the rest, which in my Treatise of Baptism I have produced.

If thou art solicited to renounce communion with other Churches of Christ as unlawful, either because they use the Common Prayer and Ceremonies, or because that ministers are faulty (if tolerable) or the people undisciplined; before thou venture thy soul upon an uncharitable and dividing principle make sure first that Christ hath commanded it. Try whether thou art sure that Christ sinned by communicating ordinarily with the Jewish Church and Synagogues, when the corruption of priests, people and worship was

so much worse than ours? Or whether that be a sin to us, which (in the general) Christ did then. And whether Paul's compliance, and his precept, (Rom. xiv. and xv.) was an error: and Peter's separation (Gal. ii.) was not rather to be blamed. With much more the like. Are you sure that notwithstanding all this, God would have you avoid communion with the churches that in such forms and orders differ from you?

So if a Papist solicit you, yield to him as soon as you are certain that the Church is the body or Church of the Pope, and that none are Christians that are not subject to him, and that therefore three or two parts of all the Christian world are unchristianed; and that when the Roman emperor made patriarchs in his own dominion only, and there only called General Councils, all the world must now take such as the Church's heads, and must be their subjects: when you can be sure that all the senses of all the sound men in the world, are by a constant miracle deceived, in taking the consecrated bread and wine, to be bread and wine indeed, and that it is none; and that the bread only without the cup must be used, though Christ's command be equal for both: when you are certain, truly certain of these and many other such things, then turn Papist. If you do it sooner, you betray your souls by pretending to know and believe God's words, when you do but believe and embody with a faction.

CHAP. X.

Inference 4. *What is the great Plague and Divider of the Christian World.*

FALSELY PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE and FAITH are the great plague and dividers of the Christian world.

I. As the number of articles and opinions, and precepts, what abundance of things go with many for certain truth of which no mortal man hath any certainty! And abundance which some rare wits may know, must go for evident certainties to all. It is not only our philosophy books, nor only our philosophical schoolmen's books, which are guilty of this. There is some modesty in their Videtur's: and indeed if they would not pretend to certainty, but profess only

to write for the sport and exercise of wit, without condemning those that differ from them, a man might fetch many a pleasant vagary, if not an over subtle Cajetan (who so often feigneth notions and distinctions), yet in Scotus, Ockam, Ariminensis, with abundance of their disciples, and in Thomas and many of his learned followers. But their successors can hardly forbear hereticating one another. How many such a wound hath poor Durandus suffered! from many for his doctrine of Concourse; and by others for his pretty device to save the credit of our senses; (that there is still the matter of bread, but not the form, as being informed by the soul of Christ, as digested bread in us is turned to flesh;) which, saith Bellarmine, is an heresy, but Durandus no heretic, because he was ready to be taught of the Church.

But no where do these stinging hornets so swarm as in the Councils and the Canon Law: so that saith the preface to the Reformation *Legum Ecclesiast.* Edward VI. (John Fox,) ‘*In quo ipso jure, neque ullum modum tenet illius impudentia, quin leges legibus; decreta decretis, ac iis in-super decretalia, aliis alia, atque item alia accumularet, nec ullam pene statuit cumulandi finem, donec tandem suis Clementinis, Sixtinis, Intra et Extravagantibus, Constitutionibus Provincialibus et Synodalibus, Paleis, Glossulis, Sententiis, Capitulis, Summariis, Rescriptis, Breviculis, Casibus longis et brevibus, ac infinitis Rhapsodiis adeo orbem confarcinavit, ut Atlas mons quo sustineri cœlum dicitur, huic si imponeretur oneri, vix ferendo sufficeret.*’ Which made these two kings, Henry VIII. and Edward VI. appoint that Compendium of Ecclesiastical Laws as their own. King Henry first abolishing the Pope’s Laws (whatever some say to the contrary), his words being, ‘*Hujus Potestatem huic cum divino munere sublatam esse manifestum est, ut quid superesset, quo non plane fractam illius Vim esse constaret, Leges omnes decreta atque instituta, quæ ab autore Episcopo Romano profecta sunt Prorsus abroganda censuimus.*’

Is it possible that all the clergy and nobles of the Roman kingdom can be so ignorant of their own and other men’s ignorance, as to take all the decrees of the huge volumes of their Councils for certain truths? Either they were certain in their evidence of truth, before they decree them, or not: if they were so, 1. How came the debates in the Councils

about them to be so hard, and so many to be dissenters as in many of them there were. I know where Arians or other heretics make up much of the Council, it is no wonder; but are the certainties of faith so uncertain to Catholic bishops, that a great part of them know not certain truths, till the majority of votes have told them they are certain? Have the poor dissenting bishops in Council nothing of certainty on which their own and all the poor people's faith and salvation must depend, but only this, that they are over-voted? As if the dissenters in the Council of Trent should say, 'We thought beforehand the contrary had been true; but now the Italian bishops being so numerous as to over-vote us, we will lay our own and all men's salvation on it, that we were deceived, though we have no other reason to think so.' O noble faith and certainty! It is possible one or two or three poor silly prelates may turn the scales and make up a majority, though as learned men Jansenius, Cusanus or Gerson were on the other side. And if the Jansenists' Articles were condemned or Cusanus' antipapal doctrine, lib. de Concordia, or Gerson's for the Supremacy of Councils and de Auferibilitate Papæ, they must presently believe that they were certainly deceived.

But what is become then of the contrary evidence which appeared before to these dissenters? As suppose it were in the Council of Basil about the immaculate conception of Mary; or the question whether the authority of the Pope or Council be greatest, decided there, and at Constance, and whereof at Trent the emperor and the French were of one opinion, and the Pope of another: was it evidently true before, which is made false after by a majority of votes?

2. And if all these decreed things were evident truths before the said decrees, why have we not those antecedent evidences presented to us, to convince us?

3. But if they were not evident truths before, what made those prelates conclude them for truths? Did they know them to be such without evidence? This is grosser than a presumptuous man's believing that he shall be saved because he believeth it; or their doctrine that teach men to believe the thing is true (that Christ did for them,) that thereby they may make it true; as if the object must come after the act. For then these prelates do decree that to be true, which before was false (for 'ex natura rei,' one party had

evidence of its falsehood), that so they might make it true, by decreeing that it is so.

A man might lawfully have believed his own and other men's senses, that bread is bread, till the Council at Lateran sub Innoc. 3. decreed transubstantiation. And O what a change did that Council make! All Christ's miracles were not comparable to it, if its decrees be true. From that day to this, we must renounce sense, and yet believe; we must believe that by constant miracles all Christians' senses are deceived: and so that this is the difference between Christians, infidels, and heathens, that our religion deceiveth all men's senses, (even heathens and all, if they see our Sacrament,) and their religion deceiveth no man's senses, saith the grave author of the History of the Trent Council, (Ed. Engl. p. 473,) *a better mystery was never found, than to use religion to make men insensible.*

And what is the Omnipotent power that doth this? Such a Convention as that of Trent, while with our Worcester Pate, and Olaus Magnus, they made up a great while two-and-forty things called Bishops; and after such a pack of beardless boys, and ignorant fellows, created by, and enslaved to the Pope, as Dudithius Quinqueccles. one of the Council describeth to the emperor; and which Bishop Jewel, in his letter to Sign. Scipio, saith, he took for no Council, called by no just authority, &c., where were neither the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, or Antioch, nor Abassines, nor Græcians, Armenians, Persians, Egyptians, Moors, Syrians, Indians, nor Muscovites, nor Protestants, pp. 143, 144. For, saith he after, p. 489, 'Now-a-days (merciful God!) the intent or scope of Councils is not to discover truth, or to confute falsehood: for these latter ages, this hath been the only endeavour of the Popes, to establish the Roman Tyranny; to set wars on foot, to set Christian princes together by the ears, to raise money——, to be cast into some few bellies for gluttony and lust: and this hath been the only cause or course of Councils for some ages last past.' So here.

And can the vote of a few such fellows oblige all the world to renounce all their senses, who were never obliged to it before?

And all this consisteth in PRETENDED FAITH and KNOWLEDGE, when men must take on them to know what

they do not know, and make decrees and canons, and doctrines suited to their conjectures, or rather to their carnal interests, and then most injuriously father them on God, on Christ and the Apostles.

II. And as the number of forgeries and inventions detecteth this public plague, so doth the number of persons that are guilty of it. How many such superfluities the Abassines^m (in their oft baptizings, and other trifles) and the Armenians, Syrians, Georgians, Jacobites, Maronites, the Russians, &c. are guilty of, the describers of their rights and religion tell us. Some would have the state of the Church in Gregory Ist's. days to be the model of our Reformation: (that Pope whom authors usually call the last of the good ones, and the first of the bad ones:) But is there either necessity or certainty in all the superfluities which the Churches then had, and which that great prelate's writings themselves contain? Or were there not abundance of such things then used as indifferent (of which see Socrates and Sozomen in the chapters of Easter,) and must all their indifferents be now made necessary to the Church's concord and communion? and all their uncertainties become certainties to us? Some will have the present Greek Church to be the standard; but alas, poor men, how many of these uncertainties, crudities and superfluities are cherished among them by the unavoidable ignorance which is caused by their oppressions? To say no more of Rome, O that the Reformed Churches themselves had been more innocent. But how few of them unite on the terms of simple Christianity and certainties? Had not Luther after all his zeal for Reformation, retained some of this leaven, he could better have endured the dissent of Zuinglius, Carolostadius and Oecolampadius about the Sacrament. And if his followers had not

^m And yet saith Zaga-Zabo in *Dannian a Goes*, p. 226. *Nec Patriarcha nec Episcopi nostri, per se, nec in Conciliis putant aut opinantur ulla leges se condere posse, quibus ad mortale peccatum obligari quis posset.* And p. 231. *Indignum est peregrinos Christianos tam acriter et hostiliter reprehendi ut ego de hac re (de delectu ciborum) et de aliis, quæ minimè ad fidem veram spectabant reprehensus fui; sed multo consultius, fuerit, hujusmodi Christianos homines sive Græcos, sive Armenos sive Æthiopes, sive ex quavis Septem Christianarum Ecclesiarum in charitate et Christi amplexibus sustinere, et eos sine contumeliis permittere, inter alios fratres Christianos vivere ac versari; quoniam omnes filii baptismi sumus, et de vera fide unanimiter sentimus. Nec est eausa cur tam acriter de ceremoniis disceptetur nisi ut unusquisque suas observet, sine odio et infectatione aliorum, nec commercii Ecclesiae ob id excludendus, est, &c.* *Learu of a ceremonious Abassine.*

kept up the same superfluities, they had never so torn the Churches by their animosities, nor resisted and wearied peaceable Melanchthon, nor frustrated so many Conventions and Treatises for Concord, as they have done. Bucer had not been so censured; agreement had not been made so impossible: all Dury's travels had not been made so ineffectual. Schlüsselbergius had not found so many heresies to fill up his catalogue with; nor Calovius so much matter for his virulent pen; nor so many equalled Calvinism with Turcism: nor had Calixtus had such scornful satires written against him; nor the great peace-makers, Lud. Crocius, Bergii, Martinus, Camero, Amyraldus, Testardus, Capellus, Placæus Davenant, Ward, Hall, and now Le Blanc, had so little acceptance and success. Had it not been for this spreading plague, (the over-valuing of our own understandings, and the accounting our crude conceits for certainties) all these Church wars had been prevented or soon ended: all those excellent endeavours for peace had been more successful, and we had all been one.

Had it not been for this, neither Arminians nor anti-Arminians had ever so bitterly contended, nor so sharply censured one another, nor written so many confident condemning volumes against each other, which in wise men's eyes do more condemn the authors; and SELF-CONCEIT, OR PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE should have been the title of them all. How far I am able to prove that almost all their bitter and zealous contentions are about uncertainties, and words, the reader may perceive in my preface to the Gro-tian Religion, and if God will, I shall more fully manifest to the worldⁿ. The synod of Dort had not had so great a work of it, nor the Breme and Britain Divines so difficult a task, to bring and hold them to that moderation of expressions which very laudably they have done: one of the noblest successful attempts for peace, though little noted, which these ages have made.

In a word, almost all the contentions of divines, the sects and factions, the unreconciled feuds, the differences in religion which have been the harvest of the devil and his emissaries in the world, have come from pretended knowledge and taking uncertainties for certain truths.

I will not meddle with the particular impositions of

ⁿ Since done in "Catholic Theology."

princes and prelates; not so much as with the German interim: nor the oaths which in some places they take to their synodical decrees; much less will I meddle at all with any impositions, oaths, subscriptions, declarations, or usages of the kingdom where I live. As the law forbiddeth me to contradict them, so I do not at all here examine or touch them, but wholly pass them by; which I tell the reader once for all, that he may know how to interpret all that I say. Nor is it the error of rulers that I primarily detect, but of human corrupted nature, and all sorts of men: though where such an error prevaieth, alas, it is of far sadder consequence in a public person, a magistrate, or a pastor, that presumeth to the hurt of public societies, than of a private man, who erreth almost to himself alone.

I profess to thee, reader, that (next to God's so much deserting so great a part of this world) there is nothing under the sun, of all the affairs of mankind, that hath so taken up my thoughts with mixtures of indignation, wonder, pity and solicitude for a cure, as this one vice; A PROUD OR UNHUMBLED UNDERSTANDING, by which men live in PRETENDED KNOWLEDGE and FAITH, to the deceit of themselves and others, the bitter censuring and persecuting of Dissenters, yea of their modest suspending brethren, tear churches and kingdoms, and will give no peace, nor hopes of peace to themselves, their neighbours, or the world! Lord! Is there no remedy, no hope from thee, though there is none from man?

1. Among divines themselves, that should not only have knowledge enough to know their own ignorance, but to guide the people of God into the ways of truth, and love, and peace; O how lamentably doth this vice prevail! To avoid all offence, I will not here at all touch on the case of any that are supposed to have a hand in any of the sufferings of me, and others of my mind; or of any that in points of conformity differ from me: remember that I meddle not with them at all. But even those that do no way differ among themselves as sect and sect, or at least, that at all pretend to principles of forbearance, gentleness and peace, yet are woefully sick of this disease.

And yet that I may wrong none, I will premise this public declaration to the world, that in the country where I lived, God in great mercy cast my lot among a company of

so humble, peaceable, faithful ministers and people, as free from this vice as any that ever I knew in the world ; who, as they kept up full concord among themselves, without the least disagreement that I remember, and kept out sects and heresies from the people ; so their converse was the joy of my life, and the remembrance of it will be sweet to me while I live ; and especially the great success of our labours, and the quiet and concord of our several flocks, which was promoted by the pastors' humility and concord. Though we kept up constant disputations, none of them ever turned to spleen, or displeasure, or discord among us.

And I add, in thankfulness to God, that I am now acquainted with many ministers in and about London, of greatest note, and labour, and patience, and success, who are of the same spirit, humble and peaceable, and no confident troublers of the churches with their censoriousness, and high esteem of their own opinions : who trade only in the simple truths of Christianity, and love a Christian as a Christian, and join not with backbiters nor factious, self-conceited men, but study only to win souls to Christ, and to live according to the doctrine which they preach : and both the former and these, have these ten ° years since they were ejected, continued their humility and peaceableness, fearing God and honouring the king.

And I further add, that those private Christians with whom I most converse, are many of them of the same strain, suspecting their own understandings, and speaking evil of no man so forwardly as of themselves.

So that in these ministers and people of my most intimate acquaintance, experience convinceth me, that this grand disease of corrupted nature is curable ; and that God hath a people in the world, that have learned of Christ to be meek and lowly, who have the wisdom from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and the fruit of mercy is sown in peace of these peacemakers. I see in them a true conformity to Christ, and a grand difference between them and the furious, fiery pretenders to more wisdom ; and the two sorts of wise men and wisdom excellently described by James chap. iii. I have seen in two sorts of religious people among us, most happily exemplified before our eyes. God hath a

° Now it is above twenty-two years that they have been ejected, 1684.

people that truly honour him in the world. But O that they were more ! And O that they were more perfect ! Alas ! what a number are there that are otherwise !

Even among divines this plague is most pernicious, as being of most public influence. Take him that never had a natural acuteness of wit, nor is capable of judging of difficult points, if he be but of long standing, and grey hairs, and can preach well to the people, and have studied long ; he is not only confident of his fitness to judge of that which he never understood, but his reputation of wisdom, must be kept up among the people by his supercilious talking against what he understandeth not ^p. Yea, if he be one that never macerated his flesh with the difficult and long studies of the matter, without which hard points will never be well digested and distinctly understood ; yet, if he be a doctor, and have lived long in a reputation for wisdom, his ignorant, flashy conjectures, and hasty, superficial apprehensions, must needs go for the more excellent knowledge. And if you put him to make good any of his contradictions to the truth, his magisterial contempt, or his uncivil wrath, and unmannerly interruptions of you in your talk, must go for reason : and if he cannot resist the strength of your evidence, he cannot bear the hearing of it ; but like a scold, rather than a scholar, taketh your words out of your mouth before you come to the end ; as if he said, ‘ Hold your tongue, and hear me who am wiser : I came to teach, and not to hear.’ If you tell him how uncivil it is, not patiently to hear you to the end, he thinks you wrong him, and are too bold to pretend to a liberty to speak without interruption : or he will tell you that you ‘ are too long ; he cannot remember all at once.’ If you reply that the sense of the former part of a speech usually depends much on the latter part, and he cannot have your sense till he have all ; and that he must not answer, before he understandeth you ; and that if his memory fail, he should take notes ; and that to have uninterrupted turns of speaking, is necessary in the order of all sober conferences, without which they will be but noise and strife ; he will let you know that he came not to hear, or keep any laws of order or civility, but to have a combat with you for the reputation of wisdom or orthodoxy : and

^p Yea, now it is also young, ignorant novices that are sick of the same feverish temerity.

what he wants in reason and evidence, he will make up in ignorant confidence and reviling, and call you by some ill name or other, that shall go for a confutation.

But yet this is not the usual way: it is too great a hazard to the reputation of their wisdom, to cast it on a dispute. The common way is, never to speak to the person himself; but if any one cross their conceits, or become the object of their envy, they backbite him among those that reverence their wisdom; and when they are sure that he is far enough out of hearing, they tell their credulous followers, 'O such a man holdeth unsound or dangerous opinions! Take heed how you hear him or read his writings; this or that heresy they savour of;' when the poor man knoweth not what he talketh of. And if any one have the wit to say to him, 'Sir, he is neither so sottish, nor so proud as to be incapable of instruction; if you are so much wiser than he, why do you not teach him?' he will excuse his omission and commission together with a further calumny, and say, 'These erroneous persons will hear no reason: it is in vain.' If he be asked, 'Sir, did you ever try?' it is likely he must confess that he did not, unless some magisterial rebuke once went for evidence of truth. If the hearers, (which is rare) have so much Christian wit and honesty, as to say, 'Sir, ministers above all men must be no backbiters, nor unjust: You know it is unlawful for us to judge another man, till we hear him speak for himself. If you would have us know whether he or you be in the right, let us hear you both together:' his answer would be like Cardinal Turnon at the conference at Poisie, and as the Papists' ordinarily is, 'It is dangerous letting heretics speak to the people, and it agreeth not with our zeal for God, to hear such odious things uttered against the truth.'

In a word, there are more that have the spirit of a pope in the world, than one, even among them that cry out against Popery; and that would be fain to be taken for the dictators of the world, whom none must dissent from, much less contradict. And there are more idolaters than heathens, who would have their ignorant understandings to be instead of God, the uncontrolled director of all about them.

But if these men have not any confidence in their self-sufficiency, if they can but embody in a society of their minds, or gather into a synod, he must needs go for a proud

and arrogant schismatic at least, that will set any reason and evidence of truth, against their magisterial ignorance, when it is the major vote.

The very truth is, the great Benefactor of the World hath not been pleased to dispense his benefits equally, but with marvellous disparity. As he is the God of nature, he hath been pleased to give a natural capacity for judiciousness and acuteness in difficult speculations but to few. And as he is the Lord of all, he hath not given men equal education, nor advantages for such extraordinary knowledge : nor have all that have leisure and capacity, self-denial and patience enough for so long and difficult studies. But the devil and ourselves have given to all men pride enough, to desire to be thought to be wiser and better than we are ; and he that cannot be equal with the wisest and best, would be thought to be so : and while all men must needs seem wise, while few are so indeed, you may easily see what must thence follow.

2. And it is not divines only, but all ranks of people, who are sick of this disease. The most unlearned, ignorant people, the silliest women, if they will not for shame say that they are wiser than their teachers in general, yet when it cometh to particular cases, they take themselves to be always in the right : and O how confident are they of it ! And who more peremptory and bold in their judgments, than those that least know what they say ? It is hard to meet with a person above eighteen or twenty years of age, that is not notably tainted with this malady.

And it is not only these great mischiefs in matters of religion which spring from self-conceitedness ; but even in our common converse, it is the cause of disorder, ruin and destruction : for it is the common vice of blinded nature, and it is rare to meet with one that is not notably guilty of it, when they are past the state of professed learners.

1. It is ordinary for self-conceited persons to ruin their own estates, and healths, and lives. When they are rashly making ill bargains, or undertaking things which they understand not, they rush on till they find their error too late ; and their poverty, prisons or ruined families, must declare their sin : for they have not humility enough to seek counsel in time, nor to take it when it is offered them. What great numbers have I heard begging relief from others, under the confession of this sin ! And far more, even the

most of men and women, overthrow their health, and lose their lives by it. Experience doth not suffice to teach them what is hurtful to their bodies; and as they know not, so you cannot convince them that they know not. Most persons by the excess in quantity of food, do suffocate nature, and lay the foundation of future maladies: and most of the diseases that kill men untimely, are but the effects of former gluttony or excess. But as long as they feel not any present hurt, no man can persuade them but their fulness is for their health, as well as for their pleasure. They will laugh, perhaps, at those that tell them what they do, and what diseases they are preparing for. Let physicians, if they be so honest, tell them, 'It is the perfection of the nutritive juices, the blood and nervous oil, which are the causes of health in man. Perfect concoction causeth that perfection. Nature cannot perfectly concoct too much, or that which is of too hard digestion. While you feel no harm, your blood groweth dispirited, and being but half concocted, and half blood, doth perform its office accordingly by the halves; till crudities are heaped up, and obstructions fixed, and a dunghill of excrements, or the dispirited humours are ready to take in any disease, which a small occasion offereth; either agues, fevers, coughs, consumptions, pleurisies, dropsies, cholics and windiness, headachs, convulsions, &c., or till the inflammations or other tumours of the inward parts, or the torment of the stone in the reins or bladder, do sharply tell men what they have been doing. A clean body and perfect concoction, which are procured by temperance and bodily labours, which suscite the spirits, and purify the blood, are the proper means which God in the course of nature hath appointed, for a long and healthful life.'

This is all true, and the reason is evident; and yet this talk will be but despised and derided by the most; and they will say, 'I have so long eaten what I loved, and lived by no such rules as these, and I have found no harm by it.' Yea, if excess have brought diseases on them, if abstinence do but make them more to feel them, they will rather impute their illness to the remedy, than to the proper cause: and so they do about the quality as well as the quantity. Self-conceitedness maketh men incurable. Many an one have I known that daily lived in that fulness which I saw would shortly quench the vital spirits; and fain I would

have saved their lives, but I was not able to make them willing. Had I seen another assault them, I could have done somewhat for them ; but when I foresaw their death, I could not save them from themselves. They still said, they found their measures of eating and drinking between meals refresh them, and they were the worse if they forbore it ; and they would not believe me against both appetite, reason and experience. And thus have I seen abundance of my acquaintance wilfully hasten to the grave ; and all through an unhumbled, self-conceited understanding, which would not be brought to suspect itself, and know its error.

2. And O how often have I seen the dearest friends thus kill their friends ; even mothers kill their dearest children, and too often their husbands, kindred, servants and neighbours, by their self-conceit, and confidence in their ignorance and error ! Alas, what abundance empty their own houses, gratify covetous landlords, and set their lands by lives, and bring their dearest relations to untimely ends, and a wise man knoweth not how to hinder them ! How often and often have I heard ignorant women confidently persuade even their own children to eat as long as they have an appetite, and so they have vitiated their blood and humours in their childhood, that their lives have been either soon ended, or ever after miserable by diseases ! How often have I heard them persuade sick or weak, diseased persons, to eat, eat, eat, and take what they have a mind to, when, unless they would poison them, or cut their throats, they could scarcely more certainly dispatch them ! How often have these good women been persuading myself, that eating and drinking more would make me better, and that it is abstinence that causeth all my illness, (when excess in my childhood causeth it :) as if every wise woman that doth but know me, knew better what is good for me, than myself, after threescore years experience, or than all the physicians in the city ! And had I obeyed them, how many years ago had I been dead !

How ordinary is it for such self-conceited women to obtrude their skill and medicines on their sick neighbours, with the greatest confidence, when they know not what they do ! Yea, upon their husbands and children ! One can scarcely come about sick persons, but one woman or other is persuading them to take that, or do that which is likely

to kill them. Many and many, when they have brought their children to the grave, have nothing to say but 'I thought this or that had been best for them.'

But you will say, 'They do it in love; they mean no harm.' I answer, so false teachers deceive souls in love. But are you content yourselves to be killed by love? If I must be killed, I had rather an enemy did it than a friend; I would not have such have the guilt or grief. Love will not save men's lives, if you give them that which tends to kill them.

But you will say, 'We can be no wiser than we are: if we do the best we can, what can we do more?'

I answer, I would have you not think yourselves wiser than you are: I would write over this word five hundred times, if that would cure you. About matters of diet and medicines, and health, this is it that I would have you do to save you from killing yourselves and your relations; 1. Pretend not to know upon the report of such as yourselves, or in matters that are difficult and beyond your skill; or where you have not had long consideration and experience. Meddle with no medicining, but what in common easy cases, the common judgment of physicians, and common experience have taught you.

2. If you have not money to pay physicians and apothecaries, tell them so, and desire them to give you their counsel freely, and take not on you to know more than they that have studied and practised it all the riper part of their lives.

3. Suspect your understandings, and consider how much there may be unknown to you, in the secrecy and variety of diseases, difference of temperatures, and the like, which may make that hurtful which you conceit is good. Therefore do nothing rashly, and in self-conceited confidence, but upon the best advice ask the physician whether your medicines and rules are safe.

4. And be sure that you do rather too little than too much. What abundance are there, especially in the small-pox and fevers, that would have escaped, if women, (yea, and physicians) would have let them alone, that die because that nature had not leave to cure them, being disturbed by mistaken usages or medicines. Diseases are so various and

secret, and remedies so uncertain, that the wisest man alive, that hath studied and practised it almost all his riper days (were it an hundred years), must confess that physic is a hard, a dark, uncertain work, and ordinary cases, much more extraordinary, have somewhat in them which doth surpass his skill: and how then come so many medicining women to know more than they?

But you will say, 'We see that many miscarry by physicians, and they speed worst that use them most.'

I answer. But would they not yet speed worse, if they used you as much? If they are too ignorant, how came you to be wiser? If you are, teach them your skill.

But I must add, that even physicians' guilt of the sin which I am reprovng, doth cost many hundred persons their lives, as well as yours. Even too many physicians, who have need of many days' inquiry and observations, truly to discover a disease, do kill men by rash and hasty judging, (I talk not of the cheating sort, that take on them to know all by the urine alone, but of honest and wiser men.) It is most certain that old Celsus saith, that a physician is not able faithfully to do his office, for very many patients: a few will take up all his time. But they that gape most after money, must venture upon a short sight, and a few words, and presently resolve before they know, and write down their directions while they are ignorant of one half; which if they knew, would change their counsels! And such is man's body and its diseases, that the oversight and ignorance of one thing among twenty, is likely enough to be the patient's death. And how wise, expedient and vigilant must he be, that will commit no such killing oversight!

And as too many medicine a man whom they know not, and an unknown disease, for want of just deliberation; so too many venture upon uncertain and untried medicines, or rashly give that to one in another case, which hath profited others. In a word, even rash physicians have cause to fear lest by prefidence and hasty judging, more should die by their mistakes than do by murderers, that I say not by soldiers in the world: and lest their dearest friend should speed worse by them, than their greatest enemies. For as seamen and soldiers do boldly follow the trade, when they find that in several voyages and battles they have escaped;

but yet most or very many of them are drowned or killed at the last ; so he that is tampering overmuch with medicines, may escape well and boast of the success awhile : but at last one bloodletting, one vomit, one purge or other medicine may miscarry by a small mistake or accident, and he is gone ! And there are some persons so civil, that if a rash or unexperienced physician be their kinsman, friend, or neighbour, they will not go to an abler man, lest they be accounted unfriendly, and disoblige him ; and if such escape long with their lives, they may thank God's mercy, and not their own wisdom. Soldiers kill enemies, and unskilful, rash physicians kill their friends !

But you will say, ' They do their best, and they can do no more.' I answer as before, 1. Let them not think that they know what they do not know : but sufficiently suspect their own understandings. 2. Let them not go beyond their knowledge : How little of our kind of physic did the old physicians (Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, &c.) give ? Do not too much. 3. Venture not rashly without full search, deliberation, counsel and experience. O how many die by hasty judging, and rash mistakes ! Physicians must pardon my free speaking, or endure it ; for I conceive it necessary. It hath not been the least part of the calamity of my life to see my friends and other worthy persons killed by the ignorance or hastiness of physicians : I greatly reverence and honour those few that are men of clear, searching, judicious heads ; of great reading, especially of other men's experiences ; of great and long experience of their own ; of present sagacity and ready memory to use their own experiments ; of conscience and caution to suspect, and know before they hastily judge and practise. I would I could say that such are not too few. But I must say to the people, as you love your lives take heed of all the rest : a highway robber you may avoid or resist with greater probability of safety, than such men. How few are they that are killed by thieves or in duels, in comparison of those that are killed by physicians ; especially confident young men that account themselves wits, and think they may hit on such philosophical principles as will better secure both their practice and reputation than old physicians' doctrine and experience could do ! Confident young men of unhumbléd understandings, presently trust their undigested thoughts, and

rashly use their poor, short experiments, and trust to their new conceptions of the reasons of all operations; and then they take all others for mere empirics in comparison of them: and when all is done, their pretended reason for want of full experience and judgment to improve it, doth but enable them to talk and boast, and not to heal; and when they have killed men, they can justify it, and prove that they did it rationally, or rather that it was something else, and not their error that was the cause. They are wits and men of rare inventions; and therefore are not such fools as to confess the fact. How often have I seen men of great worth, such as few in an age arise to, who having a high esteem of an injudicious, unexperienced physician, have sealed their erroneous kindness with their blood! How often have I seen worthy persons destroyed by a pernicious medicine, contrary to what the nature of the disease required, who without a physician might have done well! Such sorrows now upon me, make me the more plain and copious in the case. And yet, alas, I see no hope of amendment probable! For, 1. Many hundred ministers being forbidden to preach the Gospel, and cast out of all their livelihood, for not promising, asserting, swearing, and doing all that is required of them; many of these think that necessity alloweth them to turn physicians, which they venture on upon seven years' study; when seven, and seven, and seven, is not enough, though advantaged by the help of other men's experiments. 2. And others rush on practice in their youth, partly because they have not yet knowledge enough to discern uncertainties and difficulties in the art, or to see what is further necessary to be known: and partly, because they think that seeing skill must be got by experience, use must help them to that experience; and all men must have a beginning. 3. And when they do their best, they say, God requireth no more. 4. And they hope if they kill one, they cure many. But O that they had the sobriety to consider, 1. That the physician is but one man; and will his maintenance or livelihood excuse him for killing many? 2. That even one man's life is more precious than one man's maintenance, or fuller supply, is it not honester to beg your bread? 3. That killing men by virtue of your trade without danger to you, doth but hinder your repentance, but not so much extenuate your sin as many think: which is aggravated

in that you kill your friends that trust you, and not enemies that oppose you or avoid you. 4. Your experience must not be got by killing men, but by accompanying experienced physicians till you are fit to practise: and if you cannot stay so long for want of maintenance, beg rather than kill men, or betake you to some other trade.

But if you be too proud or confident to take such counsel, I still advise all that love their lives, that they choose not a physician under forty years old at least, and if it may be, not under sixty, unless it be for some little disease or remedy, which hath no danger, and where they can do no harm, if they do no good: old men may be ignorant, but young men must needs be so for want of experience, though some few rare persons are sooner ripe than others.

And whereas they say that they 'cure more than they kill;' I wish that I had reason to believe them: I suppose that if more of their patients did not live than die, they would soon lose their practice: but it is likely the far greatest part of those that live, would have lived without them, and perhaps have been sooner and easier cured, if nature had not by them been disturbed.

And what calling is there in which hasty judging and conceits of more knowledge than men have, doth make great confusion and disappointment? If a fool that rageth and is confident, be a pilot, woe to the poor seamen and passengers in the ship. If such a one be a commander in an army, his own and other men's blood or captivity, must cure his confidence, and stay his rage. For such will learn at no cheaper a rate. How often hear we such workmen, carpenters, masons, &c., raging confident that their way is right, and their work well done, till the ruin of it confute and shame them!

If this disease take hold of governors, who will not stay to hear all parties, and know the truth, but take up reports on trust, from those that please or flatter them, or judge presently before impartial trial, and hearing all, woe to the land that is so governed! The wisest and the best man must have due information and time, patience and consideration to receive it, or else he may do as David between Mephibosheth and Ziba, and cannot be just.

What an odious thing is a partial, blind, rash, hasty and impatient judge, that cannot hear, think and know before he judgeth! Such the old Christians had to do with among

their persecutors, who knew not what they held, or what they were, and yet could judge them, and cruelly execute them. And such were Tacitus and other old historians, that from common prejudice spake words of contempt or reproach of them. The Christians were glad when they had a Trajan, an Antonine, an Alexander Severus, &c. to speak to, that had reason and sobriety to hear their cause. Among the Papists, the old reformers and martyrs took him for a very commendable judge or magistrate, that would but allow them a patient hearing, and give them leave to speak for themselves. Truth and godliness have so much evidence, and such a testimony for themselves in the conscience of mankind, as that the devil could never get them so odiously thought of, and so hardly used in the world, but only by keeping them unknown, which is much by expelling and silencing their defenders, (who speed well sometimes if an Obadiah hide them by fifties in a cave,) and by tempting their judges to hear but some superficial narrative of their cause, and to have but a 'glimpse of the outside as in transitu,' and to see only the back parts of it, yea but the clothing; which is commonly such as are made by its enemies; good men and causes are too often brought to them, and set out by them, as Christ with his scarlet robe, his reed and crown of thorns, and then they say, "Behold the man!" and when they have cried out, "Blasphemy, and an enemy to Cæsar!" they write over his cross in scorn, "The King of the Jews." Cain had not patience to hear his own brother, and weigh the case; no not after that God had admonished him: but he must first hate and murder, and afterwards consider why, when it is too late. Judas must know his Master's innocency, and what he had done, in despair to hang himself. And so wise Ahithophel cometh to his end. If David would have pondered his usage of Uriah as much in time as he did when Nathan had awakened his reason, O what had he prevented! If Paul had weighed before, the case of Christians, as he did when Christ did stop his rage, he had not incurred the guilt of persecution, and the martyrs' blood: but he tells us that he was exceedingly mad against them: and it is madness indeed to venture on cruelty and persecution, and not stay first to understand the cause, and consider why, and what is likely to be the end.

How ordinary in the world are the most excellent men on

earth, for wisdom and holiness, such as Ignatius, Cyprian, and the rest of the ancient martyrs; and such as Athanasius, Chrysostom, &c., reviled and used as if they were the basest rogues on earth, laid in gaols, banished, silenced, murdered; and all this by men that know not what they are, and have no true understanding of their cause! Men of whom the world was not worthy, wandered up and down in dens, and caves, and suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods, yea and death itself, (Heb. xi.) from men that judged before they knew! Many a great man and judge that hath condemned Christ's ministers as heretics, false teachers, unworthy to preach the Gospel, have been such as understand not their baptism, creed or catechism, and have need of many years' teaching to make them know truly but those principles that every child should know. There needs no great learning, wisdom, sobriety or honesty to teach them to cry out, 'You are a rogue, a seducer, a heretic, a schismatic, disobedient, seditious; or, Away with such a fellow from the earth; it is not fit that he should live; (Acts xxii. 22. and xxi. 26;) or, Away with him, crucify him, give us Barabbas; or to say, We have found this man a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, a leader of a sect, that teacheth contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, &c.' But patience, till the cause were fully tried, and all things heard and equally weighed, would prevent most of this!

I know that ignorance and weakness of judgment is the common calamity of mankind; and there is no hope of curing us by unity in high degrees of knowledge. And though teachers are and must be a great stay to ignorant learners, yet, alas, how can they tell which are the wisest teachers, and whom to choose? When all pretend to wisdom, and no man can judge of that which he neither hath nor knoweth; and even the Roman sect, who pretend most to infallibility, have so exceeded all men in their error, as to make it a part of religion, necessary to our possessions, communion, dominion, and salvation, to maintain the falsehood of God's natural revelations to the senses of all sound men in the world. How shall one that would learn philosophy know in this age, what sect to follow, or what guide to choose? Hence is our calamity; and the remedy will be but imperfect till the time of perfection come.

But yet we are not remediless. 1. If men would but well

lay in, hold fast, love, and faithfully improve the few necessary essential principles: 2. If they would make them a rule in trying what is built upon them; and receive nothing that certainly contradicteth them: 3. If they would stay, think and try, till their thoughts are well digested, and all is heard, before they take in doubtful things: 4. If they will carry themselves as humble learners to those whose wisdom is conspicuous by its proper light, especially the concordant pastors of the Churches: 5. And if they will not quarrel with truth for every difficulty which they understand not, but humbly, as learners, suspect their own wit, till their teachers have helped them in a leisurely and faithful trial; by such means the mischief of error and rashness might be much avoided.

In common matters, necessity and undeniable experience doth somewhat rebuke and restrain this vice. If children should set their wits against their parents, or scholars presently dispute with their masters, nature and the rod would rebuke their pride and folly. If they that never used a trade, should presently take themselves to be as wise as the longest practisers, who would be apprentices? And if an unskilful musician, painter, poet, or other such like, shall be confident that he is as good at his work as any, standers-by will not easily cherish his folly, as being not blinded by his self-love. A good workman shall have most praise and practice. Buyers will convince the ignorant boasters, by forsaking such men's shops: as it is with self-conceited, ignorant writers, who are restrained by the people, that will not buy and read their books. And usually good and bad judges, magistrates, lawyers, soldiers, pilots, artificers, are discerned by most that are capable of judging; because,

1. These are matters where the common sense of mankind doth render them somewhat capable of judging, and save them from deceit.
2. And here is not usually such deep and long plots and endeavours to deceive, as in matters of speculation, and especially religion and policy there is. And the devil is not so concerned and industrious to deceive men in matters of so low importance.
4. And if one be deceived, many are ready to rectify him.
5. And men's interest here is better understood in bodily matters, and they are not so willing to be deceived. A poor man can easily discern between a charitable man and an uncharitable; between a merciful and an oppressing landlord. We discern between

diligent and slothful servants; but in matters that are above our reach, which we must take on trust, and know not whom to trust, the difficulty is greater: where the errors and haste of either party will breed mischief, but much more of both. If the physician, or other undertaker be confident in his error, and precipitant, he will impose ruin on men's health, as I have said: and if the patient be self-conceited and rash in his choice, he is likely to suffer for it; but when both physician and patient are so, what hope of escape! And especially when through the great imperfection of man's understanding, not one of a multitude is clear and skilful in things that are beyond the reach of sense: and if one man, after great experience, come to be wiser than the rest, the hearer knoweth it not, and he must cast out his notions among as many assailing warriors, as there are ignorant self-conceited hearers present, and that is usually as there are persons. And when every one hath poured out his confidence against it, and perhaps reproached the author as erroneous, because he will know more than they, and will not reverence their known mistakes; alas! how shall the person that we would instruct (be it for health or soul), be able to know which of all these to trust as wisest?

But the saddest work is that forementioned, in churches, kingdoms, families and souls. I must expect that opening the crime will exasperate the guilty: but what remedy? 1. Should I largely open what work this maketh in families, I have too much matter for the complaint. If the wife differ from the husband, she seemeth always in the right: if the servant differ from the master, and the child from the parent, if a little past infancy, they are always in the right: what is the contention in families, and in all the world, but who shall have his way and will? If they are of several parties in religion, or if any be against religion itself; if they be foolish, erroneous, or live in any sin, that can without utter impudence be defended, still they are able to make it good: and except children at school, or others that professedly go to be taught, whom can we meet with so ignorant or mistaken, that will not still think, when even superiors differ from them and reprove them, that they are in the right?

2. And what mischiefs doth it cause in churches! When the Papal tyrannical part are so confident that they are in the right, that when they silence preachers, and imprison

and burn Christians, they think it not their duty so much as to hear what they have to say for themselves. Or if they hear a few words, they have not the patience to hear all, or impartially to try the cause: but they are so full of themselves and overwise, that it must seem without any more ado a crime to dissent from them, or contradict them. And thus proud self-conceitedness smiteth the shepherds, scattereth the flocks, and will allow the Church of Christ no unity or peace. And the popular crowd are usually or often as self-conceited in their way; and if they never so unreasonably oppose their teachers, how hard it is to make them know or once suspect that they are mistaken! O what mutinies in Christ's armies, what schisms, what confusions, what scandals, what persecutions in the Church, what false accusations, what groundless censures, do proud self-conceited understandings cause!

But scarcely any where is it more lamentably seen than among injudicious, unexperienced ministers! What work is made in the Christian world, by sect against sect, and party against party, in cases of controversy, by most men's bold and confident judging of what they never truly studied, tried or understood! Papists against Protestants, Protestants against Papists, Lutherans (or Arminians) and Calvinists, &c. usually charge one another by bare hearsay, or by a few sentences or scraps collected out of their writings by their adversaries; contrary to the very scope of the whole discourse or context. And men cannot have leisure to peruse the books, and to know before they judge. And then they think that seeing their reverend doctors have so reported their adversaries before them, it is arrogance or injury to think that they knew not what they said, or else belied them. And on such supposition the false judging doth go on. Of all the pulpits that often trouble the people with invectives against this side or that, especially in the controversies of Predestination, Grace, and Freewill, how few do we hear that know what they talk against!

Yea, those young or unstudied men, who might easily be conscious how little they know, are ready to oppose and condemn the most ancient studied divines; when if ever they would be wise men, they should continue scholars to such, even while they are teachers of the people.

I will not presume to open the calamities of the world,

for want of rulers truly knowing their subjects' case, but judging hastily by the reports of adversaries: but that rebellions ordinarily hence arise I may boldly say. When subjects that know not the reasons of their ruler's actions, are so overwise as to make themselves judges of that which concerneth them not: and how few be they that think not themselves wiser than all their guides and governors!

And lastly, by this sin it is that the wisdom of the wisest is as lost to the world: for let a man know never so much more than others, after the longest, hardest studies, the self-conceitedness of the ignorant riseth up against it, or maketh them incapable of receiving it, so that he can do little good to others.

I conclude again, that this is the plague and misery of mankind, and the cause of all sin and shame and ruin,—that ignorant, unhumbled understandings will be still judging rashly before they have thoroughly tried the case, and will not suspend till they are capable of judging, nor be convinced that they know not what they know not, but be confident in their first or ungrounded apprehensions.

CHAP. XI.

The Signs and common Discoveries of a proud, self-conceited Understanding, and of pretended Knowledge.

By such effects as these, the most of men do show their guilt of overvaluing their own apprehensions.

1. When they will be confident of things that are quite above their understandings, or else which they never thoroughly studied. Some are confident of that which no man knoweth; and most are confident of that which I think they are unlikely to be certain of themselves, without miraculous inspiration, which they give us no reason to believe that they have. Things that cannot ordinarily be known, 1. Without the preparation of many other sciences, 2. or without reading many books, 3. or without reading or hearing what is said against it, 4. or at least without long or serious studies; we have abundance that will talk most peremptorily of them, upon the trust of their teachers or party, without any of this necessary means of knowledge.

2. The hastiness of men's conclusions discovereth this presumption and self-conceit. When at the first hearing or reading, or after a few thoughts they are as confident, as if they had grown old in studies; the best understandings must have long time to discern the evidence of things difficult, and a longer time to try that evidence by comparing it with what is brought against it: and yet a longer time to digest truths into that order and clearness of apprehension, which is necessary to distinct and solid knowledge, when without all this ado, most at the first lay hold of that which cometh in their way: and there they stick, at least till a more esteemed teacher or party tell them somewhat that is contrary to it. It is but few of our first apprehensions that are sound, and need not reformation; but none that are well-digested, and need not much consideration to perfect them.

3. Is it not a plain discovery of a presumptuous understanding, when men will confidently conclude of things, which their own tongues are forced to confess that they do not understand? I mean not only so as to give an accurate definition of them, but really not to know what it is they talk of. Many a zealous Anabaptist I have known, that knoweth not what baptism is. And many a one that hath disputed confidently for or against freewill, that knew not at all what freewill is. And many a one that hath disputed about the Lord's-supper, and separated from almost all churches for want of sufficient strictness in it, and especially for giving it to the ignorant; who, upon examination, have not known the true nature of a sacrament, nor of the sacred covenant which it sealeth. Many a one forsaketh most churches as no churches, that they may be of a right constituted church, who know not what a church is. What abundance will talk against an Arminian, a Calvinist, a Prelatist, a Presbyterian, an Independent; that really know not what any of them are? Like a gentleman, the other day, that after long talk of the Presbyterians, being urged to tell what a Presbyterian was, could tell no more, but that he was one that is not so merry and sociable as other men, but stricter against sports, or taking a cup. And if I should tell you how few that can judge the controversies about predestination, do know what they talk of it, were easy to evince it.

4. May I not discern their previdence, when men that hold contraries, five men of five inconsistent opinions, are

yet every one confident that his own is right? When at best it is but one that can be right? When six men confidently expound a text in the Revelation six ways. When five men are so confident of five several ways of Church-government, that they embody themselves into several policies or parties to enjoy them. Is not here self-conceitedness in all, at least save one?

5. When men themselves by turning from opinion to opinion, shall confess their opinion was false; and yet made a religion of it, while they held it; was not this a presumptuous understanding? When a man shall be one year of one sect, and another of another, and yet always confident that he is in the right.

