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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

PRACTICAL WORKS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D. D.," "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

VOL. XII.

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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

VOLUME XII.

CONTAINING 7

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

VOL. XII.

A

RICHARD EDWARDS, CRANE COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON.



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THE
LIFE OF FAITH.

IN THREE PARTS.

THE FIRST IS A SERMON ON HEB. XI. 1. FORMERLY PREACHED BEFORE HIS MAJESTY, AND PUBLISHED BY HIS COMMAND; WITH ANOTHER, ADDED FOR THE FULLER APPLICATION.

THE SECOND IS INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONFIRMING BELIEVERS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE THIRD IS DIRECTIONS HOW TO LIVE BY FAITH; OR HOW TO EXERCISE IT ON ALL OCCASIONS.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” 2 Cor. v. 7.

“For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King: for he endured, as seeing him that is invisible.” Heb. xii. 27.

THE

OF FAITH.

IN THREE PARTS.

THE FIRST PART CONTAINS THE
GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FAITH,
AND THE NATURE OF THE OBJECTS
TO WHICH IT IS APPLIED.

THE SECOND PART CONTAINS
THE HISTORY OF THE FAITH OF
THE ANCIENTS, AND THE
MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS
PRESERVED THROUGHOUT THE
MIDDLE AGES.

THE THIRD PART CONTAINS
THE HISTORY OF THE FAITH OF
THE MODERNS, AND THE
MANNER IN WHICH IT HAS
CHANGED SINCE THE
REFORMATION.

BY JOHN CALVIN, BISHOP OF
GENEVA.

TO THE

WORSHIPFUL, MY MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

RICHARD HAMPDEN OF HAMPDEN, Esq.

AND THE LADY LETTIA, HIS WIFE,

GRACE AND PEACE BE MULTIPLIED.

SIR,

YOUR name stands here in the front of this Treatise, on a double account. First, that (the custom of writers having given me such an advantage) I may tell the present and future ages, how much I love and honour your piety, sobriety, integrity and moderation, in an age when such virtues grow into contempt, or into lifeless images and names: and how much I am myself your debtor, for the manifold expressions of your love; and that in an age when love directed by the superior faculties is out of fashion; and towards such as I, is grown a crime. Sincerity and love are things that shall be honourable, when hypocrisy and malice have done their worst; but they are most conspicuous and refulgent in times of rarity, and when the shame of their contraries set them off.

Secondly, to signify my love and gratitude by the best return which I can make; which is, by tendering to you and to your family, the surest directions, for the most noble, manly life on earth, in order to a blessed life in heaven. Though you have proceeded well, you are not yet past need of help: so great a work doth call for skilful counsel, and studious learning, and industrious and unwearied practice. And your hopeful children may be the readier to learn this excellent life from these directions, for the love of your prefixed names. And how happy will they be, if they converse with God, when others are wallowing in the filth of sen-

suality! When the dead-hearted sinner thinketh not of another world, with the wisdom of a foreseeing man, till he is going out of this, 'securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivit,' ut Per. et 'quibus in solo vivendi causa palato est,' ut Juv. When such sensual souls must be dragged out of their pampered, corruptible flesh, to Divine revenge, and go with the beginnings of endless horror to the world where they might have found everlasting rest; what joy will then be the portion of mortified and patient believers, whose treasures, and hearts, and conversations in heaven, are now the foretaste of their possession, as the Spirit of Christ which causeth this, is the seal of God, and the pledge and earnest of their inheritance. If a flesh-pleasing life in a dark, distracted, brutish world, were better than a life with God and angels, methinks yet they that know they cannot have what they would, should make sure of what they may have: and they that cannot keep what they love, should learn to love what they may keep. Wonderful stupidity! that they who see that carrying dead bodies to the grave, is as common a work as the midwives' taking children into the world, and that this life is but the road to another, and that all men are posting on to their journey's end, should think no more considerately whither so many souls do go, that daily shoot the gulf of death! And return no more to the world which once they called their home! That men will have no house or home, but the ship which carrieth them so swiftly to eternity! And spend their time in furnishing a dwelling on such a tempestuous sea, where winds and tide are hastening them to the shore! And even to the end are contriving to live where they are daily dying; and care for no habitation but on horseback!. That almost all men die much wiser than they lived; and yet the certain foreknowledge of death will not serve to make them more seasonably and more safely wise! Wonderful! that it should be possible for a man awake, to believe that he must shortly be gone from earth, and enter into an unchangeable, endless life, and yet not bend the thoughts of his soul, and the labours of his life, to secure his true and durable felicity! But Adam hath given sin the antecedency to grace, and madness the priority to wisdom; and our wisdom, health and safety, must now come after, by the way of recovery and cure. The firstborn of lapsed man was a malignant,



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EPISCOPAL DEDICATION.

persecuting Cain. The firstborn of holiness, Abraham, was a persecutor of him that was "born after the spirit;" I John iii. 12. Gal. iv. 29. And the firstborn of this Isaac himself was a "prophane Isaac," that for one morsel sold his birthright; Heb. xii. 16. And naturally we are all the offspring of this profaneness, and have not acquaintance enough with God, and with heavenly holiness, and with the everlasting, heavenly glory, to make us cordially prefer it before a forbidden cup, or morsel, or a game at foolery, or a filthy lust; or before the wind of a gilded fool's acclamation and applause; or the cap and counterfeit subjection of the multitude. But the "Formosa, non tra timba" (it O.V.), et "quos sportula fecit amicit" (it Jav.), who will serve men's lusts, and be their servants, and humble attendants to damnation, are regarded more than the God, the Saviour, the Sanctifier, to whom these perfidious rebels were once de-

PREFACE.

READER,

1. IF it offend thee, that the parts of this Treatise are so unlike, understand, 1. That they are for various uses. The first part to make men willing, by awakening persuasions; and the rest, to direct them in the exercises of Faith, who are first made willing. 2. That I write not to win thy praise of an artificial, comely structure; but to help souls to holiness and heaven; and to these ends I labour to suit the means. 3. That the first sermon was published long ago; and the bookseller desiring me to give him some additions to it, I thought meet first to make up the exciting part in the same style, and then to add a directory for the practice of judicious believers.

2. And if it offend thee that the second part containeth but such matter as I have already published, in my "Reasons of the Christian Religion," understand. 1. That I perceived that that Treatise was neglected by the more unlearned sort of Christians, as not descending enough to their capacities; and that it would be useful to the confirmation of their faith, to draw forth some of the most obvious arguments, in as plain a manner, and as briefly as I could, that length or obscurity might not deprive them of the benefit; who are too slothful, or too dull to make use of more copious and accurate discourses. 2. And I knew not how to write a Treatise of the Uses of Faith, which should wholly leave out the Confirmations of Faith, without much reluctance of my reason. 3. And again, I say, I can bear the dispraise of repetition, if I may but further men's faith and salvation.

3. And if it offend thee that I am so dull in all the directive part, I cannot well do both works at once, awaken

the affections, and accurately direct the mind for practice. Or at least if I had spoken all those directions in a copious, applicatory, sermon style, it would have swelled the book to a very tedious, costly volume: and affection must not too much interpose, when the judgment is about its proper work. And being done in the beginning, it may be the better spared afterwards.

4. If it offend you that I open the “Life of Faith” in somewhat an unusual manner, I answer for myself, that if it be methodical, true and apt for use, I do that which I intend. And on a subject so frequently and fully handled, it were but an injury to the church, to say but the same which is said already. Mr. John Ball, Mr. Ezekiel Culverwell, and Mr. Samuel Ward, in a narrower room have done exceeding well upon this subject. If you would have nothing more than they have said, read their books only and let this alone.

5. If it offend you that the directions are many, of them difficult, and the style requireth a slow, considerate reader, I answer, the nature of the subject requireth it; and without voluminous tediousness, it cannot be avoided. Blame therefore your unprepared, ignorant minds; and while you are yet dull of hearing, and so make things hard to be uttered to your understanding, because you have still need of milk, and cannot digest strong meat; but must again be taught the principles of the oracles of God; (Heb. v. 11—14.) Think not to get knowledge without hard study, and patient learning, by hearing nothing but what you know already, or can understand by one hasty reading over; lest you discover a conjunction of slothfulness with an ignorant and unhumiliated mind. Or at least, if you must learn at so cheap a rate, or else stick still in your milk and your beginnings, be not offended if others outgo you, and think knowledge worthy of much greater diligence; and if leaving the principles we go on towards perfection, as long as we take them along with us, and make them the life of all that followeth, while we seem to leave them: and this we will do, if God permit; Heb. vi. 1. 3.

R. B.

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

PART I.

HEBREWS XI. 1.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

THOUGH the wicked are distinguished into hypocrites and unbelievers, yet hypocrites themselves are unbelievers too. They have no faith, which they can justify, by its prevailing efficacy and works; and therefore have no faith, by which they can be justified. Because their discovery is needful to their recovery, and all our salvation depends on the sincerity of our faith, I have chosen this text, which is a description of Faith, that the opening of it may help us for the opening of our hearts, and resolving the great question, on which our endless life depends.

To be a Christian, and to be a believer in Christ, are words in Scripture of the same signification. If you have not faith, you are not Christians. This faith hath various offices and objects. By it we are justified, sanctified and saved. We are justified, not by believing that we are justified, but by believing that we may be justified. Not by receiving justification immediately, but by receiving Christ for our justification: nor by mere accepting the pardon in itself, but by first receiving him that procureth and bestoweth it, on his terms: not by mere accepting health, but by receiving the Physician and his remedies, for health.

Faith is the practical believing in God as promising, and Christ as procuring justification and salvation. Or, the practical belief and acceptance of life, as procured by Christ, and promised by God in the Gospel.

The everlasting fruition of God in heaven, is the ultimate object. No man believeth in Christ as Christ, that believeth not in him for eternal life. As Faith looks at Christ as the necessary means, and at the divine benignity,

as the fountain, and at his veracity as the foundation or formal object, and at the promise; as the true signification of his will; so doth it ultimately look at our salvation, (begun on earth, and perfected in heaven) as the end, for which it looketh at the rest.

No wonder therefore if the Holy Ghost here speaking of the dignity and power of faith, do principally insist on that part of its description, which is taken from this final object.

As Christ himself in his humiliation was rejected by the Gentiles, and a stumbling-stone to the Jews, despised and not esteemed; (Isa. liii. 2, 3.) Having "made himself of no reputation;" (Phil. ii. 7.) So faith in Christ as incarnate and crucified, is despised and counted foolishness by the world. But as Christ in his glory, and the glory of believers, shall force them to an awful admiration; so faith itself as exercised on that glory, is more glorious in the eyes of all. Believers are never so revered by the world, as when they converse in heaven, and "the Spirit of Glory resteth on them;" 1 Pet. iv. 14.

How faith by beholding this glorious end, doth move all the faculties of the soul, and subdue the inclinations and interests of the flesh, and make the greatest sufferings tolerable, is the work of the Holy Ghost in this chapter to demonstrate, which beginning with the description, proceeds to the proof by a cloud of witnesses. There are two sorts of persons (and employments) in the world, for whom there are two contrary ends hereafter. One sort subjects their reason to their sensual or carnal interest. The other subjects their senses to their reason, cleared, conducted and elevated by faith. Things present or possessed, are the riches of the sensual, and the bias of their hearts and lives: things absent but hoped for, are the riches of believers, which actuate their chief endeavours.

This is the sense of the text which I have read to you; which setting things hoped for, in opposition to things present, and things unseen, to those that sense doth apprehend; assureth us that faith (which fixeth on the first) doth give to its object a subsistence, presence and evidence, that is, it seeth that which supplieth the want of presence and visibility. The *ὑπόστασις*, is that which 'quoad effectum' is equal to a present subsistence. And the *ἔλεγχος*, the evidence is somewhat which 'quoad effectum' is equal to visi-

bility. As if he had said, Though the glory promised to believers, and expected by them, be yet to come; and only hoped for, and be yet unseen and only believed, yet is the sound believer as truly affected with it, and acted by its attractive force, as if it were present and before his eyes, as a man is by an inheritance; or estate in reversion; or out of sight if well secured, and not only by that which is present to his view. The Syriac interpreter, instead of a translation, gives us a true exposition of the words, viz. 'Faith is a certainty of those things that are in hope, as if they did already actually exist, and the revelation of those things that are not seen.'

Or you may take the sense in this proposition; which I am next to open further; and apply, viz. That the nature and use of faith is to be as it were instead of presence, possession, and sight: or to make the things that will be, as if they were already in existence; and the things unseen which God revealeth, as if our bodily eyes beheld them.

1. Not that faith doth really change its object.
 2. Nor doth it give the same degree of apprehensions and affections, as the sight of present things would do. But, 1. Things invisible are the objects of our faith. 2. And faith is effectual instead of sight to all these uses: 1. The apprehension is as infallible, because of the objective certainty, (though not so satisfactory to our imperfect souls) as if the things themselves were seen. 2. The will is determined by it in its necessary consent and choice. 3. The affections are moved in the necessary degree. 4. It ruleth in our lives, and bringeth us through duty, and suffering, for the sake of the happiness which we believe.

3. This faith is a grounded wise and justifiable act: an infallible knowledge; and often called so in Scripture; John vi. 69. Cor. xv. 58. Rom. viii. 28; &c. And the constitutive and efficient causes will justify the name.

We know and are infallibly sure, of the truth of God, which we believe: as it is said, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God;" John vi. 69. "We know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God; an house not made with hands; eternal in the heavens;" 2 Cor. v. 1. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God;" Rom. viii. 28. "You know that your

labour is not in vain in the Lord;" 1 Cor. xv. 58. "We know God spake to Moses;" &c. John ix. 29. "We know God heareth not sinners;" John ix. 31. "We know thou art a teacher come from God;" John iii. 2. So 1 John iii. 5, 15, and 1 Pet. iii. 17; and many other Scriptures tell you, that believing God, is a certain infallible sort of knowledge.

I shall in justification of the work of faith, acquaint you briefly with, 1. That in the nature of it: 2. And that in the causing of it, which advanceth it, to be an infallible knowledge.

1. The believer knows (as sure as he knows there is a God) that God is true, and his word is true, it being "impossible for God to lie;" Heb. vi. 18. "God that cannot lie, hath promised;" Tit. i. 2.

2. He knows that the Holy Scripture is the word of God; by his image which it beareth, and the many evidences of Divinity which it containeth, and the many miracles (certainly proved) which Christ, and his Spirit in his servants, wrought to confirm the truth. 3. And therefore he knoweth assuredly the conclusion, that all this word of God is true.

And for the surer effecting of this knowledge, God doth not only set before us the ascertaining evidence of his own veracity, and the Scripture's divinity; but moreover, 1. He giveth us to believe; Phil. i. 29. 2 Pet. i. 3. For it is "not of ourselves, but is the gift of God;" Ephes. ii. 8. Faith is one of the "fruits of the Spirit;" Gal. v. 22. By the drawing of the Father, we come to the Son. And he that hath knowledge given from heaven, will certainly know: and he that hath faith given him from heaven, will certainly believe. The heavenly light will dissipate our darkness, and infallibly illuminate. Whilst God sets before us the glass of the Gospel in which the things invisible are revealed, and also gives us eyesight to behold them, believers must needs be a heavenly people, as walking in that light which proceedeth from, and leadeth to the celestial, everlasting light.

2. And that faith may be so powerful as to serve instead of sight and presence, believers have the Spirit of Christ within them, to excite and actuate it, and help them against all temptations to unbelief, and to work in them all other graces that concur to promote the works of faith;



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ready in his soul, will more easily and assuredly believe that there is a heaven hereafter. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in the Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life;" 1 John v. 20. "He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself;" ver. 10. There is so great a likeness of the holy and heavenly nature in the saints, to the heavenly life that God hath promised, that makes it the more easily believed.

§ 4. And it exceedingly helpeth our belief of the life that is yet unseen, to find that nature affordeth us undeniable arguments to prove a future happiness and misery, reward and punishment, in the general; yea, and in special, that the love and fruition of God is this reward; and that the effects of his displeasure are this punishment: nothing more clear and certain than that there is a God, (he must be a fool indeed that dare deny it;) Psal. xiv. 1. As also that this God is the Creator of the rational nature, and hath the absolute right of sovereign government; and therefore a rational creature oweth him the most full and absolute obedience, and deserveth punishment if he disobey. And it is most clear that Infinite Goodness should be loved above all finite and imperfect created good: and it is clear that the rational nature is so formed, that without the hopes and fears of another life, the world neither is, nor ever was, nor (by ordinary visible means) can be well governed; (supposing God to work on man according to his nature.) And it is most certain that it consisteth not with Infinite wisdom, power and goodness, to be put to rule the world in all ages, by fraud and falsehood. And it is certain that heathens do for the most part through the world, by the light of nature, acknowledge a life of joy, or misery to come: and the most hardened atheists, or infidels must confess, that 'for ought they know there may be such a life;' it being impossible they should know or prove the contrary. And it is most certain that the mere probability or possibility of a heaven and hell, (being matters of such unspeakable concernment) should in reason command our utmost diligence to the hazard or loss of the transitory vanities below; and consequently that a holy, diligent preparation for another life, is naturally the duty of the reasonable creature. And it is as

sure that God hath not made our nature in vain; nor set us on a life of vain employments, nor made it our business in the world to seek after that which can never be attained.

These things, and much more, do shew that nature affordeth us so full a testimony of the life to come that is yet invisible, that it exceedingly helpeth us in believing the supernatural revelation of it, which is more full.

5. And though we have not seen the objects of our faith, yet those that have given us their infallible testimony by infallible means, have seen what they testified. Though “no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him;” John i. 18. “Verily, verily, (saith our Lord) we speak that we know, and testify that we have seen;” John iii. 11. “He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard that he testifieth;” ver. 31, 32. Christ that hath told us, saw the things that we have not seen: and you will believe honest men that speak to you of what they were eye-witnesses of. And the disciples saw the person, the transfiguration, and the miracles of Christ. Insomuch that John thus beginneth his epistle: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life, (for life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew it to you, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you;” 1 John i. 1—3. So Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 1. “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” “He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present;” 1 Cor. xv. 5—7. “This great salvation at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will;” Heb. ii. 3, 4. “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him, from the excellent glory; This is my beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount;" 2 Pet. i. 16, 17. And therefore when the apostles were commanded by their persecutors, not "to speak at all, or teach in the name of Jesus," they answered, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;" Acts iv. 18. 20. So that much of the objects of our faith to us invisible, have yet been seen by those that have instrumentally revealed them; and the glory of heaven itself is seen by many millions of souls that are now possessing it. And the tradition of the testimony of the apostles unto us, is more full and satisfactory, than the tradition of any laws of the land, or history of the most unquestionable affairs that have been done among the people of the earth (as I have manifested elsewhere). So that faith hath the infallible testimony of God, and of them that have seen, and therefore is to us instead of sight.

6. Lastly, even the enemy of faith himself doth against his will confirm our faith; by the violence and rage of malice that he stirreth up in the ungodly against the life of faith and holiness; and by the importunity of his oppositions and temptations, discovering that it is not for nothing that he is so maliciously solicitous, industrious and violent.

And thus you see how much faith hath, that should fully satisfy a rational man, instead of presence, possession and sight.

If any shall here say, 'But why would not God let us have a sight of heaven or hell, when he could not but know that it would more generally and certainly have prevailed for the conversion and salvation of the world. Doth he envy us, the most effectual means?'

I answer, 1. "Who art thou, O man, that disputest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Must God come down to the bar of man, to render an account of the reason of his works? Why do ye not also ask him a reason of the nature, situation, magnitude, order, influences, &c. of all the stars, and superior orbs, and call him to an account for all his works? When yet there are so many things in your own bodies, of which you little understand the reason. Is it not intolerable impudency, for such worms as we, so low, so dark, to question the eternal God, concerning the reason

of his laws and dispensations? Do we not shamefully forget our ignorance and our distance?

2. But if you must have a reason, let this suffice you. It is fit that the government of God be suited to the nature of the reasonable subject. And reason is made to apprehend more than we see, and by reaching beyond sense, to carry us to seek things higher and better than sense can reach. If you would have a man understand no more than he sees, you would almost equalize a wise man and a fool, and make a man too like a beast. Even in worldly matters, you will venture upon the greatest cost and pains for the things that you see not, nor ever saw. He that hath a journey to go to a place that he never saw, will not think that a sufficient reason to stay at home. The merchant will sail a thousand miles to a land, and for a commodity, that he never saw. Must the husbandman see the harvest before he plough his land, and sow his seed? Must the sick man feel that he hath health before he use the means to get it? Must the soldier see that he hath the victory before he fight? You would take such conceits in worldly matters to be the symptoms of distraction. And will you cherish them where they are most pernicious? Hath God made man for any end, or for none? If none, he is made in vain: if for any, no reason can expect that he should see his end, before he use the means, and see his home before he begin to travel towards it. When children first go to school, they do not see or enjoy the learning and wisdom which by time and labour they must attain. You will provide for the children which you are like to have before you see them. To look that sight, which is our fruition itself, should go before a holy life, is to expect the end before we will use the necessary means. You see here in the government of the world, that it is things unseen that are the instruments of rule, and motives of obedience. Shall no man be restrained from felony or murders, but he that seeth the assizes or the gallows? It is enough that he foreseeth them, as being made known by the laws.

It would be no discrimination of the good and bad, the wise and foolish, if the reward and punishment must be seen. What thief so mad as to steal at the gallows, or before the judge? The basest habits would be restrained from

acting, if the reward and punishment were in sight. The most beastly drunkard would not be drunk ; the filthy fornicator would forbear his lust ; the malicious enemy of godliness would forbear their calumnies and persecutions, if heaven and hell were open to their sight. No man will play the adulterer in the face of the assembly : the chaste and unchaste seem there alike : and so they would do if they saw the face of the most dreadful God. No thanks to any of you all to be godly if heaven were to be presently seen ! Or to forbear your sin, if you saw hell-fire ; God will have a meeter way of trial. You shall believe his promises ; if ever you will have the benefit ; and believe his threatenings, if ever you will escape the threatened evil.

CHAPTER II.

Some Uses.

Use 1. THIS being the nature and use of Faith, to apprehend things absent as if they were present, and things unseen, as if they were visible before our eyes ; you may hence understand the nature of Christianity, and what it is to be a true believer. Verily it is another matter than the dreaming, self-deceiving world imagineth. Hypocrites think that they are Christians indeed, because they have entertained a superficial opinion that there is a Christ, an immortality of souls, a resurrection, a heaven and a hell ; though their lives bear witness, that this is not a living and effectual faith ; but it is their sensitive faculties and interest that are predominant, and are the bias of their hearts. Alas ! a little observation may tell them, that notwithstanding their most confident pretensions to Christianity, they are utterly unacquainted with the Christian life. Would they live as they do, in worldly cares, and pampering of the flesh, and neglect of God and the life to come, if they saw the things which they say they do believe ? Could they be sensual, ungodly and secure, if they had a faith that served instead of sight.

Would you know who it is that is the Christian indeed ?
 1. He is one that liveth (in some measure) as if he saw the Lord ; believing in that God that dwelleth in the inaccessi-

ble light, that cannot be seen by mortal eyes, he liveth as before his face. He speaks, he prays, he thinks, he deals with men, as if he saw the Lord stand by. No wonder therefore if he do it with reverence and holy fear. No wonder if he make lighter of the smiles or frowns of mortal man, than others do that see none higher; and if he observe not the lustre of worldly dignity, or fleshly beauty, wisdom or vain-glory, before the transcendent, incomprehensible Light, to which the sun itself is darkness. When "he awaketh he is still with God; Psal. cxxxix. 18. "He sets the Lord always before him, because he is at his right hand, he is not moved; Psal. xvi. 8. And therefore the life of believers is oft called a walking with God, and a walking before God, as Gen. v. 22, 24. vi. 9. xvii. 1. in the case of Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. "All the day doth he wait on God;" Psal. xxv. 5. Imagine yourselves what manner of person he must be that sees the Lord; and conclude that such (in his measure) is the true believer. For by "faith he seeth him that is invisible" (to the eye of sense), and therefore can forsake the glory and pleasures of the world, and feareth not the wrath of princes, as it is said of Moses; Heb. xi. 27.

2. The believer is one that liveth on a Christ whom he never saw, and trusteth in him, adhereth to him, acknowledgeth his benefits, loveth him, and rejoiceth in him, as if he had seen him with his eyes. This is the faith which Peter calls "more precious than perishing gold;" that maketh us "love him whom we have not seen, and in whom though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice, with unspeakable and glorious joy;" 1. Pet. i. 8. "Christ dwelleth in his heart by faith;" not only by his Spirit, but objectively, as our dearest absent friend doth dwell in our estimation and affection; Ephes. iii. 17. O that the miserable infidels of the world, had the eyes, the hearts, the experiences of the true believer! Then they that with Thomas tell those that have seen him, "Except I may see and feel, I will not believe," will be forced to cry out, "My Lord and my God;" John xx. 25, &c.

3. A believer is one that judgeth of the man by his invisible inside, and not by outward appearances with a fleshly, worldly judgment. He seeth by faith a greater ugliness in sin, than in any the most deformed monster. When the unbeliever saith, what harm is it to please my

flesh in ease, or pride, or meat and drink, or lustful wantonness? the believer takes it as the question of a fool, that should ask, 'What harm is it to take a dram of mercury or arsenic?' He seeth the vicious evil, and foreseeth the consequent penal evil by the eye of faith. And therefore it is that he pitieth the ungodly, when they pity not themselves, and speaks to them oft with a tender heart in compassion of their misery, and perhaps weeps over them (as Paul, Phil. iii. 18, 19.) when he cannot prevail; when they weep not for themselves, but hate his love, and scorn his pity, and bid him keep his lamentations for himself; because they see not what he sees.

He seeth also the inward beauty of the saints, (as it shineth forth in the holiness of their lives) and through all their sordid poverty and contempt beholdeth the image of God upon them. For he judgeth not of sin or holiness as they now appear to the distracted world; but as they will be judged of at the day which he foreseeth, when sin will be the shame, and holiness the honoured and desired state.

He can see Christ in his poor, despised members, and love God in those that are made as the scorn and offscouring of all things by the malignant, unbelieving world. He admireth the excellency and happiness of those that are made the laughingstock of the ungodly; and accounteth the saints the most excellent on earth; (Psal. xvi. 2.) and had rather be one of their communion in rags, than sit with princes that are naked within, and void of the true and durable glory. He judgeth of men as he perceiveth them to have more or less of Christ. The worth of a man is not obvious to the sense. You see his stature, complexion, and his clothes; but as you see not his learning or skill in any art whatsoever, so you see not his grace and heavenly mind. As the soul itself, so the sinful deformity, and the holy beauty of it, are to us invisible, and perceived only by their fruits, and by the eye of faith, which seeth things as God reveals them: and therefore in the eyes of a true believer, "a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth those that fear the Lord;" Psal. xv. 4.

4. A true believer doth seek a happiness which he never saw, and that with greater estimation and resolution, than he seeks the most excellent things that he hath seen. In all his prayers, his labours and his sufferings, it is an un-



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not so careful and resolute, to avoid the ruin of his estate or name, or to avoid the plague, or sword, or famine, or the scorching flames, or death, or torments, as he is to avoid the endless torments which are threatened by the righteous God. It is a greater misery in his esteem, to be really undone for ever, than seemingly only for a time, and to be cast off by God, than by all the world; and to lie in hell, than to suffer any temporal calamity. And therefore he fears it more, and doth more to avoid it; and is more cast down by the fears of God's displeasure, than by the feelings of these present sufferings. As Noah did for his preservation from the threatened deluge, so doth the true believer for his preservation from everlasting wrath. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith;" Heb. xi. 7. God first giveth warning of the flood; Noah believeth it: not with a lifeless, but a working faith, that first moved in him a self-preserving fear. This fear moved Noah to obey the Lord in the use of means, and to prepare the ark; and all this was to save himself and his house from a flood, that was as yet unseen, and of which in nature there was no appearance. Thus doth God warn the sinful world of the day of judgment and the fire that is unquenchable; and true believers take his warning, and believing that which they cannot see, by fear they are moved to fly to Christ, and use his means to escape the threatened calamity. By this they became the "heirs of that righteousness which is by faith," and condemn the unbelieving, careless world, that take not the warning and use not the remedy.

By this time you may see that the life of faith is quite another thing, than the lifeless opinion of multitudes that call themselves believers. To say, 'I believe there is a God, a Christ, a heaven, a hell,' is as easy as it is common; but the faith of the ungodly is but an ineffectual dream. To dream that you are fighting, wins no victories. To dream that you are eating, gets no strength. To dream that you are running, rids no ground. To dream that you are ploughing, or sowing, or reaping, procureth but a fruitless harvest. And to dream that you are princes, may consist with beggary. If you do any more than dream of heaven and hell,

how is it that you stir not, and make it not appear by the diligence of your lives, and the fervour of your duties, and the seriousness of your endeavours, that such wonderful, inexpressible, overpowering things, are indeed the matters of your belief? As you love your souls, take heed lest you take an image of faith to be the thing itself. Faith sets on work the powers of the soul, for the obtaining of that joy, and the escaping of that misery which you believe. But the image of faith in self-deceivers, neither warms nor works; it conquereth not difficulties; it stirs not up to faithful duty. It is blind, and therefore seeth not God; and how then should he be feared and loved? It seeth not hell, and therefore the senseless soul goes on as fearlessly and merrily to the unquenchable fire, as if he were in the safest way. This image of faith annihilateth the most potent objects, as to any due impression on the soul. God is as no God, and heaven as no heaven to these imaginary Christians. If a prince be in the room, an image reverenceth him not. If music and feasting be there, an image finds no pleasure in them. If fire and sword be there, an image fears them not. You may perceive by the senseless, neglectful carriage of ungodly men, that they see not by faith the God that they should love and fear; the heaven that they should seek and wait for, or the hell that they should with all possible care avoid. He is indeed the true believer that (allowing the difference of degrees) doth pray as if he saw the Lord; and speak and live as always in his presence; and redeem his time as if he were to die to-morrow, or as one that seeth death approach, and ready to lay hands upon him; that begs and cries to God in prayer, as one that foreseeth the day of judgment, and the endless joy or misery that followeth; that bestirreth him for everlasting life, as one that seeth heaven and hell by the eye of faith. Faith is a serious apprehension, and causeth a serious conversation; for it is instead of sight and presence.

From all this you may easily and certainly infer, 1. That true faith is a jewel, rare and precious; and not so common as nominal, careless Christians think. What say they, 'Are we not all believers? Will you make infidels of all that are not saints? Are none Christians, but those that live so strictly?' *Answ.* I know they are not infidels by profession; but what they are indeed, and what God will take them for,

you may soon perceive, by comparing the description of faith, with the inscription legible on their lives. It is common to say, 'I do believe;' but is it common to find men pray and live as those that do believe indeed? It is both in works of charity and of piety, that a living faith will shew itself. I will not therefore contend about the name. If you are ungodly, unjust, or uncharitable, and yet will call yourselves believers, you may keep the name and see whether it will save you. Have you forgotten how this case is determined by the Holy Ghost himself; "What doth it profit my brethren, if a man say, he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. Thou believest that there is one God: thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble;" James ii. 14. &c. If such a belief be it that thou gloriest in, it is not denied thee; "But wilt thou know, O vain man! that faith without works is dead?" &c. Is there life where there is no motion? Had you that faith that is instead of sight, it would make you more solicitous for the things unseen, than you are for the visible trifles of this world.

2. And hence you may observe that most true believers are weak in faith. Alas! how far do we all fall short of the love, and zeal, and care, and diligence, which we should have if we had but once beheld the things which we do believe! Alas! how dead are our affections! how flat are our duties! how cold, and how slow are our endeavours! how unprofitable are our lives, in comparison of what one hours' sight of heaven and hell would make them be! O what a comfortable converse would it be, if I might but join in prayer, praise and holy conference one day or hour, with a person that had seen the Lord, and been in heaven, and borne a part in the angelic praises! Were our congregations composed of such persons, what manner of worship would they perform to God! How unlike would their heavenly, ravishing expressions be, to these our sleepy, heartless duties! Were heaven open to the view of all this congregation while I am speaking to you, or when we are speaking in prayer and praise to God, imagine yourselves what a change it would make upon the best of us in our services! What apprehensions, what affections, what resolutions it would raise; and what a posture it would cast us all into! And do we not all profess to believe these things,

as revealed from heaven by the infallible God? Do we not say, that such a Divine revelation is as sure as if the things were in themselves laid open to our sight? Why then are we no more affected with them? Why are we no more transported by them? Why do they no more command our souls, and stir up our faculties to the most vigorous and lively exercise? and call them off from things that are not to us considerable, nor fit to have one glance of the eye of our observation, nor a regardful thought, nor the least affection, unless as they subserve these greater things? When you observe how much in yourselves and others, the frame of your souls in holy duty, and the tenor of your lives towards God and man do differ from what they would be, if you had seen the things that you believe, let it mind you of the great imperfection of faith, and humble us all in the sense of our imbecility. For though I know that the most perfect faith is not apt to raise such high affections in degree as shall be raised by the beatifical vision in the glorified, and as present intuition now would raise if we could attain it; yet seeing faith hath as sure an object and revelation as sight itself, though the manner of apprehension be less affecting, it should do much more with us than it doth, and bring us nearer to such affections and resolutions as sight would cause.

Use 2. If faith be given us to make things to come as if they were at hand, and things unseen as if we saw them, you may see from hence, 1. The reason of that holy seriousness of believers, which the ungodly want. 2. And the reason why the ungodly want it. 3. And why they wonder at, and distaste and deride this serious diligence of the saints.

1. Would you make it any matter of wonder, for men to be more careful of their souls, more fervent in their requests to God, more fearful of offending him, and more laborious in all holy preparation for eternal life, than the holiest and most precise person that you know in all the world, if so be that heaven and hell were seen to them? Would you not rather wonder at the dulness, and coldness, and negligence of the best; and that they are not far more holy and diligent than they are, if you and they did see these things? Why then do you not cease your wondering at their diligence? Do you not know that they are men, that have seen the

Lord whom they daily serve ; and seen the glory which they daily seek ; and seen the placé of torments which they fly from ? By faith in the glass of Divine revelation they have seen them.

2. And the reason why the careless world are not as diligent and holy as believers, is, because they have not this eye of faith, and never saw those powerful objects, that believers see. Had you their eyes, you would have their hearts and lives. O that the Lord would but illuminate you, and give you such a sight of the things unseen, as every true believer hath ! What a happy change would it make upon you ! Then instead of your deriding or opposing it, we should have your company in the holy path. You would then be such yourselves, as you now deride. If you saw what they see, you would do as they do. When the heavenly light had appeared unto Saul, he ceaseth persecuting, and inquires what Christ would have him to do, that he might be such an one as he had persecuted. And when the scales fell from his eyes, he falls to prayer, and gets among the believers whom he had persecuted, and laboureth and suffereth more than they.

But till this light appear to your darkened souls, you cannot see the reasons of a holy, heavenly life. And therefore you will think it hypocrisy, or pride, or fancy, and imagination, or the foolishness of crack-brained, self-conceited men. If you see a man do reverence to a prince, and the prince himself were invisible to you, would you not take him for a madman ; and say that he cringed to the stools or chairs, or bowed to a post, or complimented with his shadow ? If you saw a man's action in eating and drinking, and see not the meat and drink itself, would you not think him mad ? If you heard men laugh, and hear not so much as the voice of him that gives the jest, would you not imagine them to be brain-sick ? If you see men dance and hear not the music ; if you see a labourer threshing, or reaping, or mowing, and see no corn or grass before him ; if you see a soldier fighting for his life, and see no enemy that he spends his strokes upon ; will you not take all these for men distracted ? Why this is the case between you and the true believers. You see them reverently worship God, but you see not the majesty which they worship, as they do. You see them as busy for the saving of their souls, as if a hundred lives lay

on it; but you see not the hell from which they fly, nor the heaven they seek; and therefore you marvel why they make so much ado about the matters of their salvation; and why they cannot do as others, and make as light of Christ and heaven, as they that desire to be excused, and think they have more needful things to mind. But did you see with the eyes of a true believer, and were the amazing things that God hath revealed to us but open to your sight, how quickly would you be satisfied, and sooner mock at the diligence of a drowning man, that is striving for his life, or at the labour of the city, when they are busily quenching the flames in their habitations, than mock at them that are striving for the everlasting life, and praying and labouring against the ever burning flames.

How soon would you turn your admiration against the stupidity of the careless world, and wonder more that ever men that hear the Scriptures, and see with their eyes the works of God, can make so light of matters of such unspeakable, eternal consequence! Did you but see heaven and hell, it would amaze you to think that ever many, yea, so many, and so seeming wise, should wilfully run into everlasting fire, and sell their souls at so low a rate, as if it were as easy to be in hell as in an alehouse, and heaven were no better than a beastly lust? O then with what astonishment would you think, 'Is this the fire that sinners do so little fear? Is this the glory that is so neglected?' You would then see that the madness of the ungodly is the wonder.

Use 3. By this time I should think that some of your own consciences have prevented me, in the use of examination, which I am next to call you to. I hope while I have been holding you the glass, you have not turned away your faces, nor shut your eyes; but that you have been judging yourselves by the light which hath been set up before you. Have not some of your consciences said by this time, 'If this be the nature and use of faith, to make things unseen, as if we saw them, what a desolate case then is my soul in! How void of faith! How full of infidelity! How far from the truth and power of Christianity! How dangerously have I long deceived myself in calling myself a true Christian, and pretending to be a true believer; when I never knew the Life of Faith, but took a dead opinion, bred only by education, and the custom of the country instead of it;

little did I think that I had been an infidel at the heart, while I so confidently laid claim to the name of a believer! Alas! how far have I been from living, as one that seeth the things that he professeth to believe! If some of your consciences be not thus convinced, and perceive not yet your want of faith, I fear it is because they are seared or asleep.

But if yet conscience have not begun to plead this cause against you, let me begin to plead it with your consciences. Are you believers? Do you live the Life of Faith, or not? Do you live upon things that are unseen, or upon the present visible baits of sensuality? That you may not turn away your ears, or hear me with a sluggish, senseless mind, let me tell you first, how nearly it concerneth you to get this question soundly answered; and then, that you may not be deceived, let me help you towards the true resolution.

1. And for the first, you may perceive by what is said, that saving faith is not so common, as those that know not the nature of it do imagine. "All men have not faith;" 2 Thess. iii. 2. O what abundance do deceive themselves with names, and shows, and a dead opinion, and customary religion, and take these for the Life of Faith!

2. Till you have this faith, you have no special interest in Christ. It is only believers that are united to him, and are his living members. And it is by faith that he dwelleth in our hearts, and that we live in him; Ephes. iii. 17. Gal. ii. 20. In vain do you boast of Christ, if you are not true believers. You have no part or portion in him. None of his special benefits are yours, till you have this living, working faith.

3. You are still in the state of enmity to God, and unreconciled to him, while you are unbelievers. For you can have no peace with God, nor access unto his favour, but by Christ; Rom. v. 1—4. Ephes. ii. 14, 15, 17. And therefore you must come by faith to Christ, before you can come by Christ unto the Father, as those that have a special interest in his love.

4. Till you have this faith, you are under the guilt and load of all your sins, and under the curse and condemnation of the law; for there is no justification or forgiveness but by faith; Acts xxvi 18. Rom. iv. v. &c.

5. Till you have this sound belief of things unseen, you



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serve my turn.' It will debase the greatest pleasures, or riches, or honours of the world in your esteem. How contemptible will they seem, while you see God stand by, and heaven as it were set open to your view; you will see there is little cause to envy the prosperous servants of the world; you will pity them, as miserable in their mirth, and bound in the fetters of their folly and concupiscence, and as strangers to all solid joy and honour. You will be moved with some compassion to them in their misery, when they are braving it among men, and domineering for a little while; and you will think, Alas! poor man! Is this all thy glory? Hast thou no better wealth, no higher honour, no sweeter pleasures than these husks? With such a practical judgment as you value gold above dirt, and jewels above common stones; you will value heaven above all the riches and pleasures of this world, if you have indeed a living, saving faith; Phil. iii. 7—9.

2. A sound belief of the things unseen, will habitually incline your wills to embrace them, with consent and complacence, and resolution, above and against those worldly things, that would be set above them, and preferred before them. If you are true believers you have made your choice, you have fixed your hopes, you have taken up your resolutions, that God must be your portion, or you can have none that is worth the having; that Christ must be your Saviour, or you cannot be saved; and therefore you are at a point with all things else. They may be your helps, but not your happiness. You are resolved on what rock to build, and where to cast anchor, and at what port and prize your life shall aim. You are resolved what to seek, and trust to; God or none; heaven or nothing; Christ or none, is the voice of your rooted, stable resolutions. Though you are full of fears sometimes whether you shall be accepted, and have a part in Christ, or no; and whether ever you shall attain the glory which you aim at; yet you are off all other hopes; having seen an end of all perfections, and read vanity and vexation written upon all creatures, even on the most flattering state on earth, and are unchangeably resolved not to change your Master, and your hopes, and your holy course, for any other life or hopes. Whatever come of it you are resolved that here you will venture all; knowing that you have no other game to play, at which you are not sure

to lose, and that you can lay out your love, and care, and labour on nothing else that will answer your expectations; nor make any other bargain whatsoever, but what you are sure to be utterly undone by; Psal. lxxiii. 25. iv. 6, 7. Matt. vi. 20, 21. xiii. 45, 46. Luke xviii. 33.

3. A sound belief of things invisible, will be so far an effectual spring of a holy life, as that you will “seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;” Matt. vi. 33. and not in your resolutions only, but in your practices, the bent of your lives will be for God, and your invisible felicity. It is not possible that you should see by faith the wonders of the world to come, and yet prefer this world before it. A dead, opinionative belief, may stand with a worldly, fleshly life; but a working faith will make you stir, and make the things of God your business. And the labour and industry of your lives will shew whether you soundly believe the things unseen.

4. If you savingly believe the invisible things, you will purchase them at any rate, and hold them faster than your worldly accommodations; and will suffer the loss of all things visible, rather than you will cast away your hopes of the glory which you never saw. A human faith and bare opinion will not hold fast when trial comes. For such men take heaven but for a reserve, because they must leave earth against their wills, and are loath to go to hell. But they are resolved to hold the world as long as they can, because their faith apprehendeth no such satisfying certainty of the things unseen, as will encourage them to let go all that they see, and have in sensible possession. But the weakest faith that is true and saving, doth habitually dispose the soul to let go all the hopes and happiness of this world, when they are inconsistent with our spiritual hopes and happiness; Luke xiv. 33.

And now I have gone before you with the light, and shewed you what a believer is, will you presently consider how far your hearts and lives agree to this description? To know whether you live by faith or not, is consequently to know, whether God or the world be your portion and felicity, and so whether you are the heirs of heaven or hell. And is not this a question that you are most nearly concerned in? O therefore for your souls' sakes, and as ever you love your everlasting peace, “Examine yourselves, whether you are in

the faith or not ; Know you not that Christ is in you (by faith) except you be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Will you hearken now as long to your consciences, as you have done to me ? As you have heard me telling you, what is the nature of a living, saving faith, will you hearken to your consciences, while they impartially tell you, whether you have this Life of Faith, or not ? It may be known, if you are willing, and diligent, and impartial : if you search on purpose, as men that would know whether they are alive or dead, and whether they shall live or die for ever ; and not as men that would be flattered and deceived, and are resolved to think well of their state, be it true or false.

Let conscience tell you : what eyes do you see by, for the conduct of the chief employment of your lives ? Is it by the eye of sense or faith ? I take it for granted that it is by the eye of reason. But is it by reason corrupted and biassed by sense, or is it by reason elevated by faith ? What country is it that your hearts converse in ? Is it in heaven or earth ? What company is it that you solace yourselves with ? Is it with angels and saints ? Do you walk with them in the Spirit, and join your echoes to their triumphant praises, and say, Amen, when by faith you hear them ascribing honour, and praise, and glory to the Ancient of Days, the Omnipotent Jehovah, that is, and that was, and is to come ? Do you fetch your joys from heaven or earth ? From things unseen or seen ? Things future or present ? Things hoped for, or things possessed ? What garden yieldeth you your sweetest flowers ? Whence is the food, that your hopes and comforts live upon ? Whence are the spirits and cordials that revive you ; when a frowning world doth cast you into a fainting fit or swoon ? Where is it that you repose your souls for rest, when sin or sufferings have made you weary ? Deal truly, is it in heaven or earth ? Which world do you take for your pilgrimage, and which for your home ? I do not ask you where you are, but where you dwell ? Not where are your persons, but where are your hearts ? In a word, are you in good earnest, when you say, you believe a heaven and hell ? And do you think, and speak, and pray, and live, as those that do indeed believe it ? Do you spend your time and choose your condition of life, and dispose of your affairs, and answer temptations to worldly things, as those that are serious in their belief ? Speak out, do you

live the life of faith upon things unseen? Or the life of sense on the things that you behold? Deal truly; for your endless joy or sorrow doth much depend on it. The life of faith is the certain passage to the life of glory. The fleshly life on things here seen, is the certain way to endless misery: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye by the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" Rom. viii. 13. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life;" Gal. vi. 7, 8. If you would know where you must live for ever, know how, and for what, and upon what it is that you live here.

Use 4. Having inquired whether you are believers, I am next to ask you, what you will be for the time to come? Will you live upon things seen or unseen? Will you arrogate the name and honour of being Christians, will you be-think you what Christianity is? And will you be indeed what you say you are, and would be thought to be? Oh! that you would give credit to the word of God! that the God of heaven might be but heartily believed by you! and that you would but take his word to be as sure as sense! and what he hath told you is or will be, to be as certain as if you saw it with your eyes! Oh! what manner of persons would you then be! How carefully and fruitfully would you speak and live! How impossible were it then that you should be careless and profane! And here, that I may by seriousness bring you to be serious, in so serious a business, I shall first put a few suppositions to you, about the invisible objects of faith, and then I shall put some applicatory questions to you, concerning your own resolutions and practice thereupon.

1. Suppose you saw the Lord in glory continually before you, when you are hearing, praying, talking, jesting, eating, drinking, and when you are tempted to any wilful sin. Suppose you saw the Lord stand over you, as verily as you see a man; (as you might do if your eyes could see him; for it is most certain that he is still present with you;) suppose you saw but such a glimpse of his back parts as Moses did, (Exod. xxxiv.) when God put him into a cleft of

the rock, and covered him while he passed by, (Exod. xxxiii. 23.) when the face of Moses did shine with the sight, that he was fain to veil it from the people ; Exod. xxxiv. 33—35. Or if you had seen but what the prophet saw, when he “ beheld the Lord upon a throne, high and lifted up,” &c. and “ heard the seraphim cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.” When he said, “ Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts ;” Isa. vi. 1—6. Or if you had seen but what Job saw, when he said, “ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes ;” Job xlii. 5, 6. What course would you take, what manner of persons would you be after such a sight as this ? If you had seen but Christ appearing in his glory, as the disciples on the holy mount ; Matt. xvii. Or as Paul saw him at his conversion, when he was smitten to the earth ; Acts ix. Or as John saw him, Rev. i. 13. where he saith, “ He was clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt with a golden girdle ; his head and his hairs were white like wool or snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters ; and he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead ; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last ; I am he that liveth and was dead ; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death :” What do you think you should be and do, if you had seen but such a sight as this ? Would you be godly or ungodly after it ? As sure as you live, and see one another, God always seeth you. He seeth your secret filthiness, and deceit, and malice, which you think is hid : he seeth you in the dark ; the locking of your doors, the drawing of your curtains, the setting of the sun, or the putting out of the candle doth hide nothing from him that is omniscient ; “ Understand O ye brutish among the people ! and ye fools when will ye be wise ? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? He that formed the eye, shall he not see ?” Psal. xciv. 8, 9. The lust,

and filthiness, and covetousness, and envy, and vanity of your very thoughts are as open to his view as the sun at noon. And therefore you may well suppose him present that cannot be absent; and you may suppose you saw him that still seeth you, and whom you must see. Oh, what a change a glimpse of the glory of his majesty would make in this assembly! Oh, what amazements, what passionate workings of soul would it excite! Were it but an angel that did thus appear to you, what manner of hearers would you be! how serious! how affectionate! how sensible! And yet are you believers, and have none of this; when faith makes unseen things to be as seen? If thou have faith indeed, thou seest him that is invisible; thou speakest to him; thou hearest him in his word; thou seest him in his works; thou walkest with him; he is the life of thy comforts, thy converse and thy life.

2. Suppose you had seen the matters revealed in the Gospel to your faith, as to what is past and done already. If you had seen the deluge and the ark, and preservation of one righteous family; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven; and the saving of Lot, whose righteous soul was grieved at their sins, and hunted after as a prey to their ungodly rage, because he would have hindered them from transgressing. Suppose you had seen the opening of the Red sea, the passage of the Israelites, the drowning of Pharaoh and his Egyptians; the manna and the quails that fell from heaven, the flaming mount, with the terrible thunder, when God delivered the law to Moses; what manner of people would you have been! What lives would you have led after such sights as all or any of these! Suppose you had seen Christ in his state of incarnation; in his examples of lowliness; meekness, contempt of all the glory and vanities of this world; and had heard him speak his heavenly doctrine with power and authority, as never man spake! Suppose you had seen him heal the blind, the lame, the sick, and raise the dead; and seen him after all this made the scorn of sinners, buffeted, spit upon, when they had crowned him with thorns, and arrayed him gorgeously in scorn; and then nailed between malefactors on a cross, and pierced; and die a shameful death, and this for such as you and I! Suppose you had seen the sun darkened without any eclipse, the vail of the temple rent, the earth tremble; the angels

terrifying the keepers, and Christ rise again! Suppose you had been among the disciples when he appeared in the midst of them, and with Thomas had put your fingers into his wounded side; and had seen him walking on the waters, and at last seen him ascending up to heaven. Suppose you had seen when the Holy Ghost came down on the disciples in the similitude of cloven tongues, and had heard them speak in the various languages of the nations, and seen the variety of miracles, by which they convinced the unbelieving world, what persons would you have been! What lives would you have led, if you had been eye-witnesses of all these things! And do you not profess to believe all this? And that these things are as certain truths, as if you had seen them? Why then doth not your belief affect you, or command you more? Why doth it not do what sight would do, in some good measure, if it were but a lively, saving faith indeed, that serveth instead of sense? Yea, I must tell you, faith must do more with you in this case, than the sight of Christ alone could do, or the sight of his miracles did on most. For many that saw him, and saw his works, and heard his word, yet perished in their unbelief.

3. Suppose you saw the everlasting glory which Christ hath purchased and prepared for his saints. That you had been once with Paul, rapt up into the third heavens, and seen the things that are unutterable; would you not after that have rather lived like Paul, and undergone his sufferings and contempt, than to have lived like the brain-sick, brutish world? If you had seen what Stephen saw before his death; "The glory of God, and Christ standing at his right hand;" Acts vii. 55, 56. If you had seen the thousands and millions of holy, glorious spirits, that are continually attending the Majesty of the Lord. If you had seen the glorified spirits of the just, that were once in flesh, despised by the blind, ungodly world, while they waited on God in faith, and holiness, and hope, for that blessed crown which now they wear: if you had felt one moment of their joys: if you had seen them shine as the sun in glory, and made like unto the angels of God: if you had heard them sing the song of the Lamb, and the joyful hallelujahs, and praise to their eternal king; what would you be, and what would you resolve on after such a sight as this? If the rich man (Luke xvi.) had seen Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, in



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holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left ;” ver. 31—33. and shall sentence the righteous to eternal life, and the rest into everlasting punishment. If you did now behold the glory and terror of that great appearance, how the saints will be magnified, and rejoice, and be justified against all the accusations of Satan, and calumnies of wicked men ; and how the ungodly then would fain deny the words and deeds that now they glory in ; and what horror and confusion will then overwhelm those wretched souls, that now outface the messengers of the Lord ! Had you seen them trembling before the Lord, that now are braving it out in the pride and arrogancy of their hearts. Had you heard how then they will change their tune, and wish they had never known their sins ; and wish they had lived in greater holiness than those whom they derided for it. What would you say, and do, and be, after such an amazing sight as this ? Would you sport it out in sin as you have done ? Would you take no better care for your salvation ? If you had seen those sayings of the Holy Ghost fulfilled ; “ When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ;” (Jude 14, 15. 2 Thess. i. 7—9.) what mind do you think you should be of ? What course would you take, if you had but seen this dreadful day ? Could you go on to think, and speak, and live as sensually, stupidly and negligently as now you do ? “ The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up ;” 2 Pet. iii. 10—12. Is it possible soundly to believe such a day, so sure, so near, and no more regard it, nor make ready for it, than the careless and ungodly do ?

6. Suppose at that day you had heard the devil accusing you of all the sins that you have committed ; and set them out in the most odious aggravations, and call for justice.

against you to your Judge. If you heard him pleading all those sins against you that now he daily tempts you to commit, and now maketh you believe are harmless, or small, inconsiderable things. If you heard him saying, 'At such a time this sinner refused grace, neglected Christ, despised heaven and preferred earth; at such a time he derided godliness, and made a mock of the holy word and counsels of the Lord; at such a time he profaned the name of God, he coveted his neighbour's wealth; he cherished thoughts of envy or of lust; he was drunk, or gluttonous, or committed fornication, and he was never thoroughly converted by renewing grace, and therefore he is an heir of hell, and belongs to me: I ruled him, and I must have him.' What would you think of a life of sin, if once you had heard such accusations as these? How would you deal by the next temptation, if you had heard what use the tempter will hereafter make of all your sins?

7. What if you had seen the damned in their misery, and heard them cry out of the folly of their impenitent, careless lives; and wishing as Dives, (Luke xvi.) that their friends on earth might have "one sent from the dead, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment," (I speak to men that say they are believers,) what would you do upon such a sight? If you had heard them there torment themselves in the remembrance of the time they lost, the mercy they neglected, the grace resisted, and wish it were all to do again, and that they might once more be tried with another life! If you saw how the world is altered with those that once were as proud and confident as others, what do you think such a sight would do with you? And why then doth the believing of it do no more, when the thing is certain?

8. Once more; suppose that in your temptations you saw the tempter appearing to you, and pleading with you, as he doth by his inward suggestions, or by the mouths of his instruments. If you saw him, and heard him hissing you on to sin, persuading you to gluttony, drunkenness or uncleanness. If the devil appeared to you, and led you to the place of lust, and offered you the harlot, or the cup of excess, and urged you to swear, or curse, or rail, or scorn at a holy life; would not the sight of the angel mar his game, and cool your courage, and spoil your sport, and turn your stomachs? Would you be drunk or filthy, if you saw him stand by you?

Think on it the next time you are tempted. Stout men have been appalled by such a sight. And do you not believe that it is he indeed that tempteth you? As sure as if your eyes beheld him, it is he that prompteth men to jeer at godliness; and puts your wanton, ribald speeches, and oaths, and curses into your mouths: he is the tutor of the enemies of grace, that teacheth them 'doctè delirare, ingeniosè insanire,' ingeniously to quarrel with the way of life, and learnedly to confute the arguments that would have saved them; and subtly to dispute themselves out of the hands of mercy, and gallantly to scorn to stoop to Christ till there be no remedy; and with plausible eloquence to commend the plague and sickness of their souls; and irrefragably maintain it, that the way to hell will lead to heaven; and to justify the sins that will condemn them; and honourably and triumphantly to overcome their friends, and serve the devil in mood and figure, and valiantly to cast themselves into hell, in despite of all the laws and reproofs of God or man that would have hindered them. It being most certain that this is the devil's work, and you durst not do it if he moved you to it with open face, how dare you do it when faith would assure you, that it is as verily he, as if you saw him?

More distinctly, answer these following questions, upon the foregoing suppositions.

Quest. 1. If you saw but what you say you do believe, would you not be convinced that the most pleasant, gainful sin is worse than madness? And would you not spit at the very name of it, and openly cry out of your open folly, and beg for prayers, and love reprovers, and resolve to turn without delay?

Quest. 2. What would you think of the most serious, holy life, if you had seen the things you say you do believe? Would you ever again reproach it as preciseness, or count it more ado than needs, and think your time were better spent in playing than in praying; in drinking, and sports, and filthy lusts, than in the holy services of the Lord? Would you think then that one day in seven, were too much for the work for which you live; and that an hour on this holy day were enough to be spent in instructing you for eternity? Or would you not believe that he is the blessed man, whose delight is in the law of God, and meditateth in it day and

night? Could you plead for sensuality, or ungodly negligence, or open your mouths against the most serious holiness of life, if heaven and hell stood open to your view?

Quest. 3. If you saw but what you say you do believe, would you ever again be offended with the ministers of Christ for the plainest reproofs, and closest exhortations, and strictest precepts and discipline, that now are disrelished so much? Or rather, would you not desire them to help you presently to try your state, and to search you to the quick, and to be more solicitous to save you than to please you? The patient that will take no bitter medicine in time, when he sees he must die, would then take any thing. When you see the things that now you hear of, then you would do any thing. O then, might you have these days again, sermons would not be too plain or long: in season and out of season would then be allowed of. Then you would understand what moved ministers to be so importunate with you for conversion; and whether trifling or serious preaching was the best.

Quest. 4. Had you seen the things that you say you do believe, what effect would sermons have upon you, after such a sight as this? O what a change it would make upon our preaching, and your hearing, if we saw the things that we speak and hear of! How fervently should we importune you in the name of Christ! How attentively would you hear, and carefully consider and obey! We should then have no such sleepy preaching and hearing, as now we have. Could I but shew to all this congregation, while I am preaching, the invisible world of which we preach, and did you hear with heaven and hell in your eyesight, how confident should I be (though not of the saving change of all) that I should this hour teach you to plead for sin, and against a holy life no more; and send you home another people than you came hither. I durst then ask the worst that heareth me, 'Dare you now be drunk, or gluttonous, or worldly? Dare you be voluptuous, proud or fornicators any more? Dare you go home, and make a jest at piety, and neglect your souls as you have done?' And why then should not the believed truth prevail, if indeed you did believe it, when the thing is as sure as if you saw it?

Quest. 5. If you had seen what you say you do believe, would you hunt as eagerly for wealth, or honour, and re-

gard the thoughts or words of men, as you did before? Though it is only the believer that truly honoureth his rulers, (for none else honour them for God, but use them for themselves) yet wonder not if he fear not much the face of man, and be no admirer of worldly greatness, when he seeth what they will be, as well as what they are. Would not usurpers have been less feared, if all could have foreseen their fall? Even common reason can foresee, that shortly you will all be dust. Methinks I foresee your ghastly paleness, your loathsome blackness, and your habitation in the dark. And who can much envy, or desire the advancements that have such an end? One sight of God would blast all the glory of the world, that is now the bait for man's perdition.

Quest. 6. Would temptations be as powerful as now they are, if you did but see the things you hear of? Could all the beauty or pleasures in the world entice you to filthiness or sensuality, if you saw God over you, and judgment before you, and saw what damned souls now suffer, and what believers now enjoy? Could you be persuaded by any company or recreation, to waste your precious time in vain, with such things in your eye? I am confident you would abhor the motion; and entertain temptations to the most honoured; gainful, pleasant sin, as now you would do a motion to cut your own throats, or leap into a coal-pit, or thrust your head into a burning oven. Why then doth not faith thus shame temptations, if indeed you do believe these things? Will you say, it is your weakness, you cannot choose, or that it is your nature to be lustful, revengeful, sensual, and you cannot overcome it; but if you had a sight of heaven and hell, you could then resist; you cannot now because you will not; but did you see that which would make you willing, your power would appear. The sight of a judge or gallows can restrain men. The sight of a person whom you reverence, can restrain the exercise of your disgraceful sins; much more would the sight of heaven and hell. If you were but dying, you would shake the head at him that would then tempt you to the committing of your former sins. And is not a lively, foreseeing faith as effectual?

Quest. 7. Had you seen what you say you do believe, you would not so much stick at sufferings, nor make so great a matter of it, to be reproached, slandered, imprisoned, or condemned by man, when God and your salvation command

your patience. A sight of hell would make you think it worse than madness, to run thither to escape the wrath of man, or any sufferings on earth; Rom. viii. 18.

Quest. 8. And O how such a sight would advance the Redeemer, and his grace, and promises, and word, and ordinances in your esteem! It would quicken your desires, and make you fly to Christ for life, as a drowning man to that which may support him. How sweetly then would you relish the name, the word, the ways of Christ, which now seem dry and common things!

Quest. 9. Could you live as merrily, and sleep as quietly in a negligent uncertainty of your salvation, if you had seen these things, as now you do? Could you live at heart's ease, while you know not where you shall be to-morrow, or must live for ever? Oh no! were heaven and hell but seen before you, your consciences would be more busy in putting such questions, 'Am I regenerate, sanctified, reconciled, justified, or not?' than any the most zealous minister is now.

Quest. 10. I will put to you but one question more. If we saw God, and heaven, and hell before us, do you think it would not effectually reconcile our differences, and heal our unbrotherly exasperations and divisions? Would it not hold the hands that itch to be using violence, against those that are not in all things of their minds? What abundance of vain controversies would it reconcile! As the coming in of the master doth part the fray among the schoolboys; so the sight of God would frighten us from contentious or uncharitable violence. This would teach us how to preach and pray better than a storm at sea can do, which yet doth it better than some in prosperity will learn. Did we see what we preach of, it would drive us out of our man-pleasing, self-seeking, sleepy strain, as the cudgel drives the beggar from his canting, and the breaking loose of the bear did teach the affected cripple to find his legs and cast away his crutches. I would desire no better outward help to end our controversies about indifferent modes of worship, than a sight of the things of which we speak. This would excite such a serious frame of soul, as would not suffer religion to evaporate into formality, nor dwindle into affectation, compliment and ceremony. Nor should we dare to beat our fellow servants, and thrust them out of the vineyard, and say, you shall not preach, or pray, or live, but upon these or

those unnecessary terms. But the sense of our own frailty, and fear of a severe disquisition of our failings, would make us compassionate to others, and content that necessities be the matter of our unity, necessities of our liberty, and both of charity.

If sight in all these ten particulars would do so much, should not faith do much, if you verily believe the things you see not?

Alas! corrupted reason is asleep (with men that seem wise in other things,) till it be awakened by faith or sight. And sleeping reason is unserviceable as folly. It doth no work: it avoids no danger. A doctor that is asleep, can defend the truth no better than a waking child. But reason will be reason, and conscience will be conscience, when the dust is blown out of men's eyes, and sight and feeling have awakened, and so recovered their understandings; or faith more seasonable and happily awakened them.

And O that now we might all consent to addict ourselves to the life of faith: and,

1. That we live not too much on visibles. 2. That we live on things invisible.

(1.) One would think that worldliness is a disease that carrieth with it a cure for itself; and that the rational nature should be loath to love at so dear a rate, and to labour for so poor a recompence. It is pity that Gehazi's leprosy and Judah's death should no more prevent a succession of Gebazis and Judahs in all generations. Our Lord went before us most eminently in a contempt of earth: "his kingdom was not of this world." No men are more unlike him than the worldlings. I know necessity is the pretence; but it is the dropsy of covetousness that causeth the thirst which they call necessity: and therefore the cure is 'non addere opibus, sed imminuere cupiditatem.' The disease must not be fed but healed. 'Satis est divitiarum non amplius velle.' It hath lately been a controversy, whether this be not the golden age? That it is 'ætas ferrea' we have felt; our demonstrations are undeniable: that it is 'ætas aurata,' we have sufficient proof: and while gold is the god that rules the most, we will not deny it to be 'ætas aurea,' in the poet's sense,

"Aurea nunc vere sunt secula: plurimus auro
Venit honos: auro conciliatur amor."



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no higher end than self. To go to hell with greater stir, and attendance, and repute, with greater pomp and pleasure than the poor, is a poor consolation, a pitiful felicity.

(3.) Faith is the wisdom of the soul; and unbelief and sensuality are its blindness, folly and brutishness. How short is the knowledge of the wisest unbelievers! They know not much of what is past; (and less they would know if histories were not of more credit with them than the word of God;) but, alas! how little do they know of what is to come! Sense tells them where they are, and what they are now doing; but it tells them not where they shall be tomorrow. But faith can tell a true believer, what will be when this world is ended, and where he shall live to all eternity; and what he shall be doing, what thoughts he shall be thinking, what affections shall be the temper and employment of his soul; what he shall see, and feel, and enjoy; and with what company he shall converse for ever. If the pretenders to astrological prediction, could but foretel the changes of men's lives, and the time and manner of their deaths, what resort would be to them! And how wise would they be esteemed! But what is all this to the infallible predictions of the All-knowing God, that hath given us a prospect into another world, and shewed us what will be for ever, more certainly than you know what a day may bring forth.

So necessary is foreknowledge in the common affairs of men, that without it the actions of the world would be but mad, tumultuary confusion. What would you think of that man's understanding, or how would you value the employments of his life, that looked no further in all his actions, than the present hour, and saw no more than the things in hand? What would you call him that so spends the day, as one that knoweth not there will be any night: and so passed the night, as one that looked not for the day? That knew not in the spring there would be an harvest, or in the summer that there would be any winter, or in youth that there would be age or death? The silly brutes that have no foreknowledge, are furnished with an instinct that supplieth the want of it, and also have the help of man's foreknowledge, or else their kind would be soon extinct. The bees labour in summer, as if they foresaw the winter's need. And can that man be wise, that foreseeeth not his everlasting state?

Indeed, he that knoweth not what is to come, hath no true knowledge of what is present : for the worth and use of present things is only in their respect to things eternal : and there is no means where there is no end. What wisdom then remains in unbelievers, when all their lives are misemployed, because they know not the end of life? and when all their actions are utterly debased, by the baseness of those brutish ends, to which they serve and are referred. Nothing is truly wise or honourable that is done for small and worthless things. To draw a curious picture of a shadow, or elegantly write the history of a dream, may be an ingenious kind of foolery ; but the end will not allow it the name of wisdom : and such are all the actions of the world, (though called heroic, valiant and honourable) that aim at transitory trifles, and tend not to the everlasting end. A bird can neatly build her nest, but is not therefore counted wise. How contrary is the judgment of the world to Christ's ! When the same description that he giveth of a fool, is it that worldlings give of a wise and happy man ; " One that layeth up riches for himself, and is not rich towards God ;" Luke xii. 20, 21. Will you persuade us that the man is wise, that can climb a little higher than his neighbours, that he may have the greater fall ? That is attended in his way to hell with greater pomp and state than others ? That can sin more syllogistically and rhetorically than the vulgar ; and more prudently and gravely run into damnation ; and can learnedly defend his madness, and prove that he is safe at the brink of hell ? Would you persuade us that he is wise, that contradicts the God and rule of wisdom, and that parts with heaven for a few merry hours, and hath not wit to save his soul ? When they see the end, and are arrived at eternity, let them boast of their wisdom, as they find cause : we will take them then for more competent judges. Let the eternal God be the portion of my soul ; let heaven be my inheritance and hope ; let Christ be my Head, and the promise my security, let faith be my wisdom, and love be my very heart and will, and patient, persevering obedience be my life ; and then I can spare the wisdom of the world, because I can spare the trifles that it seeks, and all that they are like to get by it.

What abundance of complaints and calamity would foresight prevent ! Had the events of this one year been (con-

ditionally) foreseen, the actions of thousands would have been otherwise ordered, and much sin and shame have been prevented. What a change would it make on the judgments of the world? How many words would be otherwise spoken; and how many deeds would be otherwise done; and how many hours would be otherwise spent, if the change that will be made by judgment and execution were well foreseen! And why is it not foreseen, when it is foreshewn? When the omniscient God, that will certainly perform his word; hath so plainly revealed it, and so frequently and loudly warns you of it? Is he wise, that after all these warnings will lie down in everlasting woe, and say, 'I little thought of such a day: I did not believe I should ever have seen so great a change?'

Would the servants of Christ be used as they are, if the malicious world foresaw the day when "Christ shall come with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment on all that are ungodly?" Jude 14, 15. When he shall "come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that do believe;" 2 Thess. i. 10. When "the saints shall judge the world;" 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. and when the ungodly seeing them on Christ's right hand, must hear their sentence on this account, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you did it (or, did it not) to one of the least of these, (my brethren,) you did it unto me;" Matt. xxv. Yet a few days, and all this will be done before your eyes; but the unbelieving world will not foresee it.

Would malignant Cain have slain his brother, if he had foreseen the punishment, which he calleth afterwards intolerable; Gen. iv. 13. Would the world have despised the preaching of Noah, if they had believed the deluge? Would Sodom have been Sodom, if they had foreseen that a hell from heaven would have consumed them? Would Achan have meddled with his prey, if he had foreseen the stones that were his executioners and his tomb? Would Gehazi have obeyed his covetous desire, if he had foreseen the leprosy? Or Judas have betrayed Christ, if he had foreseen the hanging himself in his despair? It is foreseeing faith that saves those that are saved; and blind unbelief that causeth men's perdition.

Yea, present things as well as future are unknown to foolish unbelievers. Do they know who seeth them in their

sin? And what many thousands are suffering for the like, while they see no danger? Whatever their tongues say, the hearts and lives of fools deny that there is a God that seeth them, and will be their judge; Psal. xiv. 1. You see then that you must live by faith, or perish by folly.

(4.) Consider that things visible are so transitory, and of so short continuance, that they do not deserve the name of things; being nothings, and less than nothing, and lighter than vanity itself, compared to the necessary Eternal Being, whose name is I AM. There is but a few days difference between a prince and no prince; a lord and no lord; a man and no man, a world and no world. And if this be all, let the time that is past inform you how small a difference this is. Rational foresight may teach a Xerxes to weep over his numerous army, as knowing how soon they were all to be dead men. Can you forget that death is ready to undress you; and tell you, that your sport and mirth is done; and that now you have had all that the world can do for those that serve it, and take it for their part? How quickly can a fever, or the choice of a hundred messengers of death, bereave you of all that earth afforded you, and turn your sweetest pleasures into gall, and turn a lord into a lump of clay! It is but as a wink, an inch of time, till you must quit the stage, and speak, and breathe, and see the face of man no more. If you foresee this, O live as men that do foresee it! I never heard of any that stole his winding-sheet, or fought for a coffin, or went to law for his grave. And if you did but see (as wise men should) how near your honours, and wealth, and pleasures do stand unto eternity, as well as your winding-sheets, your coffins, and your graves, you would then value, and desire, and seek them regularly and moderately as you do these. Oh! what a fading flower is your strength! How soon will all your gallantry shrink into the shell! *‘ Si vestra sunt tollite ea vobiscum.’* Bern. But yet this is not the great part of the change: the *‘ terminus ad quem ’* doth make it greater. It is awful, for persons of renown and honour to change their palaces for graves, and turn to noisome rottenness and dirt: to change their power and command for silent impotency, unable to rebuke the poorest worm, that saucily feedeth on their hearts or faces. But if you are believers, you can look further, and foresee much more. The

largest and most capacious heart alive, is unable fully to conceive what a change the stroke of death will make.

For the holy soul so suddenly to pass from prayer to angelical praise, from sorrow unto boundless joys; from the slanders and contempt, and violence of men, to the bosom of Eternal Love; from the clamours of a tumultuous world, to the universal harmony, and perfect uninterrupted love and peace! O what a blessed change is this; which believing now we shall shortly feel.

For an unholy, unrenewed soul, that yesterday was drowned in flesh, and laughed at threatenings, and scorned reproofs, to be suddenly snatched into another world; and see the heaven that he hath lost, and feel the hell which he would not believe: to fall into the gulf of bottomless eternity, and at once to find that joy and hope are both departed; that horror and grief must be his company, and desperation hath locked up the door! O what an amazing change is this! If you think me troublesome for mentioning such ungrateful things, what a trouble will it be to feel them! May it teach you to prevent that greater trouble, you may well bear this. Find but a medicine against death, or any security for your continuance here, or any prevention of the change, and I have done: but that which unavoidably must be seen, should be foreseen.

But the unseen world is not thus mutable; eternal life is begun in the believer. The church is built on Christ the rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Fix here, and you shall never be removed.

(5.) Hence followeth another difference: the mutable creature doth impart a disgraceful mutability to the soul that chooseth it. It disappointeth and deceiveth; and therefore the ungodly are of one mind to-day, and another to-morrow. In health they are all for pleasure, and commodity, and honour; and at death they cry out on it as deceitful vanity. In health they cannot abide this strictness, this meditating, and seeking, and preparing for the life to come; but at death or judgment they will be of another mind. Then O that they had been so wise as to know their time! And O that they had lived as holy as the best! They are now the bold opposers and reproachers of a holy life; but then they would be glad it had been their own: they would eat their words, and will be down in the mouth, and stand to never a word

they say, when sight, and sense, and judgment shall convince them.

But things unchangable do fix the soul. Piety is no matter for repentance. . Doth the believer speak against sin and sinners; and for a holy, sober, righteous life? He will do so to the last: death and judgment shall not change his mind in this, but much confirm it. Rom. viii. 35—37. And therefore he perseveres through sufferings to death: “For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal;” 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

(6.) Lastly, let this move you to live by a foreseeing faith, that it is of necessity to your salvation. Believing heaven must prepare you for it before you can enjoy it. Believing hell is necessary to prevent it; Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 18. 36. “The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back (or be lifted up) the Lord will have no pleasure in him;” Heb. x. 38. Hab. ii. 4. “Take heed that there be not in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God;” Heb. iii. 12. “And be not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul;” Heb. x. 39. It is God that saith, “They shall all be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness;” 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

May I now, in the conclusion, more particularly exhort you, 1. That you will live upon things foreseen. 2. That you will promote this life of faith in others, according to your several capacities.

Princes and nobles live not always: you are not the rulers of the unmovable kingdom; but of a boat that is in a hasty stream, or a ship under sail that will speed both pilot and passengers to the shore. ‘Dixi, estis Dii: ut moriemini: ut homines.’ It was not the least or worst of kings that said, “I am a stranger upon earth;” Psal. cxix. 19. ‘Vermis sum, non homo:’ “I am a worm and no man;” Psal. lxxii. 6. You are the greater worms, and we the little ones: but we must all say with Job, “The grave is our house,

and we must make our beds in darkness : corruption is our father, and the worm our mother and our sister ;” Job xvii. 13, 14. The inexorable leveller is ready at your backs to convince you by irresistible argument, that dust you are, and to dust you shall return. Heaven should be as desirable, and hell as terrible to you as to others. No man will fear you after death ; much less will Christ be afraid to judge you ; Luke xix. 27. As the kingdoms and glory of the world were contemned by him in the hour of his temptation ; so are they inconsiderable to procure his approbation. Trust not therefore to uncertain riches : value them but as they will prove at last. As you stand on higher ground than others, it is meet that you should see further. The greater are your advantages, the wiser and better you should be ; and therefore should better perceive the difference between things temporal and eternal. It is always dark where these glowworms shine, and where a rotten post doth seem a fire.

Your difficulties also should excite you ; you must go as through a needle’s eye to heaven. To live as in heaven in a crowd of business and stream of temptations from the confluence of all worldly things, is so hard, that few such come to heaven. Withdraw yourselves therefore to the frequent, serious forethoughts of eternity, and live by faith.

Had time allowed it, I should have come down to some particular instances : as, 1. Let the things unseen be still at hand to answer every temptation, and shame and repel each motion to sin.

2. Let them be still at hand to quicken us to duty, when backwardness and coldness doth surprise us. What ! shall we do any thing coldly for eternity ?

3. Let it resolve you what company to delight in, and what society to be of, even those with whom you must dwell for ever. What side soever is uppermost on earth, you may foresee which side shall reign for ever.

4. Let the things invisible be your daily solace, and the satisfaction of your souls. Are you slandered by men ? Faith tells you, it is enough that Christ will justify you. O happy day ! when he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and set all straight, which all the false histories or slanderous tongues or pens in all the world made crooked. Are you frowned on or contemned by men ? Is it not enough that you shall everlastingly be honoured by the



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HEBREWS xi. 1.

Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

CHAPTER I.

For Conviction.

IN the opening of this text, I have already shewed, that 'it is the nature and use of faith to be instead of presence and sight; or to make things absent, future, and unseen, to be to us as to our estimation, resolution and conversation, as if they were present, and before our eyes: though not as to the degree, yet as to the sincerity of our acts.'

In the handling of this doctrine, I have already shewed, that this faith is a grounded, justifiable knowledge, and not a fancy, or ineffectual opinion; having for its object the infallible revelation and certain truth of God; and not a falsehood, nor a mere probability, or 'verisimile.' I have shewed how such a faith will work; how far it should carry us if its evidence were fully entertained and improved; and how far it doth carry all that have it sincerely in the least degree; and I have shewed some of the moving considerations, that should prevail with us to live upon the things unseen, as if they were open to our sight.

I think I may suddenly proceed here to the remaining part of the application, without any recital of the explication or confirmation, the truth lying so naked in the text itself.

The life of faith and the life of sense, are the two ways that all the world do walk in to the two extremely different ends which appear when death withdraws the veil. It is the ordination of God, that men's own estimation, choice and endeavours, shall be the necessary preparative to their fruition. 'Nemo nolens bonus aut beatus est.' Men shall have no better than they value, and choose, and seek. Where earthly things are highest in the esteem, and dearest to the mind of man, such persons have no higher nor more durable portion. Where the heavenly things are highest and dearest to the soul, and are practically preferred, they are the por-

tion of that soul. Where the treasure is, the heart will be; Matt. vi. 21. The sanctifying Spirit doth lead the spiritual man; by a spiritual rule in a spiritual way, to a spiritual, glorious, durable felicity. The sensual part, with the sensual inclination communicated to the corrupted mind and will, doth by carnal reasonings, and by carnal means, pursue and embrace a present, fading, carnal interest; and therefore it findeth and attaineth no more. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other;” Gal. v. 17. “They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace: because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his. If we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live;” Rom. viii. 5—14. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” As a man is, so he loveth and desireth; as he desireth, he seeketh, and as he seeketh, he findeth and possesseth. If you know which world, what riches a man prefers, intends and liveth for, you may know which world is his inheritance, and whither he is going as to his perpetual abode.

Reason enableth a man to know and seek more than he seeth: and faith informeth and advanceth reason, to know *that* by the means of supernatural revelation, that by no other means is fully known. To seek and hope for no better than we know, and to know no more than is objectively revealed, (while we hinder not the revelation) is the blameless imperfection of a creature that hath limited faculties and capacities. To know what is best, and yet to choose and seek an inferior, inconsistent good; and to refuse and neglect the best, when it is discerned, is the course of such as have but a superficial opinion of the good refused, or a knowledge not awakened to speak so loudly as may be effectual for choice; and whose sensuality mastereth their wills and reason, and leads them backward: and those that know

not, because they would not know ; or hear not, because they would not hear, are under that same dominion of the flesh, which is an enemy to all knowledge, that is an enemy to its delights and interest. To profess to know good, and yet refuse it ; and to profess to know evil, and yet to choose it, and this predominantly and in the main, is the description of a self-condemning hypocrite. And if malignity and opposition of the truth professed be added to the hypocrisy, it comes up to that pharisaical blindness and obduracy, which prepareth men for the remediless sin.

Consider then but of the profession of many of the people of this land, and compare their practice with it, and judge what compassion the condition of many doth bespeak. If you will believe them, they profess that they verily believe in the invisible God ; in a Christ unseen to them ; in the Holy Spirit, gathering a holy church to Christ, and employing them in a communion of saints. That they believe a judgment to come, upon the glorious coming of the Lord ; and an everlasting life of joy or torment thereupon. All this is in their creed : they would take him for a damnable heretic that denieth it ; and perhaps would consent that he be burned at a stake. So that you would think these men should live as if heaven and hell were open to their sight. But O what a hypocritical generation are the ungodly ! How their lives do give their tongues the lie ! (Remember that I apply this to no better men.) It is a wonder that such men can believe themselves, when they say they do indeed believe the Gospel : and shews what a monster the blind, deceitful heart of an impenitent sinner is. In good sadness can they think that they truly believe that God is God, and yet so wilfully disobey him ? That heaven is heaven, and yet prefer the world before it ? That hell is hell, and yet will venture upon it for a lust, or a thing of nought ? What ! believe that there is at hand a life of endless joy, and no more mind it ! but hate them that set their hearts upon it ! Do they believe, that except a man be converted and new born, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ? as Christ hath told them, Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. 5. and yet never trouble their minds about it, to try whether they are converted and new born or not ? Do they believe God, that no man shall see him without holiness ? (Heb. xii. 14) and yet dare they be unholy ? and perhaps deride it ? Do they

believe that Christ will “come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;” 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9. And yet dare they disobey the Gospel! Do they take God for their absolute Lord and Governor, while they will not so much as meditate on his laws, but care more what a mortal man saith, or what their flesh and carnal reason saith, than what he saith to them in his holy word? Do they take Christ for their Saviour, and yet would not be saved by him from their sins, but had rather keep them? Do they take the Holy Ghost for their Sanctifier, while they will not have a sanctified heart or life, and love it not in those that have it? Do they take heaven for their endless home and happiness, while they neither mind nor seek it, in comparison of the world? And do they take the world for vanity and vexation, while they mind and seek it more than heaven? Do they believe the communion of saints, while they fly from it, and perhaps detest and persecute it? Is light and darkness more contrary than their words and deeds? And is not hypocrisy as visible in their practice, as Christianity in their profession? It is the complexion of their religion. *Hypocrite* is legibly written in the forehead of it. They proclaim their shame to all that they converse with. When they have said, they believe the life to come, they tell men by their ungodly, worldly lives, that they are dissemblers. When their tongue hath loudly said, that they are Christians, their tongue and hand more loudly say, that they are hypocrites. And when they profess their faith but now and then, in a lifeless, outside piece of worship, they profess their hypocrisy all the day long: in their impious neglect of God and their salvation in their carnal speeches, in their worldly lives, and in their enmity to the practice of the same religion which they profess. Their hypocrisy is a web so thin, and so transparent, that it leaves their nakedness open to their shame. They have not profession enough to make a considerable cover for their unbelief: they hide but their tongues; the rest, even heart and all, is bare.

O the stupendous power of self-love! The wonderful blindness and stupidity of the ungodly! The dreadfulness of the judgment of God in thus deserting the wilful resisters

of his grace! That ever men (in other things, of seeming wisdom) should be such strangers to themselves, and so deceived by themselves, as to think they love the thing they hate! And to think that their hearts are set upon heaven, when they neither love it, nor the way that leadeth to it; but are principally bent another way: that when they are strangers or enemies to a holy life, they can make themselves believe that they are holy; and that they seek that first, which they never seek; and make that the drift and business of their lives, which was never the serious business of an hour! O hypocrites! ask any impartial man of reason, that sees your lives, and hears your prayers, whether you pray and live like men that believe that heaven or hell must be their reward? Ask your families, whether they perceive by your constant prayer, and diligent endeavours, and holy conversations, that your hearts are set on a life to come? It was a cutting answer of a late apostate, to one that told him of the unreasonableness of infidels that denied the life to come; saith he, 'There are none in the world so unreasonable as you Christians, that believe that there is an endless life of joy or misery to come, and do no more to obtain the one and escape the other. Did I believe such a life as this, I would think all too little that I could do or suffer, to make it sure.' Who sees the certainty, greatness and eternity of the crown of life, in the resolvedness, fervency and constancy of your holy labour? You take up with the picture of sermons and prayers, and with the name of Christianity and holy obedience. A little more religion you will admit than a parrot may learn, or a puppet may exercise. Compare your care, and labour, and cost for heaven, and for this world. That you believe the flattering, deceitful world, we see by your daily solicitousness about it: you seek it, you strive for it; you fall out with all that stand in your way, you are at it daily, and have never done; but who can see that you seriously believe another world? You talk idly, and wantonly, and proudly by the hours, but you talk of heaven and holiness but by the minutes. You do not turn the glass when you go to your unnecessary recreations, or your vain discourse, or at least, you can stay when the glass is run; but in hearing the most necessary truths of God, or in praying for everlasting life, the hour seems long to you; and the tedious preacher is your weariness and molestation.

You do not feast and play by the glass; but if we do not preach and pray by it exactly, but exceed our hour, though in speaking of, and for eternity, we are your burden, and put your languid patience to it, as if we were doing you some intolerable wrong.

In worldly matters, you are weary of giving, but seldom of receiving: you grudge at the asker, but seldom at the giver. But if the gift be spiritual and heavenly, you are weary to hear, talk of, it, and expostulate the case with him that offereth it: and he must shew by what authority he would do you good. If by serious, holy conference he would further your preparations for the life to come, or help you to make sure of life eternal, he is examined what power he hath to meddle with you, and promote your salvation. And perhaps he is snappishly told, he is a busy, saucy fellow, and you bid him meddle with his own matters, and let you speed as you can, and keep his compassion and charity for himself: you give him no thanks for his undesired help. The most laborious, faithful servant you like best, that will do you the most work, with greatest skill, and care, and diligence. But the most laborious, faithful instructor and watchman for your souls, you most ungratefully vilify, as if he were more busy and precise than needs, and were upon some unprofitable work; and you love a superficial, hypocritical ministry, that teacheth you but to compliment with heaven, and leads you such a dance of comical, outside, hypocritical worship, as is agreeable to your own hypocrisy. And thus when you are mocking God, you think you worship him, and merit heaven by the abuse. Should a minister or other friend be but half as earnest with you, for the life of your immortal souls, as you are yourselves for your estates, or friends, or lives in any danger, you would take them for fanatics, and perhaps do by them as his carnal friends did once by Christ, (Mark iii. 21.) that went out to lay hold on him, and said, "He is beside himself." For trifles you account it wisdom to be serious; but for everlasting things, you account it folly, or to be more busy and solicitous than needs. You can desire an act of pardon and indemnity from man; when as you are little solicitous about a pardon from God, to whose justice you have forfeited your souls. And if a man be but earnest in begging his pardon, and praying to be saved from everlasting misery, you scorn him, because

he does it without book, and say he whines, or speaks through the nose; forgetting that we shall have you one of these days, as earnest in vain, as they are that shall prevail for their salvation; and that the terrible approach of death and judgment shall teach you also to pray without book, and cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," when the door is shut, and it is all too late; Matt. xxv. 11.

O sirs, had you but a lively, serious, foreseeing faith, that openeth heaven and hell as to your sight, what a cure would it work of this hypocrisy!

1. Such a sight would quicken you from your sloth, and put more life into your thoughts and words, and all that you attempt for God.

2. Such a sight would soon abate your pride, and humble you before the Lord, and make you see how short you are of what you should be.

3. Such a sight would dull the edge of your covetous desires, and shew you that you have greater things to mind, and another kind of world than this to seek.

4. Such a sight would make you esteem the temptations of men's reports but as the shaking of a leaf, and their allurements and threats, as impertinent speeches, that would cast a feather or a fly into the balance against a mountain, or against the world.

5. Such a sight would allay the itch of lust, and quench the drunkard's insatiable thirst, and turn your gulosity into moderation and abstinence, and acquaint you with a higher sort of pleasures, that are durable, and worthy of a man.

6. Such a sight would cure your desire of pastime, and shew you that you have no time to spare, when all is done that necessity and everlasting things require.

7. Such a sight would change your relish of God's ordinances, and esteem of ministers, and teach you to love and savour that which is spiritual and serious, rather than hypocritical strains and shows. It would teach you better how to judge of sermons and of prayers, than unexperienced minds will ever do.

8. Such a sight would cure your malignity against the ways and diligent servants of the Lord; and instead of opposing them, it would make you glad to be among them, and fast, and pray, and watch, and rejoice with them, and



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Look seriously into the infallible word; and whatsoever that foretells, believe it as if it were come to pass. The unbelief of God's threatenings and penal laws, is the perdition of souls, as well as the unbelief of promises. God giveth not false fire, when he dischargeth the cannons of his terrible comminations. If you fall not down, you shall find that the lightning is attended with the thunder, and execution will be done before you are aware. If there were any doubt of the things unseen, yet you know it is past all doubt that there is nothing else that is durable and worthy of your estimation and regard. You must be knights and gentlemen but a little while; speak but a few words more, and you will have spoke your last. When you have slept a few nights more, you must sleep till the resurrection awake you (as to the flesh). Then where are your pleasant habitations and contents? Your honours and attendance? Is a day that is spent, or a life that is extinct, any thing or nothing? Is there any sweetness in a feast that was eaten, or drink that was drank, or time that was spent in sports and mirth a year ago? Certainly a known vanity should not be preferred before a probable endless joy. But when we have certainty as well as excellency and eternity, to set against certain, transitory vanity, what room is left for further deliberation? Whether we should prefer the sun before a squib, or a flash of lightning that suddenly leaves us in the dark, one would think should be an easy question to resolve.

Up then! and work while it is day: and let us run and strive with all our might! Heaven is at hand as sure as if you saw it. You are certain you can be no losers by the choice. You part with nothing for all things. You escape the tearing of your heart, by submitting to the scratching of a briar. You that will bear the opening of a vein for the cure of a fever, and will not forbear a necessary journey for the barking of a dog; or the blowing of the wind; O leap not into hell to escape the stinking breath of a scorner! Part not with God, with conscience, and with heaven, to save your purses or your flesh. Choose not a merry way to misery, before a prudent, sober preparation for a perfect, everlasting joy. You would not prefer a merry cup before a kingdom. You would let go a lesser delight or commodity for a greater here. Thus a greater sin can forbid the

exercises of a less : and shall not endless joy weigh down a brutish lust or pleasure ?

If you love pleasure, take that which is true, and full, and durable. For all that he calleth you to repentance and mortification, and necessary strictness, there is none that is more for your pleasure and delight than God ; or else he would not offer you the rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand ; nor himself to be your perpetual delight. If you come into a room where are variety of pictures, and one is gravely reading or meditating ; and another with a cup or harlot in his hand is profusely laughing, with a gaping, grinning mouth ; would you take the latter or the former to be the picture of a wise and happy man ? Do you approve of the state of those in heaven ? And do you like the way that brought them thither ? If not, why speak you of them so honourably ? and why would you keep holy days in remembrance of them ? If you do ; examine the sacred records, and see whether the apostles and others that are now honoured as glorified saints, did live as you do, or rather as those that you think are too precise ? Did they spend the day in feasting, and sports, and idle talk ? Did they swagger it out in pride and wealth, and hate their brethren that were not in all things of their conceits ? Did they come to heaven by a worldly, formal, hypocritical, ceremonious religion ; or by faith, and love, and self-denial, and unwearied labouring for their own and other men's salvation, while they became the wonder and the scorn of the ungodly, and as the offscouring and refuse of the world ? Do you like holiness when it is far from you ; in a dead man, that never troubled you with his presence or reproofs, or in a saint in heaven, that comes not near you ? Why then do you not like it for yourselves ? If it be good, the nearer the better. Your own health, and your own wealth do comfort you more than another man's : and so would your own holiness if you had it. If you would speed as they that are now beholding the face of God, believe, and live, and wait as they did. And as the righteous God did not forget their work and labour of love for his name, so he will remember you with the same reward, if you shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end ; and "be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promise ;" Heb. vi. 10—12.

O did you but see what they now enjoy, and what they see, and what they are, and what they do; you would never sure scorn or persecute a saint more! If you believe, you see, though not as they, with open face. If you believe not, yet it is not your unbelief, that shall make God's word of none effect; Rom. iii. 3. God will be God if you be atheists. Christ will be Christ if you be infidels. Heaven will be heaven if you by despising it go to hell. Judgment sleepeth not when you sleep: it is coming as fast when you laugh at it, or question it, as if your eyes were open to foresee it. If you would not believe that you must die, do you think that this would delay your death one year or hour? If ten or twenty years time more be allotted you, it passeth as swiftly, and death and judgment come as surely, if you spend it in voluptuousness and unbelief, as if you watched and waited for your change.

We preach not to you *ifs* and *ands*: it is not, *perhaps* there is a heaven and hell; but as sure as you are here, and must anon go hence, you must as shortly quit this world, and take up your abode in the world that is now to us invisible. And no tongue can express how sensible you will then be of the things that you will not now be made sensible of. O then with what a dreadful view will you look before you and behind you! Behind you, upon time, and say, 'It is gone, and never will return:' and hear conscience ask you, How you spent it, and what you did with it? Before you, upon eternity, and say, 'It is come;' and to the ungodly will be an eternity of woe. What a peal will conscience then ring in the unbelievers' ears! 'Now the day is come that I was forewarned of. The day and change which I would not believe! Whither must I now go? what must I now do? what shall I say before the Lord for all the sin that I have wilfully committed? for all the time of mercy which I lost? How shall I answer my contempt of Christ? my neglect of means, and enmity to a holy, serious life? What a distracted wretch was I, to condemn and dislike them that spent their lives in preparation for this day; when now I would give a thousand worlds, to be but one of the meanest of them! O that the church doors, and the door of grace, were open to me now, as once they were, when I refused to enter. Many a time did I hear of this day, and would not believe, or soberly consider of it. Many a time was I entreated to pre-

pare, and I thought a hypocritical, trifling show would have been taken for a sufficient preparation. Now who must be my companions? - How long must I dwell with woe and horror? God by his ministers was wont to call to me: 'How long, O scorner, wilt thou delight in scorning? How long wilt thou go on impenitently in thy folly?' And now I must cry out, 'How long, how long must I feel the wrath of the Almighty? the unquenchable fire! the immortal worm! Alas, for ever!' When shall I receive one moment's ease? When shall I see one glimpse of hope? O never! never! never! Now I perceive what Satan meant in his temptations; what sin intended; what God meant in the threatenings of his law; what grace was good for; what Christ was sent for; and what was the design and meaning of the Gospel; and how I should have valued the offers and promises of life! Now I understand what ministers meant, to be so importunate with me for my conversion; and what was the cause that they would even have kneeled to me, to have procured my return to God in time. Now I understand that holiness was not a needless thing; that Christ and grace deserved better entertainment than contempt; that precious time was worth more than to be wasted idly; that an immortal soul, and life eternal should have been more regarded, and not cast away for so short, so base a fleshly pleasure. Now all these things are plain and open to my understanding; but, alas! it is now too late! I know that now to my woe and torment, which I might have known in time to my recovery and joy.

• For the Lord's sake, and for your soul's sake, open your eyes, and foresee the things that are even at hand, and prevent these fruitless lamentations. Judge but as you will shortly judge, and live but as you will wish that you had lived, and I desire no more. Be serious, as if you saw the things that you say you do believe.

I know this serious discourse of another life, is usually ungrateful to men that are conscious of their strangeness to it, and taking up their portion here, are loath to be tormented before the time. This is not the smoothing, pleasing way. But remember that we have flesh as well as you, which longs not to be accounted troublesome or precise; which loves not to displease or be displeased: and had we no higher

light and life, we should talk as men that saw and felt no more than sight and flesh can reach; but when we are preaching and dying, and you are hearing and dying, and we believe and know that you are now going to see the things we speak of, and death will straightway draw aside the veil, and shew you the great, amazing sight, it is time for us to speak, and you to hear, with all our hearts. It is time for us to be serious, when we are so near the place where all are serious. There are none that are in jest in heaven or hell. Pardon us therefore if we jest not at the door, and in the way to such a serious state. All that see and feel are serious; and therefore all that truly believe must be so too. Were your eyes all opened this hour to see what we believe, we appeal to your own consciences, whether it would not make you more serious than we.

Marvel not if you see believers make another matter of their salvation, than those that have hired their understandings in service to their sense; and think the world is no bigger or better than their globe or map; and reacheth no further than they can ken. As long as we see you serious about lands and lordships, and titles and honours, the rattles and tarrying irons of the cheating world, you must give us leave (whether you will or no) to be serious about the life eternal. They that scramble so eagerly for the bonds of worldly riches, and devour so greedily the dregs of sensual delights, methinks should blush (if such animals had the blushing property) to blame or deride us for being a little (alas, too little) earnest in the matters of God and our salvation. Can you not pardon us if we love God a little more than you love your lusts; and if we run as fast for the crown of life, as you run after a feather or a fly? Or if we breathe as hard after Christ in holy desires, as you do in blowing the bubble of vain-glory? If a thousand pounds a year in passage to a grave, and the chains of darkness, be worth your labour; give us leave to believe that mercy in order to everlasting mercy, grace in order to glory, and glory as the end of grace, is worth our labour, and infinitely more.

Your end is narrow, though your way be broad, and our end is broad, though our way be narrow. You build as miners in coalpits do, by digging downwards into the dark; and yet you are laborious. Though we begin on earth, we build towards heaven, where an attractive loadstone draws

up the workmen and the work ; and shall we loiter under so great encouragements ? Have you considered that faith is the beholding grace ? the evidence of things not seen ? and yet have you the hearts to blame believers, for doing all that they can do, in a case of such unspeakable, everlasting consequence ? If we are believers, heaven and hell are as it were open to our sight ! And would you wish us to trifle in the sight of heaven ? or to leap into hell when we see it as before us ? What name can express the inhuman cruelty of such a wish or motion ? or the unchristian folly of those that will obey you ?

O give us leave to be serious for a kingdom which by faith we see ! Blame us for this, and blame us that we are not besides ourselves. Pardon us that we are awake, when the thunder of Jehovah's voice doth call to us, denouncing everlasting wrath to all that are sensual and ungodly. Were we asleep as you are, we would lie still, and take no heed what God or man said to us.

Pardon us that we are Christians, and believe these things, seeing you profess the same yourselves. Disclaim not the practice till you dare disclaim the profession. If we were infidels, we would do as the ungodly world ; we would pursue our present pleasures and commodity, and say, that things above us are nothing to us ; and would take religion to be the troubler of the world ; but till we are infidels or atheists at the heart, we cannot do so.

Forgive us that we are men ; if you take it to be pardonable. Were we brutes, we would eat, and drink, and play, and never trouble ourselves or others with the care of our salvation, or the fears of any death but one ; or with resisting sensual inclinations, and meditating on the life to come ; but would take our ease and pleasure while we may.

At least forgive us that we are not blocks or stones ; that we have life and feeling. Were we insensate clods, we would not see the light of heaven, nor hear the roaring of the lion, nor fear the threats of God himself. We would not complain, or sigh, or groan, because we feel not.

If therefore we may have leave to be awake, and to be in our wits, to be Christians, to be men, to be creatures that have life and sense, forgive us that we believe the living God ; that we cannot laugh at heaven and hell, nor jest at the threatened wrath of the Almighty. If these things must

make us the object of the world's reproach and malice, let me rather be a reproached man, than an honoured beast, and a hated Christian, than a beloved infidel; and rather let me live in the midst of malice and contempt, than pass through honour unto shame, through mirth to misery, and through a senseless to a feeling death. Hate us when we are in heaven, and see who will be the sufferer by it. If ever we should begin to nod and relapse towards your hypocritical formality and senseless indifferency, our lively sight of the world invisible, by a serious faith, would presently awake us, and force us confidently to conclude, 'Aut sanctus, aut brutus:' there is practically and predominantly no mean. He will prove a brute that is not a saint.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING done with this general conviction and exhortation to unbelieving hypocrites, I proceed to acquaint believers with their duty, in several particulars.

1. Worship God as believers; "serve him with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire;" Heb. xii. 28, 29. A seeing faith, if well excited, would kindle love, desire, fear, and all praying graces. No man prays well, that doth not well know what he prays for. When it comes to seeing, all men can cry loud, and pray when praying will do no good. They will not then speak sleepily, or by rote, 'Fides intuendo, amorem recipit, amorem suscitatur. Cor flagrans amore desideria, gemitus, orationes spirat.' Faith is the burning-glass which, beholding God, receiveth the beams of his communicated love, and inflameth the heart with love to him again; which mounteth up by groans and prayers, till it reach its original, and love for ever rest in love.

2. Desire and use the creature as believers. Interpret all things as they receive their meaning from the things unseen: understand them in no other sense. It is only God and the life to come that can tell you what is good or bad for you in the world. And therefore the ungodly that cannot go to heaven for counsel, are carried about by mere deceits. Take heed what you love: and take heed of that you love. God is very jealous of our love: he sheds abroad his own love



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will use them for God ; not flattering them, or desiring to be flattered by them ; but to kindle in each other the holy flame which will aspire and mount, and know no bounds, till it reach the boundless element of love. You will not value them as friends, ‘ *qui omnia dicta et facta vestra laudant, sed qui errata et delicta amice reprehendunt :*’ not them that call you good ; but them that would make you better. And you will let them know, as Phocian did Antipater, that they can never use you, ‘ *ut amicis et adulatoribus ;*’ as friends and flatterers, that differ as a wife and a harlot.

It is hard to love the imperfect creature, without mistakes and inordinancy in our love : and therefore usually where we love most, we sin most ; and our sin finds us out ; and then we suffer most : and too much affection is the forerunner of much affliction, which will be much prevented, if faith might be the guide of love, and human love might be made divine ; and all to be referred to the things unseen, and animated by them. Love where you can never love too much ; where you are sure to have no disappointments ; where there is no unkindness to eclipse or interrupt it ; where the only error is, that God hath not all ; and the only grief, that we love no more.

Especially in the midst of your enticing pleasures, or enticing employments and profits in the world, foresee the end, do all in faith, which telleth you, “ The time is short ; it remaineth therefore, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as though they used it not (or not abusing it) : for the fashion of this world passeth away ;” 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.

3. Employ your time as becomes believers. Faith only can acquaint you, what an inconceivable weight doth lie upon this inch of hasty time. As you behave yourselves for a few days, it must go with you in joy or misery for ever. You have your appointed time for your appointed work. God hath turned the glass upon you ; much of it is run out already. No price can call back one hour that you have lost. No power or policy can retard its course ; ‘ *Sic fugiunt fræno non remorante dies.*’ When it comes to the last sand, and time is gone, you will know the worth of it. You will

then confess it should have seemed more precious in your eyes, than to have been cast away upon things of nought. O precious time! more worth than all the riches of the world! how highly is it valued by all at last! and how basely is it esteemed now by the most! Now it is no more worth with them than to be sold for unnecessary sports and ease, and wasted in idleness and vain delights; but then when it is gone, and all is too late, how loud would they cry, if cries could call back time again! O then, what a mercy would it seem, if God would try them once again! and trust them but with another life, or with Hezekiah's fifteen years! or but with fifteen days, or hours, upon such terms of grace, as they held that life which they abused! It amazeth me to observe the lamentable stupidity of the world, how hard they beg for time when they think it is near an end! and how carelessly they let it slide away, when they have strength and faculties to improve it! They are grievously afraid lest death deprive them of it; and yet they are not afraid to deprive themselves of the use and fruit of it, and to cast it away as contemptuously, as if it were an useless thing. I seldom come near a dying man, but I hear him complain of the loss of time, and wish it were to spend again, that it might be better valued and used. And yet the living will not be warned! O value time, as wise men, while you have it; and not as miserable fools, when it is gone! If our Lord said, "I must do the work of him that sent me while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work;" (John ix 4.) what need then have such as we to be doing, and make much of time! O let not company, mirth, or business make you forget the work of time! Can you play, or loiter away your hours, with eternity in your eye? Get the sun to stand still, and time to make a truce with you, and to waste no more of the oil of life, before you lose another hour.

O what heads, what hearts have all those men that standing at the verge of an endless world, can think they have any time to spare! Hath God given you too much? If not, why do you lose it? If he hath, why are you loath that he should shorten it? You would not throw away your gold, as contemptuously as you do your time, when an hour's time is more valuable than gold. Frown on that company that would rob you of half an hour's time. Tell them you have something else to do than to feast, or play, or talk away

your time unnecessarily. O tell them you were not made for nothing! You are in a race, and must not stand still: you are in a fight, and must not cease. Your work is great; much of it is undone. Your enemies are not idle: death will not stop: the judge is coming, and still beholds you: and heaven and hell are ready to receive our ending life, and tell us how we spent our time: and can you find time to spare? You are not made as weather-cocks, to stand up on high for men to look at, and by turning about with every wind, to shew them which way it standeth. Turn not your lives into that curse, "You shall spend your strength in vain;" Levit. xxvi. 20. Believe it, time must be reviewed. The day is near, when every man of you had rather find it in your accounts, 'So many hours spent in self-examination and holy meditation; so many in reading the word of God; so many spent in fervent prayer; and so many in doing good to others,' than, 'So many spent in needless sports and pleasures; so many in idlenesses and vain discourses; and so many of the less necessary matters of the world.' Ask those that tempt you to misspend your time, whether at death and judgment they had rather themselves have a life of holy diligence to review, or a life consumed in vanity, and transitory delights.

You will not suffer impertinences to interrupt your counsels and serious business in the world. You will tell intruders, that you are busy, and cannot have while to attend them. And are you going into heaven or hell, and have but a few days time of preparation (God knows how few), and yet can you have while to pass this precious time in vain? O what would you not give ere long for one of the hours that you now misspend! When the oath is performed, "That time shall be no longer!" Rev. x. 6. Wonderful! that men can find time for any thing, save that for which they had their time! 'Non quam bene vivant, sed quamdiu, considerant (inquit Seneca,) cum omnibus possit contingere ut bene vivant; ut diu, nulli.' To live well is both possible and necessary, and yet is disregarded. To live long, is neither possible nor necessary; and yet is sought by almost all. 'Incipiunt vivere cum desinendum est: immo quidam ante desierunt vivere, quam inciperent.' Sen. It is unseasonable we should begin to live, when we should make an end; but it is most unhappy to have made an end

before they do begin. ‘ Pulchrum est (inquit idem,) consummare vitam ante mortem ; et expectare secure reliquam temporis partem.’ Do the great work, and then you may comfortably spend the rest in waiting for the conclusion. Yet you have time, and leave, and helps : you may read and meditate, and pray if you will ; but shortly time will be no more. O let not Satan insult over your carcasses and tormented souls, and say, ‘ Now it is too late ! Now mourn and repent as long as you will ! Now pray, and cry, and spare not !’ O use that faith which beholdeth the invisible world, and maketh future things as present, and then delay and loiter if you can : then waste your hours in idleness or vanity if you dare ! either light or fire shall awake you !

4. Suffer as believers. Fear not the wrath of man ; but endure as seeing him that is invisible ; Heb. xi. 27. Shew plainly, that you seek a better country ; ver. 14. 16. Read often, Heb. xi. xii. Behold the kingdom prepared and secured for you by Christ, and then you will be indifferent which way the wind of human favour or applause shall sit ; or what weather lunatic influences and aspects shall produce. Such a faith will make you, with Abraham, to turn your back on all, and engage in pilgrimage for an inheritance after to be received ; though he knew not whither he went, (with a distinct, particular knowledge) ; Heb. xi. 8. As strangers and travellers, you will not be troubled to leave towns and fields, buildings and wealth, and walks behind you, as knowing that you were but to pass by them, desiring and seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly : and you shall lose nothing by this passing by all in the world ; for God will not be ashamed to be called your God ; and he hath prepared for you a city ; Heb. xi. 13, 16. Seriously respect the recompence of reward, and it will make you “ choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world ;” ver. 25, 26. Stephen’s sight would cause Stephen’s patience. Hold on as Christians : the end is near : “ Let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him that endured such contradic-

tion of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your mind ;” Heb. xii. 2, 3.

You may well endure the buffeting and scorn, if you foresee the honour. You may well endure the crown of thorns, if you foresee the crown of glory: you may endure to be forsaken of all, if you see him that will never fail you nor forsake you. This foretaste of the rivers of pleasure with the Lord, will drown the taste of vinegar and gall. Whine not like worldlings that have lost their portion, when you are stript as bare as Job. If you are true believers, you have all still, for God is All: you have lost nothing; for faith hath made the world as nothing to you: and will you whine and vex yourselves for nothing? Can you call it nothing so frequently and easily in your prayers, and ordinary speech, and do you now recal this, or tell us by your serious grief, that you speak but in hypocrisy and jest. ‘*Frangitur nemo molestiâ adversorum, qui non capitur delectatione prosperorum.*’ August. Had there been less idolatrous love, there would have been less tormenting grief and care. Our life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that we possess. He is not happy that hath them, but he that neither needeth nor desireth them. ‘*Cum in his quæ homines eripiunt, optant, custodiunt, nihil inveneris, non dico quod malis, sed quod velis.*’ Sen. Superfluity doth but burden and break down: the corn that is too rank lodgeth; and the branches break that are overladen with fruit. ‘*Omnia quæ superfluunt nocent: segetem nimia sternit ubertas: rami onere fraguntur, ad maturitatem non pervenit fœcunditas: Idem quoque animis evenit, quos immoderata prosperitas rumpit; quia non tantum in aliorum injuriam, sed etiam in suam utuntur.*’ Sen. It is pleasure, and not pain, that is the world’s most deadly sting. It hath never so much hurt us, as when it hath flattered us into delights or hopes. ‘*Et fera et piscis spe aliqua oblectante decipitur.*’ Sen. Hope is the bait; prosperity and pleasure the net, that souls are ordinarily ensnared by. Men lose not their souls for poverty, but for riches; nor for dishonour, but for honour; nor for sorrow, but for delight.

“*Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque secundis.*”

The luxuriances of prosperity, bring us so frequently under the pruning hook. The surfeits and summer fruits of

fulness and carnal contentments and delights, do put us to the trouble of our sicknesses and our physic. “How hardly shall rich men enter into heaven!” saith he that well knew who should enter. Saith Augustine, ‘*Difficile, immo impossibile est, ut præsentibus et futuris quis fruatur bonis : ut hic ventrem, et ibi mentem impleat : ut à deliciis ad delicias transeat ; et in utroque seculo primus sit ; ut in terrâ et in cœlo appareat gloriosus ?*’ The hope is, that with God such human impossibilities are possible. But it is more terrible than desirable, to be put upon so great a difficulty. Sweet dishes will have wasps and flies ; but most of them are drowned in their delights. Saith Boetius of Prosperity and Adversity ; ‘*Illâ fallit, hæc instruit : illa mendacium specie bonorum mentes fruentium ligat : hæc cogitatione fragilis fælicitatis absolvit. Itaque illam videas ventosam fluentem, suique semper ignaram : hanc sobriam, succinctamque ac ipsius adversitatis exercitatione prudentem.*’ A full meal seems best in the eating ; but a light meal is better the next day. More thank God in heaven for adversity, than for prosperity : and more in hell cry out of the fruit of prosperity, than of adversity. Many did never look towards heaven, till affliction cast them on their backs, so that they could look no other way. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes,” saith David, Psal cxix. 71. “Before I was afflicted, I went astray ;” ver. 76. “In very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me ;” ver. 75. One sight of heaven by faith will force you to reckon “that the sufferings of this present time are unworthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ;” Rom. viii. 18. To suffer for Christ and righteousness sake, is but to turn an unavoidable, fruitless pain, into that which being involuntary, is the more easy, and hath a great reward in heaven ; Matt. v. 11, 12. And to part with that for a crown of life, which else we must part with for nothing. Worldly friends, and wealth, and honour, are summer fruit that will quickly fall. Hungry fowl know where it is harvest, ‘*At simul in tonuit fugiunt.*’ Those that must dwell with you in heaven, are your sure and stedfast friends, ‘*Cætera fortunæ, &c.*’ Those that are now highest, and least acquainted with the tongue of malice, the unfaithfulness of friends, or rage of enemies, shall shortly say,

“ Atque hæc exemplis quondam collecta priorum :
Nunc mihi sunt propriis; cognita vera malis.”

There is but the difference of an ‘ est ’ and an ‘ erit, ’ between their mirth and endless sorrows ; their honour, and their endless shame ; nor between our sorrow and our endless joy. Their final honour is to be embalmed, and their lust to be covered with a sumptuous monument, and their names extolled by the mouths of men, that little know how poor a comfort all this is to the miserable soul. In the height of their honour you may foresee the surgeon opening their bowels, and shewing the receptacles of the treasure of the epicure, and what remains of the price that he received for his betrayed soul. He cuts out the heart with a ‘ Hæ sedes livoris erant : jam pascua vermis ; ’ you next tread on his interred corpse, that is honoured but with a ‘ Hic jacet, ’ Here lieth the body of such an one. And if he have honour to be magnified by fame or history, it is a fool-trap to ensnare the living, but easeth not the soul in hell. And shall we envy men such a happiness as this ? What if they be able to command men’s lives, and to hurt those that they hate for a little while ? Is this a matter of honour or of delight ? A pestilence is more honourable, if destroying be an honour. The devil is more powerful (if God permit him) to do men hurt, than the greatest tyrant in the world. And yet I hope you envy not his happiness, nor are ambitious to partake of it. If witches were not akin to devils, they would never sell their souls for a power to do hurt. And how little do tyrannical worldlings consider, that under a mask of government and honour, they do the same !

Let the world then rejoice while we lament and weep. “ Our sorrow shall be speedily turned into joy ; and our joy shall no man then take from us ; ” John xvi. 20. 22. Envy not a dying man the happiness of a feather-bed, or a merry dream. You think it hard in them to deny you the liberties and comforts of this life, though you look for heaven ; and will you be more cruel than the ungodly ? Will you envy the trifling commodities and delights of earth, to those that are like to have no more, but to lie in hell when the sport is ended ? It is unreasonable impatience that cannot endure to see them in silks and gallantry a few days, that must be so extremely miserable for ever. Your crumbs, and leavings, and overplus is their all. And will you grudge them this



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themselves, in the more sober sort, a heathen would not have said, 'Nondum fœlix es, si non te turba deriserit: si beatus vis esse, cogita hoc primum contemnere, et ab aliis contemni.' Sen. Thou art not yet happy, if the rabble deride thee not: if thou wilt be blessed, learn first to contemn this, and to be contemned of others. No body will deride or persecute us in heaven.

5. Improve your talents and opportunities in your callings as believers; especially you that are governors. God is the original and end of government. The highest are but his ministers; Rom. xiii. 6. This world is but the way unto another. Things seen are for things unseen: and government is to order them to that end: especially by terrifying evil doers, and by promoting holiness in the earth. The moral as well as the natural motion of inferior agents, must proceed from the influence of the superior. The spring and the end of every action truly good, are out of sight. Where these are not discerned, or are ignorantly and maliciously opposed, the action is vitiated, and tendeth to confusion and ruin. God is the end of all holy actions; and carnal self is the end of sin. If God and self are infinitely distinct, you may easily see that the actions materially the same, that are intended to such distant ends, must needs be very distant. Nothing but saving faith and holiness can conquer selfishness in the lowest of the people. But where the flesh hath more plentiful provision, and self is accommodated with the fullest contents of honour and pleasure that the world affords, how difficult a work then is self-denial! And the reign of the flesh is contrary to the reign of Christ. Where the flesh and visible things bear sway, the enemy of Christ bears sway. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to his law, nor can be;" Rom. viii. 7. And how Christ's enemies will receive his laws, and use his messengers, and regard his ways and servants, the most of the world have experience to their cost. The interest of the flesh being contrary to Christ's interest, the competition maintaineth a continual conflict. The word of God doth seem to be against them: the faithful ministers that would save them from their sins, do seem to wrong them, and deal too boldly with them. Were it an Elijah, he would be called "The troubler of Israel;" and meet with an, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy." No measure of prudence, know-

ledge, piety, innocency, meekness or self-denial, will serve to appease the wrath and displeasure of this carnal enmity. If it would, the apostles had escaped it ; or at least it would not have fallen so furiously upon Christ himself. Nay, these are the oil that increase the flame. And Satan hath still the bellows in his hand : he knoweth that if he can corrupt or win the commander, he can rout the army, and ruin them with the greatest ease. It hath been Satan's grand design, since the Christian's name was known on earth, to advance the selfish interest of men against the interest of Christ ; and to entangle the rulers of the world in some cause, that Christ, and his word and servants cannot favour, and so to make them believe that there is a necessity on them to watch against and subdue the interest of Christ. As if it were necessary that the shore be brought to the boat, and not the boat to the shore : and that the physician be brought to the patient's mind, or else destroyed or used as his enemy. I am afraid to speak out the terrible words of God in Scripture that are against such persons, lest you should misunderstand me, and think I misapply them. But Christ feareth no man, and hath not spoken his word in vain ; and his messengers must be faithful, for he will bear them out ; and preventive cautions are easier and safer than reprehensive corrosives. I will but refer you to the texts, that you may peruse them ; Matt. xxi. 44 xviii. 3. 6. xxv. 45, 46. Luke xviii. 7. Psal. ii. Luke xix. 27. Acts ix. 4, 5. 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. Read them with fear as the words of God. Blessed are those rulers and nations of the earth, that perceive and escape this pernicious snare of the grand deceiver, that with all his subtlety and industry, endeavoureth to breed quarrels, and sow dissensions between them and the universal King.

The more God giveth to the carnal and unwise, the more they think themselves engaged against him ; because by his commands he seems to take it from them again, by crossing the flesh, which would use it only to fulfil its lusts. Like a dog that fawneth on you till he have his bone ; and then snarleth at you, lest you take it from him ; and will fly in your face if you offer to meddle with it. Men readily confess that they have their wealth from God ; because it cannot be denied, and because they would use the name of God, as a cover to hide their covetousness, and unlawful ways of

getting. But if you judge by their usage of it, and their returns to God; you would think that they believed, that they had nothing at all from God but some injuries; and that all their benefits and good were from themselves. The Turkish and Tartarian emperor will say, that all his grandeur and power is from God; that by making it most divine, he may procure the more reverence and obedience to himself: but when he hath said so for his own interest, he useth the same power against God and his interest, to the banishing of his word and holy worship, and the forbidding the preaching of the Gospel of salvation; and to the cherishing of tyranny, pride and lust. As if God had armed them against himself, and made his officers to be his enemies; and gave them power that they might powerfully hinder men's salvation, and made them great, to be great oppressors.

As a believing pastor is a priest that standeth between God and the people, to mediate under the great Mediator; to receive from God his word and ordinances, and deliver them to the flock; and to offer up supplications in their names to God: So believing governors of civil societies or families, receive from God a power to rule the subjects for their good, and they use it to make the subjects good, that God may be pleased and honoured by all: and the obedience which they require, is such as may be given to God in them. They take power from God to use it for God; and are so much more excellent than the greatest of ambitious, carnal princes, as the pleasing and honouring of God is a more excellent design and work, than the gratifying of fleshly lust, and the advancement of a lump of clay. The kingdoms of the world would all be used as the kingdoms of the Lord, if the everlasting kingdom were well believed. The families of men would be sanctified as churches unto God, if the eternal house not made with hands, were truly taken for their home, and their trade were to lay up a treasure in heaven. In cities and countries, brethren would dwell in holy peace, and all concur in honouring God, if once they were made fellow citizens with the saints, and their burgeship and conversation were in heaven; Ephes. ii. 19. Phil. iii. 20, 21.

6. Resist temptations as believers. If you live by faith, then fight against the world and flesh by faith. Faith must

be your helmet, and the word of faith must be your shield ; (Ephes. vi. 16.) and your victory itself must be by faith ; 1 John v. 4. If satan tell the flesh of the preferment, riches or the pleasures of lust, answer him with a believing foresight of God's judgment, and the life to come. Never look on the baits of sin alone, but still look at once on God and on eternity. As a just judge will hear both parties speak, or see their evidences before he will determine : so tell the tempter, that as you have heard what fleshly allurements can say, you will see also what the word of God saith, and take a view of heaven and hell, and then you will answer him.

7. Rejoice as believers. Can faith set open the windows of the soul, and no light of heavenly pleasures enter ? Can it peruse the map of the land of promise, or see and taste the bunch of grapes, without any sweetness to the soul ? This is the truest belief of heaven, which maketh men most like those that are in heaven ! And what is their character, work and portion, but the joys of heavenly light and love ? Can we believe that we shall live in heaven for ever ? Can we believe that very shortly we shall be there, and not rejoice in such believing ? I know we commonly say, that the uncertainty of our proper title is the cause of all our want of joy : but if that were all, if that were the first and greatest cause, and our belief of the promise itself were lively, we should at least set our hearts on heaven as the most delightful and desirable state : and love would work by more eager desires and diligent seekings, till it had reached assurance, and cast out the hindrances of our joy. How much would a mere philosopher rejoice, if he could find out natural evidence of so much as we know by faith ! You may perceive what their content in finding it would be, by their exceeding pains in seeking. The unwearied studies by day and night, which many of them used, with the contempt of the riches and greatness of the world, do tell us how glad they would have been to have seen but half so far as we may. If they could but discover more clearly and certainly, the principles, and elements, and forms of beings ; the nature of spirits ; the causes of motion ; the nature and cause of light and heat ; the order, course and harmony of the universal system of the world ; what joyful acclamations would this

produce in the literate, studious sort of men? . What joy then should it be to us, to know by faith the God that made us; the creation of the world; the laws and promises of our Creator; the mysteries of redemption and regeneration; the frame of the new creature; the entertainment of the spirits of the just with Christ; the judgment which all the world must undergo; the work and company which we shall have hereafter; and the endless joys which all the sanctified shall possess in the sight and love of God for ever! How blessed an invention would it be, if all the world could be brought again to the use of one universal language! Or if all the churches could be perfectly reconciled, how joyful would the author of so great a work be! Should we not then rejoice, who foresee by faith a far more perfect union and consent than ever must be expected here on earth?

Alas! the ordinary lowness of our comforts doth tell us that our faith is very small! I say not so much 'the sorrows of a doubting heart,' as the little joy which we have in the forethoughts of heaven, when our title seemeth not much doubtful to us: for those sorrows shew that such esteem it a joyful place, and would rejoice if their title were but cleared. But when we have neither the sorrow nor sollicitousness of the afflicted soul, nor yet the joy which is any whit suitable to the belief of such everlasting joys, we may know what to judge of such an ineffectual belief; at best, it is very low and feeble. It is a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory," which unseen things should cause in a believer; (1 Pet. i. 6—8.) because it is "an exceeding eternal weight of glory" which he believeth; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

8. Finally, learn to die also as believers. The life of faith must bring you to the very entrance into glory: where one doth end the other begins. As our dark life in the womb by nutriment from the mother, continueth till our passage into the open world. You would die in the womb, if faith should cease before it bring you to full intuition and fruition. "By faith Joseph when he died made mention of the departing of the children of Israel;" Heb. xi. 22. Joseph's faith did not die before him. "These all died in faith, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and declaring that they sought a better country;" Heb. xi. 3. They that live by faith, must die in faith; yea, and die by faith too. Faith must fetch in their dying comforts. And

O how full; and how near a treasure hath it to go to! To die to this world, is to be born into another. Beggars are best when they are abroad. The travail of the ungodly is better to them than their home: but the believer's home is so much better than his travail, that he hath little cause to be afraid of coming to his journey's end; but should rather every step cry out, 'O when shall I be at home with Christ!' Is it earth or heaven that you have prayed for, and laboured for, and waited, and suffered for till now? And doth he indeed pray, and labour, and suffer for heaven, who would not come thither?

It is faith which overcometh the world and the flesh, which must also overcome the fears of death, and can look with boldness into the loathsome grave, and can triumph over both as victorious through Christ. It is faith which can say, 'Go forth, O my soul; depart in peace: thy course is finished: thy warfare is accomplished: the day of triumph is now at hand: thy patience hath no longer work: go forth with joy: the morning of thy endless joys is near; and the night of fears and darkness at an end. Thy terrible dreams are ending in eternal pleasures; the glorious light will banish all thy dreadful spectres, and resolve all those doubts which are bred and cherished in the dark. They whose employment is their weariness and toil, do take the night of darkness and cessation for their rest; but this is their weariness: defect of action is thy toil; and thy most grievous labour is to do too little work; and thy incessant vision, love and praise, will be thy incessant ease and pleasure; and thy endless work will be thy endless rest! Depart, O my soul, with peace and gladness! Thou leavest not a world, where wisdom and piety, justice and sobriety, love, and peace, and order do prevail; but a world of ignorance and folly, of brutish sensuality and rage, of impiety and malignant enmity to good; a world of injustice and oppression, and of confusion and distracting strifes! Thou goest not to a world of darkness and of wrath, but of light and love; from hellish malice, to perfect amity; from Bedlam rage, to perfect wisdom; from mad confusion, to perfect order; to sweetest unity and peace; even to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to the celestial, glorious city of God! Thou goest not from heaven to earth, from holiness to sin, from the sight of God, into an infernal dungeon; but from

earth to heaven, from sin and imperfection into perfect holiness; and from palpable darkness, into the vital splendour of the face of God! Thou goest not among enemies, but to dearest friends; not amongst mere strangers, but to many whom thou hast known by sight, and to more whom thou hast known by faith, and must know by the sweetest communion for ever. Thou goest not to unsatisfied justice, nor to a condemning, unreconciled God; but to love itself, to infinite goodness, the fountain of all created and communicated good; to the Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of souls; to him who prepared heaven for thee, and now hath prepared thee for heaven. Go forth then in triumph, and not with terror, O my soul! The prize is won: possess the things which thou hast so long prayed for, and sought! Make haste and enter into thy master's joy! Go view the glory which thou hast so long heard of; and take thy place in the heavenly choir; and bear thy part in their celestial melody! Sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God; and receive that which Christ in his covenant did promise to give thee at the last. Go boldly to that blessed God, with whom thou hast so powerful a Mediator, and to the throne of whose grace, thou hast had so oft and sweet access. If heaven be thy fear or sorrow, what can be thy joy? And where wilt thou have refuge, if thou fly from God? If perfect, endless pleasures be thy terror, where then dost thou expect content? If grace have taught thee long ago to prefer the heavenly and durable felicity, refuse it not now when thou art so near the port. If it have taught thee long ago to be as a stranger in this Sodom, and to renounce this sinful world and flesh, linger not now as unwilling to depart; repent not of thy choice when all that the world can do for thee is past, repent not of thy warfare, when thou hast got the victory; nor of thy voyage, when thou art past the storms and waves, and ready to land at the haven of felicity.

Thus faith may sing our 'nunc dimittis,' when the flesh is loathest to be dissolved.

But we must live by faith if we would thus die by faith. Such a death doth not use to be the period of a fleshly, worldly life; nor of a careless, dull and negligent life. Nature, which brought us into the world, without our forecast or care, will turn us out of the world without it. But it will



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But on this subject (supposing it most weighty) I have written many treatises already ; (the Second Part of “ The Saints’ Rest ;” “ The Unreasonableness of Infidelity ;” and last of all, “ The Reasons of the Christian Religion ;” besides others which handle it on the bye). And somewhat is said in the beginning of this discourse But yet because in so great a matter I am more afraid of doing too little than too much, I will here give you an index of some of the chief helps, to be close together before you for your memories, to be the constant fuel of your faith.

In the work of faith it is first needful that you get all the perquisite helps of natural light, and be well acquainted with their order and evidence, and their usefulness to befriend the supernatural revelations ; for it is supposed that we are men before we are Christians ; we were created before we were redeemed ; and we must know that there is a God, before we can know that we have offended him, or that we need a Saviour to reconcile us to him. And we must know that we have reasonable souls, before we can know that sin hath corrupted them, or that grace must sanctify them. And we must know, that whatsoever God saith is true, before we can believe that the Scripture is true, as being his revelation. Faith is an act of reason, and believing is a kind of knowing, even a knowing by the testimony of him whom we believe, because we have sufficient reason to believe him.

2. And next we must be well acquainted with the evidence of supernatural truth, which presupposeth the aforesaid natural verities. I shall set both before you briefly in their order.

1. Think well of the nature of your souls, of their faculties or powers, their excellency and their proper use : and then you will find that you are not mere brutes, who know not their Creator, and live not by a law, and think not of another world, nor fear any sufferings after death ; but that you have reason, freewill, and executive power to know your Maker, and to live by rule, and to hope for a reward in another life, and to fear a punishment hereafter. And that, as no wise artificer maketh any thing in vain, so God is much less to be thought to have given you such souls and faculties in vain.

2. Consider next how all the world declareth to you,

that there is a God, who is infinitely powerful, wise and good. And that it is not possible that all things which we see should have no cause ; or that the derived power, and wisdom, and goodness of the creature, should not proceed from that which is more excellent in the first and total cause ; or that God should give more than he had to give.

3. Consider next in what relation such a creature must needs stand to such a Creator. If he made us of nothing, it is not possible but that he must be our Owner, and we and all things absolutely his own. And if he be our Maker and Owner, and be infinitely powerful, wise and good ; and we be reasonable, free agents, made to be guided by laws or moral means unto our end, it is not possible but that we should stand related to him, as subjects to their rightful governor. And if he be our Creator, Owner and Ruler, and also infinitely good, and the grand benefactor of the world ; and if the nature of our souls be, to love God as good ; it cannot be possible that he should not be our End, who is our Creator ; and that we should not be related to him as to the Chiefest Good, both originally as our Benefactor, and finally as our End.

4. And then it is easy for you next to see, what duty you owe to that God to whom you are thus related. That if you are absolutely his own, you should willingly be at his absolute dispose. And if he be your Sovereign Ruler, you should labour most diligently to know his laws, and absolutely to obey them. And if he be infinitely good, and your Benefactor and your End, you are absolutely bound to love him most devotedly, and to place your own felicity in his love. All this is so evidently the duty of man to God by nature, that nothing but madness can deny it. And this is it which we call sanctification, or holiness to the Lord. And our cohabitation and relation to men will tell us, that justice and charity are our duty as to them. And when a man is fully satisfied that holiness, justice and charity are our duty, he hath a great advantage for his progress towards the Christian faith.

To which let me add, that as to ourselves also, it is undeniably our duty to take more care for our souls, than for our bodies, and to rule our senses and passions by our reason, and to subject our lower faculties to the higher ; and so to use all sensible and present things, as conduceth to

the public good, and to the advancement of our nobler part, and to our greater benefit, though it cross our sensual appetites.

All this being unquestionably our natural duty, we see that man was made to live in holiness, justice, charity, temperance, and rational regularity in the world.

5. When you have gone thus far, consider next how far men are generally from the performance of this duty; and how backward human nature is to it, even while they cannot deny it to be their duty: and you will soon perceive that God who made it their duty, did never put in them this enmity thereto; nor ever made them without some aptitude to perform it. And if any would infer that their indisposedness proveth it to be none of their duty, the nature of man will fully confute him; and the conscience and confession of all the sober part of the world. What wretch so blind (if he believe a Deity) who will not confess that he should love God with all his heart, and that justice, charity and sobriety are his duty; and that his sense should be ruled by his reason, &c.? The evidence before given is not to be denied: and therefore something is marred in nature. Some enemy hath seduced man: and some deplorable change hath befallen him.