6. When men that are known to be ignorant in other parts of religion, shall yet in some one opinion which they have espoused, seem to themselves much wiser than their teachers, and make nothing of the judgments of those that have studied it many a year, is not this a presuming mind? Take the ablest divine that ever you knew living, suppose him to be Jewel, Andrews, Usher, Davenant, Calvin, Chamier, Camero, Amesius, Gataker, &c. Let him be one that all learned men admire, whose judgment is sent for from several kingdoms; who hath spent a long life in hard and very successful studies, every boy and silly woman, every ignorant vicious clown, that differeth from him in any point, shall slight all the wisdom of this man, as if in comparison of himself he were a fool. Let it come but to the point of anabaptistry, separation, antinomianism, yea, the grossest opinions of the Quakers, and what senseless fellow is not much wiser than all these divines! And they will pity him as a poor, carnal, ignorant person, which hath not the teaching of God which they have. Yea, let him but seek to draw a sensualist from his voluptuousness, this poor sot doth presently take himself to be the wiser man, and can prove all his gaming, his idleness, his wantonness, his precious time wasted in plays and long feasting, his gluttony, his tippling, his prodigal wastefulness to be all lawful things, whatever the learned pastor say.

But why do not such men suspect their understandings, and consider with themselves, what likelihood is there, that men as holy as I, that have studied it all their days, should not be wiser than I, that never searched as they have done?

Doth not God say, "He that seeketh, shall find;" and wisdom must be laboriously searched for, as a hidden treasure? And doth not God use to give his blessing, on supposition of men's faithful endeavours?

7. Is it not palpable pride, when a few men, no wiser nor better than others, can easily believe that all the rest of the Christian world, the most learned, godly, and concordant Christians, are all deceived, ignorant souls; and they and their few adherents only are in the right, in some doubtful controversies, wherein they have no advantage above others, either for capacity or grace? I know, that when the world is drowned in wickedness, we must not imitate them, be they never so many, nor "follow a multitude to do evil;" and I know that the certain truth of the Gospel must be held fast, though most of the world be infidels: and that when the Arians were the most, they were not therefore the rightest. And that even among Christians, carnal interests use to breed and keep up such corruptions, as must not for the number of the vicious be approved. But when those that truly fear God, and seek the truth, and faithfully serve him as self-denyingly as any others, shall agree in any part of holy doctrine or worship; for a few among them to raise up in a conceit of their own understandings, and separate from them as they separate from the world; and this upon less study than many of the rest have used to find out the truth; I am sure, none but a proud person will do this; without great jealousy of his own understanding, and great fear of erring, and without long and serious search and deliberation at least.

8. Is it not pride of understanding, when we see men confident upon inconsiderable reasons? When they bring nothing that should move a man of any competent understanding; and yet they build as boldly on this sand, as if they built upon a rock?

9. And when they slight the strongest and clearest arguments of another; and in their previdence disdain them, before they understand them, as not worthy of consideration, and as silly things?

10. When they obtrude all their conceits magisterially upon others, and expect that all men presently be of their mind, and say as they do. When they value men just as they agree with, or disagree from their opinion; and all are

dear to them, that hold with them; and all are slighted, that think they err. When a man, that without chewing, presently swalloweth their conceits, is taken for a sounder man, than he that will take nothing as sure, till evidence prove it to him: is not this notorious pride of understanding? And O how common is this imposing pride, even in them that cry out against it, and condemn it: they that will vilify one party, as imposing all their own conceptions, even in words, and forms, and ceremonies, on the Churches of Christ, will yet themselves be rigid imposers: no man shall be of their communion, nor judged meet for the holy Sacrament, who cometh not to their opinions in many of their singularities; nay, worse, that will not abstain from communion with other churches, whom their presumption separateth from.

11. And do not those people most value their own understandings, who choose teachers to please them, and not to teach them; and hear them as judges, or censors, and not as learners? How ordinary is this? If they be to choose a pastor; they will rather have the most injudicious man, who thinks as they think, than the wisest man that is able to teach them better. If they hear any thing which agreeth not with their former conceits, they go away magisterially censuring the preacher; he taught unsound doctrine, dangerous things; and neither understand him, nor endeavour to learn. I have seldom preached in strange congregations, nor seldom written on any subject, but among many learners, some such hearers and readers I have had, that neither have understanding enough to teach, nor humility enough to know it, and to learn: but they go away prating among their companions of what they never understood; and if it fall out that I know of it, and answer them, they have nothing to say, but a 'putaram,' or 'non putaram;' I thought you had meant thus or thus, contrary to what I spoke; or I noted not this or that word, which the sense depended on. Do but say as they would have you, and you are an excellent man! But if you tell them more than they knew, if it detect any error or ignorance which they had before; they condemn your teaching, instead of learning of you. Poor souls! if you are wise enough already, what need you a teacher? If you are not, why will you not learn? If you were wiser than he, why did you choose or take him for your teacher? If you are not, why will you not learn of him?

12. The deep and cruel censures which they pass against Dissenters, doth shew their self-conceitedness. None more censorious than raw, unexperienced persons, not only ignorant preachers, but women and boys. How readily and boldly, without any fear of God, doth one seek to make his brother odious as a schismatic and a fanatic, and worse than words can describe him ; and another to reproach others as antichristian and carnal, whom he never understood ! Nothing but pride could make men so ready and bold, and fearless in their most foolish censures.

13. And it further sheweth their proud presumption, when they dare do all this upon bare rumours and hearsay, and ungrounded suspicions. Were they not proud and presumptuous, they would think, alas, my understanding is not so clear and sure, nor my charity so safe and strong, as that I should in reason venture to condemn my brother, upon uncertain rumours, and such slight reports ! Have I heard him speak for himself ? or is it charity or common justice to condemn a man unheard ? What, though they are godly men that report it ? So was David, that committed adultery and murder, and hastily received a lie against Mephibosheth ; and perhaps many of those Corinthians, against whose false censures, Paul was put so largely to vindicate himself.

14. Yea, when they dare proceed to vend these false reports and censures upon hearsay, to the destruction of the charity of those that hear them ; and so entangle them all in sin. As if it were not enough to quench their own love to their brother by false surmises, but they must quench as many others also as they can.

15. Yea, when they dare venture so far as to unchurch many churches, yea, most in the world, and degrade most ministers, if not unchristian most Christians, or at least themselves withdraw from the communion of such churches, and all for something which they never understood ; about a doctrine, a form, a circumstance, where self-opinion or self-interest draweth them to all this bold adventure.

To say nothing of condemnations of whole churches and countries, the tyrannical, proud impositions, the cruel persecutions, which the Papal faction hath been guilty of by this vice ; judge now whether it be not too common a case to be guilty of an unhumbléd understanding, and of pretended knowledge ?

Object. 'If it be so, is it not best to do as the Papists, and keep men from reading the Scriptures, or meddling with divine things which they cannot master, any further than to believe what the Church believeth.'

Ans. 1. It is best no doubt, to teach men to know the difference between teachers and learners, and to keep in a humble, learning state, and in that state to grow as much in knowledge as they can; but not to cast away knowledge, for fear of overvaluing it, nor renounce their reason, for fear of error: no more than to put out their eyes for fear of mistaking by them, or choosing madness lest they abuse their wits: else we might wish to be brutes, because abused reason is the cause of all the errors and mischiefs in the world.

2. The Popish clergy who give this council for the blinding of the vulgar, are worse themselves; and by their proud contendings, censures and cruelties, shew more self-conceitedness than the vulgar do.

3. The truth is, the cause is the common frailty of man, and the common pravity of corrupted nature; and it is to be found in persons of all ranks, religions and conditions; of which more after in due place.

CHAP. XII.

VI. *Of the mischievous Effects of this proud Pretence to more Knowledge than men have.*

IF the mischiefs of this sin had not been very great, I had not chosen this subject to treat of.

1. It is no small mischief to involve men's souls in the guilt of the sins which I named in the last chapter, as the discovery of this vice. Sure all those disorders, censures, slanders, and presumptions, should not seem small in the eyes of any man that feareth God, and loveth holiness, and hateth sin.

2. Pretended knowledge wasteth men some time in getting it, and much more in abusing it: all the time that you study for it, preach for it, write for it, is sinfully lost and cast away.

3. It kindleth a corrupt and sinful zeal; such as James

describeth, (James iii. 1. 15,) which is envious and striving, and is but earthly, sensual and devilish : a zeal against love, and against good works, and against the interest of our brother, and against the peace and concord of the Church ; a hurting, burning, devouring, excommunicating, persecuting zeal. And a fever in the body is not so pernicious as such a sinful zeal in the soul. Such a zeal the Jews had, as Paul bears them witness. (Rom. xi. 1.) Such a zeal, alas ! is so common among persecuting Papists on one side, and censorious Sectaries and Separatists on the other, that we must all bear the sad effects of it : and self-conceited knowledge is the fuel of this zeal, as James iii. fully manifesteth.

4. This pretended knowledge is the fixing of false opinions in the minds of men, by which the truth is most powerfully kept out. A child will not wrangle against his teacher, and therefore will learn ; but these overwise fools do presently set their wits against what you say to keep out knowledge. You must beat down the garrison of his pride, before you come within hearing to instruct him : he is with more difficulty untaught the errors which he hath received, than an unprejudiced man is taught to understand most excellent truths.

5. By this, the gifts of the most wise and excellent teachers are half lost : it is full bottles that are cast into these seas of knowledge, which have no room for more, but come out as they went in. If an Augustine, or an Aquinas, or Scotus were among them, yea, a Peter or Paul, what can he put into these persons that are full of their own conceits already ? “ Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him.”

6. Yea, they are usually the perverters of the souls of others. Before they can come to themselves, and know that they were mistaken, what pains have they taken to make others of their own erroneous minds, whom they are not able afterward to undeceive again ?

7. It is a vice that blemisheth many excellent qualifications. To hear of a man that valueth his own judgment but according to its worth, and pretendeth to know but so much as he knoweth indeed, is no shame to him ; though knowledge is a thing fitter to be used than boasted of : but if a man know never so much, and can never so well express it,

if he think that he is wiser than he is, and excelleth others more than indeed he doth, and overvalueth that knowledge which he hath, it is a shame which his greatest parts cannot excuse or hide.

8. It exposeth a man to base and shameful mutability. He that will be hasty and confident in his apprehensions, is so often mistaken, that he must as often change his mind, and recant, or do much worse. I know that it cannot be expected, that any man should have as sound apprehensions in his youth, as in his age, and that the wisest should not have need of mutations for the better, and retractions of some youthful errors; and he that changeth not, and retracteth nothing, it seems is in his childish ignorance and error still: but when natural frailty exposeth us all to much of this disgrace, we should not expose ourselves to so much more. A hasty judger, or prefident man, must be a very weathercock, or be defiled with a leprosy of error. Whereas if men would but be humble, and modest, and self-suspicious, and suspend their presumption, and not take on them to know before they know indeed, how safely might they walk, and how seldom would they need to change their minds, or either stick in the sink of error, or make many shameful retractations!

9. Prefidence and false judging engageth a man in a very life of sin. For when falsehood goeth for truth with him, it will infect his affections, and pollute his conversation: and all that he doth in the obedience and prosecution of that error will be sin. Yea, the greatest sin that he can but think no sin may be committed; as was the persecution of Christ and Christians, by the Jews and Paul, and others like them; and the Papists' bloodiness for their religion throughout Christendom.

10. It disturbeth the peace of all societies. This is the vice that disquieteth families: every one is wisest in his own eyes: the servant thinketh his own way better than his master's. What are all the contentions between husband and wife, or any in the family, but that in all their differences, every one thinketh himself to be in the right? His own opinion is right, his own words and ways are right; and when every one is wise and just, and every one is in the right, the effects are such as if no one were wise or in the right.

And in civil societies, seditions, rebellions, oppressions, tyranny, and all confusions come from this, that men pretend to be sure of what they are not. Rulers take up with false reports from idle, malicious whisperers and accusers against their inferiors, and have not the justice and patience to suspend their judgments, till they have searched out the matter, and fully heard men speak for themselves. Subjects make themselves judges of the secrets of government, and of the councils and actions of their rulers, of which they have no certain notice, but venture to conclude upon deceitful suspicions. And the contentions and factions amongst nobles and other subjects, come from misunderstandings, through hasty and ungrounded judgments. But the most woful effects are in the churches; where, alas, whilst every pastor will be wiser than another, and the people wiser than all their pastors, and every sect and party much wiser than all that differ from them, their divisions, their separations, their alienations, and bitter censurings of each other, their obtruding their own opinions, and rules and ceremonies upon each other, their bitter envying, strife, and persecutions of each other, do make sober standers-by to ask as Paul, "Is there not a wise man among you?" O happy the world, happy kingdoms, but most happy the Churches of Christ, if we could possibly bring men but to know their ignorance! If the pastors themselves were not prudent and presumptuous overvaluers of their own apprehensions! and if the people knew how little they know! but now, alas, men rage against each other in their dreams, and few of them have the grace to awake before death, and find to repentance, that they were themselves in error.

Hear me, with that remnant of meekness and humility which thou hast left, thou confident, bitter, censorious man! Why must that man needs be taken for a heretic, a schismatic, a refractory, stubborn, self-willed person, an anti-christian, carnal, formal man, who is not of thy opinion in point of a controversy, of a form, of an order, of a circumstance, or subscription, or such like? It is possible it may be so! and it is possible thou mayest be more so thyself. But hast thou so patiently heard all that he hath to say, and so clearly discerned the truth on thy own side, and that this truth is made so evident to him as that nothing but wilful obstinacy can resist it, as will warrant all thy censures and

contempt? or is it not an overvaluing of thy own understanding, which makes thee so easily condemn all as unsufferable that differ from it? Hath not pride made thy silly wit to be as an idol, to which all must bow down on pain of the heat of thy displeasure? Do not some of those men whom thou so magisterially condemnest, study as hard and as impartially as thyself? Do they not pray as hard for God's assistance? Have they not the same books, and as good teachers? Do they not live as well, and shew as much tenderness of conscience, and fear of erring and sinning as thyself? Why then art thou so hasty in condemning them that are as fair for the reputation of wisdom as thou art?

But suppose them mistaken, hast thou tried that they are unwilling to be instructed? It may be you have wrangled with them by disputes, which have but engaged each other to defend his own opinion: but call them to thee in love, and tell them, you are ignorant, and I am wise: I will teach you what you know not, and open to them all the evidence which causeth your own confident apprehensions. Wish them to study it, and hear patiently what they have to say; and I am persuaded that many or most sober men that differ from you, will not refuse thus to become as your scholars, so far as to consider all that you have to offer to convince them, and thankfully receive as much of the truth as they can discern.

But, alas, no men rage so much against others as erroneous and blind, as the blind and erroneous; and no men so furiously brand others with the marks of obstinacy, factiousness and schism, as the obstinate, factious and schismatical. The prouder the obtruder of his own conceits is, the more he condemneth all dissenters as proud, for presuming to differ from such as he! and all for want of a humble mind.

11. Moreover it is this pretended knowledge which is the cause of all our false reformations. Men are so overwise, that they presently see a beam in their brother's eye, which is but a mote; and they magnify all the imperfections of others, pastors and churches, into mountains of iniquity. Every mis-expression or disorder, or inconvenient phrase in a prayer, or a sermon, or a book, is an odious, damning, intolerable evil. O! say such, what idolaters are they that use a form of prayer, which God did not command!

What large consciences have they that can join with a parish church; that can communicate kneeling, and among bad men, or those whose conversion is not tried! What abundance of intolerable evils do such men find in the words, and forms, and orders, and circumstances of other men's worship, which God mercifully accepteth through Christ, taking all these but for such pardonable imperfections as he mercifully beareth with in all. And then the reformation must be presently answerable to the apprehension of the evil.

Yea, sometimes the very injudicious sort of zealous people make the cry of the greatness of this or that corruption, how antichristian and intolerable it is: and then the reformation must satisfy this vulgar error, and answer the cry and expectation of the people.

I would here give instances of abundance of mis-reformings, which all need a reformation, both in doctrine, discipline and worship, but that I reserve it for another treatise, if I live to finish it, and can get it printed, called, "Overdoing is Undoing."

12. Lastly, this vice of pretended certainty and knowledge hath set up several false terms of Christian unity and peace, and by them hath done more to hinder the church's peace and unity than most devices ever did, which Satan ever contrived to that end. By this church-tearing vice, abundance of falsehoods, and abundance of things uncertain, and abundance of things unnecessary, have been made so necessary to the union and communion of the churches and their members, as that thereby the Christian world hath been ground to powder by the names and false pretences of unity and peace. Just as if a wise statesman would advise his Majesty, that none may be his subjects that are not of one age, one stature, one complexion, and one disposition, that so he might have subjects more perfectly concordant than all the princes on earth besides; and so might be the most glorious defender of unity and peace. But how must this be done? Why, command them all to be of your mind; but that prevaieth not, and yet it is undone. Why then they are obstinate, self-willed persons. Well, but yet it is undone: Why, lay fines and penalties upon them. Well, but yet it is undone: all the hypocrites that had no religion, are of the religion which is uppermost; and the rest

are uncured. Why, require more bricks of them, and let them have no straw, and tell them that their religion is their idleness, stubbornness and pride, and let your little finger be heavier than your father's loins. But hearken, young counsellors, Jeroboam will have the advantage of all this, and still the sore will be unhealed. Why then banish them, and hang them that obey not, till there be none left that are not of one mind. But, sir, I pray you, who shall do it; and who shall that one man be that shall be left to be all the kingdom? You are not such a fool as to be ignorant, that no two men will agree in all things, nor be perfectly of the same complexion. If there must be one king, and but one subject, I pray you who shall that one subject be? I hope not he that counselleth it; 'Neque enim lex justior ulla est, quam necis artifices arte perire sua.' But hark you, sir, shall that one man have a wife or not? If not, the kingdom will die with him: if yea, I dare prognosticate he and his wife will not be in all things of a mind. If they be, take me for a mistaken man.

By this vice of pretended knowledge and certainty, it is, that the Papacy hath been made the centre of the unity of the universal church. Unity we must have, God forbid else: there is no maintaining Christianity without it. But the pope must be 'Principium Unitatis: and will all Christians certainly unite in the pope? Well, and patriarchs must be the pillars of unity: but was it so to the unity of the first churches? or is it certain that all Christians will unite in patriarchs? But further, all the mass of Gregory the too great, and all the legends in his dialogues, or at least all the doctrines and ceremonies which he received, and the form of government in his time, must be made necessary to church-union. Say you so? But it was not all necessary in the apostles' times, nor in Cyprian's times, no nor in Gregory's own times; much of those things being used arbitrarily: and what was made necessary by canons of General Councils in the empire, mark it, was never thereby made necessary in all the rest of the churches. And are you sure that mere Christians will take all these for certain truths? Why, if they will not, burn and banish them. This is, as Tertullian saith, 'solitudinem facere et pacem vocare.' But hark, sir, this way hath been tried too long in vain: millions of Albigenses and Waldenses are said by historians to

be killed in France, Savoy, Italy, Germany, &c. The French massacre killed about thirty on forty thousand. The Irish massacre in that little island killed about two hundred thousand. But were they not stronger after all these cruelties than before? Alas, sir, all your labour is lost, and your party is taken for a blood-thirsty generation, and human nature which abhorreth the blood-thirsty, ever after breedeth enemies to your way. This is the effect of false principles, and terms of unity and peace, contrived by proud, self-conceited men, that think the world should take their dictates for a supreme law, and obey them as the directive deities of mankind.

If all this be not enough to tell you what proud, pretended certainty is, read over the histories of the ages past, and you shall find it written in ink, in tears, in blood, in mutations, in subversions of the empires and kingdoms of the world, in the most odious and doleful contentions of prelates, lacerations of churches, and desolations of the earth. And yet have we not experience enough to teach us!

CHAP. XIII.

The Advantages of a Suspended Judgment, and Humble Understanding, which pretendeth to no more Knowledge or Certainty than it hath.

THE advantages of a humble mind, which pretendeth not to be certain till he is certain, you may gather by contraries from the twelve forementioned mischiefs of previdence; which to avoid prolixity, I leave to your collection.

Moreover I add: 1. Such a humble, suspended mind doth not cheat itself with seeming to have a knowledge, a divine faith, a religion when it hath none. It doth not live on air and dreams, nor feed on shadows, nor is puffed up with a tympanite of vain conceits, instead of true, substantial wisdom.

2. He is not [prepossessed against the truth, but hath room for knowledge, and having the teachableness of a child, he shall receive instruction, and grow in true knowledge, when the proud and inflated wits, being full of nothing, are sent empty away.

3. He entangleth not himself in a seeming necessity of making good all that he hath once received and entertained. He hath not so many bastards of his own brain to maintain, as the prebent, hasty judgers have: which saveth him much sinful study and strife.

4. He is not liable to so much shame of mutability: he that fixeth not till he feel firm ground, nor buildeth till he feel a rock, need not pull down, and repent so oft as rash presumers.

5. Unless the world be bedlam, mad in proud obtrudings of their own conceits, methinks such a wary, humble man should offend but few, and better keep both his own and the church's peace than others. Can persecutors for shame hang and burn men for mere ignorance, who are willing to learn, and will thankfully from any man receive information? What if in Queen Mary's days the poor men and women had told my Lords of Winchester and London, 'We are not persons of so good understandings as to know what a spiritual body is, as Paul describeth it, 1 Cor. xv. And seeing most say that the sun itself is a body, and not a spirit. And late philosophers say, that light is a substance, or body, which yet from the sun in a moment diffuseth itself through all the surface of the earth and air, we know not how far locality, limitations, extension, impenetrability, divisibility, &c. belong to the body of Christ, and consequently how far it may be really present; we can say nothing, but that we know not.' Would my good Lord Bishops have burnt them for 'I know not?' Perhaps they would have said, 'You must believe the church.' But which is the church, my Lord? 'Why, it is the pope and a general council.' But, alas, my Lord, I have never seen or heard either pope or council. 'Why, but we have, and you must believe us.' Must we believe you, my Lords, to be infallible; or only as we do other men that may deceive and be deceived? Is any infallible besides the pope and his council? Truly, my Lords, we are ignorant people, and we know not what the pope and councils have said; and we are uncertain whether you report them truly, and uncertain whether they are fallible or not; but we are willing to hear any thing which may make us wiser. Would their Lordships have burnt such modest persons?

Suppose in a church where men are put to profess or

subscribe to, or against the opinions of Freewill, or Reprobation, or Predetermination, or such like, a humble man should say, these are things above my understanding; I cannot reach to know what Freewill is, nor whether all causes natural and free be predetermined by Divine premotion, &c. I can say neither it is so, nor it is not; they are above my reach; would they silence and cast out such an humble person, and forbid him to preach the Gospel of Christ? Perhaps they would: but there are not so many hardened to such inhumanity, as there are men that would deal sharply with one that is as confident as they are on the other side. And those few that were thus silenced, would have the more peace, that they had procured it not by self-conceited singularities; and the silencers of them would be the more ashamed before all sober persons that shall hear it. Other instances I pass by.

CHAP. XIV.

VII. *The Aggravation of this Sin of Presidence.*

THOUGH there be so much evil in this sin of Presumption, as I have noted, yet it is not in all alike culpable or unhappy, but differeth in both respects, as I shall tell you.

I. For culpability is worst in these sorts and cases following:

1. It is a great sin in those who have least reason to think highly of their own understandings, and greatest reason to distrust themselves: As, 1. In those that are young and unexperienced, and must be miraculously wise, if they are wiser than old experienced persons ('*cæteris paribus*'). 2. In the unlearned or half-learned, who have had but little time or helps for study, or at least have made but little use of them. 3. In duller wits, and persons that in other matters are known to be no wiser than others. 4. In those that take up their presidence upon the slightest grounds, as bare surmises and reports from others that were uncertain. 5. In those that have been oft deceived already, and should by their sad experience have been brought to humble self-suspicion.

2. And it is an aggravated sin in those whose place and

condition obligeth them to learn from others. As for the wife to be self-conceited of all her apprehensions against her husband, unless he be a fool: For the servant to set his wit against his master, where he should obey him: For children to think that their wits are brighter than their parents or masters; and apprentices and learners to think that they know more than their teachers: And for the ignorant people to censure over-hastily the doctrine and practice of their pastors, as if they were wiser than they: perhaps they are: But it must be some rare person who is fit to be a teacher himself, or the teacher some sot that hath intruded into the office; or else it must be a wonder: for God usually giveth men knowledge according to the time, and means, and pains that they have had to get it, and not by miraculous infusions without means. Doth not the Apostle expressly tell you this, Heb. v. 11, 12, "When for the time you ought to have been teachers, &c." Men should be wise according to the time and means of wisdom which they have had.

3. It is the greater crime when men will seem wisest in other men's matters and concernments. When the subject will know best what belongeth to a king or governor; and the people will know best how the pastor should teach them, and when he faileth, and whom he should receive into the Church, or exclude; when the servant will know best his master's duty, and every man his neighbour's, and least his own.

4. It is the greater crime when men will be the judges of their own understandings, and think highly of them in cases where they should be tried by others. As if an empyric, or woman do think that they know better how to cure a disease than the ablest physicians; why do they not offer themselves to the trial, and before them make good their skill by reason? If an inexperienced young student think himself able to be a physician, he is not to be the judge, but must be tried and judged by physicians: If a self-conceited professor, or a young student think himself fit for the ministry, he must not presently contrive how to get in, and how to shift off examination, but freely offer himself to be tried by able, godly ministers, and then by the ordainers, who are to judge. But when such persons can think themselves sufficient if nobody else do, or if but a few ignorant persons do, they are

unfit to judge, this proves their pride and presumption to be a great and heinous sin.

5. And it is yet more heinously aggravated, when to keep up the reputation of their own understandings, they use to depress and vilify the wiser, even those whom they never knew: As he that affecteth to be a preacher, and dare not pass the examination, hath no way to hide his shame, but 1. By crying down the learning which he wanteth, as a human, carnal thing: and, 2. By reproaching those that should judge of him, and ordain him, as poor carnal persons, who understand not the things of the Spirit as he doth, and as proud, self-seeking men, that will approve of none but those that flatter them, and are of their way. Some such there may be; but surely all are not such. Why do you not desire the judgment of the wisest and most impartial men, but take up with the applause of unlearned persons that are of your own mind and way, and magnify you for humouring them?

So you shall hear empyrics and she-physicians, vilify doctors of physic, as men that have less knowledge than they, and are so proud, and covetous, and dishonest, that there is no trusting them. When pretended knowledge must have so base a cloak, it is the greater sin.

6. And it is the more heinous sin when they venture to do heinous mischief by it: As a Papist, a Quaker, or a Separatist will in his confidence, be a perverter of others, and a condemner of the just, and a defamer of those that are against him, and a troubler of the church and the world. He that in his self-conceitedness dare resist the wisest, and his teachers and rulers, and set countries on fire, is wickedly presumptuous.

So in the practice of physic, when people will be self-conceited, when the lives of others lie upon it: and a silly fellow or woman will venture to let blood, to give this or that, who know neither the disease nor proper cure.

7. It is therefore a heinous sin in rulers, who must judge for the life and death of others, or for the peace or misery of thousands about them. I mean pastors, and commanders in armies and navies, and other governors on whom the public welfare of the church, or army or navy, or country doth depend. O how wise should that person be, whose errors may cost thousands so dear as their destruction! Or if their

understandings be not extraordinary, how cautious should they be in judging; upon hearing the wisest, and hearing dissenters, and not only flatterers or consenters: and hearing men of several minds, and hearing all witnesses and evidence, and hearing every man speak for himself: and after all considering thoroughly of it: especially of laws and wars, and impositions in religion, where thousands of consciences, say what you can, will expect satisfaction. When a woman called to Antigonus to hear her cause, and to do her justice, he told her that he could not have leisure; she answered, you should not have while to be king then: whereupon he heard her, and did her right. Had it been to an inferior judge, she had spoken reason.

8. Lastly, pretended certainty is the greater sin when it is falsely fathered on God. But the Pope and Council dare pretend, that God hath promised them infallibility, and God hath certified them that the consecrated bread is no bread, and that our senses are all deceived; and God hath made the Pope the universal ruler of the world or church, and made him and his council the only judges, by which all men must know what is the word of God. So, when fanatics will pretend, that by revelation, visions, or inspirations of the Spirit, God hath assured them that this or that is the meaning of a text which they understand not, or the truth in such or such a controversy. Alas! among two many well-meaning persons, God is pretended for a multitude of sinful errors; and they that preach false doctrine will do it, as the old prophet spake to the young, as from the Lord: and they that rail at godliness, and they that censure, backbite, cast out or persecute their brethren, will do it as Rabshakeh; "Hath not God sent me," &c. Men will not make any snares for the church, or their brethren's consciences, but in the name of God: They will not divide the church, nor cast out infants, nor refuse communion with their brethren, but in the name of God. One man saith, 'God forbiddeth him all book-prayers, or all imposed forms of prayer:' And another saith, 'God forbiddeth him all but such.' And all belie God, and add this heinous abuse of his holy word and name unto their sin.

CHAP. XV.

Some special Aggravations more of this Sin, in Students, and Pastors, which should deter them from pretended Knowledge or Prefidence.

To such, I will suppose, that to name the evils may suffice, on my part, without sharp amplifications. Though I have spoken to you first in what is said, I will briefly add,

1. That this sin will make slothful students. Few study hard, who are quickly confident of their first conceptions.

2. While you study, it keepeth out knowledge: you are too full of yourselves, to receive easily from others.

3. It is the common parent of error and heresy. Ignorance is the mother, and Pride the father of them all: and prefidence and pretended knowledge, is but proud ignorance in another name.

4. What a life of precious time will you waste in following the erroneous thoughts of your bewildered minds.

5. As food altereth the temperament of the body while it nourisheth, so the very temperament of your minds, and wills, and affections, will become vain, and frothy, and shadowy, or malignant and perverse, according to the quality of your error.

6. It is the common parent of superstition: it defileth God's worship with human inventions, with duties and sins of our own making. All such men's dreams will seem to them to be the laws of God.

7. It will entail a corrupt education of youth upon us, and consequently a corrupt degenerate kind of learning, and so a degenerate ministry on the churches. When youths are possessed with abundance of uncertainties, under the name of learning and religion, it will grow the custom to teach, and talk, and live accordingly: do I say, it will do? If the schoolmen's error in this, deserve but half as much as Faber, Valla, Hutten, Erasmus, charge upon them; you should hear and take warning: not to avoid the most accurate knowledge by the hardest studies, but to avoid pretending that you know what you do not.

8. And you will make vain strife and contention about vanity, your very trade and business, when you come abroad

in the world. They that make uncertainties or errors to be their studies and honourable learning, must keep up the honour of it by living as they learned, and talking vainly for the vanities of their minds.

9. And you are likely hereby to become the chief instruments of Satan, to trouble the church either with heresies, schisms, or persecutions.

10. And truly it should much turn your hearts against it, to know that it is a continual habit or exercise of pride. And pride, the devil's sin, is one of the most heinous and odious to God. If you hate any sin, you should hate pride. And it is one of the worst sorts of pride too. As nature hath three principles, active power, intellect and will, and man three excellencies, greatness, wisdom and goodness; so pride hath these three great objects: men are proud that they are greater, or wiser, or better than others: that is, they think themselves greater, or wiser or better than they are; and they would have others think so too. As for pride of beauty, or clothing, or such like corporeal things and appurtenances; it is the vice of children, and the more shallow and foolish sort of women. But greater things make up a greater sort of pride. O what a number of all ranks and ages do live in this great sin of pride of wisdom, or an over-valued understanding, who never feel or lament it.

11. Moreover, your prefidence prepareth you for scepticism, or doubting the most certain necessary truths: like some of our sectaries, who have been falsely confident of so many religions, till at last they doubt of all religion. He that finds that he was deceived while he was an Anabaptist, and deceived when he was a Separatist, and deceived while he was an Antinomian or Libertine, and deceived when he was a Quaker; is prepared to think also that he was deceived when he was a Christian, and when he believed the immortality of the soul, and the life to come. When you have found your understandings oft deceive you, you will grow so distrustful of them, as hardly ever to believe them when it is most necessary. He that often lieth, will hardly be believed when he speaketh truth. And all this cometh from believing your first and slight apprehensions too easily, and too soon, and so filling up your minds with lies, which when they are discovered, make the truth to be suspected. Like some fanciful, lustful youths, who hastily grow fond of some unsuitable,

unlovely person, and when they know them, cannot so much as allow them the conjugal affection which they are bound to.

12. Lastly, consider what a shame it is to your understandings, and how it contradicteth your pretence of knowledge. For, how little knoweth that man, who knoweth not his own ignorance! How can it be thought that you are likely to know great matters at a distance, the profundities, sublimities, and subtleties of sciences, who know not yet how little you know.

CHAP. XVI.

Proofs of the little Knowledge that is in the World, to move us to a due Distrust of our Understandings.

IF you think this sin of a proud understanding, and pretended knowledge, doth need for the cure of a fuller discovery of its vanity, I know not how to do it more convincingly, than by showing you how little true knowledge is in the world, and consequently that all mankind have cause to think meanly of their understandings.

I. The great imperfection of the sciences, is a plain discovery of it: when mankind hath had above five thousand years already to have grown to more perfection; yet how much is still dark, and controverted! And how much unknown in comparison of what we know! But above all, though nothing is perfectly known which is not methodically known; yet how few have a true methodical knowledge! He that seeth but some parcels of truth, or seeth them but confusedly, or in a false method, not agreable to the things, doth know but little, because he knoweth not the place, and order, and respects of truths to one another, and consequently neither their composition, harmony, strength or use. Like a philosopher that knew nothing but elements, and not mixed bodies, or animate beings: or like an anatomist that is but an atomist, and can say no more of the body of a man, but that it is made up of atoms, or at most can only enumerate the similar parts: or like a man that knoweth no more of his clock and watch, but as the pieces of it lie on a heap, or at best, setteth some one part out of its place, which disableth the whole engine: or like one that knoweth the chessmen

only as they are in the bag, or at best in some disorder. Who will make me so happy as to show me one true scheme of physics, of metaphysics, of logic, yea of theology, which I cannot presently prove guilty of such mistake, confusion, disorder, as tendeth to great error in the subsequent parts. I know of no small number that have been offered to the world, but never saw one that satisfied my understanding. And I think I scarcely know any thing to purpose, till I can draw a true scheme of it, and set each compounding notion in its place.

II. And the great diversity and contrariety of opinions, of notions and of methods, proveth that our knowledge indeed is yet but small. How many methods of logic have we! how many hypotheses in physics, yea, how many contentious volumes written against one another, in philosophy and theology itself! What loads of 'Videtur' in the schoolmen! How many sects and opinions in religion! Physicians agree not about men's lives. Lawyers agree not about men's estates; no nor about the very fundamental laws. If there be a civil war, where both sides appeal to the law, there will be lawyers on both sides. And doth not this prove that we know but little!

III. But men's rage and confidence in these contrarieties doth discover it yet more. Read their contentious writings of philosophy and theology; observe their usage of one another, what contempt, what reproach, what cruelties they can proceed to! The Papist silenceth and burneth the Protestant; the Lutheran silenceth and revileth the Calvinist; the Calvinist sharply judgeth the Arminians, and so round: and may I not judge that this wisest part of the world is low in knowledge, when not the vulgar only, but the leaders and doctors are so commonly mistaken in their greatest zeal! And that Solomon erred not in saying, "The fool rageth, and is confident."

IV. If our knowledge were not very low, the long experience of the world would have long ago reconciled our controversies. The strivings and distractions about them, both in philosophy, politics and theology, have torn churches, and raised wars, and set kingdoms on fire, and should in reason be to us as a bone out of joint, which by the pain should force us all to seek for a cure: and surely in so

many thousand years, many remedies have been tried: the issues of such disingenuous-ingenious wars, do furnish men with such experience as should teach them the cure. And yet after so many years' war of wits, to be so witless as to find no end, no remedy, no peace, doth shew that the wit of man is not such a thing to be proud of.

V. The great mutability of our apprehensions doth shew that they are not many things that we are certain of. Do we not feel in ourselves how new thoughts and new reasons are ready to breed new conjectures in us, and that looketh doubtful to us, upon further thoughts, of which long before we had no doubt. Besides the multitudes that change their very religion, every studious person so oft changeth his conceptions, as may testify the shallowness of our minds.

VI. The general barbarity of the world, the few countries that have polite learning, or true civility, or Christianity, do tell us that knowledge in the world is low: when besides the vast unknow regions of the world, all that are of late discovery in the West Indies, or elsewhere, are found to be so rude and barbarous; some little differing from subtle brutes: when the vast regions of Africa, of Tartary, and other parts of Asia, are no wiser to this day. When the Roman Eastern empire so easily parted with Christianity, and is turned so much to barbarous ignorance; this sheweth what we are; for these men are all born as capable as we.

VII. Especially the sottish opinions, which the Heathen and Mahometan world do generally entertain, do tell us how dark a creature man is. That four parts of the whole world (if not much more, that is unknown) should receive all the sottish opinions as they do, both against the light of nature, knowing so little of God, and by such vain conceits of their prophets and petty deities: that above the fifth part of the known world, should receive, and so long and quietly retain, so sottish an opinion as Mahometanism is, and build upon it the hopes of their salvation. If the Greek Church can be corrupted into so gross a foolery, why may not the Latin, and the English, if they had the same temptations? O what a sad proof is here of human folly!

VIII. But in the Latin Church (be it spoken without any comparing Mahometanism with Christianity) the wonder is still greater, and the discovery of the fallaciousness of

man's understanding is yet more clear: were there no proof of it, but the very being of Popery in the world, and the reception of it by such and so many, it affordeth the strongest temptation that ever I thought of in the world, to the brutist, to question whether instinct advance not brutes above man! The brutes distrust not their right disposed senses; but the Papists not only distrust them, but renounce them: bread is no bread, and wine is no wine with them, all men's senses are deceived that think otherwise: it is necessary to salvation to believe that God's natural revelations to sense here are false, and not to be believed. Every man that will be saved must believe that bread is no bread, that quantity, locality, colour, weight, figure, are the quantity, locality, colour, weight, figure, of nothing: and God worketh grand miracles by every priest, as frequently as he consecrateth in the mass: and if any man refuse to swear to this renunciation of human sense, and the truth of these miracles, he must be no priest, but a combustible heretic. And if any temporal lord refuse to exterminate all those from their dominions, who will believe their senses, and not think it necessary to renounce them as deceived, he must be excommunicated and dispossessed himself, his subjects absolved from their oaths and allegiance, and his dominions given to another: and this is their very religion, being the decree of a great General Council, questioned indeed by some few Protestants, but not at all by them, but largely vindicated: Later. sub. Innoc. 3. Can. 1. 3. The sum is, no man that will not renounce not only his humanity, but his animality, must be suffered to live in any one's dominions, and he that will suffer men in his dominions, must be himself turned out! this is plain truth: and yet this is the religion of popes and emperors, and kings, of lords and counsellors, of prelates and doctors, universities, churches and famous kingdoms; and such as men, all these wise men dare lay their salvation upon; and dare massacre men by thousands and hundred thousands upon, and burn their neighbours to ashes upon; and what greater confidence of certainty can be expressed! And yet shall men be proud of wit? O what is man! How dark, how sottish and mad a thing! All these great princes, doctors, cardinals, universities and kingdoms, are born with natures as capacious as ours. They are in other things as wise: they pity us as heretics, because we will not cease to be men:

The infidel that denieth man's reason and immortality, would but level us with the brutes, and allow us the preeminence among them in subtlety: but all these Papists forswear or renounce that sense which is common to brutes with us, and sentence us either below the brutes, or unto hell. Pretend no more, poor man, to great knowledge. As the sight of a grave and a rotten carcase may humble the fool that is proud of beauty, so the thought of the Popish, Mahometan and Heathen world, may humble him that is proud of his understanding. I tell thee, man, thou art capable of that madness as to believe that an ox or an onion is a God; or to believe that a bit of bread is God; yea more, to believe as necessary to salvation, that thy own and all men's senses about their proper objects are deceived, and the bread which thou seest and eatest is no bread; yea though it be three times in the three next verses (1 Cor. xi.) called bread after consecration by an inspired expositor of Christ's words.

IX. Moreover the poverty of man's understanding appeareth by the great time and labour that must be bestowed for knowledge. We must be learning as soon as we have the use of reason, and all our life must be bestowed in it. I know by experience, knowledge will not be got without long, hard and patient studies. O what abundance of books must we read! What abundance of deep meditations must we use! What help of teachers do we need! And when all is done, how little do we obtain! Is this an intellect to be proud of?

X. And it is observable how every man slighteth another's reasons, while he would have all to magnify his own. All the arguments that in disputation are used against him, how frivolous and foolish are they! All the books that are written against him, are little better than nonsense, or heresy, or blasphemy: contempt is answer enough to most that is said against them. And yet the men in other men's eyes, are perhaps wiser and better than themselves. Most men are fools in the judgments of others! Whatever side or party you are of, there are many parties against you, who all pity your ignorance, and judge you silly, deceived souls. So that if one man be to be believed of another, and if the most of mankind be not deceived, we are all poor, silly, cheated souls: but if most be deceived, mankind is a very deceivable creature. How know I that I must believe you, when

you befool twenty other sects, any more than I should believe those twenty sects, when they as confidently befool you; if no other evidence turn the scales?

XI. And verily I think that the wars and contentions, and distractions of the kingdoms of the world, do shew us that man is a pitiful, silly, deceivable thing. I am not at all so sharp against wars and soldiers as Erasmus was; but I should think that if men were wise, they might keep their peace, and save the lives of thousands, which must be dearly answered for. Were all the princes of Christendom, as wise as proud wits conceit themselves to be, how easy were it for them to agree among themselves, and equally to distribute the charge of two or three armies, which might quickly shake in pieces the Turk's dominion, and recover Constantinople, and free the Greek church from their captivity.

XII. And what need we more than every days' miscarriages to tell us of our folly! Do we not miss it in one degree or other in almost all that we take in hand! Hence cometh the ruin of estates, the ill education of children, the dissensions among neighbours and in families. Parents have scarce wit enough to breed and teach a child; nor husbands and wives to live together according to their relations; nor masters to teach their servants. If I write a book, how many can find folly and error in it: and I as easily in theirs. If I preach, how many faults can the silliest woman find in it: and I as many perhaps in other men's. Do we live in such weakness, and shall we not know it?

XIII. And the uncurableness of ancient errors is no small evidence of our folly. If our ancestors have but been deceived before us, though their error be never so palpable, we plead their venerable antiquity, for an honour to their ignorance and mistakes. The wisdom of wise ancestors almost dieth with them; but the errors of the mistaken must be successive, lest they be dishonoured. We will deny reason, and deny Scripture, and deny sense, for fear of being wiser for our souls, than some of our forefathers were.

XIV. The self-destroying courses of mankind, one would think, should be enough to evince man's folly. Who almost suffer but by themselves! Few sicknesses befall us which folly brings not on us by excess of eating or drinking, or by sloth, or some unwise neglect. Few ruins of estates but by our own folly! Few calamities and relations but by

ourselves! What churches distracted and ruined, but by the pastors and children of the church themselves! What kingdom ruined without its own procurement. It need not be said. 'Quos perdere vult Jupiter hos dementat;' it is enough to say, 'Insaniam eorum non curat:.' If he cure not our madness, we shall certainly destroy ourselves. Whose hands kindled all the flames that have wasted the glory, wealth and peace of England in state and church, except our own? Were they foreign enemies that did it, and still keep open our wounds, or is it ourselves? And yet are we wise men?

XV. But the greatest evidence in all the world of the madness of mankind, is the obstinate self-destruction of all the ungodly. Consider but 1. The weight of the case: 2. The plainness of the case: 3. The means used to undeceive them: 4. And yet the number of the madly erroneous; and then bethink you what man's understanding is.

1. It is their souls and everlasting hopes that are cast away! It is no less than heaven and endless happiness which they reject: it is no better than hell and endless misery which they run into; and are these men in their wits?

2. It is themselves that do all this; neither man nor devils else could do it: they do it for nothing. What have the wretches for their salvation? a few cups of drink, a filthy whore, a little preferment or provision for a corruptible flesh, which must shortly lie and rot in darkness; the applause and breath of flatterers as silly as themselves! O profane persons, worse than Esau, who will sell their birth-right for so poor a morsel! Come, see the madness of mankind! It is a doubt to them whether God or a filthy lust should be more loved and obeyed! It is a doubt with them whether heaven or earth be better worth their labour! Whether eternity or an inch of time; whether a soul or a perishing body should be more cared for! Are these wise men? Did I say, It is a doubt? Yea, their choice and practice sheweth that at the present they are resolved: vanity, and shadows, and dreams are preferred; heaven is neglected; "They are lovers of pleasure more than of God:" they set less than a feather in the balance against more than all the world, and they choose the first, and neglect the latter. This is the wise world!

3. And all this they do against common reason, against

daily teaching of appointed pastors, against the judgment of the most learned and wise men in the world: against the express word of God; against the obligation of daily mercies; against the warnings of many afflictions; against the experience of all the world, who pronounce all this vanity which they sell their souls for; even while men die daily before their eyes, and they are certain that they must shortly die themselves; while they walk over the churchyard, and tread on the graves of those that went before them; yet will they take no warning, but neglect God and their souls, and sin on to the very death.

4. And this is not the case only of here and there one; we need not go to Bedlam to seek them. Alas! in how much more honoured and splendid habitations and conditions may they be found! In what reverend and honourable garbs! And in how great numbers throughout the world! And these are not only sots and idiots, that never were told of better things; but those that would be accounted witty, or men of learning and venerable aspect and esteem. But this is a subject that we use to preach on to the people; it being easy, by a multitude of arguments, to prove the madness of all ungodly persons. And is this nothing to humble us, who were naturally like them, and who, so far as we are sinners, are, alas! too like them still?

XVI. And the fewness of wise men in all professions, doth tell us how rare true wisdom is. Among men whose wisdom lieth in speculation, where the effects of it do not openly difference it much from previdence, the difference is not commonly discerned: a prating speculator goeth for a wise man; but in practicals the difference appeareth by the effects. All men see, that among physicians and lawyers, those that are excellent are few. And even among the godly preachers of the Gospel, O that it were more easy and common, to meet with men suited to the majesty, mystery, greatness, necessity and holiness of their works; that speak to God, and from God, like divines indeed, and have the true frame of sound theology ready in their heads and hearts; and that in public and private speak to sinners, as beseemeth those that believe that they and we are at the door of eternity, and that we speak, and they hear for the life of souls, and that are uncertain whether ever they shall speak again. Alas! Lord, thy treasure is not only in earthen ves-

sels, but how ordinarily in polluted vessels, and how common are empty, sounding vessels, or such as have dirt or air instead of holy treasure!