6. Yea, if you had no great backwardness to this duty yourself, consider what it must cost you faithfully to perform it, in such a malignant world as we now live in! What envy and wrath, what malice and persecution, what opposition and discouragements on every side we must expect! Universal experience is too full a proof of this: (besides what it costeth our restrained flesh).

7. Proceed then to think further, that certainly God hath never appointed us so much duty, without convenient motives to perform it. It cannot be that he should make us more noble than the brutes, to be more miserable: or that he should make holiness our duty, that it might be our loss, or our calamity. If there were no other life but this, and men had no hopes of future happiness, nor any fears of punishment, what a hell would this world be! Heart-wickedness would be but little feared; nor heart-duty regarded: secret sin against princes, states, and all degrees, would be boldly committed, and go unpunished (for the most part). The sins of princes, and of all that have power to defeat the



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Nay then, these heavenly desires would be themselves our sins, as being the following of a lie, the aspiring after a state which is above us, and the abuse and loss of our faculties and time. And sensuality would be more like to be our virtue, as being natural to us, and a seeking of our most real felicity.

The common conscience of mankind doth justify the wisdom and virtue of a temperate, holy, heavenly person; and acknowledgeth that our heavenly desires are of God: and doth God give men both natural faculties, which shall never come to the perfection which is their end? And also gracious desires, which shall but deceive us, and never be satisfied? If God had made us for the enjoyments of brutes, he would have given us but the knowledge and desires of brutes.

Every king and mortal judge can punish faults against man with death: and hath God no greater or further punishment for sins as committed against himself? And are his rewards no greater than a man's?

These, and many more such evidences may assure you that there is another life of rewards and punishments; and that this life is not our final state, but only a time of preparation thereunto. Settle this deeply and fixedly in your minds.

8. And look up to the heavenly regions, and think, 'Is this world so replenished with inhabitants, both sea and land, and air itself? And can I dream that the vast and glorious orbs and regions are all uninhabited? Or that they have not more numerous and glorious possessors than this small, opacous spot of earth?

And then think, that those higher creatures are intellectual spirits; (this is many ways apparent;) and also of the communion which they have with man. And when we find also an intellectual nature in ourselves, why should we not believe that our likeness of nature doth infer our likeness in our future duration and abode.

9. And mark well but the inward and outward temptations, which solicit all the world to sin; and what notable evidences there be in many of them, of an invisible power; and you will easily believe that man hath a soul to save or lose, which is of longer duration than the body.

10. Lastly, if yet there be any doubt, consider but of the

sensible evidences of apparitions, witchcraft and possessions, and it cannot choose but much confirm you. Though much be feigned in histories of such things, yet the world hath abundant evidence of that which was certainly unfeigned. See the devil of Mascon; Mr. Mompesson's story lately acted and published; Remigius, Bodinus, Danæus, &c. of witches, Lavater de Spectris; and what I have written elsewhere.

CHAPTER II.

The true method of Inquiry into the Supernatural Evidences of Faith, and Rules therein to be observed.

WHEN you have thus seen what evidence there is of God, and his government, and of a life of reward and punishment hereafter, and of the natural obligations which lie on man to a holy, just and sober life; and of the depraved state of the world, which goeth so contrary to such undoubted duty; and how certain all this is, even by natural revelation; proceed next to consider what supernatural revelation God hath added, both to confirm you in the same truths, and to make known such other as were necessary for mankind to know. Where I must first direct you in the true method of inquiry, and then set before you the things themselves, which you are to know.

1. Think not that every unprepared mind is immediately capable of the truth (either this, or any other, except the first principles which are 'nota per se,' or are next to sense). All truth requireth a capacity, and due preparation of the recipient. The plainest principles of any art or science, are not understood by novices at the first sight or hearing: and therefore it were vain to imagine that things of the greatest distance in history, or profundity in doctrine, can be comprehended at the first attempt, by a disused and unfurnished understanding. There must be at least, as much time and study, and help supposed and used; to the full discerning of the evidences of faith, as are allowed to the attainment of common sciences. Though grace, in less time, may give men so much light as is necessary to salvation; yet he that will be able to defend the truth, and answer objections, and

attain establishing satisfaction in his own mind, must (ordinarily) have proportionable helps, and time, and studies; unless he look to be taught by miracles.

2. Remember that it is a practical and heavenly doctrine which you are to learn: it is the art of loving God, and being happy in his love: and therefore a worldly, sensual, vicious soul, must needs be under very great disadvantage for the receiving of such a kind of truths. Do not therefore impute that to the doubtfulness of the doctrine, which is but the effect of the enmity and incapacity of your minds. How can he presently relish the spiritual and heavenly doctrine of the Gospel, who is drowned in the love and care of contrary things? Such men receive not the things of the Spirit: they seem to them both foolishness and undesirable.

3. Think not that the history of things done so long ago, and so far off, should have no more obscurities, nor be liable to any more objections, than of that which was done in the time and country where you live. Nor yet that things done in the presence of others, and words spoken in their hearing only, should be known to you otherwise than by historical evidence, (unless every revelation to others, must have a new revelation to bring it to each individual person in the world). And think not that he who is a stranger to all other helps of church-history, should be as well able to understand the Scripture history, as those that have those other helps.

4. Think not that the narrative of things done in a country and age so remote, and to us unknown, should not have many difficulties, arising from our ignorance of the persons, places, manners, customs, and many circumstances, which if we had known would easily have resolved all such doubts.

5. Think not that a book which was written so long ago, in so remote a country, in a language which few do fully understand, and which may since then have several changes, as to phrases, and proverbial and occasional speeches, should have no more difficulties in it, than a book that were written at home, in the present age in our country language, and the most usual dialect. To say nothing of our own language, what changes are made in all other tongues, since the times that the Gospel was recorded! Many proverbial speeches and phrases may be now disused and unknown, which were



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servient helps to our religion ; but are not strictly our religion itself.

8. As the use of the Scripture must thus be judged of, according to the purpose of the Holy Spirit ; so the perfection of the Scripture must be judged of, in relation to its intended use. It was not written to be a system of physics, nor oratory ; nor to decide grammatical controversies about words ; but to record in apt expressions the things which God would have men to know, in order to their faith, their duty, and their happiness. And in this respect it is a perfect word. But you must not imagine that it is so far the word of God himself, as if God had shewed in it his fullest skill, and made it as perfect in every respect, both phrase and order, as God could do. And if you meet in it with several words, which you think are less grammatical, logical, or rhetorical, than many other men could speak, and which really savour of some human imperfection, remember that this is not at all derogatory to Christianity ; but rather tendeth to the strengthening of our faith ; for the Scriptures are perfect to their intended use ; and God did purposely chuse men of imperfect oratory, to be his apostles, that his kingdom might not be in word, but in power ; and that our faith might not be built upon the wisdom and oratory of man, but on the supernatural operations of the Almighty God : as David's sling and stone must kill Goliath : so unlearned men, that cannot outwit the world to deceive them, shall by the Spirit and miracles convince them. Looking for that in the Scripture, which God never intended it for, doth tempt the unskilful into unbelief.

9. Therefore you must be sure to distinguish the Christian religion, which is the vital part or kernel of the Scriptures, from all the rest ; and to get well planted in your mind, the sum of that religion itself. And that is briefly contained in the two sacraments, and more largely in the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the decalogue, the summaries of our belief, desire and practice. And then wonder no more that the other parts of Scripture, have some things of less moment, than that a man hath fingers, nails and hair, as well as a stomach, heart and head.

10. Distinguish therefore between the method of the Christian religion, and the method of the particular books

of Scriptures. The books were written on several occasions, and in several methods; and though that method of them all, be perfect, in order to their proper end; yet it is not necessary that there be in the method no human imperfection, or that one or all of them, be written in that method which is usually most logical, and best. But the frame of religion contained in these books, is composed in the most perfect method in the world. And those systems of theology which endeavour to open this method to you, do not feign it, or make it of themselves; but only attempt the explication of what they find in the Holy Scriptures, synthetically or analytically: (though indeed all attempts have yet fallen short of any full explication of this divine and perfect harmony.)

11. Therefore the true order of settling your faith, is not first to require a proof that all the Scriptures is the word of God; but first to prove the marrow of them, which is properly called the Christian religion, and then to proceed to strengthen your particular belief of the rest. The contrary opinion, which hath obtained with many in this age, hath greatly hindered the faith of the unskilful; and it came from a preposterous care of the honour of the Scriptures, through an excessive opposition to the Papists who undervalue them. For hence it comes to pass, that every seeming contradiction, or inconsistency in any book of Scripture, in chronology or any other respect, is thought to be a sufficient cause, to make the whole cause of Christianity as difficult as that particular text is: and so all those readers, who meet with great or insuperable difficulties, in their daily reading of the Scriptures, are thereby exposed to equal temptations, to damning infidelity in itself: so that if the tempter draw any man to doubt of the standing still of the sun in the time of Joshua; of the life of Jonas in the belly of the whale; or any other such passage in any one book of the Scriptures, he must equally doubt of all his religion.

But this was not the ancient method of faith: it was many years after Christ's resurrection, before any one book of the New Testament was written; and almost an age before it was finished: and all that time the Christian churches had the same faith and religion as we have now; and the same foundation of it: that is, the Gospel preached to them by the apostles: but what they delivered to them by word

of mouth, is now delivered to us in their writings, with all the appurtenances and circumstances, which every Christian did not then hear of. And there were many articles of the Christian faith, which the Old Testament did not at all make known: (as that this Jesus is the Christ; that he was born of the Virgin Mary, and is actually crucified, risen, and ascended, &c.) And the method of the apostles was, to teach the people the sum of Christianity (as Paul doth, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, &c. and Peter, Acts ii.) and to bring them to the belief of that, and then baptise them, before they wrote any thing to them, or taught them the rest which is now the Holy Scriptures; they were first to disciple the nations and baptise them, and then to teach them to observe all things whatever Christ commanded: and the main bulk of the Scriptures is made up of this last, and of the main subservient histories and helps.

And accordingly it was the custom of all the primitive churches, and ancient doctors, to teach the people first the creed and sum of Christianity, and to make them Christians before they taught them so much as to know what books the canonical Scriptures did contain; for they had the sum of Christianity itself delivered down collaterally by the two hands of tradition. 1. By the continuation of baptism, and public church-professions, was delivered the creed or covenant by itself. And 2. By the Holy Scriptures, where it was delivered with all the rest; and from whence every novice was not put to gather it of himself, but had it collected to his hand by the churches.

And you may see in the writings of all the ancient defenders of Christianity (Justin, Athenagoras, Tatianus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Arnobius, Theophil. Antioch, Lactantius, Tertullian, Eusebius, Augustine, &c.) that they used the method which I now direct you to.

And if you consider it well, you will find that the miracles of Christ himself, and all those of his apostles after him, were wrought for the confirmation of Christianity itself immediately, and mostly before the particular epistles or books were written; and therefore were only remotely and consequentially for the confirmation of those books as such: as they proved that the writers of them were guided by the infallible Spirit, in all the proper work of their office; of which the writing of the Scriptures was a part.



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ligion, even the faith then professed, and the worship and obedience then exercised. 2. The books themselves, of the Holy Scriptures, which contain all this, with much more. But we are so far from thinking that apostolical oral tradition, is a supplement to the Scriptures, as being larger than them, that we believe the Scriptures to be much larger than such tradition; and that we have no certainty by any other Scriptural tradition, of any more than the common matters of Christianity, which all the churches are agreed in. But he that will not believe the most universal practice and history of the church or world in a matter of fact must in reason much less believe his eyesight.

12. When you have soundly proved your foundation, take not every difficult objection which you cannot answer, to be a sufficient cause of doubting: for if the fundamentals be proved truths, you may trust to that proof, and be sure that there are ways of solving the seeming inconsistent points, though you are not yet acquainted with them. There are few truths so clear, which a sophister may not clog with difficulties; and there is scarce any man that hath so comprehensive a knowledge of the most certain truths, as to be able to answer all that can be said against it.

13. Come not to this study in a melancholy or distracted frame of mind; for in such a case you are (ordinarily) incapable of so great a work, as the trial of the grounds of faith: and therefore must live upon the ground-work before laid, and wait for a fitter time to clear it:

14. When new doubts arise, mark whether they proceed not from the advantage which the tempter findeth in your minds, rather than from the difficulty of the thing itself; and whether you have not formerly had good satisfaction against the same doubts which now perplex you: if so, suffer not every discomposure of your minds, to become a means of unbelief: and suffer not Satan to command you to dispute your faith at his pleasure; for if he may choose the time, he may choose the success. Many a man hath cast up a large account well, or written a learned treatise or position well, who cannot clear up all objected difficulties on a sudden, nor without books tell you all that he before wrote; especially if he be half drunk or sleepy, or in the midst of other thoughts or business.

15. When you are once persuaded of the truth of Christianity, and the Holy Scriptures, think not that you need not study it any more, because you do not already confidently believe it; for if your faith be not built on such cogent evidence as will warrant the conclusion, (whether it be at the present sound or not) you know not what change assaults may make upon you (as we have known them do on some ancient eminent professors of the strictest godliness, who have turned from Christ, and the belief of immortality.)

Take heed how you understand the common saying of the schools, that faith differeth from knowledge, in that it hath not evidence: it hath not evidence of sense indeed; nor of the immediate evidence of things invisible, as in themselves; but as they are the conclusions which follow the principles which are in themselves more evident. It is evident that God is true; and we can prove by good evidence, that the Christian verity is his revelation: and therefore it is evident (though not immediately in itself) that the matter of that word or revelation is true. And as Mr. Richard Hooker truly saith, 'No man indeed believeth beyond the degree of evidence of truth which appeareth to him, how confidently soever they may talk.' I remember that our excellent Usher answered me to this case, as out of Ariminensis, that 'Faith hath evidence of credibility, and science hath evidence of certainty.' But undoubtedly an evidence of divine revelation, is evidence of certainty. And all evidence of divine credibility, is evidence of certainty; though of human faith and credibility, the case is otherwise.

16. Yea, think not that you have done the settling of your faith, when once you have found out the soundest evidences, and are able to answer all objections; for you must grow still in the fuller discerning and digesting the same evidences which you have discerned; for you may hold them so loosely, that they may easily be wrested from you: and you may see them with so clear and full a knowledge, as shall establish your mind against all ordinary causes of mutation. It is one kind (or degree rather) of knowledge of the same things, which the pupil, and another which the doctor hath. I am sure the knowledge which I have now of the evidences of the Christian verity, is much different from what I had fifty years ago, when perhaps I could say near as much as now; and used the same arguments.

17. Consider well the great contentions of philosophers ; and the great uncertainty of most of those notions, to which the infidels would reduce our faith, or which they would make the test by which to try it. They judge Christianity uncertain, because it agreeth not with their uncertainties, or certain errors.

18. Enslave not your reason to the objects of sense : while we are in the body, our souls are so imprisoned in flesh, and have so much to do with worldly things, that most men by averseness and disuse, can hardly at all employ their minds about any higher things than sensitive ; nor go any further than sense conducteth them. He that will not use his soul to contemplate things invisible, will be as unfit for believing, as a lady is to travel a thousand miles on foot, who never went out of her doors, but in a sedan or coach.

19. Where your want of learning, or exercise, or light, doth cause any difficulties which you cannot overcome, go to the more wise and experienced believers, and pastors of the church, to be your helpers ; for it is their office to be both the preservers and expounders of the sacred doctrine, and to be the helpers of the people's faith. " The priest's lips shall preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts ;" Mal. ii. 7.

20. Lastly, Faithfully practice with love and alacrity what you do believe, lest God in justice leave you to disbelieve that which you would not love and practice.

So much to direct you in the method of your endeavours, for the getting and strengthening of faith.

CHAPTER III.

The Evidences of Faith.

THESE things in the order of your inquiry being presupposed, proceed to the consideration of the evidences themselves, which fully prove the Christian verity. And here, omitting the preparatory considerations, recited at large in my " Reasons of the Christian Religion," I shall only set before you the grand evidence itself, with a brief recital of



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much of the demonstrative impressions of the nature of God, as may fully assure us that he himself is the approving cause.

And as the sun hath a double light, 'lux et lumen,' its essential light in itself, and its emitted beams, or communicated light; so the Spirit and image of God, by which Christ and Christianity are demonstrated, are partly that which is essential, constitutive, and inherent, and partly that which is sent and communicated from him to others.

In the person of Christ there is the most excellent image of God. 1. Wonderful power, by which he wrought miracles, and commanded sea and land, men and devils, and raised the dead, and raised himself; and is now the glorious Lord of all things. 2. Wonderful wisdom, by which he formed his laws, and kingdom, and by which he knew the hearts of men, and prophesied of things to come. 3. Most wonderful love and goodness, by which he healed all diseases, and by which he saved miserable souls, and procured our happiness at so dear a rate.

But as the essential light of the sun is too glorious to be well observed by us; but the emitted light is it which doth affect our eyes, and is the immediate object of our sight; at least that we can best endure and use; so the essential perfections of Jesus Christ, are not so immediately and ordinarily fit for our observation and use; as the lesser communicated beams, which he sent forth. . And these are either such as were the immediate effects of the Spirit in Christ himself, or his personal operations, or else the effects of his Spirit in others: and that is either such as went before him, or such as were present with him, or such as followed after him: even as the emitted light of the sun, is either that which is next to its essence; or that which streameth further to other creatures: and this last is either that which it sendeth to us before its own appearing or rising, or that which accompanieth its appearing, or that which it leaveth behind it as it setteth or passeth away; so must we distinguish in the present case.

But all this is but one light, and one Spirit.

So then I shall in order speak. 1. Of that Spirit in the words and works of Christ himself, which constituteth the Christian religion. 2. That Spirit in the prophets and fathers before Christ, which was the antecedent light.

3. That Spirit in Christ's followers, which was the concomitant and subsequent light or witness: Both, 1. In those next his abode on earth: And 2. Of those that are more remote.

CHAPTER IV.

The Image of God's Wisdom.

I. AND first, observe the three parts of God's image, or impress upon the Christian religion in itself as containing the whole work of man's redemption, as it is found in the works and doctrine of Christ.

1. The wisdom of it appeareth in these particular observations (which yet shew it to us but very defectively, for want of the clearness, and the integrality, and the order of our knowledge: for to see but here and there a parcel of one entire frame or work, and to see those few parcels as dislocated, and not in their proper places and order; and all this but with a dark imperfect sight, is far from that full and open view of the manifold wisdom of God in Christ, which angels and superior intellects have).

1. Mark how wisely God hath ordered it, that the three essentialities in the divine nature, power, intellect and will, omnipotency, wisdom and goodness, and the Three Persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and the three causalities of God, as the efficient, directive, and final cause, (of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things) should have three most eminent specimens or impressions in the world, or three most conspicuous works to declare and glorify them; viz. nature, grace and glory. And that God should accordingly stand related to man in three answerable relations, viz. as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Perfecter (by holiness initially, and glory finally).

2. How wisely it is ordered, that seeing man's love to God is both his greatest duty, and his perfection and felicity, there should be some standing eminent means for the attraction and excitation of our love: and this should be the most eminent manifestation of the love of God to us; and withal, of his own most perfect holiness and goodness;

and that as we have as much need of the sense of his goodness as of his power, (loving him being our chief work) that there should be as observable a demonstration of his goodness extant, as the world is of his power.

3. Especially when man had fallen by sin from the love of God, to the love of his carnal self, and of the creature; and when he was fallen under vindictive justice, and was conscious of the displeasure of his Maker, and had made himself an heir of hell; and when man's nature can so hardly love one that in justice standeth engaged or resolved to damn him, forsake him, and hate him: how wisely is it ordered, that he that would recover him to his love, should first declare his love to the offender in the fullest sort, and should reconcile himself unto him, and shew his readiness to forgive him, and to save him, yea, to be his felicity and his chiefest good; that so the remedy may be answerable to the disease, and to the duty.

4. How wisely is it thus contrived, that the frame and course of man's obedience, should be appointed to consist in love and gratitude, and to run out in such praise and cheerful duty as is animated throughout by love; that so sweet a spring may bring forth answerable streams: that so the goodness of our Master may appear in the sweetness of our work; and we may not serve the God of love and glory, like slaves, with a grudging weary mind; but like children with delight and quietness: and our work and way may be to us a foretaste of our reward and end.

5. And yet how meet was it, that while we live in such a dark material world, in a body of corruptible flesh, among enemies and snares, our duty should have somewhat of caution and vigilancy, and therefore of fear and godly sorrow, to teach us to relish grace the more: and that our condition should have in it much of necessity and trouble, to drive us homeward to God, who is our rest. And how aptly doth the very permission of sin itself subserve this end.

6. How wisely is it thus contrived, that glory at last should be better relished, and that man who hath the joy should give God the glory; and be bound to this by a double obligation.

7. How aptly is this remedying design, and all the work of man's redemption, and all the precepts of the Gospel, built upon, or planted into the law of natural perfection:



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11. And how meet was it that he who was the monarch or deputy of God, should be also the Mediator ! And that a polluted sinner dwelling in clay, should not come immediately to God, but by a Reconciler, who is worthy to prevail.

12. And when we had lost the knowledge of God, and of the world to come, and of the way thereto ; yea, and of ourselves too, and our own immortality of soul ; how meet was it that a sure Revelation should settle us, that we might know what to seek, and whither to return, and by what way ! seeing light must be the guide of our love and power. And who could so infallibly and satisfactorily do this, as a Teacher sent from God, of most perfect knowledge and veracity.

13. And when God intended the free forgiveness of our sins, how meet was it that he who would be the Mediator of our pardon, should yield to those terms, which are consistent with the ends of government, and expose not the wisdom, and veracity, and justice, and the laws of God to the world's contempt : if no mark of odiousness should be put upon sin, nor any demonstration of justice been made, the devil would have triumphed, and said, ' Did not I say truer than God ? when he told you of dying, and I told you that you should not die ? ' And if the grand penalty had been remitted to the world, for four thousand years together successively, without any sufficient demonstration of God's justice undertaken, why should any sinner have feared hell to the world's end ? If you say, that repentance alone might be sufficient, I answer, 1. That is no vindication of the justice and truth of the Law-maker. 2. Who should bring a sinner to repentance, whose heart is corrupted with the love of sin ? 3. It would hinder repentance, if men knew that God can forgive all the world upon bare repentance, without any reparation of the breaches made by sin, in the order of the world. For if he that threateneth future misery or death for sin, can absolutely dispense with that commination, they may think that he may do so as easily by his threatening of death to the impenitent.

If you say, that threatenings in a law, are not false when they are not fulfilled, because they speak not ' de eventu,' but ' de debito pænæ ;' I answer, they speak directly only ' de debito ;' but withal he that maketh a law, doth thereby

say, This shall be the rule of your lives, and of my ordinary judgment. And therefore consequently they speak of an ordinary event also: and they are the rule of just judgment, and therefore justice must not be contemned by their contempt.

Or if any shall think, that all this proveth not a demonstration of justice on the Redeemer to be absolutely necessary, but that God could have pardoned the penitent without it; it is nevertheless manifest that this was a very wise and congruous way: as he that cannot prove that God could not have illuminated, and moved, and quickened the inferior sensitives without the sun, may yet prove that the sun is a noble creature, in whose operations God's wisdom, and power, and goodness do appear.

14. And how agreeable is this doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ, to the common doctrine of sacrificing, which hath been received throughout almost all the world! And who can imagine any other original of that practice, so early and so universally obtaining, than either Divine Revelation, or somewhat even in nature, which beareth witness to the necessity of a demonstration of God's justice and displeasure against sin?

15. How wisely is it determined of God, that he who undertakes all this; should be man, and yet more than man, even God? That the Monarch of mankind, and the Mediator, and the Teacher of man, and the sacrifice for sin, should not be only of another kind; but that he be one that is fit to be familiar with man, and to be interested naturally in his concerns; and one that is by nature and nearness capable of these undertakings and relations? And yet that he be so high and near the Father, as may put a sufficient value on his works, and make him most meet to meditate for us?

16. How wisely is it ordered, that with a perfect doctrine, we should have the pattern of a perfect life, as knowing how agreeable the way of imitation is to our natures and necessities?

17. And as a pattern of all other virtue is still before us; so how fit was it, especially that we should have a lively example, to teach us to contemn this deceitful world, and to set little comparatively, by reputation, wealth, pre-

eminence, grandeur, pleasures, yea and life itself, which are the things which all that perish prefer before God and immortality?

18. And how needful is it that they that must be overtaken with renewed faults, should have a daily remedy and refuge, and a plaister for their wounds; and a more acceptable name than their own to plead with God for pardon?

19. How meet was it that our Saviour should rise from the dead (and consequently that he should die) to shew us, that his sacrifice was accepted, and that there is indeed another life for man; and that death and the grave shall still not detain us?

20. And how meet was it that our Saviour should ascend into heaven, and therein our natures be glorified with God; that he might have all power to finish the work of man's salvation, and his possession might be a pledge of our future possession?

21. Most wisely also is it ordered of God, that man might not be left under the covenant of works, or of entire nature, which after it was broken, could never justify him, and which was now unsuitable to his lapsed state, and that God should make a new covenant with him as his Redeemer, as he made the first as his Creator: and that an act of general pardon and oblivion, might secure us of forgiveness and everlasting life; and that as we had a rule to live by; for preventing sin and misery, we might have a rule for our duty in order to our recovery.

22. And what more convenient conditions could this covenant have had, "than a believing and thankful acceptance of the mercy, and a penitent and obedient following of our Redeemer into everlasting life?"

23. And how convenient is it, that when our King is to depart from earth, and keep his residence in the court of heaven, he should appoint his officers to manage the human part of his remaining work on earth? And that some should do the extraordinary work in laying the foundation, and leaving a certain rule and order to the rest, and that the rest should proceed, to build hereupon; and that the wisest and the best of men, should be the teachers and guides of the rest unto the end.

24. And how necessary was it that our Sun in glory



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trials; and that the godly may have use for patience and fortitude, and every grace; and may be kept the easier from loving the world, and taught the more to desire the presence of their Lord.

30. Lastly, And how wisely is it ordered, that God in heaven, from whom all cometh, should be the end of all his graces and our duties? And that himself alone should be our home and happiness; and that as we are made by him, and for him, so we should live with him, to his praise, and in his love for ever; and that there, as we shall have both glorified souls and bodies, so both might have a suitable glory; and that our glorified Redeemer might there be in part the Mediator of our fruition, as here he was the Mediator of acquisition.

I have recited hastily a few of the parts of this wondrous frame, to shew you, that if you saw them all, and that in the true order and method, you might not think it strange that "Now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God;" Ephes. ii. 11. which was the first part of God's image upon the Christian religion, which I was to shew you.

But besides all this, the wisdom of God is expressed in the Holy Scriptures these several ways: .1. In the revelation of things past, which could not be known by any mortal man: as the creation of the world, and what was therein done, before man himself was made; which experience itself doth help us to believe, because we see exceeding great probabilities that the world was not eternal, nor of any longer duration than the Scriptures mention; in that no place on earth hath any true monument of more ancient original; and in that human sciences and arts are yet so imperfect, and such important additions are made but of late.

2. In the revelation of things distant, out of the reach of man's discovery. So Scripture-history, and prophecy do frequently speak of preparations and actions of princes and people afar off.

3. In the revelation of the secrets of men's hearts: as Elisha told Gehazi what he did at a distance: Christ told Nathaniel what he said, and where: so frequently Christ told the Jews and his disciples what they thought, and shewed that he knew the heart of man: to which we may

add, the searching power of the word of God, which doth so notably rip up the secrets of men's corruptions; and may shew all men's hearts unto themselves.

4. In the revelation of contingent things to come, which is most frequent in the prophecies and promises of the Scripture; not only in the Old Testament, as Daniel, &c. but also in the Gospel. When Christ foretelleth his death and resurrection, and the usage and successes of his apostles, and promiseth them the miraculous gifts of the Spirit; and foretold Pèter's thrice denying him; and foretold the grievous destruction of Jerusalem, with other such like clear predictions.

5. But nothing of all these predictions doth shine so clearly to ourselves, as those great promises of Christ, which are fulfilled to ourselves, in all generations. Even the promises and prophetic descriptions of the great work of conversion, regeneration, or sanctification upon men's souls, which is wrought in all ages, just according to the delineations of it in the word: all the humblings, the repentings, the desires, the faith, the joys, the prayers, and the answers of them, which were foretold, and was found in the first believers, are performed and given to all true Christians to this day.

To which may be added, all the prophecies of the extent of the church; of the conversions of the kingdoms of the world to Christ; and of the oppositions of the ungodly sort thereto; and of the persecutions of the followers of Christ, which are all fulfilled.

6. The wisdom of God also is clearly manifested in the concatenation or harmony of all these revelations: not only that there is no real contradiction between them, but that they all conjunctly compose one entire frame: as the age of man goeth on from infancy to maturity, and nature fitteth her endowments and provisions according to each degree; so hath the church proceeded from its infancy, and so have the revelations of God been suited to its several times: Christ who was promised to Adam, and the fathers before Moses, for the first two thousand years, and signified by their sacrifices; was more fully revealed for the next two thousand years, by Moses first in a typical Gospel (the adumbration of the grace to come) and then by the prophets, (especially Isaiah, Micah, Daniel, and Malachi) in

plainer predictions. And then came John the Baptist, the forerunner, and Christ, the Messiah, and the Spirit upon the apostles, and finished the revelation : so that it may appear to be all one frame, contrived and indicted by one Spirit. And the effects of it have been according to these degrees of the revelation.

And the end of the world (whether at the end of the last two thousand years, or when else God pleaseth) will shortly shew the unbelieving themselves, that the period shall fulfil what is yet unfulfilled to the least jot and tittle.

CHAPTER V.

The Image of God's Goodness.

II. THE second part of God's image on our religion, is that of his matchless goodness. The whole system of it is, the harmonious expression of God's holiness and love. The particulars I must but name, lest I be too long.

1. The author of it, Jesus Christ, was perfectly good himself; being God and man; sinless in nature, and in life; living, and dying, and rising to do good; and making it his office and his work, even in heaven, to do mankind the greatest good.

2. The matter of the Christian religion, is God himself the infinite good. The use of it is, to teach men to know God, and to bring us to him. To which end it maketh a fuller discovery of his blessed nature, attributes and works, than is any where to be found in this world.

3. The utmost end of it is the highest imaginable; the pleasing and glorifying of God: for he that is the beginning of all, must needs be the end of all.

4. It leadeth man to the highest state of felicity for himself (which is an end conjunct in subordination to the highest.) There can be no greater happiness imaginable, than the Christian religion directeth us to attain.

5. It placeth our happiness so certainly and clearly in that which is happiness indeed, that it directeth man's intentions, and desires, and leaving them no longer to the old variety of opinions about the chiefest good: nature perfected, and working by its most perfect acts upon the most



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the subservient histories and narratives: and he hath added the perfect pattern of his holy life, that our rule and example might agree.

12. So good is this word, that it calleth us to the highest degree of goodness; and maketh perfection itself our duty; that our duty and happiness may agree; and we may not have liberty to be bad and miserable; but may be every way bound to our own felicity: and yet so good is this covenant of grace, that it taketh not advantage of our infirmities to ruin us, but noteth them to humble us, in order to our cure: and it accepteth sincerity, though it command perfection. And Christ looketh not at our failings, as a severe judge, but as a physician, and a tender father.

13. So good is our religion, that the great thing which it requireth of us, is to prefer the greatest good, before the lesser, and not be like children who take it for their riches to fill their pin-box; or like foolish merchants, who had rather trade for trash, than for gold. The great business of Christian precepts is, to make us know that we are capable of better things than meat, and drink, and lust, and sports, and wealth, and worldly honours; that the love of God, and the felicity of the soul, in grace and glory, may be preferred before the pleasure of a swine. And is not that good, which calleth us up to the greatest good, and will not allow us to be such enemies to ourselves, as to take up with the lesser?

14. Yea, when we have most, it still engageth us to seek more: and will not allow us to take up with a low degree of grace, or with a little measure of the greatest good: but to shew us that God would have us to be still better, and to have more, it is made our duty still to ask more, and still to press higher, and labour to be better. Asking in prayer is made our daily work; and God's giving, and our receiving may be our daily blessedness.

15. The mercies here provided for us, extend both to soul and body; for though we may not prefer the less before the greater; yet we shall have it in its place: if we seek first the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, and labour first for the food which never perisheth, all other things shall be added to us; we shall have them to do us good, but not to do us hurt. "For godliness is profitable to

all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come ;” 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8. vi. 6.

16. And that future perfect goodness may invite us to present imperfect goodness, the promises of the Gospel do second the precepts, with the strongest motives in the world : so that everlasting blessedness and joy is made the reward of temporal sincerity, in faith, love, and obedience. And if heaven itself be not a reward sufficient to invite men to be good, there is none sufficient.

Yea, the penalties and severities of the Christian religion, do shew the goodness of it. When God doth therefore threaten hell to save men from it, and to draw them up to the obedience of the Gospel. Threatened evil of punishment is but to keep them from the evil of sin, and to make men better ; and he that will testify his hatred of sinful evil to the highest, doth shew himself the greatest enemy of it, and the greatest lover of good : and he that setteth the sharpest hedge before us, and most terrible warnings to keep us from damnation, doth shew himself most willing to serve us.

18. So good is Christianity, that it turneth all our afflictions unto good : it assureth us that they are sent as needful medicine, however merited by our sin ; and it directeth us how to bear them easily, and to make them sweet, and safe, and profitable, and to turn them to our increase of holiness, and to the furtherance of our greatest good ; Heb. xii. 10, 11. Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

19. It also establisheth a perpetual office, even the sacred ministry, for the fuller and surer communication of all this good beforementioned. In which observe these particulars, which shew the greatness of this benefit. 1. The person called to it, must (by Christ’s appointment) be the wisest and best of men that can be had. 2. The number of them is to be suited to the number of the people, so that none may be without the benefit. 3. Their work is, to declare all this beforementioned goodness and love of God to man, and to offer them all this grace and mercy ; and to teach them to be holy, and happy, and to set before them the everlasting joys. 4. The manner of their doing it must be with humility, as the servants of all ; with tender love, as fathers of the flock ; with wisdom, and skill, lest their works be frustrated ; with the greatest importunity, even compelling

them to come in, as men that are loath to take any denial ; and with patient enduring all oppositions, as those that had rather suffer any thing, than the people's souls should be unhealed, and be damned ; and they must continue to the end, as those that will never give up a soul as desperate and lost, while there is any hope ; and all this must be seconded with their own example of holiness, temperance, and love ; Acts xx. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. Matt. xxii. 8, 9.

20. So good is our religion, that nothing but doing good is the work in which it doth employ us. Besides all the good of piety and self-preservation, it requireth us to live in love to others, and to do all the good in the world that we are able ; Ephes. ii. 10. Matt. v. 16. and vi. 1, 2, &c. Titus ii. 14. Gal. vi. 7—9. Good works must be our study and our life ; our work and our delight ; even our enemies we must love and do good to ; Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 19, 20, 21. And sure that doctrine is good, which is purposely to employ men in doing good to all.

21. So good is Christianity, that it favoureth not any one sin, but it is the greatest condemner of them all. It is all for knowledge against hurtful ignorance : it is all for humility against pride ; and self-denial against all injurious selfishness ; for spirituality, and the dominion of true reason, against sensuality and the dominion of the flesh ; for heavenliness against a worldly mind ; for sincerity and simplicity against all hypocrisy and deceit ; for love against malice ; for unity and peace against divisions and contentions ; for justice and lenity in superiors, and obedience and patience in inferiors ; for faithfulness in all relations : its precepts extend to secret as well as open practices ; to the desires and thoughts, as well as to the words and deeds : it alloweth not a thought, or word, or action, which is ungodly, intemperate, rebellious, injurious, unchaste, or covetous or uncharitable ; Matt. v.

22. All the troublesome part of our religion is but our warfare against evil ; against sin, and the temptations which would make us sinful : and it must needs be good, if all the conflicting part of it be only against evil ; Gal. v. 17. 21. 23. Rom. vi. vii. viii. 1. 7—10. 13.

23. It teacheth us the only way to live in the greatest and most constant joy. If we attain not this, it is because we follow not its precepts. If endless joy foreseen, and



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and aggravated accidentally by our sin : so that where sin abounded; there grace did superabound; Rom. v: 15—19. Grace hath taken occasion by sin to be grace indeed, and to be the greater manifestation of the goodness of God and the greater obligation for gratitude to the sinner.

30. Lastly, all this goodness is beautified by harmony; it is all placed in a perfect order. One mercy doth not keep us from another; nor one grace oppose another; nor one duty exclude another. As it is the great declaration of mercy and justice wonderfully conspiring in God (mercy so used as to magnify justice; justice so used as to magnify mercy, and not only so as to consist); so also it worketh answerably on us. It setteth not love against filial fear; nor joy against necessary sorrow, nor faith against repentance, nor praise and thanksgiving against penitent confession of sin, nor true repentance against the profitable use of the creatures, nor the care of our souls against the peace and quiet of our minds, nor care for our families against contentedness and trusting God, nor our labour against our necessary rest, nor self-denial against the due care of our own welfare, nor patience against due sensibility and lawful passion, nor mercy to men against true justice, nor public and private good against each other; nor doth it set the duty of the sovereign and the subject, the master and the servant, the pastor and the flock, nor yet their interest, in any contrariety; but all parts of religion know their place; and every duty (even those which seem most opposite) are helpful to each other; and all interests are co-ordinate, and all doth contribute to the good of the whole, and of every part; Ephes. iv. 2, 3. 15, 16.

And now peruse all this together (but let it have more of your thoughts by far, than it hath had of my words), and then determine indifferently, whether the Christian religion bear not the lively image and superscription of God, the Prime Essential Good.

But all this will be more manifest, when we have considered how Power hath in the execution, brought all this into effect.

CHAPTER VI.

The Image of God's Power.

III. THE third part of God's image and superscription on the Christian religion, is his power. And as man's own corruption lieth more in the want of wisdom and goodness, than of power; therefore he is less capable of discerning God, in the impressions of his wisdom and goodness, than of his power. Seeing therefore he is here most capable of conviction, and acknowledging the hand of God, I shall open this also in the several parts, in some degree.

1. In the history of the creation, the omnipotency of God is abundantly set forth; which is proved true, both by the agreeableness of the history to the effects, and by much subsequent evidence of the writer's veracity.

2. The same may be said of God's drowning the old world, and the preserving of Noah and his family in the ark.

3. And of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven.

4. The many miracles done by Moses upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and in the opening of the Red Sea, and in the feeding of the Israelites in the wilderness, and keeping their clothes from wearing for forty years; and the pillar which went before them as a fire by night, and a cloud by day, for so long a time; and the darkness, and thunder, and trembling of the mount at the giving of the law; with the rest of the miracles then done, not in a corner, or before a few, but before all the people; who were persuaded to receive and obey the law, by reason of these motives which their eyes had seen. And if all this had been false; if no plagues had been shewn on Egypt; if no Red Sea had opened; if no pillar had gone before them; if no such terrible sights and sounds at Mount Sinai had prepared them for the law; such reasons would have been so unfit to have persuaded them to obedience, that they would rather with any reasonable creatures, have procured contempt.

And to shew posterity that the history of all this was not forged, or to be suspected; 1. They had the law itself then delivered in two tables of stone, to be still seen. 2.

They had a pot of manna still preserved. 3. They had the miracle-working rod of Moses and Aaron kept likewise as a monument. 4. They had an ark on purpose to keep these in, and that in the most inviolable place of worship. 5. They had the brazen serpent (till Hezekiah broke it) still to be seen. 6. They had the song of their deliverance at the Red Sea for their continued use. 7. They had set feasts to keep the chief of all these things in remembrance. They had the feast of unleavened bread, which all Israel was to observe for seven days, to keep the remembrance of their passing out of Egypt in so great haste, that they could not stay to knead up, and make their bread, but took it as in meal or unready dough. They had the feast of the passover, when every family was to eat of the Paschal Lamb, and the door-posts to be sprinkled with blood, to keep in remembrance the night when the Egyptians' first-born were destroyed, and the Israelites all preserved. And if these had been instituted at that time, upon a pretended occasion which they knew to be untrue, they would rather have derided than observed them. If they had been afterwards instituted in another generation which knew not the story, the beginning would have been known, and the fiction of the name and institution of Moses would have been apparent to all; and the institution would not have been found in the same law which was given by Moses. And it could not have been so expressly said, that the Israelites did all observe these feasts and solemnities from the very time of their deliverance but in those times when the forgery began, all would have known it to be false. 8. And they had many other words and ceremonies among them, and even in God's public worship, which were all used to keep up the memory of these things. 9. And they had an office of priesthood constantly among them, which saw to the execution and preservation of all these. 10. And they had a form of civil policy then established, and the rulers were to preserve the memory of these things, and the practice of this law, and to learn it themselves, and govern by it. So that the very form of the commonwealth, and the order of it was a commemoration hereof. And the parents were to teach and tell their children all these things, and to expound all these solemnities, laws and ceremonies to them: so that the frame of church, and state, and families, was a preservative hereof.



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over them into whose hands he was resolved to yield himself, by restraining them till his hour was come, and by making them all fall to the ground at his name.' And his power over sun, and heaven, and earth by the darkening of the sun, and the trembling of the earth, and the rending of the rocks, and of the veil of the temple; Matt. xxvii. 45. 51. And his power over the dead, by the rising of the bodies of many; Matt. xxvii. 52. And his power over the saints in heaven, by the attendance of Moses and Elias; and his power to forgive sins, by taking away the penal maladies; and his power to change hearts, and save souls, by causing his disciples to leave all and follow him at a word; and Zaccheus to receive him, and believe; and the thief on the cross to be converted, and to enter that day into paradise.

8. And his own resurrection is an undoubted attestation of Divine omnipotency. If God gave him such a victory over death, and raised him to life when men had killed him, and rolled a stone upon his sepulchre, and sealed and guarded it, there needeth no further evidence of the power of God impressing and attesting the Christian religion, than that which ascertaineth to us the truth of Christ's resurrection. For he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead; Rom. i. 4.

9. And his bodily appearance to his congregated disciples when the doors were shut; his miracle at their fishing, his walking on the sea, his vanishing out of their sight (Luke xxiv.) when he had discoursed with the two disciples, his opening their hearts to understand his word, &c. do all shew this part of God's image on our religion, even his power.

10. And so doth his bodily ascending into heaven before the face of his disciples; Acts i.

11. But especially the sending down the Holy Ghost upon his disciples according as he promised: to cause them that were before so low in knowledge, to be suddenly inspired with languages, and with the full understanding of his own will, and with unanimity and concord herein; this made his disciples the living monuments and effects of his own omnipotency; Acts ii.

12. And accordingly all the miracles which they did by this power, recorded partly in the Acts of the Apostles (or

rather, the Acts of Paul, by Luke who was his companion;) which you may there read (and no doubt but other apostles in their measures did the like as Paul, though they are not recorded; for they had all the same promise and spirit). This is another impression of power.

13. Whereto must be added the great and wonderful gifts of communicating the same spirit (or doing that upon which God would give it) to those converted believers on whom they laid their hands (which Simon Magus would fain have bought with money; Acts viii.). To enable them to speak with tongues, to heal diseases, to prophesy, &c. as they themselves had done, which is a great attestation of omnipotency.

14. And the lamentable destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, foretold by Christ, was an attestation of God's power in the revenge or punishment of their unbelief, and putting Christ to death.

15. And so was the great fortitude and constancy of believers, who underwent all persecutions so joyfully as they did for the sake of Christ; which was the effect of the corroborating power of the Almighty.

16. And so was the power which the apostles had to execute present judgments upon the enemies of the Gospel, (as Elimas and Simon-Magus), and on the abusers of religion (as Ananias and Saphira), and on many whom they excommunicated and delivered up to satan.

17. The same evidence is found in Christ's legislation, as an universal sovereign making laws for heart and life, for all the world: taking down the laws of the Jewish polity and ceremonies, which God by Moses had for a time set up; commanding his ministers to proclaim his laws to all the world, and princes and people to obey them; and by these laws, conferring on believers no less than forgiveness and salvation, and binding over the impenitent to everlasting punishment.

18. But the great and continued impress of God's power, is that which together with his wisdom and love, is made and shewed in the conversion of men's souls to God by Christ. You may here first consider the numbers which were suddenly converted by the preaching of the apostles at the first. And in how little time there were churches planted abroad the world: and then, how the Roman empire was brought

in, and subdued to Christ, and crowns and sceptres resigned to him; and all this according to his own prediction, that when he was lifted up, he would draw all men to him; and according to the predictions of his prophets. But that which I would especially open is, the power which is manifested in the work of the Spirit on the souls of men, both then and to this day.

Hitherto what I have mentioned belonging to the Scripture itself, is to be taken as part of our religion objectively considered. But that which followeth is the effect of that, even our religion subjectively considered. To observe how God maketh men believers, and by believing sanctifieth their hearts and lives, is a great motive to further our own believing. Consider the work, 1. As it is in itself. 2. As it is opposed by all its enemies, and you may see that it is the work of God.

1. As the goodness, so also the greatness of it, is God's own image. It is the raising up of our stupid faculties to be lively and active to those holy uses, to which they were become as dead by sin. To cause in an unlearned person, a firmer and more distinct belief of the unseen world, than the most learned philosophers can attain to by all their natural contemplations: to bring up a soul to place its happiness on things so high and far from sense! To cause him who naturally is imprisoned in selfishness, to deny himself, and devote himself entirely to God; to love him, to trust him, and to live to him! To raise an earthly mind to heaven, that our business and hope may be daily there! To overcome our pride and sensuality, and bring our senses in subjection unto reason, and to keep a holy government in our thoughts, and over our passions, words and deeds: and to live in continual preparation for death, as the only time of our true felicity: and to suffer any loss or pain for the safe accomplishment of this! All this is the work of the power of God.

2. Which will the more appear when we consider, what is done against it within us and without us; what privative and positive averseness we have to it, till God do send down that life, and light, and love into our souls, which is indeed his image! How violently our fleshly sense and appetite strive against the restraints of God, and would hurry us contrary to the motions of grace! How importunately Satan



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power of God ; 1 Cor. ii. 5., 2 Cor. vi. 7. And the kingdom of God in us doth consist in power ; 1 Cor. iv. 20. The mind of man is very mutable ; and he that is possessed once with the desires of the things spiritual and eternal, would quickly lose those desires, and turn to present things again, (which are still before him, while higher things are beyond our sense) if the power and activity of the divine life did not preserve the spark which is kindled in us. Though the doctrine of perseverance be controverted in the Christian church, yet experience assureth us of that which all parties are agreed in. Some hold that all true Christians persevere ; and some hold that all *confirmed* Christians persevere (that is, those who come to a strong degree of grace) ; but those that think otherwise do yet all grant, that if any fall away, it is comparatively but a very few of those that are sincere. When none would persevere if Omnipotency did not preserve them.

20. Lastly, the power of God also doth consequently own the Christian religion, by the preservation of the church, in this malicious and opposing world (as well as by the preservation of grace in the soul), which will be the more apparent if you observe, 1. That the number of true Christians is still very small in comparison of the wicked. 2. That all wicked men are naturally (by the corruption of nature) their enemies ; because the precepts and practice of Christianity are utterly against their carnal minds and interests. 3. That the doctrine and practice of Christianity is still galling them, and exciting and sublimating this enmity into rage : and God doth by persecutions ordinarily tell us to our smart, that all this is true. 4. That all carnal men are exceeding hardly moved from their own way. 5. That the government of the earth is commonly in their hand, because of their numbers, and their wealth. For it is commonly the rich that rule ; and the rich are usually bad ; so that the godly Christians are in their power. ; 6. That all the hypocrites that are among ourselves, have the same sinful nature and enmity against holiness, and are usually as bitter against the power and practice of their own profession, as open infidels are. 7. That Christianity is not a fruit of nature ; ‘ Non nati sed facti sumus Christiani ;’ said Tertullian. And therefore if God’s power preserved not religion, the degenerating of the Christian’s children from their

parent's mind and way, would hasten its extinction in the world. 8. And as it is a religion which must be taught us ; so it requireth or consisteth in so much wisdom, and willingness, and fortitude of mind, that few are naturally apt to receive it ; because folly, and badness, and feebleness of mind are so common in the world. And as we see that learning will never be common but in the possession of a very few, because a natural ingenuity is necessary thereto, which few are born with ; so it would be with Christianity, if Divine power maintained it not. 9. And it is a religion which requireth much time and contemplation, in the learning and in the practising of it : whereas the world are taken up with so much business for the body, and are so slothful to those exercises of the mind, which bring them no present, sensible commodity, that this also would quickly wear it out. 10. And then the terms of it being so contrary to all men's fleshly interest and sense, in self-denial, and forsaking all for Christ ; and in mortifying the most beloved sins, and the world putting us to it so ordinarily by persecution ; this also would deter the most, and weary out the rest, if the power of God did not uphold them. That which is done by exceeding industry, against the inclinations and interest of nature, will have no considerable number of practisers. As we see in horses and dogs which are capable, with great labour, of being taught extraordinary things which resemble reason : and yet because it must cost so much labour, there is but one in a century that is brought to it. But (though the truly religious are but few in comparison of the wicked, yet) godly persons are not so few as they would be, if it were the work of industry alone. God maketh it as a new nature to them ; and (which is very much to be observed) the main change is oftentimes wrought in an hour, and that after all exhortations, and the labours of parents and teachers have failed, and left the sinner as seemingly hopeless.

And thus I have shewed you, 1. That our religion objectively taken, is the image of God's Wisdom, Goodness and Power, and thereby fully proved it to be from God. 2. And that our religion subjectively taken, is answerably the spirit or impress of Power, and of Love, and of Sound Understanding, and is in us a constant seal and witness to the truth of Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

The Means of making known all this Infallibly to us.

I SUPPOSE the evidence of Divine attestation is so clear in this image of God on the Christian religion, which I have been opening, that few can doubt of it who are satisfied of the historical truth of the facts; and therefore this is next to be considered, 'How the certain knowledge of all those things cometh down to us?'

The first question is, whether this doctrine and religion indeed be the impress of God's Wisdom, and his Goodness and Power, supposing the truth of the historical part? This is what I think few reasonable persons will deny: for the doctrine is legible, and sheweth itself.

But the next question, which I am now to resolve, is, 'How we shall know that this doctrine was indeed delivered by Christ and his apostles, and these things done by them, which the Scriptures mention?'

And here the first question shall be, 'How the apostles, and all other the first witnesses, knew it themselves?' For it is by every reasonable man to be supposed, that they who were present, and we who are at seventeen hundred years distance, could not receive the knowledge of the matters of fact, in the very same manner. It is certain that their knowledge was by their present sense and reason: they saw Christ and his miracles: they heard his words: they saw him risen from the dead: they discoursed with him, and eat and drank with him: they saw him ascending up bodily to heaven. They needed no other revelation to tell them what they saw, and heard, and felt.

If you had asked them then, 'How know you that all these things were said and done?'. They would have answered you, 'Because we saw and heard them.' But we were not then present: we did not see and hear what they did; nor did we see or hear them, who were the eye-witnesses. And therefore as their senses told it them; so the natural way for our knowledge, must be by derivation from their senses to ours: for when they themselves received it in a way so natural, (though not without the help of God's Spirit, in the remembering, recording and attesting it,) we



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miracles of Christ himself. For Christ's miracles were the deeds of one alone; and his resurrection was witnessed but by twelve chosen witnesses, and about five hundred other persons; and he conversed with them but forty days, and that but seldom; but the miracles of the disciples were wrought by many; and before many thousands, at several times, and in many countries; and for many, many years together, and in the sight and hearing of many of the churches: so that these first churches had sight and hearing to assure them of the divine, miraculous attestation of the truth of their testimony, who told them of the doctrines, miracles and resurrection of Christ: and all this from Christ's solemn promise and gift; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father;" John xiv. 12.

But if it be demanded, 'How did the next Christians of the second receive all this from the first churches, who received it from the apostles?' I answer, by the same evidence, and with some advantages. For, 1. They had the credible human testimony of all their pastors, neighbours, parents; who told them but what they saw and heard. 2. They had a greater evidence of natural infallible certainty. For, (1.) The doctrine was now delivered to them in the records of the sacred Scriptures, and so less liable to the misreports of the ignorant, forgetful or erroneous. (2.) The reporters were now more numerous, and the miracles reported more numerous also. (3.) They were persons now dispersed over much of the world, and could not possibly agree together to deceive. (4.) The deceit would now have been yet more easily detected and abhorred.

3. But besides this, they had also the supernatural testimony of God: for the apostles' converts received the same Spirit as they had themselves: and though the miracles of other persons were not so numerous as those of the apostles, yet the persons were many thousands more that wrought them. All this is asserted in the Scripture itself; as Gal. iii. 3, 4. 1 Cor. xiv. xii. and many places. And he that should have told them falsely that they themselves had the spirit of extraordinary gifts and miracles, would hardly have been believed by them. And all this also the following ages have themselves asserted unto us.

The question then which remaineth is, 'How we receive all this infallibly from the subsequent ages or churches to this day?' The answer to which is, still by the same way, with yet greater advantages in some respects, though less in others. As, 1. We have the human testimony of all our ancestors, and of many of our enemies. 2. We have greater evidence of natural certainty, that they could not possibly meet or plot together to deceive us. 3. We have still the supernatural, divine attestation (though rarely of miracles, yet) of those more necessary and noble operations of the Spirit, in the sanctification of all true believers; which Spirit accompanieth and worketh by the doctrine which from our ancestors we have received.

More distinctly observe all these conjunct means of our full reception of our religion.

1. The very being of the Christians and churches, is a testimony to us that they believed and received this religion. For what maketh them Christians and churches but the receiving of it?

2. The ordinance of baptism is a notable tradition of it. For all that ever were made Christians have been baptized: and baptism is nothing but the solemn initiation of persons into this religion, by a vowed consent to it, as summarily were expressed in the Christian covenant. And this was used to be openly done.

3. The use of the creed, which at baptism and other sacred seasons, was always wont to be professed (together with the Lord's prayer and the decalogue; the summaries of our faith, desire and practice) is another notable tradition; by which this religion hath been sent down to the following ages. For though perhaps all the terms of the creed were not so early as some think, thus constantly used; yet all the sense and substance of it was.

4. The holy Scriptures or records of this religion, containing integrally all the doctrine, and all the necessary matter of fact, is the most complete way of tradition. And it will appear to you in what further shall be said, that we have infallible proof, that these Scriptures are the same which the first churches did receive; whatever inconsiderable errors may be crept into any copies by the unavoidable oversight of the scribes.

5. The constant use of the sacred assemblies, hath been another means of sure tradition : for we have infallible proof of the successive continuation of such assemblies ; and that their use was still, the solemn profession of the Christian faith, and worshipping God according to it.

6. And the constant use of reading the Scriptures in those assemblies, is another full historical tradition : for that which is constantly and publicly read, as the doctrine of their religion, cannot be changed, without the notice of all the church, and without an impossible combination of all the churches in the world.

7. And it secureth the tradition that one set day hath been kept for this public exercise of religion, from the very first ; even the Lord's day (besides all occasional times). The day itself being appointed to celebrate the memorial of Christ's resurrection, is a most current history of it ; as the feast of unleavened bread, and the passover was of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt. And the exercises still performed on that day, do make the tradition more complete.

And because some few Sabbatarians among ourselves do keep the old sabbath only, and call still for Scripture proof for the institution of the Lord's day ; let me briefly tell them, that which is enough to evince their error.

1. That the apostles were officers immediately commissioned by Christ, to disciple the nations, and to teach them all that Christ commanded, and so to settle orders in the church ; Matt. xxviii. 19—21. Acts. xv. &c.

2. That Christ promised and gave them his Spirit infallibly to guide them in the performance of this commission (though not to make them perfectly free from sin) ; John xvi. 13.

3. That 'de facto' the apostles appointed the use of the Lord's day for the church assemblies. This being all that is left to be proved, and this being matter of fact, which requireth no other kind of proof but history, part of the history of it is in the Scripture, and the rest in the history of all the following ages. In the Scripture itself it is evident that the churches and the apostles used this day accordingly. And it hath most infallible history (impossible to be false) that the churches have used it ever to this day, as that which they found practised in their times by their appointment :



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as William the Conqueror in England, yea, or King James ; much more than that there was a Cæsar or Cicero.

8. Moreover, the very office of the pastors of the church, and their continuance from the beginning to this day, is a great part of the certain tradition of this religion. For it is most certain that the churches were constituted, and the assemblies held, and the worship performed with them; and by their conduct, and not without. And it is certain by infallible history, that their office hath been still the same, even to teach men this Christian religion, and to guide them in the practice of it, and to read the same Scriptures as the word of truth, and to explain it to the people. And therefore as the judicatures and offices of the judges is a certain proof that there have been those laws by which they judge, (especially if they had been also the weekly public readers and expounders of them), so much more is it in our case.

9. And the constant use of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, hath according to his appointment, been an infallible tradition of his covenant, and a means to keep him in remembrance in the churches. For when all the churches in the world have made this sacramental commemoration, and renewed covenanting with Christ as dead and risen, to be their constant public practice here, this is a tradition of that faith and covenant which cannot be counterfeit or false.

10. To this we may add, the constant use of discipline in these churches: it having been their constant law and practice, to inquire into the faith and lives of the members, and to censure or cast out those that impenitently violated their religion: which sheweth, that 'de facto' that faith and religion was then received; and is a means of delivering it down to us. Under which we may mention, 1. Their synods and officers. 2. And their canons by which this discipline was exercised.

11. Another tradition hath been the published confessions of their faith and religion in those apologies; which persecutions and calumnies have caused them to write.

12. And another is, all those published confutations of the many heresies, which in every age have risen up; and all the controversies which the churches have had with them, and among themselves.

13. And another is; all the treatises, sermons and other instructing writings of the pastors of those times.

14. And another way of tradition hath been by the testimony and sufferings of confessors and martyrs, who have endured either torments or death, in the defence and owning of this religion. In all which ways of tradition, the doctrine and the matter were jointly attested by them. For the resurrection of Christ (which is part of the matter of fact) was one of the articles of their creed, which they suffered for. And all of them received the holy Scriptures, which declare the apostles' miracles; and they received their faith, as delivered by those apostles, with the confirmation of those miracles. So that when they professed to believe the doctrine, they especially professed to believe the history of the life and death of Christ, and of his apostles: and the religion which they suffered for, and daily professed, contained both: and the historical books called the Gospels, were the chief part of the Scripture which they called 'The Word of God,' and the records of the Christian Religion.

15. To this I may add, that all the ordinary prayers and praises of the churches, did continue the recital of much of this history, and of the apostles' names and acts, and were composed much in Scripture phrase, which preserved the memory, and professed the belief of all those things.

16. And the festivals or other days, which were kept in honourable commemoration of those apostles and martyrs, was another way of keeping these things in memory. Whether it were well done or not, is not my present inquiry (only I may say, I cannot accuse it of any sin, till it come to overdoing, and ascribing too much to them). But certainly it was a way of transmitting the memory of those things to posterity.

17. Another hath been by the constant commemoration of the great works of Christ, by the days or seasons of the year, which were annually observed. How far here also the church did well or ill, I now meddle not; but doubtless the observing of anniversary solemnities for their commemoration, was a way of preserving the memory of the acts themselves to posterity. How long the day of Christ's nativity hath been celebrated, I know not. Reading what Selden hath said on one side; and on the other finding no current author mention it (that I have read) before Nazianzen; and

finding by Chrysostom, that the churches of the east, till his time had differed from the western churches, as far as the sixth of January is from the twenty-fifth of December. But that is of less moment, because Christ's birth is a thing unquestioned in itself. But we find that the time of his fasting forty days, the time of his passion, and of his resurrection, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, were long before kept in memory by some kind of observation by fasts or festivals. And though there was a controversy about the due season of the successive observation of Easter, yet that signified no uncertainty of the first day, or the season of the year. And though at first it was but few days that were kept in fasting at that season, yet they were enough to commemorate both the forty days fasting, and the death of Christ.

18. And the histories of the heathens and enemies of the church, do also declare how long Christianity continued, and what they were, and what they suffered who were called Christians; such as Pliny, Celsus, Porphyry, Plotinus, Lucian, Suetonius, and others.

19. And the constant instruction of children by their parents, which is family tradition, hath been a very great means also of this commemoration. For it cannot be (though some be negligent) but that multitudes in all times would teach their children what the Christian religion was, as to its doctrine and its history. And the practice of catechising, and teaching children the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the decalogue, and the Scriptures, the more secured this tradition in families.

20. Lastly, a succession of the same Spirit which was in the apostles, and of much of the same works which were done by them, was such a way of assuring us of the truth of their doctrine and history, as a succession of posterity telleth us, that our progenitors were men. The same spirit of wisdom and goodness in a great degree continued after them to this day. And all wrought by their doctrine: and very credible history assureth us, that many miracles also were done, in many ages after them, though not so many as by them. Eusebius, Cyprian, Augustine, Victor Uticensis, Sulpitius Severus, and many others, shew us so much as may make the belief of the apostles the more easy.

And indeed, the image of God's Wisdom, Goodness and



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the Spirit, which is his especial work, and which our baptism relateth to, and feigning some extraordinary new thing as the only testimony.

And it is to be lamented, that Papists, and quarrelling sectaries should take this occasion to reproach us as infidels, that have no true grounded faith in Christ; as telling us that we resolve it all into a private, inward, pretended witness of the Spirit: and then they ask us, 'Who can know that witness but ourselves? And how can we preach the Gospel to others, if the only cogent argument of faith be incommunicable, or such as we cannot prove?' Though both the believing soul and the church be the kingdom of the Prince of Light, yet O, what wrong hath the prince of darkness done, by the mixtures of darkness in them both!

So much for the first Direction for the strengthening of faith; which is, by discerning the evidences of truth in our religion.

CHAPTER VIII.

The rest of the Directions for strengthening our Faith.

I SHALL be more brief in the rest of the Directions, for the increase of faith: and they are these.

Direct. 2. 'Compare the Christian religion with all other in the world. And seeing it is certain that some way, or other God hath revealed, to guide man in his duty, unto his end, and it is no other; you will see that it must needs be this.'

1. The way of the heathenish idolaters cannot be it. The principles and the effects of their religion may easily satisfy you of this. The only true God would not command idolatry, nor befriend such ignorance, error and wickedness as do constitute their religion, and are produced by it as its genuine fruits.

2. The way of Judaism cannot be it: for it doth but lead us up to Christianity, and bear witness to Christ, and of itself is evidently insufficient; its multitude of ceremonies being but the pictures and alphabet of that truth which Jesus Christ hath brought to light, and which hath

evidence, which to us is more convincing than that of the Jewish law.

3. The Mahometan delusion is so gross, that it seemeth vain to say any more against, than it saith itself; unless it be to those who are bred up in such darkness, as to hear of nothing else, and never to see the sun which shineth on the Christian world; and withal are under terror of the sword, which is the strongest reason of that barbarous sect.

4. And to think that the atheism of infidels is the way, (who hold only the five articles of the unity of God, the duty of obedience, the immortality of the soul, the life of retribution, and the necessity of repentance) is but to go against the light. For, 1. It is a denial of that abundant evidence of the truth of the Christian faith, which cannot by any sound reason be confuted. 2. It is evidently too narrow for man's necessities, and leaveth our misery without a sufficient remedy. 3. Its inclusions and exclusions are contradictory: it asserteth the necessity of obedience and repentance, and yet excludeth the necessary means (the revealed light, and love, and power,) by which both obedience and repentance must be had. It excludeth Christ and his Spirit, and yet requireth that which none but Christ and his Spirit can effect. 4. It proposeth a way as the only religion, which few ever went from the beginning (as to the exclusions). As if that were God's only way to heaven, which scarce any visible societies of men, can be proved to have practised to this day.

Which of all these religions have the most wise, and holy, and heavenly, and mortified, and righteous, and sober persons to profess it; and the greatest numbers of such? If you will judge of the medicine by the effects, and take him for the best physician, who doth the greatest cures upon the souls, you will soon conclude that Christ is the "way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by him;" John xiv. 6.

Direct. 3. 'Think how impossible it is that any but God should be the author of the Christian religion.'

1. No good man could be guilty of so horrid a crime as to forge a volume of delusions, and put God's name to it; to cheat the world so blasphemously and hypocritically, and to draw them into a life of trouble to promote it. Much less could so great a number of good men do this, as the

success of such a cheat (were it possible) would require. There is no man that can believe it to be a deceit, but must needs believe, as we do of Mahomet, that the author was one of the worst men that ever lived in the world.

2. No bad man could lay so excellent a design, and frame a doctrine and law so holy, so self-denying, so merciful, so just, so spiritual, so heavenly, and so concordant in itself; nor carry on so high and divine an undertaking for so divine and excellent an end. No bad man could so universally condemn all badness, and prescribe such powerful remedies against it, and so effectually cure and conquer it in so considerable a part of the world.

3. If it be below any good man, to be guilty of such a forgery as aforesaid, we can much less suspect that any good angel could be guilty of it.

4. And if no bad man could do so much good, we can much less imagine that any devil or bad spirit could be the author of it. The devil, who is the worst in evil, could never so much contradict his nature, and overthrow his own kingdom, and say so much evil of himself, and do so much against himself, and do so much for the sanctifying and saving of the world: he that doth so much to draw men to sin and misery, would never do so much to destroy their sin. And we plainly feel within ourselves, that the spirit or party which draweth us to sin, doth resist the Spirit which draweth us to believe and obey the Gospel; and that these two maintain a war within us.

5. And if you should say, that the good which is in Christianity, is caused by God, and the evil of it by the father of sin; I answer, either it is true or false: if it be true, it is so good, that the devil can never possibly be a contributor to it: nay, it cannot then be suspected justly of any evil. But if it be false it is then so bad, that God cannot be any otherwise the author of it, than as he is the author of any common natural verity which it may take in and abuse; or as his general concourse extendeth to the whole creation. But it is somewhat in Christianity, which it hath more than other religions have, which must make it more pure, and more powerful and successful than any other religions have been. Therefore it must be more than common natural truths: even the contexture of those natural truths, with the supernatural revelations of it, and the addition of a spirit of power,



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choice and use of all the means. Whilst the Gospel and the reasons of our religion are strange to people, like a lesson but half learned, who can expect that they should be settled against all temptations which assault their faith, and be able to confute the tempter? We lay together the proofs of our religion, and you read them twice or thrice, and then think that if after that you have any doubting, the fault is in the want of evidence, and not in your want of understanding: but the life of faith must cost you more labour than so; study it till you clearly understand it, and remember the whole method of the evidence together, and have it all at your finger's ends, and then you may have a confirmed faith to live by.

Direct. 5. 'When you know what are the sorest temptations to unbelief, get all those special arguments and provisions into your minds, which are necessary against those particular temptations. And do not strengthen your own temptations by your imprudent entertaining them.'

Here are three things which I would especially advise you to against temptations to unbelief. 1. Enter not into the debate of so great a business when you are incapable of it. Especially, 1. When your minds are taken up with worldly business, or other thoughts have carried them away, let not Satan then surprise you, and say, 'Come now and question thy religion.' You could not resolve a question in philosophy, nor cast up any long account, on such a sudden, with an unprepared mind. When the evidences of your faith are out of mind, stay till you can have leisure to set yourselves to the business with that studiousness, and those helps which so great a matter doth require. 2. When sickness or melancholy doth weaken your understandings, you are then unfit for such a work. You would not in such a case dispute for your lives with a cunning sophister upon any difficult question whatsoever: and will you in such a case dispute with the devil, when your salvation may lie upon it?

2. 'When your faith is once settled suffer not the devil to call you to dispute it over again at his command. Do it not when his suggestions urge you at his pleasure; but when God maketh it your duty, and at his pleasure: else your very disputing with Satan, will be some degree of yielding to him, and gratifying him. And he will one time or

other take you at the advantage, and assault you when you are without your arms.

3. Mark what it is that atheists and infidels most object against Christianity; but especially mark what it is which Satan maketh most use of against yourselves, to shake your faith: and there let your studies be principally bent, that you may have particular armour to defend you against particular assaults: and get such light by communication with wiser and more experienced men, as may furnish you for that use; that no objection may be made against your faith, which you are not always ready to answer. This is the true sense of 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

Direct. 6. 'Mark well those works of God in the world, which are the plain fulfilling of his word.'

God doth not make such notable difference by his judgments, as shall prevent the great discoveries at the last, and make his assize and final judgment to be unnecessary, by doing the same work before the time. But yet his providences do own and bear witness to his word; and he leaveth not the world without some present sensible testimonies of his sovereign government, to convince them, and restrain them.

1. Mark how the state of the sinful world agreeth to God's description of it, and how maliciously godliness is every where opposed by them, and how notably God still casteth shame upon sinners; so that even in their prosperity and rage they are pitied and contemned in the eyes of all that are wise and sober, and in the next generation their names do rot; Psal. xv. 3, 4: Prov. x. 7: And it is wonderful to observe, that sin in the general and abstract is still spoken of by all as an odious thing, even by them that will be damned rather than they will leave it: and that virtue and godliness, charity and justice, are still praised in the world, even by them that abhor and persecute it.

2. And it is very observable, how most of the great changes of the world are made; by how small, contemptible and unthought of means! Especially where the interest of the Gospel is most concerned! The instance of the reformation in Luther's time, and many others nearer to our

days, would shew us much of the conjunction of God's works with his word, if they were particularly and wisely opened.

3. The many prodigies or extraordinary events which have fallen out at several times, would be found to be of use this way, if wisely considered. A great number have fallen out among us of late years, of real certainty, and of a considerable usefulness; but the crafty enemy (who useth most to wrong Christ and his cause, by his most passionate, injudicious followers) prevailed with some over-forward minister of this strain, to publish them in many volumes, with the mixture of so many falsehoods and mistaken circumstances, as turned them to the advantage of the devil and ungodliness, and made the very mention of prodigies to become a scorn.

4. The strange deliverances of many of God's servants in the greatest dangers, by the most unlikely means, is a great encouragement to faith: and there are a great number of Christians that have experience of such. The very manner of our preservations is often such as forceth us to say, 'It is the hand of God.'

5. The notable answer, and grant of prayers, (of which many Christians have convincing experience,) is also a great confirmation to our faith, (of which I have before spoken).

6. The three sensible evidences formerly mentioned, compared with the Scriptures, may much persuade us of its truth. I mean, 1. Apparitions. 2. Witches. 3. Satanical possessions or diseases, which plainly declare the operation of Satan in them; of all which I could give you manifold and proved instances. These, and many other instances of God's providence, are great means to help us to believe his word (though we must not, with fanatical persons, put first our interpretation upon God's works, and then expound his word by them; but use his works as the fulfilling of his word, and expound his providences by his precepts, and his promises and threats).

Direct. 7. 'Mark well God's inward work of government upon the soul; and you shall find it very agreeable to the Gospel.'

There is a very great evidence of a certain kingdom of God within us. And as he is himself a Spirit, so it is with



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souls of the ungodly in this age, as well as we have noted our plagues and flames; and if God's servants kept as exact observations of their inward rewards and punishments, and that in particulars, as suited to their particular sins and duties; you would see that Christ is King indeed, and that there is a real government according to his Gospel, kept up in the consciences or souls of men (though not so observable as the rewards and punishments at the last day).

Direct. 8. 'Dwell not too much on sensual objects, and let them not come too near your hearts.'

Three things I here persuade you carefully to avoid: 1. That you keep your hearts at a meet distance from all things in this world; that they grow not too sweet to you, nor too great in your esteem. 2. That you gratify not sense itself too much; and live not in the pleasing of your taste or lust. 3. That you suffer not your imaginations to run out greedily after things sensible, nor make them the too frequent objects of your thoughts.

You may ask perhaps, what is all this to our faith? Why, the life of faith is exercised upon things that are not seen; and if you live upon the things that are seen, and imprison your soul in the fetters of your concupiscence, and fill your fancies with things of another nature, how can you be acquainted with the life of faith? Can a bird fly that hath a stone tied to her foot? Can you have a mind full of lust, and of God at once? Or can that mind that is used to these inordinate sensualities, be fit to relish the things that are spiritual? And can it be a lover of earth and fleshly pleasures, and also a believer and lover of heaven?

Direct. 9. 'Use yourselves much to think and speak of heaven, and the invisible things of faith.'

Speaking of heaven is needful both to express your thoughts, and to actuate and preserve them. And the often thoughts of heaven, will make the mind familiar there: and familiarity will assist and encourage faith: for it will much acquaint us with those reasons and inducements of faith, which a few strange and distant thoughts will never reach to. As he that converseth much with a learned, wise or godly man, will more easily believe that he is learned, wise or godly; than he that is a stranger to him, and only now and then seeth him afar off. So he that thinketh so frequently of God and heaven, till his mind hath contracted a

humble acquaintance and familiarity, must needs believe the truth of all that excellency which before he doubted of. For doubting is the effect of ignorance: and he that knoweth most here, believeth best. Falsehood and evil cannot bear the light; but the more you think of them, and know them, the more they are detected and ashamed: but truth and goodness love the light; and the better you are acquainted with them, the more will your belief and love be increased.

Direct. 10. 'Live not in the guilt of wilful sin; for that will many ways hinder your belief.'

1. It will breed fear and horror in your minds, and make you wish that it were not true, that there is a day of judgment, and a hell for the ungodly, and such a God, such a Christ, and such a life to come, as the Gospel doth describe: and when you take it for your interest to be an unbeliever, you will hearken with desire to all that the devil and infidels can say: and you will the more easily make yourselves believe that the Gospel is not true, by how much the more you desire that it should not be true. 2. And you will forfeit the grace which should help you to believe; both by your wilful sin, and by your unwillingness to believe: for who can expect that Christ should give his grace to them, who wilfully despise him and abuse it: or that he should make men believe, who had rather not believe? Indeed he may possibly do both these; but these are not the way, nor is it a thing which we can expect. 3. And this guilt, and fear, and unwillingness together, will all keep down your thoughts from heaven; so that seldom thinking of it, will increase your unbelief: and they will make you unfit to see the evidences of truth in the Gospel, when you do think of them, or hear them: for he that would not know, cannot learn. Obey therefore according to the knowledge which you have, if ever you would have more, and would not be given up to the blindness of infidelity.

Direct. 11. 'Trust not only to your understandings, and think not that study is all which is necessary to faith: but remember that faith is the gift of God; and therefore pray as well as study.'

'Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding;' Prov. iii. 5. It is a precept as necessary in this point as in any. In all things God ab-

horreth the proud, and looketh at them afar off, as with disowning and disdain : but in no case more, than when a blind ungodly sinner shall so overvalue his own understanding, as to think that if there be evidence of truth in the mystery of faith, he is able presently to discern it, before or without any heavenly illumination, to cure his dark distempered mind. Remember that as the sun is seen only by his own light ; so is God, our Creator and Redeemer. Faith is the gift of God, as well as repentance ; Ephes. ii. 8. .2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Apply yourselves therefore to God by earnest prayer for it. As he, Mark ix. 24. “ Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.” And as the disciples, Luke xvii. 5, “ Increase our faith.” A humble soul that waiteth on God in fervent prayer, and yet neglecteth not to study and search for truth, is much liker to become a confirmed believer, than ungodly students, who trust and seek no further than to their books, and their perverted minds. For as God will be sought to for his grace ; so those that draw near him, do draw near unto the light ; and therefore are like as children of light to be delivered from the power of darkness ; for in his light we shall see the light that must acquaint us with him.

Direct. 12. Lastly, ‘ What measure of light soever God vouchsafeth you, labour to turn it all into love ; and make it your serious care and business to know God, that you may love him, and to love God so far as you know him.’

For he that desireth satisfaction in his doubts, to no better end, than to please his mind by knowing, and to free it from the disquietude of uncertainty, hath an end so low in all his studies, that he cannot expect that God and his grace should be called down, to serve such a low and base design. That faith which is not employed in beholding the love of God in the face of Christ, on purpose to increase and exercise our love, is not indeed the true Christian faith, but a dead opinion. And he that hath never so weak a faith, and useth it to this end, to know God’s amiableness, and to love him, doth take the most certain way for the confirmation of his faith. For love is the closest adherence of the soul to God, and therefore will set it in the clearest light, and will teach it by the sweet convincing way of experience and spiritual taste. Believing alone is like the knowledge of our meat by seeing it : and love is the knowledge of our



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CHAPTER IX.

General Directions for exercising the Life of your Faith.

HAVING told you how faith must be confirmed, I am next to tell you how it must be used. And in this I shall begin with some general directions, and then proceed to such particular cases, in which we have the greatest use for faith.

Direct. 1. ‘Remember the necessity of faith in all the business of your hearts and lives, that nothing can be done well without it.’ There is no sin to be conquered, no grace to be exercised, no worship to be performed, nor any acts of mercy, or justice, or worldly business, to be done well without it, in any manner acceptable to God. “Without faith it is impossible to please God;” Heb. xi. 6. You may as well go about your bodily work without your eyesight, as about your spiritual work without faith.

Direct. 2. ‘Make it therefore your care and work to get faith, and to use it; and think not that God must reveal his mind to you, as in visions, while you idly neglect your proper work.’ Believing is the first part of your trade of life; and the practice of it must be your constant business. It is not living ordinarily by sense, and looking when God will cast in the light of faith extraordinarily, which is indeed the life of faith; nor is it seeming to stir up faith in a prayer or sermon, and looking no more after it all the day; this is but to give God a salutation, and not to dwell and walk with him; and to give heaven a complimentary visit sometimes, but not to have our conversation there; 2 Cor. v. 7, 8.

Direct. 3. ‘Be not too seldom in solitary meditation.’ Though it be a duty which melancholy persons are disabled to perform, in any set, and long, and orderly manner; yet it is so needful to those that are able, that the greatest works of faith are managed by it. How should things unseen be apprehended, so as to affect our hearts, without any serious exercise of our thoughts? How should we search into mysteries of the Gospel, or converse with God, or walk in heaven, or fetch either joys or motives thence, without any retired studious contemplation? If you cannot meditate or think, you cannot believe. Meditation abstracteth the

mind from vanity, and lifteth it up above the world, and setteth it about the work of faith; which by a mindless, thoughtless, or worldly soul, can never be performed; 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. Phil. iii. 20. Matt. vi. 21. Col. iii. 1. 3.

Direct. 4. ‘Let the image of the life of Christ, and his martyrs, and holiest servants, be deeply imprinted on your minds.’ That you may know what the way is which you have to go, and what patterns they be which you have to imitate; think how much they were above things sensitive, and how light they set by all the pleasures, wealth, and glory of this world. Therefore the Holy Ghost doth set before us that cloud of witnesses, and catalogue of martyrs, in Heb. xi. that example may help us, and we may see with how good company we go, in the life of faith. Paul had well studied the example of Christ, when he took pleasure in infirmities, and gloried only in the cross, to be base and afflicted in this world, for the hopes of endless glory; 2 Cor. xi. 30. xii. 5. 9, 10. And when he could say, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ—that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death;” Phil. iii. 8—10. No man will militate in the life of faith, but he that followeth the “Captain of his salvation” (Heb. ii. 10.); who for the bringing of many sons to glory (even those whom he is not ashamed to call his brethren), was made perfect, (as to the perfection of action or performance) by suffering; thereby to shew us, how little the best of these visible and sensible corporeal things, are to be valued in comparison of the things invisible; and therefore as the general and the soldiers make up one army, and militate in one militia; so “he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one;” Heb. ii. 10—12. Though that which is called the life of faith in us, deserved a higher title in Christ, and his faith in his Father, and ours, do much differ, and he had not many of the objects, acts, and uses of faith, as we have who are sinners; yet in this we must follow him, as our great example, in valuing things invisible, and vilifying things visible in comparison of them. And therefore Paul saith, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth

in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me ;” Gal. ii. 20.

Direct. 5. ‘ Remember therefore that God and heaven; the unseen things, are the final object of true faith ; and that the final object is the noblest ; and that the principal use of faith is to carry up the whole heart and life from things visible and temporal, to things invisible and eternal ; and not only to comfort us in the assurance of our own forgiveness and salvation.’

It is an exceeding common and dangerous deceit, to overlook both this principal object and principal use of the Christian faith. 1. Many think of no other object of it; but the death and righteousness of Christ, and the pardon of sin, and the promise of that pardon : and God and heaven they look at as the objects of some other common kind of faith. 2. And they think of little other use of it, than to comfort them against the guilt of sin, with the assurance of their justification. But the great and principal work of faith is, that which is about its final object ; to carry up the soul to God and heaven, where the world, and the things sensible, are the ‘ terminus à quo,’ and God, and things invisible, the ‘ terminus ad quem :’ and thus it is put in contradistinction to living by sight, in 2 Cor. v. 6, 7. And thus mortification is made one part of this great effect, in Rom. vi. throughout, and many other places : and thus it is that Heb. xi. doth set before us those numerous examples of a life of faith, as it was expressed in valuing things unseen, upon the belief of the word of God, and the vilifying of things seen which stand against them. And thus Christ tried the rich man, (Luke xviii. 22.) whether he would be his disciple, by calling him to sell all, and give to the poor, for the hopes of a treasure in heaven. And thus Christ maketh bearing the cross, and denying ourselves, and forsaking all for him, to be necessary in all that are his disciples. And thus Paul describeth the life of faith, (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) by the contempt of the world, and suffering afflictions for the hopes of heaven : “ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are not



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terest) and withal, at the same time must kindle in your souls a thankful love to the Lord and fountain of this grace : and if you were so ingenuous as to begin here, and first use your faith upon the aforesaid common gift of Christ, for the kindling of love to God within you, and would account this the work which faith hath every day to do ; you would then find that in the very exciting and exercise of this holy love, your assurance of your own special interest in Christ, would be sooner and more comfortably brought about, than by searching to find either evidence of pardon, before you find your love to God ; or to find your love to God, before you have laboured to get and exercise it.

I tell you, they are dangerous deceivers of your souls, that shall contradict this obvious truth ; that the true method and motive of man's first special love to God, must not be by believing first God's special love to us ; but by believing his more common love and mercy in the general act and offer of grace before-mentioned. For he that believeth God's special love to him, and his special interest in Christ, before he hath any special love to God, doth sinfully presume, and not believe. For if by God's special love, you mean his love of complacency to you, as a living member of Christ ; to believe this before you love God truly, is to believe a dangerous lie : and if you mean only, God's love of benevolence, by which he decreeth to make you the objects of his aforesaid complacency, and to sanctify and save you ; to believe this before you truly love God, is to believe that which is utterly unknown to you, and may be false for ought you know, but it is not at all revealed by God, and therefore is not the object of faith.

Therefore if you cannot have true assurance or persuasion of your special interest in Christ, and of your justification, before you have a special love to God, then this special love must be kindled (I say not by a common faith, but) by a true faith in the general love and promise mentioned before.

Nay, you must not only have first this special love, but also must have so much knowledge, that indeed you have it, as you will have knowledge of your special interest in Christ, and the love of God : for no act of faith will truly evidence special grace, which is not immediately and intimately accompanied with true love to God, our Father and

Redeemer, and the ultimate object of our faith: nor can you any further perceive, or prove, the sincerity of your faith itself, than you discern in, or with it, the love here mentioned. For faith is not only an act of the intellect, but of the will also: and there is no volition or consent to this or any offered good, which hath not in it the true nature of love: (and the intention of the end, being in order of nature, before our choice or use of means; the intending of God as our end, cannot come behind that act of faith, which is about Christ as the chosen means or way to God.) Therefore make this your great and principal use of your faith, to receive all the expressions of God's love in Christ, and thereby to kindle in you a love to God; that first the special true belief of God's more common love and grace, may kindle in you a special love, and then the sense of this may assure you of your special interest in Christ; and then the assurance of that special interest, may increase your love to a much higher degree: and thus live by faith in the work of love.

Direct. 7. 'That you may understand what the faith is which you must live by, take in all the parts (at least that are essential to it) in your description; and take not some parcels of it for the Christian faith; nor think not that it must needs be several sorts of faith, if it have several objects; and hearken not to that dull philosophical subtlety, which would persuade you that faith is but some single physical act of the soul.'

1. If you know not what faith is, it must needs be a great hinderance to you, in the seeking of it, the trying it, and the using it. For though one may use his natural faculties, which work by natural inclination and necessity, without knowing what they are; yet it is not so where the choice of the rational appetite is necessary; for it must be guided by the reasoning faculty. And though unlearned persons may have and use repentance, faith, and other graces, who cannot define them, yet they do truly (though not perfectly) know the thing itself, though they know not the terms of a just definition: and all defect of knowing the true nature of faith, will be some hinderance to us in using it.

2. It is a moral subject which we are speaking of; and terms are to be understood according to the nature of the

subject : therefore faith is to be taken for a moral act, which comprehendeth many physical acts : such as the act of believing it, or taking such a man for my physician, or my master, or my tutor, or my king. Even our philosophers themselves know not what doth individuate a physical act of the soul : (nay, they are not agreed whether its acts should be called physical properly, or not.) Nay, they cannot tell what doth individuate an act of sense ; whether when my eye doth at once see many words and letters of my book, every word or letter doth make as many individual acts, by being so many objects ? And if so, whether the parts of every letter also do not constitute an individual act ; and where shall we here stop ? And must all these trifles be considered in our faith ? Assenting to the truths is not one faith (unless when separated from the rest) and consenting to the good, another act : nor is it one faith to believe the promise, and another to believe the pardon of sin, and another to believe salvation, and another to believe in God, and another to believe in Jesus Christ ; nor one to believe in Christ as our ransom, and another as our Intercessor, and another as our Teacher, and another as our King, and another to believe in the Holy Ghost, &c. I deny not but some one of these may be separated from the rest, and being so separated may be called faith ; but not the Christian faith, but only a material parcel of it, which is like the limb of a man, or of a tree, which, cut off from the rest, is dead, and ceaseth when separated to be a part, any other than logical (a part of the description.)

The faith which hath the promise of salvation, and which you must live by, hath, 1. God for the principal Revealer, and his veracity for its formal object. 2. It hath Christ, and angels, and prophets, and apostles, for the sub-revealers. 3. It hath the Holy Ghost by the divine attesting operations before described, to be the seal and the confirmer. 4. It hath the same Holy Ghost for the internal exciter of it. 5. It hath all truths of known divine revelation, and all good of known divine donation by his covenant, to be the material general object. 6. It hath the covenant of grace, and the Holy Scriptures, (and formerly the voice of Christ and his apostles) or any such sign of the mind of God ; for the instrumental efficient cause of the object 'in esse cognito ;' and also the instrumental efficient of



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ordinarily in Scripture) for that which is made the condition of justification and salvation, and opposed to heathenism, infidelity, Judaism, or the works of the law, it is commonly taken in this larger sense.

Faith is well enough described to them, that understand what is implied, by the usual shorter description; as, that it is a believing acceptance of Christ, and relying on him as our Saviour, or for salvation: or, a belief of pardon, and the heavenly glory as procured by the redemption wrought by Christ; and given by God in the covenant of grace: but the reason is, because all the rest is con-noted, and so to be understood by us, as if it were expressed in words: but the true and full definition of it is this:

The Christian faith which is required at baptism, and then professed, and hath the promise of justification and glorification, is a true belief of the Gospel, and an acceptance of, and consent unto the covenant of grace: particularly, a believing that God is our Creator, our Owner, our Ruler, and our chief good; and that Jesus Christ is God and man, our Saviour, our ransom, or Teacher, and our King; and that the Holy Ghost is the sanctifier of the church of Christ: and it is an understanding, serious consent, that this God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be my God and reconciled Father in Christ, my Saviour, and my Sanctifier; to justify me, sanctify me, and glorify me, in the perfect knowledge of God, and mutual complacence in heaven; which belief and consent wrought in me by the word and Spirit of Christ, is grounded upon the veracity of God and his chief Revealer, and upon his love and mercy as the donor; and upon Christ and his apostles as the messengers of God; and upon the Gospel; and especially the covenant of his grace, as the instrumental revelation and donation itself: and upon the many signal operations of the Holy Ghost, as the divine infallible attestation of their truth.

Learn this definition, and understand it thoroughly, and it may prove a more solid useful knowledge (to have the true nature of faith or Christianity thus methodically printed on your minds) than to read over a thousand volumes in a rambling and confused way of knowledge.

If any quarrel at this definition, because the foundation is not first set down, I only tell him that no logicians do judge of the logical order of words by the mere propriety

and posteriority of place. And if any think that here is more than every true Christian doth understand and remember, I answer, that here is no more than every true Christian hath a true knowledge of; though perhaps every one have not a knowledge so methodical, explicit and distinct, as to define faith thus, or to think so distinctly and clearly of it, as others do, or to be able by words to express to another, what he hath a real conception of in himself. There is first in the mind of man a conception of the object or matter (by those words or means which introduce it) and next that 'verbum mentis,' or inward word, which is a distincter conception of the matter in the mould of such notions as may be expressed; and next the 'verbum oris,' the word of mouth expresseth it. Now many have the conception of the matter, long before they have the 'verbum mentis,' or logical notions of it: and many have the 'verbum mentis,' who by a hesitating tongue are hindered from oral expressions; and in both there are divers degrees of distinctness and clearness.

Direct. 9. "Turn not plain Gospel doctrine into the philosophical fooleries of wrangling and ill-moulded wits; nor feign to yourselves any new notions, or offices of faith, or any new terms as necessary, which are not in the Holy Scriptures."

I do not say, use no terms which are not in the Scriptures; for the Scriptures were not written in English: nor do I persuade you to use no other notions than the Scriptures use; but only that you use them not as necessary, and lay not too great a stress upon them. I confess new heresies may give occasion for new words (as the bishops in the first council of Nice thought): and yet as Hilary vehemently inveigheth against making new creeds on such pretences, and wisheth no such practice had been known (not excepting those at Nice) because it taught the heretics and contenders to imitate them: and they that made the third creed, might have the like arguments for it as those that made the second; and he knew not when there would be an end; so I could wish that there had been no new notions in the doctrine of faith, so much as used; for the same reasons: and especially because that while the first inventors do but use them, the next age which followeth them

will hold them necessary, and lay the churches' communion and peace upon them.

For instance, I think the word 'satisfaction,' as used by the orthodox, is of a very sound sense in our controversies against the Socinians; and yet I will never account it necessary, as long as it is not in the Scriptures, and as long as the words 'sacrifice, ransom, price, propitiation, atonement, &c.' which the Scripture useth, are full as good.

So I think that 'imputing Christ's righteousness to us,' is a phrase which the orthodox use in a very sound sense; and yet as long as it is not used by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures; and there are other phrases enough, which as well, or better, express the true sense, I will never hold it necessary.

So also the notions and phrases of 'faith being the instrument of our justification,' and 'faith justifieth only objectively,' and 'that faith justifieth only as it receiveth Christ's blood, or Christ's righteousness, or Christ as a priest;' 'that faith is only one physical act;' that it is 'only in the understanding;' or 'only in the will;' that 'its only justifying act is recumbency, or resting on Christ for justification;' that 'it is not an action, but a passion;' that 'all acts of faith save one, and that one as an act, are the works which Paul excludeth from our justification;' and that 'to expect justification by believing in Christ for sanctification, or glorification, or by believing in him as our Teacher, or King, or justifying Judge, or by repenting, or loving God, or Christ, as our Redeemer, or by confessing our sins, and praying for pardon and justification, &c. is to expect justification by works, and so to fall from grace or true justification;' that 'he that will escape his pernicious expectance of justification by works, must know what that one act of faith is by which only we are justified, and must expect justification by it only relatively, (that is, not by it at all, but by Christ, say some) or as an instrument (say others) &c.'

Many of these assertions are pernicious errors; most of them false; and the best of them are the unnecessary inventions of men's dark, yet busy wits, who condemn their own doctrine by their practice, and their practice by their doctrine; whilst they cry up the sufficiency of the Scrip-



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he that will without any prejudice and partiality study Paul where he opposeth faith and works, as to our justification, shall find by his almost constant naming "the works of the law," or by the context and analysis, that indeed his chief meaning is to prove, that we are justified by the Christian religion, and must be saved by it, and not by the Jewish which the adversaries of Christianity then pleaded for, and trusted to.

Direct. 12. 'Set not the helps of faith as if they were against faith; but understand their several places and offices, and use them accordingly.'

Do not like those ignorant self-conceited heretics, who cry out, 'It is by believing, and not by repenting, or reading, or hearing sermons, or by praying, or by forbearing sin, or by doing good, that we are justified; and therefore it is by faith only that we are saved; the same which is sufficient for our justification, being sufficient for our salvation; seeing the justified cannot be condemned; and justification and salvation are both equally ascribed to faith without the works of the law, by the apostle.' For we are justified only by such a faith, as is caused by God's word, and maintained and actuated by hearing, reading, meditation, prayer and sacraments; and as is accompanied by repentance, and worketh by love, and is indeed the beholding of those invisible and glorious motives, which may incite our love, and set us on good works, and obedience to our Redeemer. And he that by negligence omitteth, or by error excludeth any one of these in the life of faith, will find that he hath erred against his own interest, peace and comfort, if not against his own salvation. And that he might as wisely have disputed that it is his eyes only that must see the way, and therefore he may travel without his legs.

Direct. 13. 'Take heed lest a misconceit of the certainty of some common philosophical opinions, should make you stagger in those articles of faith which seem to contradict them.'

Not indeed that any truths can be contrary one to another: for that which is true in philosophy, is contrary to no one truth in theology: but philosophers have deceived themselves and the world, with a multitude of uncertainties and falsities; and by straining them to subtle niceties, and lock-

ing them up in uncouth terms, have kept the common people from trying them, and understanding them; and thereby have made it their own prerogative explicitly to err, and the people's duty not to contradict them; but to admire that error as profound parts of learning, which they cannot understand. And then their conclusions often go for principles which must not be gainsaid, when they are perhaps either false, or nonsense. And when they meet with any thing in Scripture, which crosseth their opinions, the reputation of human folly maketh them despise the wisdom of God. I have given you elsewhere some instances about the immortality of the soul: they know not what generation is; they do not know it: nor what are the true principles and elements of mixed bodies; nor what is the true difference between immaterial and material substances; with an hundred such like: and yet some expect, that we should sacrifice the most certain useful truths, to their false or uncertain useless suppositions, which is the true reason why Paul saith, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit (not true philosophy, which is the true knowledge of the works of God, but the vain models which every sect of them cried up) after the tradition of men, (that is, the opinions of the masters of their sects) after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him;" Col. ii. 8—10. See Acts xvii. 18. It is Christ who is the kernel and summary of the Christian philosophy; who is therefore called "The wisdom of God," (1 Cor. i. 24, 30.) both because he is the heavenly Teacher of true wisdom, and because that true wisdom consisteth in knowing him. And indeed even in those times, the several sects of philosophers accounted much of each other's principles to be erroneous; and the philosophers of these times, begin to vilify them all; and withal to confess that they have yet little of certainty to substitute in the room of the demolished idols; but they are about their experiments, to try if any thing in time may be found out.

Direct. 14. 'Especially take heed, lest you be cheated into infidelity, by the Dominicans' metaphysical doctrine, of the necessity of God's physical predetermining promotion as the first total cause, to the being of every action natural and free, not only 'in genere actionis,' but also as

respectively and comparatively exercised on this object rather than on that.'

I add this only for the learned, who are as much in danger of infidelity as others; and will use it to the greater injury of the truth. I will meddle now with no other reasons of my advice, but what the subject in hand requireth. If God can, and do thus premove and predetermine the mind, will and tongue of every liar in the world, to every lie (or material falsehood) which ever they did conceive or speak, there would be no certainty of the Gospel, nor of any divine revelation at all: seeing all such certainty is resolved into God's veracity: that God cannot lie. And God speaketh not to us, by any but a created voice: and if he can thus predetermine others to those words which are a lie, rather than to the contrary which are true, there would be no certainty, but he may do so by prophets and apostles: and let them tell you what they will of the greater certainty of inspirations and miracles, than of predeterminations, it will be found upon trial, that no man can prove, or make it so much as probable, that any inspiration hath more of a divine causation, than such a premoving predetermination as aforesaid doth amount to; much less so much more, as will prove that one is more certain than the other.

This doctrine therefore which undeniably (whatever may be wrangled) taketh down Christianity, and all belief of God, or man, is not to be believed merely upon such a philosophical conceit, that every action is a being; and therefore must in all its circumstances be caused by God. As if God were not able to make a faculty, which can determine its own comparative act to this rather than to that, by his sustentation, and universal pre-causation and concurrence, without the said predetermining pre-motion: when as an action as such is but a 'modus entis;' and the comparative exercise of it, on this rather than on that, is but a 'modus vel circumstantia modi.' And they leave no work, for gracious determination, because that natural determination doth all the same thing (equally to duty and sin) without it:

Direct. 15. 'Consider well how much all human converse is maintained by the necessary belief of one another, and what the world would be without it; and how much you expect yourselves to be believed: and then think how much more belief is due to God.'



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himself, and therefore would have none believe or trust him: for who would be better than his God?

Direct. 16. ‘Consider also that veracity in God is his nature or essence; and cannot be denied without denying him to be God.’

For it is nothing but his three essentialities, or principles, power, wisdom and goodness, as they are expressed in his word or revelations, as congruous to his mind, and to the matter expressed. He that neither wanteth knowledge (to know what to say and do) nor goodness (to love truth, and hate all evil) nor power to do what he please, and to make good his word, cannot possibly lie; because every lie is for want of one, or more of these; Heb. vi. 18. Titus i. 2. And there as it is said, that he cannot lie, and that it is impossible; so it is called, a denying of himself, if he could be unfaithful. “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself;” 2 Tim. ii. 13.

Direct. 17. ‘Exercise faith much in those proper works, in which self and sense are most denied and overcome.’

Bodily motions and labours which we are not used to, are done both unskilfully, and with pain. If faith be not much exercised in its warfare, and victorious acts, you will neither know its strength, nor find it to be strong, when you come to use it. It is not the easy and common acts of faith, which will serve turn, to try and strengthen it. As the life of sense is the adversary which faith must conquer; so use it much in such conflicts and conquests, if you would find it strong and useful: use it in such acts of mortification and self-denial, as will plainly shew, that it over-ruleth sense: use it in patience and rejoicing in such sufferings, and in contentment in so low and cross a state, where you are sure that sight and sense do not contribute to your peace and joy: use it not only in giving some little of your superfluities, but in giving your whole two mites, even all your substance, and selling all and giving to the poor, when indeed God maketh it your duty: at least in forsaking all for his sake in a day of trial. Faith never doth work so like itself, so clearly, so powerfully, and so comfortably, as in these self-denying and overcoming acts, when it doth not work alone, without the help of sense to comfort us; but also against sense, which would discourage us; Luke xviii. 22, 23. xiv. 26. 33. 2 Cor. v. 7.

Direct. 18. 'Keep a constant observation of God's converse with your hearts, and workings on them.'

For, as I said before, there are within us such demonstrations of a kingdom of God, in precepts, mercies, rewards and punishments, that he which well marketh them, will have much help in the maintaining and exercising his belief of the everlasting kingdom: especially the godly, who have that Spirit there working, which is indeed the very seal, and pledge, and earnest of life eternal; 2 Cor. i. 22. v. 5. Ephes. i. 13, 14. Gal. iv. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 16, 17. There is so much of God and heaven in a true believer's heart, that (as we see the moon and stars when we look down into the water, so) we may see much of God and heaven within us, if the heart itself be thoroughly studied.

And I must add, that experience here must be carefully recorded: and when God fulleth promises to us, it must not be forgotten.

Direct. 19. 'Converse much with them that live by faith, and fetch their motives and comforts from the things unseen.'

Converse hath a transforming power. To converse with them that live all by sense, and shew no other desires, or joys, or sorrows, but what are fetched from fleshly sensible things, is a great means to draw us downwards with them. And to converse with them who converse in heaven; and speak of nothing else so comfortably or so seriously; who shew us that heaven is the place they travel to, and the state that all their life doth aim at; and who make little of all the wants or plenty, pains or pleasures of the flesh; this much conduceth to make us heavenly. As men are apt to learn and use the language, the motives, and the employments of the country and people where they live; so he that is most familiar with such as live by faith, upon things unseen, and taketh God's promise for full security, hath a very great help to learn and live that life himself; Heb. x. 24, 25. 1 Thes. iv. 17, 18. Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Direct. 20. 'Forget not the nearness of the things unseen, and think not of a long continuance in this world; but live in continual expectations of your change.'

Distant things, be they never so great, do hardly move us: as in bodily motion, the mover must be contiguous: and as our senses are not fit to apprehend beyond a certain distance; so our minds also are finite, and have their

bounds and measure : and sin hath made them much narrower, foolish and short-sighted than they would have been. A certainty of dying at last, should do much with us : but yet he that looketh to live long on earth, will the more hardly live by faith in heaven ; when he that daily waiteth for his change, will have easily the more serious and effectual thoughts of the world in which he must live next, and of all the preparations necessary thereunto ; and will the more easily despise the things on earth, which are the employment and felicity of the sensual ; Col. iii. 1—3. Phil. i. 20—23. 1 Cor. xv. 31. As we see it in constant experience in men, when they see that they must presently die indeed, how light then set they by the world ? How little are they moved with the talk of honour, with the voice of mirth, with the sight of meat, or drink, or beauty, or any thing which before they had not power to deny ? And how seriously they will then talk of sin and grace, of God and heaven, which before they could not be awakened to regard ? If therefore you would live by faith indeed, set yourselves as at the entrance of that world which faith foreseeth, and live as men that know they may die to-morrow, and certainly must be gone ere long. Dream not of I know not how many years more on earth, which God never promised you ; unless you make it your business to vanquish faith by setting its objects at a greater distance than God hath set them. Learn Christ's warning to one and all, To watch, and to be always ready ; Mark xiii. 33. 35. 37. 1 Pet. iv. 7. Matt. xxiv. 44. Luke xii. 40. He that thinketh he hath yet time enough, and daylight before him, will be the apter to loiter in his work or journey : when every man will make haste when the sun is setting, if he have much to do, or far to go. Delays, which are the great preventers of repentance, and undoers of the world, do take their greatest advantage from this ungrounded expectation of long life. When they hear the physician say, ' He is a dead man, and there is no hope,' then they would fain begin to live, and then how religious and reformed would they be ? Whereas if this foolish error did not hinder them, they might be of the same mind all their lives, and might have then done their work, and waited with desire for the crown ; and said with Paul, " For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand : I have fought a good



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Holy Scriptures: He is the first and last object of our faith. "It is life eternal to know him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," was Christ's order in commanding and causing faith; John xiv. 1. Seeing therefore this is the principal part of faith (to know God, and live upon him, and to him), I shall give you many (though brief) Directions in it.

Direct. 1. 'Behold the glorious and full demonstrations of the being of the Deity, in the whole frame of nature, and especially in yourselves.'

The great argument from the effect to the cause is unanswerable. All the caused and derived beings in the world, must needs have a first being for their cause. All action, intellection and volition; all power, wisdom and goodness which is caused by another, doth prove that the cause can have no less than the total effect hath. To see the world, and to know what a man is, and yet to deny that there is a God, is to be mad. He that will not know that which all the world doth more plainly preach than words can possibly express, and will not know the sense of his own being and faculties, doth declare himself incapable of teaching; Psal. xiv. 1. xlix. 12. 20. Isa. i. 2, 3. It is the greatest shame that man's understanding is capable of, to be ignorant of God, (1 Cor. xv. 34.) and the greatest shame to any nation (Hos. iv. 1. vi. 6.), as it is the highest advancement of the mind to know him, and therefore the sum of all our duty; Prov. ii. 5. Hos. vi. 6. 2 Chron. xxx. 21, 22. Isa. xi. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 20. Rom. i. 20. 28. John xvii. 3.

Direct. 2. 'Therefore take not the being and perfections of God, for superstructures and conclusions, which may be tried, and made bow to the interest of other points; but as the greatest, clearest, surest truths, next to the knowledge of our own being and intellection: and that which all other (at least, not the proper objects of sense) must be tried and reduced to.'

When there is no right method or order of knowledge, there is no true and solid knowledge. It is distraction, and not knowing, to begin at the top, and to lay the foundation last, and reduce things certain to things uncertain. And it is no more wisely done of atheists, who argue from their apprehensions of other things, against the beings or perfections of God. As when they say, 'There is much evil in

the world permitted by God, and there is death and many tormenting pains befall even the innocent brutes; and there are wars and confusions, and ignorance and wickedness have dominion in the earth: therefore God is not perfectly good, nor perfectly wise, and just, and powerful in his government of the world.' The error in the method of arguing here, helpeth to continue their blindness. That God is perfectly good, is 'prius cognitum.' Nothing is more certain than that he who is the cause of all the derived goodness in the whole universe, must have as much or more than all himself. Seeing therefore that heaven and earth, and all things, bear so evident a witness to this truth, this is the foundation and first to be laid, and never more questioned, nor any argument brought against it. For all that possibly can be said against it, must be 'à minus notis,' from that which is more obscure. Seeing then that it is most certain by sense, that calamities and evils are in the world; and no less certain that there is a God, who is most perfectly good; it must needs follow that these two are perfectly consistent, and that some other cause of evil must be found out, than any imperfection in the chief good. But as to the being of things, and order in the world, it followeth not that they must be as good and perfect as their Maker and Governor is himself; nor one part as good and perfect in itself as any other. Because it was not the Creator's purpose when he made the world, to make another God, that should be equal with himself (for two infinite beings and perfections is a contradiction). But it was his will to imprint such measures of his own likeness and excellencies upon the creatures, and with such variety as his wisdom saw most fit; the reasons of which are beyond our search. The Divine agency, as it is in him the agent, is perfect; but the effect hath those measures of goodness which he was freely pleased to communicate.

And as I have given you this instance, to shew the folly of trying the certain foundation by the less certain notions or accidents in the world; so you must abhor the same error in all other instances. Some wit may consist with the questioning of many plain conclusions; but he is a fool indeed, who saith, "There is no God," or doubteth of his essential properties; Psal. xiv. 1, 2. Rom. i. 19—21.

Direct. 3. 'Remember that all our knowledge of God,

while we are in the body here, is but enigmatical; and as in a glass; and that all words which man can speak of God (at least except being and substance) are but terms below him, borrowed from his image on the creatures, and not signifying the same thing formally in God, which they signify in us.'

If you think otherwise, you will make an idol in your conception, instead of God: and you will debase him, and bring him down to the condition of the creature. And yet it doth not follow that we know nothing of him, or that all such expressions of God are vain, or false, or must be disused: for then we must not think or talk of God at all. But we must speak of him according to the highest notions which we can borrow from the noblest parts of his image; confessing still, that they are but borrowed: and these must be used till we come nearer, and see as face to face; and "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away;" 1 Cor. xiii. 10—12. And yet it is (in comparison of darker revelations) as with open face that we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord; and it is a sight that can change us into the same image, as from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Direct. 4. 'Abhor the furious ignorance which brandeth every one with the names of heresy or blasphemy, who differ from them in the use of some unnecessary metaphor of God, when their different phrases tend not indeed to his dishonour, and perhaps may have the same signification with their own.'

When we are all forced to confess, that all our terms of God are improper or metaphorical, and yet men will run those metaphors into numerous branches, and carry them unto greater impropriety, and then rail at all as blasphemers that question them; this practice is (though too common) a heinous sin in them, as it hath direful effects upon the church. Should I recite the sad histories of this iniquity, and shew what it hath done between the Greek and Latin churches, and between those called orthodox and catholic, and many through the world that have been numbered with heretics; it would be too large a subject for our sorrow and complaints.

Direct. 5. 'Abhor presumptuous curiosities in inquiring into the secret things of God; much more in pretending to



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free, and whether his influence be upon the essence, or faculty, or act immediately, and what that influx is. In a word, how voluminously do they darken counsel by words without knowledge! As if they had never read God's large exposition with Job, (Job xlii. &c.) "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law;" Deut. xxix. 29. Even an angel could say to Manoah, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" Judges xiii. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time, (saving) the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; he hath declared him;" John i. 18. And what he hath declared we may know; but how much more do these men pretend to know, than ever Christ declared! But "who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" Rom. xi. 34.

'Etiam vera de Deo loqui periculosum.' Even things that are true should be spoken of God, not only with reverence, but with great caution. And a wise man will rather admire and adore, than boldly speak what he is not certain is true and congruous.

Direct. 6. 'Let all your knowledge of God be practical; yea, more practical than any other knowledge; and let not your thoughts once use God's name in vain.'

If it be a sin to use idle or unprofitable words, and especially to take God's name in vain; it cannot be faultless to have idle, unprofitable thoughts of God: for the thoughts are the operations of the mind itself. There is no thought or knowledge which ever cometh into our minds, which, 1. Hath so great work to do; and 2. Is so fit and powerful to do it, as the knowledge and thoughts which we have of God. The very renovation of the soul to his image, and transforming it into the Divine nature, must be wrought hereby. The thoughts of his wisdom, must silence all our contradicting folly, and bring our souls to an absolute submission and subjection to his laws. The knowledge of his goodness, must cause all true saving goodness in us, by possessing us with the highest love to God. The knowledge of his power, must cause both our confidence, and our fear: and the impress of God's attributes must be his image on our souls. It is a common (and true) observation of divines, that in Scripture, words of God which express his knowledge, do

imply his will and affections: (as his knowing the way of the righteous (Psal. ii. 6,) is his approving and loving it, &c.): and it is as true, that words of our knowledge of God, should all imply affection towards him. It is a grievous aggravation of ungodliness, to be a learned, ungodly man: "To profess to know God, and deny him in works, being abominable and disobedient, and reprobate to every good work;" Titus i. 16. (though as orthodox and ready in good words as others).

A thought of God should be able to do any thing upon the soul. It should partake of the omnipotency and perfection of the blessed object. No creature should be able to stand before him, when our minds entertain any serious thoughts of him, and converse with him. A thought of God should annihilate all the grandeur and honours of the world to us; and all the pleasures and treasures of the flesh; and all the power of temptations. What fervency in prayer! What earnestness of desire! What confidence of faith! What hatred of sin! What ardent love! What transporting joy! What constant patience should one serious thought of God possess the believing, holy soul with!

If the thing known become as much one with the understanding, as Plotinus and other Platonists thought, or if man were so far a partaker of a kind of deification, as Gibieuf and other Oratorians, and Benedictus de Benedictis, Barbanson, and other fanatic friars think, surely the knowledge of God should raise us more above our sensitive desires and passions, and make us a more excellent sort of persons, and it should make us more like those blessed spirits who know him more than we on earth; and it should be the beginning of our eternal life; John xvii, 3.

Direct. 7. 'By faith deliver up yourselves to God as your Creator and your Owner, and live to him as those that perceive they are absolutely his own.'

The word 'God' doth signify both God's essence, and his three great relations unto man, and we take him not for our God, if we take him not as in these divine relations. Therefore God would have faith to be expressed at our entrance into his church, by baptism; because a believing soul doth deliver up itself to God. The first and greatest work of faith, is to enter us sincerely into the holy covenant: in which this is the first part, that we take God for

our Owner, and resign up ourselves to him, without either express or implicit reserve, as those that are absolutely his own. And though these words are by any hypocrite quickly spoken, yet when the thing is really done, the very heart of sin is broken: for as the apostle saith, "He that is dead is freed from sin;" Rom. vi. 7. Because a dead man hath no faculties to do evil. So we may say, He that is resigned to God as his absolute Owner, is freed from sin; because he that is not his own, hath nothing which is his own, and therefore hath nothing to alienate from his Owner. "We are not our own, we are bought with a price" (which is the second title of God's propriety in us), and therefore "must glorify God in body and spirit, as being his;" 1 Cor. vi. 20.

And from this relation faith will fetch abundant consolation, seeing they that by consent, and not only by constraint, are absolutely his, shall undoubtedly be loved and cared for as his own, and used and provided for as his own. He will not neglect his own, and those of his family, who will take us to be worse than infidels, if we do so; 1 Tim. i. 5.

Direct. 8. 'By faith deliver up yourselves to God, as your sovereign Ruler, with an absolute resolution to learn, and love, and obey his laws.'

Though I have often and more largely spoken of these duties in other treatises, I must not here totally omit them, where I speak of that faith in God, which essentially consisteth in them. It is a narrow, and foolish, and pernicious conceit of faith, which thinketh it hath no object but promises and pardon; and that it hath nothing to do with God as our sovereign Governor. And it is too large a description of faith, which maketh actual and formal obedience to be a part of it. As marriage is not conjugal fidelity and duty, but it is a covenant which obligeth to it; and as the oath of allegiance is not a formal obedience to the laws, but it is a covenanting to obey them; and as the hiring or covenant of a servant, is not doing service, but it is an entering into an obligation and state of service: so faith and our first Christianity, is not strictly formal obedience to him that we believe in, as such; but it is an entering of ourselves by covenant into an obligation and state of future obedience. Faith hath God's precepts for its objects as truly as his promises; but his own relation as our King or Ruler is its pri-



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his felicity in any thing else, doth cleave to God but as the means to such a felicity. But to make God our felicity is lawful and necessary; but not to dream that this is the highest respect that we must have to God, to be our felicity. To love him, and to be beloved by him; to please him, and to be pleased in him, is our ultimate end; which though it be complex, and contain our own felicity, yet doth it, as infinitely supereminent, contain the complacency of God, and God as the object of our love, considered in his own infinite perfections: for he is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; “and of him, and through him, and to him are all things;” Rom. xi. 36. It is the highest and noblest work of faith, to make our own original to be our end, and to set our love entirely upon God; and to see that we ourselves are but worms and vanity; capable of no higher honour, than to be means to please and glorify God; and must not take down God so, as to love him only for ourselves. And he only who thus denieth himself for God, doth rightly improve self-love, and seek the only exaltation and felicity, by carrying up himself to God, and adhering to the eternal good; 1 Cor. x. 31. Luke xiv. 33. Matt. xvi. 25. Mark viii. 35.

Direct. 11. ‘Distinguish these relations of God, but divide them not; much less set them in any opposition to each other; and remember that the effects of them are all marvellously and harmoniously mixed, but undivided.’

The effects of God’s power, are always the effects also of his wisdom and goodness: and the effects of his wisdom, are always the effects of his goodness and his power: and the effects of his goodness, are always the effects of his power and his wisdom. The effects of his dominion on his rational subjects, are always the effects also of his government and love: and the effects of his government, are always the effects also of his dominion and love: and the effects of his love as Benefactor, are always the effects of his dominion and government. Though some one principal, and some one relation, may more eminently appear in one work as others do in the other works. Disposal is the effect of propriety; but it is always a regular and loving disposal of the subjects of his government. Legislation and judgment are the effects of his kingdom; but dominion and love

have a hand in both, till rebellion turn men from subjection. Glorification is the highest effect of love; but it is given also by our Owner, as by one that may do as he list with his own; and by our Governor by the way of a reward; Matt. xx. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. Matt. xxv. throughout.

Direct. 12. ‘Especially let faith unveil to you the face of the goodness of God; and see that your thoughts of it be neither false nor low; but equal to your thoughts of his power and understanding.’

1. As our loss by sin is more in the point of goodness than of power or knowledge (the devils having much of the two last, who have but little or nothing of the first); so it is the goodness of God which must be more studied by a believer, than his power or his wisdom, because the impress of it is more necessary to us in our lapsed state.

2. They have false thoughts of God’s goodness, who make it to consist only or chiefly, in a communicative inclination ‘ad extra,’ which we call benignity: for he was as good from eternity, before he made any creature, as he is since: and his goodness considered as essential in himself, and as his own perfection, is infinitely higher than the consideration of it, as terminated on any creature. Man is denominated good from his adaptation to the will of God, and not God chiefly from his adaptation to the commodity or will of man. And they do therefore debase God, and deify his creature, who make the creature the ultimate end of God and itself; and not God the ultimate end of the creature. And they might as well make the creature the beginning also of itself and God. (And yet this sottish notion taketh much with many half-witted novelists in this age, who account themselves the men of ingenuity.)

And they have also false thoughts of the goodness of God, who think that there is nothing of communicative benignity, in it at all. For all the good which God doth, he doth it from the goodness of his nature. “Thou art good, and doest good;” Psal. cxix. 68. And his doing good is usually expressed by the phrase of being good to them. “The Lord is good to all;” Psal. cxlv. 9. xxv. 8. lxxxvi. 5.

Object. ‘But if communicative benignity be natural to God as his essential goodness is, then he must do good ‘per modum naturæ, et ad ultimum potentiæ;’ and then

the world was from eternity, and as good as God could make it.'

Ans. 1. Those Christian divines who do hold that the universe was from eternity, and that it is as good as God can make it; do not yet hold that it was its own original, but an eternal emanation from God, and therefore that God who is the beginning of it, is the ultimate end, and eternally and voluntarily, though naturally and necessarily produced it for himself, even for the pleasure of his will: and therefore that God's essential goodness, as it is in itself, is much higher than the same as terminated in, or productive of the universe. And that no mixed bodies which do 'oriri et interire,' are generated and corrupted, were from eternity; and consequently, that this present system called the World, which is within our sight, was not from eternity; but that as spring and fall doth revive the plants, and end their transitory life; so it hath been with these particular systems; the more simple and noble parts of the universe continuing the same. And they hold that the world is next to infinitely good; and as good as it is possible to be without being God; and that for God to produce another God, or an infinite good, is a contradiction: and that all the baser and pained, and miserable parts of the world, are best respectively to the perfection of the whole, though not best in and to themselves. (As every nuck and pin in a watch is necessary as well as the chief parts.) And that all things set together, it is best that all things be as they are, and will be. But of this, the Infinite Wisdom, who seeth not only some little parts, but the whole universe at one perfect view, is the fittest judge.

2. But the generality of divines do hold the contrary, and say, that it is natural to God to be the all-sufficient, pregnant good; not only able to communicate goodness, but inclined to it, as far as his perfection doth require; but not inclined to communicate in a way of natural, constant necessity, as the sun shineth, but in a way of liberty, when, and in what degrees he pleaseth; which pleasure is guided by his infinite understanding, which no mortal man can comprehend; and therefore must not ask any further reason of the first reason and will, but stop here, and be satisfied to find that it is indeed God's will and reason, which



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miration of the power, and wisdom and goodness of the incomprehensible Creator, when he seriously looketh to the sun and stars, to sea and land, to the course of all things, and to the wonderful variety and natures of the particular creatures. And he hath not the heart of a believer in him, who doth not think, 'O what a God is it whom I am bound to serve, and who hath taken me into his covenant as his child! How happy are they who have such a God, engaged to be their God and happiness! And how miserable are they who make such a God their revenging judge and enemy! Shall I ever again wilfully or carelessly sin against a God of so great majesty? If the sun were an intellectual deity, and still looked on me, should I presumptuously offend him? Shall I ever distrust the power of him that made such a world? Shall I fear a worm, a mortal man, above this great and terrible Creator? Shall I ever again resist or disobey the word and wisdom of him, who made and ruleth such a world? Doth he govern the whole world, and should not I be governed by him? Hath he goodness enough to communicate as he hath done to sun and stars, to heaven and earth, to angels and men, and every wight? And hath he not goodness enough to draw, and engage, and continually delight this dull and narrow heart of mine? Doth the return of his sun turn the darksome night into the lightsome day, and bring forth the creatures to their food and labour; doth its approach revive the torpid earth, and turn the congealed winter into the pleasant spring, and cover the earth with her fragrant, many-coloured robes, and renew the life and joy of the terrestrial inhabitants; and shall I find nothing in the God who made and still continueth the world, to be the life, and strength, and pleasure of my soul? "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honour of his name; make his praise glorious: say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works!— Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing towards the children of men.— He ruleth by his power for ever: his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. O bless our God ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard! who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved!" Psal. lxvi. 1, &c. "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord, neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou

hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name; for thou art great and dost wondrous things: thou art God alone;" Psal. lxxxvi. 8—10. "O Lord, how great are thy works! Thy thoughts are very deep, a brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this;" Psal. xcii. 5, 6.

Faith doth not separate itself from natural knowledge, nor neglect God's works while it studieth his word; but saith, "I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands;" Psal. cxliii. 5. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches; so is the great and wide sea," &c.; Psal. civ. 24.

Nay, it is greatly to be noted, that as redemption is to repair the creation, and the Redeemer came to recover the soul of man to his Creator, and Christ is the way to the Father; so on the Lord's day our commemoration of redemption includeth and is subservient to our commemoration of the creation, and the work of the ancient sabbath is not shut out, but taken in with the proper work of the Lord's day: and as faith in Christ is a mediate grace to cause in us the love of God, so the word of the Redeemer doth not call off our thoughts from the works of the great Creator, but call them back to that employment, and fit us for it by reconciling us to God.

Therefore it is as suitable to the Gospel church at least, as it was to the Jewish, to make God's works the matter of our sabbath praises, and to say, as Psal. cxlv. 4, 5, 10. "One generation shall praise thy works to another; and shall declare thy mighty acts: I will speak of the glorious honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous works: and men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and I will declare thy greatness.— All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee." "I will wash my hands in innocency, and so I will compass thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works;" Psal. xxvi. 6, 7. "I will praise thee O Lord, with my whole heart, I will shew forth all thy marvellous works;" Psal. ix. 12.

Direct. 14. 'Let faith also observe God in his daily providences; and equally honour him for the ordinary and the extraordinary passages thereof.'

The upholding of the world is a continual causing of it ; and differeth from creation, as the continued shining of a candle doth from the first lighting of it. If therefore the creation do wonderfully declare the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God ; so also doth the conservation. And note that God's ordinary works are as great demonstrations of him in all his perfections, as his extraordinary. Is it not as great a declaration of the power of God, that he cause the sun to shine, and to keep its wondrous course from age to age, as if he did such a thing but for a day or hour ? and as if he caused it to stand still a day ? And is it not as great a demonstration of his knowledge also, and of his goodness ? Surely we should take it for as great an act of love, to have plenty, and health, and joy continued to us as long as we desired it, as for an hour. Let not then that duration and ordinariness of God's manifestations to us, which is their aggravation, be looked upon as if it were their extenuation ; but let us admire God in the sun and stars, in sea and land, as if this were the first time that ever we had seen them.

And yet let the extraordinariness of his works have its effects also. Their use is to stir up the drowsy mind of man to see God in that which is unusual, who is grown customary and lifeless in observing him in things usual. Pharoah and his magicians will acknowledge God, in those unusual works, which they are no way able to imitate themselves, and say, " This is the finger of God ;" Exod. viii. 19. And therefore miracles are never to be made light of, but the finger of God to be acknowledged in them, whoever be the instrument or occasion ; Luke xi. 20.

There are frequently also some notable, though not miraculous providences in the changes of the world, and in the disposal of all events, and particularly of ourselves, in which a believer should still see God ; yea, see him as the total cause, and take the instruments to be next to nothing ; and not gaze all at men as unbelievers do ; but say, " This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ;" Psal. cxviii. 23. " Sing unto the Lord a new song ; for he hath done marvellous things ; Psal. xcvi. 1. " Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well ;" Psal. cxxxix. 14.

Direct. 15. ' But let the chief study of faith for the know-



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all things ; Deut. xxviii. 47. And therefore the days in which men were to rejoice in God with the greatest love and thankfulness, were appointed to be days of feasting, that the pleasure of the bodily senses might promote the spiritual pleasure and gratitude of the mind ; 2 Chron. xix. 21. xxix. 30. Neh. viii. 17. xii. 27. Esther ix. 17—19. Num. x. 10.

Direct. 17. ‘ Let faith feel God’s displeasure in every chastisement and judgment.’

For we must be equally careful that we despise them not, and that we faint not under them ; Heb. xii. 5. They that pretend that it is the work of faith to see nothing in any affliction but the love and benefit, do but set one act of faith against another : for the same word which telleth us, that it shall turn to a true believer’s good doth tell us that it is of itself a natural evil, and that as the good is from God’s love, so the evil is from our sins, and his displeasure ; and that he would give us the good without the evil, if man were without sin. He therefore that believeth not that it is a castigatory punishment for sin, is an unbeliever, as well as he that believeth not the promise of the benefit ; Rom. v. 12. 14. 16—18. 1 Cor. xi. 30. 32. Jer. v. 25. Micah i. 5. Amos iii. 2.

Yea, this opinion directly frustrateth the first end and use of all chastisements which is to further men’s repentance for the evil of sin, by the sense of the evil of punishment, and the notice of God’s displeasure manifested thereby : and next to make us warnings to others, that they incur not the same correction and displeasure as we have done. For he that saith, there is no penalty or evil in the suffering, nor no displeasure of God expressed thereby, doth contradict all this. But as it is a great benefit which we are to reap by our corrections, even the furtherance of our repentance and amendment ; so it is a great work of faith, to perceive the bitterness of sin, and the displeasure of God in these corrections ; of which more anon.

Direct. 18. ‘ Faith must hear the voice of God in all his word, and in all the counsel which by any one he shall send us.’

When sense taketh notice of nothing but a book, or of none but a man, faith must perceive the mind and message of God : not only in preachers, (2 Cor. v. 19, 20. 1 Thess.

ii. 13. Titus ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 7.) but also in the mouth of wicked enemies, when it is indeed the will of God which they reveal. And so David heard the curse of Shimei, speaking to him the rebukes of God, for his sin in the matter of Uriah; 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11. And Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached by men of envy and strife, who did it to add affliction to his bonds; Phil. i. 18. Moses perceived the will of God in the counsel of Jethro, even in as great a matter as the governing and judging of the people; Exod. xviii. 19. The counsel of the ancients which Rehoboam forsook, was the counsel of God which he rejected; 1 Kings xii. 8. David blessed God for the counsel of a woman, Abigail. Whoever be the messenger, a believer should be acquainted with the voice of God, and know the true significations of his will. The true sheep of Christ do know his voice, and follow him, because they are acquainted with his word; and though the preacher be himself of a sinful life, he can distinguish between God and the preacher; and will not say, it is not the word of God, because it cometh from a wicked mouth. For he hath read Psal. l. 16. where God saith to the wicked, "What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee:" but he never read 'to the godly, saith God, Why didst thou hear a wicked preacher?' He hath read, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' chair, hear them, but do not as they do:" but he never read, 'Hear none that live not according to their doctrine.' An unbeliever will not know Christ's word, if a Judas be the preacher of it; but a believer can read the commission of Judas, or at least can understand whose counsel he delivereth; and though he would be loath to choose a Judas, or to prefer him before a holy man; yet if workers of iniquity do preach in Christ's name, he leaveth it to Christ to say at judgment, "I know you not;" Matt. vii. 21, 22. Acts i. 17, 24.

Direct. 19. 'Faith must not look at God now and then, and leave the soul in ordinary forgetfulness of him; but remember that he is always present, and must make us rather forget them that are talking to us, or conversing with us, than to forget the Lord.'

Nothing is more the work of faith, than to see him who is invisible; Heb. xi. 27. And to live as one that still re-

membereth that God standeth by: to think as one that knoweth that our thoughts are always in his sight, and to speak and do as one that forgetteth not, that he is the constant and most reverend witness of all. To hear, and pray, and live, and labour as if we saw the God who employeth us, and will reward us; Matt. vi. 4. 6. Isa. lix. 18. Rev. xx. 12. Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6.

Direct. 20. 'Faith must lay the heart of man, to rest in the will of God, and to make it our chief delight to please him, and quietly to trust him whatever cometh to pass: and to make nothing of all that would rise up against him, or entice us from him, or would be to us as in his stead.'

Faith seeth that it is the pleasing of the will of God, which is all our work, and all our reward: and that we should be fully pleased in the pleasing of him: and that there is no other rest for the soul to be thought on, but the will of God: and it must content the soul in him alone; 2 Thess. i. 11. Col. iii. 20. 1 Cor. vii. 32. 1 Thess. iv. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 4. Heb. xi. 6. Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. Heb. xiii. 16. Psal. xvi. 5. lxxiii. 26. cxix. 57. cxlii. 5.

As God is often called jealous, especially over the heart of man; so faith must make us jealous of ourselves, and very watchful against every creature, which would become any part of the felicity or ultimate object of our souls. God is so great to a believing soul, that ease, and honour, and wealth, and pleasure, and all men high and low must be as dead and nothing to us, when they speak against him, or would be loved, or feared, or trusted, or obeyed before him, or above him. It is as natural to a true life of faith on God, to make nothing of the incroaching creature, as for our beholding the sun, to make nothing of a candle. And thus is faith our victory over the world; 1 John v. 4. Jer. xvii. 5. Isa. ii. 22. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Ephes. iv. 6. Col. iii. 11.

CHAPTER II.

Directions how to Live by Faith on Jesus Christ.

So much is said already towards this in opening the grounds of faith, as will excuse me from being prolix in the rest:



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soon as man is made an object fit for the complacency of God, it cannot be but that God will again take complacency in him; so that the real change must be only on man; and then that relative or denominative change which must be on God, will thence immediately result.

Some also there be who gather from Christ's death, that God desired the sufferings of Christ as pleasing to him in itself; as if he made a bargain with Christ to sell so much mercy to man, for so much blood and pains of Christ; and as if he so delighted in the blood of the innocent, that he would the more willingly do good to us, if he might first forsake and crucify Christ. But this is to contradict Christ's business in the world, as if he who came from heaven to declare God's love, had come to declare him to delight in doing hurt; and as if he who came to demonstrate God's justice, had come to shew, that he had rather punish the innocent, than the guilty: but the case is quite otherwise: God doth not delight in man's sufferings as such; no, not of the guilty, much less of the innocent: he desired not Christ's suffering for itself; but as it was a convenient means, to demonstrate his justice, and his holiness, and to vindicate the honour of his government and law, and to be a warning to sinners, not to sin presumptuously; and yet to declare to them the greatness of his love.