And as for philosophers and judicious speculators in divinity, do I need to say, that the number is too small? Of such as are able judiciously to resolve a difficulty, to answer cases of conscience, to defend the truth, to stop the mouths of all gainsayers, and to teach holy doctrine clearly and in true method, without confusion, or running into any extremes? We bless God, this land, and the other reformed churches have had a laudable degree of this mercy: the Lord restore it to them and us, and continue the comfortable measure that we possess.

XVII. And it is a notorious discovery of the common ignorance, that a wise man is so hardly known. Men that have not wisdom to imitate them, have not wit enough to value them; so that as Seneca saith, ‘He that will have the pleasure of wisdom, must be content with it for itself, without applause: two or three approvers must suffice him.’ The blind know not who hath the best eyesight. Swine trample upon pearls. Nay, it is well if, when they have increased knowledge, they increase not sorrow; and become not the mark of envy and hatred, and of the venom of malignant tongues and hands, yea, and that merely for their knowledge sake. All the learning of Socrates, Demosthenes, Cicero, Seneca, Lucan, and many more; and all the learning and piety of Cyprian, and all the martyrs of those ages; of Boetius, of the African bishops that perished by Hunnerichus; of Peter Ramus, Marlorate, Cranmer, Ridley, Philpot, Bradford, and abundance such, could not keep them from a cruel death. All the excellency of Greg. Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and many others, could not keep them from suffering by orthodox bishops; no nor all the holiness and miracles of Martin. Insomuch that Nazianzen leaveth it to his people as a mark of the man whom he would have them value and choose when he was dead. ‘This one thing I require, that he be one of those that are envied, not pitied by others; who obey not all men in all things; but for the love of truth in some things incurreth men’s offence.’ And of himself he professeth, that, ‘Though most thought otherwise than he did, that this was nothing to him who cared only for the truth, as that which must condemn him or ab-

solve him, and make him happy or miserable. But what other men thought was nothing to him, any more than what another dreameth.' Orat. 27. p. 468. And therefore he saith, Orat. 26. p. 443. 'As for me, I am a small and poor pastor, and to speak sparingly, not yet grateful, and accepted with other pastors, which whether it be done by right judgment and reason, or by malevolence of mind, and study of contention, I know not.' And Orat. 32. p. 523. 'I am tired, while I fight both with speech and envy, with enemies, and with those that are our own. Those strike at the breast, and obtain not their desire: for an open enemy is easily taken heed of; but these come behind my back and are more troublesome.'

Such obloquy had Jerom, such had Augustine himself, and who knoweth not that envy is virtue's shadow? And what talk I of others, when all godly men are hated by the world, and the apostles and Christ himself were used as they were; and Christ saith, "Which of the prophets did not your fathers kill and persecute?" (Matt. xxiii.) If hating, persecuting, slandering, silencing, killing men that know more than the rest, be a sign of wisdom, the world hath been wise since Cain's age until this.

Even a Galilæus, a Savonarola, a Campanella, &c. shall feel it if they will be wiser than the rest: so that Solomon's warning, (Eccles. vii. 16,) concerneth them that will save their skin; "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself over-wise: why wilt thou destroy thyself?" But again I may prognosticate with Anthisthenes in Laert. 'Then cities are perishing, when they are not wise enough to know the good from the bad.' And with Cicero, Rhet. 1. 'That man's safety is desperate whose ears are shut against the truth, so that even from a friend he cannot hear it.'

XVIII. And this leadeth me to the next discovery. How rare wisdom is in the world, in that the wisest men and most learned teachers have so small success. How few are much the wiser for them! If they praise them, they will not learn of them, till they reach to their degree. Men may delight in the sweetness of truth themselves; but it is a feast where few will strive for part with them. A very few men that have first sprung up in obscure times have had great success: so had Origen at Alexandria, and Chrysostom at Constantinople, but with bitter sauce. Pythagoras, Plato and

Aristotle at Athens, and Augustine at Hippo, had the most that history maketh mention of, with Demosthenes and Cicero in oratory; Melanchthon at Wirtemburgh, with Luther, and Zuinglius in Helvetia, and Calvin at Geneva prevailed much: and now and then an age hath been fruitful of learned, wise and godly men: and when we are ready to expect, that each of these should have a multitude of scholars like themselves, suddenly all declineth, and ignorance and sensuality get uppermost again. And all this is because that all men are born ignorant and sensual; but no man attaineth to any excellency of wisdom, without so long and laborious studies, as the flesh will give leave to few men to perform. So that he that hath most laboriously searched for knowledge all his days, knoweth not how to make others partakers of it; no not his own children of whom he hath the education: unless it be here and there one Scaliger, one Paræus, one Tossanus, one Trelcatius, one Vossius, &c. How few excellent men do leave one excellent son behind them! O what would a wise man give, that he could but bequeath all his wisdom to others when he dieth!

XIX. And it is evident that great knowledge is more rare than previdence, in that the hardest students, and most knowing men, complain more than others of difficulties and ignorance: when certainly other men have more cause. They that study a little, know little, and think they know much: they that study very hard, but not to maturity, oft become sceptics, and think nothing certain. But they that follow it till they have digested their studies, do find a certainty in the great and necessary things, but confess their ignorance in abundance of things which the presumptuous are confident in. I will not leave this out, to escape the carping of those that will say, that by this character I proclaim myself one of the wisest, as long as it is but the confession of my ignorance which is their occasion. But I will say as Augustin to Jerom, Epist. 29. ‘Adversus eos qui sibi videntur scire quod nesciunt, hoc tutiores sumus, quod hanc ignorantiam nostram non ignoramus.’

XX. Lastly, every man's nature, in the midst of his pride, is conscious of the fallibility and frailty of his own understanding. And thence it is that men are so fearful in great matters of being overreached. And wherever any conclusion dependeth upon a contexture of many proofs, or on any

long, operous work of reason, men have a natural consciousness of the uncertainty of it. Yea, though our doctrines of the immortality of our own souls, and of the life of retribution after this, and the truth of the Gospel, have so much evidence as they have, yet a lively, certain faith is the more rare and difficult, because men are so conscious of the fallibility of their own understandings, that about things unseen and unsensible, they are still apt to doubt, whether they be not deceived in their apprehensions of the evidence.

By these twenty instances it is too plain that there is little solid wisdom in the world; that wise men are few, and those few are but a little wise. And should not this suffice to make all men, but especially the unlearned, half-learned, the young, and unexperienced, to abate their ungrounded confidence and to have humble and suspicious thoughts of their own apprehensions.

CHAP. XVII.

Inference 5. That it is not the Dishonour, but the Praise of Christ, his Apostles and the Gospel, that they speak in a plain manner of the Certain Necessary Things, without the Vanity of School-Uncertainties, and feigned unprofitable Notions?

I HAVE been myself often scandalized at the Fathers of the fourth Carthage Council^m, who forbid bishops the reading of the heathen books; and at some good old unlearned Christian bishops, who spake to the same purpose, and often reproach Apollinaris, Ætius and other heretics for their secular or Gentile learning, logic, &c. And I wondered that Julian and they should prohibit the same thing. But one that is so far distant from the action, is not a competent judge of the reasons of it. Perhaps there were some Christian authors then, who were sufficient for such literature as was best for the Church: perhaps they saw that the danger of reading the heathens' philosophy was like to be greater than the benefit: both because it was them that they lived among, and were to gather the churches out of; and if they put an honour upon logic and philosophy, they might find

^m Concil. Carth. 4, Can. 16.

it more difficult to draw men from that party which excelled in it, to the belief of the Scriptures which seemed to have so little of it: and they had seen also how a mixture of Platonic notions with Christianity, had not only been the original of many heresies, but had sadly blemished many great doctors of the churches.

Whatever the cause was, it appeareth that in those days it was the deepest insight into the sacred Scriptures which was reckoned for the most solid learning; philosophy was so confounded by differences, sects, uncertainties and falsehoods, that made it the more dispicable, by how much the less pure. And logic had so many precarious rules and notions, as made it fitter to wrangle and play with, than to further grave men in their deep and serious inquiry in the great things of God, and mysteries of salvation.

But yet it cannot be denied but that true learning of the subservient arts and sciences is of so great use to the accomplishing of man's mind with wisdom, that it is one of the greatest offences that ever was taken against Christ and the holy Scriptures, that so little of this learning is found in them, in comparison of what in Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, or Cicero. But to remove the danger of this offence, let these things following be well considered:

I. Every means is to be judged of by its aptitude to its proper use and end: morality is the subject and business of the Scriptures: it is not the work of it to teach men logic and philosophy, any more than to teach them languages: Who will be offended with Christ for not teaching men Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, Architecture, Navigation, or Mechanic Arts? And why should they be more offended with him for not teaching them Astronomy, Geometry, Physics, Metaphysics, Logic, &c. It was none of his work.

II. Nature is presupposed to grace; and God in nature have before given man sufficient helps to the attainment of so much of the knowledge of nature, as was convenient for him. Philosophy is the knowledge of God's works of creation. It was not this (at least chiefly) that man lost by his fall: it was from God, and not from the creature that he turned: and it was to the knowledge of God, rather than of the creature, that he was to be restored. What need one be sent from heaven to teach men the order and rules of speaking? or to teach men those arts and sciences which they

can otherwise learn themselves. As it is presupposed that men have reason, so that they have among them the common helps and crutches of reason.

III. The truth is, it is much to be suspected, lest as an inordinate desire of creature-knowledge was a great part of our first parents' sin, so it hath accordingly corrupted our nature with an answerable vicious inclination thereunto: not that the thing in itself is evil to know God's works; but good and desirable in its place and measure: but it is such a good as by inordinacy may become a dangerous evil: why should we not judge of this desire of knowing the creatures, as we do of other creature-affections? It is lawful and meet to love all God's creatures: his works are good, and therefore amiable. And yet I think no man is damned but by the inordinate loving of the creature, turning his heart from the love of God. And as our appetites are lawful and necessary in themselves, and yet nature's pravity consisteth much in the prevalency of them against reason, which is by reason's infirmity, and the inordinacy of the sensitive appetite; even so a desire to know God's works, is natural and good; but its inordinateness is our pravity, and a sinful lust.

Doubtless the mind and fantasy may find a kind of pleasure in knowing, which is according to the nature and use of the thing known. When it is vain, or low, and base, the pleasure is vain, and low, and base: when the object is ensnaring and diverting from higher things, it doth this principally by delight. Verily this inordinate desire of creature-knowledge is a lust, a vicious lust. I have been guilty of it in some measure myself, since I had the use of reason: I have lived a life of constant pleasure, gratifying my intellect and fantasy with seeking to know as much as I could know: and if I could not say truly, that I referred it as a means to the knowledge and love of God, I should say that it was all sin: but because I have loved it too much for itself, and not referred it to God more purely and entirely, I must confess that it was never blameless.

And the corruption of the noblest faculty is the worst: the delights of eating, drinking, venery, are the matter of common sensuality, when they are inordinately desired: and is not the inordinate desire of creature-knowledge, (if it

be desired from the like principle, and to the like ends) as bad or worse in some respects? Consider,

1. I am sure that it doth as much take up and prepossess the mind, which should be employed on God, and take up those thoughts and affections which should be holy. Tell me why one man should be accounted carnal and ungodly, for delighting to see his own houses, fields, woods, corn, rivers, cattle, &c., rather than another that hath as much delight to peruse a map of pleasant countries, setting aside the covetous desire of having much. Do we not justly account it as unfit a work for the Lord's-day to be for pleasure perusing maps, as to be for pleasure viewing the woods and fields? many a poor student is as long and perilously entangled in his thoughts and affections, and kept from God and heaven, and holiness, by deep study of languages, customs, countries, chronology, logic, physics, mathematics, metaphysics, laws, &c., as worldlings are by overminding the world.

2. And it wasteth their precious time as much as other lusts do. One sensualist spendeth his hours in gaming, feasting, wantonness, idle courtship, hunting, hawking, bowling, and other excess of sports: another spends his precious time in hearing comedies; and another in reading play-books and romances; and another in reading true and useful history, and other parts of useful learning: and though the matter of the latter be better than the former, a man may make up the same sensuality in one as in the other; in reading mathematics or history, as in reading, or beholding, and hearing comedies.

3. And some turn this learning to as powerful a perversion of the mind, as others do their sensual delights. Many think so highly of their languages and chronology, and philosophy, that secretly they are drawn by it to despise the Gospel, and to think a holy life to be but an employment for women, and persons that live more by affection than by judgment: so perniciously doth learning make them mad.

4. And abundance make it the fuel of their pride, and think that they are excellent persons, because they have got some ornaments of the mind: as vain women are proud of fine clothes instead of real comeliness and worth. I will not dishonour some famous writer by naming them here,

lest I seem to take down their due praise; but in general I may say, that it is more than one, of our late famous philological and grammatical critics, who openly shew so much pride of their kind of worldly knowledge, as may warn humble men to fear such temptations, and to see that this learning may be made a snare.

5. And the worst of all is, that while such learned men think highly of themselves for that, they are kept from the knowledge and sense of their sinful corruption and misery, and feel not the need of a Saviour and a Sanctifier; they cry not for grace; they seek not after God and everlasting happiness; they neglect a holy, heavenly life; they take up some easy formalities and words to make up an image of religion on; and then they think that (in their unhumbled, un-sanctified state) they have as good right to be esteemed godly, as any other; and if any question it, they are accounted proud, self-conceited fanatics, who appropriate the reputation of holiness to themselves: and to question a learned formalist's sincerity, (as Martin and Sulpitius Severus did Ithacius his, and his fellow bishops) is to expose himself to the censure of proud hypocrisy. Yea, no man is so fit for the church preferment and honour, and to be the governor of all religious persons and affairs, as one of these un-sanctified, learned men is in his own eyes: from whence it is that the state of the churches is low in the East and West (the Roman I mean), because those that have truly no religion must dispose of religion, and the Churches of Christ must be instructed and ruled by his real enemies; and those that hate godliness at the heart, must be the teachers of godliness, and the chief managers of the sacred work.

Lay all this together, and think whether our inordinate desire of common learning, which is the knowledge of the creature, be not the fruit of Adam's sin.

And if it prove so, consider how far it was the work of Christ to cure it. Sure he was sent to destroy the works of the devil (not learning, but this inordinate desire of it). And he was to mortify it in the same way as he mortified other sinful lusts. Therefore as he mortified venereous and all sensual lusts, by holy examples, and by condemning them, and calling men off from them to spiritual delights; and as he mortified the worldliness in men, by living himself a life of poverty and inferiority in the world, and calling men off

from the love of the world, to the love of God and glory: even so no wonder if he mortified in men the inordinate desire of greater knowledge, by calling them up to higher things, and shewing them the vanity of this alone. And as he saith, "Love not the world, or the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) When yet the ordinate love of the world is lawful: and as he saith, (John vi. 27.) "Labour not for the meat that perisheth," when he meaneth, labour not for it inordinately: even so no wonder if Christ omit this common philosophy, and if Paul bid them take heed that none deceive them by vain philosophy, when it is the inordinacy only which they condemn.

If you ask me, when this desire of common learning is inordinate? I answer, 1. When it is desired most for the fantastical, sensual or intellectual delight of knowing; or from the overvaluing of the thing known: not but a delight in knowledge as such is good and lawful, but not as our chief end. 2. When it is desired as a step to serve a proud aspiring mind, that we may be magnified as learned men: or to serve any worldly, covetous design. 3. When it is not duly subordinate and subservient to the love of God, and to his service, and the common good: If God be not first intended, and all our studies and learning desired purely as a means to God, that is as a means to know him, and to love him, and to please him, and praise him, and to do him service in the world, and enjoy him for ever, but be desired for itself or carnal ends, it is a carnal lust. 4. When it hath a greater measure of our time and affection, and industry comparatively than its due; and the study of higher things is put behind it, or neglected by it, at least in a great degree. 5. When it cometh not in due order, but is taken first, and in the hours and place which higher things should have.

In a word; God, and our duty to him, and the common good, and our salvation, are the great and necessary things, in comparison of which, all other things are vain: As riches and pleasure with its appetite may be used holily, as God's mercies, to raise us into spiritual delights, and to serve him the better ourselves, and to be helpful to others: And for these ends they are given us, and may be sought and used; when yet, as they are the fuel of lust, they are the snares of Satan, the mammon, the god of this world, the damnation of

souls; so is it with the knowledge of the creature; sanctified and made serviceable to God and holiness it is of great utility; but out of its place it is poison and perdition.

Yea, as appetite and sensual delight is necessary, while we are in a body in which the soul must operate and receive: even so is some knowledge of creatures and common things (called learning) of necessity, as a means to better. And while we see, as in a glass, we must not cast away the glass, nor neglect it, though it be but a help to see the species.

I conclude then, 1. That it is hard to say that any man can know too much, except it be 1. Matter of temptation. 2. And of penal knowledge, raising terrors, and tormenting the soul. In these two cases we may know too much; and I fear some men's knowledge is much of the first sort. But so far am I from dissuading any from true knowledge, or studies to attain it, that I think ignorance is the mother, as pride is the father of all heresies, and almost all sins: and that the lazy student shall never be wise, though one may take his years in the university, the greatness of his library, or the titles which he hath obtained, instead of wisdom; and another as slothful, may boast that the Spirit hath saved him the labour of long and hard studies; for my part I shall account both sorts as they are, and leave them to be admired by such as themselves: and verily they have their reward. He that will be wise, must spare no pains, and be diverted by no worldly things, but take wisdom for his welfare here, and the getting and using it for all his work. Never was slothful, or impatient, or presumptuous person wise.

2. God hath not made and set before us all his works in vain: "Great and wonderful are all his works, sought out of them that have pleasure therein:" (Psalm cxi:) the image of his power, wisdom, and goodness is imprinted on them all. Who can look up to the sun, and moon, and stars; to the vast and numerous globes above us; to this earth, and all its furniture and inhabitants, and not see the footsteps of the great and wise, and good Creator, and be edified and made more holy; that doth not use the eye of sense alone, while he winketh with the eye of reason? Our Redeemer came to recover us to the knowledge, love and obedience of our Creator, and by faith to lead us up to the love of God, and to sanctify us to our Maker's praise and service. Far was it

from his design to call us from studying the works of creation; which he prepareth us better to understand and use: nor would he deprive reason of its spectacles, but help us to better than we had before. Man's wit and tongue are apt to be so irregular, that we have need of the rules of true logic to keep them to order, and save them from deceit. Too little true logic and philosophy is much of their unhappiness who think they have enough to deserve veneration and applause.

3. But all this is dreaming, insignificant, incoherent nonsense, deliration, worse than children's chat (as it troubleth the world more), if God be not the beginning, guide, and end of it, and if we know not how to please him and be saved; and if all learning be not directly or indirectly a learning to know God and life eternal: when conscience is awakened all things are as dreams, and signify nothing in comparison of God and life eternal, to be obtained by Christ. When men come to die, the most learned die in his mind, and further than it is divine and holy and felicitating, they cry out of all their fame and learning, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Though learning be the most splendid of all vanities: fear God and keep his commandments, is the end of true learning, and the whole learning of man. Of writing many books there is no end; and much-reading is a weariness to the flesh; and he that increaseth knowledge contracteth envy and contradiction, and increaseth sorrow: but sanctified learning maketh a man indeed; so it be true, and not false pretended learning.

4. Therefore the industry of a man's study, the most of his time, the zeal of his soul, must be laid out on God, and the great and endless concernments of his own and others souls; and learning must be desired, esteemed, sought and used, according to its usefulness to these high and glorious ends: Then it is the lower part of wisdom; which all that want it must esteem, and honour, and desire; else it is a dream and folly, which leaveth the awakened soul in shame. But I have been too long on this.

IV. Consider next, that as this lower sort of learning is presupposed by Christ as true, and the desire of it cured as it is a lust; so plainness and intelligibleness were altogether necessary to his ends; what came he on earth to do, but

to reconcile us to God, and make known his kingdom, and his love to sinners? To procure us pardon and a spirit of vivification, illumination, and sanctification? And the word that must be the means of this must be fitted to its end, and be intelligible to the unlearned; or else he should have been the Saviour of a few learned men only, and not of the world. Kings and parliaments write their laws in a style suitable to the matter: and so do men draw up their covenants: and princes their pardons, and physicians their bills and directions: And none of these useth to write a grammar or logic instead of their proper work, nor to fill their writings with ludicrous, logical tricks, and toys. He that is but to tell men how to be saved from sin and hell, and brought to heaven, and live so here that he may live with God and angels for ever, must speak in plainness and in good earnest.

V. And consider that the Scripture is not void of so much logic and philosophy as is suitable to its design. In a well-fleshed body the distinction and compagination of the parts are hid, which in an ugly skeleton are discerned. So the Scripture is a body of essentials, integrals and accidentals of religion, and every unstudied fellow cannot anatomise it: but it hath its real and excellent method, for all that it is hid to the unskilful. There is a method of Scripture Theology, which is the most accurate that ever the world knew in morality. I have drawn up the body of theology into schemes. In which I doubt not but I have shewn, that the method of theology contained in the Holy Scriptures, is more accurate than any logical author doth prescribe: and the Lord's-prayer and decalogue especially will prove this, when truly opened: and the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Baptismal Covenant, is the foundation of all true method of physics, and morality in the world. What if a novice cannot anatomise Cicero or Demosthenes, doth it follow that they are immethodical? Brandmiller and Flacher upon the Scripture text, and Steph. Tzegedine, Solnius, Gomarus, Dudley, Fenner, and many others upon the body of theology have gone far in opening the Scripture method. But more may be yet done.

VI. Consider also that the Eternal Wisdom, Word, and Son of God our Redeemer, is the fountain and giver of all knowledge: nature to be restored, and grace to restore it, are in his hands. He is that true light that lighteneth every

one that cometh into the world: The light of nature and arts, and sciences are from his Spirit and teaching, as well as the Gospel. Whether Clemens Alexandrinus, and some other ancients were in the right or not, when they taught that philosophy is one way by which men come to salvation, it is certain that they are in the right, that say it is now the gift of Christ: And that as the light which goeth before sun-rising (yea which in the night is reflected from the moon,) is from the sun, as well as its more glorious beams; so the knowledge of Socrates, Plato, Zeno, Cirero, Antonine, Epictetus, Seneca, Plutarch, were from the wisdom and word of God, the Redeemer of the world, even by a lower gift of his Spirit, as well as the Gospel and higher illumination: and shall Christ be thought void of what he giveth so many in the world?

VII. Lastly, let it be considered above all, that the grand difference between the teaching of Christ and other men, is that he teacheth effectively (as God spake when he created, and as he said to Lazarus, Arise:) He giveth wisdom by giving the Holy Ghost: All other teachers speak but to the ears; but he only speaketh to the heart: were it not for this he would have no church.—I should never have else believed in him myself, nor would any other, seriously and savingly. Aristotle and Plato speak but words, but Christ speaketh LIFE and LIGHT and LOVE, in all countries, through all ages to this day. This above all is his witness in the world. He will not do his work on souls, by ludicrous enticing words of the pedantic wisdom of the world; but by illuminating minds, and changing hearts and lives by his effectual operations on the heart. God used no more rhetoric nor logic than a philosopher, when he said only “Let there be light,” but he used more power. Indeed the first chapter of Genesis (though abused by ignorants and cabalists) hath more true philosophy in it than the presumptuous will understand, (as my worthy friend Mr. Samuel Gott lately gone to God, hath manifested in his excellent Philosophy; excepting the style, and some few presumptions.) But operations are the glorious oratory of God, and his wisdom shineth in his works, and in things beseeming the heavenly Majesty; and not in childish laces, and toys of wit.

Let us therefore cease quarrelling, and learn wisdom of God, instead of teaching and reprehending him. Let us

magnify the mercy and wisdom of our Redeemer, who hath brought life and immortality to light, and certified us of the matters of the world above, as beseemed a messenger sent from God; and hath taught us, according to the matter, and our capacity, and not with trifling, childish notions.

CHAP. XVIII.

Inference 6. *The true and false Ways of restoring the Churches, and healing our Divisions, hence opened and made plain.*

HAVING opened to you our disease, it is easy, were not the disease itself against it, to discern the cure. Pretended knowledge hath corrupted and divided the Christian world. Therefore it must be CERTAIN VERITIES, which must restore us, and unite us. And these must be things PLAIN and NECESSARY, and such as God hath designed to this very use; or else they will never do the work. One would think that it should be enough to satisfy men of this, 1. To read the Scripture. 2. To peruse the terms of concord in the primitive church. 3. To peruse the sad histories of the church's discord and divisions, and the causes. 4. To peruse the state of the world at this day, and to make use of universal experience. 5. To know what a Christian is, what Baptism is, and what a Church is. 6. To know what man is; and that they themselves, and the churches are but men. But penal and sinful infatuation, hath many ages been upon the minds of those in the Christian world, who were most concerned in the cure; and our sin is our misery, as, I think, to the damned it will be the chief part of their hell.

But this subject is so great and needful, and that which the wounds and blood of the Christian world do cry for a skilful cure of; that I will not thrust it into this corner, but design to write a treatise of it by itself, as a second part of this ⁿ.

ⁿ This book is since printed with some alteration, and called "The True and Only Way of the Concord of the Churches."

CHAP. XIX.

VIII. *Of the Causes of this Disease of Prefidence, or proud Pretended Knowledge, in order to the Cure.*

THE cure of prefidence and pretended knowledge, could it be wrought, would be the cure of souls, families, churches, and kingdoms. But alas, how low are our hopes! Yet that may be done on some, which will not be done on all or most. And to know the causes, and oppugn them, is the chief part of the cure, so far as may be hoped for.

I. The first and grand cause is the very nature of ignorance itself; which many ways disableth men, from knowing that which should abate their groundless confidence. For, 1. An ignorant man knoweth but little parcels and scraps of things; and all the rest is unknown to him: therefore he fixeth upon that little which he knoweth; and having no knowledge of the rest, he cannot regulate his narrow apprehensions by any conceptions of them. And all things visible to us (not light itself excepted, which, as seen by us, is fire incorporated in air;) being compounds; the very nature or being of them is not known, where any constitutive part is unknown. And in all compounds, each part hath such relation and usefulness to others, that one part which seemeth known, is itself but half-known, for want of the knowledge of others. Such a kind of knowledge is theirs, that knowing only what they see, do take a clock or watch to be only the index moving by the hours, being ignorant of all the casual parts within: or that know no more of a tree, or other plant, than the magnitude, site, colour, odour, &c. Or that take a man to be only a body, without a soul; or the body, be only the skin and parts, discerned by the eye in converse.

Now that which such persons do sensibly apprehend, they are confident of, because that nature teacheth them to trust their senses; but not knowing the rest, their little partial conceptions are lame, defective, and deceitful. For most will hence rashly conclude of the negative, that there is no more, because they know no more. But if any be more wise and modest, yet do they want the conception of the unknown parts, to make the rest to be true knowledge, or to tell them what is yet unknown: and such use to turn a judicial rule

into a physical; that 'non apparere et non esse,' are to them all one.

2. And an ignorant man doth not know what conceptions other men have of the same things which he is ignorant of: so that he neither knoweth the thing intelligible, (what it is) nor yet the act of knowing it, which he never had: but, as a man born blind hath no formal conception, either of sight, or of light, or visible objects; so is it here.

3. Nor hath he usually a true knowledge of his own ignorance; how imperfect his understanding is, and how much to be suspected, as liable to mistake: though in some sensible matters, it is easy to convince men of a total ignorance; yet when they know any thing, it is hard to convince them what more is to be known, and to keep them from false and hasty conclusions. A man that cannot read at all, is easily convinced that he cannot read: but he that can read a little, is apt to think that he readeth rightly, when he doth not. A man that never heard of physic, is easily convinced that he hath no skill in it: but if he have read, heard of, and tried a few medicines; he is apt to grow conceited, and venture men's lives upon his skill. A man that never saw building, navigation, or any art or manufacture, is easily convinced that he is ignorant of it: but if he have got some smattering knowledge, he is ready to think that it is more than it is, because he knoweth not what he wants.

And to err, and know that a man erreth, (at the same time, about the same thing,) is a contradiction: for he that erreth, judgeth a falsehood to be a truth: but to know that so to judge is to err, is certainly not so to judge; for 'intellectus vult verum;' that is, truth is the object which it is naturally inclined to. The same light which discovereth error, cureth it: and that light which discovereth the thing itself, is it that must convince me that I before erred about it, by misapprehensions.

4. And an ignorant man doth not so much as know the difficulties of the case, and what may be said on the other side: what contrary evidence convinceth others, or what weight there is in the objections, which are, or may be brought against him. So that all men being naturally ignorant, and little being known for much that is unknown, even to the wisest; alas, the temptation to error and false confidence is so strong, that few escape it.

II. Another cause of it is, the radical master sin of pride:

an unhumbléd mind, never well acquainted with its own dark and erroneous condition, and its great need of natural and supernatural helps. I find it hard to convince men of this; but the forementioned effects do certainly prove it. The vice is born with us at the very heart. It is the devil's image: he that is not naturally proud, is not a son of Adam. It liveth first, and dieth last: and there is nothing that man is apter to be proud of, than his reason, which is his humanity, and next to that of his goodness, and of his greatness. Men perceive not this in themselves, because they know not what pride is, while it ruleth in them. They think that it is only some womanish or childish extrinsical ostentation, (boasting) or perking up above others in garb and place, or peacock-like looking upon their own train, or setting it up for others to look on. But pride is (as I said before) an overvaluing ourselves, and a desire that others should overvalue us: and how few be there that be not tickled, when their wisdom is applauded, and nettled when it is accounted small: it is hard to bear to be accounted and reported a fool, or a person of little wit. Many a man spendeth all the studies of his life, more for a fame of learning than for learning itself; what is pride if this be not? What grosser pride, than for a woman or unexperienced lad, to scorn and despise the oldest and hardest students in divinity, as dark souls in comparison of them! The Quakers in their shops, when I go along London streets, say, 'Alas, poor man, thou art yet in darkness:' they have oft come into the congregation, (when I had liberty to preach Christ's Gospel) and cried out against me as a deceiver of the people. They have followed me home, crying out in the streets, 'The day of the Lord is coming, when thou shalt perish as a deceiver.' They have stood in the market-place, and under my window, year after year, crying out to the people, 'Take heed of your priests, they deceive your souls:' And if they saw any one wear a lace or neat clothing, they cried to me, 'These are the fruit of thy ministry.' If they spake to me with the greatest ignorance or nonsense, it was with as much fury and rage, as if a bloody heart had appeared in their faces; so that though I never hurt, or occasioned the hurt of one of them, that I know of, their truculent countenances told me what they would have done had I been in their power: (this was in 1656, 57, 58, 59.) And yet they were poorly clothed: (some of them went through the streets

stark naked), and cried out over and over all the year, 'Woe to the proud!' Wonderful! wonderful! O the blindness of a corrupted mind! that these poor souls did not perceive their superlative pride. How highly did these people think of their own wisdom and holiness, while they cried down laces, points, and cuffs!

And when did I ever know either a true church-tyrant, or a true sectarian separating humourist, which were not both notorious proud over-valuers of their own conceits. To which those that bowed not must be persecuted as unruly schismatics by the one sort, and excommunicated, separated from, and damned as ungodly, carnal or antichristian by the other sort?

Several ways doth PRIDE cause pretended knowledge. 1. By thinking that our understandings are so good as that without great study we can know truth from falsehood; and so making us venture to judge of things at the first hearing or reading; which we cannot be capable of judging of under long and diligent studies; because 'recipitur ad modum recipientis.' Therefore it is that when a man by great success in studies hath made things as plain as words can make them, so that you would think that all students should presently be wise at easy rates by the light which he hath set up to them, they are half as long in learning for all that, as if he had never given them such a help. And therefore it is, that we cannot leave our learning to posterity; because still the stop is in the receiver's incapacity. And he cannot be capable of the plainest precepts, but by much time and study.

2. Pride maketh men hasty in concluding, because they are not humbled to a just suspicion of their own apprehensions. And men stay not to prove and try things before they judge.

3. Pride maketh men insensible how much they are ignorant of, in all their knowledge.

4. And it causeth men to slight the reasons and judgments of other men, by which they might learn, or at least might be taught to judge considerably, and suspend their own.

If overvaluing a man's own apprehensions be pride (as it is), then certainly pride is one of the commonest sins in the world, and particularly among men professing godliness, who upon every poor surmise or report are condemning those, that do not thoroughly know, and in every petty con-

troversy, they are all still in the right, though of never so many minds.

III. Another cause of pretended knowledge is the want of a truly tender conscience: which should make men fear, lest they should err, lest they should deserve the curse of putting "light for darkness, and darkness for light; evil for good, and good for evil:" (Isa. v. 20:) and should make them afraid lest they should defile their minds, resist the truth, blaspheme God or dishonour him, by fathering errors on him, and lest they should prove snares to men's souls, and a scandal and trouble to the Church of God. A tender conscience would not have espoused such opinions under one or two or many years deliberation, which an Antinomian, or other sectary will take up in a few days, (if they were true.) O, saith the tender conscience, what if I should err, and prove a snare to souls, and a scandal and dishonour to the Church of God! &c.

IV. Another cause of pretended knowledge is a blind zeal for knowledge and godliness in the general, while men know not what it is they are zealous of. They think it is a necessary part of sincerity to receive the truth speedily without delay: and therefore they take a present concluding, for a true receiving it. And he that soonest taketh up that which is offered him, probably as a part of godliness, is taken for the most resolved downright convert. Which is true in case of evident truths, where it is the will that by vice suspendeth the mind. But not in dark and doubtful cases.

V. Another cause is, an inordinate trust in man: when some admire the learned too much, and some the religious, and some this or that particular person, and therefore build too confidently on their words: some on great men, some on the multitude, but most on men of fame for great learning, or great piety. A credit is to be given by every learner to his teacher: but the confounding this with our belief of God, and making it a part of our religion, and not trusting man as man only, that is, a fallible wight, doth cause this vice of pretended knowledge, to pass with millions for divine faith. Especially when men embody themselves into a sect, as the only orthodox or godly party, or as the only true church (as the Papists do); then it emboldeneth them to believe any thing, which their sect or church believeth. For they think that this is the church's faith, which cannot err, or is the safest:

and that God would not let so many good men err. And thus they that should be made their teachers, and the helpers of their faith, becoming the lords of it, and almost their gods.

VI. And it much increaseth their sin, that men are not sufficiently acquainted with the original and additional corruption of man's nature, and know not how blind all mankind are. Alas, man is a dark creature! what error may he not hold. What villany may he not do; yea and maintain! Truly said David, "All men are liars." Pitifully do many expound this, as an effect of his unbelief and passion, because he saith, "I said in my haste;" when it is no more than Paul saith; "Let God be true, and every man a liar." (Rom. iii.) And than Solomon and Isaiah say, "All men are vanity:" and Jeremiah, "Cursed be he that trusteth in man:" all men are untrusty in a great degree! Weak, false, and bad. And his *haste* was either as Dr. Hammond translateth it, his *flight*, or else that his trial and distress made him more passionately sensible of the vanity or untrustiness of man, than he was at other times. For *vanity* and a *lie* to the Hebrews were words of the same importance, signifying deceivableness and untrustiness. And indeed among mankind there is so great a degree of impotency, selfishness, timorousness, ignorance, error, and viciousness, as that few wicked men are to be believed, where there is any strong temptation to lying. And the devil is seldom unprovided of temptations: and abundance of hypocrites are as untrusty as open wicked men: and abundance of sincere godly persons, especially women, have loose tongues, and hasty passions, and a stretching conscience, but especially injudicious heads, so that frequently they know not truth from falsehood, nor have the tenderness of conscience to be silent till they know: so that if one say it, another will say it, till a hundred say it, and then it goeth for current truth.

Good men's overmuch credulity of one another hath filled the church with lies and fables. Many of the Papist's superstitions, purgatory, praying to saints and angels, praying for the dead, &c. were bred by this credulity. It is so visible in Venerable Bede, Gregory the first, yea before them in Sulpitius Severus of Martius Life, and abundance more, that to help up Christianity among the Pagans, they laid hold of any old woman's or ignorant man's dreams, and visions, and stories of pretended miracles and revelations, that

it made even Melchior Canus cry out of the shameful, ridiculous filth, that hence had filled their legends. Even Baronius upon trial, retaineth no small number of them, and with his brethren the Oratorians, on their prophesying days, told them to the people. I am ashamed, that I recited one out of him, before my treatise of "Crucifying the World," though I did it not, as persuading any that it was true: for I quickly saw, that Sophronius on whom he fathered it, was none of the reporters of it, that book being spurious, and none of Sophronius's work.

Indeed I know of such impudent false history lately printed, of matters of public fact in these times, yea, divers concerning my own words and actions, by persons that are far from contemptible, that strangers and posterity will scarce believe, that human nature could be guilty of it in the open light. And I know it to be so customary a thing, for the zealots professing the fear of God, on one side and the other, to receive and rashly tell about lies of one another, that I confess I am grown to take little heed of what such say, in such a case; unless the report continue a year uncontrolled! For it is common for them to tell those things as unquestionable, which a few months prove false: and yet never to manifest any repentance, but to go on with the like; one month disproving what the former hatched and vended.

And indeed the very wisest and best of men are guilty of so much ignorance, temerity, suspiciousness of other's partiality, &c. that we must believe them (though far sooner than others, yet) still with a reserve to change our minds, if we find them mistaken, and still on supposition that they are fallible persons, and that all men are liars.

VII. Another great cause of pretended false knowledge and confidence is the unhappy prejudices which our minds contract even in our childhood, before we have time, and wit, and conscience to try things by true deliberation. Children and youth must receive much upon trust, or else they can learn nothing: but then they have not wit to proportion their apprehensions to the evidence, whether of credibility or certainty: and so fame and tradition, and education and the country's vote, do become the ordinary parents of many lies; and folly maketh us to fasten so fearlessly in our first apprehensions, that they keep open the door to

abundance more falsehoods; and it must be clear teachers, or great, impartial studies, of a self-denying mind, with a great blessing of God, that must deliver us from prejudice, and undeceive us. And therefore all the world seeth, that almost all men are of the religion of their country or their parents, be it never so absurd; though with the Mahometans they believe the nonsense of a very sot, (once reading a quarter of whose Alcoran one would think should cure a man of common reason, of any inclination to his belief.) And among the Japonians, even the eloquent Bonzii believe in Amida and Xaca; to mention the belief of the Chinese, the people of Pegu, Siam, and many other such; yea, the Americans, the Brasilians, Lappians, &c. that correspond with devils would be a sad instance of the unhappiness of men's first apprehensions and education. And what doth the aforesaid instance of Popery come short herein, which tells us how prejudice, and education, and company can make men deny all men's common sense, and believe common, unseen miracles, pretended in the stead?

VIII. Another cause is the mistaking of the nature of the duty of submitting our judgment to our superiors and teachers, especially to the multitude, or the church, or antiquity. No doubt but much reverence and a human belief, is due to the judgment of our teachers credibly made known. But this is another thing quite different, 1. From knowing by evidence. 2. And from believing God; (of which, before and after).

IX. Another cause is base slothfulness, which makes men take up with the judgment of those in most reputation for power, wisdom, or number, to save them the labour of searching after the scientific evidence of things; or the certain evidence of Divine revelations.

X. Another frequent cause is, an appearance of something in the truth, which frighteneth men from it; either for want of a clear, methodical, advantageous representation; or by some difficult objection, or some miscarriage in the utterance, carriage or life of them that seem most zealous for it: such little things deceive dark man: and when he is turned from the truth, he thinks that the contrary error may be embraced without fear.

XI. Another great cause of confidence in false conceits, is the bias of some personal interest prevailing with a cor-

rupted will, and the mixture of sense and passion in the judgment. For, as interested men hardly believe what seemeth against them, and easily believe that which they would have to be true; so sense and passion (or affections) usually so bear down reason, that they think it their right to possess the throne. Not but that sense is the only discernor of its own sensible object as such, (and reason by sense as it is intelligible): but that is not the matter in hand. But the sensualist forceth his reason to call that best for him, which his sense is most delighted with, and that worst which most offendeth sense. The drunkard will easily judge that his drinking is good for him, and the glutton that his pleasant meats are lawful, and the time-waster that his plays are lawful, and the fornicator, the wrathful revenger, &c., that their lusts and passions are lawful, because they think that they have feeling on their side. It is hard to carry an upright judgment against sense and passion.

XII. Sometimes a strong, deluded imagination, maketh men exceeding confident in error; some by melancholy, and some by a natural weakness of reason, and strength of fantasy; and some by misapprehensions in religion, grow to think that every strong conceit which doth but come in suddenly, at reading, or hearing, or thinking on such a text, or in time of earnest prayer, especially if it deeply affect themselves, is certainly some suggestion or inspiration of God's Spirit. And hence many errors have troubled poor souls and the church of God, which afterwards they have themselves retracted. Hence is the confidence of some ignorant Christians in expounding difficult Scripture prophecies; and the boldness of others in expounding dark providences; and also in foretelling by their own surmises, things to come.

XIII. And not a few run into this mischief in some extremes, by seeing others run into error on the other side. Some are so offended at the credulity of the weak, that they will grow confident against plain certainties themselves. As, because there are many feigned miracles, apparitions, possessions and witchcrafts in the world, divulged by the incredulity of the injudicious; therefore they will more foolishly be confident that there are no such things at all. And because they see some weak persons impute more of their opinions, performances, and affections to God's Spirit,

than they ought; therefore they grow mad against the true operations of the Spirit, and confident that there is no such thing. Some deride praying by the Spirit, and preaching by the Spirit, and living by the Spirit; when as they might as well deride understanding, willing, working, by a reasonable soul; no holy thing being holily done without God's Spirit, any more than any act of life and reason without the soul. And they may, on the same grounds, deride all that live not after the flesh, and that are Christians, (Rom. viii. 5—9. 13,) or that love God, or that seek salvation. Yea, some run so far from spiritual fanaticisms, that they deny the very being of spirits; and many confidently set up a dead image of true religion, in bitter hatred and opposition of all that hath life and serious holiness: so mad are some made, by seeing some feverish persons dote.

XIV. Another cause, is, conversing only with those of our own mind, and side, and interest; and not seeking familiar, loving acquaintance with those that differ from us: whereby men deprive themselves of hearing half that is to be heard, and of knowing much that is to be known. And their proud vice hardeneth them in this way, to say, 'I have read, and I have heard enough of them; I know all that they can say.' And if a man soberly speak to them, their vices of pride, presumption and passion, will scarce patiently bear him to go on without interruption to the end; but the wizard saith, 'I know already what you will say, and you are tedious; and do you think that so wise a man as I, hath nothing to do but hear such a fool as you talk?' Thus proud men are ordinarily so full of themselves, that they can scarcely endure to hear, or at least learn any thing from others, nor restrain their violent list to speak, so long as either just information, or human civility requireth.

XV. Another cause, is, malignity and want of Christian love; whereby men are brought, if not to a hatred, yet to a proud contempt of others, who are not of their mind, and side, and way. O they are all—as foolish and bad as any one hath list to call them; and he that railleth at them most ingeniously and impudently, giveth them but their due. And will a man, full of himself and his own, be moved from his presumptions, by any thing that such a hated or scorned people can say? Nay, will he not be hardened in his self-conceit, because it is such as these that contradict him?

Many such causes of this vice there be ; but pride and ignorance are the proper parents of it, whatever else be the nurse or friend.

CHAP. XX.

Objections Answered.

I EASILY foresee, that besides the aforesaid impediments, all these following Objections will hinder the cure of false pretended knowledge, and self-conceitedness, and false belief, if they be not answered.

Object. 1. ‘ You move men to an impossibility : to see without light ; and for an erring man to believe that he erreth. He that hath not light to see the truth, hath not light to see his ignorance of it. This is no more, than to persuade all men to be wise, and not to err ; which you may do long enough to little purpose.’

Answ. It is impossible indeed for an erring man, while such, to know that he erreth : but it is not impossible I. For an ignorant man to know that he is ignorant ; (nor for a man without light or sight, to know that he seeth not ; though he cannot see that he seeth not). For though nescience be nothing ; and nothing is not properly and directly an object of our knowledge, no more than of our sight : yet as we see the limited quantity of substances, and so know little from big, by concluding that it hath no more quantity than we see ; so we know our own knowledge, both as to object and act, and we know the degree of it, and to what it doth extend : and so can conclude, I know no more. And though nescience be nothing, yet this proposition, ‘ I know no more,’ is not nothing. And so nothing is usually said to be known reductively ; but indeed it is not properly known at all ; but this proposition, ‘ de nihilo,’ is known, which is something. (I will not here meddle with the question, whether God know nonentities.)

2. To think, and to know, are not all one : for I may think that I may know ; that is, I study to know. Now I can know that I study, or think ; and I can perceive, that my studies reach not what I desire to reach, but fall short of satisfaction : and so as in the body, though emptiness be

nothing, and therefore not felt as nothing; yet a hungry man feeleth it in the consequents, by accident; that is, feel-eth that by which he knoweth that he is empty: and so it is with a student as to knowledge.

3. And a man that hath so much experience, as we all have of the stated darkness of our understandings, and frequent errors; may well know, that this understanding is to be suspected, and so blind a guide not over-confidently and rashly to be trusted.

4. And a man that knoweth the danger of error, may know that it is a thing that it should fear: and fear should make him cautelous.

5. And though an erring man, while such, cannot know that he erreth; yet, by the aforesaid means, he may cease to err, and know that he hath erred.

6. And lastly, It is a shame for a man to be unacquainted with himself, and especially with his understanding, and not to know the measure of his knowledge itself.

Object. II. 'You talk like a Cartesian, that must have all that would know, suppose first that they know nothing, no not that he feeleth and liveth.'

Ans. No such matter. Some things we know necessarily, and cannot choose but know: for the intellect is not free of itself, but only as 'quoad exercitium actus,' it is 'sub imperio voluntatis.' And it is vain to bid men not to know what they cannot choose but know. And it is as vain to tell them that they must suppose, (falsely,) that they know not what they know, as a means to know: for ignorance is no means to knowledge, but knowledge is. One act of knowledge being necessary to more, and therefore not to be denied. I have told you before what certainties are, which must be known, and never forsaken.

Object. III. 'But your discourse plainly tendeth to draw men to scepticism, and to doubt of all things.'

Ans. 1. I tell you, I describe to you many certainties not to be doubted of. 2. And it is indeed your puffedness that tendeth to scepticism, as is shewed: for men that believe hastily and falsely, find themselves so often deceived, that at last they begin to doubt of all things: it is scepticism which I prevent. 3. But I confess to you, that I am less afraid of scepticism in the world, than ever I was; as

finding corrupt nature so universally disposed the contrary way. As when I first saw the books of Jacob Behmen, and some such others, I adventured to prognosticate, that the Church would never be much endangered by that sect, or any other which a man cannot understand and join in, without great study and acuteness; because few men will be at so much labour; even so I say of scepticism; here and there a hard, impatient, half-knowing student, may turn sceptic; but never any great number. For pride and ignorance, and other causes of self-conceitedness are born in all men; and every man that apprehendeth any thing, is naturally apt to be too confident of his apprehensions; and few will have the humility to suspect themselves, or the patience and diligence to find out difficulties. I must say in my experience, that except the congregation which I long instructed, and some few such, I meet with few women, boys, or unlearned men, when they are past eighteen or twenty years old, but they are in conceit wiser than I, and are still in the right, and I am in the wrong, in things natural, civil, religious, or almost any thing we talk of, if I say not as they say; and it is so hard to abate their confidence, or convince them, that I have half ceased to endeavour it, but let every one believe and say what he will, so it be not to the dishonour of God, the wrong of others, and the hazard of his salvation: for I take it for granted beforehand, that contradiction more often causeth strife than instruction; and when they take not themselves for scholars, they seldom learn much of any but themselves: and their own thoughts and experience must teach them that in many years which from an experienced man they might have more cheaply learned in a few days.

Object. IV. 'You speak against taking things on trust, and so would keep children from believing and learning of their parents and masters, and from growing wise.'

Answer. I often tell you that human faith is a necessary help to divine faith; but it must not be mistaken for divine faith. Men are to be believed as fallible men; but in some things with diffidence, and in some things with confidence, and in some things, (where it is not the speaker's credit that we rely on but a concurrence of testimonies, which make up a natural certainty,) belief and knowledge go together, and the thing is sure. But man is not God.

Object. V. ‘ May not a man more safely and confidently believe by the Church’s faith, than his own? That is, take that for more certain which all men believe, than that which I think I see a divine word for myself?’

Answer. This is a Popish objection thus confusedly and fallaciously often made. 1. Properly, no man can believe by any faith but his own, any more than understand with any understanding but his own. But the meaning being, that we may better trust to the Church’s judgment, that this or that is God’s word, than to our own persuasion that it is God’s word, from the evidence of the revelation. I further answer. 2. That the Church’s judgment is one part of our subordinate motive; and therefore not to be put in competition with that divine evidence which it is always put in conjunction with. And the Church’s teaching, is the means of my coming to know the true evidences of Divinity in the Word. And the Church’s real holiness caused by that Word, is one of the evidences themselves, and not the least. Now to put the question, whether I must know the Scripture to be God’s Word because I discern the evidences of its divinity, or rather because the Church teacheth me that it is God’s Word, or because the Church saith it is God’s Word, or because the Church is sanctified by it, are all vain questions; setting things conjunct and co-ordinate as opposite. 1. By the Church’s judgment or belief, I am moved to a high reverence of God’s Word, by a very high human faith, supposing it credible that it may be God’s Word indeed. 2. Next by the Church’s (or minister’s) teaching, the evidences of its divinity are made known to me. 3. The effect of it, in the Church’s holiness, is one of these evidences. 4. And by that and all other evidences I know that it is God’s Word. 5. And therefore I believe it to be true. This is the true order and resolution of our faith.

3. But because the Popish method is, barely to believe the Scripture to be God’s Word, because a Pope and his Council judgeth so, I add, 1. That we have even of that human sort of testimony far more than such. For theirs is the testimony of a self-exalting sect of Christians, about the third part of the Christian world: but we have also the testimony of them and of all other Christians; and in most or much of the matter of fact, (that the Scriptures were deli-

vered down from the apostles) the testimony of some heathens and abundance of heretics. 2. And with these we have the evidences of its divinity themselves. 3. But if we had their Church's (or Pope and Council's) decrees for it alone, we should take it but for a human, fallible testimony.

For, 1. They cannot plead God's word here as the proof of their infallibility: for it is the supposed question, what is God's word, which (they say) cannot be known but by their infallible judgment. 2. And they cannot plead number; for, 1. The Mahometans are more than the Christians in the world: Brierwood reckoneth that they are six parts of thirty, and we but five. And yet not therefore infallible nor credible. 2. And the heathens are more than the Mahometans and Christians (being four-sixth parts of the world), and yet not infallible. But of this I have the last week wrote a book of the "Certainty of Christianity without Popery;" and heretofore my "Safe Religion," and others.

Object. VI. 'At least this way of believing and knowing things by proper evidences of truth, will loosen the common sort of Christians, (even the godly) from their faith and religion: for whereas now they go quietly on without doubting, as receiving the Scriptures from the Church or their teachers as the Word of God, when they fall on searching after proofs, they will be in danger of being overcome by difficulties, and filled with doubts, if not apostatizing to infidelity, or turning Papists.'

Answ. Either these persons have already the knowledge of certain evidence of the divinity of the Scripture, or Christianity, or they have none. If they have any, the way of studying it more will not take it from them, but increase it: else you dishonour Christianity to think that he that knoweth it to be of God, will think otherwise if he do but better try it. Upon search he will not know less, but more.

But if he have no such certainty already, 2. I further answer, that I take away from him none of that human belief which he had before: if the belief of his parents, teachers, or the Church only, did satisfy him before, which was but a strong probability, I leave with him the same help and probability, and only persuade him to add more and surer arguments. And therefore that should not weaken but confirm his faith.

Object. 'But you tell him that the Church's or his teacher's judgment or word is uncertain, and that sets him on doubting.'

Answ. 1. I tell him of all the strength and credibility that is in it, which I would have him make use of. 2. And it not alone, but by his teacher's help that I would have him seek for that certainty. 3. But if he did take that testimony for certain which was not certain; if he took man for God, or took his teachers, or Pope, for inspired prophets, and a human testimony for divine, do you think that this error should be cherished or cured? I think that God nor man have no true need of a lie in this case; and that lies seldom further man's salvation; and that though they do some job of present service the next way, at the end we shall find that they did more harm than good. And that to say the contrary, and that men will cease to be Christians unless they be kept to it by deceit, is the way to downright infidelity.

And yet that you may see how much more than ordinary I favour the weaknesses of such, I will here answer a great question.

Quest. 'Whether a man can have a true saving faith, who believeth the Gospel or Scripture to be God's Word, and Christ to be the Saviour of the world, upon reasons or grounds not sure nor cogent and concluding; yea, possibly not true, for the most part.'

Answ. He that readeth Mr. Pink's excellent Sermons, and many other such divines, will find them thus describing the faith of hypocrites, (that they conclude have no true saving faith,) that they believe in Christ, but on the same or like reasons as a Turk may believe in Mahomet; that is, because the most, the greatest, the most learned and the best, and all the country are of their minds, and in that way their parents did educate them in. For my part, I easily confess, 1. That such a belief which buildeth on unsound grounds, is wanting proportionably in its own soundness. 2. And that it should not be rested in. 3. Much less cherished against all counsels that would cure it. 4. And that though uncertain reasons are, 1. The first. 2. And the most prevailing with him afterwards, yet every true believer discerneth some intrinsic signs of divinity at least as probable in the Word itself. But yet supposing that wrong motives be his chief,

and that he discerneth not that in the Word itself which most prevaieth with him, I am of opinion that, 1. If the end of such a believer be sound, (the reducing of the soul to God, and attainment of glory, and the perfect love of God.) 2. And if that man unfeignedly believe all that is God's Word to be true. 3. And if he believe all the substance of the Gospel to be God's Word, though by an unsound and non-concluding medium as his chief. 4. And if he by this belief be brought himself to the actual love of God as God; this unsound believer is sound in the essentials of Christianity, and shall be saved.

The *Objection* is, 'An uncertain, yea, deceived belief upon false suppositions, is no true belief, and therefore cannot save.'

I answer, There is a double truth in such a belief: 1. That all God's Word is true. 2. That this Gospel is God's Word, and Christ is the Messiah.

You will say, that 'there can be no more, no surer, no better in the conclusion, than is in the weaker of the premises °.' I answer, I grant it. And all that will follow is, that the conclusion is not necessary from these premises; and that the believer was mistaken in the reason of his inference, and that he concluded a truth upon an unsound medium: I grant all this, and consequently that his faith hath some unsoundness or diseasedness in it. But for all this, I see not but such a believer may be saved: 1. Because Christ's promise is, that whoever "believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," without excepting such as are drawn to it by non-cogent arguments. And he that will put in an exception against the covenant of grace, must prove it, or be injurious to Christ, to his Gospel, and to men's souls.

2. Because by experience I find, that it is but a small part of serious, godly Christians, who believe the Scriptures upon cogent evidence, (or at least many do not:) but abundance take it upon trust from godly preachers or parents, and go on without much examining of their grounds; and are not able to bring a cogent proof of the divinity of the Scriptures, when they are called to it. And I am not willing to conclude so great a part of humble, upright Chris-

° Of which see Smiglecius Logics and Albertinus in his Philosoph. Disputat. at large.

tians, to damnation, as know not such reasons for their faith as would hold good in strict disputation. Not that our charity must bend the Scripture to it. But that Scripture commanded such charity; and it no where condemneth any man that believeth upon uncogent reasons. For he that doth so, may yet firmly trust on Jesus Christ, and firmly believe that the Gospel is true, as being the very Word of God, and may take heaven for his portion, and love God, as God, and therefore may be saved. Though yet I think it impossible that any man should truly believe the Scriptures, and not perceive in them some characters of Divinity, which as an intrinsical evidence much encourage and induce him to believe them: and though this secret gust and perception be not the medium that he useth in arguing, or be not the chief, yet it may have an effectual force with his soul to hold him close to Christ. But if you suppose the man to have no spiritual sight and taste of a difference between God's Word and a common book, then he cannot be supposed to be a sound believer.

As a man that hath one ingredient in his medicine which is effectual, may be cured, though in the composition the main bulk be vanities; or as a doctor that hath many insufficient sureties, may do well if he have one sufficient one, though he more trust the rest; or as a man's cause may go for him in judgment that hath one or two good witnesses, and twenty bad ones which he put more trust in; and as he truly proveth his position, who bringeth one sound argument for it, and twenty bad ones: so I think that the common way of the illiterate in believing is, first to believe God's Word *to be his Word* by human faith; and after upon trial to find a spiritual light and goodness in the Word itself, and by both together to believe that it is God's Word. And the worse reasons may be the more powerful with him, and yet not destroy the sincerity of his faith.

Nor doth this make his faith merely human: for the question now is not, why he believeth God's Word to be true, and trusteth on it: for that is, because it is God's Word (discerned by him so to be); but he that by an insufficient medium (at least with a better, though less understood), doth take it to be God's, may yet by a divine faith believe it, because he judgeth it his Word.

If a man should counterfeit himself an angel from heaven,

and come in some splendid, deceitful appearance in the night to an heathen, and tell him that he is sent from God to bring him this Bible as his certain Word; and if the man receive it, and believe it on his credit to the death, and by that believing it be brought to see an excellency and credibility, and taste a spiritual sweetness in it, and be brought by it (as he may be) to holiness and the love of God, that man shall be saved, though I cannot say that the intrinsic evidence of the Word alone would have prevailed with him without that false belief of a deceiver: when it is once become a sanctifying belief, then there is no doubt but the man hath better evidence than the uncertain word of man: he hath the witness in himself. And it is not a glorifying faith, till it be a sanctifying faith. But the question is, what soundness of reason or proof that this is God's Word, is necessary to make it a sanctifying faith; at least, as most prevalent and trusted in?

By this you may know what I judge of the faith of honest, illiterate Papists, and of illiterate Protestants, for there are a great number of them, who live in love and obedience to God.

And yet to speak both more concisely and distinctly, I. I may believe by historical tradition all that matter of fact, which those that saw Christ's and the apostles' miracles, and heard their words, did know by sense; and those that saw not, believed on the credit of the reporters. II. And yet I may know by reason, through God's help, that these miracles, and this Scripture impress and efficacy are God's attestation; and none but God could do it. And of this all believers have some perception in various degrees. III. And then we know it to be true, because it is sealed by those attestations, and is the Word of God.

Object. VII. 'But would you have men take the matter of fact for uncertain (that this is a true Bible and copy, and was given the Church by the apostles, &c.) and so not pretend to be certain of them.'

Ans. I have often said, and elsewhere largely proved, that as, 1. A human faith of highest probability prepareth the way; so, 2. These things are known by an historical evidence, which hath a proper certainty above mere human faith: for human faith resteth on men's veracity or fidelity, which is uncertain: but there is a history (such as that there is

such a city as Rome, Venice, &c.) which is evident by a surer ground than men's fidelity; even from such a concurrence of consenters and circumstances, as will prove a forgery impossible.

Object. VIII. ' You seem to favour the Popish doctrine of ignorance, while you would have all our knowledge confined to a few plain and easy things, and persuade men to doubt all the rest.'

Ans. 1. I persuade no man to doubt of that which he is certain of, but not to lie, and say he is certain when he is not. 2. I am so far from encouraging ignorance, that it is ignorance of your ignorance which I reprove: I would have all men know as much as possibly they can of all that God hath revealed. And if the self-conceited knew more, they would doubt more; and as they grow wiser, will grow less confident in uncertainties. It is not knowing, but false pretending to know, that I am against. Do you think that a thousand self-conceited men and women do really know ever the more for saying they know, or crying down that ignorance, doubting and uncertainty which they have themselves. How many a one (yea preachers) have cried down the Popish doctrine of uncertainty of salvation, who had no certainty of their own; but their neighbours thought by their lives were certainly in the way to hell.

Object. IX. ' But you would have men resist the Spirit that convinceth them, and make so long a work in doubting, and questioning, and proving every thing, as that Christians will come but to a little knowledge in your way.'

Ans. They will have the more knowledge, and not the less for trying. Peremptory confidence is not knowledge, the next way here is farthest about. Receive all evidence from God and man, from the Word and Spirit, with all the desire, and all the delight, and all the speed that you possibly can: Study earnestly; learn willingly; resist no light; neglect no truth. But what is all this to foolish conceit that you know what you do not? What is this to the hasty believing of falsehoods, or uncertainties, and troubling the church and world with self-conceit and dreams? I remember two or three of my old acquaintance, who suddenly received from a seducer the opinion of perfection, that we might be perfectly sinless in this life: And because I denied it they carried it as if I had pleaded for sin against perfec-

tion; and they presently took themselves to be perfect and sinless, because they had got the opinion that some are such. I told them that I desired perfection as well as they, and that I was far from hindering or dissuading any from perfection; but wished them to let us see that they are so indeed, and never to sin more in thought, word or deed: And ere long they forsook all religion, and by drunkenness, fornication and licentiousness, shewed us their perfection. So here, it is not a conceit that men have faith and knowledge, and quickly saying, I believe; or turning to the priest or party that persuadeth them, which maketh them ever the wiser men, or true believers.

Object. X. ‘But that may seem certain to another which seemeth uncertain or false to you: therefore every man must go according to his own light.’

Ans. 1. Nothing is certain which is not true: if that seem true to you which is false, this is your error: and is every man, or any man bound to err, and believe a falsehood? Being is before knowing: If it be not true, you may think it to be so, (which is that which I would cure;) but you cannot know it to be so; much less to be certain of it. 2. If it be certain to you, it is evidently true; and if so, hold it fast, and spare not: It is not any man’s certainty, but error, which I oppose.

Object. XI. ‘But if we must write or utter nothing but certainties, you would have but a small library.’

Ans. 1. The world might well spare a great many uncertain writings. 2. But I say not that you must think, say or write nothing but certainties: there is a lawful, and in some cases, necessary exercise of our understandings about probabilities and possibilities. The husbandman when he plougheth and soweth is not certain of an increase. 1. But call not that certain which is not. 2. And be not as vehement and peremptory in it as if it were a certainty. 3. And separate your certainties and probabilities asunder, that confusion fill not your minds with error.

Object. XII. ‘While you persuade us to be so diffident of men’s reports, and to suspend our belief of what men say, you speak against the laws of converse.’

Ans. I persuade you not to deny any man such a belief as is his due: but give him no more. If a man profess himself a Christian, and say that he sincerely believeth in Christ,

and consenteth to his covenant, though you may perceive no ascertaining evidence that he saith true, yet you must believe him, because he is the only opener of his own mind, and the laws of God and human converse require it. But what is this believing him? Not taking it for a certain truth, but taking it for a thing probable, which may be true for aught you know, and which you must hope is true; and this in different degrees, according to the different degrees of the person's credibility.

If you hear men confidently report any news in these times, when half that we hear oft proveth false, you may believe the reporter as a fallible person, that is, believe that he doth not wilfully lie, and so not uncivilly contradict him; and yet suspend your belief of the thing itself, and whether he took it up rashly on uncertain rumours.

But if you hear a man speak evil of another behind his back, when the thing is not notorious and certain other ways, the law of justice and charity obligeth you not to believe him, but to suspend your belief till you hear both sides, or have surer proof; yea, and to suspend, not with an indifferency, but with a hope that it is not true which he speaketh.

Object. XIII. 'But then I shall be as uncharitable in judging the reporter (who perhaps is a godly man) to be a liar and slanderer, as I should be in believing that the other is guilty.'

Answ. 1. I say not that you are to conclude that certainly he lieth, and that it is false, but to suspend your belief, and to hope that it is false. 2. He that maketh himself the accuser of another man behind his back, in a way of talk, doth expose himself to that disadvantage, and maketh it our duty to begin our charitable opinion on the side of him that is accused, and rather to hope that he is innocent ('cæteris paribus') than the accuser. For God forbiddeth backbiting and slandering, and biddeth us to speak evil of no man. And he that in our hearing backbiteth and speaketh evil, how godly otherwise soever, without a clear necessary cause, doth forfeit our charity and belief, more than a man can do whom we do not see or hear. For if I was bound to judge him innocent before this backbiting, I am bound so to judge him still. Therefore I do but continue that good opinion of my neighbour which I was bound to: And that I must suspect the backbiter of a lie, is the consequent of his own act, and wrong of himself. For I cannot believe con-

traries : and it is not his backbiting that will disoblige me from my former duty, of judging the other innocent. So that it is the reporter that casteth away the reputation of his own veracity.

Object. XIV. ‘ When you have written all this against pretended knowledge, who is more guilty than yourself? Who so oppresseth his reader with distinctions? Are all your large writings evident certainties? Even those controversies in which you have so many adversaries?’

Ans. I put in this objection, because I have a book called “*Methodus Theologiæ*,” which I know will occasion such thoughts in many readers. But, 1. It is one thing to assert uncertainties, and another thing to anatomise, and distinctly, and methodically explain to certain truth. In all my large writings, if you find that I call any thing certain which is uncertain, that is, which I give not ascertaining evidence of, acquaint me with the particulars, and I shall retract them.

2. I never persuaded any man to write or say no more than all men certainly know already, no not all learned divines; for then how should we receive edification? Subjective certainty is as various as men’s intellects, where no two are of a size. And objective certainty must be tried by the evidence, and not by other men’s consenting to it. Nor must a major vote of dissenters go for a proof of objective uncertainty: For Heathens are more than the rest of the world; and Mahometans more than Christians; and Papists more than Protestants; and the ungodly more than the godly; and yet this is no proof of our own, or the things uncertainty.

3. Part of my writings are against uncertainties; and to deliver the Church from false opinions that go for certainties; and these are they that have most contradicters: and may I not write against false and uncertain opinions which religion is corrupted with, and defend the ancient simplicity, without being guilty of the introduction of uncertainties myself.

4. I deny not but I have many things that are uncertain; but then I acknowledge them uncertain; and treat of them but as they are.

5. Lastly, If really my writings are guilty of that which I here reprehend, false pretended knowledge, the sin is never

the better for that, nor my accusation of it, ever the less true, nor your duty to avoid it ever the less. Think what you will of me, so you will but think rightly of sin and duty. If I go contrary to my doctrine, and you can prove it, take warning by me, and do not you the like.

CHAP. XXI.

IX. *Directions for the Cure of Pretended Knowledge, or Self-conceit.*

THE cure of this plague of puffed-upness or pretended knowledge is it which all the rest is written for; and must now be the last in execution as it was the first in my intention^p. And could men be persuaded to this following course it might be done: but nature's vicious inclination to the vice, and the commonness and strength of temptations to it, do make me expect to prevail but with a few.

Direct. I. Labour to understand the true nature and principles of certainty before opened. False measures will make you judge certainties to be falsehoods or uncertain, and falsehoods to be certain truths. And when you know the conditions of certainty, try all things by them accurately; and if any would by art, persuade you of the uncertainty of nature's just perceptions, by sense or intellect, remember that be they what they will, you have no better or surer: they are such as our Creator hath given you to trust to for your use, even for the ends of life.

Direct. II. Discern the helps of knowledge from knowledge or certainty itself. Believing your teachers as men, and believing historians according to their credibility, and reverencing the judgment of seniors, and of the church, are all preparative helps to certainty: and human faith is such as to Divine faith. But do not therefore think that it is the same: nor give men that prerogative of infallibility which belongeth to God, or to inspired prophets, who prove their word by God's attestation. The belief of logicians is needful to your understanding logic, and logic is a great help to

^p Because I must not often repeat the same things, I must refer the reader to what I have more fully said of this in twenty-seven directions for certainty of knowledge in my Christian Directory, Part iii. chap. 7.

your certain discerning of physical and metaphysical and moral verities. And yet many rules of your logic may be uncertain, and you must not take the helps of your knowledge for evidence itself.

Some think that nothing is known till we have second notions for it, or can define it: when things sensible are better known by sensing them, and usually second notions deceive men and make them doubt of what they better apprehended without them.

Be very suspicious of all words or terms; 1. As ambiguous, as almost all are: and therefore he that cannot distinguish them must needs err by confusion. 2. Lest you take the names for things, most disputes using to carry controversies 'de nomine' as if they were 'de re,' or slide from this into that.

Direct. III. Therefore also trust not too far to the artificial forms of argument, without, or instead of the evidence of the truth of the thing itself. For there are many things supposed to the infallibility of your art, which may not themselves be infallibly true: and man's wit is conscious of its own fallibility; and therefore is doubtful lest it should be deceived in its collections and ratiocinations; especially when the engine hath many tacklings, and the chain many links, we are still in doubt lest some one should break: but the evidence of the thing in its own reality, which is not wholly laid on the form of an artificial argument, which is of great use, doth satisfy more.

Direct. IV. Take truths in order; the principles first, and the rest in their true exurgence and dependance upon them: and take nothing to be well known which is not known, not only in a method but in a method clearly suitable to the things. As words and notions, so rules and methods must be fetched from the things, and fitted to the things, or they are vain. Sense and intellect must first perceive the things themselves, and be your first tutors in somatology and pneumatology; and then these must do much in making your logic. The foot must be the measure of the shoe. And remember that you have but a half, fallacious knowledge, till you know the true place, and order, and respects of the thing, as well as the nature and quality of it in itself; and till you can draw up a true scheme of the things which you know: it is dreams that are incoherent.

Direct. V. Let the great radical verities have your greatest confidence, and not only so, but the most of your thoughts, and estimation, and time; and proportionably let the lesser things have but that share of your esteem, and time, and studies which they deserve; which comparatively will be little. And make them the test of what is further offered to you: and believe nothing which is certainly contrary to them. Argue always ‘à notioribus,’ and reduce not certainties to uncertainties, but contrarily.

Direct. VI. Keep all your perceptions distinct according to the distinction of their natures. Let both your books and your intellects be like an apothecary’s shop, where there are different boxes with different titles for different things. Let sensible perceptions be by themselves: and the intellectual perception of things sensate be by themselves: and the intellectual perception of its own and the will’s acts be by themselves: and the collection of the nature of spirits and intellectual agents thence, be by themselves: and the knowledge of principles, physical and moral, be by themselves: and the certainty of conclusions be ranked according to the variety of their degrees. The confusion of these different things causeth so confused a kind of knowledge, as is next to no knowledge, and more fit to trouble than to satisfy.

Direct. VII. Look to all things, or as many as is possible. When half is unknown, the other half is not half known. ‘Respicere ad omnia’ is proper to God: ‘Respicere ad plurima’ is necessary to the competent wisdom of a man: to be of a narrow mind and prospect, is the property of the ignorant and erroneous. He that seeth only a hand or foot knoweth not what a man is by it: and he that seeth only a word knoweth not by that what a sentence is. God’s works are all one. I know not what we shall see in Comenius’s Pansophy, which they say is yet to see the light; how far he hath reduced all sciences to one. But I little doubt but they may and should be all reduced to two, which are as the soul and body that yet make up one man, though not one nature, viz. 1. The ontological or real part, distinguished into that of substances and of modes, where morality cometh in, &c. 2. The organical part, which fitteth words and notions to things. And I am sure that as the knowledge of one thing or of many, much conduceth to further knowledge; so the ignorance of one thing conduceth to

ignorance and error about others. It is here as in the knowledge of a clock or watch, or musical instrument. Know all or you know little, and next to none. No man is a fit judge of church affairs, who hath not the state of the world in some good measure in his eye; else he will be like most sectaries, who judge, and talk, and live, as if the world were no bigger than their synagogues or sects. He must have all the Scripture in his eye, and all the body of divinity, and all the world in his eye; and God himself, who is more than all, who will not, by a narrow mind be cheated into a multitude of errors. There are abundance of truths unknown to you which, were they known, would rectify your other errors.

Direct. VIII. Conclude not hastily of negatives. You may more easily know, that you do what you do know, than know what it is that you do not know. It doth not follow that there is no more, because you know no more. St. John tells you, that if all that Christ did should be written, the world could not contain the books: you cannot therefore conclude from what is recorded, that he said and did no more than is recorded: though I am sure against popery, by my sense and intellect, that there is real bread and wine in the sacrament, I am not sure by sense that there is no spiritual body of Christ: the negative must be otherwise proved. I am sure by my five senses (as they are commonly distinguished and numbered) that there are existent all the sensible qualities, which are their objects: but whether the world may not have more sensible qualities, suited to many other sort of senses, which we have no conception, notion or name of, is a thing that no mortal man can know.

You hear many things, and know many things by another man, which make his cause seem bad: but do you know how many more things may be existent unknown to you, which if you knew would change your judgment?

Allow still room and supposition for abundance of unknown things, which may come hereafter to your knowledge, and make things seem to you quite other than they do. How can you possibly know how much more may be unknown to you? If I have a servant that stayeth much longer than I expected, I may conjecture that he could have no business to stay him, but his negligence; but there may be many accidents to cause it, which I cannot judge of till I hear him speak.

Direct. IX. Be sure that you suspect your first apprehensions of things; and take few conceptions (conclusive) for certain, that are not digested. Fasten not over-tenaciously upon opinions, in the beginning, at the first hearing: take it for granted, that your first conceptions of things must alter, either as to the truth, or the evidence, or the order, or the degree. Few men are so happy in youth, as to receive at first such right impressions, which need not after be much altered. When we are children, we know as children; but when we become men, childish things are done away. Where we change not our judgment of the matter, yet we come to have very different apprehensions of it. I would not have boys to be mere sceptics; for they must be godly, and Christians. But I would have them leave room for increase of knowledge, and not be too peremptory with their juvenile conceptions, but suppose that a further light will give them another prospect of the same things.

Direct. X. Choose such teachers, if possible, as have themselves attained the things you seek; even that most substantial wisdom which leadeth to salvation. For how else shall they teach others, what they have not learned themselves! O the difference between teachers and teachers! between a rash, flashy, unexperienced, proud wit; and clear-headed, well-studied, much-experienced, godly men! Happy is he that hath such a teacher, that is long exercised in the ways of truth, and holiness, and peace; and hath a heart to value him.

Direct. XI. Value truth for goodness, and goodness above truth; and estimate all truths and knowledge by their usefulness to higher ends. That is good as a means, which doth good. There is nothing besides God that is simply good, in, of, and for itself; all else is only good derivatively from God the efficient, and as a means to God the final cause. As a pound of gold more enricheth than many loads of dirt; so a little knowledge of great and necessary matters, maketh one wiser, than a great deal of pedantic, toyish learning. No man hath time and capacity for all things: he is but a proud fool, that would seem to know all, and deny his ignorance in many things. Even he that with Alstedius, &c. can write an Encyclopædia, is still unacquainted with abundance that is intelligible. For my own part, I humbly thank God,

that by placing my dwelling still as in the church-yard, he hath led me to choose still the studies which I thought were fittest for a man, that is posting to another world. He that must needs be ignorant of many things, should choose to omit those which he can best spare. Distinguish well between studying and knowing for use, and for lust: for the true ends of knowledge, and for the bare delight of knowing. One thing is necessary, (Luke x. 42,) and all others, but as they are necessary to that one; mortify the lust of useless knowledge, as well as other lusts of flesh and fantasy. Dying men commonly call it vanity. Remember what a deal of precious time it wasteth; and from how many greater and more necessary things it doth divert the mind; and with what wind it puffs men up; as is aforesaid. How justly did the rude Tartarians think the great libraries, and multitudes of doctors and idle priests, among the Chinese to be a foolery; and call them away from their books to arms, as Palafox tells us; when all their learning was to so little purpose as it was, and led them to no more high and necessary things?

Direct. XII. Yet because many smaller parts of knowledge are necessary to kingdoms, academies and churches, which are not necessary, nor greatly valuable to individual persons; let some few particular persons be bred up to an eminency in those studies, and let not the generality of students waste their time therein. There is scarcely any part of knowledge so small and useless, but it is necessary to great societies, that some be masters of it, which yet the generality may well spare. And all are to be valued and honoured according to their several excellencies. But yet I cannot have to study as long as Politian how Virgil should be spelt; nor to decide the quarrels between Phil. Pareus and Gruter, nor to digest all his grammatical collections, nor to read all over abundance of books, which I allow house-room to. Nor to learn all the languages and arts which I could wish to know, if I could know them without neglecting greater things. But yet the excellent professors of them all I honour.

Direct. XIII. Above all, value, digest, and seriously live upon the most great and necessary certain truths. O that we knew what work, inward and outward, the great truths of salvation call for from us all! If you do not faithfully value and improve these, you prepare for delusion: you forget

your premises and principles : God may justly leave you in the dark, and give you up to believe a lie. Did you live according to the importance of certain principles, your lives would be filled with fruit, and business, and delight, and all this great : so that you would have little mind or leisure for little and unnecessary things. It is the neglect of things necessary, which fills the world with the trouble of things unnecessary.

Direct. XIV. Study hard, and search diligently and deeply, and that with unwearied patience and delight. Unpleasant studies tire and seldom prosper. Slight running thoughts accomplish little. If any man think that the Spirit is given to save us the labour of hard and long studies, Solomon hath spent so many chapters in calling them to dig, search, cry, labour, wait for wisdom, that if that will not undeceive them, I cannot : they may as well say, that God's blessing is to save the husbandman the labour of ploughing and sowing : and that the Spirit is given to save men the labour of learning to read the Bible, or to hear it, or think of it, or to pray to God. Whereas the Spirit is given us to provoke and enable us to study hard, and read, and hear, and pray hard, and to prosper us herein.

And as vain are our idle lads, that think their that natural wits, or their abode and degrees in the Unversities, will serve the turn instead of hard studies ! And so they come out almost as ignorant, and yet more proud than they went thither, to be plagues in all countries where they come, to teach others by example the idleness and sensuality which they learned themselves ; and being ignorant, yet the honour of their functions must be maintained, and therefore their ignorance must be hid, which yet themselves do weekly make ostentation of in the pulpit, where they should be shining lights ; and when their own tongues have proclaimed it, those of understanding that observe and loathe it, must be maligned and railed at for knowing how little their teachers know.

Nothing without long and hard studies furnisheth the mind with such a stock of truth, as may be called real wisdom. "That God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," (and not of the lazy neglecters of him) is the second principle in religion. (Heb. xi. 6.) They that cannot be at this labour, must be content to know but little, and not take on them to know much. For they are not able to

discern truth from falsehood: but while they sleep the tares are sowed: or while they open the door, all crowd in that can come first; and they cannot make a just separation. Ignorant persons will swarm with errors, and he that erreth will think that he is in the right: and if he think that it is a divine and necessary truth which he embraceth, how zealously may he pursue it!

Direct. XV. Take heed of the bias of carnal interest, and of the disturbing passions, which selfish partiality will be apt to raise. Men may verily think, that they sincerely love the truth, when the secret power of a carnal interest, their honour, their profit or pleasure, is it that turneth about their judgment, and furnisheth them with arguments, and whets their wits, and maketh them passionately confident, and they are not aware of it. Is your worldly interest on that side that your opinion is for? Though that prove it not false, it proveth that you should be very suspicious of yourselves.

Direct. XVI. Keep up unfeigned fervent love to others, even as to yourselves. And then you will not contemn their persons and their arguments, beyond certain cause. You will not turn to passionate contentions, and reproaches of them when you differ; and the reverence of your elders, teachers, superiors, will make you more ready to suspect yourselves than them. Most of our self-conceited pretenders to knowledge, have lost their love and reverence of dissenters, and are bold despisers of the persons, reasons and writings of all that contradict their error. And most that venture to cast the churches into flames, and their brethren into silence and sufferings, that they may plant their own opinions, are great despisers of those that they afflict, and either hate them, or would make them hateful, lest they should be thought to be unjust in using them like hateful persons. "Love that thinketh not evil of others, is not apt to vaunt itself." (1 Cor. xiii.)

Direct. XVII. Reverence the Church of God, but give not up your understandings absolutely to any men; but take heed of taking any church, sect, or party, instead of the infallible God. With the Universal Church, you must embody and hold concord: it is certain, that it erreth not from the essentials of Christianity: otherwise the Church were no Church, no Christians, and could not be saved. If a Pa-

pist say, 'and which is this Church?' I answer him, it is the universality of Christians, or all that hold these essentials; and when I say, that this Church cannot fall from these essentials, I do but say, it cannot cease to be a Church: the Church is constituted of, and known by the essentials of faith; and not the essentials of faith constituted by the Church, nor so known by it; though it be known by it as the teacher of it.

He that deserteth the Christian universality, in deed though not in words, and cleaveth too close to any sect, whether Papal or any other, will be carried down the stream by that sect, and will fill his understanding with all their errors and uncertainties, and confound them with the certain truths of God, to make up a mixed religion with; and the reverence of his party, church or sect, will blind his mind, and make him think all this his duty.

Direct. XVIII. Fear error and ungrounded confidence. Consider all the mischiefs of it, which the world hath long felt, and the churches in the East and West are distracted by unto this day; and which I have opened to you before. He that feareth not a sin and mischief, is most unlikely to escape it. A tender conscience cannot be bold and rash, where the interest of God, the church, and his own and others' souls is so much concerned. When you are invited to turn Papist, or Quaker, or Anabaptist, or Antinomian, or Separatist, think, what if it should prove an error; and as great an error as many godly, learned men affirm it to be? Alas, what a gulf should I plunge my soul in! What injury should I do the truth! What wrong to souls! And shall I rashly venture on such a danger, any more than I would do on fornication, drunkenness, or other sin? And doth not the sad example of this age, as well as all former ages, warn you to be fearful of what you entertain? O what promising, what hopeful, what confident persons, have dreadfully miscarried, and when they once began to roll down the hill, have not stopped till some of them arrived at infidelity and profaneness, and others involved us in confusions! And yet shall we not fear, but rage and be confident?

And to see on the other side, what darkness and delusion hath fallen upon thousands of the Papal clergy, and what their error hath cost the world, should make those that are that way inclined also fear.

Direct. XIX. Above all pray and labour for a truly humble mind, that is well acquainted with its own defects; and fear and fly from a proud, overvaluing of your own understanding. Be thankful for any knowledge that you have, but take heed of thinking it greater than it is. The devil's sin, and the imitation of Adam, are not the way to have the illumination of God's Spirit. It is not more usual with God to bring low those that are proud of greatness, than to leave to folly, deceit and error, those that are proud of wisdom; and to leave to sin and wickedness, those that are proud of goodness. A proud understanding cannot be brought to suspect itself, but is confident of its first undigested apprehensions: it either feeleth no need of the Spirit's light, but despiseth it as a fancy; or else it groweth conceited, that all its conceptions are of the Spirit, and is proud of that Spirit which he hath not. Nothing maketh this peremptory confidence in false conceits so common, as pride of a knowledge which men have not. Would the Lord but humble these persons thoroughly, they would think, alas! 'What a dark, deceitful mind have I! how unfit to despise the judgment of them that have laboured for knowledge far more than I have done, and how unfit to be confident against such as know much more than I?'

But so deep and common is this pride, that they that go in rags, and they that think themselves unworthy to live, and are ready to despair in the sense of sin, do yet ordinarily so overvalue their own apprehensions, that even these will stiffly hold their vain and unpeaceable opinions, and stiffly reject the judgment and arguments of the wisest and best that will not be as envious as they.

Direct. XX. Lastly, Keep in a childlike, teachable, learning resolution, with a sober and suspended judgment, where you have not sure evidence to turn the scales. When Christ saith, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven:" (Matt. xviii. 3:) as he hath respect to the humility of children in general (and their inception of a new life), so in special he seemeth to respect them [as disciples: Set children to school and their business is to hear and learn all day; they set not their wits against their masters, and do not wrangle and strive against him, and say, it is not so; we know better than you. But so abominably is human na-

ture corrupted by this intellectual pride, that when once lads are big enough to be from under a tutor, commonly, instead of learning of others, they are of a teaching humour, and had rather speak two hours than hear one; and set their wits to contradict what they should learn, and to conquer those that would instruct them; and to shew themselves wiser than to learn to be more wise; and we can scarcely talk with man or woman, but is the wisest in the company, and most hardly convinced of an error.

But two things here I earnestly advise you: 1. That you spend more time in learning than in disputing: not but that disputing in its season is necessary to defend the truth; but usually it engageth men's wits in an eager opposition against others, and so against the truth which they should receive; and it goeth more according to the ability of the disputants, than the merits of the cause. And he that is worsted is so galled at the disgrace, that he hateth the truth the more for his sake that hath dishonoured him: and therefore Paul speaketh so often against such disputing, and saith that the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle, and apt to teach, and in meekness instruct opposers.

I would ordinarily, if any man have a mind to wrangle with me, tell him; 'If you know more of these things than I, if you will be my teacher, I shall thankfully hear and learn,' and desire him to open his judgment to me in its fullest evidence: and I would weigh it as the time and case required; and if I were fully satisfied against it, I would crave leave to tell him the reasons of my dissent, and crave his patient audience to the end. And when we well understood each other's mind and reasons, I would crave leave then to end in peace; unless the safety of others required a dispute to defend the truth.

2. And my special repeated counsel is, that you suspend your judgment till you have cogent evidence to determine it. Be no further of either side than you know they are in the right; cast not yourself into other men's opinions hastily, upon slight reasons at a blind adventure. If you see not a certainty, judge it not certain. If you see but a probability, judge it but probable. "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. v.) The Bereans are commended for searching the Scripture, and seeing whether the things were so which Paul had spoken. (Acts xvii.) Truth

feareth not the light. It is like gold, that loseth nothing by the fire. Darkness is its greatest enemy and dishonour. Therefore look before you leap: you are bid, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." (1 John ii.) Stand still till you know that the ground is safe which you are to tread on. When poisoners are as common as physicians, you will take heed what you take. It is safer when once you have the essentials of Christianity, to take too little than too much: for you are sure to be saved if you are mere true Christians; but how far Popery, Antinomianism, &c., may corrupt your Christianity is a controversy. Wish them that urge you, to forbear their haste in a matter of everlasting consequence: these are not matters to be rashly done. And as long as you are uncertain, profess yourselves uncertain; and if they will condemn you for your ignorance when you are willing to know the truth, so will not God. But when you are certain, resolve in the strength of God, and hold fast whatever it cost you, even to the death, and never fear being losers by God, by his truth, or by fidelity in your duty.

PART II.

OF TRUE SAVING KNOWLEDGE :

I. CAUSING OUR LOVE TO GOD.

II. THEREBY QUALIFYING US FOR HIS LOVE.

1 CORINTHIANS viii. 3.

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

CHAP. I.

Knowledge is to be estimated more by the End it tendeth to, than by itself.

HAVING done with that epidemical, mortal disease, SELF-CONCEITEDNESS, or PREFIDENCE, or over-hasty judging, and pretending to know that which we know not, which I more desire than hope to cure ; I have left but little room for the nobler part of my subject, True Saving Knowledge, because the handling of it was not my principal design.

The meaning of the text I gave you before. The true paraphrase of it is as followeth : As if Paul had said : ‘ You overvalue your barren notions, and think that by them you are wise ; whereas knowledge is a means to a higher end ; and is to be esteemed of as it attaineth that end ; and that end is to make us lovers of God, that so we may be known with love by him ; for to love God and be beloved by him is man’s felicity and ultimate end ; and therefore that which we must seek after and live for in the world ; and he is to be accounted the wisest man that loveth God most ; when unsanctified notions and speculations will prove but folly.’

This being the true meaning of the text, I shall briefly speak of it by parts, as it containeth these several doctrines or propositions.

Doct. I. Knowledge is a means to a higher end, according to which it is to be estimated.

Doct. II. The end of knowledge is to make us lovers of God, and so to be known with love by him.

Doct. III. Therefore knowledge is to be valued, sought and used, as it tendeth to this holy blessed end.

Doct. IV. And therefore those are to be accounted the wisest or best-knowing men, that love God most; and not those that are stored with unholy knowledge.

For the first of these, that 'Knowledge is a means to a higher end,' I shall first open it, and then prove it.

I. Aquinas and some other schoolmen make the vision or knowledge of God, to be the highest part of man's felicity: and I deny not but that the three faculties of man's soul, *vital activity, intellect* and *will*, as the image of the Divine Trinity, have a kind of inseparability and co-equality. And therefore each of their perfections and perfect receptions from God, and operations on God, is the ultimate end of man: but yet they are distinguishable, though not divisible; and there is such an order among them, as that one may in some respects be called the inceptor and another the perfecter of human operations; and so the acts of one be called a means to the acts of the other. And thus though the vision or knowledge of God be one inadequate conception, if not a part of our ultimate end; yet the love of God, and living to God, are also other conceptions or parts of it: yea, and the more compleitive, perfect parts, which we call '*finis ultimatè ultimus.*'

II. The proof shall be fetched, 1. From the order and use of the faculties of the soul. 2. From the objects. 3. From the constitution of the acts. 4. From express Scripture.

I. It is evident to our internal perception; 1. That the understanding is but the guide of the will, and its acts but mediate to determine the will: as the eye is to lead the appetitive and executive faculties, by presenting to them their proper objects. To know is but an initial introductory act.

Yea, 2. It is evident that the soul is not satisfied with bare knowing, if no delight or complacency follow: for what is that which we call satisfaction, but the complacency of the will? Suppose a man to have no effect upon his will, no pleasure, no contentation in his knowledge, and what felicity or desirable good to him would there be, in all the knowledge in the world? Yea, when I name either *good* or

desirable every one knoweth that I name an object of the will. Therefore if you stop at bare intellection, it is not to be called good or desirable as to the intellect, these being not proper intellectual objects: though remotely I confess they are; that is, that which is called good, amiable and desirable primarily as the proper object of the will, must be discerned to be such by the understanding: when yet the formal notion of the intellects' object, is but "quid intelligibile," which materially is 'Ens, Unum, Verum, Bonum:'. But goodness is the formal notion of the object of the will, and not only the material.

If any say that I seem here to take part with Epicurus, and Cicero's Torquatus, who erred by placing the chief excellency of virtue in the pleasure of it; and consequently making any thing more excellent which is more pleasant, though it be sin itself; I answer, He that will decide that great controversy, must distinguish, 1. Between sensitive pleasure, and the complacency of the will. 2. Between that which is good only to me, and that which is good to others, and that which is good in relation to the supreme and final will of God. 3. Between the exterior and the interior acts of virtue, and then you shall see Cicero and Torquatus easily reconciled, thus:—

1. It is certain that GOODNESS and the WILL are so essentially related to each other, that they must each enter the other's definition. To be 'bonum' is to be 'volibile;' and to will is ever 'velle bonum.'

2. It is certain that God's will is the original and end of all created good, which hath its essence in relation to his will. And therefore if it were possible for virtue to be unpleasant or pernicious to the possessor, it would be good as it is suited and related to the will of God.

3. Therefore it cannot be said, that virtue as virtue is better than virtue as it pleaseth God: but it is most certain that virtue as virtue is pleasing to God, (as to the objective aptitude,) and that virtue as pleasing to God, and consequently as virtue, is better than virtue, as it is pleasant to the possessor.

4. And it is certain that virtue, as it is profitable, and justly pleasing to mankind, to the church, to kingdoms, to public societies or multitudes, is better than as it is pleasing

unto one. Because the good of many is better than of one.

5. And it is certain that virtue, as it pleaseth the rational will, is better than as it pleaseth the mere sensitive appetite, which it seldom doth: and therefore sensuality hath no advantage hence.

6. And virtue as it profiteth, though at present it occasion sorrow or disobedience in its consequents, is better than that which at the present only pleaseth, and quickly vanisheth. But that profit lieth in this, that it prepareth for everlasting, or more durable pleasure. And a long pleasure attained by present sorrow, is better than a momentary pleasure; which is another difference between sensual sinful, and spiritual durable delights,

7. And to end all this controversy between us and Epicurus, it is notorious, that the internal vital acts of true virtue, are nothing else radically but pleasure itself: for it is radically and summarily nothing but the love of God and goodness: and love in its properest notion is nothing but the complacency of the will. To say, I love it, is but to say, it pleaseth me; unless when you speak of either sensual appetite and delight, or love as conjunct with some other act or passion. And (though Occum here stretch it a little too far) it is certain that the external act of man hath no virtue in it that is moral, but secondary, and derived from the will, even as far as it is voluntary. So that the informing root of virtue is will, love or complacency; which Austin useth to call delectation, asserting what I now assert. So that the question now is, Whether virtue, which is nothing but complacency in good, be better as complacency or as virtue; that is, under one name or another? or whether it be better as virtue, or as virtue? as complacency, or as complacency?

If you think I make Cicero and the old philosophers fools, by feigning them to agitate such a question; I answer, 1. If they do so, it is not my doing, but their own. 2. But I think Cicero meant not so foolishly, but understood Epicurus only of sensual pleasure, and not of rational. 3. Or at least, of private pleasure of a single person, as opposite to the utility and pleasure of multitudes. 4. And whether he had so much Theology as to remember that which is it that resolveth the whole doubt, I know not, viz. that virtue as

virtue is objectively pleasing to the will of God : and as pleasing to God, it is better than as pleasing to me, and all the world.