And some are ready to gather from Christ's propitiation, that God is now more reconcilable to sin, and so they blaspheme him as if he were unholy: and as if he made a smaller matter of our misdoings, since he is satisfied for them by a Mediator. And they are ready to gather, that God can now take complacency in man, though he have no inherent holiness at all, because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. And some take God's imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, to be a reputed us to be the persons, who ourselves fulfilled the law in or by Christ; so that his very attributes of wisdom, and love, and holiness, and justice, and mercy, &c. which Christ came purposely to declare, are by some denied, blasphemed or abused, on pretence of extolling Christ and our redemption; as if we might sin that grace may abound; Rom. vi. 1, 2. "But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid;" Gal. ii. 17.

Direct. 3. ‘Distinguish between the common and the special benefits of man’s redemption by Christ; and see how the latter do suppose the former; and set not these parts against each other, which God in wisdom hath joined together.’

To pass by all other the great and notable common benefit, is the conditional covenant of grace; or the conditional pardon of sin, and gift of eternal life to all without exception; John iii. 16. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Rom. x. 9. Matt. vi. 14, 15. xxii. 7—9: And this general conditional promise must be first preached; and the preaching of this is the universal or common call and offer of grace: and it must be first believed, as is before said. But the actual belief of it, according to its true intent and meaning, doth prove our actual personal title to all the benefits which were before given but conditionally; John iii. 16. 1 John v. 10—12. 2 Cor. v. 19—21.

Direct. 4. ‘Accordingly judge how far redemption is common or special, by the common and special benefits procured.’

For no man can deny but it is so far common, as the benefits are common: that is, so far as to procure and give to sinners a common conditional pardon as aforesaid (as Dr. Twisse very often taketh notice). And no man can affirm, that it is common to all, so far as absolutely or eventually to give them actual pardon and salvation, unless they dream that all are saved. But that some eventually and infallibly are saved all confess: and we had rather think that Christ and the good pleasure of God, is the chief differencing cause, than we ourselves.

Direct. 5. ‘Set not the several parts of the office of Christ against each other; nor either depress or forget any one part, while you magnify and meditate only on the other.’

It is most ordinary to reduce all the office of Christ, to the prophetic, priestly, and kingly part. (For it is more proper to call them three parts of one office, than three offices :) but it is hard to reduce his incarnation, or his infant-humiliation, and his whole course of obedience, and fulfilling the law to any one, or all of these, totally. Though in some respect, as it is his example, it is teaching, and as it is part of his humiliation, it may be called a part of his sacrifice; yet as it is meritorious, obedience and perfection, it belongeth indeed to our high-priest, but not formally to

his priesthood: no nor yet as he himself is the sacrifice for sin; for it is not an act of priesthood to be himself a sacrifice. But yet I think the common distribution intimateth to us that sense which containeth the truth which we inquire after: for the word priesthood is applied to Christ in a peculiar notion, so as it is never applied to any other; and therefore is taken more comprehensively, as including all that good which he doth for us (as good) by the way of mediation with the Father, and all his acts of mediation with God; as the prophetic and kingly parts, contain his other acts towards men. But yet a more plain and accurate distribution should be made; in which it should be manifested also to what heads his many other assumed titles of relation are to be reduced; but this is not a work for this place.

But that which now I advise you to avoid, is the error of them who look so much at Christ's mediation with God, that they scarce observe his work with man: and the error of them who look so much at his work on man, that they overlook his mediation with God: and their's that so observe his sacrifice, as to make light of his continual intercession: or that observing both, make light of his doctrine and example: or that observe these so much as to make light of his sacrifice and intercession: or that extol his doctrine and example, and overlook his giving of the Spirit to all his living members; or that cannot magnify any one of these, without depressing or extenuating some other. If Christ's kingdom be not divided (Matt. xii. 25.), sure Christ himself is not divided, nor his works; 1 Cor. i. 13.

Direct. 6. 'Still distinguish between Christ's work of redemption, which he hath already wrought on earth, to constitute him our Mediatory Head, and that which he was further to do for us in that relation; that you may ground your faith on the first as a foundation laid by him, and may seek after the second as that which requireth somewhat from yourselves to your own participation.'

The first part is commonly called the impetration, the second, the application (or rather the communication.); As God did first do himself the work of creation, and thence result his relations of our Owner, our Ruler, and our chief good (or our love, or end, or benefactor); so Christ first doth the works which make him our Redeemer towards



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ingly they shall be far off from the blessed ones hereafter ; Luke xvi. 23. So it is the happiness of believers to be nigh to God, in Jesus Christ, who condescended to be nigh to us ; which is our preparation to be yet nearer to him for ever ; Psal. cxlviii. 14. xxxiv. 18. cxlv. 18. Ephes. ii. 13. It giveth the soul more familiar thoughts of God, who seemed before to be at an inaccessible distance ; which is part of the boldness of access and confidence mentioned ; Ephes. iii. 12. ii. 18. Rom. v. 2. Heb. x. 19. We may come boldly to the throne of grace ; Heb. iv. 16. And it greatly helpeth us in the work of love, to think how near God is come to us in Christ, and how near he hath taken the human nature unto him. When a sinner looketh at God only as in himself, and as he is estranged from the guilty, he is amazed and confounded, as if God were quite out of the reach of our love ; but when he thinketh how he hath voluntarily come down into our flesh, that he might be man, and be familiar with man, and what a wonderful marriage the divine nature hath made with the human, this wonderfully reconcileth the heart to God, and maketh the thoughts of him more sweet and acceptable. If the life of faith be a dwelling in God, and God in us, and a walking with God ; 1 John iii. 24. iv. 12. 15, 16. Ephes. iii. 17. Gen. xvii. 1. xxiv. 40. v. 22. vi. 9. Heb. xi. 5. Then must we perceive our nearness to God : the just apprehension of this nearness in Christ's incarnation and relation to us, is the chief means to bring us to the nearness of love and heavenly conversation ; Col. iii. 1. 3, 4.

Direct. 8. ' Make Christ therefore the mediation of all your practical thoughts of God.'

The thoughts of God will be strange to us through our distance, and terrible through our guilt, if we look not upon him through the prospective of Christ's humanity and cross. God out of Christ is a consuming fire to guilty souls. As our acceptance must be through the beloved, in whom he is well pleased ; so our thoughts must be encouraged with the sense of that acceptance ; and every thought must be led up to God, and emboldened by the Mediator ; Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. vii. 18. Ephes. i. 6. Heb. ii. 9, 10. 12, 13. 17.

Direct. 9. ' Never come to God in prayer, or any other

act of worship, but by the mediation of the Son; and put all your prayers as into his hand, that he may present them to the Father.'

There is no hoping for any thing from God to sinners, but by Christ: and therefore there is no speaking to God but by him: not only in his name, but also by his mediation: and this is the exercise of his priesthood for us, by his heavenly intercession, so much spoken of by the Holy Ghost in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession: Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need;" Heb. iv. 14. 16.

Direct. 10. 'Hear every word of Scripture precept; and ministerial exhortation (consonant to the Scripture) as sent to us by Christ, and from the Father by him, as the appointed Teacher of the church.'

Hear Christ in his Gospel and his ministers, and hear God the Father in the Son. Take heed of giving only a slight and verbal acknowledgment of the voice of Christ, whilst you really are more taken with the preacher's voice, as if he had a greater share in the sermon, than Christ hath. The voice in the holy Mount, which Peter witnesseth that he heard, was, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him;" 2 Pet. i. 17. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people;" Acts iii. 23. Matt. xvii. 5. "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which worketh effectually in you that believe;" 1 Thes. ii. 13. "The sheep will follow him, for they know his voice: a stranger they will not follow;" John x. 4, 5.

Direct. 11. 'Take every mercy from God as from the hand of Christ; both as procured by his cross, and as delivered by his Mediatory administration.'

It is still supposed that the giving of the Son himself by the Father to this office, is excepted as presupposed. But all subsequent particular mercies, are both procured for us, and given to us, by the Mediator. Yet is it nevertheless from God the Father, nor doth it ever the less, but

the more fully signify his love. But the state of sinners alloweth them no other way of communication from God, for their benefit and happiness, but by one who is more near and capable to God, who from him may convey all blessings unto them. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in things heavenly in Christ;" Ephes. i. 3. "He that spareth not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Through the knowledge of him, the Divine power giveth us "all things that pertain to life and godliness;" 2 Pet. i. 3. God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; 1 John v. 10, 11. All things are delivered into his hand; John xiii. 3. xvii. 2. Therefore receive every particular mercy for soul and body, as from the blood, and from the present Mediation of Christ, that you may rightly understand it, and have it as sanctified and sweetened by Christ.

Direct. 12. 'Let faith take occasion by every sin, to renew your sense of the want of Christ, and to bring you to him, to mediate and grant you a renewed pardon.'

Therefore entertain not their mistake, who tell men that all sin, past, present, and to come, is fully pardoned at once (whether it be before you were born in God's decree, or Christ's satisfaction, or at the time of your conversion) nor their's who teach that Christ pardoneth only sins before conversion, but as for all that are committed afterward, he doth prevent the need of pardon, by preventing all guilt and obligation to punishment (except mere temporal chastisement.) The preparation which Christ hath made for our pardon, is in itself sufficient, yea, and effectual as to that end which he would have it attain before our believing: but our actual pardon is no such end: nor can sin be forgiven before it be committed; because it is no sin. Christ never intended to justify or sanctify us perfectly at the first (whatsoever many say to the contrary, because they understand not what they say) but to carry on both proportionably and by degrees, that we may have daily use for his daily mediation, and may daily pray, "Forgive us our trespasses." There is no guilt on them that are in Christ, so far as they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" nor no proper condemnation by sentence or execution at all; because



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Remember therefore that we live in Christ, and that the life which we now live is by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved us, and given himself for us; Gal. ii. 20. And his grace is sufficient for us, and his strength most manifested in our weakness; 2 Cor. xii. 9. And that when Satan desireth to sift us, he prayeth for us that our faith may not fail; Luke xxii. 32. And that our life is "hid with Christ in God," even with "Christ, who is our life;" Col. iii. 3, 4. That he is the Head, in whom all the members live, by the communication of his appointed ligaments and joints; Ephes. iv. 14—16. Therefore when any grace is weak, go to your Head for life and strength. If faith be weak, pray, "Lord increase our faith;" Luke xvii. 5. If you are ignorant, pray to him to open your understandings; Luke xxiv. 45. If your hearts grow cold, go to him by faith, till he shed abroad the love of God upon your hearts; Rom. v. 3, 4. For of his fullness it is that we must receive grace for grace; John i. 16.

Direct. 14. 'Let the chief and most diligent work of your faith in Christ be, to inflame your hearts with love to God, as his goodness and love is revealed to us in Christ.'

Faith kindling love, and working by it, is the whole sum of Christianity; of which before.

Direct. 15. 'Let faith keep the example of Christ continually before your eyes; especially in those parts of it, which he intended for the contradicting and healing of our greatest sins.'

Above all others, these things seem purposely and specially chosen in the life of Christ, for the condemning and curing of our sins; and therefore are principally to be observed by faith.

1. His wonderful love to God, to his elect, and to his enemies: expressed in so strange an undertaking, and in his sufferings, and in his abundant grace, which must teach us, what fervours of love to God and man, to friends and enemies must dwell and have dominion in us; 1 John iv. 10. Rev. i. 5. Rom. v. 8. 10. John xiii. 34, 35. xv. 13. 1 John iii. 14. 23. 17. iv. 7, 8. 20, 21.

2. His full obedience to his Father's will, upon the dearest rates or terms: to teach us that no labour or cost should seem too great to us in our obeying the will of God; nor any thing seem to us of so much value, as to be a price

great enough to hire us to commit any wilful sin; Rom. v. 19. Heb. v. 8. Phil. ii. 8. 1 Sam. xv. 22. 2 Cor. x. 5, 6. Heb. v. 9. John xiv. 15. xv. 10. 1 John ii. 3. iii. 22. v. 2, 3. Rev. xxii. 14.

3. His wonderful contempt of all the riches, and greatness of the world, and all the pleasures of the flesh, and all the honour which is of man; which he shewed in his taking the form of a servant, and making himself of no reputation, and living a mean inferior life: He came not to be served (or ministered to) but to serve: not to live in state with abundance of attendants; with provisions for every turn and use, which pride, curiosity, or carnal imagination, taketh for a conveniency, or a decency, no nor a necessity: but he came to be as a servant unto others; not as despising his liberty, but as exercising his voluntary humility and love: he that was Lord of all, for our sakes became poor, to make us rich: he lived in lowliness and meekness: he submitted to the greatest scorn of sinners; and even to the false accusations and imputations of most odious sin in itself, (Phil. ii. 6—9. Heb. xii. 1—3. Matt. xxvi. 55. 60, 61. 63. 66. xxvii. 28—31. Matt. xi. 29, 30. xx. 28. 2 Cor. viii. 9.) which was to teach us to see the vanity of the wealth and honours of the world, and to despise the idol of the ungodly, and to lay that under our feet, which is nearest to their hearts; and to be able without impatience to be scorned, spit upon, buffeted and abused; to be poor and of no reputation among men; and though not to enslave ourselves to any (but if we can be free to use it rather; 1 Cor. vii. 21.) yet to be the loving and voluntary servants of as many as we can to do them good; and not to desire to have a great retinue, and to be such voluntary burdens to the world, as to be served by many, while we serve none; as if we (who are taught by Christ and nature, that it is more honourable to give than to receive, and to be helpful unto many, than to need the help of many) would declare our impotency to be so great, that when every poor man can serve himself and others, we are (and had rather be) so indigent, as not to live and help ourselves, without the help of many servants; yea, scarce to undress and dress ourselves, or to do any thing which another can do for us. Only such persons are willing to eat, and drink, and sleep for themselves, and to play, and laugh, and to sin for them-

selves ; but as to any thing that is good and useful, without their present sensitive delight, they are not only unserviceable to the world, but would live like the lame or dead, that must be moved and carried about by others. Among Christ's servants, he that is the chief, must be the chief in service, even as a servant unto all ; Luke xxii. 26. Matt. xxiii. 11. . . And all " by love must serve one another ;" Gal. v. 13.

4. His submission unto death, and conquest of the natural love of life, for a greater good, even the pleasing of God, and the crown of glory, and the good of many in their salvation : to teach us that not only the pleasures of life, but life itself must be willingly laid down, when any of these three ends require it ; Matt. xx. 28. John x. 11. xv. 13. 1 John iii. 16. John x. 17. Acts xx. 24. Matt. x. 39. xvi. 25. Mark xiv. 26. Phil. ii. 30. 1 John iii. 16. Rev. xii. 11.

Direct. 16. ' Let faith behold Christ in his relation to his universal church, and not unto yourselves alone.'

1. Because else you overlook his most honourable relation : it is more his glory to be the church's Head and Saviour, than yours ; Ephes. v. 23. i. 21, 22. And 2. You else overlook his chief design and work ; which is for the perfecting and saving of his body ; Ephes. i. 23. Col. i. 24. 18. And 3. Else you overlook the chief part of your own duty, and of your conformity to Christ, which is in loving and edifying the body ; Ephes. iv. 12. 16. Whereas if you see Christ as the undivided and impartial Head of all saints, you will see also all saints as dear to him, and as united in him : and you will have communion by faith with them in him ; and you will love them all, and pray for all, and desire a part in the prayers of all (instead of carping at their different indifferent manner, and forms, and words of prayer, and running away from them, to shew that you disown them.) And you will have a tender care of the unity, and honour, and prosperity of the church, and regard the welfare of particular brethren as your own, (1 Cor. 12. throughout, John xiii. 14. 34. xv. 12. 17. Rom. xiii. 8.) stooping to the lowest service to one another, if it were the washing of the feet ; and in honour preferring one another ; Rom. xii. 10. Not judging nor despising, nor persecuting, but receiving and forbearing one another ; Rom. xiv.



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understanding the matter aright, you may know what you are here both to do, and to expect.

Direct. 1. ‘The name of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, is used in Scripture for the third person in the Trinity as constitutive, and as the third perfective principle of operation; and most usually as operating ‘ad extra,’ by communication.’ And therefore many fathers, and ancient divines and schoolmen say, ‘That the Holy Ghost the third person and principle is the love of God; which, as it is God’s love of himself, is a constitutive person or principle in the Trinity; but as it is pregnant and productive, it is the third principle of operation ‘ad extra;’ and so that it is taken usually for the pregnant, operative love of God.’

And thus they suppose that the Divine power, intellect and will (or wisdom and love) are the three constitutive persons in themselves, and the three principles of operation ‘ad extra.’ To this purpose writeth Origen, Ambrose, and Richardus the schoolman; but more plain and full Damascene and Bernard, and Edmundus Cantuariensis, and Potho Prumensis cited by me in my “Reasons of the Christian Religion.” Augustine only putteth memory for power, by which Campanella thinketh he meant power, (Metaphys. par. 2. l. 6. c. 12. art. 4. pag. 88.) what Cæsarius and many others say, ‘de triplici lumine,’ I pass by: the ‘Lux Radii et Lumen,’ are thought a fit similitude by many: but the motion, light and heat, is a plain impression of the Trinity on that noble element of fire. The holy man, Ephræm Syrus, in his Testament, useth the phrase (in his adjuration of his Disciples, and the protestation of his own steadfastness in the doctrine of the Trinity against all heresies) ‘by that three named fire of the most Holy Trinity, (or ‘Divine Majesty,’ as another copy hath it) and by that infinite and sole, one power of God; and by those three subsistences of the intelligible (or intellectual) fire.’ And as it is a most great and certain truth, that this Sacred Trinity of Divine principles, have made their impress communicatively upon the frame of nature, and most evidently on the noblest parts, which are in excellency nearest their Creator; so it is evident that in the creatures, love is the pregnant communicative principle: so is natural love in generation and friendly love in benefiting others; and spi-

ritual love, in propagating knowledge and grace, for the winning of souls.

What I said of the Scripture use of the word is found in 1 John v. 5—8. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Cor. xii. 2—4. Rom. i. 4. John i. 32, 33. iii. 5. 34. vi. 63. Gen. i. 2. Job xxxiii. 4. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. Luke iv. 18. Micah iii. 8. Isa. xi. 2. lxi. 1.

Direct. 2. ‘The most excellent measure of the Spirit given by Christ after his ascension to the Gospel church, is to be distinguished from that which was before communicated; and this Spirit of Christ is it which our Christian faith hath special respect to.’

Without the Spirit of God, as the perfective principle, nature would not have been nature; Gen. i. 2. All things would not have been good, and very good, but by the communication of goodness: and without somewhat of that Spirit, there would be no moral goodness in any of mankind: and without some special operations of that Spirit, the godly before Christ’s coming in the flesh, would not have been godly, nor in any present capacity of glory: therefore there was some gift of the Spirit before.

But yet there was an eminent gift of the Spirit proper to the Gospel times, which the former ages did not know; which is so much above the former gift, that it is sufficient to prove the verity of Christ.

For 1. There was use for the special attestation of the Father by way of power, by miracles, and his resurrection to own his Son. 2. The wisdom and word of God incarnate, must needs bring a special measure of wisdom to his disciples; and therefore give a greater measure of the Spirit for illumination. 3. The design of redemption being the revelation of the love of God, and the recovery of our love to him, there must needs be a special measure of the Spirit of love shed abroad upon our hearts. And in all these three respects, the Spirit was accordingly communicated.

Quest. ‘Was it not the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, and in all the godly before Christ’s coming?’

Answ. The Spirit of Christ is either that measure of the Spirit which was given after the first covenant of grace, as it differeth from the state of man in innocency, and from the state of man in his apostacy and condemnation: and thus it was the Spirit of Christ which was then given, so far as

it was the covenant and grace of Christ. By which men were then saved. But there was a fuller covenant to be made after his coming, and a fuller measure of grace to be given, and a full attestation of God for the establishment and promulgation of this covenant: and accordingly a fuller and special gift of the Spirit. And this is called The Spirit of Christ, in the peculiar Gospel sense.

Quest. 'How is it said, John vii. 37., that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified?'

Answ. It is meant of the special measure of the Spirit, which was to be Christ's special Witness and Agent in the world. They had before that measure of true grace which was necessary to the salvation of believers, before the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, (which was the Spirit of Christ, as the light before sun-rising is the light of the sun;) and if they died in that case, they would have been saved: but they had not the signal Spirit of the Gospel, settled and resident with them, but only some little taste of it for casting out devils, and for cures at that time when Christ sent them by a special mission to preach, and gave them a sudden special gift; Luke ix. 1. x. 17.

Quest. 'How is it said of those baptized believers, (Acts xix.) that they had not heard that there was a Holy Ghost?'

Answ. It is meant of this eminent Gospel gift of the Holy Ghost, as he is the great Witness and Agent of Christ; and not of all the graces of the Holy Ghost.

Quest. 'Was it before necessary to have an explicit belief in the Holy Ghost as the third person in the blessed Trinity, and as the third principle of the Divine operations, and were the faithful then in covenant with him?'

Answ. Distinguish between the person and the name: no name is necessary to salvation; else none could be saved but men of one language: to believe in the Holy Ghost under that name, was not necessary to salvation (nor yet is); for he that speaketh and heareth of him in Greek, or Latin, or Slavonian, &c. may be saved, though he never learnt the English tongue: but to believe in the energetical, or operative, or communicative love of God, was always necessary to salvation, considered in the thing, and not only in the name: as it was to believe in his power and his wisdom: and to believe which is the first, and which the



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not at all necessary to them that never hear it; though the same efficiency on his part be necessary: and so it is about the knowledge of the Holy Ghost, without which Christ cannot be sufficiently now known and rightly believed in.

Direct. 4. 'The presence or operation of the Spirit of God is causally the spiritual life of man, in his holiness: as there is no natural being but by influence from his being; so no life but by the communication from his life, and no light but from his light, and no love or goodness, but from this Spirit of love.'

It is therefore a vain conceit of them, that think man in innocency had not the Spirit of God: they that say, his natural rectitude was instead of the Spirit, do but say, and unsay: for his natural rectitude was the effect of the influx or communication of God's Spirit: and he could have no moral rectitude without it; as there can be no effect without the chief cause: the nature of love and holiness cannot subsist, but in dependance on the love and holiness of God: and those Papists who talk of man's state first in pure naturals, and an after donation of the Spirit, must mean by pure naturals, man in his mere essentials, not really, but notionally by abstraction distinguished, from the same man at the same instant as a saint; or else they speak unsoundly: for God made man in moral dispositive goodness at the first; and the same love or Spirit, which did first make him so, was necessary after to continue him so. It was never his nature to be a prime good, or to be good independently without the influence of the prime good; Isa. xlv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Job xxvi. 13. Psal. li. 10. 12. cxliii. 10. Prov. xx. 27. Mal. ii. 15. John iii. 5, 6. vi. 63. vii. 39. Rom. viii. 1. 5, 6. 9. 13. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 11. ii. 11, 12. vi. 17. xii. 11. 13. xv. 45. 2 Cor. iii. 3. 17. Ephes. ii. 18. 22. iii. 16. v. 9. Col. i. 8. Jude 19.

Direct. 5. 'The Spirit of God, and the holiness of the soul may be lost, without the destruction of our essence, or species of human nature; and may be restored without making us specifically other things.'

That influence of the Spirit which giveth us the faculty of a rational appetite or will, inclined to good as good, cannot cease, but our humanity or being would cease: but that influence of the Spirit, which causeth our adherence to God by love may cease, without the cessation of our be-

ings; as our health may be lost, while our life continueth; Psal. li. 10. 1 Thess. v. 19.

Direct. 6. ‘The greatest mercy in this world, is the gift of the Spirit, and the greatest misery is to be deprived of the Spirit; and both these are done to man by God, as a Governor, by way of reward and punishment oftentimes: therefore the greatest reward to be observed in this world, is the increase of the Spirit upon us, and the greatest punishment in this world is the denying or withholding of the Spirit.’

It is therefore a great part of a Christian’s wisdom and work, to observe the accesses and assistances of the Spirit, and its withdrawings; and to take more notice to God in his thankfulness of the gift of the Spirit, than of all other benefits in this world: and to lament more the retiring or withholding of God’s Spirit, than all the calamities in the world; and to fear this more as a punishment of his sin; lest God should say as Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. “But my people would not hearken to my voice, Israel would none of me: so I gave them up to their own hearts’ lust, to walk in their own counsels.” And we must obey God through the motive of this promise and reward, “Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you;” Prov. i. 23. “But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive;” John vii. 39. Luke xi. 13. God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it. And we have great cause when we have sinned, to pray with David, “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit;” Psal. li. 10—12. And as the sin to be feared is the grieving of the Holy Spirit, (Ephes. iv. 30.) so the judgment to be feared, is accordingly the withdrawing of it. “But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up—Where is he that put his holy Spirit within them?” Isa. lxiii. 10, 11. The great thing to be dreaded, is, lest “those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost—should fall

away, and be no more renewed by repentance,——” Heb. vi. 4. 6.

Direct. 7. ‘Therefore executive pardon or justification cannot possibly be any more perfect than sanctification is: because no sin is further forgiven, or the person justified executively, than the punishment is taken off; and the privation of the Spirit, being the great punishment, the giving of it, is the great executive remission in this life.’

But of this more in the chapter of justification following.

Direct. 8. ‘The three great operations in man, which each of the three persons in the Trinity eminently perform, are ‘Natura, medicina, salus;’ the first by the Creator, the second by the Redeemer, the third by the Sanctifier.’

Commonly it is called Nature, Grace and Glory: but either the terms ‘Grace and Glory’ must be plainer expounded, or that distribution is not sound: If by ‘Grace’ be meant all the extrinsic medicinal preparations made by Christ; and if by ‘Glory’ be meant only the holiness of the soul, the sense is good: but in common use those words are otherwise understood. Sanctification is usually ascribed to the Holy Ghost: but glorification in heaven, is the perfective effect of all the three persons in our state of perfect union with God; Rom. xv. 16. Titus iii. 5, 6. But yet in the work of sanctification itself, the Trinity undividedly concur: and so in the sanctifying and raising the church, the apostle distinctly calleth the act of the Father, by the name of operation; and the work of the Son by the name of administration, and the part of the Holy Ghost by the name of gifts; 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. And in respect to these sanctifying operations of God, ‘ad extra,’ the same apostle distributeth them thus: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all;” 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Where by God, seemeth to be meant all the persons in the Trinity in their perfection; but especially the Father, as the fountain of love, and as expressing love by the Son and the Spirit; and by the grace of Christ, is meant all that gracious provision he hath made for man’s salvation, and the relative application of it, by his intercession, together with his mission of the Holy Spirit. And by the communion of the Spirit is meant that actual communication of life, light and love to the soul itself, which is eminently ascribed to the Spirit



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make that our end, which we did love ; so that it is the first loved for itself, and then made our end. Now if Christ be not used as a means to God, as our ultimate end, then he is not believed in, or used as Christ, and therefore it is no true faith : and that which hath not the true end, is not the true act or grace in question, nor can that be any special grace at all, which hath not God for his ultimate end : on both which accounts, it can be no true faith : the ‘ *intentio finis* ;’ being before the choice or use of means, though the assecution be after.

And yet on the other side, if God be loved as our end, before we believe in Christ as the means, then we are sanctified before we believe. And then faith in Christ is not the means of our first special love to God. And the consequents on both parts are intolerable ; and how are they to be avoided ?

Consider here, 1. You must distinguish betwixt the assenting or knowing act of faith, and the consenting or choosing act of it in the will. 2. And between Christ as he is a means of God’s choosing and using, and as he is a means of our choosing and using. And so I answer the case in these propositions.

1. The knowledge of a Deity is supposed before the knowledge of Christ as a Mediator : for no man can believe that he is a teacher sent from God, nor a Mediator between us and God, nor a sacrifice to appease God’s wrath, who doth not believe first that there is a God.

2. In this belief or knowledge of God, is contained the knowledge of his essential power, wisdom and goodness, and that he is our Creator and Governor, and that we have broken his laws, and that we are obnoxious to his justice, and deserve punishment for our sins. All this is to be known before we believe in Christ as the Mediator.

3. Yet where Christianity is the religion of the country, it is Christ himself by his word and ministers, who teacheth us these things concerning God ; but it is not Christ as a means chosen or used by us, to bring us to the love of God ; (for no man can choose or use a means for an end not yet known or intended :) but it is Christ as a means chosen and used by God, to bring home sinners to himself : (even as his dying for us on the cross was.)

4. The soul that knoweth all this concerning God, cannot yet love him savingly, both because he wanteth the Spirit to effect it, and because a holy sin-hating God, engaged in justice to damn the sinner, is not such an object, as a guilty soul can love: but it must be a loving and reconciled God that is willing to forgive.

5. When Christ by his word and ministers hath taught a sinner both what God is in himself, and what he is to us, and what we have deserved, and what our case is; and then hath taught him, what he himself is as to his person and his office, and what he hath done to reconcile us to God, and how far God is reconciled hereupon, and what a common conditional pardoning covenant, he hath made and offereth to all, and what he will be and do to those that do come in, the belief of all this seriously (by the assenting act of the understanding) is the first part of saving faith, going in nature before both the love of God, and the consenting act of the will to the Redeemer. (And yet perhaps the same acts of faith in an ineffectual superficial measure, may go along before this in many.)

6. In this assent our belief in God, and in the Mediator, are conjunct, in time and nature; they being relatives here as the objects of our faith. It is not possible to believe in Christ as the Mediator, who hath propitiated God to us, before we believe that God is propitiated by the Mediator; nor 'vice versâ:' indeed there is a difference in order of dignity and desirableness; God as propitiated being represented to us as the end, and the Propitiator, but as the means: but as to the order of our apprehension or believing, there can be no difference at all, no more than in the order of knowing the father, and the son, the husband and wife, the king and subjects: these relatives are 'simul naturâ et tempore.'

7. This assenting act of faith, by which at once we believe Christ to be the Propitiator, and God to be propitiated by him, is not the belief that my sins are actually pardoned, and my soul actually reconciled and justified; but it includeth the belief of the history of Christ's satisfaction, and of the common conditional covenant of promise and offer from God, viz. that God is so far reconciled by the Mediator, as that he will forgive, and justify, and glorify all that repent, and believe, that is, that return to God by faith in

Christ; and offereth his mercy to all, and entreateth them to accept it, and will condemn none of them but those that finally reject it. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God;" 2 Cor. v. 18—20. So that it is at once the belief of the Father as reconciled, and the Son as the Reconciler, and that according to the tenor of the common conditional covenant, which is the first assenting part of saving faith.

8. This same covenant which revealeth God as thus far reconciled by Christ, doth offer him to be further actually and fully reconciled, and to justify and glorify us, that is, to forgive, accept, and love us perfectly for ever. And it offereth us Christ to be our actual Head and Mediator, to procure and give us all this mercy, by communicating the benefits which he hath purchased according to covenant-terms: so that as before the Father and the Son were revealed to our assent together; so here they are offered to the will together.

9. In this offer, God is offered as the end, and Christ as Mediator is offered as the means; therefore the act of the will to God, which is here required, is simple love of complacency (with subjection, which is a consent to obey), but the act of the will to Christ, is called choice or consent, though there be in it 'amor medii,' the love of that means for its aptitude as to the end.

10. This love of God as the end and consent to Christ as the means, being not acts of the intellect, but of the will, cannot be the first acts of faith, but do presuppose the first assenting acts.

11. But the assenting act of faith, doth cause these acts of the will to God and the Mediator. Because we believe the truth and goodness, we consent and love.

12. Both these acts of the will are caused by assent at one time, without the least distance.

13. But here is a difference in order of nature, because we will God as the end, and for himself, and therefore first



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assent bringeth us to take God for our end, and Christ for the means of our actual justification and glory; so that Christ is not by faith chosen and used by us under the notion of a Mediator or means to our first act of love and consent; but is a means to that of the Father's choosing only; but is in that first consent chosen by us for the standing means of our justification and glory, and of all our following exercise and increase of love to God, and our sanctification; so that it is only the assenting act of faith, and not the electing act, which is the efficient cause of our very first act of love to God, and of our first degree of sanctification; and thus it is that faith is called the seed and mother grace: but it is not that saving faith which is our Christianity, and the condition of justification and of glory, till it come up to a covenant-consent of heart, and take in the aforesaid acts of repentance and love to God as our God and ultimate end.

The observations of many written mistakes about the order of the work of grace, and the ill and contentious consequents that have followed them, hath made me think that this true and accurate decision of this case is not unuseful or unnecessary.

Direct. 12. 'The Holy Ghost so far concurred with the eternal word, in our redemption, that he was the perfecting Operator, in the conception, the holiness, the miracles, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'

Of his conception it is said, "For that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost;" Matt. i. 20. And ver. 18. "She was found with child of the Holy Ghost." And of his holy perfection, as it is said, that "he increased in wisdom and stature, and favour with God and men;" Luke ii. 52. (meaning those positive perfections of his human nature which were to grow up with nature itself, and not the supply of any culpable or privative defects) so when he was baptized, the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him; Luke iii. 22. And Luke iv. 1. it is said, "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost," &c. "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord, and shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord," &c.; Isa. xi. 2. "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;" John iii. 34. "After that he through the

Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen ;” Acts i. 2. “ And was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, (that is, the Holy Spirit) by the resurrection from the dead ;” Rom. i. 4. “ If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,” &c. ; Matt. xii. 28. “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ; because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal,” &c. ; Luke iv. 18. Isa. lxi. 1.

In all this you see how great the work of the Holy Spirit was upon Christ himself, to fit his human nature for the work of our redemption, and actuate him in it ; though it was the word only which was made flesh, and dwelt among us ; John i. 3.

Direct. 13. ‘ Christ was thus filled with the Spirit, to be the Head or quickening Spirit to his body : and accordingly to fit each member for its peculiar office : and therefore the Spirit now given is called the Spirit of Christ, as communicated by him.’

“ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his ;” Rom. viii. 9. “ This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive ;” (John vii. 39.) viz. it is the water of life, which Christ will give them. “ The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit ;” 1 Cor. xv. 45. “ God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father ;” Gal. iv. 6. “ Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ ;” Phil. i. 19. See also Ephes. i. 22, 23. iii. 17—19. ii. 18. 22. iv. 3. 12. 16. 1 Cor. xii. &c.

Direct. 14. ‘ The greatest extraordinary measure of the Spirit, was given by him to his apostles, and the primitive Christians, to be the seal of his own truth and power, and to fit them to found the first churches, and to convince unbelievers, and to deliver his will on record in the Scriptures, infallibly to the church for future times.’

It would be tedious to cite the proofs of this, they are so numerous ; take but a few : “ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;” Matt. xxviii. 20. (that is the commission.) “ And these signs shall follow them that believe,” &c. ; Mark xvi. 17. “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” &c. ; John xx. 22. “ But the Comforter,

the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you ;” John xiv. 26. “When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth,” &c. ; John xvi. 13. “God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ;” Heb. ii. 4.

Direct. 15. ‘And as such gifts of the Spirit were given to the apostles as their office required ; so those sanctifying graces, or that spiritual life, light and love, are given by it to all true Christians, which their calling and salvation doth require.’

“Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit ;” John iii. 5, 6. “Without holiness none shall see God ;” Heb. xii. 14. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God : but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ;” Rom. viii. 8—10. 14. See also ver. 1. 3—7, &c. “He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life ;” Titus iii. 5—7. But the testimonies of this truth are more numerous than I may recite.

Direct. 16. ‘By all this it appeareth that the Holy Ghost is both Christ’s great witness objectively in the world, by which it is that he is owned of God, and proved to be true ; and also his Advocate or great Agent in the church, both to indite the Scriptures, and to sanctify souls.’

So that no man can be a Christian indeed, without these three : 1. The objective witness of the Spirit to the truth of Christ. 2. The Gospel taught by the Spirit in the apostles. 3. And the quickening, illuminating and sanctifying work of the Spirit upon their souls.

Direct. 17. ‘It is therefore in these respects that we are baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father and the Son, it being his work to make us thus both



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abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you ;” ver. 7. “ Continue ye in my love ;” ver. 9. “ If ye continue in the faith,” &c. Col. i. 23. “ Keep yourselves in the love of God ;” Jude 21. “ Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, &c. For if we sin wilfully, &c. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath done despite to the Spirit of grace ;” Heb. x. 25, 26. 29. vi. 4—6. “ Grieve not the holy Spirit of God ;” Ephes. iv. 30. “ Quench not the Spirit ;” 1 Thess. v. 19.

Direct. 20. ‘ By this it is plain that the Spirit worketh not on man as a dead thing, which hath no principle of activity in itself ; nor as on a naturally necessitated agent, which hath no self-determining faculty of will ; but as on a living, free, self-determining agent, which hath duty of its own to perform for the attaining of the end desired.’

Those therefore that upon the pretence of the Spirit’s doing all, and our doing nothing without him, will lie idle and not do their parts with him, and say that they wait for the motions of the Spirit, and that our endeavours will not further the end, do abuse the Spirit, and contradict themselves ; seeing the Spirit’s work is to stir us up to endeavour, which when we refuse to do, we disobey and strive against the Spirit.

Direct. 21. ‘ Though sometimes the Spirit work so efficaciously, as certainly to cause the volition, or other effect which it moveth to ; yet sometimes it so moveth, as procurereth not the effect, when yet it gave man all the power and help which was necessary to the effect ; because that man failed of that endeavour of his own, which should have concurred to the effect, and which he was able without more help to have performed.’

That there is such effectual grace, Acts ix., and many Scriptures, with our great experience tells us. That there is such mere necessary ineffectual grace possible, and sometimes in being (which some call sufficient grace), is undeniable in the case of Adam ; who sinned not for want of necessary grace, without which he could not do otherwise. And to deny this, blotteth out all Christianity and religion at one dash.

By all which it appeareth, that the work of the Spirit is such on man’s will, as that sometimes the effect is suspended

on our concurrence ; so that though the Spirit be the total cause of its own proper effect, and of the act of man, in its own place and kind of action ; yet not simply a total cause of man's act or volition ; but man's concurrence may be further required to it, and may fail.

Direct. 22. ' Satan transformeth himself oft into an angel of light, to deceive men by pretending to be the Spirit of God : therefore the spirits must be tried, and not every spirit trusted ;' 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15. Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. 11. 24. 1 John iii. 7. Ephes. iv. 14. Rev. xx. 3. 8. 2 Thess. ii. 2. 1 John iv. 1. 3. 6.

Direct. 23. ' The way of trying the spirits is to try all their uncertain suggestions, by the rule of the certain truths already revealed in nature, and in the holy Scriptures : and to try them by the Scriptures, is but to try the spirits by the Spirit ; the doubtful spirit, by the undoubted Spirit, which indited and sealed the Scriptures more fully, than can be expected in any after revelation ;' 1 Thess. i. 21. Isa. viii. 16. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11. The Spirit of God is never contrary to itself. Therefore nothing can be from that Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures which the Spirit indited.

Direct. 24. ' When you would have an increase of the Spirit, go to Christ for it, by renewed acts of that same faith, by which at first you obtained the Spirit ;' Gal. iii. 3, 4. iv. 6.

Faith in Christ doth two ways help us to the Spirit. 1. As it is that condition upon which he hath promised it, to whom it belongeth to give us the Spirit. 2. As it is that act of the soul which is fitted in the nature of it to the work of the Spirit : that is, as it is the serious contemplation of the infinite goodness and love of God, most brightly shining to us in the face of the Redeemer : and as it is a serious contemplation of that heavenly glory procured by Christ, which is the fullest expression of the love of God ; and so is most fit to kindle that love to God in the soul, which is the work of the Spirit. These are joined, Rom. v. 1, 2. 5, 6. " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.— The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. For when

we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.— God commended his love to us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”—— So Ephes. iii. 17—19. Let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, and it would help you to be rooted and grounded in love, and to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and so to be filled with the fulness of God. If faith be the way to see God’s love, and faith be the way thereby to raise our love to God, then faith in Christ must needs be the continual instrument of the Spirit, or that means which we must still use for the increase of the Spirit.

Direct. 25. ‘ The works of the Spirit, next to the excitation of life, light and love, do consist in the subduing of the lusts of the flesh, and of the power of all the objects of sense which serve it. Therefore be sure that you faithfully serve the Spirit in this mortifying work, and that you take not part with the flesh against it.’

A great part of our duty towards the Holy Ghost, doth consist in this joining with him, and obeying him in his strivings against the flesh: and therefore it is that so many and earnest exhortations are used with us, to live after the Spirit, and not after the flesh; and to mortify the lusts of the flesh, and the deeds of it by the Spirit; especially in Rom. viii. 1—16. and in Gal. v. throughout. Rom. vi. vii. Col. iii. Ephes. v.

Direct. 26. ‘ Take not every striving for a victory, nor every desire of grace, to be true grace itself; unless grace be desired as it is the lovely image of God, and pleasing to him, and be desired before all earthly things; and unless you not only strive against, but conquer the predominant love of every sin.’

There are many ineffectual desires and strivings which consist with the dominion of sin. Many a fornicator, and glutton, and drunkard, hath earnest wishes that he could leave his sin, when he thinketh of the shame and punishment; and hath a great deal of striving against it before he yieldeth; but yet he liveth in it still, because his love to it is the predominant part in him. “How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Rom. vi. 2. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ,



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(who so often proposeth himself as an example to be imitated by those that he wrote to). Thousands are deceived about their state, by taking every ineffectual desire and wish, and every striving before they sin, to be a mark of saving grace. Misunderstanding Mr. Perkins, and some others with him, who make a desire of grace to be the grace itself, and a combat against the flesh, to be a sign of the renovation by the Spirit; whereas they mean only, such a desire of grace, as grace for the love of God, as is more powerful than any contrary desires; and such a combating as conquereth gross (or mortal) sin, and striveth against infirmities. And of this, this saying is very true.

Direct. 27. 'Strive with your hearts when the Spirit is striving with you. And take the season of its special help; and make one gale of grace advantageous to another.'

This is a great point of Christian wisdom. The help of the Spirit is not at our command: take it while you have it. Use wind and tide before they cease. God will not be a servant to our slothfulness and negligence. As he that will not come to the church at the hour when the minister of Christ is there, but say, I will come another time, will have none of his teaching there; so he that will not take the Spirit's time, but say, I am not now at leisure, may be left without its help, and taught by sad experience to know, that it is more fit for man to wait on God, than for God to wait on man. More may be done and got at one hour, than at another, when we have no such help and motions.

Direct. 28. 'Be much in the contemplation of the heavenly glory; for there are the highest objects, and the greatest demonstrations of God's love and goodness; and therefore in such thoughts we are most likely to meet with the Spirit with whose nature and design they are so agreeable.'

We fall in with the heavenly Spirit in his own way, when we set ourselves to be most heavenly. Heavenly thoughts are the work which he would set you on; and the love of God is the thing which he works you to thereby: and nothing will so powerfully inflame the soul with the love of God, as to think that we shall live in his love and glory for evermore. Set yourselves therefore to this work, and it will be a sign that the Spirit sets you on it; and you may be sure that he will not be behind with you, in a work which both he and

you must do. To this sense the apostle bids us, “pray in the Holy Ghost;” Jude 20. Because though prayer must be from the Spirit, which is not in our power; yet when we set ourselves to pray, it is both a sign that the Spirit exciteth, and a certain proof that he will not be behind with us, but will afford us his assistance.

Direct. 29. ‘Converse with those who have most of the Spirit, as far as you can attain it.’

And that is not those that are most for revelations or visions, or that pretend to extraordinary illuminations, or that set the Spirit against the word; or that boast most of the Spirit in contempt of others; but those who are most humble, most holy, and most heavenly, who love God most, and hate sin most. Converse with such as have most of the Spirit (of love and heavenliness) is the way to make you more spiritual; as converse with learned men is the way to learning: for the Spirit giveth his graces in the use of suitable means, as well as he doth his common gifts; Jude 20, 21. Heb. x. 24, 25. iii. 13. Ephes. iv. 12. 15; 16.

Direct. 30. ‘Lastly, ‘The right ordering of the body itself, is a help to our spirituality.’ A clean and a cheerful body is a more fit instrument for the Spirit to make use of than one that is opprest with crudities, or dejected with melancholy. Therefore especially avoid two extremes: 1. The satisfying the lusts of the flesh, and clogging the body with excess of meat or drink, or corrupting the fancy with foolish pleasures. 2. And the addicting yourselves to distracting melancholy, or to any disconsolate or discontented thoughts.

And from hence you may both take notice of the sense of all that fasting and abstinence which God commandeth us, and of the true measure of it, viz. as it either fitteth or unfitteth the body for our duty, and for our ready obedience to the Spirit of God; “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway;” 1 Cor. ix. 27. “Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, for lust;” Rom. xiii. 12—14. Pampering the body, and addicting ourselves to the pleasing of it, turneth a man from spirituality into brutishness; and

savouring or minding the things of the flesh, destroyeth both the relish and minding of the things of the Spirit; Rom. viii. 5—8. And a sour, discontented, melancholy temper, is contrary to that alacrity requisite in God's service; and to those which the comforter is to work in us.

So much for living by faith on the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VI.

Directions how to exercise Faith upon God's Commandments, for Duty.

IT being presupposed that your faith is settled about the truth of the Scriptures in general (by the means here before and elsewhere more at large described), you are next to learn how to exercise the life of faith about the precepts of God in particular; and herein take these helps.

Direct. 1. 'Observe well how suitable God's commands are to reason and humanity, and natural revelation itself; and so how nature and Scripture do fully agree, in all the precepts for primitive holiness.'

This is the cause why divines hath thought it so useful to read heathen moralists themselves, that in a Cicero, a Plutarch, a Seneca, an Antoninus, an Epictetus, &c., they might see what testimony nature itself yieldeth, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. See Rom. xix. 20, &c. But of this I have been larger in my "Reasons of the Christian Religion."

Direct. 2. 'Observe well how suitable all God's commandments are to your own good, and how necessary to your own felicity.'

All that God commandeth you, is, 1. To be active, and use the faculties of your souls, in opposition to idleness. 2. To use them rightly, and on the highest objects, and not to debase them by preferring vanity and sordid things, nor to pervert them by ill-doing. And are not both these suitable to your natural perfection, and necessary to your good?

1. If there were one law made, that men should lie or stand still all the day, with their eyes shut, and their ears



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can see by faith, the goodness of their author, and the goodness of the reward and end, more fully than by reason only. And a believer hath found by sad experience, how bad and bitter the ways of sin are, and by sweet experience, how good and pleasant the ways of God are. He hath found that it is the way to peace, and hope, and joy, to deny his lusts, and obey his Maker and Redeemer. And it is the way to terror and a troubled soul, and a broken heart, to sin and to gratify his sensuality; "All her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" Prov. iii. 17. "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing can offend them;" Psal. cxix. 165. "Mark the upright man, and behold the just, for the end of that man is peace;" Psal. xxxvii. 37. "Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are the kingdom of God;" Rom. xiv. 17. Grace, mercy and peace are God's entertainment of the faithful soul; Titus i. 4. 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2. 1 Cor. i. 3, &c. "But there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God;" Isa. lvii. 21. xlviii. 22. "For the way of peace they have not known: They have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein, shall not know peace;" Isa. liv. 8.

Direct. 3. 'Mark well how those commands of God, which seem not necessary for yourselves, are plainly necessary for the good of others, and for the public welfare, which God must provide for as well as yours.'

He is not your God only, but the God of all the world. And the welfare of many, especially of kingdoms and societies, is more to be regarded than the welfare (much more than the humouring or pleasing) of any one. You may think that if you had leave to be fornicators, and adulterers, to be riotous, and examples of evil, to be covetous, and to deceive, and steal, and lie, that it would do you no harm: but suppose it were so, yet a little wit may serve to shew you how pernicious it would be to others, and to societies. And faith can tell a true believer, what is like to be the end: and that "sin is a reproach to any people;" Prov. xiv. 34.

You may think perhaps that if you were excused from many duties of charity and justice, in ministry, magistracy, or a more private state, it would be no harm to yourselves. But suppose it were so, must not others be regarded? If God should regard but one, why should it fall to your lot

rather than to another's? And why should any others be bound to use justice or charity to you any more than you to them? There is no member of the body politic or ecclesiastic, which will not receive more good to itself, by the laws of communion, if truly practised, than it can do to others. For you are but one who are bound to be charitable and do good to others, and that but according to your own ability; but it may be hundreds or thousands who may be all bound to do good to you. You have the vital influences and assistances of all the parts: you have the prayers of all the Christians in the world.

Suppose that the laws were made to secure yourselves of your estate and lives; but to leave the estates and lives of your children to the will of any one that hath a will to wrong them, would you be content with such kind of laws as these? And why should not others' good be secured, as well as your posterities? 1 Cor. xii. 12. 14. 20, &c. Rom. xii. 4, 5. xvi. 2. 1 Cor. x. 17. 33. Ephes. iv. 3. 11, 12. 14—16.

Direct. 4. 'The chief work of faith is to make the obedience of God's commands to be sweet and pleasant to us, by seeing still that intrinsical goodness, and the extrinsical motives, and the eternal rewards, which may cause the soul to embrace them with the dearest love.'

They are much mistaken who know no use for faith but to comfort them, and save them from hell: the great work of faith is to bring up the soul to obedience, thankfulness and love. Therefore it hath to do with the precepts, as well as with the promises, and with the promises to sweeten the precepts to us. Believers are not called to the obedience of slaves; nor to be actuated only by the fear of pain; but to the obedience of redeemed ones and sons; that faith may cause them to obey in love; and the essential act of love is complacency. Therefore it is the work of faith, to cause us to obey God with pleasure and delight. Forced motives endure not long: they are accompanied with unwillingness and weariness, which at last will sit down, when the fears do by distance delay or dulness abate. Love is our nature; but fear is only a servant to watch for us while we do the work of love. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God (and therefore will obey as sons). For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry,

Abba, Father:" Rom. viii. 14, 15. Christ suffered death to overcome the devil that had the power of death, and to deliver us from the fears of it, which was the bondage of our lives; Heb. ii. 14, 15. That we might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives; Luke i. 74. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment;" 1 John iv. 18. The meaning is, not only that the love of God casteth out the fear of men, and persecution; but also it maketh the fear of tormenting punishment, to become unnecessary to drive us to obedience, so far as the love of God and of obedience doth prevail. He that loveth more to feast than to fare hardly, to be rich, than to be poor, (and so to be obedient and holy, than to be unholy) need not (so far) any fear of punishment to drive him to it. Even as the love of the world, as adverse to the love of God, is overcome by faith, (1 John ii. 15.) and yet the love of the world as God's creature, and as representing him, and sanctified to his service, is but subordinate to the love of the Father, so also fear as adverse to love, or as disjunct from it, is cast out by it: but as it subserveth it in watching against the enemies of love, and is truly filial, it is a fruit of faith, and the beginning of wisdom.

Employ faith therefore day by day, in looking into the love of God in Christ, and the kingdom of glory, the reward of obedience, and the beauties of holiness, and the merciful conditions of filial obedience (when we have a pardon of our infirmities and are accepted in Christ), that so we may feel that Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden light, and his commandments are not grievous;" Matt. xi. 28, 29. 1 John v. 3. And when faith hath taught you to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to delight to do the will of God, love, which is the end of faith, will satisfy you; Matt. v. 6. Psal. xl. 8.

Direct. 5. 'Take especial notice how suitable a holy law is to the nature of a most holy God; and how much he is honoured in that demonstration of his holiness; and how odious a thing it would be to wish, that the most holy one would have made for us an unholy law.'

Would you draw the picture of your friend like an ape or a monkey, or a monster? Or would you have the king pictured like a fool? Or would you have his laws written



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him, in a more desirable and grateful matter, even in perfect love for ever: and therefore the more desirable must be considered to draw us to the less desirable; and that consideration of the reward, (and not the possessing of it,) is the means to our obedience, not for the sake of the ungrateful matter, but of the form and end; Matt. v. 10—12. vi. 1. 4. x. 41, 42. 1 Cor. ix. 17, 18. 1 Tim. v. 18. Heb. xi. 6. x. 35. xi. 26. Col. iii. 24.

Direct. 7. ‘Remember how much Christ himself hath condescended, to be made a means or Mediator to procure our obedience to God.’

And surely that must be an excellent end, which Christ himself became a means to! He came to save his people from their sins; Matt. i. 21. And “to call sinners to repentance;” Luke v. 32. Matt. ix. 13. “Is Christ the minister of sin? God forbid;” Gal. ii. 17. “For this end was he revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil;” I John iii. 8. And he died to redeem and “purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;” Titus ii. 14. Christ came as much to kill sin, as to pardon it. Judge therefore of the worth of obedience by the nobleness and dignity of the means.

Direct. 8. ‘Remember still that the same law which governeth us, must judge us. Let faith see the sure and close connexion between obedience and judgment.’

If faith do but speak aloud to a sluggish soul, ‘Thou must be judged by the same word which commandeth thee to watch and pray, and to walk in holiness with God,’ it will much awaken the soul to duty: and if faith do but say aloud to a tempted sinner, ‘The Judge is at the door, and thou must hear of this again, and review sin when it will have another countenance,’ it will do much to kill the force of the temptation; Rom. xiv. 12. Phil. iv. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. Matt. xii. 36. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.

Direct. 9. ‘Be sure that your heart-subjection to God be fixed, that you may live under the sense of his authority.’

For as God’s veracity is the formal object of all faith; so God’s authority is the formal object of all obedience. And therefore the deep, renewed apprehensions of his majesty, his wisdom and absolute authority, will make us perceive that all things and persons must give place to him, and he to none; and will be a constant spring within us, to move

the will to a ready obedience in particular cases ; Mal. i. 6. Matt. xxiii. 8. 10. Jer. v. 22.

Direct. 10. ‘ Keep in memory some plain texts of Scripture for every particular duty, and against every particular sin ;’ which I would willingly here write down, but that the book swelleth too big, and it is so plentifully done already in most catechisms, where they confirm all such commands with the texts of Scripture cited to that use. As you may see in the Assembly’s Catechism, with the proofs, and more briefly in Mr. Tobias Ellis’s “ English School,” where a text or more for every article of faith, and every duty, is recited for the use of children. God’s word, which is the object and rule of faith, should be before the eye of faith in this great work of causing our obedience.

Direct. 11. ‘ Understand well the different nature and use of Scripture examples ; how some of them have the nature of a divine revelation and a law ; and others are only motives to obedience, and others of them are evils to be avoided by us.’

1. To Moses and the apostles of Christ, a special commission was granted, to one to settle the tabernacle and its worship, and to the other, to settle the orders of the Gospel church. Christ sent them to “ teach all things, whatsoever he commanded ;” Matt. xxviii. 20. And he promised to be with them, and to send them the “ Spirit to lead them into all truth, and to bring all things to their remembrance.” Accordingly they did obey this commission, and settle the Gospel churches according to the will of Christ ; and this many years before any of the New Testament was written. Therefore these acts of theirs have the nature and use of a divine revelation and a law. For if they were fallible in this, Christ must break the aforesaid promise.

2. But all the acts of the apostles which were either about indifferent things, or which were about fore-commanded duties, and not in the execution of the aforesaid commission, for which they had the promise of infallibility, have no such force or interpretation. For, (1.) Their holy actions of obedience to former laws, are not properly laws to us, but motives to obey God’s laws. And this is the common use of all other good examples of the saints in Scripture : their examples are to be tried by the law, and followed as secondary copies or motives, and not as the law itself :

“ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ ;” 1 Cor. xi. 1. “ Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience do inherit the promise ;” Heb. vi. 12. 1 Cor. iv. 16. Phil. iii. 17. 1 Thess. i. 6. ii. 16. iii. 7 9. Heb. xiii. 7.

(2.) And the evil examples even of apostles, are to be avoided, as all other evil examples recorded in the Scriptures are ; such as Peter’s denial of his Lord, and the disciples all forsaking him, and Peter’s sinful separation and dissimulation, and Barnabas’s with him (Gal. ii.), and the falling out of Paul and Barnabas, &c.

(3.) And the history of indifferent actions, or those which were the performance of but a temporary duty, are instructing to us, but not examples which we must imitate. It is not divine faith which forgeth an object or rule to itself. Whatsoever example we will prove to be obligatory to us to imitate, we must either prove, 1. That it was an execution of God’s own commission, which had a promise of infallible guidance. Or, 2. That it was done according to some former law of God, which is common to them and us. (As the first must be the revealing of some duty extended to this age, as well as that.)

Direct. 12. ‘ Faith must make great use of Scripture examples, both for motive and comfort, when we find their case to be the same with ours.’

We cannot conclude that we must imitate them in extraordinary circumstances ; nor can we conclude that God will give every extraordinary mercy to us, which he gave to them, (as that he will make all kings as he did David, or all apostles, or raise all as he did Lazarus now, &c.) nor that every believer shall have the same outward things, or will have just the same degrees of grace, &c. But we may conclude that we shall have all God’s promises fulfilled to us, as they had to them ; and shall have all that is suitable to our condition. As David was pardoned upon repentance, so many others : “ I confessed, and thou forgavest : for this shall every one that is godly pray to thee.”—— Psal. xxxii. 5, 6. Hath God pardoned a Manasseh, a Peter, a Paul, &c. upon repentance ? So is he ready to do to us. Hath he helped the distressed ? Hath he heard and pitied, even the weak in faith ? So we may hope he will do by us ; Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11. Psal. cxvi. 3. Acts xxvii. 20. Jonah ii. 4. We have the same God, the same Christ, the same promise,



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solation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us ; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.”—— And therefore when the apostle meaneth, that Christ will not be unfaithful to us, his phrase is, “ He cannot deny himself ;” 2 Tim. ii. 13. As if his very nature and being consisted more in his truth and fidelity, than any mortal man’s can do.

Direct. 2. ‘ Understand the nature and reasons of fidelity among men, viz. 1. To make them conformable to God : and, 2. To maintain all justice, order and virtue in the world.’ And when you have pondered these two, you will see that it is impossible for God to be unfaithful : For, 1. If it be a vice in the copy, what would it be in the original ! Nay, would not falsehood and perfidiousness become our perfection, to make us like God ? 2. And if all the world would be like a company of enemies, bedlams, brutes, or worse, if it were not for the remnants of fidelity, it is impossible that the nature or will of God, should be the pattern or original of so great evil.

Direct. 3. ‘ Consider what a foundation of his promises God hath laid in Jesus Christ, and what a seal his blood and resurrection is unto them.’

When it hath cost Christ so dear to procure them, certainly God will not break them. A promise ratified in the blood of the Son of God, called the “ blood of the everlasting covenant,” (Heb. xiii. 20.) and by his rising from the dead, can never be broken. If the law given by Moses was firm, and a jot or tittle should not pass away till all were fulfilled, much more the word and testament of the Mediator of a better covenant ; “ All the promises in him are yea and amen ;” (2 Cor. i. 20.) that is, they are asserted or made in him, and they are ratified, and shall be fulfilled in him. “ He hath obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises ;” Heb. viii. 6. And those that are better cannot be less sure. It is the sure mercies of David that are given us, by a promise which is sure to all the seed ; Acts xiii. 34. Isa. lv. 3. Rom. iv. 16.

Direct. 4. ‘ Consider well that it is God’s own interest to fulfil his promises ; for he attaineth not that glory of his love and grace in the perfection of his people till it be done, which he designed in the making of them.’

And certainly God will not fail himself and his own interest. The happiness will be ours, but it will be his everlasting pleasure to see his creatures in their perfection. If he was so pleased after the creation, to see them all good, that he appointed a sabbath of rest, to celebrate the commemoration of it; how much more will it please him to see all restored by Jesus Christ, and brought up to that perfection which Adam was but in the way to when he sinned and fell short of the glory of God. He will not miss of his own design, nor lose the everlasting complacency of his love.

Direct. 5. ‘Consider how great stress God hath laid upon the belief of his promises, and of how great use he hath made them in the world.’

If the intimation of another world and reward which we find in nature, and the promise of it in Scripture, were out of the world, or were not believed, and so men had nothing but temporal motives to rule their hearts and lives by, O what an odious thing would man be! And what a hell would the world be! I have elsewhere shewed that the government of the world is mainly steered by the hopes and fears of another life, and could not be otherwise, unless man be turned into far worse than a beast. And certainly those promises cannot be false, which God hath laid so great a stress on, and the belief of which is of so great moment. For the wise, and holy, and powerful God, neither needeth a lie, nor can use it to so great a work.

Direct. 6. ‘Take notice how agreeable God’s promises are to the nature both of God and man.’

It is not only God’s precepts that have a congruence to natural reason, but his promises also. It is agreeable to the nature of Infinite Goodness to do good: and yet we see that he doth not do to all alike. He maketh not every creature an angel, nor a man: how then shall we discern what he intendeth to do by his creatures, but by their several natures? The nature of every thing is fitted to its use. Seeing therefore God hath given man a nature capable of knowing, loving and enjoying him, we have reason to think he gave it not in vain. And we have reason to think that nature may be brought up to its own perfection; and that he never intended to employ man all his days on earth, in seeking an end which cannot be attained. And yet we see that some

do unfit themselves for this end, by turning from it, and following vanity : and that God requireth every man as a free agent, to use his guidance and help aright, for his own preparation to felicity. Therefore reason may tell us, that those who are so prepared by the nearest capacity, and have a love to God, and a heavenly mind, shall enjoy the glory which they are fitted for. And it helpeth much our belief of God's promise, to find that reason thus discerneth the equity of it : yea, to find that a Cicero, a Seneca, a Socrates, a Plato, &c. expected much the like felicity to the just, which the Scripture promiseth.

Direct. 7. ' Be sure to understand God's promises aright, that you expect not that which he never promised, and take not presumption to be faith.'

Many do make promises to themselves by misunderstanding, and look that God should fulfil them. And if any of them be not fulfilled, they are ready to suspect the truth of God. And thus men become false prophets to themselves and others, and speak words in the name of the Lord, which he hath never spoken, and incur much of the guilt, which God oft chargeth on false prophets, and such as add to the word of God. It is no small fault to father an untruth on God, and to call that his promise which he never made.

Direct. 8. ' Think not that God promiseth you all that you desire or think you want, in bodily things.'

It is not our own desires which he hath made the measure of his outward gifts ; no nor our own opinion of our necessity neither : else most men would have nothing but riches, and health, and love, and respect from men ; and few would have any want, or pain, or suffering. But it is so much as is good, 1. To the common ends of government, and the societies with which we live. 2. And to our souls, which God doth promise to his own. And his wisdom, and not their partial conceits, shall be the judge. Our Father knoweth what we need, and therefore we must cast our care on him, and take not too particular nor anxious thoughts for ourselves ; Matt. vi. 24, to the end, 1 Pet. v. 7.

Direct. 9. ' Think not that God promiseth you all that you will ask ; no not that which he commandeth you to ask ; unless it agree with his promising will, as well as with his commanding will.'

That promise of Christ, " Ask and ye shall receive," &c.



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things which he hath thought meet to make no promise of; and then secondarily, his commanding will to us; but this extendeth not only to prayer itself, but also to the manner of prayer, and to our conjunct and subsequent endeavours. And so this meeteth and closeth with the former will of God; because we do not pray according to his commanding will, unless we do it with due respect to his promising and decreeing will. And so it is, as if it were said, 'Of all these things which God hath promised or decreed, whatsoever you ask in my name, in a manner agreeable to his command, and do second your prayers with faithful endeavours, you shall obtain it; because neither his decrees or promises are nakedly, or merely to give such a thing; but complicately to give it in this way of asking.'

And as to the objections in the beginning, I answer, 1. Where only God's decreeing will is the measure of the matter to be granted, the text intendeth not to us a particular assurance of the thing; but the comfort that we and our prayers are accepted, and they shall be granted if it be not such a thing as God in his wisdom and eternal counsel hath secretly determined not to do. As if you pray for the conversion of the kingdom of China, of Japan, of Hindostan, of Tartary, &c.

And, 2. Where God's promise hath given us security of the thing in particular; yet this general promise, and our prayer, are neither of them in vain. For, 1. The general promise doth both confirm our faith in general, which is a help to us in each particular case; and also it directeth us to Christ as the means, in whose name we are to ask all things of the Father; and assureth us, that it is for his sake that God doth fulfil those particular promises to us. 2. And prayer in his name, is the condition, way, or means of the fulfilling them.

It is a very common error among many praying persons, to think that if they can but prove it their duty to ask such a thing, this promise telleth them, that they shall have it: but you see there is more necessary to the understanding of it than so.

Direct. 10. 'Think not that God promiseth you all that you do believe that you shall receive, when you ask it; though it be with never so confident an expectation.'

This is a more common error than the former. - Many

think that if the thing be but lawful which they pray for, much more if it be their duty to pray for it, then a particular belief that they shall receive it, is the condition of the promise, and therefore that they shall certainly receive it. As if they pray for the recovery of one that is sick, or for the conversion of one that is unconverted, and can but believe that it shall be done, they think God is then obliged by promise to do it. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible;” Mark ix. 23. And Mark xi. 23, 24. “Whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, &c. and shall not doubt in his heart, but believe, &c. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

Answ. The reason of this was, because they had a special promise of the gift of miracles, as is expressed, Mark xvi. 17, 18. And even this text is such a particular promise: for the spirit of miracles was then given to confirm the Gospel, and gather the first churches, and faith was the condition of them: or the Spirit, whenever he would work a miracle, would first work an extraordinary faith to prepare for it. And yet if you examine well the particular texts which speak of this subject, you shall find that as it was the doubt of the Divine authority of Christ’s testimony, and of his own real power, which was the unbelief of those times; so it was the belief of his authority and power, which was the faith required: and this is the oftener expressed than the belief of the event is extolled, it is because the belief of Christ’s power is contained in it. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible;” Mark ix. 23. Not ‘all things shall come to pass.’ “The blind men came to him, and Jesus said, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you;” Matt. ix. 28. So the centurion’s faith is described as a belief of Christ’s power; Matt. viii. 7—10. So is it in many other instances.