So that notwithstanding this objection, thus fully answered, the acts of the intellect merely as such, without their respect to some will, either of God or man, are not so much as formally amiable, desirable or good.

3. I further add, that the acts of the intellect may be forced, involuntary, displeasing, and both morally and pentially evil. A man may by God be forbidden to search after, and to know some things ; and to know them (as voluntarily done) may be his sin. And all know that a man may be necessitated to know many things ; and that knowledge may torment him : As to know dangers, losses, enmities, injuries, future evils ; especially sins by an accusing conscience, and God's displeasure : and devils and damned souls have such knowledge.

Object. ' All this is true of some knowledge, but not of the knowledge of God or goodness.'

Ans. 1. It is granted then that knowledge, as such, is not sufficient to be man's felicity, or final act. 2. And as to the object, I easily grant that the true knowledge of God is the initial part of man's felicity : but that is much, because it ever inferreth that love or complacency of the will, which is the more completive part. 3. But there is a knowledge even of God, which being separated from love, is sin and misery. As the devils and damned that believe, and tremble, and hate, and suffer, are not without all knowledge of God. So much for the first proof, fetched from the order of the faculties of the soul.

II. The second proof is fetched from the objects : it is not mere intelligibility that blesseth a man, but goodness, which as such is the formal object of the will, though the material object of the understanding. It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun : and as pleasant, it is good ; and also as useful to further pleasure of ourselves or others. Nothing maketh a man good or happy, but as it is good. Therefore the goodness of God, (his transcendent perfection by which he is first essentially good in himself, and amiable to himself, and then good and amiable to us all) is the ultimately ultimate object of man's soul, to which his intelligibility is supposed.

III. The third proof is from the constitution of these several acts: knowledge being but an introductory act, supposeth not love, as to its essence, though it produce it as an effect: but love includeth knowledge in it; as the number of two includeth one, when one doth not include two. Therefore both together must needs be more perfect than one alone.

IV. The fourth proof is from express Scripture; I will only cite some plain ones which need no tedious comment. 1. For love it is said, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, (or in this the love with us is perfected) that we have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we, in this world: there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John iv. 16—18.) So that love is the perfection of man.

1 Cor. xii. 31; xiii. 2., &c. "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way: though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing.—Charity never faileth. 13. The greatest of these is charity."

Rom. viii. 35. "Who shall separate us from the love of God," &c.

Rom. xiii. 10. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Rom. v. 5. "The love of God is poured out on our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us."

Gal. v. 6. "Faith which worketh by love."

Matt. xxii. 37. "The first and great commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c.

Luke x. 27; Deut. x. 12; xi. 1. 13. 22; xix. 9; xiii. 3; xxx. 6. 16. 20; Josh. xxii. 5; xxiii. 11; Psal. v. 11; xxxi. 23; lxix. 36; cxix. 165; cxliv. 20. Jam. i. 12: "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." So. ii. 5.

Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me."

See John xiv. 21; xvi. 27; 1 John iv. 19; John xxi. 15—17; 1 John iii. 22; Heb. xi. 6., &c.

And of knowledge it is said, (John xiii. 17.) "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

See James ii. 14. to the end; John xv. 24. "But now they have both seen and hated, both me and my Father."

Luke xii. 47. Knowing God's will, and not doing it, prepareth men for many stripes. See Rom. ii. And as barren knowledge is oft made the aggravation of sin, so true knowledge is usually made the cause or means of love and obedience, 1 John iv. 8. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God." 2 Pet. i. 2. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you, through the knowledge of God," 2 Pet. ii. 20, and many such like.

I conclude therefore that the knowledge of creatures is not desirable ultimately for itself, but as it leadeth up the soul to God. And the knowledge of God, though desirable ultimately for itself, yet not as the perfect, but the initial part of our ultimate act or end, and as the means or cause of that love of God, which is the more perfect part of that ultimate perfection.

CHAP. II.

The End of Knowledge is to make us Lovers of God, and so to be known with Love by Him.

THIS is the second doctrine contained in the meaning of the text: where is included, 1. That all knowledge of creatures, called learning, must be valued and used but as a means to the knowledge and love of God: which is most evident in that the whole creation is the work of God, bearing the image or impress of his perfections, to reveal him to the intellectual creature, and to be the means of provoking us to his love, and helping us in his service. To deny this therefore is to subvert the use of the whole creation, and to set up God's works as an useless shadow, or as an idol in his place.

2. It is included as was before proved, that all our knowledge of God himself, is given us to kindle in us the love of God. It is the bellows to blow up this holy fire. If it do not this, it is unsound and dead. If it do this, it hath attained its end; which is much of the meaning of James in that chap. ii. which prejudice hindereth many from understanding.

3. This love of God hath its degrees and effects. Knowledge first kindleth but some weak initial act of love; which

through mixtures of fear, and of carnal affections, is hardly known to be sincere by him that hath it. But afterwards it produceth both stronger acts, and the Holy Ghost still working as the principal cause, infuseth or operateth a radiated habit. So that this holy love becometh like a nature in the soul, even a Divine nature, and it becometh in a sort natural to us to love God and goodness, though not as the brutish nature, which is exercised by necessity, and without reason. And this new nature of holy love, is called the new creature and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and the Spirit of adoption; and is our *new-name*, the *white-stone*, the *witness* in ourselves that Christ is the Saviour, and that we are the regenerate children of God, the pledge, the earnest, the first-fruits, and the foretaste of life eternal.

And all the works of a Christian are so far truly holy, as they are the effects of holy love: for 1. Holy love is but a holy will; and the will is the man, in point of morality. 2. And the love of God is our final act upon the final object; and all other gracious acts are some way means subservient to this end: and the end is it that informeth all the means, they being such only as are adapted to the end.

And in this sense it is true which is said in the schools, (though many Protestants misunderstanding it, have contradicted it) that love is the form of all other graces: that is, it is the heart of the new creature; or it is that by which the man is morally to be reputed and denominated: and it is the final grace which animateth or informeth the rest as means.

And thus it is true, that when you will prove any grace to be sincere and saving, or any evidence certain, you must prove it to participate of the love of God and goodness, or you have failed and said nothing. Yea, you must prove it to be conjunct with predominant love, which setteth God above all creatures. And if you will prove any good work to be acceptable to God, prayer, praise, alms, justice, &c., you must prove that it cometh from this predominant love. For it is so far and no further acceptable to God.

And their ignorance is but to be pitied, who tell you that this is to make our love of God to be instead of Christ to us, or to set up an acceptable righteousness or merit in ourselves: for we dream not that our love of God was a sacrifice for our sins, and the expiatory atonement and satisfaction to justice, nor that merit which procured us love itself, or

purchased us the Holy Ghost. Our meaning is that goodness is the only proper object of love: and God loveth his essential goodness first, and created goodness next: and our moral goodness which is his image is holy love, produced by and joined with holy wisdom and vitality. And so though God love us in Christ, or as related to him, it is as holy members of him; and not that he loveth complacentially the haters of God for their relation to Christ, without respect to any goodness in themselves. And to say that Christ maketh us acceptable and amiable to God, is all one as to say that he procureth us the pardon of sin, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and maketh us holy lovers of God: or that he is indeed our Saviour. He that commendeth health as wrought by his physician, doth not set health instead of the physician; Christ is the physician; the Holy Ghost or holy love in us, is our health: to procure and give us the Holy Ghost, is Christ's office. He pardoneth our sin when he pardoneth the punishment: the privation of the Holy Ghost and his operations is our principal punishment: and therefore not all, but the principal part of our pardon lieth in the giving us the Holy Ghost.

But some will say, 'That if God love nothing but goodness, and love us no further than we are good, how then did he love us first, and while we were his enemies? Are not Election, Creation, Redemption and Conversion, acts of love? And is not our love, the fruit of his love?'

Ans. Thus names not opened by confounding heads, are made the matter of a thousand controversies. As our love is nothing but our will, so the word *love* is taken strictly and properly, or largely and less properly. A man's will is considered as efficient or as final: as it respecteth a future effect, or a present exigent good. And so God's will as it is final, and respecteth things existent, either 1. 'In esse cognito.' 2. or 'in esse reali,' is called complacence, and only complacence is love in the strict and properest sense. But God's will as efficient of good, may in a laxer sense be called love. God's will is the fountain or efficient cause of all good, natural and moral in the world. And so you may call God's causing or making good, by the name of love, if you please; remembering that it is but the name that is questioned: but his complacency in good foreseen, or existent,

is strictly called his love. And so still God loveth nothing in either sense but good. For 1. He causeth nothing but good. 2. And he is pleased in nothing but good as good.

Quest. ‘ But how then doth God love his enemies ?’

Ans. 1. He maketh us men, which may be called one act of efficient love: and he redeemeth them; and he giveth them all the good things which they possess; and he sanctifieth some, and maketh them lovers of him, that is, holy. And thus he willeth their good, while they are nothing or evil; which is called benevolence, and love efficient.

2. And he hath true love of complacency in them, 1. As they have the good of human nature. 2. And thereby are capable of grace, and all the love and service which after they may perform. 3. And as they are related to Christ as his redeemed ones. 4. And as by relation they are those that God foreknoweth will love and serve him here, and in the perfections of eternal glory. There is all this good in some enemies of God, to be the matter of his complacency. And beyond their goodness he hath no complacency in them.

3. And to clear up all this, still remember that though man’s will is changed by or upon the various objects, yet so is not the will of God. And therefore all these words signify no variety or change in God; but only how his simple immutable essential will is variously related to and denominated from the connotation of effects and objects.

4. Also it must be noted, as included in the text, that God loveth all that truly love him; for to be known of him, here meaneth to be known with approbation and love as his peculiar people. As Psal. i. 6, it is said, “ The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous ;” and so oft: and of the wicked, (Matt. xxv. 12.) “ Depart from me, I know you not.” God owneth with love all those that love him. What parts, what quality, what degree soever men are of, whatever difference else there be among them, if they are true lovers of God, they are certainly approved and beloved by him. This being the very heart and essence of the new creature, and the Divine nature in us, must needs prove that man to be amiable to God that hath it. Other things are true marks of a child of God, only so far as they participate of love: but love is the primary proper character, which proveth us adopted directly of itself.

And here you may resolve the question that seemeth so difficult to many: whether when the Scripture either by describing the godly, or by promising, doth mention some one grace or duty, as the character of a saint, or the condition of salvation, it be to be understood with a 'cæteris paribus,' if other graces and duties concur, as supposing them separable? or absolutely, as supposing that one mark infallible, because it never separated from the rest?

Ans. The new man hath, 1. Its essential parts; and 2. Its integrals; and 3. Its accidents. The essentials are ever infallible marks, and are inseparable from each other: any one of them will prove us holy, and will prove the presence the rest. These essentials are an united trinity of graces, holy life, light and love, where each one hath the common essence of holiness, which is their objective termination upon God; and each is linked by participation to another. Holy vitality is vital activity towards God in mind, will, and practice, holy light is that knowledge and belief which kindleth love, and causeth a holy life. Holy love is that complacency of will in God and goodness, which is kindled by holy life and light, and operateth in holy practice. Any one of these thus described, where love is the heart of all, is an infallible mark of holiness. But all other graces and duties which are but the integrals of holiness, are in all characters and promises to be understood with a 'cæteris paribus;' that is, supposing them to be animated with holy love, and caused by holy life and light (knowledge and belief).

And that God doth most certainly love all that love him, besides the forementioned proofs from Scripture is further evident.

1. The love of God and goodness is the Divine nature: and God cannot but love his own nature in us: it is his image, which, as in its several degrees, he loveth for himself, and next to himself.

2. The love of God is the rectitude of man's soul, its soundness, health and beauty: and God loveth the rectitude of his creatures.

3. The love of God is the final, perfect operation of the soul; even that end which it was created and redeemed for, and God loveth to have his works attain their end, and to see them in their perfection.

4. The love of God is the goodness of the soul itself : and goodness is amiableness, and must needs be loved by him that is goodness and perfection himself.

5. The love of God is our uniting adhesion to him : and God that first draweth up the soul to this union, will not himself reject us, and avoid it.

6. Love is a pregnant, powerful, pleasing grace : it delivereth up ourselves, and all that we have to God : it delighteth in duty : it conquereth difficulties : it contemneth competitors, and trampleth on temptations : it accounteth nothing too much, nor too dear for God. Love is the soul's nature, appetite and 'pondus,' according to which it will ordinarily act. A man's love, is his will, his heart, himself : and if God have our love, he hath ourselves, and our all : so that God cannot but love the soul that truly loveth him as God.

But here are some doubts to be resolved.

Quest. 1. 'What if the same soul have love and sin mixed ; or sincere love in a degree that is sinfully defective, and so is consistent with something of its contrary ; God must hate that sin ; how then can he love that soul ?'

Answ. Remember still that diversity is only in us, and not in God : therefore God's will is related and denominated towards us, just as its object is. All that is good in us God loveth : all that is evil in us he hateth. Where goodness is predominant, there God's love is predominant, or greatest, from this relation and connotation. Where sin is predominant, God's aversation, displicency or hatred is the chief : and we may well expect that the effects be answerable.

Object. 'But we are beloved as elect before conversion.'

Answ. That was answered before. That is, God from eternity purposed to make us good, and amiable, and happy ; if you will call that (as you may) his love.

Object. 'But we are beloved in Christ, for his righteousness and goodness, and not for our own.'

Answ. The latter is false : the former is thus true : for the merits of Christ's righteousness, and goodness, God will pardon our sins, and make us good, holy and happy ; and will love us as the holy members of his Son ; that is, both as related to him, and as holy.

Object. 'But if God must needs love sincere imperfect lovers of him as such, with a predominant love, (which will not damn them ;) then sin might have been pardoned with-

out Christ's death, and the sinner be loved without his righteousness, if he had but sincerely loved God.'

Answ. The supposition is false, that a sinner could have loved God without pardon and the Spirit, purchased by the death and righteousness of Christ. God perfectly loveth the perfected souls in glory, for their own holy perfection, but they never attained it, but by Christ. And God loveth us here, according to the measure of our love to him: but no man can thus love him, till his sin be pardoned; for which he was deprived of the Spirit, which must kindle love. And imperfect love is ever joined with imperfect pardon, (whatever some falsely say to the contrary;) I mean that love, which is sinfully imperfect.

Quest. 2. 'Doth not God's loving us make us happy? And if so, it must make us holy. And then none that he loveth will fall away from him: whereas the fallen angels and Adam loved him, and yet fell from him: how then were they beloved by him?'

Answ. I before told you that God's will (or love) is first efficient, causing good, and then final, being pleased in the good that is caused. God's efficient will or love, doth so far make men holy and happy as they are such, even efficiently: but God's will, or love, as it is our 'causa finalis,' and the terminating object of our love, and is pleased in us, and approveth us, is not the efficient cause of our holiness and happiness; but the objective and perfect constitutive cause. Now you must further note, that God's benevolent efficient will, or love, doth give men various degrees of holiness. To Adam in innocency he gave but such a degree, and upon such terms, as he could lose and cast away; which he did. But to the blessed in glory, he giveth that which they shall never lose. These degrees are from God's efficient love, or will; which, therefore, causeth some to persevere, when it left Adam to himself, to stand or fall. But it is not God's final love of complacency, as such, that causeth our perseverance: for Adam had this love, as long as he loved God, and stood; and he after lost it: so that it is not that final complacency, which is the 'terminus' of our holiness, and constitutive cause of our happiness, which alone will secure the perpetuity of either of them.

Object. 'Thus you make God mutable in his love, as loving Adam more before his fall, than after.'

Ans. I told you, loving, and not loving the creature, are no changes in God, but in the creature. It is man that is mutable, and not God. It is only the relation of God's will to the creature, as varying in itself, and the extrinsic denomination, by connotation of a changed object, which is changed as to God. As the sun is not changed when you wink and when you open your eyes; nor a pillar changed when your motion sets it sometimes on your right hand, and sometimes on your left.

5. Lastly, it must be noted, as included in the text 'That our own loving God, is not the only or total notion of our end, perfection, or felicity; but to be known and loved by God, is the other part which must be taken in, to make up the total notion of our end.'

In our love, God is considered as the object: but in God's complacential love to us, he is considered as active, and his love as an act, and man as the object: but yet not as an object of efficiency, but of approbation, and a pleased will or delight. Here then the great difficulty is, in resolving which of these is the highest perfective notion of man's felicity; perfection, or ultimate end; our love to God, or God's love to us.

Ans. It is mutual love and union which is the true and complete notion of our end; and to compare God's love and ours as the parts, and tell which is the final principal part or notion, is not easy, nor absolutely necessary. But I conceive,

1. That our love to God is objectively, or as to the object of it, infinitely more excellent than God's love to us, as to the object: which is but to say, that God is infinitely better than man. God loveth man who is a worm: but we love God who is perfect goodness.

2. God's love to us, as to the agent and the act 'ex parte agentis,' is infinitely more excellent than our love to him: for it is God's essential will, which loveth us; and it is the will of a worm that loveth God.

3. That man's felicity, as such, is not the chief notion of his ultimate end: but he must love God as God, better than his own felicity as such, or better than God as our felicity.

4. That man's true ultimate end, containeth these five inadequate conceptions. 1. The lowest notion or part of it, is, our own holiness and felicity. 2. The next notion of it, is, the perfection of the church and universe, to which we contribute, and which we must value above our own; inclu-

ding the glory of Christ's humanity. 3. The third notion, is, the glory or lustre of God's perfections, as they shine forth in us and all his perfected glorious works. 4. The fourth notion is, God's own essential goodness, as the object of our knowledge, love, and praise. 5. The fifth and highest notion is, the active love or complacency of God's fulfilled will, in us, and in the whole creation. So that the pleasing of God's will, is the highest notion of man's ultimate end: though all these five are necessarily contained in it.

CHAP. III.

Doct. 3. *Therefore Knowledge is to be valued, sought, and used, as it tendeth to our Love of God.*

THIS third doctrine is much of the scope of the text: all means are for their end: so far as knowledge is a means of love, it must needs hence have the measure of its worth, and we the motives of our desires of it, and the direction for our using of it.

1. All knowledge that kindleth not the love of God in us, is so narrow and small that it deserveth not indeed the name of knowledge; for the necessary things that such a person is ignorant of, are a thousand times more or greater, than that little which he knoweth: for, (1.) What is it that he is ignorant of?

1. He hath no sound and real knowledge of God. For if he knew God truly, he could not but love him: goodness is so naturally the object of the will, that if men well knew the infinite Good, they must needs love him: however there is a partial knowledge that is separable from sincere love.

2. He that knoweth not and loveth not God, neither knoweth nor loveth any creature truly and effectually either as it is of God, or through him, or to him; either as it beareth the impress of the glorious efficient, or as it is ordered to its end by the most wise director, or as it is a means to lead up souls to God, or to glorify and please him, no nor to make man truly happy. And can he be said indeed to know any creature that knoweth it not in any of these respects, that knoweth neither its original, order or use? Doth a dog or a goose know a book of philosophy, because he looketh on it,

and seeth the bulk? Doth he know a clock or watch, who knoweth no more of it, but that it hath such parts and shapes, made of iron and brass? It is most evident that an unholy person knoweth nothing: that is, no one being, though he may know 'aliquid de re aliqua,' something of some being: for he that knoweth not the nature, order or use and end of a being, but only 'secundum quid,' or some accidents of it, or to have a general knowledge that it is a substance, or a something, he knoweth not what. As an Epicurean can call all things compacted atoms, or matter and motion. An ungodly man is just like one that studieth the art of a scrivener or printer, to make the letters, and place them by art, but never learned to read or know the signification of the letters which he maketh or composeth.

Or if any may be said to have a speculative knowledge of all this in the creature (the nature, order and use), yet he is without the true practical knowledge, which is it that only is knowledge indeed, and of use and benefit to man; for to be able to speak or write a true proposition about God or the creature, is not properly to know God or the creature, but to know names and words concerning them: it is but a logical knowledge of notions, and not the knowledge of the thing itself, to be able to say and know that this or that concerning it, is true or false. Nothing more deceiveth mankind, both in point of learning and of religion, and salvation, than mistaking the organical or logical knowledge of second notions, words, propositions, inferences and methods, for the real knowledge of the things themselves; and thinking that they know a thing, because they know what to say of it.

He knoweth not a country, who is only able by the map or hearsay to describe it. He knoweth not motion, light, heat, cold, sweet, bitter, that knoweth no more than to give a true definition of it. And as this is true of things sensible, which must themselves be perceived first by sense, so is it of things spiritual, which must themselves be perceived first by intellect, and not only the notions and definitions of them. He that doth not intuitively, or by internal immediate perception, know what it is to understand, to remember, to will and nill, to love and hate, and consequently to be able to do these acts, doth not know what a man is, or what a reasonable soul is, and what an intellectual Spirit is, though he could (were it possible) without these, learn the definition of a

man, a soul, a spirit. A definition or word of art spoken by a parrot or a madman, proveth not that he knoweth the thing.

Practical objects are not truly known without a practical knowledge of them. He knoweth not what meat is, that knoweth not that it must be eaten, and how to eat it: he only knoweth his clothing that knoweth how to put it on. He only knoweth a pen, a gun, or other instrument, that knoweth how to use it. Now the ungodly, not knowing how any creature signifieth the Divine perfections, nor how by it to ascend to the knowledge and love of God, do indeed know nothing with a proper, formal knowledge.

(2.) And what is it that such men know, or seem to know, which may be compared with their ignorance? To give them their due praise, they know how to eat as well as a dog, though not so subtly as an ox or sheep, that can distinguish grass before he taste it. He can tell how to drink, though not by so constant a temperance as a beast. He can speak better than a parrot: he can build him a house as apt for his use, as a swallow or other birds can do for theirs. He can lay up for the time to come, more subtly than a fox, or ant, though nothing so orderly, and by wonderful self-conficiency as the bees: he can look upwards, and see the birds that soar and fly in the air, though he cannot imitate them: he can look into the surface of the waters, and artificially pass over them in ships, though he cannot live in them, or glide through them as the fish: he can master those that are weaker than himself, as the great dogs do the little ones, and carry away the bone from them all: he can glory in his strength, though it be less than a horse's, an ox's, an elephant's, or a whale's. He can kill and eat his fellow animals, as well as a pike among the fishes, a kite among the birds, or a wolf or a dog among the beasts: he can more craftily than the fox entrap and ensnare them (the fishes, birds and beasts); yea, as artificially as a spider doth the flies, to make up what he wants, of the hawk, or dog for swift pursuit, or of the lion for rapacious strength. He can sing; and so can the linnet, the owsel, the lark and nightingale: he can make his bed as soft as the birds their nests, or as other creatures that love their ease; he can generate and breed up his offspring, though not with that constancy of affection, and accurateness of skill and industry, as a hen her chickens, or most other animals do their

young. Yea, he can live in society, families, commonwealths, though much more disorderly, contentiously, and to the disturbance, if not destruction of each other, than pigeons in their dove-house, or the flight of stares, or larks, or lapwings, or the flocks of sheep, and less accurately than the bees do in their hive.

All this and more, we can speak of the praises of the knowledge or wisdom of an ungodly man that never learned to know or love his God, nor any thing truly worthy of a man: and is all this worthy the name of knowledge? Their character could not be more fitly given than here it is by the apostle: "They know nothing as they ought to know." But of this more next.

CHAP. IV.

Doct. 4. *And therefore those are to be accounted the wisest and best knowing Men, that love God most; and not those that are stored with unholy knowledge.*

THIS fourth doctrine, is also a discernible part of the meaning of the apostle in the text. His purpose is to humble those that judge themselves wise for that which is no wisdom, but useless, ludicrous notions and self-conceitedness: and to shew men wherein true wisdom doth consist. Many thousands there are that heartily love God, and are devoted to him, and live to his service in the world, who never read logic, physics, metaphysics or mathematics; nor laid in that stock of artificial notions, which are the glory and utensils of the learned world. And yet that these are truly and happily wise and knowing, the apostle judgeth, and I thus further prove.

1. Because they know the things themselves, and not only the names and definitions of them: as he that knoweth food by eating it, the military art, or navigation by experience, or a country by travelling or dwelling in it. Others lick the outside of the glass, but taste not the sweet that is within.

2. Because they know the greatest and most excellent things: God is infinitely greater and better than the crea-

tures : and heaven incomparably better than the riches and pleasures of this earth. To know how to build a city, or a navy, and how to govern an army or a kingdom, is more than to know how to pick sticks or straws, or to dress and undress us. Understanding is valuable by the dignity of its objects ; therefore how much doth the wisdom of a holy soul excel all the craft and learning of the ungodly ? Let not the rich man glory in his riches——But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth God ; if he so know him as to love him.

3. Because they know the most necessary things, and the most profitable. They know how to be good, and how to do their duty, and how to attain their end, and how to please God, and how to escape damnation, and how to be happy in everlasting joy and glory. And I think he is wise, that is wise enough to be happy, and to attain all that the soul of man can well desire.

But who will desire the wisdom that maketh a man never the better ; and that will not save his soul from hell ? What soul in hell doth think that wisdom brought him thither ? It were a thousand times better, not to know how to speak or go, to dress or undress us, than not to know how to be holy and happy, and to escape sin and everlasting misery.

4. A holy soul understandeth that which his understanding was made for ; and for which he hath his life, and time, and teaching ; which is but to be good, and love God and goodness, and to do good. And wisdom, as is before proved, as all other means, is to be estimated by its end.

But an ungodly man knoweth not that which he was made for. He is like a knife that cannot cut ; a ship that will not endure the water ; a house that is not fit to dwell in. What is a man's wit worth, but for its proper end ? If man was made but to eat, and drink, and play, and sleep, and build, and plant, and stir awhile about the earth, and have his will over others, and his fleshly pleasure, and then die, then the ungodly may be called wise ; but if he be made to prepare for another world, and to know, and love, and live to God, they are then worse than bedlams, and more dangerously beside themselves.

5. A holy soul knowing God the beginning and end, knoweth all things ; because he knoweth them, 1. In the chief excellency of their natures, as they bear the impress

of God ; 2. And in their order as governed by him ; 3. And in their usefulness as tending to him : though neither they, nor any others, be well acquainted with their material part, which the philosopher thinketh that he knoweth best. Who think you best knoweth what money is ? He that knoweth the king's impress, and the value, and what it is good for, and how to get and use it ? or he that can only tell you, whether it be copper or silver, or gold, (not knowing well what any of these are,) and knoweth nothing of the impress, or value, or use ? I tell you, the humble, holy person, that seeth God in all, and knoweth all things to be *of him*, and *by him*, and *to him*, and loveth him in and for all, and serveth him by all, is the best philosopher, and hath the greatest, most excellent and profitable knowledge. In comparison of which, the unholy learning of the world, is well called foolishness with God. (For I believe not that paraphraser who would persuade us, that it is but the fanatic conceits and pretensions of the Gnostics, that the apostle here and elsewhere speaketh of. But I rest satisfied, that it is primarily the unholy arts and sciences of the philosophical heathens ; and secondarily the Platonic heretics' pretensions to extraordinary wisdom, because of their speculations about angels, spirits, and other invisible and mysterious things, which they thought were peculiarly opened unto them.) Doting about questions that engender strife, and not edification, and to increase to more ungodliness, is the true description of unholy learning.

6. The lovers of God are wise for perpetuity : they see before them : they know what is to come ; even as far as to eternity. They know what will be best at last, and what will be valued, and serve our turn in the hour of our extremity : they judge of things, as all will judge of them ; and as they shall constantly judge of them for ever. But others are wise but for a few hours, or a present job : they see not before them : they are preparing for repentance. They are shamefully mutable in their judgments ; magnifying those pleasures, wealth and honours to-day, which they vilify and cry out against at death and to eternity ! A pang of sickness, the sight of a grave, the sentence of death, the awakening of conscience, can change their judgments, and make them speak in other language, and confess a thousand times over that they were fools : and if they come to any thing like

wisdom, it is too late, when time is past, and hope is gone. But the godly know the day of their visitation, and are wise in time ; as knowing the season of all duties, and the duties of every season. And as some schoolmen say, that all things are known to the glorified, ' in speculo Trinitatis ;' so I may say, that all things are morally and savingly known, to him that knoweth and loveth God, as the efficient, Governor and End of all.

Yet, to avoid mistakes and cavils, remember, that I take no true knowledge as contemptible. And when I truly say that he knoweth nothing as he ought to know, that doth not know and love his God, and is not wise to his duty and salvation ; yet if this fundamental knowledge be presupposed, we should build all other useful knowledge on it, to the utmost of our capacity : and from this one stock, may spring and spread a thousand branches, which may all bear fruit. I would put no limits to a Christian's desires and endeavours to know, but that he desire only to know useful and revealed things. Every degree of knowledge tendeth to more : and every known truth befriendeth others ; and like fire, tendeth to the spreading of our knowledge, to all neighbour truths that are intelligible. And the want of acquaintance with some one truth among an hundred, may hinder us from knowing rightly most of the rest ; or may breed an hundred errors in us. As the absence of one wheel or particle in a watch, or the ignorance of it, may put all the rest into an useless disorder. What if I say that wisdom lieth more in knowing the things that belong to salvation, to public good, to life, health, and solid comfort, than in knowing how to sing, or play on the lute, or to speak or carry ourselves with commendable decency, &c. It doth not follow that all these are of no worth at all ; and that in their places these little matters may not be allowed and desired : for even hair and nails are appurtenances of a man, which a wise man would not be without ; though they are small matters in comparison of the animal, vital and nobler parts. And indeed he that can see God in all things, and hath all this sanctified by the love of God, should above all men value each particle of knowledge, of which so holy an use may be made ; as we value every grain of gold.

CHAP. V.

Inference I. *By what Measures to estimate Men's Knowledge.*

FROM hence then we may learn how to value the understandings of ourselves and others : that is good which doth good. Would God but give me one beam more of the heavenly light, and a little clearer knowledge of himself, how joyfully could I exchange a thousand lower notions for it! I feel not myself at all miserable, for want of knowing the number and order of the stars, the nature of the meteors, the causes of the ebbing and flowing of the sea, with many hundred other questions in physics, metaphysics, mathematics : nor do I feel it any great addition to my happiness, when I think I know somewhat of such things which others know not. But I feel it is my misery to be ignorant of God, and ignorant of my state and duty, and ignorant of the world where I must live for ever. This is the dungeon where my wretched soul doth lie in captivity night and day, groaning and crying out, O when shall I know more of God! and more of the celestial habitations, and more of that which I was made to know! O when shall I be delivered from this darkness and captivity! Had I not one beam that pierceth through this lantern of flesh, this dungeon were a hell, even the outer darkness. I find books that help me to names, and notions ; but O for that Spirit that must give me light to know the things, the spiritual, great and excellent things, which these names import! O how ignorant am I of those same things, which I can truly and methodically speak and write of! O that God would have mercy on my dark understanding, that I be not as a clock, to tell others that which itself understandeth not! O how gladly would I consent to be a fool in all common arts and sciences, if I might but be ever the wiser in the knowledge of God! Did I know better him by whom I live, who upholdeth all things, before whom my soul must shortly appear; whose favour is my life; whom I hope to love and praise for ever; what were all other things to me? O for one beam more of his light! for one taste of his love! for one clear conception of the heavenly glory! I should then scarcely have leisure, to think of a thousand inferior speculations, which are now magnified and agitated in the world.

But much more miserable do I find myself, for want of more love to the blessed God, who is love itself. O happy exchange! did I part with all the pleasures of the world, for one flame, one spark more of the love of God! I hate not myself for my ignorance in the common arts and sciences; but my God knoweth, that I even abhor and loathe myself, because I love and delight in him no more! O what a hell is this dead and disaffected heart! O what a foretaste of heaven would it be, could I but feel the fervours of Divine love! Well may that be called the firstfruits of heaven, and the Divine nature and life, which so uniteth souls to God, and causeth them to live in the pleasures of his goodness. I dare not beg hard for more common knowledge: but my soul melteth with grief for want of love; and forceth out tears, and sighs, and cries; O when will heaven take acquaintance with my heart, and shine into it, and warm and revive it, that I may truly experience the delightful life of holy love! I cannot think them loathsome and unlovely, that are unlearned, and want the ornaments of art. But I abhor and curse those hateful sins, which have raised the clouds, and shut the windows, and hindered me from the more lively knowledge, and love of God. Would God but number me with his zealous lovers, I would presume to say, that he had made me wise, and initially happy. But, alas! such high and excellent things will not be gotten with a lazy wish, nor will holy love dwell with iniquity in unholy and defiled souls.

But if wisdom were justified of none but her children, how confidently durst I call myself a son of wisdom? For all my reason is fully satisfied, that the learned, ungodly doctors are mere fools, and the lovers of God are only wise: and O that my lot may be with such, however I be esteemed by the dreaming world!

CHAP. VI.

Inference 2. To abate our Censures and Contempt of the less learned Christians and Churches upon Earth.

I MUST confess that ignorance is the great enemy of holiness in the world; and the prince of darkness, in his king-

dom of darkness, oppugneth the light, and promoteth the works of darkness by it: and it is found that where vision ceaseth, the people perish, even for lack of knowledge: and the most ignorant countries are the most ungodly. But I must recant some former apprehensions: I have thought the Armenians, the Syrians, the Georgians, the Coptics, the Abassines, the Greeks, more miserable for want of polite literature, than now I judge them. Though I condemn it not as the Turks do, and the Muscovites; yet I perceive that had men but the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, yea, of the summaries of true religion, they might be good and happy men, without much more. If there be but some few among them, skilled in all the learning of the world, and expert in using the adversaries' weapons against themselves, as champions of the truth, the rest might do well with the bare knowledge of God, and a crucified Christ. It is the malice of assaulting enemies, that maketh all other learning needful in some for our defence. But the new creature liveth not on such food, but on the bread of life, and living waters, and the sincere milk of the sacred Word.

The old Albigenes and Waldenses in Piedmont, and other countries, did many ages keep up the life and comfort of true religion, even through murders and unparalleled cruelties of the worldly learned church; when they had little of the arts and common sciences. But necessary knowledge was propagated by the industry of parents and pastors: their children could say over their catechisms, and could give account of the principles of religion, and recite many practical parts of Scripture: and they had much love and righteousness, and little division or contention among them; which made the moderate emperor Maximilian profess to Crato, that he thought the Picards of all men on earth were most like the apostolic, primitive churches.

And Brocardus, who dwelt among them in Judea, tells us that the Christians there that by the Papists are accounted heretics, (as Nestorians or Eutychians,) were indeed good, harmless, simple men, and lived in piety, and mortifying austerities, even beyond the very religious sort (the monks and friars) of the church of Rome, and shamed the wickedness of our learned part of the world.

And though there be sad mixtures of such superstitions and traditions, as ignorance useth to breed and cherish, yet

the great devotion and strictness of many of the Abassines, Armenians, and other of those ruder sort of Christians, is predicated by many historians and travellers. And who knoweth but there may be among their vulgar, more love to God and heaven, and holiness, than among the contentious, learned nations, where the pastors strive who shall be the greatest, and preach up that doctrine and practice which is conformable to their own wills and worldly interests; and where the people, by the oppositions of their leaders, are drawn into several sides and factions, which, as armies, militate against each other. Is not the love of God like to be least, where contentions and controversies divert the people's minds from God and necessary saving truths? and where men least love one another; and where mutual hatred, cruelty and persecution proclaim them much void of that love which is the Christian badge?

I will not cease praying for the further illumination and reformation of those churches: but I will repent of my hard thoughts of the providence of God, as if he had cast them almost off, and had few holy souls among them. For ought I know they may be better than most of Europe.

And the like I say of many unlearned Christians among ourselves. We know not what love to God and goodness doth dwell in many that we have a very mean esteem of. The breathings of poor souls towards God by Christ, and their desires after greater holiness, is known to God that kindleth it in them, but not to us.

CHAP. VII.

Inference 3. *By what Measures to judge of the Knowledge necessary to Church Communion.*

I KNOW that there are some that would make Christ two churches; one political and congregate, as they phrase it, and the other regenerate: or one visible and the other invisible: and accordingly they say, that professed faith is the qualification of a member of the church-congregate; and obedience to the Pope, say the Papists, and real love is the qualification of the church-regenerate.

But as there is but one catholic church of Christ, so is there but one faith, and one baptism, by which men are stated as members in that church. But as heart-consent and tongue-consent are two things, but the latter required only as the expression and profession of the former: so heart-consenters and tongue-consenters should be the same men; as body and soul make not two men, but one. But if the tongue speak that consent which is not in the heart, that person is an hypocrite; and is but analogically or equivocally called a Christian or member of Christ: and such among the sincere are not a distinct church or society, (if they were, they should be called the hypocritical church, and not the political or congregate church.) But they are as traitors in an army, or as stricken ears in a corn-field. But the true church being one, is considered as consenting with the heart and with the tongue: as a corn-field hath straw, chaff and grain; and as a man hath soul and body. So that it is the same church that is visible by baptism and profession, and invisible by heart-consent or sincerity.

But it is the same thing, and not divers, that is in the hearts of the sincere, and that is to be professed by the tongue: even that voluntary practical faith which is described in baptism, and no other. The same faith which is accepted to salvation in the sincere and invisible members of the church, as they are called, must be professed by all that will, at age, be visible members.

And the knowledge and belief required in baptism is so much as prevaileth with the person to give up himself to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as his reconciled Creator, his Saviour and Sanctifier. And he that hath so much knowledge as will do this, hath as much as is necessary to his reception into the church.

Doubtless he that is capable of baptism, is capable of church-membership; and he that is capable of church-membership, is capable 'de jure,' as to right, of so much church communion as he is capable of by real aptitude: An infant is not naturally capable of the actions of the adult; nor half-witted persons of the receptions and performances of the judicious; some cannot understand a sermon, or prayer, or praise, the twentieth part so well as others can do, and so cannot receive and do beyond their understanding. Some

may not so well understand the nature of the Lord's-supper, as to be really fit at present to receive it: and some may be unfit through some extraordinary doubts, opinions, or lapses; but still 'de jure' a church member hath right to so much church communion as their real qualifications make them capable of. For that right is part of the definition of a church member; and to be made a church member is the work of baptism.

And here we must consider of the reason why God would have baptism to be the profession of that faith which maketh us Christians: Sometimes we are called believers, and said to be justified by faith, as if it were faith alone that were our Christianity; and yet when it cometh to church-entrance, and to the solemn profession of our faith, and reception of a sealed and delivered pardon, we must do more than profess that we believe with the understanding; we must give up ourselves absolutely by a vow and covenant, to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; which is the act of a resolved will: and to will is rationally to love and choose. By which Christ telleth us, that (as words of knowledge in Scripture usually imply affection, so) the faith that he means and requireth to our justification, is not a mere assent or act of intellection; but it is also the will's consent, and a practical affiancing: as a man believing the skill and fidelity of a physician, doth desire, will or choose him for his physician, and practically trust him, or cast himself upon his fidelity and care for cure. Therefore Christ joineth both together, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" (Mark xvi. 16;) not principally intending the washing of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, as Peter expoundeth it: that is, he that so believeth as by hearty consent to devote and give up himself openly and absolutely, and presently to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, shall be saved.

And so the apostle saith, (Eph. iv. 4, 5.) There is one baptism, as part of the uniting bond of Christians: That is, there is one solemn covenant between God and man, in which we profess our faith, and give up ourselves to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and are stated in a gracious relation to him and one another.

And thus it is that baptism is reckoned, (Heb. vi.) among the principles; and that the ancient doctors unanimously con-

clude, that baptism washeth away all sin, and certainly puts us into a present state of life ; that is, the delivering up ourselves sincerely to God in the baptismal covenant, is the condition of our right to the benefits of that covenant from God.

From all which it is plain, that the head is but the guide of the heart, and that God looketh more to the heart than to the head, and to the head for the heart : and that we are not Christians indeed, till Christ have our hearts indeed ; nor Christians by profession, till by baptismal covenant and profession we deliver up the heart to Christ. Now so far as consent and will may be called love, so far even love is essential to our Christianity, and to this faith, which is required to our baptism and justification : and no other faith is Christianity, nor will justify us.

But to them that are here stalled with the great difficulty, how love is that grace of the Holy Ghost which is promised to believers, in the covenant, as consequent, if it go before it in the covenanters ; I answer at present, that they must distinguish between, 1. Love to Christ, as a Saviour of ourselves, proceeding principally from the just love of ourselves, and our salvation : and love to God above ourselves, for his own infinite goodness, as our ultimate end : 2. Between the act of love, and a habit : 3. Between that spark of love which consisteth in the said consent, and is contained in true faith ; and that flame of love which itself carrieth the name, as being the most eminent operation of the soul. And if hereupon they cannot answer this question themselves, I must refer them to the Appendix of the third chapter of my " Christian Directory," in which I have largely opened this case, with as much exactness as I could reach unto.

All that remaineth very difficult then as to our judging of the knowledge of men to be admitted to Christian church-communion, is but, what knowledge is necessary in the adult unto their lawful baptism : And to that I say, so much as is necessary to an understanding consent to the baptismal covenant, or to an hearty giving up themselves to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And here we must know that the same covenanting words being comprehensive, are understood in different degrees, according to man's different capacities, even of true believers : insomuch that I do not think that any two men in the world, have in all notions and degrees just the same understanding of them. And there-

fore it is not the same distinctness and clearness of understanding which we must expect in all, which is found in some, or which is desirable. When one man nameth GOD, he hath an orderly conception of his several attributes (in which yet all men are defective, and most divines themselves are culpably ignorant): when another man conceiveth but of fewer of them, and that disorderly: and these must not be accounted Atheists, or denied to believe in the same God, or refused baptism; nor is it several gods that men so differently believe in.

I. He that knoweth God to be a most perfect Spirit, most powerful, wise and good; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Creator of the world; our Owner, Governor, and most amiable Lover, Benefactor and End: I think, knoweth as much of God, as is of necessity to baptism and church-communion.

II. He that knoweth that Jesus Christ is God and man, the Redeemer of the sinful world, and the Mediator between God and man; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, fulfilled all righteousness, was crucified as a sacrifice for man's sin; and being dead and buried, rose again, and ascended into heaven; and is the Teacher, King, and Intercessor of his Church; and hath made the new covenant, and giveth the Holy Ghost to sanctify believers, and pardoneth their sins; and will raise our bodies at last, and judge the world in righteousness according to his Gospel, and will give everlasting happiness to the sanctified: I think, knoweth as much of Christ, as is necessary to baptism and church-communion.

III. He that knoweth, that the Holy Ghost is God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, the Sanctifier of souls, by holy Life, and Light, and Love; by the holy Gospel, of which he is the inditer, and the seal: I think, knoweth all that is necessary unto baptism, concerning the Holy Ghost.

IV. And as to the act of knowing this Trinity of objects, there is a great difference between, 1. Knowing the notions, or words, and the matter. 2. Between an orderly, clear, and a dark and more confused knowledge. 3. And between apt significant words, and such as any way notify a necessary true conception of the mind. 4. Between such a knowledge as maketh a man willing, and consent to give up himself to this Trinity in covenant, and that which prevaieth not for such consent. And so,

1. It is true, that we know not the heart immediately : and therefore must judge by words and deeds : but yet it is the knowledge of the things, as is aforesaid, that is necessary to salvation ; because it is the love of the things that is chiefly necessary. By what words to express that love or knowledge, is not of equal necessity in itself.

2. There being no man, whose conceptions of God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Covenant, &c. are not guilty of darkness and disorder ; a great degree of darkness and disorder of conceptions, may consist with true grace in those of the lowest rank of Christians.

3. The second notions and conceptions of things, (and so of God our Redeemer, and Sanctifier,) as they are ' verba mentis ' in the mind itself, are but logical, artificial organs ; and are not of that necessity to salvation, as the conception of the matter or incomplex objects.

4. Many a man in his studies, findeth that he hath oft a general and true knowledge of things in themselves, before he can put names and notions on them, and set those in due order, and long before he can find fit words to express his mental notions by ; which must cost him much study afterwards. And as children are long learning to speak, and by degrees come to speak orderly, and composedly, and aptly, (mostly not till many years use hath taught them :) So the expressive ability is as much matter of art, and got by use, in men at age : and they must be taught yet as children to speak of any thing, new and strange, and which they learned not before. As we see in learning arithmetic, geometry, and all the arts and sciences. Even so men, how holy internally soever, must by study and use, by the help of God's Spirit, learn how to speak of holy things, in prayer, in conference, in answering such as ask an account of their faith and knowledge : and hypocrites, that are bred up in the use of such things, can speak excellently in prayer, conference, or preaching ; when true Christians at first, that never used them, nor were bred up where they heard them used, cannot tell you intelligibly what is in their minds ; but are like men, that are yet to learn the very language in which they are to talk. I know this by true experience of myself, and many others that I have examined.

5. Therefore, I say again, if men cannot aptly answer me, of the very essentials of religion, but speak that which in its

proper sense is heresy, or unsound and false: yet if when I open the questions to them myself, and put the article of faith into the question, and ask them *e. g.* Do you believe that there is but one God? or, are there many? Doth God know all things, or not? Is he our owner, or not? Doth he rule us by a law, or not, &c.? If they, by yea or nay, do speak the truth, and profess to believe it; I will not reject them for lack of knowledge, if the rest concur. I meet with few censorious professors, (to say nothing of the teachers,) that will not answer me with some nonsense or falseness or ineptitude, or gross confusion, or defectiveness, if I examine them of the foregoing notions of the very baptismal covenant: As, What is a spirit? What doth the word God signify? What is power in God? What knowledge? What will? What goodness? What holiness? What is a person in the Trinity? What is the difference between the three persons? How is God our end? Had Christ his human soul from the Virgin, or only his flesh? Had he his manhood from man, if not his soul, which is the chief essential part? What is the union of the Divine and human nature? Wherein different from the union of God and saints, or every creature? With an hundred such. In which I must bear with ignorant false answers from eminent professors, that separate from others as too ignorant for their communion: And why then must I not bear with more in those that are new beginners, and have not had their time and helps?

6. But if a man can speak never so well, and profess never so confident a belief; if he consent not to the covenant and vow of baptism, to give up himself presently and absolutely to Christ; I must reject that man from the communion of the church. But if these two things do but concur in any, 1. The aforesaid signification of a tolerable knowledge and belief, by yea or nay, (dost thou believe in God, &c. as the ancient churches used to ask the baptized.) 2. And a ready professed consent to be engaged by that holy vow and covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; I will not deny baptism to such, if adult, nor after church communion to them, if they are already in the covenant.