So that this text is no exception from the general rule; but the meaning of it is, Whatsoever promised thing you ask, not doubting, ye shall receive it: or doubt not of my enabling power, and you shall receive whatever you ask, which I have promised you; and miracles themselves shall be done by you.

Object. ‘ But what if they had only doubted of Christ’s will?’ *Answ* If they had doubted of his will in cases where he never expressed his will, they could not indeed have been certain of the event (for that is contrary to the doubt). But they could not have charged Christ with any breach of promise; and therefore could not themselves have been charged with any unbelief. (For it is no unbelief to doubt of that will which never was revealed.) But if they had doubted of his revealed will concerning the event, they had then charged him with falsehood, and had sinned against him, as ill as those who deny his power.

And the large experience of this our age, confuteth this aforesaid error of a particular belief: for we have abundance of instances of good people who were thus mistaken, and have ventured thereupon to conclude with confidence, that such a sick person shall be healed, and such a thing shall come to pass; when over and over the event hath proved contrary, and brought such confidence into contempt, upon the failing of it.

Direct. 11. ‘ Think not that because some strong imagination bringeth some promise to your minds, that therefore it belongeth unto you, unless upon trial, the true meaning of it do extend to you.’

Many and many an honest, ignorant, melancholy woman hath told me what abundance of sudden comfort they have had, because such a text was brought to their minds, and such a promise was suddenly set upon their hearts; when as they mistook the very sense of the promise, and upon true inquiry, it was nothing to their purpose. Yet it is best not always to contradict those mistaken and ungrounded comforts of such persons: because when they are godly, and have true right to sounder comforts, but cannot see it, it is better that they support themselves a while with such mistakes, than that they sink into despair. For though we may not offer them such mistakes, nor comfort them by a lie; yet we may permit that which we may not do (as God himself doth). It is not at all times that we are bound to rectify other men’s mistakes, viz. not when it will do them more harm than good.

Many an occasion may bring a text to our remembrance which concerneth us not, without the Spirit of God. Our



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some two, when some have five, and therefore gain ten talents in the improvement; Matt. xxv.

All must strive for the highest measure: and all the sincere may at last expect their own perfection: But, God breaketh no promise, if he giveth them not all as much as some have.

Direct. 13. 'Much less hath God promised the same degree of common gifts to all.'

If you never attain to the same measure of acuteness, learning, memory, utterance, do not think that God breaketh promise with you: nor do not call your presumption by the name of faith, if you have such expectations. See 1 Cor. xii. throughout.

Direct. 14. 'God often promiseth not the thing itself, when he promiseth the time of giving it: therefore do not take it to be an act of faith, to believe a set time, where God hath set no time at all.'

Many are the troubles of the righteous, but God will deliver them out of all; Psal. xxxvii. But he hath not set them just the time. Christ hath promised to come again and take us to himself; John xiv. 1—3. But of that day and hour knoweth no man. God will give necessary comfort to his servants; but he best knoweth when it is necessary: and therefore they must not set him a time, and say, 'Let it be now, or thou breakest thy word.' Patient waiting God's own time, is as needful as believing: yea, he that believeth, will not make haste; Isa. xxviii. 16. Rom. ii. 7. 2 Thess. iii. 5. James v. 7, 8. Heb. vi. 12. x. 36. xii. 1. James v. 7. Rev. xiii. 10. xiv. 12. 1 Thess. i. 3. 11.

Direct. 15. 'God often promiseth the thing, when he promiseth not either in what manner, or by what instrument he will do it.'

He may deliver his church, and may deliver particular persons out of trouble; and yet do it in a way, and by such means as they never dreamed of. Sometimes he foretelleth his means, when it is we that in duty are to use them. And sometimes he keepeth them unknown to us, when they are only to be used by himself. In the mount will the Lord be seen; but yet Abraham thought not of the ram in the thicket. The Israelites knew not that God would deliver them by the hand of Moses; Acts vii. 25.

Direct. 16. 'Take not the promises proper to one time or

age of the church, as if they were common to all, or unto us.'

There were many promises to the Israelites, which belong not to us, as well as many precepts: the increase of their seed, and the notable prosperity in the world which was promised them, was partly because that the motive should be suited to the ceremonial duties, and partly because the eternal things being not then so fully brought to light as now, they were the more to be moved with the present outward tokens of God's love. And so the gift of the spirit of miracles, and infallibility, for writing and confirming Scriptures, was promised to the first age, which is not promised to us.

Direct. 17. 'Take not any good man's observation in those times for an universal promise of God.'

For instance, David saith, "I have been young, and now am old; yet did I never see the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread;" Psal. lxxiii. But if he had lived in the Gospel times, where God giveth greater heavenly blessings and comforts, and calleth men to higher degrees of patience and mortification, and contempt of the world, he might have seen many both of the righteous, and their seed begging their bread, though not forsaken; yea, Christ himself asking for water of a woman; John iv.

Direct. 18. 'Take heed of making promises to seem instead of precepts; as if you were to do that yourselves, which God had promised that he will do.'

If God promise to deliver his church, or to free any of his servants from trouble or persecution, you must have a precept to tell you what is your own duty, and what means you must use, before you must attempt your own deliverance. What God will do, is one thing; and what you must do, is another. This hath been the strange delusion of the people that call themselves the Fifth-monarchy-men in our times; who believing that Christ will set up righteousness, and pull down tyrants in the earth, have thought that therefore they must do it by arms; and so have been drawn into many rebellions, to the scandal of others, and their own ruin.

Direct. 19. 'Take heed of mistaking prophecies for promises; especially dark prophecies not understood.'

Many things are foretold by God in prophecies, which are men's sins: Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the people

of the Jews, fulfilled prophecies in the crucifying of Christ: and all the persecutors and murderers of the saints, fulfil Christ's prophecies; and so do all that hate us, "and say all manner of evil falsely against us for his sake;"

att. v. 11, 12. But the sin is never the less for that. It **M** "prophesied that the ten kings shall give up their kingdoms to the beast; that in the last days shall come scoffers walking after their own lusts; and in the last days shall be perilous times," &c. These are not promises nor precepts.

It hath lamentably disturbed the church of Christ, when ignorant self-conceited Christians, who see not the difficulty, grow confident that they understand many prophecies in Daniel, the Revelations, &c. and thereupon found their presumption (miscalled faith) upon their own mistakes, and then form their prayers, their communion, their practice into such schism and sedition, and uncharitable ways, as the interest of their opinions do require (as the Millenaries before mentioned have done in this generation).

Direct. 20. 'Think not that all God's promises are made to mere sincerity; and that every true Christian must be freed from all penal hurt, however they behave themselves.'

For there are further helps of the Spirit, which are promised only to our diligence in attending the Spirit, and to the degrees of industry, and fervour, and fidelity in watching, praying, striving, and other use of means. And there are heavy chastisements which God threateneth to the godly, when they misbehave themselves; especially the hiding of his face, and withholding any measure of his Spirit. The Scripture is full of such threatenings and instances.

Direct. 21. 'Much less may you imagine that God hath made any promise, that all the sins of true believers shall work together for their good.'

They misexpound, Rom. viii. 28. who so expound it, (as I have elsewhere shewed.) For 1. The context confineth it to sufferings. 2. The qualification added "to them that love God" doth shew that the abatement of love to God, is none of the things meant that shall work our good. 3. And it sheweth that it is love as love, and therefore not the least that is consistent with neglect and sin, which is our full condition. 4. Experience telleth us, that too many true Christians may fall from some degrees of grace, and the love of God, and die in a less degree than they once had:



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and adoption, and of our after pardon, and of our justification at judgment, and of our additional degrees of grace, and of our freedom from chastisements, have some difference in the conditions, though true Christianity be the main substance of them all. Mere Christianity, or true consent to the covenant, is the condition of our first justification. And the continuance of this, with actual sincere obedience, is the condition of nonamission, or of continuance of this state of justification: and the use of prayer and other means, is a condition of our further reception of more grace. And perseverance in true holiness with faith, is the condition of our final justification and glorification; (of which more anon).

Direct. 24. 'You can no further believe the fulfilling of any of these conditional promises, than you know that you perform the condition.'

It is presumption, and not faith, for an impenitent person to expect the benefit of those promises, which belong to the penitent only: and so it is for him that forgiveth not others, to expect to be forgiven his particular sins: and so in all the rest of the promises.

Direct. 25. 'But be sure that you ascribe no more to yourselves, for performing any condition of a promise, than God doth.'

A condition as such is no cause at all of the performance of the promise; either natural or moral: only the non-performance of the condition is a cause of the non-performance of the promise: for the true nature of a condition as such, is only to suspend the benefit. Though naturally a condition may be meritorious among men; and for their own commodity (which God is not capable of) they ordinarily make only meritorious acts to be conditions: as God also doth only such acts as are pleasing to him, and suited to their proper ends. But this is nothing to a condition formally, which is but to suspend the benefit till it be done.

Direct. 26. 'When you find a promise to be common or universal, apply it as boldly as if your name were written in it: and also when you find that any particular promise to a saint is but a branch of that universal promise to all saints; or to all that are in the same case, and find that the case and reason of the promise proveth the sense of it to belong to you as well as them.'

‘ If it be said, that “ whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life ;” (John iii. 16.) you may apply it as boldly as if it were said, ‘ If thou John, or Thomas be a believer, thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life.’ As I may apply the absolute promise of the resurrection to myself as boldly, as if my name were in it, because it is all that shall be raised (John v. 22. 24, 25. 1 Cor. xv.): so may I all the conditional promises of pardon and glory conditionally, if I repent and believe. And you may absolutely thence conclude your certain interest in the benefit, so far as you are certain that you repent and believe.

And when you read that Christ promiseth his twelve apostles, to be with them, and to reward their labours, and to see that they shall be no losers by him, if they lose their lives, &c. You may believe that he will do so by you also. For though your work be not altogether the same with theirs ; yet this is but a branch of the common promise to all the faithful, who must all follow him on the same terms of self-denial ; Luke xiv. 26, 27. 33. Matt. x. Rom. viii. 17, 18. And on this ground the promise to Joshua is applied : “ I will never fail thee nor forsake thee,” (Heb. xiii. 5.) because it is but a branch of the covenant common to all the faithful.

Direct. 27. ‘ Be sure that you lay the stress of all your hopes on the promises of God, and venture all your happiness on them, and when God calleth to it, express this by forsaking all else for these hopes, that it may appear you really trust God’s word, without any secret hypocritical reserves.’

This is the true life, and work, and trial of faith : whether we build so much on the promise of God, that we can take the thing promised for all our treasure, and the word of God for our whole security.

As faith is called a trusting in God ; so it is a practical kind of trust ; and the principal trial of it, lieth in forsaking all other happiness and hopes, in confidence of God’s promise through Jesus Christ.

To open the matter by a similitude : Suppose that Christ came again on earth as he did at his incarnation, and should confirm his truth by the same miracles, and other means ; and suppose he should then tell all the country, I have a kingdom at the Antipodes, where men never die, but live in

perpetual prosperity; and those of you shall freely possess it; who shall part with your own estates and country, and go in a ship of my providing, and trust me for your pilot to bring you thither, and trust me to give it you when you come there. My power to do all this, I have proved by my miracles, and my love and will, my offer proveth. How now will you know whether a man believe Christ, and trust this promise or not? Why, if he believe and trust him, he will go with him, and will leave all, and venture over the seas whithersoever he conducteth him, and in that ship which he prepareth for him: but if he dare not venture, or will not leave his present country and possessions, it is a sign that he doth not trust him.

If you were going to sea, and had several ships and pilots offered you, and you were afraid lest one were unsafe, and the pilot unskilful, and it were doubtful which were to be trusted; when after all deliberation you choose one, and refuse the rest, and resolve to venture your life and goods in it, this is properly called trusting it. So trusting in God, and in Jesus Christ, is not a bare opinion of his fidelity, but a practical trust; and that you may be sure to understand it clearly, I will once open the parts of it distinctly.

Divines commonly tell us that faith is an affiance or trust in God: and some of them say, that this is an act of the understanding, and some, that it is an act of the will, and others say, that faith consisteth in assent alone, and that trust or affiance is as hope, a fruit of faith, and not faith itself: and what affiance itself is, is no small controversy, (and so it is what faith and Christianity is, even among the teachers of Christians).

The plain truth is this: As to the name of faith, it sometimes signifieth a mere intellectual assent, when the object requireth no more: and sometimes it signifieth a practical trust or affiance, in the truth or trustiness of the undertaker or promiser, that is, in his power, wisdom and goodness, or honesty, conjunct as expressed in his word; and that is, when the matter is practical, requiring such a trust. The former is often called, the Christian faith; because it is the belief of the truth of the Christian principles: and is the leading part of faith in the full sense. But it is the latter which is the Christian faith, as it is taken, not 'secundum quid,' but simply; not for a part, but the whole; not for



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discerned, that as allegiance or subjection differ from obedience, and hiring myself to a master, differeth from obeying him; and taking a man for my tutor, differeth from learning of him; and marriage differeth from conjugal duty, and giving up myself to a physician, differeth from taking his counsel and medicines; and taking a man for my pilot, differeth from being conducted by him; so doth our first faith or Christianity differ from actual obedience to the healing precepts of our Saviour. It is the covenant of obedience and consent to it, immediately entering us into the practice: it is the seed of obedience, or the soul, or life of it, which will immediately bring it forth, and act it. It is virtual, but not actual obedience to Christ; because it is but the first consent to his kingly relation to us; unless you will call it that inception from whence all obedience followeth. But it may be actual (common obedience to God, where he is believed in and acknowledged before Christ: and all following acts of faith after the first, are both the root of all other obedience, and a part of it: as our continued allegiance to the king is: and as the heart, when it is the first formed organ in nature, is no part of the man, but the organ to make all the parts, because it is solitary; and there is yet no man, of whom it can be called a part; but when the man is formed, the heart is both his chief part, and the organ to actuate and maintain the rest.

Object. 'But faith, as faith, is not obedience.'

Answ. Nor learning, as learning, is not obedience to your tutor: nor ploughing, as ploughing, is not obedience to your master: or to speak more aptly, the continuance of your consent, that this man may be your tutor as such, is not obedience to him; but it is materially part of your obedience to your Father who commandeth it; and your continued allegiance or subjection as such, is not obedience to your King; but as primarily it was the foundation or heart of future obedience; so afterward it is also materially a part of your obedience, being commanded by him to whom you are now subject. And so it is in the case of faith: and therefore true faith and obedience are as nearly conjoined as life and motion; and the one is ever connoted in the other! Faith is for obedience to Christ's healing means, as trusting and taking a physician, is for the using of his counsel: and faith is for love and holy obedience to God, which is called

our sanctification, as trusting a physician, is for health. Faith is implicit virtual obedience to a Saviour: and obedience to a Saviour, is explicit operating faith or trust.

I. In the understanding, faith in God's promises hath all these acts contained in it.

1. A belief that God is, and that he is perfectly powerful, wise and good.

2. A belief that he is our Maker, and so our Owner, our Ruler, and our chief good, (initially and finally) delighting to do good, and the perfect felicitating end and object of the soul.

3. A belief that God hath expressed the benignity of his nature, by a covenant or promise of life to man.

4. To believe that Jesus Christ, God and man, is the Mediator of this covenant, (Heb. viii. 6. ix. 15. xii. 24.) procuring it, and entrusted to administer or communicate the blessings of it; Heb. v. 9.

5. To believe that the Holy Ghost is the seal and witness of this covenant.

6. To believe that this covenant giveth pardon of sin, and justification and adoption, and further grace, to penitent believers; and glorification to those that persevere in true faith, love and obedience to the end.

7. To believe that the Holy Scriptures, or word delivered by the apostles, is the sure record of this covenant, and of the history and doctrine on which it is grounded.

8. To believe that God is most perfectly regardful and faithful to fulfil this covenant, and that he cannot lie or break it; Titus i. 2. Heb. vi. 17, 18.

9. To believe that you in particular are included in this covenant, as well as others, it being universal as conditional to all if they will repent and believe, and no exception put in against you to exclude you; John iii. 16. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

10. To believe or know that there is nothing else to be trusted to, as our felicity and end instead of God; nor as our way instead of the Mediator, and the aforesaid means appointed by him.

II. In the will, faith or trust hath, 1. A simple complacency in God as believed to be most perfectly good as afore-described.

2. It hath an actual intending and desiring of him as our end and whole felicity to be enjoyed in heaven; Gal. v.

6, 7. Ephes. iii. 17—19. Col. iii. 1. 3, 4. 1 Cor. xiii. Heb. xi. Matt. vi. 20, 21.

3. It is the turning away from, and refusing all other seeming felicity or ends, and casting all our happiness and hopes upon God alone.

4. It is the choosing Jesus Christ as the only way and Mediator to this end; with the refusing of all other, (John xiv. 6.) and trusting all that we are or hope for upon his mediation.

III. In the vital power, it is the casting away all inconsistent fears, and the inward resolved delivering up the soul to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in this covenant, entering ourselves into a resolved war with the devil, the world, and the flesh, which in the performance will resist us. And thus faith or trust is constituted and completed in the true baptismal covenant.

Direct. 28. ‘In all this be sure that you observe the difference between the truth of faith, and the high degrees.’

The truth of it is most certainly discerned by (as consisting in) **THE ABSOLUTE CASTING OR VENTURING not part, but ALL YOUR HAPPINESS and HOPES UPON GOD and the MEDIATOR ONLY, and LETTING GO ALL WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH THIS CHOICE AND TRUST.** This is true and saving faith and trust.

Pardon me that I sometimes use the word **VENTURING ALL**, as if there were any uncertainty in the matter. I intend not by it to express the least uncertainty or fallibility in God’s promise: for heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of his word shall not pass, till all be fulfilled: but I shall here add;

1. True faith or trust may consist with uncertainty in the person who believeth; if he believe and trust Christ but so far, that he can cast away all his worldly treasures and hopes, even life itself upon that trust. Every one is not an infidel; nor a hypocrite, who must say, if he speak his heart, ‘I am not certain past all doubts, that the soul is immortal, or the Gospel true: but I am certain, that immortal happiness is most desirable, and endless misery most terrible; and that this world is vanity, and nothing in it worthy to be compared, with the hopes which Christ hath given us of a better life: and therefore upon just deliberation I am resolved to let go all my sinful pleasures, profits,



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shall never make any wise man believe by it, that their own faith is ever the more certain or perfect.

As far as I can judge by acquaintance with persons most religious, though there be many who are afraid to speak it out, yet the far greater number of the most faithful Christians, have but such a faith which I described, and their hearts say, ‘I am not certain, or past all doubt, of the truth of our immortality, or of the Gospel; but I will venture all my hopes and happiness, though to the parting with life itself upon it.’

And I will venture to say it, as the truth of Christ, that he that truly can do this, hath a sincere and saving faith; whatsoever opinionists may say against it. For Christ hath promised, that he that loseth his life for his sake and the Gospel’s, shall have life everlasting; Matt. x. 37—39. 42. xvi. 25. xix. 29. Luke xviii. 30. And he hath appointed no higher expressions of faith, as necessary to salvation, than denying ourselves, and taking up the cross, and forsaking all that we have; or in one word, than martyrdom; and this as proceeding from the love of God; Luke xiv. 26, 27. 29. 33. Rom. viii. 17, 18. 28—30. 35—39.

And it is most evident that the sincere have been weak in faith: “And the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith;” Luke xvii. 5. “Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief;” Mark ix. 24. “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;” Luke vii. 9. The weak faith was the more common.

2. And as true faith or trust may consist with doubts and uncertainty in the subject; so may it with much anxiety, care, disquietment and sinful fear; which sheweth the imperfection of our faith. “Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” Matt. xvi. 8. “O ye of little faith, why reason you among yourselves?” &c.; Matt. viii. 26. “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” Matt. xiv. 31. Peter had a faith that could venture his life on the waters to come to Christ, as confident of a miracle upon his command; but yet it was not without fear, (ver. 30.) “when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid;” which caused Christ to say, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

And you cannot say that this is only a hindrance in the

applying act, and not in the direct and principal act of faith: for we find some disciples at this pass; "But we trusted that it had been he, who should have redeemed Israel;" Luke xxiv. 21. Christ saith unto them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the [prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 25, 26. The words of them who told the apostles, that Christ was risen, "seemed but as tales to them, and they believed them not;" Luke xxiv. 11. "While they believed not for joy, and wondered," &c.; ver. 41.

3. Nay, a weak faith may have such a swooning fit, as to fail extraordinarily in an hour of temptation, so far as to deny Christ, or shrink from him in this fear: so did Peter, and not only he, but "all the disciples forsook him, and fled;" Matt. xxvi. 56.

But yet he that according to the habituated state of his soul, hath so much faith, and love, as will cause him to venture life and all, upon the trust which he hath to the promises of the Gospel, hath a true and saving faith.

And here I desire all doubting Christians, to lay by the common mistake in the trying of their faith or trust in Christ, and to go hereafter upon surer grounds. Many say, 'I cannot believe or trust Christ for salvation, for I am full of doubts, and fears, and troubles; and surely this is not trusting God.' *Answ.* 1. The question is not, whether you trust him perfectly, so as to have no fears, no troubles, no doubts; but whether you trust him sincerely, so far as to venture all upon him in his way. If you can venture all on him, and let go all to follow him, your faith is true and saving.

This would abundantly comfort many fearful, troubled Christians, if they did but understand it well: for many of them that thus fear, would as soon as any, forsake all for Christ, and let go all carnal pleasures, and worldly things, or any wilful sin whatsoever, rather than forsake him; and would not take to any other portion and felicity than God, nor any other way than Christ, and the Spirit of Holiness, for all the temptations in the world: and yet they fear because they fear; and doubt more because they doubt. Doubting soul, let this resolve thee; suppose Christ and his way were like a pilot with his ship at sea: many more promise to convey thee safely, and many persuade thee not to

venture; but stay at land: but if thou hast so much trust as that thou wilt go, and put thyself, and all that thou hast into this ship, and forsake all other, though thou go trembling all the way, and be afraid of every storm, and tempest, and gulf; yet thou hast true faith, though it be weak. If thy faith will but keep thee in the ship with Christ, that thou neither turn back again to the flesh, and the world; nor yet take another ship and pilot, (as Mahometans, and those without the church), undoubtedly Christ will bring thee safe to land, though thy fear and mistrust be still thy sin.

For the hypocrite's case is always some of these: 1. Some of them will only trust God in some smaller matter, wherein their happiness consisteth not; as a man will trust one with some trifle which he doth not much regard, whom yet he thinks so ill of, that he cannot trust him in a matter of weight.

2. Some of them will trust God for the saving of their souls; and the life to come, (or rather presume on him, while they call it trusting him), but they will not trust him with their bodies, their wealth, and honours, and fleshly pleasures, or their lives. These they are resolved to shift for, and secure themselves, as well as they can. For they know that for the world to come, they must be at God's disposal, and they have no way of their own to shift out of his hands: whether there be such a life or no, they know not; but if there be, they will cast their souls upon God's mercy, when they have kept the world as long as they can, and have had all that it can do for them. But they will not lose their present part, for such uncertain hopes as they account them.

3. Some of them will trust him only in pretence and name, while it is the creature which they trust indeed. Because they have learned to say, that God is the disposer of all, and only to be trusted, and all creatures are but used by his will; therefore they think that when they trust the creature, it is but in subordination to God; though indeed they trust not God at all.

4. Some of them will trust God and the creature jointly; and as they serve God and Mammon, and think to make sure of the prosperity of the body, and the salvation of the soul, without losing either of them; so they trust in both conjunctly, to make up their felicity. Some think when



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none; and that the world must be valued and used but for his sake, and in subordination to him, and a better world.

5. Yet some hypocrites seem to go further (though they do not), for they will seem, even to themselves, to resign goods, and life, and all things absolutely to the will of God. But the reason is, because they are secretly persuaded in their hearts, that their resignation shall no whit deprive them of them; and that God will never the more take it from them; but that they may possess as much present corporal felicity in a life of religion, as if they lived in the dangerous case of the ungodly: or at least that they may keep so much, as not to be undone or left to any great sufferings in the world: or at least, their lives may not be called for. For they live in a time when few suffer for Christ; and therefore they see little cause to fear that they should be of the smaller number: and it is but being a little the more wise and cautelous, and they hope they may escape well enough. And if they had not this hope, they would never give up all to Christ. But like persons that will be liberal to their physician, they will offer a great deal, when they think he will not take it; but if they thought he would take all that is offered, they would offer less. Or as if a sick person should hear that such a physician will give him no very strong or loathsome physic; and therefore when the physician telleth him, 'I will be none of your physician unless you will absolutely promise to take every thing which I shall give you.' He promiseth that he will do it; but it is only because he supposeth that he will give him nothing which is troublesome. And if he find his expectation crossed, he breaketh his promise, and saith, 'If I had known he would have used me thus, I would never have promised it him.' So hypocrites by promise give up themselves absolutely to God, and to be wholly at his will, without excepting life itself: but their hearts do secretly except it: for all this is because they doubt not but they may save their earthly prosperity and lives, and be Christians too: and if once Christ call them to suffer death for him, they shew then what was the meaning of their hearts.

To reassume the former similitude: If Christ on earth should offer to convey you to a kingdom at the antipodes, where men live for ever in glorious holiness, if you will but trust him, and go in his ship, and take him for your pilot.

Here one saith, I do not believe him that there is such a place, and therefore I will not go (that is the infidel). Another saith, I like my merry life at home, better than his glorious holiness (that is the open worldly and profane). Another saith, I will live in my own country, and on my own estate as long as I can, and when I find that I am dying, and can stay here no longer, that I may be sure to lose nothing by him, I will take his offer. Another saith, I will go with him, but I will turn back again, if I find any dangerous storms and gulfs in the passage. Another saith I will take another ship and pilot along with me, lest he should fail me, that I may not be deceived. Another saith, I am told that the seas are calm, and there is no danger in the passage, and therefore I will absolutely trust him; and venture all; but when he meets with storms and hideous waves, he saith, This is not as I expected; and so he turneth back again. But another (the true Christian) saith, 'I will venture all, and wholly trust him:' and so, though he is oft afraid in danger, when he seeth the devouring gulfs, yet not so fearful as to turn back, but on he goeth, come on it what will; because he knoweth that the place which he goeth to is most desirable, and mortality will soon end his old prosperity; and he hath great reason to believe his pilot to be trusty.

By all this you may see how it cometh to pass that Christ who promiseth life to believers, doth yet make self-denial, and forsaking all that we have, even life itself, to be also necessary; and what relation self-denial hath to faith: Luke xiv. 26. 33. nearer by far than most consider. You may see here the reason why Christ tried the rich man, (Luke xviii. 22.) with selling all, and following him in hope of a reward in heaven. And why he bid his disciples, (Luke xii. 33.) "Sell that ye have and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not."— And why the first Christians were made a pattern of entire Christianity, by selling all, and laying down at the apostle's feet; and Ananias and Sapphira were the instances of hypocrisy, who secretly and lyingly kept back part. You see here how it comes to pass, that all true Christians must be heart-martyrs, or prepared to die for Christ and heaven, rather than forsake him. You may plainly perceive that faith itself is an affiance or trust-

ing in God by Christ; even a trusting in God in heaven as our felicity, and in Christ as the Mediator and the way; and that this trust is a venturing all upon him, and a forsaking all for God, and his promises in Christ. And that it is one and the same motion, which from the ‘terminus à quo.’ is called repentance and forsaking all; and from the ‘terminus ad quem’ is called trust and love. They that are willing to see, may profit much by this observation; and they that are not may quarrel at it, and talk against that which their prejudice will not allow them to understand.

And by all this you may see also wherein the strength of faith consisteth: and that is, 1. In so clear a sight of the evidences of truth as shall leave no considerable doubtings; Matt. xxi. 21. So Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;” Rom. iv.

2. In so confirmed a resolution to cleave to God and Christ alone, as leaveth no wavering, or looking back; that we may say groundedly with Peter, “Though I die, I will not deny thee;” which doubtless signified then some strength of faith: and as Paul, “I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus;” Acts xxi. 13.

3. In so strong a fortitude of soul, as to venture and give up ourselves, our lives, and all our comforts and hopes into the hand of Christ, without any trouble or sinful fears, and to pass through all difficulties and trials in the way, without any distrust or anxiety of mind. These be the characters of a strong and a great degree of faith.

And you may note how Heb. xi. describeth faith commonly by this venturing and forsaking all upon the belief of God. As in Noah’s case, ver. 7. and in Abraham’s leaving his country, ver. 8. and in his sacrificing Isaac, ver. 17. and in Moses forsaking Pharaoh’s court, and choosing the reproach of Christ, rather than the pleasures of sin for a season, ver. 24—26. and in the Israelites venturing into the Red Sea, ver. 29. and in Rahab’s hiding the spies, which must needs be her danger in her own country. And in all those, who “by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong.—Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resur-



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“The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head,” we hear no more of him. And another came with a “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke xviii. 13.) as if he would have been one of Christ’s disciples, and have done any thing for heaven. (And it is like that he would have been a Christian, if free grace had been as large, and as little grace, as some now imagine.) But when he heard, “Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Come, follow me: he was then very sorrowful, for he was very rich;” Luke xviii. 21—23. Thousands cheat their souls with a conceit that they are believers, because they believe that they shall be saved by free grace, without the faith and grace which Christ hath made necessary to salvation.

4. And this will take off all those needful thoughts and means, which should help you to the faith, which yet you have not.

5. And it will engage you in perverse disputes against that true faith which you understand not. And you will think, that you are contending for free grace, and for the faith, when you are “proud, knowing nothing, but sick or doting about questions,” which engender no better birth than “strifes, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings,” &c. 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5.

6. Lastly, You can scarce more dishonour the Christian religion, nor injure God and our Mediator, or harden men in infidelity, than by fathering your ill shapen fictions on Christ, and calling them the Christian or justifying faith.

Direct. 29. ‘Take not all doubts and fears of your salvation, to be the proper effects and signs of unbelief; seeing that in many they arise from the misunderstanding of the meaning of God’s promise, and in more from the doubtfulness of their own qualifications, rather than from any unbelief of the promise, or distrust of Christ.’

It is ordinary with ignorant Christians to say, that they cannot believe, because they doubt of their own sincerity and salvation: as thinking that it is the nature of true faith, to believe that they themselves are justified, and shall be saved; and that to doubt of this, is to doubt of the promises, because they doubtingly apply it. Such distresses have false principles brought many to. But there are two other

things besides the weakness of faith, which are usually the causes of all this. 1. Many mistake the meaning of Christ's covenant, and think that it hath no universality in it; and that he died only for the elect, and promiseth pardon to none but the elect (no not on the condition of believing). And therefore thinking that they can have no assurance that they are elect, they doubt of the conclusion.

And many of them think that the promise extendeth not to such as they, because of some sin or great unworthiness which they are guilty of.

And others think that they have not that faith and repentance which are the condition of the promise of pardon and salvation: and in some of these the thing itself may be so obscure, as to be indeed the matter of rational doubtfulness. And in others of them, the cause may be either a mistake about the true nature and signs of faith and repentance; or else a timorous, melancholy, causeless suspicion of themselves; but which of all these soever be the cause, it is something different from proper unbelief or distrust of God. For he that mistaketh the extent of the promise, and thinketh that it belongeth not to such as he, would believe and trust it, if he understood it, that it extends to him as well as others. And he that doubteth of his own repentance and faith, may yet be confident of the truth of God's promise to all true, penitent believers.

I mention this for the cure of two mischiefs: the first is that of the presumptuous opinionist, who goeth to hell presuming that he hath true saving faith, because he confidently believeth, that he himself is pardoned, and shall be saved. The second is that of the perplexed, fearful Christian, who thinks that all his uncertainty of his own sincerity, and so of his salvation, is properly unbelief, and so concludeth that he cannot believe, and shall not be saved: because he knoweth not that faith is such a belief and trust in Christ, as will bring us absolutely and undeservedly to venture our all upon him alone.

And yet I must tell all these persons, that all this while it is ten to one, but there is really a great deal of unbelief in them which they know not. And that their belief of the truth of the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, and of the Gospel itself, is not so strong and firm, as their never doubting of it would intimate, or as some of their de-

definitions of faith, and their book-opinions and disputes import. And it had been well for some of them, that they had doubted more, that they might have believed, and have settled better.

Direct. 30. ‘Think often of the excellencies of the life of faith, that the motives may be still inducing you thereto.’

As, 1. It is but reasonable that God should be trusted; or else indeed we deny him to be God; Psal. xx. 7.

2. What else shall we trust to? Shall we deify creatures, and say to a stock, “Thou art my Father?” Jer. ii. 27. Lam. i. 19. Shall we distrust God, and trust a liar and a worm?

3. Trying times will shortly come; and then woe to the soul that cannot trust in God! Then nothing else will serve our turns. Then “cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and withdraweth his heart from the Lord; he shall be like the barren wilderness, &c. Then none that trusted in him shall be ashamed;” Jer. xvii. 5; 6. Psal. xxv. 3, 4. lxxiii. 26—28.

4. God’s all-sufficiency leaveth no reason for the least distrust. There is the most absolute certainty that God cannot fail us, because his veracity is grounded on his essential perfections.

5. No witness could ever stand up against the life of faith, and say that he lost by trusting God, or that ever God deceived any.

6. The life of faith is a conquest of all that would distress the soul, and it is a life of constant peace and quietness: yea, it feasteth the soul upon the everlasting joys. Though the mountains be removed; though this world be turned upside down, and be dissolved; whether poverty or wealth, sickness or health, evil report or good, persecution or prosperity befall us; how little are we concerned in all this! And how little should they do to disturb the peace and comfort of that soul, who believeth that he shall live with God for ever. Many such considerations should make us more willing to live by faith upon God’s promises, than to live by sense on transitory things.

Direct. 31. ‘Renew your covenant with Christ in his holy sacrament, frequently, understandingly and seriously.’

For, 1. When we renew our covenant with Christ, then Christ reneweth his covenant with us; and that with great



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but of power, of love, and of a sound mind ;” 2 Tim. i. 7. ‘ πνεῦμα δυνάμεως, καὶ ἀγάπης, καὶ σωφρονισμῶν.’ Power, love, and a sound mind or understanding, do answer God’s nature as the face in the glass doth answer our face, and therefore cannot choose but trust him.

Direct. 34. ‘ Lay up in your memory, particular, pertinent and clear promises, for every particular use of faith.’

The number is not so much ; but be sure that they be plain and well understood, that you may have no cause to doubt whether they mean any such thing indeed or not. Here some will expect that I should do this for them, and gather them such promises. Two things dissuade me from doing it at large. 1. So many books have done it already. 2. It will swell this book too big : but take these few.

1. For forgiveness of all sins, and justification to penitent believers.

“ Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins ;” Acts v. 31.

“ Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses ;” Acts xiii. 38, 39.

“ To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith, that is in me ;” Acts xxvi. 18.

“ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ;” 1 John i. 9.

“ I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more ;” Heb. viii. 12.

“ To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins ;” Acts x. 43.

“ That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations ;” Luke xxiv. 47.

2. Promises of salvation from hell, and possession of heaven.

“ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begot-

ten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on him is not condemned.— He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ;” John iii. 16. 18. 36. “ And this is the record that God hath given us, eternal life ; and this is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life ;” 1 John v. 11, 12.

Acts xxvi. 18. Before cited. “ Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ;” 1 Tim. i. 15.

“ He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him ;” Heb. vii. 25.

“ And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him ;” Heb. v. 9.

“ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ;” Mark xvi. 16.

“ By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved ;” John x. 9.

“ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish ;” John x. 27, 28.

“ Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.— Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life ;” Rom. v. 9, 10. See Luke xviii. 30. John iv. 14. vi. 27. 40. 47. xii. 50. Rom. vi. 22. Gal. vi. 8. 1 Tim. i. 16.

3. Promises of reconciliation, adoption, and acceptance with God through Christ.

“ God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God : for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ;” 2 Cor. v. 18—20.

“ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom also we have access by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.— When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; Rom. v. 1, 2. 10.

“I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ;” 2 Cor. vi. 16—18.

“There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ;” Rom. viii. 1.

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God ; even to them that believe on his name : which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God ;” John i. 12.

“In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him ;” Acts x. 35.

“He hath made us accepted in the beloved ;” Ephes. i. 6. ii. 14. 16. Col. i. 20.

“The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and believed that I came out from God ;” John xvi. 27.

4. Promises of renewed pardon of sins after conversion.

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world ;” 1 John ii. 1, 2.

“Forgive us our trespasses.— For if we forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you ;”— Matt. vi. 14.

“If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him ;” James v. 15.

“I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Spirit ;” Matt. xii. 31.

“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ;” Psal. ciii. 3.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ;” 1 John i. 9.

5. Promises of the Spirit of sanctification to believers ; and of Divine assistances of grace.

“How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ;” Luke xi. 13.

“If any man thirst let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive ;”— John vii. 37—39.



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“ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you : for every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.— If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them-that ask him ?” Matt. vii. 7, 8. 11.

“ Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly ;” Matt. vi. 6.

“ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you ;” John xiv. 13, 14. xv. 16. xvi. 23. xv. 7.

“ And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him ;” 1 John v. 14, 15.

“ And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight ;” 1 John iii. 22.

“ The prayer of the upright is his delight.— He heareth the prayer of the righteous ;” Prov. xv. 8. 29.

“ The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers ;” 1 Pet. iii. 12.

8. That God will accept weak prayers and groans, which want expressions, if they be sincere.

“ The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.— The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered : and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit ;” Rom. viii. 26, 27.

——“ Crying, Abba ; Father ;” Gal. iv. 6.

“ I remembered God, and was troubled, and my spirit was overwhelmed ;” Psal. lxxvii. 3.

“ Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee ;” Psal. xxxviii. 9.

“ God be merciful unto me a sinner ;” Luke xviii. 14.

9. Promises of all things in general which we want, and which are truly for our good.

“ For the Lord God is a sun and shield : the Lord will give grace and glory : no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly ;” Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

“ O fear the Lord, ye his saints ; for there is no want to

them that fear him——They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;" Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10.

"All things work together for good to them that love God——He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 28. 32.

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you;" Matt. vi. 33.

"According as his Divine Power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness;" 2 Pet. i. 3.

"But godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8.

10. Promises of a blessing on them that sincerely hear and read God's word, and use his sacraments and other means.

"Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your souls shall live;" Isa. lv. 3.

Read the eunuch's conversion, in Acts viii., who was reading the Scripture in his chariot.

"Laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisy, and envies, and evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;" 1 Pet. ii. 1.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein;" Rev. i. 3.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly——But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night;" Psal. i. 1, 2.

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock," &c.; Matt. vii. 24, 25.

"Rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and do it;" Luke viii. 21.

"Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her;" Luke x. 42.

"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear——And unto you that hear shall more be given——;" Mark iv. 23, 24.

"Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy household shall be saved;" Acts xi. 14.

"Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine, and con-

tinue therein; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee;" 1 Tim. iv. 16.

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound! they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day——;" Psal. lxxxix. 15.

"The word of God is quick and powerful," &c.; Heb. iv. 12.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" Matt. xviii. 20.

"And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence;" Isa. iv. 5.

11. Promises to the humble, meek and lowly.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth;" Matt. v. 3—5.

"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;" Matt. xi. 28, 29.

"The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit;" Psal. xxxiv. 18.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;" Psal. li. 17.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in height and holiness (or in the high and holy place), with him also that is of a contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones;" Isa. lvii. 15.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word;" Isa. lxvi. 2.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to



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nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ;” 2 Pet. i. 5. 8.

“ Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him ;” 2 Cor. v. 9.

“ Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you ;” Matt. vi. 33.

“ Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour ;” 1 Cor. iii. 8.

“ The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force ;” Matt. xi. 12. See Prov. iii. 13, &c. iv. to xiv. vi. 20, &c. vii. 1, &c. viii. and ix. throughout.

14. Promises to the patient waiting Christian.

“ And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises ;” Heb. vi. 11, 12.

“ Knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience ; but let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing ;” James i. 3, 4.

“ Wait on the Lord ; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart ; wait, I say, on the Lord ;” Psal. xxvii. 14.

“ Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him——Those that wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way ; he shall exalt thee to inherit the land ;” Psal. xxxvii. 7. 9. 34.

“ Wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee ;” Prov. xx. 22.

“ Blessed are all they that wait for him ;” Isa. xxx. 18.

“ They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; they shall walk, and not be faint ;” Isa. xl. 31.

“ They shall not be ashamed that wait for me ;” Isa. xlix. 23.

“ The Lord is good to them that wait for him ; to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord ;” Lam. iii. 25, 26.

“ But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it ;” Rom. viii. 25.

“ For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith ;” Gal. v. 5.

“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ ;” 2 Thess. iii. 5.

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life ;” Rom. ii. 7.

“Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may inherit the promise ;” Heb. x. 36.

15. Promises to sincere obedience.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city ;” Rev. xxii. 14.

“Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight ;” 1 John iii. 22. “He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him ;” ver. 24.

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him ;” John xiv. 21.

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love ;” John xv. 10.

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God ;” 1 Cor. vii. 19. See Psal. cxii. 1. cxix. 6. Prov. i. 20—22, &c. Isa. xlvi. 18. Psal. xix. 8, 9, &c.

“He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him ;” Heb. v. 9.

“Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus ;” Rev. xiv. 12.

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments ;” 1 John v. 3.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : fear God, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man ; for God shall bring every work into judgment,” &c. ; Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;” Matt. v. 8.

“You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only ;” James ii. 24.

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds :

to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life—glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good——Rom. ii. 6, 7, 10.

“In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him;” Acts x. 35.

“Of obedience unto righteousness;” Rom. vi. 16.

“He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous;” 1 John iii. 7.

“The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace;” James iii. 18.

“He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting;” Gal. vi. 8.

“If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;” Rom. viii. 13.

16. Promises to them that love God.

“All things work together for good to them that love God;” Rom. viii. 28.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;” 1 Cor. ii. 9.

“He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him;” James i. 12.

“Rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him;” James ii. 5.

“He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him;” John xiv. 21.

“I love them that love me;” Prov. viii. 17.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;” John xiv. 15.

“The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and believed——;” John xvi. 27.

17. Promises to them that love the godly, and that are merciful, and do the works of love.

“By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;” John xiii. 35.

“In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.—By love serve one another; for the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as



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ther knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you ;” Matt. vi. 30-32, 33.

“ Let your conversations be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have : for he hath said, I will never fail thee nor forsake thee ;” Heb. xiii. 5.

“ Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom ?” James ii. 5.

“ They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing ;” Psal. xxxiv. 10.

“ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ;” Psal. xxiii. 1.

“ My God shall supply all your need ;” Psal. iv. 19.

“ I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound ; every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry ; both to abound, and to suffer need ;” Phil. iv. 11—13.

“ The needy shall not always be forgotten : the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever ;” Psal. ix. 18.

19. Promises to the oppressed and wronged Christian.

“ For the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord : I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him——Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever ;” Psal. xii. 5—7.

“ All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him ; yea the poor and needy from him that spoileth him ;” Psal. xxxv. 10.

“ But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me ; thou art my helper and deliverer ;” Psal. xl. 17.

“ He shall judge thy people with righteousness ; and thy poor with judgment.—He shall judge the poor of the people ; he shall save the children of the needy ; and shall break in pieces the oppressor. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy : he shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence ; and precious shall their blood be in his sight ;” Psal. lxxii. 2. 4. 12—14.

“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;” Psal. cxiii. 7. See Isa. xxv. 3—5. xiv. 30. Zech. ix. 8. Isa. li. 13.

“If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest, regardeth; and there be higher than they;” Eccles. v. 8.

20. Promises to the persecuted who suffer for righteousness.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you;” Matt. v. 10—12.

“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul—Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered: fear you not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it;” Matt. x. 28—32. 39.

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life;” Matt. xix. 29.

“Your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us—when Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe—;” 2 Thess. i. 4—6.

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Acts ix. 4.

Read Rom. viii. 28. to the end. Rev. ii. iii. Heb. xi. xii.

“There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it ;” 1 Cor. x. 13.

“ I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds ; but the word of God is not bound : I endure all things for the elect’s sake—It is a faithful saying : For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer, we shall also reign with him ;” 2 Tim. ii. 9—12.

“ If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ;” Rom. viii. 17, 18.

“ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;” 2 Cor. iv. 17.

“ But if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye : and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled ;” 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15. Read 1 Pet. iv. 12—16. 18, 19. Rom. v. 1—4.

“ The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you— ;” 1 Pet. v. 10.

21. Promises to the faithful in dangers, daily and ordinary, or extraordinary.

“ The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him ; and delivereth them. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants ; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate ;” Psal. xxxiv. 7. 17. 19, 20. 22.

“ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress ; my God, in him will I trust—Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night—For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone ;” Psal. xci. 1—3. 5. 11, 12. Read the whole.



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“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;” 1 John v. 4.

23. Promises to them that overcome and persevere.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God;” Rev. ii. 7.

“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death;” ver. 11.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, &c. Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;” ver. 17. 10.

“He that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron—Even as I received of my Father: and I will give him the morning-star;” ver. 26. 28.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and my new name;” Rev. iii. 5. 12.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne;” ver. 21.

“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;” John viii. 31.

“To present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith; grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel—” Col. i. 22, 23.

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you;” John xv. 7.

“He that endureth to the end shall be saved;” Matt. x. 22.

24. Promises to believers in sickness and at death.

“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord,

that we should not be condemned with the world ;” 1 Cor. xi. 32.

“ For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth : if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons—Shall we not be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live—But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness : No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby ;” Heb. xii. 6—8. 11.

“ Is any sick, let them send for the elders of the church—The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him ;” James v. 14.

“ He whom thou lovest is sick— ;” John xi. 3.

“ Blessed is the man that considereth the poor : the Lord shall deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord shall preserve him and keep him alive—The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing : thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness ;” Psal. xli. 1—3.

“ For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon, with our house which is from heaven—For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened ; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God ; who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, not by sight :) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord ;” 2 Cor. v. 1, &c.

“ Now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain—I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better ;” Phil. i. 20, 21. 23.

“To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;” Luke xxiii. 43.

“I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them;” Rev. xiv. 13.

“Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage;” Heb. ii. 14.

“He that is our God, is the God of salvation, and to God the Lord belong the issues from death;” Psal. lxviii. 20.

“Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel;” 2 Tim. i. 10.

“O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;” 1 Cor. xv. 54.

25. Promises to persevering believers, of the resurrection unto life, and of justification in judgment, and of glorification.

“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life—The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation;” 1 Cor. xv. throughout. John v. 22. 24. 28, 29.

“Because I live, ye shall live also;” John xiv. 19.

“If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory;” Col. iii. 1. 3, 4.

“He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;” 2 Thess. i. 10.

“Come ye blessed, &c. The righteous into life eternal;” Matt. xxv. 34. 46.



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thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not;" Matt. xxiii. 37.

"Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles," Rom. xi. 11. Ver. 16—18, &c. shew that they were broken off by unbelief, and we are grafted in, and are holy as they were.

"Go and disciple all nations, baptizing them," &c.; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

That the promise might be sure to all the seed. The children of promise are counted for the seed;" Rom. iv. 16. 9. 8.

"Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. xix. 13, 14.

27. Promises to the church, of its increase, and preservation, and perfection.

"The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ;" Rev. xi. 15.

"He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;" Luke i. 33.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which is indeed the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air lodge in the branches of it—The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened;" Matt. xiii. 31. 33.

"And I, if I be lifted up; will draw all men unto me;" John xii. 32.

"In the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever;" Dan. ii. 44.

"Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" Matt. xvi. 18.

"For the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.: that henceforth we may be

no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the Head, Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love;" Ephes. iv. 12. 16.

"Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish;" Ephes. v. 25—27. Read Rev. xxi. xxii.

"Lo, I am with you to the end of the world;" Matt. xxviii. 20.

"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come;" Matt. xxiv. 14.

"Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder;" Matt. xxi. 44.

The obscure prophetic passages I pass by.

So much for living by faith on the promises of God.

CHAPTER VI.

How Faith must be exercised on God's Threatenings and Judgments.

THE exercise of faith upon God's threatenings and judgments, must be guided by such rules and helps at these:

Direct. 1. 'Think not either that Christ hath no threatening penal laws, or that there are none which are made for the use of believers.'

If there were no penalties, or penal laws, there were no distinguishing government of the world. This Antinomian fancy destroyeth religion. And if there be threats, or penal laws, none can be expected to make so much use of them as true believers. 1. Because he that most believeth them,

must needs be most affected with them. 2. Because all things are for them, and for their benefit; and it is they that must be moved by them to the fear of God, and an escaping of the punishment.

And therefore they that object, that believers are passed already from death to life; and that there is no condemnation to them; and they are already justified, and therefore have no use of threats or fears; do contradict themselves: for it will rather follow, 'Therefore they, and they only, do and will faithfully use the threatenings in godly fears.' For, 1. Though they are justified, and passed from death to life, they have ever faith, in order of nature before their justification; and he that believeth not God's threatenings with fear, hath no true faith. And, 2. They have ever inherent righteousness or sanctification, with their justification: and this faith is part of that holiness, and of the life of grace, which they are passed into. "For this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ;" John xvii. 3. And he knoweth not God, who knoweth him not to be true. And this is part of our knowledge of Christ also, to know him as the infallible author of our faith, that is, of the Gospel, which saith not only, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" but also, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" Mark xvi. 16. And this is the record which God gave of his Son, which he that believeth not maketh him a liar; "that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life;" 1 John v. 11, 12. Yea as "he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; so he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" John iii. 36. And therefore, 3. The reason why there is no condemnation to us, is because believing, not part only, but all this word of Christ, we fly from sin and wrath, and are in Christ Jesus, as giving up ourselves to him, and "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" being moved so to do both by the promises and threats of God. This is plain English, and plain and necessary truth, the greater is the pity, that many honest, well meaning Antinomians should fight against it, on an ignorant conceit of vindicating free grace: if the plain word of God were not through partiality overlooked by them, they might see enough to end the controversy in



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amiable and beneficial to us. Though love must be the principle or chief spring of our obedience; yet he that knoweth not that fear must drive, as love must draw, and is necessary in its place to join with love, or to do that which the weaknesses of love leave undone, doth neither know what a man is, nor what God's word is, nor what his government is, nor what either magistracy, or any civil, or domestical government is; and therefore should spend many years at school before he turneth a disputer.

2. They are of use to keep up order in the world; which could not be expected if it were not for God's threatenings. If the world be so full of wickedness, rapine and oppressions; notwithstanding all the threatenings of hell, what could we expect it should be, if there were none such, but even as the suburbs of hell itself. When princes, and lords, and rich men, and all those thieves and rebels that can but get strength enough to defend themselves, and all that can but hide their faults, would be under no restraints considerable, but would do all the evil that they have a mind to do: men would be worse to one another, than bears and tigers.

3. God's threatenings, in their primary intention or use, are made to keep us from the punishment threatened. Punishment is naturally due to evil doers: and God declarèth it, to give us warning, that we may take heed, avoid it and escape.

4. That which doth so clearly demonstrate the holiness of God, in his righteous government, his wisdom and his justice is certainly good and amiable in itself. But we must not expect that the same thing should be good and amiable to the wicked, who run themselves into it; which is good to the world, or to the just about them, or to the honour of God. Assizes, prisons and gallows are good to the country, and to all the innocent, to preserve their peace, and to the honour of the king and his government; but not to murderers, thieves or rebels; Isa. xxvi. 7—9. Psal. xlviii. 11. ix. 16. lxxxix. 14. xcvi. 2. cxlix. 9. cxlvi. 7. xxxvii. 6. 28. Jude 6. 15. Rev. iv. 7. xv. 4. xvi. 7. xix. 2. Eccles. xii. 14.

Direct. 3. 'Judge of the severity of God's threatenings, partly by the greatness of himself whom we offend, and partly by the necessity of them for the government of the world.'

1. Remember that sinning wilfully against the Infinite Majesty of Heaven, and refusing his healing mercy to the last, deserveth worse than any thing against a man can do; 1 Sam. ii. 25.

2. And remember that even the threatening of hell doth not serve turn with most of the world, to keep them from sinning and despising God: and therefore you cannot say that they are too great. For that plaster draweth not too strongly, which will not draw out the thorn. If hell be not terrible enough to persuade you from sin, it is not too terrible to be threatened and executed: He that shall say, 'Why will God make so terrible a law?' and withal should say, 'As terrible as it is I will venture at it, rather than leave my pleasures, and rather than live a holy life;' doth contradict himself, and telleth us, that the law is not terrible enough to attain its chief and primary end, with such as he, that will not be moved by it, from the most sordid, base, or brutish pleasure.

Direct. 4. 'Remember how Christ himself, even when he came to deliver us from God's law, did yet come to verify his threatening in the matter of it, and to be a sacrifice for sin; and public demonstration of God's justice.'

For this end was Christ manifested, to destroy the works of the devil; 1 John. iii. 5. 8. And the first and great work of the devil was, to represent God as a liar, and to persuade Eve not to believe his threatenings, and to tell her, that though she sinned, she should not die. And though God so far dispensed with it, as to forgive man the greatest part of the penalty, it was by laying it on his Redeemer; and making him a sacrifice to his justice; that his cross might openly confute the tempter, and assure the world, that God is just, and that "the wages of sin is death;" (Rom. vi. 23.) though eternal life be the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

And he that well considereth this, that the Son of God would rather stoop to sufferings and death, than the devil's reproach, of God's threatenings should be made true, and that the justice of God against sin should not be manifested, will sure never think, that this justice is any dishonour to the Almighty.

Direct. 5. 'Let this be your use of the threatenings of

God, to drive you from sin to more careful obedience, and to help you against the defects of love, and to set them against every temptation when you are assaulted by it.'

When a tempting bait is set before you, set hell against it, as well as heaven; and say, Can I take this cup, this whore, this preferment, this gain of Judas, with hell; for my part instead of heaven? If men threaten death, imprisonment, or any other penalty; or if losses or reproaches be like by men to be made your reward, remember that God threateneth hell, and ask if this be not the most intolerable suffering.

And if any Antinomian revile you for thus doing, and say, 'You should set only free grace before you, to keep you from sinning, and not hell and damnation.' Tell him that it is Christ the Mediator of free grace, which hath set hell before you in the Scripture, and not you: and that you do but consider of that which Christ hath set there before you to be considered of. Ask them whether it be not God that prepared hell for the devil and his angels, and Christ himself that will adjudge all impenitent sinners to it; Matt. xxv. And ask them why Christ doth so often talk of it in the Gospel, (Matt. xiii.) of the "worm that never dieth, and the fire that never shall be quenched;" Luke xix. 27. Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 36. 2 Thess. i. 8, 9, &c. And whether they know why fear was given to man; and whether Christ mistook in all such commands, Luke xii. 4. Heb. xi. 7. iv. 1. And whether God hath made any part of his laws in vain.

If they say, that the "Law was not made for a righteous man;" 1 Tim. i. 9. Tell them that the words are expounded, Gal. v. 23. "Against such there is no law." The law was not made to condemn and punish a righteous man; because he feared the threatening of it, and so fell not under the condemnation. If you speak of the law of Christ, or any law which supposeth the subject righteous: there is no law can be pleaded against such to their damnation. That there is no law against them is but as, Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation to them." And we grant also, that in that measure as men's souls are habituated with love to God, and duty, and hatred of sin, they need no law to urge and threaten them, no more than a loving wife need to have a



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Note here, 1. That I do not say; that all belief or fear of God's threatenings is saving faith. But, 2. That all saving faith containeth such a belief of the threatenings. 3. And that many times poor Christians, who believe and tremble at the threatenings, do truly believe the promises, and yet mistake, and verily think that they do not believe them. 4. But their mistake may certainly be manifested, if their faith do but work by a love and desire after holiness, and the fruition of God.

For, 1. It is evident that the same Gospel which saith, "He that believeth shall be saved;" doth say, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore the same faith believeth both. 2. It is plain that the same formal object of faith, which is God's veracity, will bring a man to believe one as well as the other, if he equally know it to be a divine revelation: he that believeth that 'All that God saith is true:' and then believeth that God saith that 'All true believers shall be saved;' must needs believe that this promise is true. And he that understandeth that Christ saith, 'Unbelievers shall be damned;' cannot but find also that he saith, 'True believers shall be saved.' And if he believe the one, because it is the word of Christ; he doth sure believe the other, because it is the word of Christ. 3. Yea it is in many respects harder to believe God's threatenings, than his promises; partly because sinners are more unwilling that they should be true; and they have more enmity to the threatenings, than to the promises; and partly because they commonly feign God to be such as they would have him be: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself," &c.; Psal. l. And partly because God's goodness being known to be his very essence, and all men being apt to judge of goodness, by the measure of their own interest, it is far more obvious and facile to man's understanding, to conclude that some are saved, than that some are damned; and that the penitent believers are saved, than that the impenitent unbelievers are damned: We hear daily how easily almost all men are brought to believe that God is merciful; and how hard it is to persuade them of his damning justice and severity. Therefore he that can do the harder, is not unlike to do the easier.

And indeed it is mere ignorance of the true nature of faith, which maketh those whom I am now describing, to

think that they do not believe God's promises, when they believe his threatenings. They think that because they believe not that they themselves are pardoned, justified, and shall be saved, that therefore they believe not the promise of God: but this is not the reason; but it is because you find not the condition of the promise yet in yourselves, and therefore think that you have no part in the benefits: but it is one thing to doubt of your own sincerity, and another thing to doubt whether the promise of God be true. Suppose that the law do pardon a felon, if he can read as a clerk; and one that is a felon be in doubt whether his reading will serve or not; this is not to deny belief to the pardoning act of the law. Suppose one promise a yearly stipend to all that are full one and twenty years of age, in the town or country: to doubt of my age, is not to doubt of the truth of the promise.

Object. 'But do not Protestant divines conclude against the Papists, that saving faith must be a particular application of Christ and the promise to ourselves, and not only a general assent?'

Answer. It is very true; and the closer that application is the better. But the application which all sound divines (in this point) require as necessary in saving faith, is neither an assurance, nor persuasion that your own sins are already pardoned, or that they ever will be: but it is, 1. A belief that the promise of pardon to all believers, is so universal, as that it includeth you as well as others, and promiseth and offereth you pardon, and life, if you will believe in Christ. 2. And it is a consent or willingness of heart that Christ be yours, and you be his, to the ends proposed in the Gospel. 3. And it is a practical trust in his sufficiency, as choosing him for the only Mediator, resolving to venture your souls, and all your hopes upon him: though yet through your ignorance of yourselves, you may think that you do not this thing in sincerity, which indeed you do; yea, and much fear (through melancholy or temptation) that you never shall do it, and consequently never shall be saved.

He that doubteth of his own salvation, not because he doubteth of the truth of the Gospel; but because he doubteth of the sincerity of his own heart, may be mistaken in himself, but is not therefore an unbeliever (as is said before).

If you would know whether you believe the promises truly; answer me these particular questions: 1. Do you believe that God hath promised that all true believers shall be saved? 2. Do you believe that if you are or shall be a true believer, you shall be saved? 3. Do you choose or desire God as your only happiness and end, to be enjoyed in heaven, and Christ as the only Mediator to procure it; and his Holy Spirit as his Agent in your souls, to sanctify you fully to the image of God? Are you truly willing that thus it should be? And if God be willing, will not you refuse it? 4. Do you turn away from all other ways of felicity, and choose this alone, to venture all your hopes upon, and resolve to seek for none but this; and to venture all on God and Christ, though yet you are uncertain of your sincerity and salvation? Why this makes up true saving faith.

5. And I would further ask you; Do you fear damnation, and God's wrath, or not? If not, what troubleth you? And why complain you? If you do, tell me then whether you do believe God's threatenings, that he that believeth not shall be damned, or not? If you do not, what maketh you fear damnation? Do you fear it, and not believe that there is any such thing? If you do believe it, how can you choose but believe also, that every true believer shall be saved? Is God true in his threatenings, and not in his promises? This must force you plainly to confess, that you do believe God's promises; but only doubt of your own sincerity, and consequently of your salvation; which is more a weakness in your hope, than in your faith, or rather chiefly in your acquaintance with yourself.

Direct. 8. ' Yet still dwell most upon God's promises in the exercise of love, desire and thankfulness; and use all your fear about the threatenings, but in a second place, to further and not to hinder the work of love.'

Direct. 9. ' Let faith interpret all God's judgments, merely by the light of the threatenings of his word; and do not gather any conclusions from them, which the word affordeth not, or alloweth not; God's judgments may be dangerously misunderstood.'



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sin and misery, will prepare us but for a superficial opinionative faith in Christ, as the remedy; but a true sense of both, will teach us to think of him as a Saviour indeed.

2. Original sin, and actual, the wickedness both of the heart and life, even all our particular sins of omission and commission, and all their circumstances and aggravations, are the first reason of our great necessity of pardon: and therefore it cannot but be a duty to lay them to heart as particularly as we can, to make that necessity, and Christ's redemption the better understood; Acts ii. 37. xxii. 8, 9, &c.

3. The wrath of God, and the miseries of this life, and the everlasting miseries of the damned in hell, being the due effects or punishment of sin, are the second cause of our necessity of pardon: and therefore these also must be thought on seriously, by him that will seriously believe in Christ.

4. The law of God which we have broken, maketh this punishment our due; Rom. iii. v. vii. And the justice of God is engaged to secure his own honour, in the honour of his law and government.

Direct. 2. 'Understand well what Christ is and doth, for the justification of a sinner, and how (not one only) but all the parts of his office are exercised hereunto.'

In the dignity of his person, and perfect original holiness of his natures, divine and human, he is fitly qualified for his work of our justification and salvation.

His undertaking (which is but the Divine decree) did from eternity lay the foundation of all, but did not actually justify any.

His promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) and his new relation to man thereupon, did that to the fathers in some degree, which his after-incarnation and performance, and his relation thereupon, doth now to us.

His perfect obedience to the law; yea, to that law of mediation also peculiar to himself (which he performed neither as priest, or prophet, or king, but as a subject) was the meritorious cause of that covenant and grace which justifieth us, and so of our justification. And that which is the meritorious cause here, is also usually called the material, as it is that matter or thing which meriteth our justification; and so is called our righteousness itself.

As he was a sacrifice for sin, he answered the ends of

the law which we violated, and which condemned us, as well as if we had been all punished according to the sense of the law: and therefore did thereby satisfy the Law-giver: and thereby also merited our pardon and justification; so that his obedience as such, and his sacrifice (or whole humiliation) as satisfactory by answering the ends of the law, are conjunctly the meritorious cause of our justification.

His new covenant (which in baptism, is made mutual by our expressed consent) is a general gift or act of oblivion, or pardon, given freely to all mankind, on condition they will believe and consent to it, or accept it; so that it is God's pardoning and adopting instrument: and all are pardoned by it conditionally; and every penitent believer actually and really. And this covenant or gift is the effect of the aforesaid merit of Christ, both founded and sealed by his blood.

As he merited this as a mediating subject and sacrifice, so as our High Priest he offered this sacrifice of himself to God.

And as our King, he being the Law-giver to the church, did make this covenant as his law of grace, describing the terms of life and death: and being the Judge of the world, doth by his sentence justify and condemn men, as believers or unbelievers, according to this covenant: and also executeth his sentence accordingly (partly in this life, but fully in the life to come).

As our Teacher, and the Prophet, or Angel of the Covenant, he doth declare it as the Father's will, and promulgate and proclaim this covenant and conditional pardon and justification to the world; and send out his ambassadors with it to beseech men in his name to be reconciled to God, and to declare, yea, and by sacramental investiture, to seal and deliver a pardon and actual justification to believers when they consent.

And as our Mediating High Priest now in the heavens, he presenteth our necessity, and his own righteousness and sacrifice as his merits, for the continual communication of all this grace, by himself, as the Head of the church, and administrator of the covenant.

So that Christ doth justify us both as a subject meriting, as a sacrifice meriting, as a Priest offering that sacrifice; as

a King actually making the justifying law, or enacting a general pardon; as a King sententially and executively justifying; as a Prophet or Angel of the Covenant promulgating it; as King, and Prophet, and Priest, delivering a sealed pardon by his messengers; and as the Priest, Head and Administrator communicating this with the rest of his benefits. By which you may see in what respects Christ must be believed in to justification, if justifying faith were (as it is not) only the receiving him as our justifier: it would not be the receiving him as in one part of his office only.

Direct. 3. 'Understand rightly how far it is that the righteousness of Christ himself is made ours, or imputed to us, and how far not.'