And all this is because that the will is the man; and if any man truly love Jesus Christ, he is a true believer in Christ; and if any man love God, the same is known and loved of him, and hath so much knowledge as will save his

soul. I confess in private catechising and conference, I have met with some ancient women that have long lived as godly persons, in constant affectionate use of means, and an honest godly life, and been of good repute in the church where they lived, who yet have spoken downright heresy to me, through ignorance, in answering some questions about Jesus Christ: but I durst not therefore suspend their communion, nor condemn their former communion: for as soon as I told them better, they have yielded, and I could not perceive whether it was from gross ignorance, or from unreadiness of notions, or from the want of memory, or what, that they spake amiss before. So that I shall be very loath to reject one from communion, that sheweth a love of God, and Jesus Christ, and holiness, by diligent use of means, and an upright life.

7. And he that will impartially be ruled by the Holy Scriptures, will be of the same mind. For no one was ever taken to be a church-member at age, without so full a consent, as was willingly expressed by devotedness to God in the solemn covenant: the Jews by the sign of circumcision, and the Christians by baptism; and both by covenanting with God were initiated; and consent is love. But the articles and objective degrees of knowledge and belief have greatly varied. The Jews were to know and profess more than the Gentiles; and the Jews since the Egyptian deliverance, more than before; and John baptized upon a shorter profession than the apostles did; and the apostles till Christ's resurrection, believed not many great articles of our faith, not knowing that Christ must die, and be an expiatory sacrifice for sin, and sin to be pardoned by his blood; nor that he was to rise again, and send the Holy Ghost for the work which he was sent for, &c. And Acts xix. there were disciples that had not heard that there was a Holy Ghost (I confidently think, twice baptized).

And if we mark how the apostles baptized, with what orders for it they received from Christ, it will confirm my conclusion. For Christ could have given a particular creed, and profession of faith, if he had pleased; but he taketh up with the general three articles, of believing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,) lest any should cast out his weak ones, for want of distinctness of knowledge and belief. And he maketh the covenant-consent in bap-

tism the necessary thing, as the end and measure of their knowledge. He that hath knowledge enough to cause him to thirst, may come and drink of the waters of life. (Rev. xxii. 17.) And he that hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness shall be satisfied; and he that cometh to Christ, he will in no wise cast out.

And the Apostles baptized so many thousands in a short time, that they could not examine each person about a more particular knowledge and belief; (Acts ii. &c.); nor do we read in Scripture of such particular large professions, as go much beyond the words of baptism. And though, no doubt, they did endeavour to make the ignorant understand what they professed and did, and so had some larger creed, yet was it not all so large, as the short creed called the Apostles' now is; several of its articles having been long since added.

I have spoken all this, not only to ministers, who have the keys of admission, but especially for the religious persons' sakes, who are too much inclined to place godliness in words and ability to speak well, in prayer or conference, or answering questions, and that make a more distinct knowledge and profession necessary than God hath made: yea, if all the articles of the creed are professed, when the understanding of them is not clear and distinct, they deride it, and say, a parrot may be taught as much; and they separate from those pastors and churches, that receive such to their communion. Many do this of a godly zeal, lest ignorance and formality be encouraged, and the godly and ungodly not sufficiently distinguished: but their zeal is not according to knowledge, nor to the holy rule; and they little know how much pride often lurketh unobserved, in such desires to be publicly differenced from others, as below us, and unmeet for our communion: and less know they how much they injure and displease our gracious Lord, who took little children in his arms, and despiseth not the weak, and carrieth the lambs, and refuseth no one any further than they refuse him.

I tell you, if you see but true love and willingness in a diligent, reformed, pious and righteous life, there is, certainly there is, saving knowledge and faith within; and if words do not satisfactorily express it, you are to think that it is not for want of the thing itself, but for want of use and exercise, and for want of well studied notions, or for want of

natural parts, education or art to enable them to act that part aright. But if God know the meaning of Abba, Father, and of the groans of the Spirit, in his beloved infants, I will not be one that shall condemn and reject a lover of God and Christ and holiness, for want of distinct particular knowledge, or of words to utter it aright.

CHAP. VIII.

Inference 4. *The aptness of the Teaching of Christ, to ingenerate the Love of God and Holiness.*

IF love be the end and perfection of our knowledge, then hence we may perceive, that no teacher that ever appeared in the world, was so fit for the ingenerating of true saving knowledge as Jesus Christ; for none ever so promoted the love of God.

1. It was he only that rendered God apparently lovely to sinful man, by reconciling us to God, and rendering him apparently propitious to his enemies, pardoning sin, and tendering salvation freely to them that were the sons of death. Self-love will not give men leave to love aright a God that will damn them, though deservedly for sin. But it is Christ that hath made atonement, and is the propitiation for our sins, and proclaimeth God's love, even to the rebellious: which is more effectually to kindle holy love in us, than all the precepts of naturalists without this could ever have been. His cross, and his wounds and blood were the powerful sermons, to preach God's winning love to sinners.

2. And the benefits are so many and so great which he hath purchased and revealed to man, that they are abundant fuel for the flames of love. We are set by Christ in the way of mercy, in the household of God, under the eye and special influence of his love; all our sins pardoned, our everlasting punishment remitted, our souls renewed, our wounded consciences healed, our enemies conquered, our fears removed, our wants supplied, our bodies, and all that is ours under the protection of Almighty Love; and we are secured by promise, that all our sufferings shall work together for our good. And what will cause love, if all this will not? When we perceive with what love the Father hath loved us, that of

enemies we should be made the sons of God, and of condemned sinners we should be made the heirs of endless glory, and this so freely, and by so strange a means, we may conclude that this is the doctrine of love, which is taught us from heaven by Love itself.

3. And especially this work of love is promoted, by opening the kingdom of heaven to the foresight of our faith; and shewing us what we shall enjoy for ever; and assuring us of the fruition of our Creator's everlasting love; yea, by making us foreknow that heaven consisteth in perfect, mutual, endless love. This will both of itself, draw up our hearts and engage all our reason and endeavours, in beginning that work which we must do for ever, and to learn on earth to love in heaven.

4. And besides all these objective helps, Christ giveth to believers the Spirit of love, and maketh it become as a nature in us; which no other teacher in the world could do. Others can speak reason to our ears, but it is Christ that sendeth the warming beams of holy love into our hearts.

If the love of God and holiness were no better than common philosophical speculations, then Aristotle, or Plato, or such other masters of names and notions, might compare with Christ and his apostles, and Athens with the primitive church; and the schoolmen might be thought the best improvers of theology. But if thousands of dreaming disputers wrangle the world into misery, and themselves into hell, and are ingenious artificers of their own damnation; if the love of God and goodness be the healthful constitution of the soul, its natural content and pleasure, the business and end of life, and all its helps and blessings, the solder of just societies, the union of man with God in Christ, and with all the blessed; and the foretaste and firstfruits of endless glory; then Christ the Messenger of love, the Teacher of love, the Giver of love, the Lord and commander of love, is the best promoter of knowledge in the world. And as Nicodemus knew that he was a teacher come from God, because no man could do such works unless God were with him; so may we conclude the same, because no man could so reveal, so cause, and communicate love, the holy love of God and goodness, unless the God of love had sent him. Love is the very end and work of Christ, and of his Word and Spirit.

CHAP. IX.

Inference 5. What great Cause Men have to be thankful to God for the Constitution of the Christian Religion: and how inexcusable they are that will not learn so short and sweet, and safe a Lesson.

So excellent and every way suitable to our case is the religion taught and instituted by Christ, as should render it very acceptable to mankind. And that on several accounts.

1. The brevity and plainness of Christian precepts, greatly accommodateth the necessity of mankind. I say his necessity, lest you think it but his sloth. ‘*Ars longa, vita brevis,*’ is the true and sad complaint of students. Had our salvation been laid upon our learning a body of true philosophy, how desperate would our case have been! For, 1. Man’s great intellectual weakness: 2. His want of leisure, would not have allowed him a knowledge that requireth a subtle wit and tedious studies.

1. Most men have wits of the duller sort: such quickness, subtlety and solidity as is necessary to great and difficult studies, are very rare: so rare, as that few such are found even among the preachers of the Gospel; of a multitude who by hard studies, and honest hearts, are fit to preach the doctrine of salvation, scarcely one or two are found of so fine and exact a wit as to be fit judiciously to manage the curious controversies of the schools. What a case then had mankind been in, if none could have been wise and happy indeed, but these few of extraordinary capacity! The most public and common good is the best. God is more merciful than to confine salvation to subtlety of wit: nor indeed is it a thing itself so pleasing to him as a holy, heavenly heart and life.

2. And we have bodies that must have provision and employment: we have families and kindred that must be maintained: we live in neighbourhoods and public societies, which call for much duty, and take up much time. And our sufferings and crosses will take up some thoughts. Were it but poverty alone, how much of our time will it alienate from contemplation! Whilst great necessities call for great care, and continual labour; can our common, poor labourers,

(especially husbandmen) have leisure to inform their minds with philosophy or curious speculations?

Nay, we see by experience, that the more subtle and most vacant wits, that wholly addict themselves to philosophy, can bring it to no considerable certainty and consistency to this day, except in the few rudiments or common principles that all are agreed in. Insomuch that those do now take themselves to be the chief or only wits, who are pulling down that which through so many ages, from the beginning of the world, hath with so great wit and study been concluded on before them; and are now themselves no higher than new experimenters, who are beginning all anew again, to try whether they can retrieve the errors of mankind, and make any thing of that which they think the world hath been so long unacquainted with: and they are yet but beginning at the skin or superficies of the world, and are got no further with all their wit, than matter and motion, with figure, site, contexture, &c. But if they could live as long as Methuselah, it is hoped they might come to know that besides matter and motion, there are essential virtues called substantial forms, or active natures, and that there is a 'vis motiva,' which is the cause of motion, and a 'virtus intellectiva,' and wisdom, which is the cause of the order of motion, and a vital will and love, which is the perfection and end of all: in a word, they may live to know that there is such a thing in the world as life, and such a thing as active nature, and such a thing as sense and soul, besides corporeal matter and motion, and consequently that man is indeed man. But, alas! they must die sooner, perhaps before they attain so far, and their successors must begin all anew again, as if none of all these great attempts had been made by their predecessors, and so, by their method, we shall never reach deeper than the skin, nor learn more than our A B C. And would we have such a task made necessary to the common salvation, even for all the poor and vulgar wits, which is so much too hard for our most subtle students?

2. And Christianity is as suitable to us, in the benefit and sweetness of it. What a happy religion is it that employeth men in nothing but receiving good to themselves, and in doing good to themselves and others. Whose work is only the receiving and improving of God's mercies, and loving and delighting in all that is good, rejoicing in the

taste of God's love on earth, and in the hopes of perfect felicity, love and joy for ever. Is not this a sweeter life than tiresome, unprofitable speculations?

O then, how inexcusable are our contemners of religion, that live in wilful ignorance and ungodliness, and think this easy and sweet religion to be a tedious and intolerable thing! What impudent calumniators and blasphemers are they of Christ and holiness, who deride and revile this sweet and easy way to life, as if it were a slavery and an irksome toil, unnecessary to our salvation, and unfit for a freeman, or at least a gentleman, (or a servant of the flesh and world) to practise. If Christ had set you such a task as Aristotle or Plato did to their disciples; so many notions, and so many curiosities to learn: if he had written for you as many books as Chrysippus did; if he had made necessary to your salvation, all the arbitrary notions of Lullius, and all the fanatic conceits of Campanella, and all the dreaming hypotheses of Cartesius, and all the astronomical and cosmographical difficulties of Ptolomy, Tycho-Brache, Copernicus and Galilæus, and all the chronological difficulties handled by Eusebius, Scaliger, Functius, Capellus, Petavius, &c. And all the curiosities in philosophy and theology of Cajetan, Scotus, Ockam, Gabriel, &c. Then you might have had some excuse for your aversation: but to accuse and refuse, and reproach so compendious, so easy, so sweet, so necessary a doctrine and religion, as that which is brought and taught by Christ; this is an ingratitude that hath no excuse, unless sensuality and malignant enmity may pass for an excuse.

Doth Christ deliver you from the maze of imaginary curiosities, and from the burdens of worldly wisdom, called philosophy, and of Pharisaical traditions, and Jewish ceremonies, and make you a light burden, an easy yoke, and commandments that are not grievous; and after all this, must he be requited with rejection and reproach, and your burdens and snares be taken for more tolerable than your deliverance? You make a double forfeiture of salvation, who are so unwilling to be saved.

Be thankful, O Christians, to your heavenly Master, for tracing you out so plain and sweet a way. Be thankful that he hath cut short those tiresome studies, by which your taskmasters would confound you, under pretence of making

you like gods, in some more subtle and sublime speculations than vulgar wits can reach. Now all that are willing may be religious, and be saved: it is not confined to men of learning. The way is so sweet, as sheweth it suitable to the end. It is but believe God's love and promises of salvation by Christ, till you are filled with love and its delights, and live in the pleasures of gratitude and holiness, and in the joyful hopes of endless glory! and is not this an easy yoke? Saith our heavenly poet Mr. G. Herbert in his poem called "Divinity."

As men for fear the stars should sleep and nod,
 And trip at night, have spheres supply'd ;
 As if a star were duller than a clod,
 Which knows his way without a guide :
 Just so the other heaven they also serve,
 Divinity's transcendent sky,
 Which with the edge of wit they cut and carve,
 Reason triumphs, and faith lies by,
 — But all his doctrine which he taught and gave,
 Was clear as heav'n from whence it came ;
 At least those beams of truth which only save,
 Surpass in brightness any flame :
 Love God, and love your neighbours, watch and pray,
 Do as you would be done unto.
 O dark instructions! even as dark as day!
 Who can these Gordian knots undo?

CHAP. X.

Inference 6. How little Reason ungodly men have to be proud of their Learning, or of any sort of Knowledge or Wisdom whatsoever.

As the ancient Gnostics, being puffed up with their corrupt Platonic speculations, looked down with contempt upon ordinary Christians, as silly ignorants in comparison of them, and yet had not wisdom enough to preserve them from the lusts and pollutions of the world; even so is it with abundance of the worldly clergy and ungodly scholars in this age. They think their learning setteth them many degrees above the vulgar, and giveth them right to be revered as the oracles or rabbies of the world; when yet, poor souls! they have not learned, by all their reading, studies and dis-

putings to love God and holiness better than the riches and preferments of the world. And some of them not better than a cup of strong drink, or than the brutish pleasures of sense and flesh. It is a pitiful thing to see the pulpit made a stage for the ostentation of this self-shaming, self-condemning pride and folly: for a man under pretence of serving God, and helping other men to heaven, to make it his errand to tell the hearers, that he is a very wise and learned man, who hath not wit enough to choose a holy, humble life, nor to make sure of heaven, or to save his soul; nor perhaps to keep out of the tavern or alehouse the next week, nor the same day to forbear the venting of his worldly, carnal mind: What is such learning but a game of imagination, in which the fantasy sports itself with names and notions; or worse, the materials which are used in the service of sin, the fuel of pride, the blinder and deceiver of such as were too ignorant before, being a mere shadow and name of knowledge? What good will it do a man tormented with the gout, or stone, or by miserable poverty, to know the names of various herbs, or to read the titles of the apothecaries' boxes, or to read on a sign-post, 'Here is a good ordinary.' And what good will it do a carnal, unsanctified soul that must be in hell for ever, to know the Hebrew roots or points, or to discourse of "*Cartesius's Materia Subtilis*," and "*Globuli Ætherei*," &c. Or of "*Epicurus and Gassendus's Atoms*," or to look on the planets in Galileus' glasses, while he casteth away all his hopes of heaven, by his unbelief, and his preferring the pleasures of the flesh? Will it comfort a man that is cast out of God's presence, and condemned to utter darkness, to remember that he was once a good mathematician, or logician, or musician, or that he had wit to get riches and preferments in the world, and to climb up to the height of honour and dominion? It is a pitiful thing to hear a man boast of his wit, while he is madly rejecting the only felicity, forsaking God, esteeming vanity, and damning his soul: the Lord deliver us from such wit and learning! Is it not enough to refuse heaven, and choose hell (in the certain causes) to lose the only day of their hopes, and in the midst of light, to be incomparably worse than mad, but they must needs be accounted wise and learned, in all this self-destroying folly? As if (like the physician who boasted that he killed men according to the rules of art) it were the height of their ambi-

tion to go learnedly to hell, and with reverend gravity and wit, to live here like brutes, and hereafter with devils for evermore.

CHAP. XI.

Inference 7. *Why the ungodly World hateth Holiness, and not Learning.*

FROM my very childhood, when I was first sensible of the concernments of men's souls, I was possessed with some admiration, to find that every where the religious, godly sort of people, who did but exercise a serious care of their own and other men's salvation, were made the wonder and obloquy of the world; especially of the most vicious and flagitious men; so that they that professed the same articles of faith, the same commandments of God to be their law, and the same petitions of the Lord's-prayer to be their desire, and so professed the same religion, did every where revile those that did endeavour to live according to that same profession, and to seem to be in good sadness in what they said. I thought that this was impudent hypocrisy in the ungodly, worldly sort of men! To take them for the most intolerable persons in the land, who are but serious in their own religion, and do but endeavour to perform what all their enemies also vowed and promised. If religion be bad, and our faith be not true, why do these men profess it? If it be true and good, why do they hate and revile them that would live in the serious practice of it, if they will not practise it themselves? But we must not expect reason, when sin and sensuality have made men unreasonable.

But I must profess that since I observed the course of the world, and the concord of the word and providences of God, I took it for a notable proof of man's fall, and of the verity of the Scripture, and the supernatural original of true sanctification, to find such an universal enmity between the holy and the serpentine seed, and to find Cain and Abel's case so ordinarily exemplified, and him that is born after the flesh to persecute him that is born after the Spirit. And

methinks to this day it is a great and visible help for the confirmation of our Christian faith.

But that which is much remarkable in it is, that nothing else in the world, except the crossing of men's carnal interest, doth meet with any such universal enmity. A man may be as learned as he can, and no man hate him for it. If he excel all others, all men will praise him and proclaim his excellency: he may be an excellent linguist, an excellent philosopher, an excellent physician, an excellent logician, an excellent orator, and all commend him. Among musicians, architects, soldiers, seamen, and all arts and sciences, men value, prefer and praise the best; yea, even speculative theology, such wits as the schoolmen and those that are called great divines are honoured by all, and meet, as such, but with little enmity, persecution or obloquy in the world. Though I know that even a Galilæus, a Campanella, and many such have suffered by the Roman inquisitors, that was not so much in enmity to their speculations or opinions, as through a fear lest new philosophical notions should unsettle men's minds and open the way to new opinions in theology, and so prove injurious to the kingdom and interest of Rome. I know also that Demosthenes, Cicero, Seneca, Lucan, and many other learned men, have died by the hands or power of tyrants. But that was not for their learning, but for their opposition to those tyrants' wills and interests. And I know that some religious men have suffered for their sins and follies, and some for their meddling too much with secular affairs, as the counsellors of princes, as Functius, Justus Jonas, and many others. But yet no parts, no excellency, no skill or learning is hated commonly, but honoured in the world, no not theological learning, save only this practical godliness and religion, and the principles of it, which only rendereth men amiable to God, through Christ, and saveth men's souls. To know and love God, and live as those that know and love him, to seek first his kingdom and the righteousness thereof, to walk circumspectly, in a holy and heavenly conversation, and studiously to obey the laws of God, this which must save us, this which God loveth and the devil hateth, is hated also by all his children; for the same malignity hath the same effect.

But methinks this should teach all considering men to

perceive what knowledge it is that is best, and most desirable to all that love their happiness. Surely this sort of learning, wit and art, which the devil and the malignant world do no more dispraise, oppose and persecute, (though as it is sanctified to higher ends it be good, yet) of itself is comparatively no very excellent and amiable thing. I know Satan laboureth to keep out learning itself (that is truly such) from the world, because he is the prince and promoter of darkness, and the enemy of all useful light: and lower knowledge is some help to higher, and speculative theology may prepare for practical; and the most gross and brutish ignorance best serveth the devil's designs and turn. And even in heathen Rome the arts prepared men for the Gospel; and learning in the church-reformers hath ever been a great help and furtherance of reformation. But yet if you stop in learning and speculation, and take it as for itself alone, and not as a means to holiness of heart and life, it is as nothing. It is Paul's express resolution of the case, that if "we have all knowledge without this holy love, we are nothing," but as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," (1 Cor. xiii.)

But surely there is some special excellency in this holy knowledge, and love, and obedience, which the devil and the malignant world so hate, in high and low, in rich and poor, in kindred, neighbours, strangers, or any, where they meet with it. It is not for nothing. This is the image of God; this is it that is contrary to their carnal minds, and to their fleshly lusts, and sinful pleasures. This tells them what they must be and do, or be undone for ever, which they cannot abide to be or do.

Let us therefore be somewhat the wiser for this discovery of the mind of the devil and all his instruments. I will love and honour all natural, artificial, acquired excellencies in philology, philosophy and the rest: as these expose not men to the world's obloquy, so neither unto mine or any sober man's. In their low places they are good and may be used to a greater good. But let that holy knowledge and love be mine, which God most loveth, and the world most hateth, and costeth us dearest upon earth, but hath the blessed end of a heavenly reward.

CHAP. XII.

Inference 8. *What is the Work of a Faithful Preacher, and how it is to be done.*

IF that knowledge which kindleth in us the love of God, be the only saving knowledge, then this is it that ministers must principally preach up and promote. Could we make all our hearers never so learned, that will not save their souls; but if we could make them holy, and kindle in them the love of God and goodness, they should certainly be saved. The holy, practical preacher therefore is the best preacher, because the holy, practical Christian is the best and only true Christian. We work under Christ, and therefore must carry on the same work on souls which Christ came into the world to carry on. All our sermons must be fitted to change men's hearts, from carnal into spiritual, and to kindle in them the love of God. When this is well done, they have learned what we were sent to teach them; and when this is perfect, they are in heaven.

Those preachers that are enemies to the most godly of the people, and would make their hearers take them all for hypocrites, that go any further than obedience to their pastors, in church-forms and orders, observances and ceremonies, and a civil life, are the great enemies of Christ, his Spirit, his Gospel, and the people's souls; and the eminent servants of the devil, in his malignant war against them all. All that knowledge, and all those formalities, which are set up instead of Divine Love and holy living, are but so many cheats, to deceive poor souls till time be past, and their convictions come too late.

I confess that ignorance is the calamity of our times, and people perish for lack of knowledge: and that the heart be without knowledge it is not good: and lamentable ignorance is too visible in a great degree, among the religious sort themselves; as their manifold differences and errors too openly proclaim: and therefore to build up men in knowledge, is much of the ministerial work. But what knowledge must it be? Not dead opinions, or ineffectual notions, or such knowledge as tendeth but to teach men to talk, and make them pass for men of parts; but it is the knowledge

of God and our Redeemer, the knowledge of Christ crucified, by which we crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts : and by which the world is crucified to us, and we to it. If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their eyes. When there is no truth and mercy, and knowledge of God in the land, no wonder if such a land be clad in mourning. When men have not so much knowledge of the evil of sin, and their own sin and misery, and of the need and worth of Christ, of the truth of God's Word, of the vanity of the world, of the greatness, wisdom and goodness of God, and of the certain, most desirable glory of heaven, as shall humble their souls, and turn them from the world to God, and absolutely deliver them up to Christ, and mortify fleshly lusts, and overcome temptations, and renew them unto the love of God and goodness, and set their hearts and hopes on heaven : This is the ignorance that is men's damnation ; and the contrary effectual knowledge is it which saveth souls.

CHAP. XIII.

Inference 9. *Those that know God so far as to Love him above all, may have Comfort, notwithstanding their remaining Ignorance.*

A GREAT number of upright-hearted Christians, who love God sincerely, and obey him faithfully, are yet under so great want of further knowledge, as is indeed a great dishonour to them, and a hindrance of them in their duty and comfort, and to many a great discouragement. And O that we knew how to cure this imperfection, that ignorance might not feed so many errors, and cause so many factions and disturbances in the church, and so many sinful miscarriages in its members !

But yet we must conclude that the person that hath knowledge enough to renew his soul to the love of God, shall be loved by him, and shall never perish, and therefore may have just comfort under all the imperfections of his knowledge. More wisdom might make him a better and more useful Christian ; but while he is a Christian indeed, he may rejoice in God. I blame not such for complaining

of the dullness of their understandings, the badness of their memories, their little profiting by the means of grace: I should blame them if they did not complain of these: and I think their case far more dangerous to the church and to themselves, who have as much ignorance and know it not, but proudly glory in the wisdom which they have not. But many a thousand Christians, that have little of the notional and organical part of knowledge, have powerful apprehensions of the power, wisdom and love of God, and of the great mercy of redemption, and of the evil of sin, the worth of holiness, and the certainty and weight of the heavenly glory: and by how much these men love God and holiness more than the more learned that have less grace, by so much they are more beloved of God, and accounted wiser by the God of wisdom; and therefore may rejoice in the greatness of their felicity. I would have none so weak as to undervalue any real useful learning; but if Pharisees will cry out against unlearned, godly Christians, "These people know not the law and are accursed;" remember the thanksgiving of your Lord, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." And as the (reputed) foolishness of God, that is, of God's evangelical mysteries, will shortly prove wiser than all the reputed wisdom of men; so he that hath wisdom enough to love God and be saved, shall quickly be in that world of light, where he shall know more than all the doctors and subtle disputers upon earth; and more, in a moment, than all the books of men can teach him, or all their authors did ever here know. "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, That he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness and righteousness in the earth: for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. ix. 23, 24.)

CHAP. XIV.

Questions and Objections answered.

Quest. 1. 'IF so much knowledge will save a man, as helpeth him to love God as God, may not heathens or infidels at least be saved? For they know that there is one God who is infinitely good and perfect, and more amiable than all the world, and the great Benefactor of man, and of the whole creation: so that there is no goodness but what is in him, or from him, and through him, and finally to him: and man's will is made to love apprehended good, and followeth the last practical act of the intellect, at least where there is no competitor, but 'omnimoda ratio boni.' And all men know that God is not only best in himself, but good, yea, best to them, because that all they have is from him: and they have daily experience of pardoning grace contrary to their demerit. It seemeth therefore that they may love God as God.'

Ans. 1. To cause a man to love God as God, there is necessary both objective revelation of God's amiableness, and such subjective grace which consisteth in a right disposition of the soul. 2. Objective Revelation is considered as sufficient either to a well-disposed, or to an ill-disposed soul. 3. This right disposition consisteth both in the abatement of men's inclinations to contrary, sensual objects, and in the inclining them to that which is divine and spiritual. And now I answer,

1. It cannot be denied, but that so much of God's amiableness or goodness is revealed to infidels that have not the Gospel, by the means mentioned in the Objection, as is sufficient to bring men under an obligation to love God as God, and to leave them inexcusable that do not.

2. Therefore, to such, the impossibility is not physical, but moral.

3. And there is in that objective Revelation, so much sufficiency, as that if the soul itself were sanctified and well disposed, it might love God upon such revelation: which Amyraldus hath largely proved.

4. But to an unholy and undisposed soul, no objective

Revelation is sufficient without the Spirit's help and operations.

5. Only the Spirit of Christ the Mediator, as given by and from him, doth thus operate on souls, as savingly to renew them.

6. Whether ever the Spirit of Christ doth thus operate on any that hear not of Christ's incarnation, must be known either by the Scripture or by experience^a. By the Scripture I am not able to prove the universal negative, though it is easy to prove sanctification incomparably more common in the church, than on those without, if any there have it. The case of infants, and of the churches, and the world before Christ's incarnation, must here come into consideration. 2. And by experience no man can prove the negative; because no man hath experience what is in the hearts of all the persons in the world.

Quest. 2. 'May a Papist or a heretic by his knowledge be a lover of God as God?'

Ans. What is said to the former Question is here to be reviewed. And further, 1. A Papist and such heretic as positively holdeth all the essentials of Christianity, and seeth not the opposition of his false opinions hereto, and holdeth Christianity more practically than those false opinions, may be saved in that state, for he is a lover of God: but no other Papists or heretics can be saved but by a true conversion. 2. There is a sufficiency in the doctrine of Christianity which they hold, to save them, as to objective sufficiency. And that God giveth not subjective grace of sanctification to any such, notwithstanding their errors, is a thing that no man can prove, nor any sober, charitable Christian easily believe: and experience of the piety of many maketh it utterly improbable, though we know not certainly the heart of another.

There are many murmurings against me in this city, behind my back: for never one man of them to my remembrance to this day, did ever use any charitable endeavour to my face, to convince me of my supposed error; as one that holds that a Papist may be saved, yea, that we are not certain that none in the world are saved besides Christians;

^a Of all this, I have discoursed more largely in my "Catholic Theology," and the annexed Epitome.

and the Sectaries whisper me to one another to be like Origen, a person in these dangerous opinions, forsaken of God, in comparison of them. What really I assert about these questions, I have here briefly hinted ; but more largely opened in my " Catholic Theology : " but I will confess that I find no inclination in my soul, to desire that their doctrine may prove true, who hide the glorified love of God, and would contract his mercy and man's salvation into so narrow a room, as to make it hardly discernible by man, and the church to be next to no church, and a Saviour to save so very few, as seem scarce considerable among the rest that are left remediless. And who would make us believe that the way appointed to bring men to the love of God, is, to believe that he hath elected that particular person, and left almost all the world (many scores or hundreds to one) unredeemed, and without any promise or possibility of salvation. I am sure that the Covenant of Innocency is ceased, and I am sure that all the world was brought under a law of Grace, made after the fall to Adam and Noah : and that this law is still in force, to those that have not the more perfect edition in the Gospel. And that Christ came not to bring the world that never hear of him nor can do, into a worse condition than Jews and Gentiles were in before : nor hath he repealed that law of grace, which he before made them ; nor hath God changed that gracious name which he proclaimed even to Moses. (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) And I am sure that Abraham, the father of the faithful, conjectured once, even when God told him that Sodom was ripe for destruction, that yet there might be fifty righteous persons in it ; by which we may conjecture, what he thought of all the world^b. And I know " that in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him ; " and that " he that cometh to God, must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him ; " and therefore without faith none can please God : and that men shall be judged by that same law, which they were under and obliged by, whatever it be. And they that have sinned under the law of Moses, shall be judged by it ; and they that sinned without that law shall be judged without it. And I know that God is love itself, and infinitely

^b Read Mal. i. 14. with all the old translations in the Polyglot Bible, and consider it.

good ; and will shew us his goodness in such glorious effects to all eternity, as shall satisfy us and fill us with joyful praise. And as for the Papists, I know that they are seduced by a worldly clergy, and that by consequence many of the errors in that church do subvert the fundamentals ; and so do many errors of the Antinomians and others among us, that are taken for religious persons ; yea, and as notoriously as any doctrines of the Popish councils do. But I know that as a logical faith or orthodoxy, which consisteth in holding right notions and words, deceiveth thousands that have no sound belief of the things themselves expressed by these words ; so also logical errors about words, notions and sentences, may in unskilful men consist with a sound belief of the things which must necessarily be believed. And that Christ and grace may be thankfully received by many that have false names and notions, and sayings about Christ and grace. And I know the great power of education and converse, and what advantage an opinion hath even with the upright, which is commonly extolled by learned, godly, religious men, especially if by almost all. Therefore I make no doubt but God hath many among the Papists, and the Antinomians, to name no others, who are truly godly, though they logically or notionally hold such errors, as if practically held would be their damnation, and if the consequents were known and held : much more when thousands of the common people hold not the errors of the church which they abide in. And it shall not be my way of persuading my own soul, or others to love God, by first persuading them that he loveth but few besides them. And when such have narrowed God's love and mercy to all save their own party, and made themselves easily believe that he will damn the rest of the world, even such as are as desirous to please God as they are, they have but prepared a snare for their own consciences ; which may perhaps when it is awakened as easily believe that he will damn themselves. Let us give " all diligence to make our own calling and election sure," and leave others to the righteous God, to whose judgment they and we must stand or fall. " Who art thou that judgest another's servant ?"

As the Covenant of Peculiarity was made only with the Israelites, though the Common Law of Grace, made to Adam and Noah, was in force to other nations of the world ; so the

more excellent Covenant of Peculiarity is, since Christ's incarnation, made only with the Christian church, though the aforesaid Common Law of Grace be not repealed to all others: nor can it be said that they sin not against a law of grace, or mercy leading to repentance.

And as the Covenant of Peculiarity was not repealed to the ten tribes, (though the benefits were much forfeited by their violation;) but God had still thousands among them in Elias's time, that bowed not the knee to Baal, and such as Obadiah to hide the prophets; though yet the Jews were the more orthodox: Even so though the Reformed Churches as the two tribes, stick closer to the truth, the kingdoms where Popery prevailed have yet many thousands that God will save; and, notwithstanding their errors and corrupt additions, they have the same articles of faith and baptismal covenant as we. And if any man think himself the wiser or the happier man than I, for holding the contrary, and thinking so many are hated of God more than I do, (and consequently rendering him less lovely to them;) I envy not such the honour nor comfort of their wisdom.

Object. III. 'You will thus confirm our ignorant people in their presumption, that tell professors of godliness, I love God above all, and my neighbour as myself: though I do not know, and talk, and pray so much as you do.'

Ans. Either they do so love God and man, or they do not. If they do they are good and happy men, though you call them ignorant: yea, he is far from being an ignorant man, that knoweth God and Christ, and heaven and holiness so well, as to be unfeignedly in love with them. But if he do not, what say I to his encouragement in presumption! But you must take another course to cure him, than by calling him to a barren sort of knowledge. You must shew him, that the love of God is an operative principle; and where it is will have dominion, and be highest in the soul; and that telling God that we love him, while we love not his law, his service, or his children; yea, while we love our appetite, our wealth, our credit, and every beastly lust above him; and while we cannot abide much to think or hear talk of him; this is but odious hopocrisy, which deceiveth the sinner, and maketh him more abominable to God.

But if really you see a poor neighbour, whom you count

ignorant, live as one that loveth God and goodness; take heed, that you proudly despise not Christ's little ones, but love and cherish those sparks that are kindled and loved by Christ. The least are called by Christ his brethren, and their interest made as his own. (Matt. xxv.) And the least have their angels, which see the face of God in heaven.

Object. IV. 'How then are infants saved, that neither have knowledge nor love?'

Ans. 1. While they have no wills of their own, which are capable of holy duties, they are as members of their parents, whose wills are theirs; or who know God, and love him, for themselves and their infants. As the hand and foot doth not know and love God in itself; and yet is holy, in that it is the hand or foot of one that doth know and love him.

2. Sanctified infants have that grace which is the seed of holy love, though they have not yet the act nor proper habit of love. I call it a seed, because it is a holy disposition of the soul; by which it is (not only physically, as all are, but) morally able to love God, when they come to the use of reason, or at least mediately to do that which shall conduce to holy love.

3. And in this state being loved of God, and known of him as the children of his grace and promise; they are happy in his love to them: for he will give their natures their due capacity, in his way, which we are not yet fit to be fully acquainted with; and he will fill up that capacity with his love and glory.

Object. V. 'If this hold, away with universities, and all our volumes and studies of physics, mathematics and other sciences; for they must needs divert our thoughts from the love of God! And then Turks, Muscovites, and other contemners of learning are in the right.'

Ans. There is a right and a wrong use of all these, as there is of arts and business of the world. One man so followeth his trade and worldly business, as to divert, distract, or corrupt his mind, and drown all holy thoughts and love, and leave no due place for holy diligence. And another man so followeth his calling, as that heaven hath still his heart and hope, and his labour is made but part of his obedience to God, and his way to life eternal; and all is sanctified by holy principles, end and manner. And so it is about

common learning, sciences or arts. And I have proved to you, that among too many called great scholars in the world, many books, and much reading and acquaintance with all the arts of speaking, with grammar, logic, oratory, metaphysics, physics, history, laws, &c. is but one of Satan's last and subtlest means of wasting precious time, deceiving souls, and keeping such persons from pursuing the ends of their excellent wit, and of life itself, that would not have been cheated, diverted and undone, by the grosser way of brutish pleasures: but holy souls have a sanctified use of all their common knowledge, making it serve their high and holy ends. But O that some learned men would in time, as well understand the difference between common learning (which serveth fancy, pride, or worldly hopes;) and the love of God and a heavenly life; as they must know it when they come to die!

CHAP. XV.

Use, Exhort. 1. *Not to deceive ourselves by overvaluing a dead or an unholy Knowledge.*

It grieveth my soul to observe how powerfully, and how commonly Satan still playeth his first deceiving game, of calling off man from love, trust, and obedience, to an ensnaring and troublesome, or unprofitable sort of knowledge. And how the lust of knowing carrieth away many unsuspected to misery, who escape the most dishonourable sort of lust! And especially, what abundance in several ways take notional knowledge, which is but an art of thinking and talking, for real knowledge; which is our acquaintance with God and grace; and which changeth the soul into the image of him that we seek and know; and filleth us with love, and trust, and joy.

Two sorts are especially here guilty.

I. The learned students before described:

II. The superficial sort of people accounted religious.

I. I have already shewed how pitiful a thing it is, that so many academical wits, and so many preachers, (to say nothing of the grossly proud, tyrannical and worldly clergy;) do spend so many years in studies, that are used but in the

service of the flesh, to their own condemnation; and never bend their minds to kindle in themselves the love of God, nor a heavenly desire or hope, nor to live in the comfortable prospect of glory. How many preach up that love and holiness, (as the trade that they must live by) which they never fervently preached to themselves, nor practised sincerely one hour in their lives! How many use to preach funeral sermons, and bury the dead, that are unprepared for death themselves, and hardened in their security and unholy state, by those sights, those studies, those words, which should awaken and convince them, and which they plead themselves for the conviction of their hearers! O miserable scholars! Miserable preachers! Miserable doctors and prelates, who study and preach to their own condemnation; and have not knowledge enough to teach them to love God, nor to set more by the heavenly glory, than this world; but by spiritual words, do both hide and cherish a fleshly and a worldly mind! You will find at death, that all your learning was but a dream, and one of the vanities that entangle fools; and you will die as sadly as the unlearned, and be beaten with more stripes, than they that knew not their master's will.

1. Unholy knowledge is but a carcase, a shadow, the activity of a vain mind, or a means without the end, and unfit to attain it. A map is not a kingdom, nor doth it much enrich the owner. The names of meats and drinks will not nourish you: and to know names and notions, giveth you no title to the things so named. You may as well think to be saved for being good musicians, physicians or astronomers, as for being learned divines, if your knowledge cause not holy love: it may help others to heaven, but it will be but vanity to you; and you will be as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (1 Cor. xiii. 1.) You glory in a lifeless picture of wisdom; and hell may shortly tell you, that you had better have chosen any thing, to play the fool with, than with the notions and words of wisdom mortified.

2. Nay, such profanation of holy things is a heinous sin. Who is more like the devil than he that knoweth most, and loveth God least? To know that you should love and seek God most, and not to do it, is wilfully to despise him in the open light. As the privation of God's love is the chief part of hell, so the privation of our love to God is the chief part

of ungodliness or sin; yea, and much of hell itself. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. Unholy knowledge is a powerful instrument of Satan's service; in the service of pride, and ambition, and heresy, one learned and witty, ungodly man will merit more of the devil by mischieving mankind, than any of the common, unlearned sort: and none are so likely impenitently to glory in this sin. They will be proud of such adorned fetters; that they can sin philosophically, and metaphysically, in Greek and Hebrew, and with logical subtlety, or oratorical fluency, prove against unlearned men, that they do well in damning their own souls, and that God and heaven are not worthy of their chief love and diligence; such men will offend God more judiciously than the ignorant, and will more discreetly and honourably fool away their hopes of heaven, and more successfully deceive the simple. Their wisdom, like Ahithophel's, will serve turn to bring them to destroy themselves: and is it any wonder if this be foolishness with God? (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

The understanding of a man is a faculty unfit to be abused and prostituted to the slavery of the flesh. The abuse of the senses is bad, but of the understanding worse; because it is a nobler faculty. When they that "knew God, glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imagination, their foolish heart was darkened, and professing themselves wise (philosophers or Gnostics) they became fools;" (Rom. i. 21. 28;) "and as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to vile affections." And yet many are proud of this mortal tympanite, as if it were a sound and healthful constitution; and think they have the surest right to heaven for neglecting it knowingly, and going learnedly in the way to hell.

3. You lose the chief delight of knowledge. O that you knew what a holy quietness and peace, what solid pleasure that knowledge bringeth, which kindleth and cherisheth holy love, and leadeth the soul to communion with God; and how much sweeter it is to have a powerful and experimental knowledge, than your trifling dreams! The most learned of you all have but the husks or shells of knowledge; and what great sweetness is in shells, when the poorest, holy, experienced Christian hath the kernel, which is far more pleasant! O try a more serious, practical religion,

and I dare assure you, it will afford you a more solid kind of nourishment and delight. The pleasure of the speculative divine in knowing, is but like the pleasure of a mathematician or other speculator of nature; yea, below that of the moral philosopher: it is but like my pleasure in reading a book of travels or geography; in comparison of the true, practical Christian's; which is like their pleasure that live in those countries, and possess the lands and houses which I read of.

4. Nay, yet worse, this unholy knowledge doth often make men the devil's most powerful and mischievous instruments; for though Christ oft also so overrule the hearts of men, and the course of the world, as to make the knowledge and gifts of bad men serviceable to his church (as wicked soldiers oft fight in a good cause, and save the lives of better men), yet a worldly mind is more likely to follow the way of worldly interest; and it is but seldom that worldly interest doth suit with, and serve the interest of truth and holiness, but more commonly is its greatest adversary: therefore most usually it must be expected that such worldly men should be adversaries to the same truth and holiness which their worldly interest is averse to. And hence hath arisen that proud, worldly and tyrannical clergy, which hath set up and maintained the Roman kingdom, under the name of the Holy Catholic Church; and which hath by their Pope and pretended General Councils, usurped a legislative and executive power over the whole Christian world, and made great numbers of laws without authority, and contrary to the laws of Christ; multiplying schisms on pretence of suppressing them, and making so many things necessary to the concord of Christians, as hath made such concord become impossible; presumptuously voting other men to be heretics, while their own errors are of as odious a kind; yea, when holy truth is sometimes branded by them as heresy. And when they cannot carry the judgments, consciences and wills of all men along in obedience to their tyrannical pride, lust and interest, they stir up princes and states to serve them by the sword, and murder and persecute their own subjects, and raise bloody wars against their neighbours, to force them to obey these proud seducers. Yea, and if kings and states be wiser than thus to be made their hangmen or bloody executioners, to

the ruin of their best subjects, and their own everlasting infamy and damnation, they stir up the foolish part of the subjects against such rulers, and in a word, they will give the world no peace: so that I am past all doubt that the ten heathen persecutions so much cried out of, was but a small matter as against the Christian's blood, in comparison of what hath been done by this tyrannical clergy: and the cruellest magistrates still seem to come short of them in cruelty, and seldom are very bloody or persecuting, but when a worldly or proud clergy stirs them up to it. And all the heresies that ever sprang up in the church, do seem to have done less harm on one side, than by pretences of unity, order and government, they have done on the other. O how unspeakably great have been, and still are the church's sufferings, by a proud and worldly clergy, and by men's abuse of pretended learning and authority!

5. I will add yet one more considerable mischief; that is, that your unholiness and carnal minds for all your learning, corrupteth your judgments, and greatly hindereth you from receiving many excellent truths, and inclineth you to many mortal errors. To instance in some particulars.

1. About the attributes and government of God. A bad man is inclined to doubt of God's particular providence, his holy truth and justice, and to think God is such an one as he would have him to be. Whereas they that have the love of God and goodness, have his attributes, as it were, written on their hearts; that he is good, and wise, and holy, and just, and true, they know by an experimental, certain knowledge, which is to them like nature and life itself. (John xvii. 3; Hos. ii. 20; Psal. xxxiv. 8, &c.)

2. The very truth of the Gospel and mystery of redemption is far more hardly believed by a man that never felt his need of Christ, nor ever had the operations of that Spirit on his soul, which are its seal, than by them that have the witness in themselves, and have found Christ actually save them from their sins: who are regenerated by this holy seed, and nourished by this milk. (1 John v. 10—12; 1 Pet. i. 22, 23; ii. 2.)

3. Yea, the very truth of our soul's immortality, and the life and glory to come, is far more hardly believed by them, who feel no inclination to such a future glory; but only a

propensity to this present life, and the interests and pleasures of it, than by them that have a treasure, a home, a heart, and a conversation in heaven, and that long for nearer communion with God, and that have the earnest and first-fruits of heaven within them. (Matt. vi. 20, 21; Phil. iii. 20, 21; Col. iv. 1—4; Rom. viii. 17—20.)

4. The evil of sin in general, and consequently what is sin in particular, is less known by a man that loveth it, and would not have it to be sin, than by one that hateth it, and loveth God and holiness above all: they that love the Lord hate evil. (1 Cor. ii. 14; John ix. 40.)

5. Most controversies about the nature of grace, are more hardly understood by them that have it not, than by them that have it as a new nature in them. And consequently what kind of persons are to be well thought of, as the children of God. The Pharisees were strict, and yet haters of Christ and Christians. Many preach and write for godliness, that yet when it cometh to a particular judgment, deride the godly as hypocrites or superstitious.

6. In cases about the worship of God, a carnal mind, how learned soever, is apt to relish most an outside, carnal, ceremonious way, and to be all for a dead formality, or else for a proud ostentation of their own wits, opinions and parts, or some odd singularity that sets them up to be admired as some extraordinary persons, or teacheth their own consciences so to flatter them: when a spiritual man is for worshipping God (though with all decent externals, yet) in spirit and in truth; and in the most understanding, sincere and humble manner, and yet with the greatest joy and praise. (Rom. viii. 16, 26, &c.)

7. Especially in the work of self-judging, how hard a work have the most learned that are ungodly, truly to know themselves; when learning doth but help their pride to blind them! And yet none so apt to say as the Pharisees, (John ix. 10,) "Are we blind also?" and to hate those that honour them not, as erroneously as they do themselves: and therefore Augustine so lamenteth the misery of the clergy, and saith that the unlearned take heaven by violence, when the learned are thrust down to hell with all their learning! Who are prouder and more self-ignorant hypocrites in the world (expecting that all should bow to them and reverence

them, and cry them up as wise and excellent men,) than the unholy, worldly, fleshly clergy?