There are most vehement controversies to this day, about the imputation of Christ's righteousness; in which I know not well which of the extremes are in the greater error; those that plead for it in the mistaken sense, or those that plead against it in the sober and right sense: but I make no doubt but they are both of them damnable, as plainly subverting the foundation of our faith. And yet I do not think that they will prove actually damning to the authors, because I believe that they misunderstand their adversaries, and do not well understand themselves; and that they digest not, and practise not what they plead for, but digest and practise that truth which they doctrinally subvert, not knowing the contrariety; which if they knew they would renounce the error, and not the truth. And I think that many a one that thus contradicteth fundamentals, may be saved.

Some there be (besides the Antinomians) that hold that Christ did perfectly obey and satisfy, (not in the natural, but) in the civil or legal person of each sinner that is elect (representing and bearing as many distinct persons as are elect), so fully as that God doth repute every elect person (or say others, every believer) to be one that in law sense, did perfectly obey and satisfy justice himself; and so imputeth Christ's righteousness and satisfaction to us, as that which was reputatively or legally of our own performance, and so is ours, not only in its effects, but in itself.

Others seeing the pernicious consequences of this opinion, deny all imputed righteousness of Christ to us, and write many reproachful volumes against it (as you may see



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he suffered as one that by his own consent undertook to suffer for the persons of sinners, and that as such an undertaker only he suffered; and that thus our sins were imputed to him (not in themselves, as if he were in law sense the committer of them, or polluted by them, or by God esteemed so to have been, but) as to the effects, that is, his suffering; in that they were the occasion, and the remote or assumed cause of his sufferings; as his righteousness is imputed to us, as the meritorious cause of our pardon and justification.

But he could not be said, no not in so large a sense as this, to have obeyed in our stead (considering it as obedience or holiness, but only as merit), because he did it not that we might not obey, but that we might not suffer for disobeying.

More of this will follow in the next chapter.

Direct. 4. Understand well what guilt it is that Christ doth remit in our justification; not the guilt of the fact, nor of the fault in itself, but the guilt of punishment; and of the fault only so far as it is the cause of wrath and punishment.

1. The guilt of fact, is in the reality or truth of this charge, that such a fact we did or omitted: so far it is but physically considered, and would not come into legal consideration, were it not for the following relation of it.

2. The guilt of fault, '*reatus culpæ*,' is the reality of this charge (or the foundation of it in us) that we are the committers or omitters of such an action contrary to the law: or that our act or omission was really a crime or fault.

3. The guilt of punishment, '*reatus pœnæ, vel ad pœnam*,' is the foundation of this charge, that we are by that law which must judge us, condemnable, or obliged to punishment (or it is our right) for the sins so committed.

Now Christ doth not by justifying us, or pardoning us, make us either to be such as really did not do the fact; or such as did not a culpable fact; no, nor such as did not deserve damnation, or to whom it was not due by the first law alone; but to be such who are not now at all condemnable for it, because the new law which we must be judged by, doth absolve us, by forgiving us; not making the fault no fault, nor causing God to think that Christ committed it, and not we; or to esteem us to be such as

never did commit it; but remitting the punishment, and that dueness of punishment and obligation to it, which did before result from the fault and law together; and so the fault itself is remitted as it is the foundation from whence that obligation to punishment resulteth, respectively, but not simply, nor as a fault in itself at all.

When I say the punishment and the dueness of it to us, is forgiven, I mean not only the punishment of sense, but of loss also: nor only the outward part which is executed by creatures, but especially the first and great penalty, of God's own displeasure with the person, and the withdrawing of his Spirit and complacential love, and that which we may improperly call, his obligation in justice to condemn the sinner. There was upon God, before Christ's satisfaction and our title to him, that which we may so call a legal or relative obligation on God to punish us, because else he should have done contrary to the due ends of government, and so contrary to the wisdom and justice of a Governor, which is not consistent with his perfection. But now the ends of government are so answered and provided for, that there is no such obligation on God to punish us, but he may remit it without any dishonour at all; nay with the honour of his wisdom and justice. We are now, 'non condemnandi,' not condemnable, though we are sinners. In judgment we must confess the latter, and deny the former only.

Direct. 5. 'Understand well what sins Christ justifieth men from, or forgiveth to them, and what not: All sins which consist with true faith and repentance, (or true conversion to God in love, by faith in Christ) and all that went before: but he forgiveth no man in a state of impenitency and unbelief, nor any man's final impenitency and unbelief at all; nor any other sins, where those are final; except it be with the common conditional forgiveness before mentioned; or that absolute particular forgiveness of some present penalties, which saveth no man from damnation;' Matt. xii. 31. Acts xxvi. 18. Rom. viii. 1. 30. Acts v. 31. vii. 38, 39. Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16. 18. 36. 1 John v. 11, 12. Mark iv. 12. Matt. xviii. 27. 32.

Direct. 6. 'Understand well the true nature of that faith and repentance, which God hath made the condition of our justification.' This is sufficiently opened before; and the

confutation of all the cavils against it, would be tedious and unsavoury here.

Direct. 7. ‘Understand well the covenant and promise of justification; and measure your belief and expectations by that promise.’

Expect no other pardon, nor on any other conditions or terms than the promise doth contain; for it is God’s pardoning act or instrument; and by it we must be justified or condemned: and we know not but by it, whom God will justify.

Direct. 8. ‘Keep always the assuring grounds of faith before your eyes, when you look after pardon, that your faith may be firm, and powerful, and quieting; especially consider the following grounds.’

1. God’s gracious nature proclaimed even to Moses, as abundant in mercy, and forgiving iniquity, transgressions and sins (to those, and upon those terms that he promiseth forgiveness), though he will by no means clear the guilty (that is, will neither take the unrighteous to be righteous; nor forgive them, or acquit them in judgment, whom his covenant did not first forgive).

2. The merciful nature also of our Redeemer; Heb. ii. 17.

3. How deeply Christ hath engaged himself to shew mercy, when he assumed our nature, and done so much towards our salvation, as he hath done; Heb. viii. ix.

4. That it is his very office and undertaking, which therefore he cannot possibly neglect; Luke xix. 10. ii. 11. John, iv. 42. Acts v. 31. xiii. 23.

5. That God the Father himself did give him to us, and appoint him to this saving office; John iii. 16. 18. Acts v. 31. xiii. 23. Yea “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. And God made “him sin (that is, a sacrifice for sin) for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” (that is, might be the public instances of God’s merciful justice, as Christ was of his penal justice); and this by a righteousness given us by God himself, and purchased or merited for us by Christ, (2 Cor v. 21.) yea, and be renewed in holiness and righteousness according to his image.

6. That now it is become the very interest of God, and of Jesus Christ himself to justify us; as ever he would



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unrighteous: (as the first making of the world, and not the continuance of it, is called Creation:); but this is but about the name: for the thing itself, no doubt but that covenant which first justified us, doth continue to justify us; and if the cause should cease, the effect would cease. And he that requireth no actual obedience, as the condition of our begun justification, doth require both the continuance of faith, and actual sincere obedience, as the condition of continuing, or not losing our justification, (as Davenant, Bergius, Blank, &c. have well opened, and I have elsewhere proved at large.): As matrimony giveth title to conjugal privileges to the wife; but conjugal fidelity, and performance of the essentials, of the contract is necessary to continue them. Therefore labour to keep up your faith, and to abide in Christ, and he in you, and to bring forth fruit, lest ye be branches withered, and for the fire; John xv. 2, 3. 7—9, &c.

And upon the former misapprehension, the same persons do look upon all the faith which they exercise through their lives; after the first instantaneous act, as no justifying faith at all (but only a faith of the same kind), but to what use they hardly know. Yea they look upon Christ himself, as if they had no more use for him, either as to continue their justification, or to forgive their after sins; when as our continued faith must be exercised all our lives on the same Christ, and trust on the same covenant, for the continuation and perfection of that which was begun at the time of our regeneration; Col. i. 23. 1 John ii. 24. Heb, iii. 6. 12, 13. vi. 11, 12. x. 22, 23.

Direct. 10. 'Understand that every sin which you commit, hath need of a renewed pardon in Christ: and that he doth not prevent your necessity of such pardon. And therefore you will have constant need of Christ; and must daily come to God for pardon by him; not only for the pardon of temporal chastisements, but of everlasting punishment.'

Of the sense of this, I shall say more anon: The proof of it is in the forecited promises; and in all those texts of Scripture which tell us that death is the wages of sin, and call us to ask pardon, and tell us on what terms it may be had.

Direct. 11. 'Yet do not think that every sin doth put

you into a state of condemnation again; or nullify your former justification: for though the law of nature is so far still in force, as to make punishment by it your natural due; yet the covenant of grace is a continually pardoning act; and according to its proper terms, doth dissolve the aforesaid obligation, and presently remit the punishment: and as its moral action is not interrupted; no more is our justified state.

“There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” &c.; Rom. viii. 1. John iii. 16. 18. 1 John v. 11, 12. “If any may sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins;” 1 John ii. 1, 2. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If all need of pardon had been prevented by Christ, what use were there of his advocacy for our future forgiveness?

Direct. 12. ‘Remember, that though unknown infirmities, and unavoidable ones, have an immediate pardon, because the believer hath an habitual faith and repentance; yet great and known sins must have actual repentance, before the pardon will be plenary or perfect; though the person is not in the meantime an unregenerate nor justified person.’

1. That great and known sins must have a particular repentance, appeareth, 1. In that it is utterly inconsistent with the sincerity of habitual repentance, not to be actual, when sins are known, and come into our deliberate remembrance. 2. By all those texts which require such repentance, confession and forsaking; 1 John ii. 1, 2. i. 9. Prov. xxviii. 13. Psal. xxxii. li. 2 Cor. vii. 11. Rev. ii. 5. 16. Luke xiii. 3. 5. James v. 14, 15. Luke vi. 37. xi. 4. Repentance consisteth chiefly in forsaking sin; and if men forsake not such known wilful sins, they are wicked men, and therefore are not pardoned.

2. That unavoidable frailties, are mere infirmities, and unknown faults, are pardoned immediately to them that are truly godly; and have a general and implicit repentance, is plain, because else no man in the world could be saved; because every man hath such infirmities and unknown sins; 1 John i. 10.

3. Yet David himself is not put by his sin into a mere graceless state, and as a person that hath no former justification ; for he prayeth God not to take his Spirit from him, and he was not deprived of the true love to God, which is the character of God's children : but he had incurred heinous guilt, and put himself in the way towards utter damnation, and caused a necessity of a more particular deep repentance before he could be fully pardoned, than else he needed.

Before the world had a Saviour, we were all so far unpardoned, that a satisfying sacrifice was necessary to our justification : but afterward, all men are so far pardoned, that only the acceptance of what is purchased and freely (though conditionally) given, is necessary to it. Before men are converted, they are yet so far unpardoned, that (though no more sacrifice be necessary, yet) a total conversion and renovation, by turning from a life of sin to God by faith in Christ, is necessary to their actual justification and forgiveness. When a man is turned from a life of sin to God, and liveth in the state of grace, all his following sins, which consist with the loving of God and holiness above the world and sinful pleasures, are so far forgiven immediately upon the committing, that they need neither another sacrifice, nor another regeneration, or justification, ('quoad statum') but only an acting of that faith and repentance, which habitually he had already. But the unknown errors and faults of such godly persons are pardoned even without that actual repentance : and infirmities, without forsaking of the sin overcomingly in practice. And so every one liveth and dieth, in some degree of sinful defectiveness and omission, of his love to God, and trust, and hope, and zeal, and desire, and love to men, and care of his duty, and watchfulness, and fervency in prayer, meditation, &c. And in some degree of sinful disorder, in our ill-governed thoughts, and words, and affections, or passions, and actions : we are never sinless till we die.

Direct. 13. 'Remember that you must neither think that every sin which is a cause of repentance, is a sufficient reason for you to doubt of your present state of justification ; nor yet that no sin can be so great as to be a necessary cause of doubting.'

If every sin should make us doubt of our justification,



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a state of death, and so very like to an unjustified person; can never be sure, in that case, that he is justified. 2. And also God in wisdom and justice will have it so; that sin may not be encouraged, nor presumption cherished, nor the comforts which are the reward of an obedient child, be cast away on an incapable child in his stubborn disobedience; Psal. li. xxxii. lxxvii.

Therefore for a man that liveth in gross sin, to say that he is sure that he is justified, and therefore no sin shall make him question it; is but to believe the Antinomian devil transforming himself into an angel of light, and his ministers, when they call themselves the ministers of righteousness; and to deny belief to the Spirit of holiness and truth. And if a true believer should come very near such a state of death, common reason, and the due care of his own soul, obligeth him to be suspicious of himself, and to fear the worst, till he have made sure of better; Heb. vi. iii. 10. iv. 1. 12—14. 1 Cor. x. John xv. 2, 7, 8, &c.

Direct. 14. 'Let not the persuasion that you are justified, make you more secure and bold in sinning, but more to hate it, as contrary to the ends of justification, and to the love which freely justified you.'

It is a great mark of difference between true assurance, and blind presumption, that the one maketh men hate sin more, and more carefully to avoid it; and the other causeth men to sin with less reluctancy, and remorse; because with less fear.

Direct. 15. 'When the abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and not by works, doth pervert your minds and lives, remember that all confess, that we shall be judged according to our works (as the covenant of grace is the law by which we shall be judged): and to be judged, is to be justified or condemned.'

I need not recite all those Scriptures to you, that say, that we shall be judged, and shall receive according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil: and this is all that we desire you to believe, and live accordingly.

Direct. 16. 'Remember still that faith in Christ is but a means to raise us to the love of God, and that perfect holiness is higher and more excellent than the pardon of sin: and therefore desire faith, and use it, for the kindling of

love, and pardon of sin, to endear you to God; and that you may do so no more: and do not sin, that you may have the more to be pardoned.'

“The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: How shall they that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Rom. vi. 1, 2. See Titus iii. 5—7. Rom. v. 1: 4—6. viii. 1: 4. 9. Gal. iv. 6. v. 24. 26. So much for those practical directions, which are needful for them that love not controversy.

CHAPTER VIII.

The pernicious and dangerous Errors detected, which hinder the Work of Faith about our Justification; and the contrary Truths asserted.

THERE is so much dust and controversy raised here to blind the eyes of the weak, and to hinder the life of faith; and so much poison served up under the name of justification and free grace, that I should be unfaithful if I should not discover it, either through fear of offending the guilty, or of wearying them that had rather venture upon deceit, than upon controversy. And we are now so fortified against the Popish and Socinian extremes, and those whom I am now directing to live by faith, are so settled against them, that I think it more necessary (having not leisure for both; and having done it heretofore in my “Confession”) to open at this time the method of false doctrine on the other extreme, which for the most part is it which constituteth Antinomianism, though some of them are maintained by others.

And I will first name each error; and then with it, the contrary truth.

Error 1. Christ's suffering was caused by the sins of none, as the assumed meritorious cause, or as they usually say, as imputed to him, or lying on him, save only of the elect that shall be saved.

Contr. The sins of fallen mankind in general, except those rejections of grace, whose pardon is not offered in the

conditional covenant, did lie on Christ as the assumed cause of his sufferings.

See John i. 29. 2 Cor. v. 18—20. John iii. 16—19. Heb. ii. 9. 1 Tim. ii. 4—6. 1 John ii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 10. 2 Pet. ii. 2. See Paræns in his ‘Irenicon;’ and ‘Twisse vind., et alibi passim,’ saying as much; and Amyrald, Davenant, Dalleus, Testardut Usher, &c. proving it.

Error 2. ‘Christ did both perfectly obey, and also make satisfaction for sin by suffering, in the person of all the elect in the sense of the law, or God’s account; so that his righteousness of obedience and perfect holiness, and his satisfaction, is so imputed to us, as the proprietaries, as if we ourselves had done it, and suffered it: not by an after donation in the effects, but by this strict imputation in itself.’

Contr. The contrary truth is at large opened before, and in my “Confession.”

Christ’s satisfaction, and the merit of his whole obedience, is as effectual for our pardon, justification and salvation, as if believers themselves had performed it; and it is imputed to them, in that it was done for their sakes, and suffered in their stead, and the fruits of it by a free covenant or donation given them. But, 1. God is not mistaken, to judge that we obeyed or suffered when we did not. 2. God is no liar, to say, we did it, when he knoweth that we did it not. 3. If we were not the actors and sufferers, it is not possible that we should be made the natural subjects of the accidents of another’s body, by any putation, estimation or misjudging whatsoever; no, nor by any donation either. It is a contradiction, and therefore an impossibility that the same individual actions and passions, of which Christ’s human nature was the agent and subject so many hundred years ago, and have themselves now no existence, should in themselves, I say, in themselves, be made yours now, and you be the subject of the same accidents. 4. Therefore they can no otherwise be given to us, but, 1. By a true estimation of the reasons why Christ underwent them, viz. for our sakes, as aforesaid. 2. And by a donation of the effects or fruits of them, viz. pardoning, and justifying, and saving us by them (on the terms chosen by the Donor himself, and put into his testament or covenant) as certainly (but not in the same manner) as if we had done and suffered them ourselves. 5. If Christ had suffered in



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sin; then there was no room after for the imputation of perfect obedience. We cannot feign God to receive all the debt, or inflict all the penalty, and then to say, now I will esteem thee one that never didst deserve it.

If they say that he doth neither impute the obedience or the suffering to us simply, and to all effects, but 'in tantum ad hoc,' or 'secundum quid' only: so that we shall be pardoned for his suffering, and then judged worthy of heaven for his obedience: this is but to come up towards the truth before you are aware, and to confess that neither of them is given us in itself, but in the effects, as being itself paid to God to procure those effects.

But withal, the matter must be vindicated from their unsound inventions, and it must be said, that Christ died not only for our sins of commission, but of omission also; and that he that is pardoned both his sins of commission and omission, is free from the punishment both of sense and loss; yea, and is reputed as one that never culpably omitted any duty; and consequently fell short of no reward by such omission: so that there remaineth no more necessity of righteousness in order to a reward where the pardon is perfect, save only (N. B.) to procure us that degree of reward which must be superadded to what we forfeited by our sin; and which we never by any culpable omission deserved to be denied. And thus much we do not deny that somewhat (even adoption) which is more than mere pardon and justification must confer on us. But withal, as we hold not that the sun must bring light, and somewhat else must first banish darkness; that one thing must cure death, and another cause life; that satisfaction must procure the pardon of sins of omission and commission, as to the 'pœna damni et sensus,' and make us esteemed and used as no sinners, and then imputed obedience must give us right to that reward, which the 'pœna damni,' deprived us of; so (N. B.) we maintain that Christ's sufferings have merited our eternal salvation, and our justification and adoption; and that his obedience hath merited our forgiveness of sin: and that both go together, the merit of the one and of the other, to procure all that we receive, and that the effects are not parcelled out as they have devised: though yet we believe that Christ's sufferings were paid to God, as for our sins, to satisfy justice, and that in the passive obedience, it

is first satisfactory, and then and therefore meritorious, and in the active it is merely meritorious.

And the maintainers of the contrary opinion; besides all the beforementioned evils, could never agree how much of Christ's righteousness must be in their sense imputed: some holding only the passive; a second sort the active and passive; a third sort, the habitual, active and passive; a fourth sort, the divine, the habitual, the active and the passive.

But of all these things there is so much written against them, by Cargius, Ursinus, Olevian, Piscator, Paræns, Soultéus, Alstedius, Windeline, Camero, Bradshaw, Gataker, and many more, that I need not to add any more for confutation.

Error 3. 'That no one shall suffer whose sins lay on Christ, and were suffered for by him.'

Contr. Many such shall suffer the sorer punishment, for sinning against the Lord that bought them, and treading under foot the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were so far sanctified, as to be a people by their own covenant separated to God; Heb. x. 25, 26. vi. 4—6. 2 Pet. ii. 2. Heb. iv. 1. ii. 3. xii. 29.

Error 4. 'That no godly man (say some), or elect person, though ungodly (say others), is ever punished by God, because Christ suffered all their punishment himself.'

Contr. Every godly man is chastened of God, and all chastisement is a fatherly correcting punishment: and many justified persons are punished to their final loss, by the denial of forfeited degrees of grace, and consequently of glory; Heb. xii. 7—10. 1 Cor. xi. 32. 1 Thess. v. 19. Ephes. iv. 30. But sad experience is too full a proof. See my "Confession."

Error 5. 'That God were unjust if he laid any degree of punishment on those that Christ died for; or (say others) on the justified; because he shall punish one sin twice.'

Contr. It is certain, that God punisheth the justified in some degree (much more the elect before conversion), and it is certain that God is not unjust. Therefore it is certain that the ground of this accusation is false; for it was not our deserved punishment itself, or the same which was due in the true sense of the law which Christ endured: but it was the punishment of a voluntary sponsor, which was the

‘*equivalens*,’ and not the ‘*idem*’ that was due; and did answer the ends of the law, but not fulfil the meaning of the threatening; which threatened the sinner himself, and not another for him: seeing then it was a satisfaction, or sacrifice for sin, which God received for an atonement and propitiation, and not a solution or suffering of the sinner himself in the sense of the law, the charge of injustice on God is groundless.

And no man can have more right to Christ’s sufferings or benefits, than he himself is willing to give: and it is not his own will (into whose hands all power and judgment is committed) that we should be subject to no punishment because he suffered for us.

Error 6. ‘That the elect are justified from eternity (say some), or from Christ’s death before they were born (say others), or before they believed’ (say others).

Against this I have said enough in many volumes heretofore.

Error 7. ‘That faith justifieth only in the court of our own consciences, by making us to know that we were justified before.’

Against this also I have said enough elsewhere.

Error 8. ‘That sins to come, not yet committed, are pardoned in our first justification.’

Contr. Sins to come are no sins: and no sins have no actual pardon: but only the certain remedy is provided, which will pardon their sins as soon as they are capable.

Error 9. ‘Justification is not a making us just, but a sentence pronouncing us just.’

Contr. Justification is a word of so many significations, that he that doth not first tell what he meaneth by it, will not be capable of giving or receiving satisfaction.

And here once for all, I must entreat the reader that loveth not confusion and error, to distinguish of these several sorts of justification, as the chief which we are to note.

Justification is either public by a governor, or private by an equal or mere discerners; justification is by God, or by man. Justification by God is either as he is Law-giver, and above laws, or as he is Judge according to his laws: In the first way God maketh us just, by his act of oblivion, or pardoning law, or covenant of grace. In the second respect



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Spirit, is greatest punishment inflicted in this life: and therefore the giving of the Spirit is the removal or executive remitting of the greatest penalty: so that if pardon were only as Dr. Twisse thought, a 'non-punire,' a not punishing, then this were the most proper, as well as plenary pardon in this life. But the truth is, that our pardon and justification in right goeth first, which God effecteth by his covenant-gift: and then God esteemeth us just or pardoned, when by pardon he hath made us just: and if there be any sentence, or any thing equivalent before the day of judgment or death, he next sentenceth us just; and lastly, he useth us as just, that is, as pardoned (all sins of omission and commission) which is by taking off all punishment both of pain (or sense) and loss; of which part the giving of the Spirit is the chief act on this side our glorification.

Note therefore, that thus far no Protestant can deny to the Papists, nor will do, that sanctification and justification are all one, that is, that God having pardoned us 'de jure,' doth pardon us executively, by giving us his forfeited Spirit and Grace; and by all the communion which we have after with him, and the comfort which we have from him.

And further let it be well noted, that the nature of this executive pardon or justification (of which read Mr. Hotchkis at large) is far better known to us, than the nature of God's sentential pardon and justification: and therefore there is less controversy about it. For what it is to forbear or take off a punishment, is easily understood: But though most Protestants say, that justification is a sentence of God, they are not agreed what that sentence is: Some think (truly) that our first justification by faith is but a virtual sentence of the law of grace, by which we must be judged. Others say, that by a sentence is meant God's secret mental estimation: others say, that as angels are his executioners; so it is before them, where joy is said to be for a sinner's conversion, (Luke xv.) that doth declare and sentence us pardoned and just. Others think that there is no sentence but God's notification of pardon to our consciences; or giving us the sense or knowledge of it. Others think that there is no sentence till death, or public judgment: Others say, that God doth sentence us just, though we know not where or how. And Mr. Lawson noteth, that (as all con-

ness that God hath no voice, but a created voice ; and therefore useth not words as we ; unless what Christ as man may do in that we know not ; so) his sentence is nothing but his declaration that he esteemeth us pardoned and just in title, which is principally, if not only, by his execution, and taking off all penalties of sense and loss, and using us as pardoned in title : and so that the giving of his Spirit, is his very sentence of justification in this life, as it is his declaration as aforesaid.

. . And doubtless executive pardon is the most perfect and complete, as being the end and perfection of all the rest. Therefore God maketh us just in title by covenant pardon ; and therefore he sentenceth us as just, that he may take off all penalty, and give us the felicity due to the righteous ; and may use us as those that are made just.

There is much truth in most of the aforesaid opinions inclusively, and much falsehood in their several exclusions of all the rest (unless their quarrel be only ‘de nomine,’ which of all these is most fitly called justification). For, 1. There is no doubt but our pardon, or constituted justification in covenant-title, is a virtual sentential justification. 2. And there is no doubt but God doth esteem them just, that are first made just, and no other (because he erreth not): And that this estimation is ‘sententia concepta,’ as distinct from ‘sententia prolata.’ 3. And it is certain that those angels that must execute his sentence, must first know it: and it is probable that the joy *ἐνωπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων τῆς Θεῆς*, in the presence of the angels of God, doth intimate that God useth ordinarily to notify the conversion of a sinner to angels (whether the joy here be meant as Dr. Hammond and others think, ‘God’s joy signified to angels,’ or rather the ‘angels’ joy,’ by their presence being, ‘in Choro Angelorum,’ or ‘among them, that is, in them ; or both). 4. And it is granted that God doth usually give some notice of his pardon, at one time or other, more or less to a sinner’s conscience (though that is too late, too uncertain, too low, and too unequal, and too unconstant to be the great and famous justification by faith). 5. And it is clear, that till death or judgment, there is no such solemn plenary judicial sentence or declaration: as there will be then. 6. And it is certain, that at death and judgment, Christ as man, a creature, can speak or express himself, as the blessed

creatures do to one another. 7. And it is certain that God hath a way of expressing himself to creatures, which is beyond our present understandings: but we may conceive of it by the similitude of light, which in the same instant revealeth millions of things to millions of persons respectively. (Though that is nothing to his present justification of us by faith, unless as he revealeth it to angels). 8. And it is certain, that at the day of death and judgment, God will thus by an irresistible light, lay open every man to himself, and to the world, which may be called his sentence, differing from the execution; and that Christ in our nature will be our Judge, and may express that sentence as aforesaid. 9. And it is certain, that God's actual taking off punishment, and giving the blessing which sin had deprived us of, is a declaration of his mind, which may be called, an executive sentence, and might serve the turn if there were no more: and that in Scripture, the terms of "God's judging the world" doth usually signify God's executive government, rewarding and punishing: and that God doth begin such execution in this life: and that his giving the Spirit is thus his principal pardoning and justifying act; and yet that this is but part, and not the whole of our present executive pardon: and that glorification in this sense is the highest and noblest justification or pardon: when God giveth us all that sin had forfeited. (But yet we deny not that glorification is somewhat more than an executive pardon, so far as any more is then given us, than we did forfeit by our sins.)

I must desire the reader not to forget all this explication of the nature of justification, because it will be supposed to the understanding of all before and after.

Error 10. 'That the justified or regenerate never incur any guilt or obligation to any punishment, but only temporal corrections; and therefore need no pardon at all of any sin, at least, since regeneration, as to the everlasting punishment; because Christ died to prevent that guilt, and consequently the necessity of any such pardon.'

Contr. This is before explained. Christ died to procure us that pardoning covenant, which (on its own terms) will pardon every sin of the justified when they are committed; but not to prevent the need of pardon. Otherwise Christ should not satisfy for any sins after regeneration, nor bear



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title, as he that is past all such conditions. 5. That pardon which is only of sins past, while there are thousands more hereafter to be pardoned (or else we should yet perish), is not so perfect as that pardon and justification in the conclusion of our lives, when all sin that ever will be committed is forgiven absolutely. 6. The kind of our present justification is imperfect; it being but in covenant-title, and some part of execution; the full and perfect sentence and execution, being at the day of judgment.

I leave them therefore to say, 'Christ's righteousness imputed to us is imperfect; therefore we are as perfectly just and justified as Christ,' who know not what imputation here is; nor that Christ's personal righteousness is not given to us as proprietors, in itself, but in the effects; and who know not the difference between believing and blaspheming, and making ourselves as so many Christs to ourselves; and that know not what need they have of Christ, or of faith, or prayer, or of any holy endeavour for any more pardon, and righteousness or justification, than they have already: or who think that David in his adultery and murder was as perfectly pardoned and justified as he will be in heaven at last: and in a word, who know not the difference between earth and heaven.

Error 12. 'That Christ justifieth us only as a Priest: or (say others) only as obeying and satisfying.'

Contr. Christ merited our justification in his state of humiliation, as a Mediator subjected to the law, and perfectly obeying it, and as a sacrifice for sin. But this is not justifying us. Christ offered that sacrifice as the High Priest of the church or world: but this was not justifying us. Christ made us the new covenant as our King, and as the great Prophet of the Father or Angel of the Covenant; Mal. iii. 1. And this covenant giveth us our pardon and title to impunity, and to life eternal; and Christ as our King and Judge doth justify us by a judiciary sentence, and also by the execution of that sentence: so that the relations which most eminently appear in our justification, are all excluded by the aforesaid error.

Error 13. 'That we are justified only by the first act of faith; and all our believing afterwards to the end of our lives, are no justifying acts at all.'

Contr. Indeed if the question be only about the name of justifying, if you will take it only for your first change into a state of righteousness by pardon, it is true. But the following acts of faith are of the same use and need to the continuing of our justification, or state of righteousness, as the first act was for the beginning of it.

Error 14. 'That the continuance of our justification needeth no other conditions to be by us performed, than the continuance of that faith on which it was begun.'

Contr. Where that first faith continueth, there our justification doth continue: but that faith never continueth without sincere obedience to Christ; and that obedience is part of the condition of the continuance, or not losing our justification (as is proved before, and at large elsewhere). The faith which in baptism we profess, and by which we have our first justification or covenant-right, is an accepting of Christ as our Saviour and Lord to be obeyed by us in the use of his saving remedies; and we there vow and covenant future obedience. And as our marriage to Christ, or covenant-making, is all the condition of our first right to him and his benefits, without any other good works or obedience; so our marriage-fidelity, or covenant-keeping, is part of the condition of our continuance herein, or not losing it by a divorce; John xv. Col. i. 23, &c.

Error 15. 'That faith is no condition of our part in Christ, and our justification, but only one of God's gifts of the covenant, given with Christ and justification.'

Error 16. 'That the covenant of grace hath no conditions on our part, but only donatives on God's part.'

Error 17. 'That if the covenant had any conditions, it were not free. And that every condition is a meritorious cause, or at least some cause.'

Contr. All these I have confuted at large elsewhere, and proved, 1. That faith is a proper condition of those benefits which God giveth us by the conditional covenant of grace; but not of all the benefits which he any other way giveth us. It was not the condition of his giving Christ to live and die for us; or of his giving us the Gospel, or this covenant itself, nor of his giving us preachers, or of the first motions of his Spirit; nor was faith the condition of the gift of faith itself; because all these are not given us in

that way, by that covenant, but absolutely, as God shall please.

2. That some promises of God of the last mentioned gifts, have no condition: The promises of giving a Saviour to the world; and the promise of giving and continuing the Gospel in the world; and of converting many by it in the world, and of making them believers, and giving them new hearts, and bringing them to salvation, &c. have no conditions. But these are promises made, some of them to Christ only, and some of them to fallen mankind, or the world in general, or predictions, what God will do by certain men unborn, unnamed, and not described, called the Elect. But all this giveth no title to pardon, or justification, or salvation to any one person at all.

Remember therefore once for all, that the covenant which I still mean, by the covenant of grace, is that which God offereth men in baptism, by the acceptance whereof we become Christians.

3. That God's gift of a Saviour, and a new covenant to the world, are so free as to be without any condition: but God's gift of Christ with all his benefits of justification, adoption, &c. to individual persons, is so free as to be without and contrary to our desert; but not so free as to be without any condition: and that he that will say to God, 'Thy grace of pardon is not free if thou wilt not give it me, but on condition that I accept it, yea, or desire it, or ask it,' shall prove a contemner of grace, and a reproacher of his Saviour, and not an exalter of free grace. There is no inconsistency for God to be the giver of grace to cause us to believe and accept of Christ, and yet to make a deed of gift of him to all on condition of that faith and acceptance; no more than it is inconsistent to give faith and repentance, and to command them: of both which the objectors themselves do not seem to doubt. For he maketh both his command, and his conditional form of promise to be his chosen means (and most wisely chosen) of working in us the thing commanded.

4. That a condition as a condition is no cause at all, much less a meritorious cause: but only the non-performance of it suspendeth the donation of the covenant, by the will of the Donor: or rather it is the Donor's will that



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gree of pardon, that it is called often by such absolute names, as if all were done; because all is done which concerneth God as Legislator or Covenant-maker, to do, before our own acceptance of it.

Suppose a prince redeem all his captive subjects from the Turkish slavery, and one half of them so love their state of bondage, or some harlot or ill company there (yea, if all of them do so, till half of them are persuaded from it) that they will not come away. It is no improper nor unusual language to say that he hath redeemed them; and given them a release, though they would not have it. That may be given to a man, which he never hath, because he refuseth to accept it; when the donor hath done all that belongeth to him in that relation of a donor; though perhaps as a persuader he might do more.

This is the sense of Heb. i. 3. "When he had by himself purged our sins, (or made purgation of our sins) he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" that is, when he had become a sacrifice for sin, and sealed the covenant by his blood. For actual personal pardon was not given by him before our acceptance.

This is the plain sense of 2 Cor. v. 18—20. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; not imputing to them their trespasses (that is, purchasing and giving them a pardoning covenant); and hath committed to us the word and ministry of reconciliation: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God."

John i. 29. 36. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" (that is, as a sacrifice for sin.) As Heb. ix. 26. "Once in the end of the world he hath appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself:" (Though the sacrifice as offered only, doth not actually and fully pardon it.) The same as Heb. x. 12. "After he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

So Matt. xviii. 27. 32. "He forgave him the debt——— I forgave thee all that debt———" viz. conditionally, and as David forgave Shimei.

Psal. lxxviii. 38. "He forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not;" that is, he forgave them the temporal punishment, and suspended the execution of eternal punish-

ment, giving them yet more time and offers of repentance and of further mercy. And so he forgave Ahab and Nineveh upon their humiliation, Numb. xiv. 19. "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt until now."

So Psal. lxxxv. 2, 3. "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sins: Thou hast taken away all thy wrath——— Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger to cease: Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?" So that they are two palpable errors here asserted by the objectors, viz. that 'there is no degree of pardon to such as are not saved;' and that 'we are justified whenever we have any degree of pardon.' We may be so far pardoned as to have grace given us effectually to believe, and yet our justification, or the covenant-forgiveness of eternal punishment, is in order of nature after our believing, and not before it.

Error 19. 'That our natures are as far from being able to believe in Christ, as from being able to fulfil the law of works, and to be justified by it; they being equally impossible to us; and as much help is necessary to one as to the other.'

Contr. To be justified by the law of works, when we have once broken it, is a contradiction, and a natural impossibility; as it is to be at once a sinner, and no sinner. But so it is not for a sinner to believe in Christ: The impossibility is but moral at most; which consisteth not in a want of natural faculties or power, but in the want of a right disposition, or willingness of mind.

And to fulfil the law of God, and to be perfect for the future, is surely a far higher degree of spiritual grace and excellency, than to be a poor, weak, sinful believer, desiring to fulfil it. Therefore our sinful natures are much farther off from perfection than from faith.

3. And though the same Omnipotency do all God's works, (for all God's power is Omnipotency) yet it is not equally put forth, and manifested in all his works: the moving of a feather, and the making of the world, are both works of Omnipotency; but not equal works or exertions of it.

4. And it is certain that 'in rerum natura,' there is such

a thing as a proper power given by God, to do many things that never are done; and that necessary grace (which some call sufficient) which is not eventually effectual: for such Adam had (such power, and such necessary grace or help) to have forborn his first sin, which he did not forbear. And no man can prove that no final unbelievers have had such power and help to have believed, as Adam had to have stood. But it is certain that we have not such power and necessary grace, to have perfectly fulfilled all the law.

Error 20. 'That faith justifieth as an instrument, and only so.'

Of this I have written at large heretofore. An instrument properly so called, is an efficient cause: faith is no efficient cause of our justification; neither God's instrument, nor ours: for we justify not ourselves instrumentally: the known undoubted instrument of our justification, is God's covenant or deed of gift; which is his pardoning act: they that say it is not a physical, but a moral instrument, either mean that it is morally called an instrument, that is, reputatively, and not really; or that it is indeed a moral instrument, that is, effecteth our justification morally. But the latter is false; for it effecteth it not at all: and the former is false: for as there is no reason; so there is no Scripture to prove that God reputeth it to be what it is not.

All that remaineth to be said is that indeed faith in Christ is an act whose nature partly (that is, one act of it) consisteth in the acceptance of Christ himself who is given to us for our justification and salvation, by a covenant which maketh this believing acceptance its condition. And so this accepting act in the very essence of it, is such as some call a receiving instrument (or a passive) which is indeed no instrument, but an act metaphorically called an instrument; (and in disputes, metaphors must not be used without necessity; and to understand them properly is to err.) So that such an improper instrument of justification faith is, as my trusting my physician (and taking him for my physician) is the instrument of my cure: and as my trusting myself to the conduct of such a pilot, is the instrument of my safe voyage; or as my trusting my tutor is the instrument of my learning; or rather as a woman's marriage-consent is the instrument of all the wealth and honour



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is all the justification acknowledged by the usual defenders of instrumentality) saving as it may be said to give us a right to it, by giving us constitutive justification in the pardon of our sins.

And the Scripture never saith that faith justifieth us, nor calleth it justifying faith; but that we are justified by faith, and most commonly [of faith], for the most usual phrase is ἐκ πίστεως, 'ex fide,' as it is 'ex operibus,' when justification by works is denied; which is not the mere instrumentality of works.

So that here is a double error; 1. That faith justifieth as a true and proper instrument; 2. And no other way.

Error 21. 'That faith causeth justification, as it causeth sanctification; as much and as properly.'

Contr. Faith causeth not justification at all, but only is the condition of it: but faith causeth the acts of other graces by a proper efficiency; believing is a proper efficient cause of the will's volition, complacency, consent, (though but a moral efficient, because the liberty of the will forbiddeth the intellect to move it 'per modum naturæ.') And the will's consent produceth other acts, and physically exciteth other graces: because to love, and desire, and fear, and seek, and obey, are acts of our own souls, where one may properly cause another: but to justify or pardon is an act of God: and therefore faith equally procureth our right or title to justification, and to sanctification, and glorification; but it doth not equally effect them. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness," &c.; 2 Cor. vii. 1. Not let us pardon and justify ourselves. Cleanse your hearts, you sinners, &c.; James iv. 8. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings;" Isa. i. 16. (not your guilt and punishment.) So only Christ cleanseth us from all sin and unrighteousness; 1 John i. 7. 9. "Keep yourselves in the love of God;" Jude 21. "Abide in me," &c.; John xv. 4. "He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself," &c.; 1 John v. 18.

Error 22. 'That the faith by which we are justified, is not many physical acts of the soul only, but one.'

Error 23. 'That it is not only an act of one faculty of the soul.'

Contr. The contrary is fully opened before; and proved at large elsewhere, and through the Scripture. Faith is (as

Davenant well noteth) the act of the whole man: I was wont to say of both faculties, I now say of the three faculties, which constitute the soul of man, the potestative, the intellective and the volitive. And the assent itself is many acts, (as acts are physically specified by their objects) as is shewed. It is one moral act or work of the soul: like trusting a man as my physician, which is a fiducial consent that he be my physician, in order to the use of his remedies; or as taking a man to be your prince, husband, tutor, master, &c. where he that will tell people that taking signifieth but one physical act, would be ridiculous. And he that will tell people that only one physical act of one faculty is it that they must look to be justified by, will be much worse than ridiculous.

Error 24. 'That we are justified by faith, not as it receiveth Christ's person, but his benefits or righteousness.'

Contr. The contrary is before and after proved (and insisted on by Dr. Preston at large). Indeed we receive not Christ's person itself physically; but his person in the office and relation of our Saviour; as we must choose what person shall be our physician, before we take his medicines, or receive our health; but it is only a consent that he and no other, be our physician, which we call the taking of his person. And so it is here.

Error 25. 'That it is one act of faith which giveth us right to Christ, and another to his righteousness, and another to his teaching, and another to his Spirit, and another to adoption, and to heaven,' &c. and not the same.

Contr. This is, 1. Adding to the word of God, and that in a matter near our chiefest comfort and safety. Prove it, or affirm it not. 2. It is corrupting, and perverting, and contradicting the word and covenant of God, which unitedly maketh the same faith (without any such distinction) the condition of all the covenant-gifts; Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16. &c.

Error 26. 'That though the same faith which justifieth doth believe in him as a Teacher; as a King and a Judge, &c. yet it justifieth us only 'quatenus receptio justitiæ,' as it is the receiving of Christ's righteousness.'

Contr. See my Dispute of Justification, my confutation of this assertion in Mr. Warner. Properly faith justifieth not at all; but we are justified of or by it as a condition by

the tenor of God's deed of gift. And so far as it is the condition in that gift, so far we are justified by it. But it is one entire faith in Christ, which is the condition, without such distinction; therefore we are so justified by it. 2. According to that rule, there must be as many acts of faith, as there are benefits to be received, and the title to be ascribed to each one accordingly. 3. The natural relation of the act to the object, sheweth no more but what the nature or essence of that faith is, and not how we come to be justified by it. 4. The sense containeth this false proposition, 'Hæc fides qua talis,' or 'qua fides justificat:' faith as faith, or as this faith is specie, justifieth (which some call the 'To credere'). For it is the essence of faith which they call its reception of Christ's righteousness. 5. The true passive reception of righteousness and pardon, is that of the person, as he is the 'terminus' of the donative or justifying act of the covenant: to receive pardon properly, is to be pardoned: but our active receiving or consent, is but the condition of it; and there is no proof or reason that the condition should be so parcelled. 6. Yet if by your 'quatenus' you intend no more than the description of the act of faith, as essentially related to its subsequent benefit, and not at all to speak of its conditional nearest interest in our justification, the matter were less. 7. But the truth is, that if we might distinguish where God doth not distinguish, it were much more rational to say, that taking Christ for a true Messenger of God, and a Teacher, and Sanctifier, and King, hath a greater hand in our justification, than taking him to justify us (supposing that all be present). Because the common way and reason of conditions in covenants is, that somewhat which the party is willing of, is promised upon condition of something which he is unwilling of, that for the one he may be drawn to consent unto the other: as if the physician should say, 'If you will take me for your physician, and refuse none of my medicines, I will undertake to cure you.' Here it is supposed that the patient is willing of health, and not willing of the medicines, but for health's sake; and therefore consenting to the medicines (or receiving this man to be a physician as a prescriber of the medicines) is more the condition of his cure, than his consenting to the cure itself, or receiving the physician as the cause of his health: so here it is supposed that con-



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them as it is such an act, but as it is an act made the condition of his gift.

And note that I have before proved, that even as to the object Christ justifieth us in all the parts of his office.

Error 27. ‘That believing in God as God and our Father in Christ, is not an act of justifying faith, but only a consequent or concomitant of it.’

Contr. 1. No doubt but God must some way be believed in, in order of nature, before Christ can be believed in (as is proved) who can believe that Christ is the Son and Messenger of God? Who believeth not that there is a God? Or that Christ reconcileth us to God, before he believe that he is our offended God and Governor. 2. But to believe in God as the end of our redemption; to whose love and favour we must be restored by faith in Christ, and who pardoneth by the Son, is as essential an act of justifying faith, as our belief in Christ.

Object. ‘But not, ‘quatenus justificantis,’ not of faith as justifying.’

Answ. If by ‘as justifying,’ you mean ‘not as effecting justification,’ it is a false supposition: there is no such faith. If you mean ‘not as the condition of justification,’ it is false: it is as essential a part of it as the condition. If you mean ‘not as faith is denominated justifying from the consequent benefit,’ it is true, but impertinent; for the same may be said of faith in Christ; it is not called ‘faith in Christ,’ as it is called (by you) justifying. And yet I may add, that in the very physical nature of it, belief in God as our God and end, is essential to it: as consenting to be healed, is essential to consenting to the physician; and consenting to be reconciled is essential to our consenting to a mediation for that end; because the respect to the end is essential to the relation consented to.

All the faith described Heb. xi. in all those instances, hath special essential respect to God.

So hath Abraham’s faith, Rom. iv. 3. “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.” “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him (on God) that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;” ver. 5. “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;” ver. 8. “Before him whom he be-

lièved, even God who quickeneth the dead ;” ver. 17. “ He staggered not at the promise of God—Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was also able to perform ;” ver. 20, 21. “ And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead ;” ver. 22—24.

Abundance such testimonies are obvious in Scripture ; but this being as plain as can be spoken, he maketh his own faith, who refuseth to believe it. Our faith in God as God hath as much hand in our justification, as our faith in Christ as Mediator.

But the form of the baptismal covenant which the church ever used, fully proveth it as aforesaid, though to answer all ignorant cavils against it, as an unnecessary tediousness I pass by.

Error 28. ‘ The belief of heaven, or the life to come, is no essential part of justifying faith, as such.’

Contr. The last answer to this error is sufficient: Heaven is the everlasting vision and love of God ; and therefore we are justified by believing it, though not it alone : it is essential to our Saviour, to save and bring us to the fruition of God.

Error 29. ‘ That justifying faith is a believing that I am justified, or elect, and shall be saved by Christ.’

Error 30. ‘ That this faith is a full assurance, or persuasion at least, excluding doubting.’

Contr. 1. We are justified by believing and accepting God for our God, and Christ for our Saviour, that we may be justified ; and not by believing that we are justified. 2. It is false, and ever will be, that any of the ‘ præsciti’ (as Austin and Prosper call them) or the non-elect, are elect, or justified, or will be saved ; but the non-elect are commanded and bound to believe with that same kind of faith by which we are justified ; therefore to believe that they themselves are elect, justified, and shall be saved, is not that kind of faith by which we are justified. No men are bound by God on pain of damnation to believe a lie, nor damned for not believing it. 3. Assurance of personal pardon, is the happiness but of few true Christians in this life ; and where it

is, it is only an effect or consequent participating of faith. See Mr. Hickman on this subject.

Error 31. ‘The meaning of that article of our creed ‘I believe the remission of sins’ is, I believe that my own sins are forgiven to me personally.’

Contr. Though worthy Mr. Perkins, and other ancient divines have too much countenanced this exposition, it is false. The meaning of that article is but this, ‘I believe that a sufficient provision for pardon is made by Christ, both for sins before regeneration, and after-faults which shall be repented of; and that a pardoning covenant is made to all, if they will repent and believe; and to me as well as others, and I accept of that gracious offer, and trust in that covenant in Christ.’

It is dangerous misexpounding articles of the creed.

Error 32. ‘At least it is an act of divine belief to believe that I am elect, and justified, and shall be saved.’

Contr. Many have been a great scandal or snare to harden the Papists by asserting this. But the truth is, it is but a rational conclusion from two premises; the one of which is of divine revelation, and the other of inward experience; and all that is capable of being a controversy to the judicious, is only ‘de nomine,’ whether logically the conclusion be to be denominated from the more debile of the premises, or from both, by participation, as being both an act of faith, and of reason, ‘secundum quid,’ and of neither simpliciter. But it is commonly concluded, that the more debile of the premises must denominate the conclusion: and it is certain ‘de re,’ that the conclusion can be no more certain than it.

Object. ‘But when the Scripture saith, “He that believeth shall be saved;” it is equivalent to this, ‘I John believe, and therefore I shall be saved.’

Answ. A gross deceit. That I believe, is no where in the Scripture: if it be, doth the Scripture say, that all men believe, or only some? If some, doth it name them, or notify them by any thing but the marks by which they must find it in themselves?

Object. ‘But he that believeth may be as sure that he believeth, as that the Scripture is true.’

Answ. But not that he is sincere, and exceeding all



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Contr. I have elsewhere at large proved the contrary from Scripture. Repentance hath many acts as faith hath. To repent (as it is the change of the mind) of our atheism, idolatry, and not loving God, and obeying him, is the same motion of the soul denominated from the ‘terminus à quo,’ as faith in God, and love to God is denominated from the ‘terminus ad quem:’ this is repentance towards God. Repenting of our infidelity against Christ, is the same motion of the soul as believing in Christ, only one is denominated from the object turned from, and the other from the object turned to. By which you may see that some repentance is the same with faith in Christ; and some is the same with faith in God; and some is the same with love to God; and some is but the same with the leaving of some particular sin, or turning to some particular fore-neglected duty. And so you may easily resolve the case how far it is the condition of pardon, repentance, as it is a return to the love of God, as he is our God, and end, and all, is made the final condition or further blessings as necessary in and of itself as the end of faith in Christ; and repentance of infidelity, and faith in Christ is made the mediate or medicinal condition. As consenting to be friends with your father or king after a rebellion; and consenting to the mediation of a friend to reconcile you, are both conditions, one (the more noble) ‘de fine,’ and the other ‘de mediis:’ or as consenting to be cured, and consenting to take physic. They that will, or must live in the darkness of confusion, were best at least hold their tongues there, till they come into distinguishing light.

Error 35. ‘That all other acts of faith in Christ (as our Lord, or Teacher, or Judge), or of faith in God, or the Holy Ghost; all confessing sin, and praying for pardon, and repenting and forgiving others, and receiving baptism, &c. are the works which Paul excludeth from justification; and one act of faith only being the justifying instrument, he that looketh to be justified by any of all these, besides that one act, doth look for justification by works, and consequently is fallen from grace.’

Contr. This is not only an addition to God’s word and covenant (not to be used by them that judge it unlawful to add a form or ceremony in his worship) but it is a most

dangerous invention to wrack men's consciences, and keep all men under certain desperation. For whilst the world standeth, the subtlest of these inventors of new doctrines will never be able to tell the world, which is that one sole act of faith, by which they are justified, that they may escape looking for a legal justification by the rest: whether it be believing in Christ's divinity, or humanity, or both; or in his divine, or human, or habitual righteousness, or his obedience as a subject, or his sacrifice, or his priesthood offering that sacrifice, or his covenant and promise of pardon and justification, or in God that giveth him and them; or in his resurrection, or in God's present sentential or executive justification; or in his final sentential justification, &c. No man to the end of the world shall know which of these, or any other is the sole justifying act; and so no man can escape being a legal adversary to grace. Unhappy Papists, who by the contrary extreme, have frightened or disputed us into such wild and scandalous inventions. Of this see fully my *Dispute of Justification*, against the worthy and excellent Mr. Anthony Burgess.

Error 36. 'That our own faith is not at all imputed to us for righteousness, but only Christ's righteousness received by it.'

Contr. The Scripture no where saith, that Christ or his righteousness, or his obedience, or his satisfaction is imputed to us; and yet we justly defend it, as is before explained, and as Mr. Bradshaw and 'Grotius de satisfact.' have explained it. And on the other side, the Scripture often saith, that faith is imputed for righteousness, and shall be so to all that believe in God that raised Christ; Rom. iv. And this these objectors peremptorily deny. But expounding Scripture amiss, is a much more clean pretence for error than a flat denial of its truth. And a true exposition is better than either.

The same God who hath given us a Saviour to satisfy legal justice, and to merit our justification against the charge that we are condemnable by the law of works; hath thought meet to convey our title to this Christ and justification, by the instrumentality of a new covenant, testament, or pardoning act; in which (though he absolutely gave many antecedent mercies, yet) he giveth these and other

rights, by a conditional gift, that as the reward of glory should have invited man to keep the law of nature and his innocency; so the reward should be a moving means to draw men to believe. So that there is a condition to be performed by ourselves (through grace) before we can have the covenant-right to justification. Now when that is performed, Christ then is our only righteousness (as aforesaid) by which we must answer the charge of breaking the first law, and being condemnably by it. But we can lay no claim to this righteousness of Christ, till we first prove that we are ourselves inherently righteous, against the charge of being impenitent unbelievers. This false accusation we must be justified against by our own faith and repentance; that we may be justified by Christ, against the true accusation of sinning against the law, and thereby being condemnably by it. Now as to our legal righteousness, or pro-legal rather, by which this last must be avoided, it is 'only the merits of Christ, given to us in its fruits, in the new covenant, even the merits of his obedience and sacrifice.' But our faith itself is the other righteousness, which must be found in our persons to entitle us to this first: and this being it, and being all (in the sense aforesaid) that is made the condition of our pardon by the new covenant; therefore God is said to impute it itself to us for a righteousness, because that condition maketh it so; and to impute it to us for our righteousness, that is, as all that now by this covenant he requireth to be personally done by us, who had formerly been under a harder condition, even the fulfilling of the law by innocency, or suffering for sin; because he that doth not fulfil nor satisfy, as is said, yet if he believe, hath a right to the justification merited by Christ, who did fulfil and satisfy. This is easy to be understood as undoubted truth by the willing; and the rest will be most contentious where they are most erroneous.

Error 37. 'That sincere obedience, and all acts of love, repentance, and faith save one, do justify us only before men; and of that speaketh St. James, Ch. ii.'

Contr. I must refer the reader to other books, in which I have fully confuted this. How can men judge of the acts of repentance, faith, love, &c. which are in the heart? And James plainly speaketh of God's imputing righteousness to



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Contr. No man can groundedly believe the special love of God to him, nor his own election or justification, before he hath (yea before he find in himself) a special love to God. Because he that hath no special love to God, must believe a lie if he believe that he is justified, or that ever God revealed to him that he is elect, or specially beloved of God; and no man hath any evidence or proof at all of his election, and God's special love, till he have this evidence of his special love to God. Till he know this, he cannot know that any other is sincere.

2. They that deny or blaspheme God's common love to fallen man, and his universal pardoning covenant, do their worst to keep men from being moved to the special love of God by his common love; but when they have done their worst, it shall stand as a sure obligation. Is there not reason enough to bind men to love God above all, even as one that yet may be their happiness in his own infinite goodness, and all the revelations of it by Christ, and in his so "loving the world, as to give his only Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in his giving a free pardon of all sin to mankind, and offering life eternal to them, so that none but the final refusers shall lose it, and entreating them to accept it, &c. Is not all this sufficient in reason to move men to the love of God, if the Spirit help them to make use of reason (as he must do what reasons soever are presented to them), unless men think that God doth not oblige them by any kindness they can possibly reject? Or by any thing which many others do partake of?

Yet here note, that by God's common love to man, I do not mean, any which he hath to reprobates, under the consideration of final despisers of his antecedent love; but of that antecedent love itself, which he hath shewed to lost mankind in Christ.

And note also, that I do not deny but that love of God in some men may be true, where their own presumption that God hath elected them, and loved them above others, before they had any proof of it, was an additional motive; but this is man's way, and not God's.

Error 43. 'That trusting to any thing; save God and Jesus Christ, for our salvation, is sin and damnable.'

Contr. Confusion cheateth and choketh men's under-

standing. In a word, to trust to any thing but God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, for any of that which is the proper part of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, is sin and damnable. But to trust to any thing or person, for that which is but his own part, is but our duty. And he that prayeth, and readeth, and heareth, and endeavoureth, and looketh to be never the better by them, nor trusteth them for their proper part, will be both heartless and formal in his work.

And I have shewed before, that the Scriptures, the promise, the apostle, the minister, and every Christian and honest man, hath a certain trust due to them for that which is their part, even in order to our salvation. I may trust only to the skill of the physician, and yet trust his apothecary, and the boy that carrieth the medicine for their part.

Error 44. 'That it is sinful, and contrary to free grace, to look at any thing in ourselves, or our own inherent righteousness, as the evidence of our justification.'

Contr. Then no man can know his justification at all. The Spirit of holiness and adoption in ourselves, is our earnest of salvation, and the witness that we are God's children, and the pledge of God's love; as is proved before. This is God's seal, as God knoweth who are his; so he that will know it himself, must depart from iniquity, when he nameth Christ. If God sanctify none but those whom he justifieth, then may the sanctified know that they are justified. Hath God delivered in Scripture so many signs or characters of the justified in vain?

Object. 'The witness of the Spirit only can assure us.'

Answ. You know not what the witness of the Spirit is; or else you would know that it is the Spirit making us holy; and possessing us with a filial love of God, and with a desire to please him, and a dependance on him, &c. which is the witness, even by way of an inherent evidence (and helping us to perceive that evidence, and take comfort in it). As a childlike love, and a pleasing obedience, and dependance, with a likeness to the father, is a witness, that is, an evidence which is your child.

Error 45. 'That it is sinful to persuade wicked men to pray for justification, or any grace, or to do any thing for it; seeing their prayers and doings are abominable to God, and cannot please him.'

Contr. Then it is sinful to persuade a wicked man from his wickedness: praying and obeying, is departing from wickedness. He that prayeth to be sanctified indeed, is repenting and turning from his sin to God. We never exhort wicked men to pray with the tongue, without the desire of the heart. Desire is the soul of prayer, and words are but the body. We persuade them not to dissemble; but as Peter did Simon, repent and pray for forgiveness; Acts. viii. And if we may not exhort them to good desires (and to excite and express the best desires they have) we may not exhort them to conversion. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way," &c.; Isa. lv. 6. 10. You see there that praying is a repenting act; and when we exhort them to pray, we exhort them to repent and seek God.

Object. 'But they have no ability to do it.'

Ans. Thus the devil would excuse sinners and accuse God. Thus you may put by all God's commands, and say, God should not have commanded them to repent, believe, love him, obey him, nor love one another, nor forbear their sins; for they have no ability to do it. But they have their natural faculties, or powers, and they have common grace; and God's way of giving them special grace, is by meeting them in the use of his appointed means; and not by meeting them in an alehouse, or in sinful courses. (However a soul may be met with in his persecuting, and God may be found of them that sought him not; yet that is not his usual, nor his appointed way.) Can any man of reason dream that it is not the duty of a wicked man to use any means for the obtaining of grace, or to be better; nor to do anything towards his own recovery and salvation? Nature and Scripture teach men as soon as they see their sin and misery, to say, "What must I do to be saved?" As the repenting Jews, and Paul, and the Gaoler did; Acts ii. 37. viii. xvi.

The prayers of a wicked man as wicked, are 'abominable'; that is, both his wicked prayers, and his praying to quiet and strengthen himself in his wickedness, or praying with the tongue without the heart. The prayers which come from a common faith, and common good desires are better than none, but have no promise of justification. But the wicked must be exhorted both to this, and more, even to repent, desire and pray sincerely.



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mercy did not keep them from digesting their own errors, and bringing them into practice.

Error 47. 'God is pleased with us only for the righteousness of Christ, and not for any thing in ourselves.'

Contr. This is sufficiently answered before. He blasphemeth God, who thinketh that he is no better pleased with holiness than with wickedness; with well doing, than with ill doing. They that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. viii. 6, 7.); but the spiritual and obedient may. Without faith it is impossible to please him, because unbelievers think not that he is a Rewarder, and therefore will not seek his reward aright: but they that will please him, must believe that "he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" Heb. xi. 6. They forget not to do good and distribute, because with such sacrifices God is well pleased; Heb. xiii. And in a word, it is the work of all their lives to labour, that whether living or dying they may be accepted of him, (2 Cor. v. 8, 9.) and to be such, and to do those things as are pleasing in his sight. Nay, I will add, that as the glory of God, that is, the glorious demonstration or appearance of himself in his works, is materially the ultimate end of man; so the pleasing of himself in this his glory shining in his image and works, is the very 'apex,' or highest formal notion of this ultimate end of God and of man, as far as is within our reach.

No man's works please God out of Christ, both because they are unsound and bad in the spring and end, and because their faultiness is not pardoned. But in Christ, the persons and duties of the godly are pleasing to God, because they have his image, and are sincerely good, and because their former sins, and present imperfections are forgiven for the sake of Christ (who never reconciled God to wickedness).

Error 48. 'It is mercenary to work for a reward, and legal to set men on doing for salvation.'

Contr. It is legal or foolish to think of working for any reward, by such meritorious works, as make the reward to be not of grace, but of debt; Rom. iv. 4. But he that maketh God himself, and his everlasting love to be his reward, and trusteth in Christ the only reconciler, as knowing his guilt and enmity by sin; and laboreth for the food

which perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting life; and layeth up a treasure in heaven, and maketh himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and layeth up a good foundation for the time to come, laying hold upon eternal life, and striveth to enter in at the strait gate, and fighteth a good fight, and finisheth his course for the crown of righteousness, and suffereth persecution for a reward in heaven, and prayeth in secret that God may reward him, and always aboundeth in the work of the Lord, because his labour is not in vain in the Lord, and endureth to the end, that he may be saved, and is faithful to the death, and overcometh, that he may receive the crown of life; this man taketh God's way, and the only way to heaven; and they that thus seek not the reward (being at the use of reason) are never like to have it.

Error 49. 'It is not lawful for the justified to pray for the pardon of any penalties, but temporal.'

Contr. The ground of this is before overthrown:

Error 50. 'It is not lawful to pray twice for the pardon of the same sin; because it implieth unbelief, as if it were not pardoned already.'

Contr. It is a duty to pray oft and continuedly for the pardon of former sins: 1. Because pardon once granted must be continued; and therefore the continuance must be prayed: If you say, 'It is certain to be continued,' I answer, then it is certain that you will continue to pray for it (and to live a holy life. 2. Because the evils deserved, are such as we are not perfectly delivered from, and are in danger of more daily. And therefore we must pray for daily executive pardon, that is, impunity; and that God will give us more of his Spirit, and save us from the fruit of former sin; because our right to future impunity is given before all the impunity itself. 3. And the complete justification from all past sins, is yet to come at the day of judgment. And all this, (besides that some that have pardon, know it not) may and must be daily prayed for.

Error 51. 'The justified must not pray again for the pardon of the sins before conversion.'

Contr. What was last said confuteth this.

Error 52: 'No man at all may pray for pardon, but only for assurance: for the sins of the elect are all pardoned before they were born; and the non-elect have no satisfaction

made for their sins, and therefore their pardon is impossible.'

Contr. Matt. vi. "Forgive us our trespasses," &c.

These consequences do but shew the falsehood of the antecedents

Error 53. 'No man can know that he is under the guilt of any sin; because no man can know but that he is elect, and consequently justified already.'

Contr. No infidel, or impenitent person is justified.

Error 54. 'Christ only is covenanted with by the Father, and he is the only Promiser, as for us, and not we for ourselves.'

Contr. Christ only hath undertaken to do the work of Christ; but man must undertake, and promise, and covenant, even to Christ himself, (that by the help of his grace) he will do his own part. Or else no man should be baptized. What a baptism and sacramental communion do these men make? He that doth not covenant with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, hath no right to the benefits of God's part of the covenant. And no man (at age) can be saved that doth not both promise and perform.

Error 55. 'We are not only freed from the condemning sentence of the law, but freed also from its commands.'

Contr. We are not under Moses's judaical law, which was proper to their nation, and their proselytes; nor are we under a necessity or duty, of labouring after perfect obedience in ourselves, as the condition of our justification or salvation; but to renounce all such expectations. Nor will the law of works itself ever justify us (as some affirm) as having perfectly fulfilled it by another: but we are justified against its charge, and not by it, by the covenant of grace, and not of works. But perfect obedience to all the law of nature and all the commands of Christ, is still our duty, and sincere obedience is necessary to our salvation. All our duty is not supererogation.

Error 56. 'When a man doubteth whether he be a believer or penitent, he must believe that Christ repented and believed for him.'

Contr. Christ never had sin to repent of, and it is not proper to say one repenteth of another's sin; Christ believed his Father; but had no use for that faith in a Mediator which we must have. He that repenteth not and



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that he who believeth God to man, will not belie man to God ; seeing he is the father of lies, and did so by Job, &c.

4. But we must not think of the day of judgment, as a day of talk between God, and Satan, and man ; but as a day of DECISIVE LIGHT or manifestation. And so the case is out of doubt. The faith, repentance, and sincerity of the just will be there manifest, against all former or latter, real or virtual calumnies of men or devils to the contrary.

5. But above all let it be marked, that nothing else can be matter of controversy to be decided. That Christ hath obeyed, and suffered, and satisfied for believers' sins, and made a testament or covenant to pardon all true believers, will be known to the Accuser, and past all doubt. The day of judgment is not to try Christ's obedience and sufferings, nor to decide the case whether he fulfilled the law, and satisfied for sin, or made a pardoning covenant to believers : but whether we have part in him or not, and so are to be justified by the Gospel-covenant, through his merits against the legal covenant ; and whether we have fulfilled the conditions of the pardoning covenant or not. This is all that can then be made a controversy ; this is the secrets of men's heart, and case that must be opened before the world by God. However we doubt not, but the glory of all will redound to Christ, whose merits are unquestioned.

6. Note also, that Christ will be the Judge on supposition of his merits, and not the party to be tried and judged.

7. Note also, that we are to be judged by the new covenant or law of liberty, and therefore it is the condition of that covenant (as made with us) which is to be inquired after.