8. And in every case that themselves are much concerned in, their learning will not keep them from the most blind injustice. Let the case be but such as their honour, or profit, or relations and friends are much concerned in, and they presently take all right to be on their side; and all these to be honest men that are for them, and all those to be wicked hypocrites, heretics, schismatics, factious, or liars, that are against them; and dare print to the world that most notorious truths in matters of fact are lies, and lies are truths, and corrupt all history where they are but concerned: so that experience hath taught me to give little credit to any history written by men, in whom I can perceive this double character, 1. That they are worldly and unconscionable: 2. And concerned by a personal interest; especially when they revile their adversaries. And money, friends or honour will make any cause true and just with them, and can confute all evidences of truth and innocency. Learned judges are too often corrupt.

9. And in cases of great temptation, how insufficient is learning to repel the tempter, when it is easily done by the holy love of God and goodness! How easily is a man's judgment tempted to think well of that which he loveth, and ill of that which his heart is against?

Many such instances I might give you, but these fully shew the misery and folly of ungodly scholars, that are but blinded by dead notions, and words of art, to think they know something, when they know nothing as they ought to know; and to hate truth and goodness, and speak evil of the things they know not, while for want of holy love, these tinkling cymbals do but deceive themselves, and ascertain their own damnation.

II. I should next have said as much of the vanity and snare of the knowledge of such Gnostics, as in an overvaluing of their own religious skill and gifts, cry out as the Pharisees, "This people that know not the law are cursed." But what is said is applicable to them.

CHAP. XVI.

Exhort. 2. *Love best the Christians that have most Love to God and Man.*

IF God love those most that have most love, and not those that have most barren knowledge ; then so must we, even all that take God's wisdom as infallible : of whom can we know better, whom to love and value, than of him that is wisdom and love itself? There is more savoury worth in the experience, affections and heavenly tendency of holy souls, than in all the subtleties of learned wits. When a man cometh to die, who savoureth not more wisdom in the sacred Scripture, and in holy treatises, than in all Aristotle's learned works ? And who had not then rather hear the talk and prayers of a holy person, than the most accurate logic and mathematics? Alas! what are these but trifles to a dying man! And what they will be to a dying man, they should be much to us all our life ; unless we would never be wise till it is too late.

And among men seeming religious, it is not the religious wrangler or disputer, nor the zealous reviler of his brethren, that can hotly cry down on one side, ' These men are heretical ;' or on the other, ' These are antichristian,' that are the lovely persons : not they that on one side cry out, ' Away with these from the ministry and church as disobedient to us :' or on the other, ' Away with these from our communion as not holy enough to join with us.' It is not they that proudly persecute to prove their zeal, nor they that proudly separate from others to prove it ; but it is they that live in the love of God and man, that are beloved of God and man. Nature teacheth all men to love those that love them. And the Divine nature teacheth us to love those much more that love God and goodness. Though love be an act of obedience as commanded, yet hath it a nature also above mere obedience ; and bare commanding will not cause it. No man loveth God or man, only because he is commanded so to do ; but because he perceiveth them to be good and amiable. And the most loving are the most lovely, so be it their love be rightly guided. Doth it not kindle love in you to others, more, to hear their breathings

after God, and grace, and glory, and to see them loving and kind to all, and delighting to do all the good they can, and covering tenderly the infirmities of others, and practising 1 Cor. xiii, and living at peace among themselves, and as much as is possible with all men, and loving their enemies, and blessing those that curse them, and patiently bearing, and forgiving wrongs; than to come into one congregation and hear a priest teach the people to hate their brethren as schismatics or heretics; or in another, and hear a man teach his followers to hate others as antichristian or ceremonious? Or to hear silly men and women talk against things that are quite beyond their reach, and shaking the head to talk against Dissenters, and say, 'Such an one is an erroneous or dangerous man, take heed of hearing him! Such an one is for or against reprobation, free-will, universal redemption, man's power, and such like, which they little understand.' In a word, the proudly tyrannical, and the proudly schismatical, with all their pretence of learning on one side, or of the Spirit and holiness, and gifts on the other, are no whit so amiable as the single-hearted, honest, peaceable Christian, who preacheth love, and prayeth love, and liveth, and breatheth, and practiseth love. Paul saith, that all the law is fulfilled in love; and fulfilling is more than knowing it. And Christ himself did not in vain sum up all the commandments in the love of God and man; nor in vain ask Peter thrice, "Lovest thou me?" nor in vain so often charge it on them, as his new, that is his last commandment, that they love one another! Nor doth his beloved apostle John in vain so earnestly write for love.

CHAP. XVII.

Exhort. 3. *Plead not against Love or Works of Love, upon Pretence of a Cross Interest of Learning, Knowledge, Gifts, Church-order, Discipline, &c. or any other Thing.*

IF Love be that which is most amiable in us to the God of Love, then as nothing in the world can excuse him that is without it, nor render him lovely indeed to God and man, so nothing must be made a pretence against it: and no pre-

tence will excuse that man, or that society that is against it. Even corrections and severities, when they must be used, must come from love, and be wholly ordered to the ends and interest of love. And when necessity calls for destructive executions, which tend not to the good of him that is executed, yet must they tend to the good of the community or of many, and come from a greater love than is due to one, or else that which otherwise would be laudable justice, is but cruelty: for the punishment of offenders is good and just, because tending to the common good, 'Debentur Reipublicæ,' the community have 'jus,' a right to them as a means to their good: so that it is love that is the amiableness of justice itself.

If any think that God's justice is a cross instance; let him consider, 1. That though the most public or common good be our end next the ultimate, yet the true ultimate end of all things, is God himself: and the love of God is the highest love: and God's justice is not without that love of himself, and tendeth to that good which he is capable of receiving; which is but the fulfilling or complacency of his own will, which is, but improperly, called his receiving. 2. And we little know how many in another world, or in the renewed earth, are to be profited by his justice on the damned, as angels and men are, by his justice on the devils.

1. LOVE is the life of religion, and of the soul, and of the church: and what can be a just pretence for any to destroy or oppose the very life of religion, the life of souls, and the life of the church of Christ? Physic, blood-letting and dismembering may be used for life; but to take away life, except necessarily for a good that is better than that life, is murder. And what is it that is better than the life of religion, in all matters of religion? Or than the life of the church, in all church-affairs? Or than the life of men's souls, in all matters of soul-concernment?

2. LOVE is the great command and summary of all the law: and what can be a just pretence for breaking the greatest command, yea, and the whole law?

3. LOVE is God's image; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, who is LOVE, and God in him: and what can be a pretence sufficient for destroying the image of God, which is called by his name?

4. There is nothing in man that God himself loveth better

than our love : and therefore nothing that as better can be set against it.

And yet, alas, what enmity is used in the world against the *Love* of God and man ! and many things alleged as pretences to justify it ! Let us consider of some few of them.

1. The great tyrants of the world, such as in several ages have been the plagues of their own and neighbour-nations, care not what havoc they make of religion, and of men's lives, by bloody wars, and cruel persecutions ! Destroying many thousands, and undoing far more thousands of the country-families where their armies come ; and sacrificing the lives of the best of their subjects by butcheries or flames ! And what is the pretence for all this ? Perhaps they would be lords of more of the world, and would have larger kingdoms, or more honour. Perhaps some prince hath spoken a hard word of them, or done them some wrong. Perhaps some subjects believe not, as they bid them believe ; or forbear not to worship God, in a manner which they forbid them. Perhaps Daniel will not give over praying for a time ; or the apostles will not give over preaching ; or the three confessors will not fall down to the golden image ; and so Nebuchadnezzar or the other rulers seem despised : and their wills and honour are an interest that with them seemeth to warrant all this. But how long will it seem so ? I had rather any friend of mine had the sins of a thief or drunkard, or the most infamous sinner among us to answer for, than the sins of a bloody Alexander, Cæsar or Tamerlane.

2. The Roman clergy set up inquisitions, force men by cruelties to submit to their church-keys, whose very nature is to be used without force ; and they silence, yea, torment the faithful ministers of Christ, and have murdered thousands of his faithful people, raised rebellions against princes, and wars in kingdoms : and taught men to hate God's servants, as heretics, schismatics, rebels, factious, and what not ? And what pretence must justify all this ? Why, the interest of the pope and clergy : called in ignorance, or craft, by the name of the *Holy Church, Religion, Unity*, and such other honourable names ! But must their church live on blood, and holy blood ; and be built or preserved by the destruction of Christ's church ? Must their doctrine be kept up, by silencing faithful ministers ; and their worship by destroying or undoing the true worshippers of Christ ?

Are all these precious things which die with love, no better than to be sacrificed to the clergy's pride and worldly lusts?

3. Among many schismatics and sectaries, that are not miscalled so, but are such indeed; their discipline consisteth in separating from most other Christians, as too bad (and that is, too unlovely) to be of their communion; and their preaching is much to make those seem bad, (that is, unlovely) that are not of their way. And their worship is much such as relisheth of the same envy and strife, to add affliction or reproaches to their brethren; or to draw the people from the love of others unto them: And their ordinary talk is backbiting others for things that they understand not; and reporting any lie that is brought them; and telling the hearers something of this minister, or that person, or the other that is unlovely; as if Satan had hired them to preach down love, and prate and pray down love; and all this in the name of Christ. And the third chapter of James is harder than Hebrew to them; they do not understand it; but though they tear it not out of the Bible, they leave it out of the law in their hearts, as much as the Papists leave the second commandment out of their books. And it is one of the marks of a good man among them, to talk against other parties, and make others odious, to set up them. And what are the pretences for all this? Why, Truth and Holiness. 1. Others have not the truth which they have. And 2. Others are not against the same doctrines and ceremonies, and bishops, and church-orders, and ways of worship, which they are against; and therefore are ungodly, anti-christian, or men of no religion.

But Truth seldom dwelleth with the enemies of love and peace. They that are strangers and enemies to it, indeed, do often cry it up, and cry down those as enemies to it, that possess it. The wisdom that hath bitter envying and heart-strife, is from beneath, and is earthly, sensual and devilish. I admonish all that care for their salvation, that they set up nothing upon love-killing terms. If you are Christ's disciples, you are taught of God to love each other, you are taught it as Christ's last and great commandment; you are taught it by the wonderful example of his life; and especially (John xiii. 14,) by his washing his disciples' feet. You are taught it by the Holy Ghost's uniting the hearts of the disciples, and making them by charity to live as in commu-

nity. (Acts iii ; iv.) You are taught it by the effective operation of the Spirit on your own hearts : the new nature that is in you, inclineth you to it. And will you now pretend the necessity of your own interest, reputation, your canons, and things indifferent ; your little church-orders of your own making, yea, or the positive institutions of Christ himself, as to the present exercise, against this love ? Hath Christ commanded you any thing before it, except the love of God ? You say, if such and such men be suffered, this and that disorder and inconvenience will follow : but is it a greater thing than love that you would maintain ? Is it a greater evil than the destruction of love, that you would avoid ? Did not Christ prefer mercy before Sabbath-rest, and before the avoiding familiarity with sinners ? Pretend nothing against love, that is not better than love !

Object. ‘ But what is this to the love of God, which the text speaketh of ?’

Answer. As God is here seen as in a glass, so is he loved. He that loveth not his brother whom he seeth daily, how shall he love God, whom he never saw ? He that saith he loveth God, and hateth his brother, is a liar ! What you do to his brethren you do as to Christ. If you can find as full a promise of salvation to those that observe your canons, ceremonies, orders, or are of your opinion and sect, as I can shew you for them that love Christ and his servants, then prefer the former before love.

I know that the love and good of church and state and of many must be preferred before the love and good of few. But take heed of their hypocrisy that make these also inconsistent when they are not ; and make public good and peace a mere pretence for their persecutions on one side, or their schisms on the other. Love is so amiable to nature itself, that few of its enemies oppose it but under pretence of its own interest and name : it is as in love to the church and to men’s souls that the Inquisition hath murdered so many, and the laws ‘ de hereticis comburendis ’ have been made and executed. But this burning, hanging, tormenting, and undoing kind of love, needeth very clear proof to make good its name and pretences, before impartial men will take it for love indeed. Whatever good you seem to do, by the detriment of love to God and man, you will find it will not bear your charges.

CHAP. XVIII.

Exhort. 4. *Bend all your Studies and Labours to the Exercise and Increase of Love, both of God and Man, and all good Works.*

THE greatest, best and sweetest work should have the greatest diligence. This great commandment must be obeyed with the greatest care. The work of love must be the work of our whole life: if you cannot learn to pray and preach, nor to follow a worldly trade, without study and much exercise, how think you to be proficients in the love of God without them? Do this well, and all is done. O happy souls that are habituated and daily exercised in this work: whose new nature, and life and study, and business, is holy love.

1. How Divine, how high and noble is this life; to live in a humble friendship with God and all his holy ones! All animals naturally love their like, and converse according to their love: and men as men have as much sociable love to men as the love of sin and inordinate self-love will allow them: and they that truly love God and holiness and saints, do shew that they have some connatural suitableness to these excellent objects of their love. Nothing more aptly denominateth any man divine and holy, than divine and holy love. How else should souls have communion with God? His common influx all creatures receive: in him all live, and move, and have their being; but when his love kindleth in us a reflecting love, this is felicity itself. Yea it is much nobler than our felicity; for though our felicity consist in loving God, and being beloved of him, yet it is a far more excellent thing, by reason that God is the object of our love, than by reason that it is our felicity: God's interest advanceth it more than ours: And though they are not separable, yet being distinguishable, we should love God far more as God, and perfect goodness in himself, than as he or this love is our own felicity.

2. This life of love is the true improvement of all God's doctrines, ordinances, mercies, afflictions, and other providences whatsoever! For the use of them all is to lead us up to holy love, and to help us in the daily exercise of it. What

is the Bible else written for, but to teach us to love and to exercise the fruits of love? What came Christ from heaven for, but to demonstrate and reveal God's love and loveliness to man, by reconciling us to God, and freely pardoning all our sins, and promising us both grace and glory, to shew us those motives which should kindle love, and to shew us that God is most suitable and worthy of our love, and to fill us with the Spirit of love, which may give us that which he commandeth us. What is it that we read books for, and hear sermons for, but to kindle and exercise holy love? What join we for in the sacred worship of the assemblies, but that in an united flame of holy love, we might all mount up in praise to Jehovah? What is the Lord's-day separated to, but the tidings of love, the sufferings, victories, and triumphs of our Saviour's love, the tastes and prospects of God's love to us, and the lively and joyful exercise of ours to him, and to each other? What use are the sacraments of, but that being entertained at the most wonderful feast of love, we should taste its sweetness, and pour out the grateful sense of it in holy thanksgiving and praise, and the exercise of uniting love to one another? What are church societies or combination for, but the loving communion of saints? which the primitive Christians expressed by selling all, and living in a community of love, and steadfastly continuing in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayer? What are all God's mercies for but that as by love-tokens we should taste that he is love and good, and should by that taste be inclined to returns of love? Nay, what are civil societies, but loving communions, if used according to their natures? Did they not love each other, so many bees would never hive and work together, nor so many pigeons dwell peaceably in one dove-house, nor fly together in so great flocks. What is the whole Christian faith for, but the doctrine of holy love believed, for the kindling and exercise of our love? What is faith itself but the bellows of love? What is the excellency of all good works, and gifts and endowments, but to be the exercises of love to God and man, and the incentives of our brethren's love? Without love all these are dead carcasses, and as nothing, and without it we ourselves are as nothing; yea though we give all that we have to the poor, or give our bodies like martyrs to be burnt, or could speak with the

tongue (the orthodoxy and elegancy) of angels, we were but "as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal." James knew what he said, when he said that "Faith without works is dead," because without love it is dead, which those works are but the body or the fruit of.

3. This life of love is the perfection of man's faculties as to their intended end and use. As all the operations of the lower faculties, vegetative and sensitive, are subordinate to the use and operations of the intellectual part, which is the higher, so all the acts of the intellect itself, are but subservient and dirigent to the will, or love and practice. The understanding is but the eye by which the soul seeth what to love and choose or refuse, and what to do or to avoid. Love is the highest act of our highest faculty; and complacency in the highest infinite good, is the highest of all the acts of love. This is the state of the soul in its ripeness and mellow sweetness, when it is delightful, embracing its most desired object, and is blessed in the fruition of its ultimate end. All other graces and duties are servants unto this. They are the parts indeed of the same new creature, but the hands and feet are not the heart.

4. For love is the very foretaste of heaven; the beginning of that felicity which shall there be perfect. In heaven all saints shall be as one; and all united to their glorious Head, as he is united to the Father, disparities allowed. (John xvii. 24.) And what more uniteth souls than love? Heaven is a state of joyful complacence; and what is that but perfect love? The heavenly work is perfect obedience and praise: and what are these but the actions and breath of love?

5. Therefore they that live this life of love, are fitter to die, and readier for heaven, than any others. Belief is a foresight of it; but love is a foretaste: the firstfruits, and our earnest and pledge. He that loveth God, and Christ, and angels, and saints, and perfect holiness, and divine praise, is ready for heaven, as the infant in the womb is ready for birth, at the fulness of his time: But other Christians, whose love is true, but little to their fears, and damped by darkness, and too much love of the body and this world, do go as it were by untimely birth to heaven; and those in whom the love of the body is predominant, come not thither, in that state at all. The God of grace and glory will meet that soul with his felicitating embracements,

who panteth and breatheth after him by love: and as love is a kind of union with the heavenly society, the angels who love us better than we love them, will be ready to convey such souls to God. As the living dwell not in the graves among the dead, and the dead are buried from among the living, so holy souls, who have this life of love, cannot be among the miserable in hell, nor the dead in sin among the blessed.

6. Therefore this life of holy love doth strengthen our belief itself. Strong reasons that are brought for the immortality of souls, and the future glory, are usually lost upon unsanctified hearers, yea with the doctors themselves that use them: When they have persuaded others that there is a heaven for believers, and that by arguments in themselves unanswerable, they have not persuaded their own hearts; but the predominant love of flesh and earth doth bias their understandings, and maketh them think that they can confute themselves. Their gust and inclination prevaieth against belief: and therefore the greatest scholars are not always the strongest believers. But holy love, when it is the habit of the soul, as it naturally ascendeth, so it easily believeth that God, that glory to which it doth ascend. The gust and experience of such a soul assureth it that it was made for communion with God, and that even in this life such communion is obtained in some degree; and therefore it easily believeth that it is redeemed for it, and that it shall perfectly enjoy it in heaven for ever. Though glory be here but seminally in grace, and this world be but as the womb of that better world for which we hope, yet the life that is in the embryo and seed, is a confirming argument of the perfection which they tend to. O that men knew what holy love doth signify and foretel! As the seed or embryo of a man becometh not a beast or serpent; so he that hath the habitual love of God, and heaven, and holiness is not capable of hell, no more than the lovers of worldliness and sensuality are capable of present communion with God, and of his glory. God doth not draw men's hearts to himself, nor kindle heavenly desires in them in vain. He that hath the Spirit of Christ, hath the witness in himself, that Christ and his promises of life are true. (1 John v. 10—12.) And what is this Spirit but the habit of divine and heavenly love, and its concomitants? May I but feel my soul inflamed with the fervent love of the heavenly perfection, surely it will do

more to put me quite out of doubt of the certainty of that blessed state, than all arguments without that love can do.

7. And holy love will be the surest evidence of our sincerity; which many old writers meant, that called it, 'The form of faith and other graces :' as means, as means, are informed by their aptitudinal respect unto the end; so love, as it is the final act upon God the final object, thus informeth all subordinate graces and duties as they are means. And as all morality is subjected in the will as the proper primary seat, and is in the intellect, executive power, and senses only by participation, so far as their acts are imperate by will; so love and volition being really the same thing, it may accordingly be said, that nothing is any further acceptable to God, than it is good; and nothing is morally good any further than it is voluntary or willed; and to be willed (as good, as end, or as means) and to be loved, are words that signify the same. No preaching, praying, fasting, &c., no fear of punishment, no belief of the truth, &c., will prove us sincere and justified, any further than we can prove, that all this either cometh from, or is accompanied with love, that is, with a consenting will. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. x.) And, "If thou believe with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized," saith Philip to the Eunuch. (Acts viii.) "My son, give me thy heart," is Wisdom's invitation. All is nothing without the heart, that is, without willingness or love. They that love most are more surely forgiven, and have most holiness or grace, how unskilful soever they may be in their expressions. The sealing Spirit of Adoption is the Spirit of love, and the Abba, Father, and the unexpressed groans of filial love are understood and acceptable to God. A loving desire after God and holiness, is a better evidence than the most taking tongue, or largest knowledge.

8. This life of holy love will make all our religion and obedience easy to us; it will give us an alacrity to the performance, and a pleasure in the practice of it; and so our obedience will be hearty, willing, and universal. Who is averse to that which he loveth, unless for something in it which he hateth? All men go willingly and readily to that which they truly love. Therefore it is said that the law is not made for a righteous man; that is, a man that loveth piety, temperance and justice, and their several works, so

far hath no need of threatening laws and penalties to constrain him to it : and he that hateth sin, so far hath no need of legal penalties to restrain him from it. Thus the law is said to be "written in our hearts ;" not as it is merely in our knowledge and memory, but as the matter commanded is truly loved by us, and the sin forbidden truly hated. Even our horses will carry us cheerfully that way which they love to go, and go heavily where they go against their wills. Win men's love, and the life, and lips, and all (according to power) will follow it.

9. And such persons therefore are most likely to persevere : men go unweariedly, if they be but able, where they go with love. Especially such a love which groweth stronger as it draweth nearer the state of perfection which it loveth ; and groweth by daily renewed experiences and mercies, as rivers grow bigger as they draw nearer to the sea. We easily hold on in that we love ; but that which men loathe, and their hearts are against, they are quickly weary of : and the weary person will easily be persuaded to lie down. The root or apostacy is already in those persons, who love not the end which they pretend to seek, nor the work which they pretend to do.

10. Lastly, holy love is a pregnant, spreading, fruitful grace : it kindleth a desire to do good to others, and to draw men to love the same God, and heaven, and holiness which we love. It made God's Word to be to Jeremiah as a "burning fire shut up in his bones, he was weary of forbearing." (Jer. xx. 9.) As a fire kindleth fire, and is the active principle of vegetation, as I suppose, so love kindleth love, and is a kind of generative principle of grace. God's love is the first cause ; but man's love maketh them meet instruments of God's love : for love will be often praising the God and holiness which is loved ; and earnestly desireth that all others may love and praise the same. The soul is not indeed converted, till its love is won to God and goodness : a man may be terrified into some austerities, superstitions, or reformations, but he is not further holy than his heart is won. And as every thing that generateth is apt to produce its like, so is love, and the words and works of love. And as love is the heart of holiness, so must it be of all fruitful preaching and conversation ; whatever the words or actions are, they are likely no farther to win souls, than they de-

monstrate the love of God, and of holiness, and of the hearers or spectators. As among amorous and vain persons, strong love, appearing, though by a look or word, doth kindle the like more than all compliments that are known to be but feigned and affected words; so usually souls are won to God, as by the preacher's words and works of love, the love and loveliness of God in Christ, are more fully made known.

Quest. 'But how should we reach this excellent life of holy love, which doth so far excel all knowledge?'

Ans. I have said so much of this in the first part of my "Christian Directory," and other writings, that I must here say but little of it, lest I be overmuch guilty of repetitions. Briefly,

Direct. 1. Believe God's goodness to be equal to his greatness. God's three great primary attributes are coequal, viz. his power, his wisdom, and his goodness: and then look up to the heavens, and think how great and powerful is that God that made and continueth such a frame, as that sun, and those stars, and those glorious unmeasurable regions where they are: think what a world of creatures God maintaineth in life, on this lower orb of earth, both in the seas, and on the land. And then think, O what is the goodness which is equal to all this power!

Direct. 2. 'Consider how communicative this Infinite Goodness is: why else is he called LOVE itself?' Why else made he all the world? and why did he make the sun so glorious? why else did he animate and beautify the universe, with the life and ornaments of created goodness? All his works shine by the splendour of that excellency which he hath put upon them; all are not equal, but all are good, and their inequality belongeth to the goodness of the universe. The communicative nature with which God hath endowed all active beings, (and the most noble most) is an impress of the infinite communicative LOVE. Fire would communicate its light, heat and motion, to all passive objects which are capable of receiving it: how pregnant and fertile is the very earth with plants, flowers and fruits of wonderful variety, usefulness and beauty! what plant is not natured to the propagation of its kind, yea, to a plenteous multiplication? How many seeds, which are virtual plants, doth each of them bring forth at once; and yet the same

plant, with all its offspring, perhaps liveth many years for further multiplication: so that did not the far greater part of seeds yearly perish, there must be very many such earths to receive and propagate them: this earth hath not room for the hundredth part: To shew us that the active natures even of vegetatives, do quite exceed in their pregnant communicative activity, the receptive capacity of all passive matter; which teacheth us to observe that all created patients are inconceivably too narrow to receive such communicative influences, as Infinite pregnant LOVE can communicate, were there subjects to receive them.

It is wonderful to observe in all sorts of animals, the same multiplying communicative inclination; and what use the God of nature maketh even of sensual LOVE to all generation! Uniting and communicative LOVE is in all creatures the incentive principle of procreation. And what a multitude of young ones will some one creature procreate, especially fishes to admiration! so that if other fishes, with men and other creatures, did not devour them, all the waters on earth could not contain them.

Yea, our moral communicativeness also hath the same indication: He that knoweth much, would fain have others know the same; secret knowledge kept to ourselves only hath its excellent use; but it satisfieth not the mind, 'nisi te scire hoc sciat alter,' unless others know that you have such knowledge, and unless you can make them know what you know: Holy souls therefore have a fervent, but a regular desire, and endeavour by communicative teaching to make others wise: but proud, heretical persons, that overvalue their conceits, have an irregular, fornicating lust of teaching, and adulterously invade the charge of others, presuming that none can do it so wisely and so well as they. Men "will compass sea and land to make a proselyte;" and tares and weeds are as much inclined to propagation as the wheat. There is a marvellous desire in the nature of man, to make others of their own opinion; and when it is governed by God's laws, it is greatly beneficial to the world.

And even in affections, as well as knowledge, it is so: we would have others love those that we love, and hate what we hate. Though where, by the insufficiency of the narrow creature, men must lose and want that themselves, which

they communicate to others, selfishness forbiddeth such communication.

And doubtless all the creatures in their several ranks, have some such impresses from the Creator, by which his transcendent perfections may be somewhat observed. That God is now so communicative as to give all creatures in the world, whatever being, motion, life, order, beauty, harmony, reason, grace, glory, any of them possess, is past all question to considering, sober reason. Which tempted Aristotle to think that the world was eternal, and some Christians to think that though this present heaven and earth were created, as in Genesis i. is said, yet that from eternity some intellectual world at least, if not also corporeal, did flow from the Creator as an eternal effect of an eternal cause; or an eternal accident of the Deity: because they could not receive it, that a God so unspeakably communicative now (who hath made the sun to be an emblem of his communicativeness), should from all eternity be solitary and not communicative, when yet to all eternity he will be so. But these are questions which incapable mortals were far better let alone than meddle with, unless we desire rather to be lost than to be blessed in the abyss of eternity, and the thoughts of Infinite pregnant LOVE.

But it is so natural for man and every animal to love that love and goodness which is beneficent, (not only to us, but to all) rather than a mere self-love, that doth no good to others, that it must needs conduce much to our love of God, to consider that "he is good to all, and his mercy is over all his works;" and that as there is no light in the air but from the sun, so there is no goodness but from God in all the world, who is more to the creation than the sun is to this lower world. And a sun that lighteth all the earth, is much more precious than my candle: a Nile which watereth the land of Egypt, is more precious than a private well; it is the excellency of kings and public persons, that if they are good, they are good to many: and O what innumerable animals in sea and land, besides the far greater worlds of nobler wights do continually love! Study this Universal, Infinite Love.

Direct. 3. Especially study Divine love and goodness in the face of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, and all the grace

which he hath purchased and conferreth. As we may see that magnitude of the stars in a telescope, which without it no eye can discern; so may we see that glory of the love of God by the Gospel of Jesus, which all common natural helps are insufficient to discover to such minds as ours. Love is the great attribute which Christ came principally to manifest, as was aforesaid. (John iii. 16; 1 John iii. 1, &c.) And love is the great lesson which he came to teach us; and love is the new nature which by his Spirit he giveth us. And love is the great duty, which by law and gospel he requireth of us. Love hath wrought its miracles in Christ to the posing of the understandings of men and angels. There we may see God in the nearest condescending unity with man: in Christ we may see the Divine wisdom and word incorporate in such flesh as ours, conceived in a virgin by the power of the Spirit of Love; by which Spirit this incorporate Word did live, preach, converse familiarly with man; work miracles, heal diseases, suffer reproachful calumnies and death; rising, triumphing, ascending, interceding, sending the embassies of love to the world, calling home the greatest sinners unto God, reconciling enemies, and making them the adopted sons of God, forgiving all sin to penitent believers, quickening dead souls, illuminating the blind, and sanctifying the wicked by the Spirit of life, and light, and love; and making it his office, his work, his delight and glory, to rescue the miserable captives of the devil, and to make heirs of heaven of those that were condemned to hell, and had forsaken life in forsaking God. As this is shining, burning love, so it is approaching and self-applying love; which cometh so near us, in ways and benefits so necessary to us, and so exceeding congruous to our case, as that it is easier for us to perceive and feel it, than we can do things of greater distance. The clearer the eye of faith is, by which we look into this mysterious glass, the more the wonders of love will be perceived in it. He never knew Christ, nor understood the Gospel, that wondered not at redeeming, saving love; nor did he ever learn of Christ indeed, that hath not learned the lesson, work and life of love.

Direct. 4. Keep as full records as you can of the particular mercies of God to yourselves; and frequently peruse them, and plead them with your frozen hearts.

These are not the chief reasons of Christian love; be-

cause we are such poor inconsiderable worms, that to do good to one of us, is a far smaller matter, than many things else that we have to think of for that end. But yet when love doth choose a particular person for its object, and there bestow its obliging gifts, it helpeth that person far more than others to returns of thankfulness and love: it is that place, that glass which the sun doth shine upon, doth reflect its beams, rather than those that are shut up in darkness. Self-love may and must be regulated and sanctified, to the furthering of higher love. It is not unmeet to say with David, (Psal. cxvi. 1,) "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." We should say as heartily, I love the Lord because he hath prospered, recovered, comforted my neighbour: but this is not all so easy as the other. And where God by personal application maketh our greatest duty easy, we should use his helps.

Object. 'But if it be selfishness as some tell us, to love one that loveth us, better than another of equal worth, who doth not love us, is it not selfishness to love God on so low an account as loving us? God may say well, "I love those that love me," (Prov. viii. 17,) because to love him is highest virtue, but to love us is as inconsiderable as we are.

Ans. 1. You may love another the more for loving you, on several accounts. 1. As it is a duty which God requireth him to perform (but so you must love him equally for loving others also). 2. As he rendereth himself more congruous and obliging to you, by choosing you for the special object of his love, by which he taketh the advantage of your natural self-love, to make your love to him both due and easy, as it is said of the reflection of the sun-beams before.

2. But two things you must take heed of, 1. That you undervalue not your neighbour's good, but love another for loving your neighbours also, and doing them good; and he that arriveth at that impartial unity as to make the smallest difference between his neighbour and himself, doth seem to me to be arrived at the state that is most like theirs that are one in heaven. 2. And you must not over-love any man by a fond partiality for his love to you; as if that made a bad man good, or fitter for your love: they that can love the worst that love them, and cannot love the best that set light by them (deservedly, or upon mistake), do shew that self-love overcometh the love of God. But God can-

not be loved too much, though he may be loved too selfishly and carnally. His greatest amiableness is his essential goodness and infinite perfection: the next is his glory shining in the universe, and so in the heavenly society, especially Christ and all his holy ones; and so in the public blessings of the world, and all societies. And next his goodness to yourselves, not only as parts of the said societies, but as persons, whose natures are formed by God himself, to a capacity of receiving and reflecting love.

Who findeth not by experience that God is most loved, when we are most sensible of his former love to us, in the thankful review of all his mercies, and most assured or persuaded of his future love in our salvation? Therefore make the renewed commemoration of God's mercies, the incentives of your love.

Direct. 5. 'But yet could you get a greater union and communion not only with saints as saints, but with mankind as men, it would greatly help you in your love to God: for when you love your neighbours as yourselves, you would love God for your neighbour's mercies, as well as for your own. And if you feel that God's love and special mercies to one person, even yourselves, can do so much in causing your love, what would your love amount to, if thousand thousands of persons to whom God sheweth mercy, were every one to you as yourselves, and all their mercies as your own? Thus graces mutually help each other. We love man, because we love God; and we love God the more for our love to man.

Direct. 6. Especially dwell by faith in heaven where love is perfect, and there you will learn more of the work of love. To think believingly that mutual love is heaven itself, and that this is our union with God, and Christ, and all the holy ones, and that love will be an everlasting employment, pleasure and felicity, this will breed in us a desire to begin that happy life on earth. And as he that heareth excellent music will long to draw near, and join in the concert or the pleasure; so he that by faith doth dwell much in heaven, and hear how angels and blessed souls do there praise God in the highest fervours of rejoicing love, will be inclined to imitate them, and long to partake of their felicity.

Direct. 7. Exercise that measure of love which you have in the constant praises of the God of love. For exercise ex-

citeth, and naturally tendeth to increase, and praise is the duty in which pure love to God above ourselves and all, even as good and perfect in himself, is exercised. As love is the highest grace, or inward duty; so is praise the highest outward duty, when God is praised both by tongue and life. And as soul and body make one man, of whose existence generation is the cause; so love and praise, of mouth and works, do make one saint, who is regenerated such by believing in the Redeemer, who hath power to give the Spirit of holiness to whom he pleaseth. But of this more afterwards.

Direct. 8. Exercise your love to man, especially to saints, in doing them all the good you can; and that for what of God is in them. For as this is the fruit of the love of God, and the evidence of it; so doth it tend to the increase of its cause: partly as it is an exercise of it, and partly as it is a duty which God hath promised to reward. As it is the Spirit of Christ, even of adoption, which worketh both the love of our Father, and our brethren in us; so God will bless those that exercise love, especially at the dearest rates, and with the fullest devotedness of all to God, with the larger measures of the same Spirit.

CHAP. XIX.

Exhort. 5. Place your Comforts in Health and Sickness in Mutual Divine love. 2. See that you sincerely love God. How known? Doubts answered.

It is of the greatest importance to all mankind, to know what is best for them, and in what they should place and seek their comforts: to place them most with the proud, in the applauding thoughts or words of others, that magnify them for their wit, their beauty, their wealth, or their pomp and power in the world, is to choose somewhat less than a shadow for felicity, and to live on the air, even an unconstant air. And will such a life be long or happy? Should not a man in misery rather take it for a stinging, deriding mockery or abuse, to be honoured and praised for that which he hath not, or for that which is his snare, or consisteth with his calamity? Would not a malefactor at the gallows take it for his reproach to hear an oration of his happiness? Will

it comfort them in hell to be praised on earth? This common reason may easily call, an empty vanity.

To place our comforts in the delights of sensuality, had somewhat a fairer show of reason, if reason were made for nothing better; and if these were the noble sort of pleasures that advanced man above the brutes; and if they would continue for ever, and the end of such mirth were not heaviness and repentance, and they did not deprave and deceive men's souls, and leave behind them disappointment and a sting. But he is unworthy the honour and pleasures of humanity, who preferreth the pleasures of a beast, when he may have better.

To place our comforts in those riches which do but serve this sensuality with provisions, and leave posterity in as vain and dangerous a state as their progenitors were, is but the foresaid folly aggravated.

To place them in domination, and having our wills on others, and being able to do hurt, and exercise revenge, is but to account the devils happier than men, and to desire to be as the wolf among the sheep, or as the kite among the chickens, or as the great dogs among the little ones.

To place them in much knowledge of arts and sciences, as they concern only the interests of the body in this life; or as knowledge is but the delight of the natural fantasy or mind, doth seem a little finer, and sublime, and manly; but it is of the same nature and vanity as the rest. For all knowledge is for the guidance of the will and practice; and therefore mere knowing matters that tend to pride, sensuality, wealth, or domination, is less than the enjoyment of sensual pleasures in the things themselves. And the contemplation of superior creatures, which hath no other end than the delight of knowing, is but a more refined sort of vanity, and like the mind's activity in a dream.

But whether it be the knowledge or the love of God, that man should place his highest felicity in, is become among the schoolmen and some other divines, a controversy that seemeth somewhat hard. But indeed to a considering man, the seeming difficulty may be easily overcome: the understanding and will and executive activity, are not several souls, but several faculties of one soul; and their objects and order of operation easily tell us, which is the first, and which the last which tendeth to the other as its end, and which object is the most delightful and most felicitating to

the man, viz. That truth is for goodness, and that good as good is the amiable, delectable and felicitating object ; and therefore that the intellect is the guide of the will, and faith and knowledge are for love and its delight. And yet that man's felicity is in both, and not one alone, as one faculty alone is not the whole soul, though it be the whole soul that acteth upon that faculty. Therefore the latter schoolmen have many of them well confuted Aquinas in this point.

And it is of great importance to our Christian practice. As the desire of more knowledge first corrupted our nature, so corrupted nature, is much more easily drawn to seek after knowledge than after love. Many men are bookish that cannot endure to be saints : many men spend their lives in the studies of nature and theology, and delight to find increase of knowledge, who are strangers to the sanctifying, uniting, delightful exercise of holy love. Appetite is the ' *pondus*' or first spring of our moral actions, yea and of our natural, though the sense and intellect intromit or illuminate the object. And the first act of natural appetite, sensitive and intellectual, is necessitated. And accordingly the appetite as pleased is as much the end of our acts and objects, as the appetite as desiring is the beginning : even as (' *si parvis magna,*' &c.) God's will as efficient is the absolutely first cause, and his will as done and pleased is the ultimate end of all things. It is love by which man cleaveth unto God as good, and as our ultimate end. Love ever supposeth knowledge ; and is its end and perfection. Neither alone, but both together are man's highest state ; knowledge as discerning what is to be loved, and love as our uniting and delighting adherence to it.

1. Labour therefore with all your industry, to know God that you may love him ; it is that love that must be your comforting grace, both by signification, and by its proper effective exercise. 1. True love will prove that your knowledge and faith are true and saving, which you will never be sure of, without the evidence of this and the consequent effects. If your expressive art or gifts be never so low, so that you scarcely know what to say to God or man, yet if you so far know God as sincerely to love him, it is certainly true saving knowledge, and that which is the beginning of eternal life. Knowledge, belief, repentance, humility meekness, patience, zeal, diligence, &c. are so far and

no further sure marks of salvation, as they cause or prove true love to God and man, predominant. It is a hard thing any otherwise to know whether our knowledge, repentance, patience, zeal, or any of the rest be any better than what an unjustified person may attain: But if you can find that they cause or come from, or accompany a sincere love of God, you may be sure that they all partake of sincerity, and are certain signs of a justified soul. It is hard to know what sins for number, or nature, or magnitude, are such as may or may not consist with a state of saving grace. He that considereth of the sins of Lot, David, Solomon, and Peter, will find the case exceeding difficult: But this much is sure, that so much sin may consist with a justified state, as may consist with sincere love to God and goodness. While a man truly loveth God above all, his sin may cause correction but not damnation; unless it could extinguish or overcome this love. Some question whether that the sin of Lot or David, for the present stood with justification: If it excused not predominant habitual love, it intercepteth not justification: If we could tell whether any or many heathens that hear not of Christ, have the true love of God and holiness, we might know whether they are saved.

The reason is, because that the will is the man in God's account; and as voluntariness is essential to sin, so a holy will doth prove a holy person. God hath the heart of him that loveth him. He that loveth him would fain please him, glorify him, and enjoy him: and he that loveth holiness would fain live a holy life.

Therefore it is that divines say here, that desire of grace is a certain sign of grace, because it is an act of will and love. And it is true, if that desire be greater or more powerful than our averseness, and than our desire after contrary things, that so it may put us on our necessary duty, and overcome the lusts and temptations which oppose them: though cold wishes which are conquered by greater unwillingness and prevailing lusts, will never save men.

2. And as love is our more comforting evidence, so it is our most comforting exercise. Those acts of religion which come short of this, come short of the proper life and sweetness of true religion. They are but either lightnings in the brain that have no heat; or a feverish zeal, which destroyeth or troubleth, but doth not perform the acts of life; or else

even where love is true, but little, and oppressed by fears, and grief and trouble; it is like fire in green wood, or like young green fruits, which is not come to mellow ripeness. Love of vanity is disappointing, unsatisfactory and tormenting: most of the calamities of this life proceed from creature-love. The greatest tormentor in this world, is the inordinate love of life; and the next, is the love of pleasures and accommodations of life: which cause so much care to get and keep, and so much fear of losing, and grief for our losses, especially fear of dying; that were it not for this, our lives would be much easier to us (as they are to the fearless sort of brutes). And the next tormenting affection is the love of children, which prepareth men for all the calamity that followeth their miscarriages in soul and body: their unnatural ingratitude, their lewdness and debauchery, and prodigality, their folly and impiety would nothing so much torment us, were they no more loved than other men. And our dearest friends do usually cost us much dearer than our sharpest enemies. But the love of God and satisfying everlasting good, is our very life, our pleasure, our heaven on earth. As it is purest and highest, above all other because of the object, so is it yet more pleasant and contenting; because it includeth the hopes of more, even of those greater delights of heavenly, everlasting love, which, as a pledge and earnest, it doth presignify. As in nature, conception and the stirring of the child in the womb, do signify that same life is begun, which must shortly appear and be exercised in the open world; so the stirrings of holy love and desires towards God, do signify the beginning of the heavenly life.

Humility and patience, and diligent obedience, do comfort us by way of evidence, and as removing many hindrances of our comfort; and somewhat further, they go. But faith, hope, and love, do comfort us by way of direct efficiency: faith seeth the matter of our joy; love first tasteth it, so far as to stir up desires after it; then hope giveth some pleasure to us in expecting it. And lastly complacential love delightfully embraceth it, and is our very joy itself, and is that blessed union with God and holy souls, the amiable objects of true love, which is our felicity itself. To work out our comforts by the view of evidences and signs, is a necessary thing indeed: but it requireth a considerate search, by an

understanding and composed mind; and it is often much hindered and interrupted by men's ignorance of themselves, and weakness of grace, and darkness or smallness of evidence, and divers passions, especially fear; (which in some is so tyrannical, that it will not suffer them to believe or feel any thing that is comfortable.) But love taketh in the sweetness of that good which is its object, by a nearer and effectual way, even by immediate taste: As we feel in the exercise of our love to a dear friend, or any thing that is amiable and enjoyed.

The readiest and surest way, therefore, to a contented and comfortable life, is, (to keep clear indeed our evidence, especially sincere obedience, but) especially to bend all our studies and religious endeavours, to the kindling and exercise of holy love; and to avoid all (though it may come on religious pretence of humiliation or fear,) which tendeth to quench or hinder it.

I. In health and prosperity, as you live upon God's love, be sure that you do not atheistically overlook it, but take all as from it, and savouring of it. The hand of Divine love perfumeth each mercy with the pleasant odour of itself, which it reacheth to us: every bit that we eat is a love-token; and every hour or minute that we live: all our health, wealth, friends and peace are the streams which still flow from the spring of unexhausted love. Love shineth upon us by the sun; love maketh our land fruitful, our cattle useful, our habitations convenient for us, our garments warm, our food pleasant and nourishing: Love keepeth us from a thousand unknown dangers night and day; it giveth us the comforts of our callings, our company, our books, our lawful recreations: it blesseth means of knowledge to our understandings, and means of holiness to our will, and means of health and strength to our bodies. Mercies are sanctified to us, when we taste God's love in them, and love him for them, and are led up by them to himself; and so love him ultimately for himself, even for his infinite essential goodness. As God is the efficient life of our mercies, and all the world (without his love, could never give us what we have; so is God's love the objective life of all our mercies, and love them but as such, if we love not in them the love that giveth them.

II. And even in adversity, and pain, and sickness, whilst

God's love is unchanged, and is but changing the way of doing good, our thoughts of it should be unchanged also. We must not think that the sun is lost when it is set, or clouded: we live by its influence in the night, though we see not its light, unless as reflected from the moon. Our mothers brought us into the world in sorrow; and yet they justly accounted it a mercy that we were born: our lives are spent in the midst of sorrows, and yet it is a mercy that we live; and though we die by dolour, all is still mercy to believers, which faith perceiveth contrary to sense. And here is the greatest and final victory which faith obtaineth against the flesh, to believe even the ruin of it to be for our good. Even Antonine the emperor could say, that it was the same good God, who is the cause of our birth and of our death; one as well as the other is his work, and therefore good: it was not a tyrant that made us, and it is not a tyrant that dissolveth us. And that is the best man, and the best will, which is most pleased with the will of God, because it is his will. Yet just self-love is here a true coadjutor of our joy; for it is the will of God, that the justified be glorified: and Infinite Love is saving us, when it seemeth to destroy us.

To live upon the comforts of Divine love in sickness, and when death approacheth; is a sign that it is not the welfare of the body that we most esteem; and that we rejoice not in God only as the preserver and prosperer of our flesh, but for himself and the blessings of immortality.

It is a mercy indeed, which a dying man must with thankfulness acknowledge, if God have given him a clear understanding of the excellent mysteries of salvation. Knowledge, as it kindleth and promoteth love, is a precious gift of grace, and is with pleasure exercised, and may with pleasure be acknowledged. But all other knowledge is like the vanities of this world, which approaching death doth take down our esteem of, and causeth us to number it with other forsaking and forsaken things. All the unsanctified learning and knowledge in the world, will afford no solid peace at death; but rather aggravate nature's sorrows, to think that this also must be left. But love and its comforts, if not hindered by ignorance or some strong temptation, do then shew their immortal nature: and even here we feel the words of the apostle verified, of the vanishing nature of knowledge, and the perpetuity of holy love; whilst all our learning and

knowledge will not give so much comfort to a dying man, as one act of true love to God, and holiness kindled in us by the communion of his love. Make it therefore the work of your religion and the work of your whole lives, to possess your minds with the liveliest sense of the infinite goodness and amiableness of God, and hereby to live in the constant exercise of love.

III. And though some men hinder love, by an over-fearful questioning whether they have it, or not; and spend their time in doubting and complaining that they have it not, which they should spend in exciting and exercising it; yet reason requireth us to take heed lest a carnal mind deceive us with any counterfeits of holy love. Of which I having written more in my "Christian Directory," I shall here give you but these brief instructions following.

It is here of grand importance, I. To have a true conception of God as he must be loved. II. And then to know practically how it is that love must be exercised towards him.

I. GOD must be conceived at once, both 1. As in his essence. 2. And as in his relations to the world, and to ourselves. 3. And as in his works. And those that will separate these, and while they fix only on one of them, leave out the other, do not indeed love God as God, and as he must be loved.

1. To think in general, that there is an Infinite Eternal Spirit of Life, Light and Love; and not to think of him as related to the world as its Creator, Preserver, and Governor; nor as related to us and to mankind as our Owner, Ruler and Benefactor; is not to think of him as a God to us, or to any but himself: and a love thus exercised, cannot be true saving love.

2. And because his relations to us result from his works, either which he hath done already, or which he will do hereafter; therefore without the knowledge of his works, and their goodness, we cannot truly know and love God in his relations to us.

3. And yet when we know his works, we know but the medium, or that in which he himself is made known to us: and if by them we come not to know him, and to love him in his perfect essence; it is not God that we know and love. And if we knew him only as related to us and the world, (as that he is our Creator, Owner, Mover, Ruler and Benefactor;)

and yet know not what he is in his essence, that is thus related; (viz. that he is the Perfect, First Being, Life, Wisdom and Love;) this were not truly to know and love him as he is God. These conceptions therefore must be conjunct.

God is nowhere known to us, but by the revelation of his works and word; nor can we conceive of him, but by the similitude of some of his works. Not that we must think that he is just such as they, or picture him like a creature; for he is infinitely above them all: but yet it is certain that he hath made some impressions of his perfections upon his works; and on some of them so clear, as that they are called his image.

Nothing is known to us, but either, 1. By sense immediately perceiving things external, and representing them to the fantasy and intellect. Or, 2. By the intellect's own conceiving of other things by the similitude of things sensed. 3. Or by immediate internal intuition or sensation of the acts of the soul in itself. 4. Or by reason's collection of the nature of other things, from the similitude and effect of such perceived operations.

I. By the external senses we perceive all external sensed things, and we imagine and know them as so perceived.

II. By the intellection of these, we conceive of other things as like them; forming universal conceptions, and applying them to such individuals as are beyond the reach of our senses. (As we think of men, trees, beasts, fishes, &c., in the Indies, as like those which we have seen; and of sounds there, as like those which we have heard; and of the taste of fruits, by the similitude of such as we have tasted, &c.)

III. How sense itself, intellection itself, volition itself, and internal affections are perceived, is no small controversy among philosophers. That we do perceive them, by the great wisdom and goodness of our Creator, we are sure; but how we do it, we can scarcely describe; as knowing it better by the experience of that perception itself, than by a knowledge of the causes, and nature of the acts. It is most commonly said, that the intellect knoweth its own acts by reflection, or, as Ockham, by intuition: and that it knoweth what sense is, and what volition, by some species or image of them in the fantasy which it beholdeth. But such words give no man a true knowledge of the thing inquired of, unless withal he read the solution experimentally in his own soul. I know not what the meaning of a reflect act is: is it

the same act which is called direct and reflect? and doth the intellect know, that it knoweth by the very same act, by which it knoweth other things? If so, why is it called reflect; and what is that reflection? But the contrary is commonly said, that divers objects make divers acts; and therefore to know *e.g.* that this is paper, and to know that I know this, are two acts, and the latter is a reflecting of the former. But the former act is gone, and nothing in the instant that it is done; and therefore is in itself no intelligible object of a reflecting act: But, as remembered, it may be known; or rather, that remembering is knowing what is past, by a marvellous retention of some impress of it, which no man can well comprehend, so as to give an account of it. And why may not the same memory, which retaineth the unexpressible record of an act past an hour or many years ago, be also the book where the intellect readeth its own act as past immediately in the foregoing instance? But surely this is not the first knowing that we know. Before the act of memory, the intellect immediately perceiveth its own particular acts; and so doth the sense. By one and the same act, we see, and perceive that we see; and by one and the same act, I think, we know, and know that we know; and this by a consciousness or internal sense, which is the immediate act of the essence of the faculty: and choose whether you will say that such two objects may constitute one act; or whether you will say, that the latter (the act itself) is not properly to be called an object. For the various senses of the word object, must be considered in the decision of that. Man's soul is God's image: when God knoweth himself and his own knowledge, and when he willeth or loveth himself and his own will or love; here we must either say, that himself, his knowledge and will, is not properly to be called an object; or else that the object and the act are purely the same, without the least real difference; but we name them differently, as inadequate conceptions of one being: and why may it not be so in a lower sort in the soul that is God's image? that is, that the understanding's most internal act, viz. the knowing or perceiving when it knoweth any thing that it knoweth. It is not really compounded of an act and an object (as the knowledge of distinct objects is); but that either its act is not properly to be called its object, or that

act and object are not two things, but two inadequate conceptions of one thing.

And how doth the soul perceive its own volitions? To say that volitions, which are acts of the intellectual soul, must be sensate, and so make a species on the fantasy, as sensate things do, and be known only in that species, is to bring down the higher faculty, and subordinate it to the lower, that it may be intelligible; while it is certain that we shall never here perfectly understand the solution of these difficulties, is it not pardonable, among other men's conjectures, to say, that the noble faculty of sense (because brutes have it) is usually too basely described by philosophers? And that intellection and volition in the rational soul are a superior, eminent sort of sensation, transcending that of brutes; and that 'intelligere et velle' are 'eminenter sentire;' and that the intellect doth by understanding other things eminently see or sense, and so understand that it understandeth: and that the will doth by willing feel that it willeth: when I consult my experience, I must either say thus, or else that intellection and volition so immediately ever move the internal sense, that they are known by us only as acts compounded with that sense.

But I am gone too far before I was aware.

IV. The soul thus knowing or feeling its own acts, doth in the next place rationally gather, 1. That it hath power to perform them, and is a substance so empowered. 2. That there are other such substances with the like acts. 3. And there is one prime transcendent substance, which is the cause of all the rest which hath infinitely nobler acts than ours.

And thus sense and reason concur to our knowledge of God, by shewing us, and perceiving that image in which by similitude we must know him. The fiery, ethereal or solar nature is (at least) the similitude of spirits: and by condescending similitude, God in Scripture is called LIGHT, and the FATHER of LIGHTS, in whom is no darkness, allowing and inviting us to think of his glory by the similitude of the sun or light. But intellectual spirits are the highest nature known to us, and these we know intimately by most near perception; by the similitude of these therefore we must conceive of God.

A soul is a self-moving life or vital substance, actuating the body to which it is united. God is super-eminently essential life, perfect in himself, as living infinitely and eternally, and giving being to all that is, and motion to all that moveth, and life to all that liveth.

A reasonable soul is essentially an understanding power : and God is super-eminently an infinite understanding, knowing himself and all things perfectly.

A reasonable soul is essentially a rational appetite or will, necessarily loving himself, and all that is apprehended every way, and congruously good. God is super-eminently an infinite will or love, necessarily loving himself; and his own image, which yet he freely made by communicative love.

All things that were made by this Infinite Goodness, were made good and very good. All his works of creation and providence (however misconceived of by sinners) are still very good. All the good of the whole creation is as the heat of this Infinite, Eternal Fire of Love. And having made the world good, in the good of nature, and the good of order, and the good of mutual love, he doth by his continual influx maintain and perfect it. His power moveth, his wisdom governeth, and his love felicitateth. And man he moveth as man, he ruleth him by moral laws as man; and he is his perfect lover, and perfect amiable object and end. As our Creator making us in this natural capacity and relation; as our Redeemer restoring and advancing us to blessed union with himself; and as our Sanctifier and Glorifier preparing us for, and bringing us to celestial perfection. And thus must God be conceived of that we may love him: and false and defective conceptions of him are the great impediments of our love: and we love him so little, (much) because we so little know him: and therefore it is not the true knowledge of God, which Paul here maketh a competitor with love.

II. And as we know God by ascending from his works and image, in the same order must our love ascend. The first acts of it will be towards God in his works, and the next will be towards God in his relation to us, and the highest towards God as essentially perfect and amiable in himself.

I will therefore now apply this to the soul that feareth lest he love not God, because he perceiveth not himself either to know or love him immediately in the perfection of his essence.

1. Do you truly love the image of God on the soul of man; that is a heavenly life, and light, and love? Do you not only from bare conviction commend, but truly love a soul devoted to God, full of his love, and living in obedience to his laws, and doing good to others according to his power? This is to love God in his image? God is infinite power, wisdom and goodness, or love: to love true wisdom and goodness as such, is to love God in his works.

Especially with these two qualifications; 1. Do you love to have wisdom and goodness, and love as universal as is possible? Do you long to have families, cities, kingdoms, and all the world, made truly holy, wise, and united in love to one another? The most universal wisdom and goodness is most like to God; and to love this is to love God in his image.

2. Do you love wisdom and goodness in yourselves, and not in others only? Do you long to be most like to God in your capacity, and more near him and united to him? that is, do you long to know him, and his will more clearly, and to enjoy a holy communion with him, and his holy ones in the fullest mutual love, (loving and being beloved) and to delight your souls in his joyful praises, in the communion of saints? This is certainly the love of God. Our union is by love; he that would be united to God and his saints in Jesus Christ, that would fain know him more, and love him better, and praise and obey him joyfully in perfection, doth undoubtedly love him.

And here I would earnestly caution you against two common deceits of men by counterfeit love. I. Some think that they love God savingly, because they love him as the God of nature, and cause of all the natural being, order and goodness which is in the whole frame of heaven and earth; this is to love somewhat of God, or to love him 'secundum quid,' in one respect: but if they love him not also as he is the Wise and Holy, and Righteous Ruler of mankind, and as he requireth us to be holy, and would make us holy, and love not to please his governing will, they love him not as

God with a saving love. I have elsewhere mentioned the saying of Adrian (after Pope) in his Quodlib. that an unholy person may not only love God, as he is the glorious cause of the world and natural good, but may rather choose to be himself annihilated, and be no man, than that there should be no God, were it a thing that could be made the matter of his choice: and indeed I dare not say that every man is holy, who had rather be annihilated than one kingdom should be annihilated, when many heathens would die to save their country or their prince; much less dare I say that all shall be saved that had rather be annihilated than there should be no world, or be no God: but, saith the aforesaid schoolman, it is the love of God as our Holy Governor, and a love of his holy will, and of our conformity thereto, that is saving love.

II. And I fear that no small number do deceive themselves in thinking that they love holiness, as the image of God in themselves and others, when they understand not truly what holiness is, but take something for it that is not it. Holiness is this uniting love to God and man, and a desire of more perfect union! To love holiness, is to love this love itself; to love all of God that is in the world, and to desire that all men may be united in holy love to God and one another, and live in his praise, and the obedience of his will. But I fear too many take up some opinions that are stricter than other men's, and call some things sin which others do not, and get a high esteem of some particular church order, and form or manner of worshipping God, which is not the essence or holiness, and then they take themselves for a holy people, and other men for profane and loose, and so they love their own societies, for this which they mistake for holiness; and instead of that uniting love which is holiness indeed, they grow into a factious enmity to others, reproaching them and rejoicing in their hurt, as taking them for the enemies of God.

2. And as God must be loved in his image on his servants, so must he in his image on his Word. Do you love the holy laws of God, as they express that holy wisdom and love, which is his perfection? Do you love them as they would rule the world in holiness, and bring mankind to true wisdom and mutual love? Do you love this Word as it would make you wise and holy; and therefore love it most

when you use it most, in reading, hearing, meditation and practice. Surely to love the wisdom and holiness of God's laws and promises, is to love God in his image there imprinted, even in that glass where he hath purposely shewed us that of himself which we must love.

3. But no where is God's image so refulgent to us, as in his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ: in him therefore must God be loved: though we never saw him, yet what he was, even the holy Son of God, separate from sinners, the Gospel doth make known to us: as also what wondrous love he hath manifested to lost mankind: in him are all the treasures of wisdom and goodness: both an example, and a doctrine, and a law of wisdom, holiness and peace, he hath given to the world: In this Gospel faith seeth him, yea, seeth him as now glorified in heaven, and made Head over all things to the Church; the King of Love, the great High Priest of Love, the Teacher of Love, and the express Image of the Father's person: Are the thoughts of this glorious image of God now pleasing to you, and is the wisdom, holiness, and love of Christ now amiable to you in believing? If so, you love God in his blessed Son. And as he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father, so he that loveth the Son, loveth the Father also.

4. Yet further, the glory of God will shine most clearly in the celestial glorified Church, containing Christ and all the blessed angels and saints, who shall for ever see the glory of God, and love, obey and praise him, in perfect unity, harmony and fervency! You see not this heavenly society and glory, but the Gospel revealeth it, and faith believeth it: doth not this blessed society, and their holy work seem to you the most lovely in all the world? Is it not pleasing to you to think in what perfect joy and concord they love and magnify God, without all sinful ignorance, disaffection, dullness, discord, or any other culpable imperfection? I ask not only, whether your opinion will make you say that this society and state is best; but whether you do not so really esteem it as that it hath the pleasing desires of your souls? Would you not fain be one of them, and be united to them, and join in their perfect love and praise? If so, this is to love God in that most glorious appearance where he will shew forth himself to man to be beloved.

But here true believers may be stopped with doubting, be-

cause they are unwilling to die, and till we die this glory is not seen. But it is one thing to love heaven and God there manifested; and another thing to love death which standeth in the way. Nature teacheth us to loathe death as death, and to desire, if it might be, that this cup might pass by us. Though faith make it less dreadful, because of the blessed state that followeth: but he that loveth not blood-letting, or physic, may love health. It is not death, but God and the heavenly perfection in glory which we are called to love. What if you could come to this glory without dying, as Enoch and Elias did, would you not be willing to go thither?

5. And he that loveth God in all these his appearances to man, in his works and image on his saints, in the wisdom, holiness and goodness of his word, in the wisdom, love and holiness of his Son, and in the perfection of his glory in the heavenly society, doth certainly also love him in the highest respect, even as he is himself that blessed Essence, that perfect Greatness, Wisdom and Goodness, or Life, Light and Love which is the beginning and end of all things, and the most amiable object of all illuminated minds, and of every sanctified will, and of all our harmonious praise for ever. For whatever become of that dispute, whether we shall see God's essence in itself, as distinct from all created glory, (the word *seeing* being here ambiguous) it is sure that we can even now have abstracting thoughts of the essence of God as distinct from all creatures, and our knowledge of him then will be far more perfect.

It should be more pleasant to every believer to think that GOD IS; even that such a perfect glorious being is existent: as if we heard of one man in another land, whom we were never likely to see, who in wisdom, love, and all perfections excelled all men that ever were in the world, the thoughts of that man would be pleasing to us, and we should love him because he is amiable in his excellency. And so doth the holy soul when it thinketh of the infinite amiableness of God.

6. But the highest love of the soul to God, is in taking in all his amiableness together, and when we think of him as related to ourselves, as our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier and Glorifier, and as related to all his Church, and to all the world, as the cause and end of all that is amiable; and when we think of all those amiable works which these rela-

tions do respect, his creation and conservation of the whole world, his redemption of mankind, his sanctifying and glorifying of all his chosen ones, his wonderful mercies to ourselves for soul and body, his mercies to his Church on earth, his inconceivable mercies to the glorified Church in heaven, the glory of Christ, angels, and men, and their perfect knowledge, love, and joyful praises, and then think what that God is in himself that doth all this : this complexion of considerations causeth the fullest love to God. And though unlearned persons cannot speak or think of all these distinctly and clearly, as the Scripture doth express them, yet all this is truly the object of their love, though with confusion of their apprehensions of it.

But I have not yet done, nor indeed come up to the point of trial. It is not every kind or degree of love to God in these respects that will prove to be saving. He is mad that thinks there is no God : and he that believeth that there is a God, doth believe that he is most powerful, wise and good, and therefore must needs have some kind of love to him. And I find that there are a sort of Deists or Infidels now springing up among us, who are confident, ' That all, or almost all men shall be saved, because, say they, all men do love God. It is not possible, say they, that a man can believe God to be God, that is, to be the best, and to be Love itself, and the cause of all that is good and amiable in heaven and earth, and yet not love him : the will is not so contrary to the understanding, nor can be.' And say the same men, ' he that loveth his neighbour, loveth God ; for it is for his goodness that he loveth his neighbour, and that goodness is God's goodness appearing in man : he that loveth sun, and moon, and stars, meat, and drink, and pleasure, loveth God, for all this is God's goodness in his works ; and out of his works he is unknown to us : and therefore, they say, that all men love God, and all men shall be saved ; or at least, all that love their neighbours ; for God by us is no otherwise to be loved.

For answer to these men, 1. It is false that God is no otherwise to be loved than as in our neighbour : I have told you before, undeniably, of several other respects or appearances of God, in which he is to be loved : and he that is not known to us as separate from all creatures, is yet known to us as distinct from all creatures, and is, and must be so loved by us : else we are idolaters if we suppose the creatures to

be God themselves, and love and honour them as God : even those philosophers that took God for the inseparable soul of the world, yet distinguished him from the world, which they thought he animated, and indeed doth more than animate.

2. And it is false that every one loveth God who loveth his neighbour, or his meat, drink, and fleshly pleasure, or any accommodations of his sense. For nature causeth all men to love life, and self, and pleasure for themselves : and these are beloved even by atheists that believe not that there is a God ! and consequently such men love their neighbours not for God, but for themselves, either because they are like them, or because they please them, or serve their interest, or delight them by society and converse, as birds and beasts do love each other that think not of a God. And if all should be saved that so love one another, or that love their own pleasure, and that which serveth it, not only all wicked men, but most brute creatures should be saved. If you say, they shall not be damned, it is true, because they are not moral agents, capable of salvation or damnation, nor capable of moral government and obedience ; and therefore even the creatures that kill one another are not damned for it : but certainly as man is capable of salvation or damnation, so is he of somewhat more as the means or way, than brutes are capable of, and he is saved or damned for somewhat which brutes never do. Many a thousand love the pleasure of their sense, and all things and persons which promote it, that never think of God, or love him. And it is not enough to say that even this natural good is of God, and therefore it is God in it which they love ; for it will only follow that it is something made and given by God which they love, while they leave out God himself. That God is essentially in all things good and pleasant which they love, doth not prove that it is God which they love, while their thoughts and affections do not include him.

3. But suppose it were so, that to love the creature were to love God, is not then the hating of the creature the hating of God ? If those same men that love meat and drink, and sensual delight, and love their neighbours for the sake of these, or for themselves, as a dog doth love his master, do also hate the holiness of God's servants, and the holiness and justice of his word and government, and that holiness and order of heart and life which he commandeth them,

do not these men hate God in hating these? And that they hate them, their obstinate aversation showeth, when no reason, no mercy, no means, can reconcile their hearts and lives thereto.

4. I therefore ask the infidel objector, whether he shall be saved that loveth God in one respect, and hateth him in another? That loveth him as he causeth the sun to shine, the rain to fall, the grass to grow, and giveth life and prosperity to the world, but hateth him as he is the author of those laws, and duties, and that holy government, by which he would bring them to a voluntary right order, and make them holy, and fit for glory, and would use them in his holy service, and restrain them from their inordinate lusts and wills? How can love prepare or fit any man for that which he hateth or doth not love: if the love of fleshly interest and pleasure prepare or fit them to seek that, and to enjoy it (the little time that it will endure), how should this love make them fit for heaven, for a life of holiness with God and saints? It is this that they love not, and will not love, (for if they truly loved it they should have it;) yea, it is this that they hate, and will not accept or be persuaded to. And what a fond conceit then is it to think that they shall have heaven that never loved it, no nor the small beginnings here of the heavenly nature and life, and all because they loved the pleasures of the flesh on earth, and loved God and their neighbours for promoting it?

5. Yea, I would ask the infidel, whether God will save men for rebelling against him? Their love to their flesh and to the creature, as it is inordinate, and taketh God's place, and shutteth out the love of holiness and heaven, is their great sin and idolatry; and shall this be called a saving love of God? What gross self-deceit hath sensuality taught these men!

6. I grant them therefore that all men that believe that there is a God, do love somewhat of God, or 'secundum quid,' or in some partial respect have some kind of love to God. But it is not a love to that of God, which must save, felicitate and glorify souls: meat and drink, and fleshly sports do not this; but heavenly glory, wisdom, holiness and love to God, and man for God, and this they love not, and therefore never shall enjoy: nay, that of God which should save and felicitate them they hate, and hated holiness is none of

theirs, nor ever can be, till they are changed. And so much to the infidel's objection.

7. I add therefore in the last place to help men in the trial of their love to God, that their love must have these two qualifications.

1. They must love that of God which maketh man happy, and is indeed the end of his nature, and sanctification; and that is, not only the comforts of this transitory natural life and flesh, but the fore-described union and communion with God, in perfect knowledge, love and praise. 2. This love to God must be predominant, and prevail against the power of alluring objects, which Satan would use to turn our hearts from him, and to keep out holy heavenly love. Damning sin consisteth in loving somewhat that is good and lovely, and that is of God; but it is not simply in loving it, but in loving it inordinately, instead of God or greater things, and out of its due time and rank, and measure, and so to hinder that love which is our holiness and happiness. Moral good consisteth not in mere entity, but in order; and disorderly love even of real good is sinful love.

Therefore when all is said, the old mark which I have many and many times repeated, is it that must try the sincerity of your love; viz. 'If 1. in the esteem of a believing mind. 2. And in the choice and adherence of a resolved will. 3. And in the careful, serious endeavours of your lives, you prefer the knowing, loving, obeying and joyful praising of God, begun here and perfected in glory, as the benefit of our redemption by Christ, before all the interests of this fleshly life, the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world; that is, before the pleasures of sin and sensuality for this transitory season. Or, in Christ's words, (Matt. vi. 33,) If you seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and trust him to superadd all other things.' This is that love of God and goodness which must save us: and he that loveth God even in these high respects, a little, and loveth his fleshly pleasure so much more, as that he will not consent to the regulating of his lusts, but will rather venture or let go his salvation than his sins, hath no true saving love to God.

Object. 'There is scarce any fornicator, drunkard, glutton, swearer, or other rash and sensual sinner, but believeth that God is better than the creature, and that it were better

for him to live to God in love and holiness, than to live in sinful pleasures: and therefore though he live in sin against this knowledge, it seemeth that with the rational will he loveth God and goodness best, because he judgeth them best.'

Ans. 1. It is one thing, what the judgment saith, and another thing how it saith it. A speculative judgment may drowsily say, that God and holiness are best, when yet it saith it but as a dreaming opinion, which prevaieth not with the will to choose them, having at the same time so strong an apprehension of the pleasures of sin as carrieth away the will and practice.

2. It is one thing therefore to love God under the notion of being best, and another thing to love him best. For the will can cross such a notion of the understanding; at least by an omission, as appeareth by the sin of Adam, which began in the will (or else had been necessitated). The same understanding which sluggishly saith God or holiness is better, yet may more clearly and vehemently say 'lust is pleasant, or pleasure of the flesh is good,' and being herein seconded with the strong apprehensions of sense and fantasy, the will may follow this simple judgment, and neglect the compare.

3. It is one thing for the understanding to say, that God is more amiable to one that hath a heart to love him, and a suitable disposition; and another thing to say, he is now more amiable to me: those can say the first, that cannot truly say the latter, and therefore love not God as best, and above all.

4. It is one thing for the understanding sometimes under conviction to say, God and holiness are best for me, and I ought to love them best, and then to lay by the exercise or this judgment in the ordinary course of life, (though it be not contradicted) and to live in the continual apprehension of the goodness of sensual pleasure: and another thing to keep the judgment that God and holiness are best, in ordinary exercise. For the will doth not always follow the judgment that we had before, but that which we have at present; and that which we exercise not, we have not at that time in act: and it is not a mere power or habit of knowledge which ruleth the will, but the present act. Many a man is said to know that which he doth not think of, when indeed he doth not know it at that time, but only would know it if he

thought of it: as a man in his sleep is said to know what he knew when awake, when indeed he knoweth it not actually till he be awake.

Object. ' But true grace is rather to be judged by the habit, than by the present acts.'

Ans. By the habit of the will it is, that is, by habitual love, for that will command the most frequent acts: but I propose it to the consideration of the judicious, whether an ordinary habit of drowsy knowledge, or belief that God and holiness are best, may not be ordinarily kept out of act, and consist with a prevailing habit of sensuality or love of forbidden pleasure in the will, and with a privation of prevalent habitual love to God and holiness. I suppose with most such sinners this is the true case: the understanding said lately, It is best for thee to love God, and live to him, and deny thy lust: and it oft forgetteth this, while it still saith with sense, that fleshly pleasure is desirable: and at other times it saith, Though God be best, thou mayest venture at the present on this pleasure; and so lets loose the corrupted will, reserving a purpose to repent hereafter, as apprehending most strongly at the present, that just now sensual delight may be chosen, though holiness will be best hereafter.

Object. ' But if a habit will not prove that we sincerely love and prefer God, how shall any man know that he loveth and preferreth him, when the best oft sin; and in the act of sin God is not actually preferred.'

Ans. 1. I told you that a habit of true love will prove sincerity, though not a habit of true opinion or belief, which is not brought into lively and ordinary act: ineffectual faith may be habitual. Yea, such an ineffectual counterfeit half love, which I before described to you, may be habitual, and yet neither act nor habit saving.

2. The sins of godly men are not prevalent absolutely against the being, operation or effects of the love of God and holiness; for even when they sin, these live, and are predominant in all other things, and in the main bent and course of life; but only they prevail against some degree of holy love, perhaps both in the act and habit, for such sins are not ungodliness, but imperfection of godliness, and the effects of that imperfection.

3. When godly men fall into a great extraordinary sin, it

is not to be expected that they should comfortably discern the sincerity of their love to God either by that sin, or in that sin; but they may discern it, 1. By the course of a godly life, where the prevalency of the habit appeareth in the power and stream of acts; and 2. By their repentance for, and abhorring and forsaking of that sin, which stopped and darkened their love to God. And these two together, viz. a resolved course of living unto God, and repentance and hatred of every sin which is against it, and especially of greater sin, will shew the sincerity and power of holy love.

Object. 'But then one that sinneth daily, *e. g.* by passion, or too much love to the world, or creatures, and by omissions, &c., shall never be sure that he sincerely loveth God, because this is a course of sin, and he cannot have such assurance till he forsake it.'

Answer. One that ordinarily committeth gross and wilful sin; that is, such sin as he had rather keep than leave, and as he would leave if he were but sincerely willing, hath no predominant love of God; at least in act; and therefore can have no assurance of it: but one that is ordinarily guilty of mere infirmities may at the same time know that the love of God doth rule both in his heart and life. The passion of fear or of anger, or of sorrow may be inordinate, and yet God loved best, because the will hath so weak a power over them, that a man that is guilty of them may truly say, I would fain be delivered from them. And some inordinate love of life, health, wealth, friends, honour, may stand with a more prevailing love of God, and the prevalency be well perceived. But what greater actual sins (as Noah's or Lot's drunkenness, David's adultery and murder, Peter's denial of Christ) are or are not consistent with true love to God, is a case that I have elsewhere largely handled, and is unmeet for a short decision here.

Object. 'But when I feel my heart, desires and delights all cold to God and holiness, and too hot after fleshly, worldly things, may I not conclude that I love these better?'

Answer. Sensible near things may have much more of the passionate part of our love, our desires and delights, and yet not be best loved by us. For God and things spiritual being out of the reach of sense, are not so apt or likely to move our sense and passion immediately to and by themselves. As I said before, that is best loved, which hath, 1. The highest

esteem of the understanding. 2. The most resolved prevalent choice of the will. 3. And the most faithful endeavours of our life.

And many a Christian mistaketh his affection to the thing itself, because of his strangeness to the place and to the change that death will make. If the weakest Christian could have without dying, the clear knowledge of God, the communion of faith and love by his Spirit; could he love God but as much as he would love him, and answerably taste his love, in every prayer, in every promise, in every sacrament, in every mercy; could his soul keep a continual sabbath of delight in God, and in his saints and holy worship, this seemeth to him more desirable and pleasing than all the treasures of the world. And he that desireth this communion with God, desireth heaven in reality, though he fear the change that death will make, because of the weakness of faith, and our strangeness to the state of separated souls.

CHAP. XX.

The Second Part of the Exhortation; Rest in this, that you are known with Love to God.

2. To be KNOWN OF GOD here signifieth to be approved and loved of him, and consequently that all our concerns are perfectly known to him and regarded by him.

This is the full and final comfort of a believer. Our knowledge and love of God, in which we are agents, are, 1. The evidence that we are known with love to God, and so our comfort (as is said) by way of evidence. 2. And they are our comfort in their very exercise. But the chief part of our comfort is from God, not only as the object of our love, but as the lover of us and all his saints, even in our passive receiving of the blessed effects of his love for ever: when a Christian therefore hath any discerning of his interest in this love of God, by finding that he loveth God and goodness, here he must finally anchor his soul, and quietly rest in all temptations, difficulties and tribulations.

1. Our enemies know us not, but judge of us by blinding interest, and the bias of their false opinions, and by an easy

belief of false report, or by their own ungrounded suspicions: and therefore we are odious to them, and abused, slandered and persecuted by them. But God knoweth us, and will justify our righteousness, and bring all our innocency into light, and stop the mouth of all iniquity.

2. Strangers know us not, but receive such characters of us as are brought to them with the greatest advantage: and even good men may think and speak evil of us (as Bernard and others of the Waldenses, and many fathers of many godly men that were called heretics, and many called heretics of such fathers). But to us it is a small thing to be judged of man, that is not our final judge and knoweth not our cause, and is ready to be judged with us; we have one that judgeth us and them, even the omniscient God, who knoweth every circumstance of our cause.

3. Our very friends know us not: no not they that dwell with us: in some things they judge us better than we are, and in some things worse: for they know not our hearts; and interests and cross dispositions may deceive them; and even our bosom friends may slander us and think they speak the truth.

And when they entirely love us, their love may hurt us, while they know not what is for our good: but God knoweth us perfectly, and knoweth how to counsel us, conduct us, and dispose of us: he seeth the inwards and the outwards, the on wards and the upwards of our case, which our dearest friends are utter strangers to.

4. We know not ourselves thoroughly, nor our own concerns: we oft take ourselves to be better or worse than indeed we are: we are oft mistaken in our own hearts, and our own actions, and in our interest: we oft take that to be good for us that is bad, and that to be bad which is good and necessary. We long for that which would undo us, and fear and fly from that which would save us: we oft rejoice when we are going to the slaughter, or are at least in greatest danger; and we lament and cry when God is saving us, because we know not what he is doing. Paul saith, "I know nothing by myself, yet I judge not my ownself:" That is, though I have a good conscience, yet that is not my final judge: it must go with me as God judgeth of me, and not as others or myself.

Is it not then an unspeakable comfort in all these cases, that we are known of God ?

Desiring to know inordinately for ourselves, was our first sin ; and this sin is our danger, and our constant trouble : but to be to God as a child to his father, who taketh care to love him and obey him, and in all things trusteth his father's love, as knowing that he careth for him, this is our duty, our interest, and our only peace.

Remember then with comfort, O my soul, 1. Thy Father knoweth what it is fittest for thee to do. His precepts are wise, and just, and good : thou knowest not but by his word. Love therefore, and submit to all his laws : the strictest of them are for thy good : Thy Guide, and not thou, must lead the way ; go not before him, nor without him ; nor stay behind him : in this night and wilderness if thou have not his light and presence, how forlorn, erroneous and comfortless wilt thou be ? He knoweth thy heart, and knoweth thy enemies, temptations and dangers, and therefore best knoweth how to guide thee, and what to put into his laws and into thy duty.

2. He knoweth what place, what state of life, of health, of wealth, of friends is best for thee. None of these are known to thee : He knoweth whether ease or pain be best : the flesh is no fit judge, nor an ignorant mind : that is best which will prove best at last ; which He that foreknoweth all events knoweth. That therefore is best which Infinite Wisdom and Love doth choose. Ease and pain will have their end : it is the end that must teach us how to estimate them : and who but God can foretel thee of the end ?

He knoweth whether liberty or imprisonment be best : Liberty is a prison, if sin prevail, and God be not there. A prison is a palace, if God by his love will dwell there with us. There is no thralldom but sin and God's displeasure ; and no true liberty but his love.

3. He knoweth whether honour or dishonour be best for thee : If the esteem of men may facilitate their reception of the saving truth of God which is preached to them, God will procure it, if he have work to do by it ; if not, how little is it to be regarded ! What doth it add to me to be highly esteemed or applauded by men, who are hasting to the dust, where their thoughts of me and all the world are at an end ? When I see the skulls of the dead, who perhaps once knew

me, how little doth it now concern me what thoughts of me were once within that skull? And as for the immortal soul, if it be in the world of light, it judgeth as God judgeth by his light: if in hell, I have no more cause to be troubled at their malice than at the devil's; and I have little cause to rejoice that those damned souls did once applaud me.

O miserable men, that have no better than the hypocrites' reward, to be seen and honoured of men! God's approbation is the felicitating honour! He will own all in me that is his own, and all that he owneth is everlastingly honoured. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;" (Psal. i. 6;) for it is his way: the way which he prescribed them, and in which he did conduct them. Good and evil are now so mixed in me, that it is hard for me fully to discern them: but the all-seeing God doth discern them, and will separate them.

4. Thy heavenly Father knoweth whether it be best for thee to abound or want: and with what measure of worldly things it is fittest for thee to be intrusted. Abundance hath abundant snares, and cares, and troubling employments which divert our thoughts from things of real and perpetual worth: provision is desirable according to its usefulness to our work and end: It is far better to need little and have little, than to have much, and need it all; for it cannot be got, or kept, or used, without some troublesome and hurtful effects of its vanity and vexation. Let the foolish desire to be tired and burdened with provision, and lose the prize by turning their helps into a snare, and miss of the end by overloving the way: my Father knoweth what I want, and he is always able to supply me with a word: it doth not impoverish him to maintain all the world. His store is not diminished by communication. "The Lord is my Shepherd, what then can I need?" (Psal. xxiii. 1.) How often have I found that he careth for me, and that it is better to be at his finding and provision, than to have been my own carver, and to have cared for myself! Blessed be my bounteous Father who hath brought me so near to the end of my race, with very little care for provision in my way, and with lesser want: necessaries I never wanted, and superfluities are not wanted. Blessed be that wise and gracious Lord that hath not given me up to greedy desires, nor ensnared and burdened me with needless plenty. How safe, how easy and comfortable a life is it, to live in the family of such

a Father, and with a thankful carelessness to trust his will, and take that portion as best which he provideth for us! and into what misery do foolish prodigals run, who had rather have their portion in their own hand than in their father's!

5. Thy heavenly Father knoweth with what kind and measure of trials and temptations it is fit that thou shouldest be exercised: it is his work to permit, and bound, and order them: it is thy work to beg his grace to overcome them, and watchfully and constantly to make resistance, and in trial to approve thy faithfulness to God: "Blessed are they that endure temptations; for when they are tried they shall receive the crown of life." (James i.) If he will try thee by bodily pain and sickness, he can make it turn to the health of thy soul: perhaps thy diseases have prevented some mortal soul-diseases which thou didst not fear. If he will try thee by men's malice, injury or persecution, he knoweth how to turn it to thy good; and in season to bring thee out of trouble: he will teach thee by other men's wickedness to know what grace hath cured or prevented in thyself; and to know the need of trusting in God alone, and appealing to his desirable judgment: he that biddeth thee when thou art reviled, and persecuted, and loaded with false reports for righteousness sake, to rejoice and be exceeding glad, because of the great reward in heaven, can easily give thee what he doth command, and make thy sufferings a help to this exceeding joy.

If he will try thee by Satan's molesting temptations, and suffer him to buffet thee, or break thy peace by melancholy disquietments and vexatious thoughts, from which he hath hitherto kept thee free, he doth but tell thee from how much greater evil he hath delivered thee, and make thy fears of hell a means to prevent it, and call thee to thy Saviour to seek for safety and peace in him.

If it please him to permit the malicious tempter to urge thy thoughts to blasphemy, or other dreadful sin (as it ordinarily falleth out with the melancholy), it telleth thee from what malice grace preserveth thee, and what Satan would do were he let loose: it calleth thee to remember that thy Saviour himself was tempted by Satan to as great sin as ever thou wast, even to worship the devil himself; and that he

suffered him to carry about his body from place to place, which he never did by thee : it tells thee therefore that it is not sin to be tempted to sin, but to consent ; and that Satan's sin is not laid to our charge : and though our corruption is such, as that we seldom are tempted, but some culpable blot is left behind in us, for we cannot say as Christ, that Satan hath nothing in us ; yet no sin is less dangerous to man's damnation, than the melancholy thoughts which such horrid vexatious temptations cause ; both because the person being distempered by a disease, is not a volunteer in what he doth ; and also because he is so far from loving and desiring such kind of sin, that it is the very burden of his life ; they make him weary of himself, and he daily groaneth to be delivered from them. And it is certain that love is the damning malignity of sin ; and that there is no more sin than there is will ; and that no sin shall damn men which they had rather leave than keep ; and therefore forgiveness is joined to repentance : drunkards, fornicators, worldlings, ambitious men, love their sin : but a poor, melancholy soul that is tempted to ill thoughts, or to despair, or terror, or to excessive griefs, is far from loving such a state. The case of such is sad at present : but O how much sadder is the case of them that are lovers of pleasure more than of God, and prosper and delight in sin.

6. God knoweth how long it is best for me to live. Leave then the determination of the time to him ; all men come into the world on the condition of going out again : die we must, and is it not fitter that God choose the time than we ? Were it left to our wills how long we should live on earth, alas, how long should many of us be kept out of heaven, by our own desires ! And too many would stay here till misery made them impatient of living. But our lives are his gift, and in his hand, who knoweth the use of them, and knoweth how to proportion them to that use ; which is the most just measure of them. He chose the time and place of my birth, and he chooseth best : why should I not willingly leave to his choice also, the time, and place, and manner of my departure. I am known of him ; and my concerns are not despised by him. He knoweth me as his own, and as his own he hath used me, and as his own he will receive me. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be for ever." (Psal. xxxvii.

18.) And if he bring me to death through long and painful sickness, he knoweth why, and all shall end in my salvation. "He knoweth the way that is with me, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job xxiii. 10.) He forsaketh us not in sickness or in death. "Like as a father pitieth his children, the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust: as for man his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth: for the wind passeth over it, and it is not, and the place thereof shall know it no more: but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting to them that fear him." If the ox should not know his owner, nor the ass his master's crib, the owner will know his own and seek them. That we understand and know the Lord, is matter of greater joy and glorying, than all other wisdom or riches in the world. (Jer. ix. 24.) But that he knoweth us in life and death, on earth and in heaven, is the top of our rejoicing. "The Lord is good, and strength in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." (Nah. i. 7.) Sickness may so change my flesh that even my neighbours shall not know me; and death will make the change so great, that even my friends will be unwilling to see such an unpleasing, loathsome spectacle: but while I am carried by them to the place of darkness, that I may not be an annoyance to the living, I shall be there in the sight of God, and my bones and dust shall be owned by him, and none of them forgotten or lost.

7. It may be that under the temptations of Satan, or in the languishing weakness or distempers of my flesh, I may doubt of the love of God, and think that he hath withdrawn his mercy from me; or at least may be unmeet to taste the sweetness of his love, or to meditate on his truth and mercies: but God will not lose his knowledge of me, nor turn away his mercy from me. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) He can call me his child, when I doubt whether I can call him Father: he doubteth not of his right to me, nor of his graces in me, when I doubt of my sincerity and part in him. "Known unto God are all his works." (Acts xv. 18.) What meaneth Paul thus to describe a state of grace, (Gal. iv. 9,) "Now after ye have known

God, or rather are known of God?" but to notify to us, that though our knowledge of God be his grace in us, and our evidence of his love, and the beginning of life eternal, (John xvii. 3,) yet that we are loved and known of him is the first and last, the foundation and the perfection of our security and felicity. He knoweth his sheep, and none shall take them out of his hand. When I cannot through pain or distemper remember him, or not with renewed joy or pleasure, he will remember me, and delight to do me good, and to be my salvation.

8. And though the belief of the unseen world be the principle by which I conquer this, yet are my conceptions of it lamentably dark : a soul in flesh, which acteth as the form of a body, is not furnished with such images, helps, or light, by which it can have clear conceptions of the state and operations of separated souls : but I am known of God, when my knowledge of him is dark and small : and he knoweth whither it is that he will take me, and what my state and work shall be ! He that is preparing a place for me with himself, is well acquainted with it and me : all souls are his ; and therefore all are known to him : He that is now the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as being living with him while they are dead to us, will receive my departing soul to them, and to himself, to be with Christ, which he hath instructed me to commend into his hands, and to desire him to receive. He that is now making us living stones for the New Jerusalem, and his heavenly Temple, doth know where every one of us shall be placed. And his knowledge must now be my satisfaction and my peace. Let unbelievers say, "How doth God know?" (Psal. lxxiii. 11.) But shall I doubt whether he that made the sun, be Father of Lights, and whether he know his dwelling, and his continued works? Be still, O my soul, and know that he is God, (Psal. xl. 10,) and when he hath guided thee by his counsel, he will take thee to glory ; and in his light thou shalt have light : and though now it appear not, to sight, but to faith only, what we shall be, yet we know that we shall see him as he is, and we shall appear with him in glory.

And to be KNOWN of God, undoubtedly includeth his PRACTICAL LOVE, which secureth our salvation and all that tendeth thereunto. It is not meant of such a knowledge only as he hath of all things, or of such as he hath of the

ungodly. And why should it be hard to thee, O my soul, to be persuaded of the love of God?

Is it strange that he should love thee who is Essential Infinite Love: any more than the sun should shine upon thee, which shineth upon all capable, recipient objects, though not upon the incapable, which through interposing things cannot receive it? To believe that Satan or wicked men, or deadly enemies should love me, is hard: but to believe that the God of Love doth love me, should in reason be much easier than to believe that my father or mother, or dearest friend in the world doth love me: if I do not make and continue myself incapable of his complacence by my wilful continued refusing of his grace, it is not possible that I should be deprived of it. (Prov. viii. 17.) "I love them that love me." (Psal. cxlvi. 8.) "The Lord loveth the righteous." (John xvi. 27.)

2. Why should it be hard to thee to believe that He loveth thee, who doth good so universally to the world, and by his love doth preserve the whole creation, and give all creatures all the good which they possess? When his mercy is over all his works, and his goodness is equal to his wisdom and his power, and all the world is beautified by it, shall I not easily believe that it will extend to me? "The Lord is good to all." (Psal. cxlv. 9; Luke xviii. 19.) None is good (essentially, absolutely, and transcendently,) but he alone. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." (Psal. xxxiii. 5.) "The goodness of God endureth continually." (Psal. lii. 1.) "He is good and doth good." (Psal. cxix. 68.) And shall I not expect good from so good a God, the cause of all the good that is in the world?

3. Why should I not believe that He will love me, who so far loved the world, yea, his enemies, as to give his only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life?" (John iii. 16.) Having given me so precious a gift as his Son, will he think any thing too good to give me? (Rom. viii. 32.) Yea, still he followeth his enemies with his mercies, not leaving himself without witness to them; but filling their hearts with food and gladness, and causing his sun to shine on them, and his rain to fall on them, and by his goodness leading them to repentance.

4. Why should I not easily believe his love, which he

hath sealed by that certain gift of love, the Spirit of Christ, which he hath given? "The giving of the Holy Ghost, is the shedding abroad of his love upon the heart," (Rom. 5.) I had never known, desired, loved, or served him sincerely, but by that Spirit: and will he deny his name, his mark, his seal, his pledge, and earnest of eternal life? Could I ever have truly loved him, his word, his ways and servants, but by the reflection of his love? Shall I question whether he love those whom he hath caused to love him? When our love is the surest gift and token of his love; shall I think that I can love him more than he loveth me; or be more willing to serve him than he is willing and ready to reward his servants?" (Heb. xi. 6; 1 John iii. 24; iv. 13.)

5. Shall I not easily hope for good from Him, who hath made such a covenant of grace with me in Christ? Who giveth me what his Son hath purchased, who accepteth me in his most beloved, as a member of his Son? Who hath bid me ask, and I shall have? And hath made to godliness, the promise of this life, and that to come; and will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly? Will not such a Gospel, such a covenant, such promises of love, secure me that he loveth me, while I consent unto his covenant terms?

6. Shall I not easily believe that he will love me, who hath loved me while I was his enemy, and called me home when I went astray, and mercifully received me when I returned? Who hath given me a life full of precious mercies, and so many experiences of his love as I have had. Who hath so often signified his love to my conscience; so often heard my prayers in distress, and hath made all my life, notwithstanding my sins, a continual wonder of his mercies. O unthankful soul, if all this will not persuade thee of the love of him that gave it! I that can do little good to any one, yet have abundance of friends and hearers, who very easily believe that I would do them good, were it in my power; and never fear that I should do them harm. And shall it be harder to me to think well of Infinite Love and Goodness, than for my neighbours to trust me, and think well of such a wretch as I? What abundance of love-tokens have I yet to show, which were sent me from heaven, to persuade me of my Father's love and care!

7. Shall I not easily believe and trust His love, who hath

promised me eternal glory with his Son, and with all his holy ones in heaven! Who hath given me there a great Intercessor, to prepare heaven for me, and me for it; and there appeareth for me before God. Who hath already brought many millions of blessed souls to that glory, who were once as bad and low as I am. And who hath given me already the seal, the pledge, the earnest and the firstfruits of that felicity!

Therefore, O my soul, if men will not know thee, if thou were hated of all men for the cause of Christ and righteousness; if thine uprightness be imputed to thee as an odious crime; if thou be judged by the blind malignant world, according to its gall and interest; if friends misunderstand thee; if faction, and every evil cause which thou disownest, do revile thee, and rise up against thee; it is enough, it is absolutely enough, that thou art known of God. God is all; and all is nothing that is against him, or without him. If God be for thee, who shall be against thee? How long hath he kept thee safe in the midst of dangers; and given thee peace in the midst of furious rage and wars? He hath known how to bring thee out of trouble, and to give thee tolerable ease; while thou hast carried about thee night and day the usual causes of continual torment! "His lovingkindness is better than life," (Psal. lxxiii. 3.) but thou hast had a long unexpected life, through his loving kindness. "In his favour is life," (Psal. xxx,) and life thou hast had by and with his favour. Notwithstanding thy sin, while thou canst truly say thou lovest him; he hath promised, "that all shall work together for thy good," (Rom. viii. 28,) and he hath long made good that promise. Only ask thyself again and again, as Christ did Peter, whether indeed thou love him? And then take his love as thy full, and sure, and everlasting portion, which will never fail thee, though flesh and heart do fail: "For thou shalt dwell in God, and God in thee for evermore." Amen. (1 John iv. 12. 15, 16.)