8. Note also, that Christ himself in Matt. xxv. (and every where) when he describeth the day of judgment, doth not at all speak of any decision of such a controversy, as whether he was the Lamb of God, who took away the sin of the world ? Or whether he did his part or not ; but only whether men did their parts or not, and shewed the sincerity of their love to God and him, by venturing all for him, and owning him in his servants, to their cost and hazard. And the fruit of Christ's part is only mentioned as a pre-supposed thing, " Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you——For I was hungry," &c.

The preparation (in God's decree and Christ's merits) is unquestioned, and so is the donation to all true believers; therefore it is the case of their title to this gift, and of the condition or evidence of their title, which is here tried and decided.

Lastly, Note that upon the decision, in respect of both together (Christ's merits and covenant as supposed, and their own true faith and love, as manifested decisively,) they are called righteous, Matt. xxv. 46. "The righteous into life eternal."

So much to take the stumbling-blocks out of the way of faith, about free grace and justification, which the weakness of many well-meaning erroneous men hath laid there of late times, to the great danger or impediment of weak believers.

"Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people;" Isa. lvii. 14.

"Thou shalt not put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear God;" Levit. xix. 14.

CHAPTER IX.

How to live by Faith, in order to the exercise of other Graces and Duties of Sanctification, and Obedience to God.

And first of the Doctrinal Directions.

WE cannot by faith promote sanctification, unless we understand the nature and reasons of sanctification. This therefore must be our first endeavour.

The word *sanctified* doth signify that which is separated to God from common uses. And this separation is either by God himself (as, he hath sanctified the Lord's day, &c.) or by man's dedication; either of persons to a holy office; and so the ministers of Christ are sanctified in their ordination (which is a consecration) and their self-dedication to God. And it is high sacrilege in themselves, or any other, that shall alienate them unjustly from their sacred calling and work. Or of things to holy uses (as places and utensils may be sanctified.) Or it may be a dedication of persons to a holy state, relation and use; as

is that of every Christian in his baptism. And this is either an external dedication; and so all the baptized are sanctified and holy; or an internal dedication, which if it be sincere, it is both actual and habitual, when we both give up ourselves to God in covenant, and are also disposed and inclined to him; and our hearts are set upon him; yea and the life also consisteth of the exercise of this disposition, and performance of this covenant. This is the sanctification which here I speak of. And so much for the name.

The doctrinal propositions necessary to be understood about it are these, (more largely and plainly laid down in my 'Confession,' chap. 3.)

Prop. 1. So much of the appearance or image of God as there is upon any creature, so much it is good and amiable to God and man.

Object. 'God loveth us from eternity, and when we were his enemies; not because we were good, but to make us better than we were.'

Answ. God's love (and all love) consisteth formally in complacency. God hath no complacency in any thing but in good; or according to the measure of its goodness. From eternity God foreseeing the good which would be in us, loved us as good in 'esse cognito'; and not as actually good, when we were not. When we were his enemies, he had a double love to us (or complacency), the one was for that natural good which remained in us as we were men, and repairable, and capable of being made saints. The other was for that foreseen good as in 'esse cognito', which he purposed in time to come, to put upon us. This complacency exceeded not at all the good which was the object of it: but with it was joined a will and purpose to give us grace and glory hereafter; and thence it is called, a love of benevolence: not but that complacency is the true notion of love; and benevolence, or a purpose to give benefits, is but the fruit of it. But if any will needs call the benevolence alone by the name of love, we deny not in that sense that God loveth Saul, a persecutor, as well as Paul, an apostle; in that his purpose to do him good is the same.

Object. 'God loveth us in Christ, and for his righteousness, and not only for our own inherent holiness.'

Answ. 1. The benevolence of God is exercised towards us in and by Christ; and the fruits of his love are Christ



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fulness and love to God as our chief good, efficiently and finally.

Prop. 5. Love is that final perfective act, which implieth and comprehendeth all the rest; and so is the fulfilling of the law, and the true state of sanctification; Rom. xiii. 10. Matt. xxii. 37. Mark xii. 33. 1 John vii. 16.

Prop. 6. Heaven itself, as it is our ultimate end and perfection, is but our perfect love to God maintained by perfect vision of him, with the perfect reception of his love to us.

Prop. 7. Therefore it was Christ's great business in the world, to destroy the works of the devil, and to bring us to this perfect love of God.

Prop. 8. Accordingly the greatest use of faith in Christ is, to subserve and kindle our love to God.

Prop. 9. This it doth two special ways: 1. By procuring the pardon of sin, which forfeited the grace of the Spirit; that so the Spirit may kindle the love of God in us: 2. By actual beholding the love of God, which shineth to us most gloriously in Christ, by which our love must be excited, as the most, suitable, and effectual means; John. iii. 1. iv. 10.

Prop. 10. Our whole religion, therefore, consisteth of two parts: 1. Primitive holiness, restored and perfected: 2. The restoring and perfecting means: or, 1. Love to God, the final and more excellent part: 2. Faith in Christ, the mediate part. Faith causing love, and love caused by faith; 1 Cor. xii. 31. xiii. Rom. viii. 35, Ephes. vi. 23. 1 Tim. i. 5. 2 Thess. iii. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 9. viii. 3. Rom. viii. 28. James 1. xii. ii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 8.

Prop. 11. Repentance towards God, is the soul's return to God, in love; and regeneration by the Spirit, is the Spirit's begetting us to the image and nature of God our heavenly Father, in a heavenly love to him; so that the Holy Ghost is given us, to work in us a love to God, which is our sanctification; Rom. v. 5. Titus iii. 4—7. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. 1 John iv. 16.

Prop. 12. When sanctification is mentioned as a gift consequent to faith, it is the love of God as our Father, in Christ, and the Spirit of love, that is principally meant by that sanctification.

Prop. 13. The pardon of sin consisteth more in the

‘pœnam damni’, the forfeiture and loss of love, and the spirit of love, than in remitting any corporal pain of sense. And the restoring of love, and the spirit of love, and the perfecting hereof in heaven, is the most eminent part of our executive pardon, justification and adoption. Thus far sanctification is pardon itself; Rom. viii. 15—17. Gal. iv. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. Titus iii. 6, 7. Titus ii. 13, 14. Rom. vi. viii. 4. 10. 13.

Prop. 14. The pardon of the pain of sense, is given us as a means, to the executive pardon of the pain of loss, that is, to put us in a capacity, with doubled obligations and advantages to love God; Luke vii. 47.

Prop. 15. Sanctification therefore being better than all other pardon of sin, as being its end; we must value it more, and must make it our first desire to be as holy as may be, that we may need as little forgiveness as may be, and in the second place only desire the pardon of that we had rather not have committed; and not make pardon our chief desire; Rom. vi. vii. viii. throughout. Gal. v. 17, to the end.

Prop. 16. Holiness is the true morality; and they that prefer the preaching, and practice of faith in Christ, before the preaching and practice of holiness, and slight this as mere morality, do prefer the means before the end, and their physio before their health: and they that preach or think to practise holiness, without faith in Christ, do dream of a cure without the only Physician of souls. And they that preach up morality as consisting in mere justice, charity to men, and temperance, without the love of God in Christ, do take a branch, cut off and withered, for the tree.

Some ignorant sectaries cry down all preaching, as mere morality, which doth not frequently toss the name of Christ, and free grace.

And some ungodly preachers, who never felt the work of faith or love to God in their own souls, for want of holy experience, savour not, and understand not holy preaching; and therefore spend almost all their time, in declaiming against some particular vices, and speaking what they have learned of some virtues of sobriety, justice or mercy. And when they have done, cover over their ungodly unbelieving course, by reproaching the weaknesses of the former sort,

who cry down preaching mere morality. But let such know, that those ministers and Christians, who justly lament their lifeless kind of preaching, do mean by morality, that which you commonly call ethics in the schools, which leaveth out not only faith in Christ; but the love of God, and the sanctification of the Spirit, and the heavenly glory. And they do not cry down true morality, but these dead branches of it, which are all your morality. It is not morality itself inclusively that they blame, but mere morality, that is, so much only as Aristotle's ethics teach, as exclusive to the Christian faith and love; and do you think with any wise men (or with your own consciences) long to find a cloak to your infidel or unholy hearts and doctrine, to mistake them that blame you, or to take advantage of the ignorance of others? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost," do shut up your liturgy by way of benediction; but it is almost all shut out of your sermons, unless a few heartless customary passages; and when there is nothing less in your preaching, than that which is the substance of your baptismal covenant and Christianity, and your customary benediction; you do but tell the people what kind of Christianity you have, and what benediction; that is, that you are neither truly Christians, nor blessed.

True morality, or the Christian ethics, is the love of God and man, stirred up by the Spirit of Christ, through faith; and exercised in works of piety, justice, charity and temperance, in order to the attainment of everlasting happiness, in the perfect vision and fruition of God. And none but ignorant or brain-sick sectaries will be offended for the preaching of any of this morality. "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue—and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone;" Luke xi. 42.



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science or subject which you would learn; so let this be the designed, studied, constant use which you make of Christ, to see and admire in him the Father's love. When you read your grammar, if one ask you why? you will say it is to learn the language which it teacheth; and he that readeth law-books, or philosophy, or medicine, it is to learn law, philosophy, or physic; so whenever you read the Gospel, meditate on Christ, or hear his word; if you are asked, why you do it? be able to say, I do it to learn the love of God, which is no where else in the world to be learned so well. No wonder if hypocrites have learned to mortify Scripture, sermons, prayers, and all other means of grace; yea all the world which should teach them God; and to learn the letters and not the sense: but it is most pitiful that they should thus mortify Christ himself to them; and should gaze on the glass; and never take much notice of the face even of the love of God which he is set up to declare.

Direct. 4. 'Therefore congregate all the great discoveries of this love, and set them all together in order; and make them your daily study, and abhor all doctrines or suggestions from men or devils, which tend to disgrace, diminish or hide this revealed love of God in Christ.'

Think of the grand design itself; the reconciling and saving of lost mankind: think of the gracious nature of Christ; of his wonderful condescension in his incarnation; in his life and doctrine; in his sufferings and death; in his miracles and gifts: think of his merciful covenant and promises; of all his benefits given to his church; and all the privileges of his saints; of pardon and peace; of his Spirit of holiness; of preservation and provision; of resurrection and justification; and of the life of glory which we shall live for ever. And if the faith which looketh on all these cannot yet warm your hearts with love, nor engage them in thankful obedience to your Redeemer, certainly it is no true and lively faith.

But you must not think narrowly and seldom of these mercies; nor hearken to the devil or the doctrine of any mistaken teachers, that would represent God's love as veiled or eclipsed; or show you nothing but wrath and flames. That which Christ principally came to reveal, the devil principally striveth to conceal, even the love of God to sin-

nèrs; that so that which Christ principally came to work in us, the devil might principally labour to destroy; and that is, our love to him that hath so loved us.

Direct. 5. 'Take heed of all the Antinomian doctrines before recited, which, to extol the empty name and image of free grace, do destroy the true principles and motives of holiness and obedience.

Direct. 6. 'Exercise your faith upon all the holy Scriptures, precepts, promises and threatenings, and not on one of them alone. For when God hath appointed all conjunctly for this work, you are unlike to have his blessing, or the effect, if you will lay by most of his remedies.'

Direct. 7. 'Take not that for holiness and good works, which is no such thing; but either man's inventions, or some common gifts of God.'

It greatly deludeth the world, to take up a wrong description or character of holiness in their minds. As, 1. The papists take it for holiness, to be very observant in their adoration of the supposed transubstantiated hosts; to use their relics, pilgrimages, crossings, prayers to saints and angels, anointings, candles, images, observation of meats and days, penance, auricular confession, praying by numbers and hours on their beds, &c.; they think their idle ceremonies are holiness, and that their hurtful austerities, and self-afflictions (by rising in the night, when they might pray as long before they go to bed, and by whipping themselves) to be very meritorious parts of religion. And their vows of renouncing marriage and propriety, and of absolute obedience, to be a state of perfection.

2. Others think that holiness consisteth much in being rebaptized, and in censuring the parish-churches and ministers as null, and in withdrawing from their communion; and in avoiding forms of prayers, &c.

3. And others (or the same) think that more of it consisteth in the gifts of utterance, in praying, and preaching, than indeed it doth; and that those only are godly, that can pray without book (in their families, or at other times), and that are most in private meetings; and none but they.

4. And some think that the greatest parts of godliness, are the spirit of bondage to fear; and the shedding of tears for sin; or finding that they were under terror, before they had any spiritual peace and comfort; or being able to

tell at what sermon, or time, or in what order, and by what means they were converted.

It is of exceeding great consequence, to have a right apprehension of the nature of holiness, and to escape all false conceits thereof. But I shall not now stand further to describe it, because I have done it in many books, especially in my “Reasons of the Christian Religion,” and in my “A Saint or a Brute,” and in a treatise only of the subject, called “The Character of a Sound Christian.”

Direct. 8. ‘Let all God’s attributes be orderly and deeply printed in your minds; (as I have directed in my book called “The Divine Life;”) for it is that which must most immediately form his image on you. To know God in Christ is life eternal;’ John xvii. 3.

Direct. 9. ‘Never separate reward from duty, but in every religious or obedient action, still see it as connext with heaven. The means is no means but for the end; and must never be used but with special respect unto the end. Remember in reading, hearing, praying, meditating, in the duties of your callings and relations, and in all acts of charity and obedience, that, all this is for heaven. It will make you mend your pace, if you think believingly whither you are going;’ Heb. xi.

Direct. 10. ‘Yet watch most carefully against all proud self-esteeming thoughts of proper merit as obliging God; or as if you were better than indeed you are. For pride is the most pernicious vermin that can breed in gifts or in good works. And the better you are indeed, the more humble you will be, and apt to think others better than yourself.

Direct. 11. ‘So also in every temptation to sin, let faith see heaven open, and take the temptation in its proper sense, q. d. [Take this pleasure instead of God: sell thy part in heaven for this preferment or commodity: cast away thy soul for this sensual delight.] This is the true meaning of every temptation to sin, and only faith can understand it. The devil easily prevaieth, when heaven is forgotten and out of sight; and pleasure, commodity, credit and preferment, seem a great matter, and can do much, till heaven be set in the balance against them; and then they are nothing, and can do nothing; Phil. iii. 7—9. Heb. xii. 1—3. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17.

Direct. 12. ‘Let faith also see God always present.



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Direct. 15. 'Let faith set the example, first of Christ, and next of his holiest servants, still before you.'

He that purposely lived among men in flesh, a life of holiness and patience, and contempt of the world, to be a pattern or example to us, doth expect that it be the daily work of faith to imitate him; and therefore that we have this copy still before our eyes. It will help us when we are sluggish, and sit down in low and common things, to see more noble things before us. It will help us when we are in doubt of the way of our duty; and when we are apt to favour our corruptions: it will guide our minds, and quicken our desires, with a holy ambition and covetousness to be more holy: it will serve us to answer all that the world or flesh can say, from the contrary examples of sinning men: If any tell us what great men, or learned men think, or say, or do, against religion, and for a sinful life; it is enough, if faith do but tell us presently, what Christ, and his apostles, and saints, and martyrs, have thought, and said, and done to the contrary; Matt. xi. 28, 29. 1 Pet. ii. 21. John xiii. 15. Phil. iii. 17. 2 Thess. iii. 9. 1 Tim. iv. 12. Ephes. v. 1. Heb. vi. 12. 1 Thess. i. 6. ii. 14.

Drect. 16. 'Let your faith set all graces on work in their proper order and proportion; and carry on the work of holiness and obedience in harmony; and not set one part against another, nor look at one while you forget or neglect another.'

Every grace and duty is to be a help to all the rest: and the want or neglect of any one, is a hindrance to all: as the want of one wheel or smaller particle in a clock or watch, will make all stand still, or go out of order. The new creature consisteth of all due parts, as the body doth of all its members. The soul is as a musical instrument, which must neither want one string, nor have one out of tune, nor neglected, without spoiling all the melody. A fragment of the most excellent work; or one member of the comeliest body cut off, is not beautiful: the beauty of a holy soul and life, is not only in the quality of each grace and duty, but much in the proportion, feature, and harmony of all. Therefore every part hath its proper armour; Ephes. vi. 11—14. And the whole armour of God must be put on: because all fulness dwelleth in Christ; we are complete in

him, as being sufficient to communicate every grace. Epaphras laboured always fervently in prayers for the Colossians, that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; Col. iv. 12. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" James i. 4. We oft comfort ourselves, that though we want the perfection of degrees, yet we have the perfection of parts, or of integrity. But many are fain to prove this only by inferring, that he that hath one grace, hath all; but as to the discerning and orderly use of all, they are yet to seek.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Order of Graces and Duties.

BECAUSE I find not this insisted on in any writers for the people's instruction, as it ought, I will not pass over so needful a point without some further advertisement about it. I will therefore shew you. 1. What is the completeness and the harmony to be desired: 2. What are our contrary defects and distempers: 3. What are the causes of them, and what must be the cure: 4. Some useful inferences hence arising.

I. He that will be complete and entire, must have all these graces and duties following.

1. A solid and clear understanding of all the great, the needful and practical matters of the sacred Scriptures; 2 Tim. iii. 16. (And if he have the understanding of the Scripture languages, and the customs of those times, and other such helps, his understanding of the Scripture will be the more complete; Acts xxvi. 3. If he have not, he must make use of other men's.)

2. A settled well-grounded belief of all God's supernatural revelations (as well as the knowledge of natural verities).

3. Experience to make this knowledge and belief to be satisfactory, powerful and firm. Especially the experience of the Spirit's effectual operations in ourselves, by the means of this Word; Rom. v. 4. viii. 9. Gal. iv. 6.

4. The historical knowledge of the Scripture matters of fact, and how God in all ages (since Scripture times) hath

fulfilled his word, both promises and threatenings, and what Christ, and Satan, grace and sin, have been doing in the world. Therefore the Scripture is written so much by way of history; and therefore the Jews were so often charged to tell the history of God's works to their children; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. 6, 7. 11. Exod. xii. 29. Deut. xxvi. 22. Josh. iv. 6. 21, 22. xxii. 24. 27. Therefore the writing of church-history is the duty of all ages, because God's works are to be known, as well as his word: and as it is your forefather's duty to write it, it is the children's duty to learn it (or else the writing it would be vain). He that knoweth not what state the church and world is in, and hath been in, in former ages, and what God hath been doing in the world, and how error and sin have been resisting him, and with what success, doth want much to the completing of his knowledge.

5. And he must have prudence to discern particular cases; and to consider of all circumstances, and to compare things with things, that he may discern his duty, and the seasons and manner of it; and may know among inconsistent seeming duties, which is to be preferred; and when and what circumstances or accidents do make any thing a duty, which else would be no duty or a sin; and what accidents make that a sin which without them would be a duty. This is the knowledge which must make a Christian entire or complete.

2. And in his will there must be. 1. A full resignation and submission to the will of God his owner; and a full subjection and obedience to the will of God his governor; yielding readily and constantly, and resolutely to the commands of God, as the scholar obeyeth his master, and as the second wheel in the clock is moved by the first: and a close adhering to God as his chief good, by a thankful reception of his benefits; and a desirous seeking to enjoy, and glorify him, and please his will: In a word, loving him as God, and taking our chiefest complacency in pleasing him; in loving him, and being loved of him.

2. And in the same will there must be a well regulated love, to all God's works, according as he is manifested or glorified in them: to the humanity of our Redeemer; to the glory of heaven, as it is a created thing; to the blessed



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nor some duties take up all our heart and time, whilst others are almost laid by.

3. There must be a just activity and exercise of every grace.

4. And a just conjunction and respect to one another, that every one be used so as to be a help to all the rest.

1. The order.—1. Of intellectual graces, and duties, must be this. 1. In order of time, the things which are sensible are known before the things which are beyond our sight, and other senses.

2. Beyond these, the first thing known both for certainty and for excellency, is, that there is a God.

3. This God is to be known as one-being in three essential principles, vital power, intellect and will.

4. And these in their essential perfections, omnipotency, wisdom and goodness (or love).

5. And also in his perfections called modal and negative, &c. (as immensity, eternity, independency, immutability, &c.)

6. God must be next known in his three personalities; as the Father, the Word, or Son, and the Spirit.

7. And these, in their three causalities; efficient, dirigent and final.

8. And in their three great works, creation, redemption, sanctification, (or perfection) producing nature, grace and glory, or our persons, medicine, and health.

9. And God who created the world, is thereupon to be known in his relations to it; as our Creator in unity; and as our Owner, Ruler, and Chief Good (efficient, dirigent and final) in a trinity of relations. You must know how the Infinite vital power of the Father, created all things by the Infinite wisdom of the Word; or Son, and by the Infinite goodness and love of the Holy Spirit. (As the Son redeemed us as the Eternal Wisdom, and Word incarnate, sent by the Eternal vital power of the Father, to reveal and communicate the Eternal love in the Holy Ghost: and as the Holy Ghost doth sanctify and perfect us as proceeding and sent from the power of the Father, and the wisdom of the Son, to shed abroad the love of God upon our hearts, &c.)

10. Next to the knowledge of God as Creator, is to be considered the world which he created, and especially the intellectual creatures; angels, or heavenly spirits, and men.

Man is to be known in his person or constitution first, and afterward in his appointed course, and in his end and perfection.

11. In his constitution is to be considered, 1. His being or essential parts: 2. His rectitude or qualities: 3. His relations, 1. To his Creator; And, 2. To his fellow creatures.

12. His essential parts are his soul and body: his soul is to be known in the unity of its essence, and trinity of essential faculties (which is its natural image of God). Its essence is a living Spirit: its essential faculties are, 1. A vital activity, or power: 2. An understanding: 3. A will.

13. His rectitude, which is God's moral image on him, consisteth, 1. In the promptitude and fortitude of his active power: 2. In the wisdom of his understanding: 3. In the moral goodness of his will, which is its inclination to its end, and readiness for its duty.

14. Being created such a creature, by a mere resultancy from his nature, and his Creator, he is related to him as his creature; and in that unity is the subsequent trinity of relations: 1. As we are God's propriety, or his own: 2. His subjects: 3. His beneficiaries and lovers: All comprised in the one title of his children. And at once with these relations of man to God, it is that God is as before related to man, as his Creator, and as his Owner, Ruler, and Chief Good.

15. Man is also related to his fellow creatures, below him, 1. As their owner, 2. Their ruler, 3. Their end, under God; which is God's dominative or honourary image upon man, and is called commonly, our dominion over the creatures: so, that by mere creation, and the nature of the creatures there is constituted a state of communion between God and man, which is, 1. A dominion, 2. A kingdom, 3. A family or paternity. And the whole is sometimes called by one of these names, and sometimes by the other, still implying the rest.

16. God's kingdom being thus constituted, his attributes appropriate to these his relations follow: 1. His absolute-ness as our Owner: 2. His holiness, truth and justice as our Ruler: 3. And his kindness, benignity and mercy as our Father or Benefactor.

17. And then the works of God as in these three relations follow; which are, 1. To dispose of us at his pleasure

as our Owner : 2. To govern us as our King : 3. To love us, and do us good, and make us perfectly happy as our Benefactor and our End.

18. And here more particularly is to be considered. 1. How God had disposed of Adam when he had new made him : 2. How he began his government of him : And ; 3. What benefits he gave him, and what he further offered or promised him.

19. And as to the second, we must 1. Consider the antecedent part of God's government, which is legislation, and then (hereafter the consequent part ; which is, 1. Judgment, 2. Execution. And God's legislation is, 1. By making our natures such as compared with objects, duty shall result from this nature so related : 2. Or else by precept or revelation from himself, besides our natures. 1. The law of nature is fundamental and radical in our foresaid relations to God themselves, in which it is made our natural duty : 1. To submit ourselves wholly to God, and his disposal, as his own : 2. To obey his commands : 3. And to receive his mercies, and thankfully to return them, and to love him. But though (as God's essential principles, and his aforesaid relations, are admirably conjunct in their operations 'ad extra ;' so) our relative obligations are conjunct, yet are they so far distinguishable, that we may say, that these which conjunctly make our moral duty, yet are not all the results of our relation to a Governor, as such ; but the second only ; and therefore that only is to be called the radical law in the strict sense, the other two being the moral results of our rectitude. The duty of subjection and obedience in general, arising from our natures related to our Creator, is the radical governing law of God in us. But yet the same submission, and gratitude, and love, which are primarily our duty from their proper foundations, are secondarily made also the matter of our subjective duty, because they are also commanded of God. 2. The particular laws of nature are, 1. Of our particular duties to God ; or, of piety : 2. Or of our duties to ourselves and others : 1. Acts of justice, 2. And of charity. These laws of nature are, 1. Unalterable ; and that is, where the nature of our persons, and of the objects, which are the foundations of them are unalterable, or still the same : 2. Or mutable, when the nature of the things which are its foundation, is mutable.



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28. And, 2. Of the fundamental works of our redemption (such as creation was to the first administration), viz. (his first undertaking, interposition, and incarnation, being all presupposed.) 1. His perfect resignation of himself to his Father, and submission to his disposing will: 2. His perfect subjection and obedience to his governing will: 3. His perfect love to him: 4. And the suffering, by which he expressed all these. The three first meriting of themselves; and the last meriting as a satisfactory sacrifice, not for itself, but for its usefulness to its proper ends.

29. From this offering once made to God, Christ acquired the more perfect title of a Saviour, or Redeemer, or Mediator, which one contained this trinity also of relations towards man: 1. Their Owner: 2. Their Ruler: 3. Their Benefactor: The Father also as the first principle of redemption, acquiring a second title (besides the first by creation) to all these: and towards God, Christ continueth the relation of a Heavenly Priest.

30. In order to the works of these relations for the future, we must consider of Christ's exaltations; 1. Of his justification and resurrection: 2. Of his ascension and glorification: And, 3. Of the delivering of all power, and all things into his hands.

31. The work of redemption thus fundamentally wrought, doth not of itself renew man's nature; and therefore putteth no law of nature into us of itself, as the creation did: and therefore we must next proceed to Christ's administration of this office, according to these relations; which is, 1. By legislation or donation; enacting the new covenant, where this last and perfect edition of it is to be explained; the perceptive, the promissory and the penal parts, with its effects, and its differences from the former edition, and from the law of nature and of works.

32. And, 2. By the promulgation or publication of this covenant or Gospel to the world, by calling special officers for that work, and giving them their commission, and promising them his Spirit, his protection, and their reward.

33. And here we come to the special work of the Holy Ghost; who is, 1. To be known in his essence and person, as the third in Trinity, and the eternal love of God: 2. And as he is the grand Advocate or Agent of Christ in the

world, where his works are to be considered, 1. Preparatory, on and by Christ himself: 2. Administratory: 1. Extraordinary, on the apostles and their helpers: 1. Being in them a Spirit of extraordinary power, by gifts and miracles: 2. Of extraordinary wisdom and infallibility, as far as their commission-work required: 3. And of extraordinary love and holiness. 2. By the apostles, 1. Extraordinarily convincing and bringing in the world: 2. Settling all church doctrines, officers and orders which Christ had left unsettled (bringing all things to their remembrance which Christ had taught and commanded them; and guiding them in the rest:) 3. Recording all this for posterity in the Holy Scriptures. 2. His ordinary Agency, 1. On ministers; 2. By sanctification on all true believers is after to be opened.

34. And here is to be considered the nature of Christianity 'in fieri:' faith and repentance in our three great relations to our Redeemer, as we are his own, his (disciples and) subjects, and his beneficiaries; with all the special benefits of these relations as antecedent to our duty; and then all our duty in them as commanded: and then the benefits after to be expected (as in promise only).

35. Next must distinctly be considered, the preaching, and converting, and baptizing part of the ministerial office; 1. As in the apostles: 2. And in their successors to the end; with the nature of baptism, and the part of Christ, and of the minister, and of the baptized in that covenant.

36. And then the description of the universal church, which is the baptized constitute.

37. Next is to be considered the state of Christians after baptism: 1. Relative, 1. In pardon, reconciliation, justification, 2. Adoption. 2. Physical, in the Spirit of sanctification.

38. Where is to be opened, 1. The first sanctifying work of the Spirit: 2. Its after-helps and their conditions: 3. All the duties of holiness, primitive and medicinal towards God, ourselves and others.

39. Our special duties in secret: reading, meditation, prayer, &c.

40. Our duties in family relations and callings.

41. Our duties in church relations; where is to be described the nature of particular churches, their work and

worship, their ministry, and their members, with the duties of each.

42. Our duties in our civil relations.

43. What temptations are against us, as be to be overcome.

44. Next is to be considered the state of Christians and societies in the world; how far all these duties, are performed; and what are their weaknesses and sins.

45. And what are the punishments which God useth in this life.

46. And what Christians must do for pardon and reparation after falls, and to be delivered from those punishments.

47. Of death, and the change which it maketh, and of our special preparation for it.

48. Of the coming of Christ, and the judgment of the great day.

49. Of the punishment of the wicked impenitent in hell.

50. And of the blessedness of the saints in heaven, and the everlasting kingdom.

These are the heads, and this is the method of true divinity, and the order in which it should lie in the understanding of him that will be complete in knowledge.

II. And as this is the intellectual order of knowledge; so the order which all things must lie in at our hearts and wills, is much more necessary to be observed: 1. That nothing but God be loved as the infinite simple good, totally with all their heart, and finally for himself: and that nothing at all be loved with any love, which is not purely subordinate to the love of God, or which causeth us to love him the less.

2. That the blessed person of our Mediator, as in the human nature glorified, be loved above all creatures next to God: because there is most of the Divine perfections, appearing in him.

3. That the heavenly church, or society of angels and saints be loved next to Jesus Christ, as being next in excellence.

4. That the universal church on earth be loved next to the perfect church in heaven.

5. That particular churches and kingdoms be next loved;



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frame of nature ; so) in the frame of morality, the true motion is circular : from God, the efficient by God, the dirigent to God, the final cause of all ; therefore as God is the first spring or cause of motion ; so the creature is the recipient first, and the agent after, in returning all to God again.

Therefore mark, that our receiving graces, are our first graces in exercise ; and our receiving duties are our first duties ; and then our returning graces and duties come next ; in which we proceed from the lesser to the greater, till we come up to God himself.

Therefore in point of practice, the first thing that we have to do, is to learn to know God himself as God and our God, and to live as from him, and upon him as our Benefactor, from our hearts confessing that we have nothing but from him, and shall never be at rest but with him, and in him, as our ultimate end ; and therefore to set ourselves to seek him as our end accordingly ; which is but to seek to love him, and be beloved by him, in the perfection of knowledge and delight.

2. The whole frame of means appointed by God for the attainment of this end, must be taken together, and not broken asunder ; as they have all relation each to other. And, 1. The whole frame of nature must be looked on as the first great means appointed to man in innocency, for the preservation and exercise of his holiness and righteousness : 2. And the covenant or law-positive, as conjoined unto this : 3. And the Spirit of God, communicated only for such a mere sufficiency of necessary help, as God saw meet to one in that condition. And though these means (the creatures, and the Spirit of the Creator in that degree) be not now sufficient for lapsed man ; yet they are still to be looked on as delivered into the hand of Christ the Mediator, to be used by him on his terms, and in order to his blessed ends.

3. But it is the frame, of the recovering and perfecting means, which we are now to use. And in this frame, 1. Christ the Mediator is the first and principal ; and the author of our faith, or religion ; and therefore from his name it is called Christianity. He is now the first means, used on God's part for communicating mercy unto man ;

and the first in dignity to be received and used by man himself; but not the first in time, because the means of revealing him must go first.

2. The second means in dignity (under Christ) is the operation of the Holy Spirit as sent or given by the Redeemer; which Spirit being as the soul of outward means (which are as the body) is given variously in a suitableness to the several sorts of means (of which more anon).

3. The outward means for this Spirit to work by and with, have been in three degrees: 1. The lowest degree, is the world or creatures (called The Book of Nature) alone: 2. The second degree was the law and promises to the Jews and their forefathers (together with the law of nature). 3. The third and highest degree of outward means, is the whole frame of Christian institutions, adjoined to the Book of Nature, and succeeding the foresaid promises and law.

Every one of these hath a sufficiency in its own kind, and its proper use. 1. The law of nature is sufficient in its own kind, to reveal a God in his essential principles and relations; and to teach man the necessity now of some supernatural revelations and institutions; and so to direct him to inquire after them (what and where they be).

2. The promises and Jewish law (of types, &c.) was sufficient in its own kind, to acquaint men that a Saviour must be sent into the world, to reveal the will of God more fully, and to be a sacrifice for sin, and to make reconciliation between God and man, and to give a greater measure of the Spirit, and to renew men's souls, and bring them to full perfection, and to the blessed fruition of God. The Jewish Scriptures teach them all this, though it tell them not many of the articles of our Christian belief.

3. The Christian Gospel is sufficient in its own kind, to teach men first to believe aright, in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and then to love and live aright.

When I say that each of these is sufficient in its own kind, the meaning is, not that these outward means are of themselves sufficient without the Holy Spirit; for that were to be sufficient not only 'in suo genere,' but 'in alieno vel in omni genere;' not only for its own part and work; but for the Spirit's part also: but other causes being supposed to concur, it is sufficient for its own part: as my pen is a

sufficient pen, though it be not sufficient to write without my hand.

Now the measure of the Spirit's concurrence with all these three degrees of means is to be judged of by the nature of the means, and by God's ends in appointing them, and by the visible effects. . And whereas the world is full of voluminous contentions about the doctrine of sufficient and effectual grace, I shall here add thus much in order to their agreement. 1. That certainly such a thing there is, or hath been, as is called sufficient not-effectual grace: by sufficient they mean so much as giveth man all that power which is necessary to the commanded act (or forbearance); so that man could do it without any other grace or help from God (which supposeth that man's will in the nature of it, hath such a vital, free, self-determining power, that (sometimes at least) it can act, or not act, when such bare power is given to it, and sometimes doth, and sometimes doth not. But the word *necessary* is more proper than *sufficient*: the latter being applicable to several degrees; but *necessary* signifieth that degree, without which the act cannot be performed.

That there is such a thing, is evident in Adam's case, who had that grace which was necessary to his forbearing the first sin (or else farewell all religion). And there are few men will deny but that all men have still such a degree of help for many duties which they do not perform; and against many sins which they do not forbear; (as to forbear an oath, or a lie, or a cup of drink, to go to church when they go to an alehouse, &c.) Such a thing therefore there is, and such a power man's will hath to do or not do, when such a degree only of help is given.

Therefore we have reason enough to suppose, 1. That such a degree of the Spirit's help is given under the bare teachings of the creature, or to them that have no outward light but natural revelation, as is necessary to the foresaid ends and uses of that light or means, that is, to convince man that there is a God, and what he is, as aforesaid, and that we are his subjects and beneficiaries, and owe him our chiefest love and service; and to convince them of the need of some further supernatural revelation. . Not that every one hath this measure of spiritual help; for some by abusing



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4. The next is our holy society in Christian families, and family instructions, worship and just discipline.

5. The next is our secret duties between God and us alone. As 1. Reading. 2. Meditation, and self-examination. 3. Prayer and thanksgiving, and praise to God.

6. The next part is our improvement of godly men's intimate friendship, who may instruct, and warn, and reprove, and comfort us.

7. The next is the daily course of prospering providences and mercies, which express God's love, and call up ours; (as provisions, protections, preservations, deliverances, &c.)

8. The next is God's castigations (by what hand or means soever) which are to make us partakers of his holiness; Heb. xii. 9, 10.

9. The next is the examples of others. 1. Their graces and duties. 2. Their faults and falls. 3. Their mercies. And 4. Their sufferings and corrections; 1 Cor. x. 1. 10, 11.

10. And lastly, our own constant watchfulness against temptations, and stirring up God's graces in ourselves. These are the frame of the means of grace, and of our receiving duties.

2. The next in order to be considered, is the whole frame of our returning duties, in which we lay out the talents which we receive, which lie in the order following.

1. That we do what good we can to our own souls. That we first pluck the beam out of our own eyes, and set that motion on work at home, which must go further: therefore all the foregoing means were primarily for this effect; (though not chiefly and ultimately for this end).

2. Next we must do good according to our power to our near relations.

3. And next to our whole families, and more remote relations.

4. And next them, to our neighbours.

5. And next, to strangers.

6. And lastly, to enemies of ourselves and Christ.

7. But our greatest duties must be for public societies, viz. 1. For the commonwealth (both governors and people). 2. And for the church.

8. And the next part (in intention and dignity) must be for the whole world (whose good by prayer and all just means we must endeavour).

9. And the next for the honour of Jesus Christ our Mediator.

10. And the highest ultimate termination of our returning duties, is the pure Deity alone.

For the further opening to you the order of Christian practice, take these following notes or rules.

1. Though receiving duties (such as hearing, reading, praying, faith, &c.) go first in order of nature and time, before expending, or returning duties; so that the motion is truly circular; yet we must not stay till we have received more, before we make returns to God of that which we have already. But every degree of received grace, must presently work towards God our end; and as there is no intermission between my moving of my hand and pen, and its writing upon this paper; so must there be no more intermission between God's beams of love and mercy to us, and our reflections of love and duty unto him. Even as the veins and arteries in the body lie much together, and one doth often empty itself into the other, for circulation, and not stay till the whole mass hath run through all the vessels of one sort (veins or arteries) before any pass into the other.

2. The internal returns of love are much quicker than the return of outward fruits. The love of God shed or streamed forth upon the soul, doth presently warm it to a return of love; but it may be some time before that love appear in any notable, useful benefits to the world, or in any thing that much glorifieth God and our profession. Even as the heat of the sun upon the earth or trees, is suddenly reflected; but doth not so suddenly bring forth herbs, and buds, and blossoms, and ripe fruits.

3. All truly good works must have one constant order of intention (which is before opened; God must be first intended, then Christ, then the universal church in heaven and earth, &c.). But in the order of operation and execution, there may be a great difference among our duties: as God appointeth us to lay out some one way, and some another. Yet ordinarily, as the emitted beams begin from God, and dart themselves on the soul of man; so the reflected beams begin upon, or from our hearts, and pass towards God (though first beloved and intended) by several receptacles, before they bring us to the perfect fruition of him.

4. Therefore the order of loving (or complacency), and

the order of doing good (or benevolence) is not the same. We must love the universal church better than ourselves; but we cannot do them sincere service, before we do good to ourselves. And our nearest relations must be preferred in act of beneficence before many whom we must love more.

5. When two goods come together (either to be received, or to be done), the greater is ever to be preferred; and the choosing or using of the lesser at that time, is to be taken for a sin. I lately read a denial of this, in a superficial satire; but the thing itself, if rightly understood, is past all doubt with a rational man. For, 1. Else good is not to be chosen and done as good, if the best be not to be preferred. 2. Else almost all wicked omissions might be excused. I may be excused for not giving a poor man a shilling (whatever his necessity be) because I give him a farthing. No doubt but Dives, (Luke xvi.) did good at such a rate as this at least. And else a man might be excused from saving a drowned man, if he save his horse that while, &c. 'A quatenus ad summum valet consequentia,' in the case of desiring and doing good. But then mark the following explications:

6. That is not always to be accounted the greatest good, which is so only in regard of the matter simply considered; but that is the greatest good, which is so 'consideratis, considerandis,' all things considered and set together.

7. When God doth peremptorily tie men to certain duty, without any dispensation or liberty of choice, that duty at that time is a greater good and duty than many others which may be greater in their time and place. A duty materially less, is formally (and by accident materially) greater in its proper season. Reaping, and baking, and eating, are better than ploughing and weeding the corn, as they are nearer to the end; but ploughing and weeding are better in their season. To make pins or points, is not materially so good a work as to pray; but in its season (as then done) it is better; and he that is of this trade, may not be praying when he should be about his trade: not that he is to prefer the matter of it before praying; but praying is to keep its time, and may be a sin when it is out of time. He that would come at midnight to disturb his rest, to present his service to his lord or king, would have little thanks for such unseasonable service.

8. He that is restrained by a lower calling, or any true



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ject then; which putteth the greatness upon the latter duty; both by commanding it; and so making it an act more pleasing to him; and because that the love of God is supposed to be the concurring spring of that love to man, which we shew in seeking their preservation.

14. Our great duty about God our ultimate End, can never be done too much, considered in itself, and in respect to the soul only; we cannot so love God too much. And this love so considered, hath no extreme; Matt. xxii. 37.

15. But yet even this may by accident, and in the circumstances be too much: as, 1. In respect to the body's weaknesses; if a man should so fear God, or so love him, as that the intenseness of the act did stir the passions so much as to bring him to distraction, or to disorder his mind, and make it unfit for that or any other duty. 2. Or if he should be exciting the love of God, when he should be quenching a fire in the town, or relieving the poor that are ready to perish. But neither of these is properly called, a loving God too much.

16. The duties of the heart are in themselves greater and nobler than the actions of the outward man, of themselves abstractedly considered; because the soul is more noble than the body.

17. Yet outward duties are frequently, yea most frequently greater than heart-duties only; because in the outward duty it is to be supposed that both parts concur (both soul and body). And the operations of both, is more than of one alone: and also because the nobler ends are attained by both together more than by one only: for God is loved, and man is benefitted by them. As when the sun shineth upon a tree, or on the earth, it is a more noble effect, to have a return of its influences, in ripe and pleasant fruits, than in a mere sudden reflection of the heat alone.

18. All outward duties must begin at the heart, and it must animate them all; and they are valued in the sight of God, no further than they come from a rectified will, even from the love of God and goodness. However without this, they are good works materially, in respect to the receiver. He may do good to the church, or commonwealth, or poor; who doth none to himself thereby.

19. As the motion is circular from God to man, and from man to God again (mercies received, and duties and

love returned) so is the motion circular between the heart and the outward man. The heart moving the tongue and hand, &c. and these moving the heart again; (partly of their own nature, and partly by Divine reward). The love of God and goodness produceth holy thoughts, and words, and actions; and these again increase the love which did produce them; Gal. v. 6. 13. Heb. x. 24. 2 John vi. Jude 21.

20. The judgment must be well-informed before the will resolve.

21. Yet when God hath given us plain instructions, it is a sin to cherish causeless doubts and scruples.

22. And when we see our duty before us, it is not every scruple that will excuse us from doing it: but when we have more conviction that it is a duty, than that it is none, or that it is a sin, we must do it, notwithstanding those mistaking doubts. As if in prayer or alms-deeds you should scruple the lawfulness of them, you ought not to forbear till your scruples be resolved; because you so long neglect a duty: else folly might justify men in ungodliness and disobedience.

23. But in things merely indifferent, it is a sin to do them doubtfully; because you may be sure it is no sin to forbear them; Rom. xiv. 23. 1 Cor. viii. 13, 14.

24. An erring judgment entangleth a man in a necessity of sinning (till it be reformed), whether he act or not according to it. Therefore if an erring person ask, 'What am I bound to?' the true answer is, to lay by your error, or reform your judgment first, and then do accordingly; and if he ask a hundred times over, 'But what must I do in case I cannot change my judgment?' the same answer must be given him, 'God still bindeth you to change your judgment, and hath given you the necessary means of information; and therefore he will not take up with your supposition, that you cannot: his law is a fixed rule, which telleth you what you must believe, and choose, and do: and this rule will not change, though you be blind, and say, I cannot change my mind. Your mind must come to the rule, for the rule will not come to your perverted mind. Say what you will, the law of God will be still the same, and will still bind you to believe according to its meaning.'

25. Yet supposing that a man's error so entangleth him

in a necessity of sinning, it is a double sin to prefer a greater sin before a lesser: for though no sin is an object of our choice, yet the greater sin is the object of our greater hatred and refusal; and must be with the greater fear and care avoided.

26. An erring conscience then, is never the voice or messenger of God, nor are we ever bound to follow it; because it is neither our God, nor his law, but only our own judgment which should discern his law. And mis-reading or mis-understanding the law, will not make a bad cause good, though it may excuse it from a greater degree of evil.

27. The judicious fixing of the wills, resolutions, and especially the increasing of its love, or complacency and delight in good, is the chief thing to be done in all our duties, as being the heart and life of all; Prov. xxiii. 26. 12. iv. 23. vii. 3. xxii. 17. iii. 1.—3. iv. 4. 21. Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. xxxvii. 4. xl. 8. cxix. 16. 35. 70. 47. i. 2. Isa. lviii. 14.

28. The grand motives to duty, must ever be before our eyes, and set upon our hearts, as the poise of all our motions and endeavours. (As the traveller's home and business, is deepest in his mind, as the cause of every step which he goeth.)

29. No price imaginable must seem great enough to hire us to commit the least known sin; Luke xii. 4. xiv. 26. 28. 33. Matt. x. 39. xvi. 26.

30. The second great means (next to the right forming of the heart) for the avoiding of sin, is to get away from the temptations, baits and occasions of it. And he that hath most grace, must take himself to be in great danger, while he is under strong temptations and allurements, and when sin is brought to his hands, and alluring objects are close to the appetite and senses.

31. The keeping clean our imaginations, and commanding our thoughts, is the next great means for the avoiding sin. And a polluted fantasy, and ungoverned thoughts are the nest where all iniquity is hatched, and the instruments that bring it forth into act.

32. The governing of the senses is the first means to keep clean the imagination. When Achan seeth the wedge of gold, he desireth it, and then he taketh it. When men wilfully fill their eyes with the objects which entice them to



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a duty. For it is certain that God's commands are for edification, and not for destruction, for good, and not for evil.

40. Yet that may tend to present, inferior hurt, which ultimately tendeth to the greatest good. Therefore it is not some present or inferior incommmodity that must cause us to reject such a means of greater future good.

41. Whatsoever we are certain God commandeth, we may be certain is a proper means, though we see not the aptitude, or may think it to be destructive; because God knoweth better than we: but then we must indeed be sure that it is commanded 'hic et nunc,' in this case, and place, and time, and circumstances.

42. It is one of the most needful things to our innocency, to have Christian wisdom to compare the various accidents of those duties and sins which are such by accident, and to judge which accidents do preponderate. For indeed the actions are very few which are absolutely and simply duties or sins in themselves considered, without those accidents which qualify them to be such. Accidental duties and sins are the most numerous by far: and in many cases the difficulty of comparing the various accidents, and contrary motives, is not small.

43. Therefore it is, that (as in physic and law cases, &c. the common people have greatest need of the advice of skilful artists, to help them to judge of particular cases, taking in all the circumstances, which their narrow understandings cannot comprehend; which is more of the use of physicians and lawyers, than to read a public lecture of physic, or of law, so) the office of the church guides, or bishops, is of so great necessity to the people, in every particular church. And that not only for public preaching, but also to be at hand, to help the people, who have recourse unto them in all such cases, to know in particular what is duty and what is sin.

44. And therefore it is (besides other reasons) that the office of the bishops or pastors of the churches, must in all the proper parts of it be done only by themselves, or men in that office, and not 'per alios,' by men of another office: and therefore it is, that bare titles or authority will not serve the turn, without proportionable or necessary abilities or

gifts; because the work is done by personal fitness; and cases and difficulties can no more be resolved, nor safe counsel given for the soul in matters of morality, by men unable, than for the body or estate, in points of physic, or of law. (As the lord Verulam in his considerations of ecclesiastical government hath well observed.)

45. In such cases where duty or sin must be judged of by compared accidents; the nature of a means, or the interest of the end, is the principal thing to be considered; and that which will evidently do more harm than good, is not to be judged a duty (in those circumstances) but a sin. as if the question were whether preaching be at this time, in this place, to this number, to these individuals, a duty. If it appear to true Christian prudence, that it would be like to do more hurt than good, it is a sin at that time, and not a duty: and yet preaching in due season is a great duty still. So if the question were, Whether secret prayer be at this hour or day a duty. If true reason tell you, that it is like to hinder, either family prayer, or any other greater good, it is not at that time a duty. Or if the question be, Whether reproof or personal exhortation of a sinner be now a duty: if true reason tell me, that it is like to do more harm than good, it is not a duty then, but accidentally a sin: for we must not cast pearls before swine, nor give that which is holy unto dogs, lest they tread it underfoot, or turn again and all to rend us. And there is a time when preachers that are persecuted in one city, must fly to another; and when they must shake off the dust of their feet for a witness against the disobedient, and turn away from them. (The imprudent people can easily discern this when it is their own case, but not when it is the preacher's case; so powerful is self-love and partiality); Matt. vii. 6, 7. x. 14. xxiii. 34. x. 23. The reason of all this is, 1. Because God appointeth all means for the end. 2. And because the law by which in such cases we must be ruled, is only general; as, "Let all things be done to edification;" as if he should say, 'Fit all your actions, which I have not given you a particular, peremptory law for, to that good which is their proper end;' 1 Cor. xiv. 5. 12. 3. 26. 17. 2 Cor. x. 8. xii. 19. xiii. 10. 1 Cor. x. 23. Ephes. iv. 12. 16. 29. 1 Tim. i. 4. Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 7.

46. Public duties, ordinarily, must be preferred before

private: and that which is for the good of many, before that which is for the good of one only.

47. Yet when the private necessity is more pressing, and the public may be omitted at that time with less detriment, the case doth alter. As also when that one that we do good to is more worth than the many, in order to the honour of God, or the more public good of the whole society: or when it is one that by special precept, we are obliged to prefer in our beneficence.

48. Civil power is to be obeyed before ecclesiastical, in things belonging to the office of the magistrate; and ecclesiastical before the civil, in things proper to the ecclesiastical governors only. And family power before both, in things proper to their cognizance only. But what it is that is proper to each power, I shall tell them when I think they are willing to know, and it will do more good than harm to tell it them.

49. The supreme magistrate is ever to be obeyed before his inferiors; because they have no power but from him; and therefore have none against him (unless he so give it them).

50. No human authority is above God's, nor can bind us against him; but it is all received from him, and subordinate to him.

51. No human power can bind us to the destruction of the society which it governeth; because the public or common good is the end of government.

52. The laws of kings, and the commands of parents, masters and pastors (in cases where they have true authority) do bind the soul primarily, as well as the body secondarily; but not as the primary, but the secondary bond. It is a wonderful and pitiful thing, to read Divines upon this point, 'Whether the laws of men do bind the conscience?' what work they have made as in the dark, when the case is so very plain and easy! Some are peremptory that they do not bind conscience; and some that they do; and some calling their adversaries the idolizers of men; and others again insinuating that they are guilty of treason against kings, who do gainsay them; when surely they cannot differ if they would.

1. The very phrase of their question is nonsense, or very unfit. Conscience is but a man's knowledge or judgment



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sight and fruition of God himself; so this trinity of Divine principles, must be inseparably used, in all our internal and external duties towards God or men; and all that we do must be the work of Power, and of Love, and of Wisdom or a sound mind; 2 Tim. i. 7.

II. Having been so large in opening the order of our duties, I must be more brief than our case requireth, in telling you our disorders, or contrary disease. Oh! what a humbling sight it would be, if good Christians did but see the pitiful confusions of their minds and lives. They find little melody in their religion, because there is little harmony in their apprehensions, affections or conversations. If the displacing one wheel or pin in a clock, will so much frustrate the effect, it is a wonder that our tongues or lives do ever go true, which are moved by such disordered parts within; that were it not that the Spirit of grace doth keep an order where it is essential to our religion (between the end and the means, &c.) we should be but like the parts of a watch pulled in pieces, and put up together in a bag. But such is God's mercy, that the body may live when many smaller veins are obstructed; so that the master vessels be kept clear.

I. There are so few Christians that have a true method of faith or divinity in their understandings, even in the great points which they know disorderly, that it is no wonder if there be lamentable defectiveness and deformity, in those inward and outward duties, which should be harmoniously performed, by the light of this harmonious truth. And no divine in the world can give you a perfect scheme of divinity in all the parts; but he is the wisest that cometh nearest to it. Abundance of schemes and tables you may see, and all pretending to exactness: but every one palpably defective and confused; even those of the highest pretenders that ever I have seen. And one error or disorder usually introduceth, in such a scheme, a confusion in all that followeth as dependent on it.

Some confound God's attributes themselves (nay who doth not): they confound the three great essential principles, with all the attributes, by similitude called modal and negative: and they use to name over God's attributes, like as they put their money or chess-men into a bag, without any method at all.

Some confound God's primary attributes of being, with

his relations, which are subsequent to his works, and with his relation-attributes.

Some confound his several relations to man, among themselves; and more do confound his works, as they flow from these various relations.

The great works of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and their several designs, significations, and effects, are opened obscurely and in much confusion.

The legislative will of God 'de debito' institutive, (which is it that Damascene, Chrysostom, and the schoolmen mean by his antecedent will, if they speak properly) which ever goeth before man's actions duties or sins, or as the fathers 'call them, merits or demerits) is confounded by many with the acts of his judgment and execution (called his consequent will, because it ever presupposeth men's precedent actions): or, his works, as Law-giver, Judge and Executioner, are oft confounded.

And so are the orders of his precepts promises, and penal threats, and the conditions of his promises: and the order of his precepts among themselves; and of his promises as one respecteth another.

And our relations to God, and the several respective duties of those relations, are ordinarily much confounded.

The work of the Holy Ghost (as we are baptized into the belief of him) is poorly; lamely and disorderly opened, to the encouraging of the carnal on one hand, or the enthusiasts on the other.

Law and Gospel, and covenant and covenant; words and works; the precepts of Christ, and the operations of the Spirit, are seldom thought on in their proper place and order, and differences.

In a word, consecretaries are confounded with principles: nature, medicine and health; the precepts and parts of primitive sanctity, with the precepts and means of medicinal grace; the end and the means; yea, nothing more usually than words and things are confounded and disordered by the most (that I say not by us all).

The circular motion of grace, from God, and by God, and to God, and in man the receiving duties as distinct from the improving duties; and these, as communicative and dispersing unto man, from those ascendant unto God, partly in the fruits, and partly in the exaltation of the mind

itself, these are not to be found, nor abundance more which I pass by, in any just harmonious scheme.

II. And Oh! what confusion is in our hearts or wills, and lameness, and defect as well as confusion; which must needs be the consequent of a lame and confused understanding. It is so great that I am not willing to be so tedious as to open it at large.

III. And the confusion in our practices, taking it in, and expressing it, will shew you your heart-confusion of itself. But to open this also would be long; and the regular order before laid down, will shew you our disorders without any further enumerations or instances.

Only some of our lameness and partialities, contrary to entire and complete religiousness, I shall briefly mention, because I think it to be of no small need, to the most, even of the more zealous part of Christians.

1. In our studies and meditations, we are partial and defective: we search hard perhaps for some few truths, with the neglect of many hundred more.

2. In our zeal for truth, we are oft as partial, greatly taken with some one or few, which we think we have suddenly and happily found out, and see more into than others do; or in which we think we have some singular or special interest; and in the meantime little affected with abundance of truths, of greater clearness and importance, and of more daily usefulness; because they are things that all men know, and common unto you with the most of Christians.

3. In your love to the godly, and your charity, in expressions, and in your daily prayers, what lameness and partiality is there? Those that are near you, and conversant with you, you remember; and perhaps those in the kingdom, or country where you dwell; or at least those of your own society, opinions and party. But when it cometh to praying for the world, and all the church abroad; and when it cometh to the loving of those that differ from you, what partiality do you shew?

4. In the course of duties to God and man, how rare is that person that doth not quite omit, or slubber over some duty, as if it were nothing, while he doth with much earnestness prosecute another? One that is much in receiving duties for themselves (as hearing, reading, meditating, pray-



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which hath got any reputation among them by the advantage of some errors. In England, through God's mercy, the profanation of the Lord's Day, is noted as a heinous sin. But beyond sea, where it is not so reputed, how ordinarily is it committed? Many would condemn Joseph, if they had heard him swear by the life of Pharaoh, because through God's mercy, swearing is a disgraced sin. But how ordinarily do the dividing sort of Christians, rashly or falsely, censure men behind their backs that differ from them; upon unproved hearsay, and gladly take up false reports, and never shed a tear for many such slanders, back-bitings and wrongs? Many a one that would take an oath or curse for a certain sign of an ungodly person, yet make little of a less disgraceful way of evil-speaking, and of a peevish, unpleasable disposition; and when they are impatient of a censure, or a foul word, are patient enough with their impatience.

And it deserveth tears of blood to think how little the sins of selfishness and pride are mortified in most of the forwardest Christians (even in them that go in mean attire). How much they love and look to be esteemed, to be taken notice of, to be well thought of, and well spoken of! How ill they bear the least contempt, neglect or disrespect! How abundantly they overvalue their own understandings! And how wise they are in their own conceits! And how hardly they will think ill of their most false or foolish apprehensions! And how proudly they disdain the judgments of wiser men, from whom, if they had humility, they might learn perhaps twenty years together, and yet not reach the measure of their knowledge! And what a strange difference there is in their judging of any case, when it is another's, and when it is their own!

And among how few is the sin of flesh-pleasing sensuality mortified! Abundance take no notice of it, because it is hid, and can be daily exercised in a less disgraceful way. If they be rich, they can enjoy that which is their own; and they can cleanly do as Dives did, (Luke xvi.) and take their good things here. Having enough laid up for many years, they think they may take their ease, and eat, drink, and be merry, without rebuke; Luke xii. 19. 20. They that are the most zealous in strict opinions, and modes of worship, can live as Sodom did, in pride, fulness of bread,

and abundance of idleness, and use meat for their lusts, and make provision for the flesh, to satisfy those lusts, and yet never seem to themselves, nor those about them to offend; much less to do any thing that is grossly evil; Ezek. xvi. 49. Psal. lxxviii. 18. 30. Rom. xiii. 13; 14. They drink not till they are drunk; they eat not more in quantity than others; they labour as far as need compels them; and this they think is very tolerable. And because the papists have turned the just subduing of the flesh into hurtful austerities, or formal mockeries, therefore they are more hardened in their flesh-pleasing ways. They take but that which they love, and that which is their own, and then they think that the fault is not great; and what Christ meant by Dives's being "clothed in purple and silk, and faring sumptuously every day," they never truly understood: nor yet what he meaneth by the poor in spirit, Matt. v. 3. which is not (at least only or chiefly) a sense of the want of grace, but a spirit suited to a life of poverty, contrary to the love of money, and of fulness, and luxury, and pride: when we are content with necessaries, and eat and drink for health more than for pleasure, or for that pleasure only which doth conduce to health: and when we will be at no needless superfluous cost upon the flesh, but choose the cheapest food and raiment which is sufficient to our lawful ends; and use not our appetites, and sense, and fantasy to such delight and satisfaction as either increaseth lust, or corrupteth the mind, and hindereth it from spiritual duties and delights, by hurtful delectation or diversion: nor bestow that upon ourselves which the poor about us need to supply their great necessities. This is to be poor in spirit; and this is the life of abstinence and mortification which these sensual professors will not learn. Nay, rather than their throats shall not be pleased, if they be children in their parents' families, or servants, they will steal for it, and take that which their parents and masters (they know) do not consent to, nor allow them: and they are worse thieves than they that steal for hunger and mere necessity; because they steal to satisfy their appetites and carnal lusts; that they may fare better than their superiors would have them. And yet perhaps be really conscientious and religious in many other points, and never humbled for their fleshly minds, their gluttony and thievery; especially if they see others fare better than they: and they

quiet their consciences; as the most ungodly do, with putting a handsome name upon their sin, and calling it *taking*, and not stealing; and eating and drinking, and not fulness of bread or carnal gulosity. Abundance of such instances of men's partiality in avoiding sin, I must omit, because it is so long a work.

6. Yea, in the inward exercise of graces, there are few that use them completely, entirely, and in order; but they neglect one, while they set themselves wholly about the exercise of another; or perhaps use one against another. Commonly they set themselves a great while upon nothing so much as labouring to affect their hearts with sorrow for sin, and meltingly to weep in their confessions (with some endeavours of a new life). But the love of God, and the thankful sense of the mercy of redemption, and the rejoicing hopes of endless glory, are things which they take but little care about: and when they are convinced of the error of this partiality, they next turn to some Antinomian whimsy, under the pretence of valuing free grace; and begin to give over penitent confessions, and the care and watchfulness against sin, and diligence in a holy and fruitful life, and say that they were long enough legalists, and knew not free grace, but looked after doing, and something in themselves; and then they could have no peace; but now they see their error, they will know nothing but Christ; and thus that narrow foolish soul cannot use repentance without neglecting faith in Christ; and cannot use faith, but they must neglect repentance; yea, set faith and repentance, love and obedience in good works, like enemies or hindrances against each other: they cannot know themselves and their sinfulness, without forgetting Christ and his righteousness: and they cannot know Christ, and his love and grace, without laying by the knowledge or resistance of their sin. They cannot magnify free grace, unless they may have none of it, but lay by the use of it as to all the works of holiness, because they must look at nothing in themselves. They cannot magnify pardon and justification, unless they may make light of the sin and punishment which they deserve, and which is pardoned, and the charge and condemnation from which they are justified: they cannot give God thanks for remitting their sin, unless they may forbear confessing it, and sorrowing for it. They cannot



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7. I perceive this treatise swelleth too big, or else I might next shew you, how partial men are in the sense of their dangers.

8. And in the resisting of temptations ; he that escapeth sensuality, feareth not worldliness ; or he that fearèth both, yet falleth into heresy or schism ; and he that escapeth errors, falleth into fleshly sins.

9. And what partial regard we have of God's mercies.

10. And how partial we are as to our teachers, and good books.

11. And also about all the ordinances of God, and all the helps and means of grace.

12. And how partial we are about good works, extolling one, and senseless of another ; and about the opportunities of good. In a word, what lame apprehensions we have of religion, when men are so far from setting all the parts together in a well-ordered frame, that they can scarce forbear the dividing of every part into particles : and must take the food of their souls as physic, even like pills which they cannot get down, unless they are exceeding small.

III. The causes of this calamity I must for brevity but name.

1. The natural weakness of man's mind, doth make him like a narrow-mouthed bottle that can take in but a little at once, and so must be long in learning and receiving.

2. The natural laziness and impatience of men, will not give them leave to be at such long and painful studies as completeness of knowledge doth require.

3. The natural pride of men's hearts will not give them leave to continue so long in a humble sense of their emptiness and ignorance, nor to spend so many years in learning as disciples : but it presently persuadeth them that their first apprehensions are clear and right, and their knowledge very considerable already ; and they are as ready to dispute and censure the ignorance of their teachers, if not to teach others themselves, as to learn.

4. The poverty and labours of many, allow them not leisure to search and study so long and seriously, as may bring them to any comprehensive knowledge.

5. The most are not so happy as to have judicious, methodical and laborious teachers, who may possess them with right principles and methods, but deliver them some

truths, with great defectiveness and disorder themselves; and perhaps by their weakness tempt the people into pride, when they see that they are almost as wise as they.

6. Most men are corrupted by company and converse with ignorant, erroneous, and self-conceited men; and hearing others (perhaps that are very zealous) make something of nothing, and make a great matter of a little one, and extolling their own poor and lame conceits, they learn also to think that they are something when they are nothing, deceiving themselves; Gal. vi. 3, 4.

7. Most Christians have lost the sense of the need and use of the true ministerial office, as it consisteth in personal counsel and assistance, besides the public teaching; and most ministers by neglecting it, teach them to overlook it.

8. Every man hath some seeming interest in some one opinion, or duty, or way, above the rest; and selfishness causeth him to reel that way that interest leadeth him.

9. Education usually possesseth men with a greater regard of some one opinion, duty, way or party, than of the rest.

10. The reputation of some good men doth fix others upon some particular ways or notions of their's above others.

11. Present occasions and necessities sometimes do urge us harder to some means and studies, than to others: especially for the avoiding of some present evil, or easing of some present trouble; and then the rest are almost laid by.

12. Some doctrines more deeply affect us in the hearing, than others; and then the thoughts run more on that, to the neglect of many things as great.

13. Perhaps we have had special experience of some truths and duties, or sins, more than others; and then we set all our thoughts about those only.

14. Usually we live with such as talk most of some one duty, or against some one sin, more than all the rest, and this doth occasion our thoughts to run most in one stream, and confine them by hearing and custom to a narrow channel.

15. Some things in their own quality, are more easy and near to us, and more within the reach of sense. And therefore as corporal things, because of their sensibility and nearness, do possess the minds of carnal men, instead of things spiritual and unseen; even so Paul and Apollos, and

Cephas; this good preacher, and that good book, and this opinion, and that church-society, and this, or, that ordinance, do possess the minds of the more carnal, narrow sort of Christians, instead of the harmony of Christian truth, and holy duty.

16. Nature itself as corrupted, is much more against some truths, and against some duties, internal and external, than against others. And then when those that it is less averse to, are received, men dwell on them, and make a religion of them, wholly or too much, without the rest. As when some veins are stopped, all the blood is turned into the rest; or when one part of the mould is stopped up, the metal all runneth into the rest, and maketh a defective vessel: or when one part of the seal is filled up before, it maketh a defective impression on the wax. Therefore the duties of inward self-denial, humility, mortification, and heavenliness, are almost left out in the religion of the most.

17. Temptations are ever more strong and violent against some duties, than against others, and to some sins, than to others.

18. Most men have a memory, which more easily retaineth some things than others: especially those that are best understood, and which must affect them. And grace cannot live upon forgotten truths.

19. There is no man but in his calling, hath more frequent occasion for some graces and duties, and useth them more, and hath more occasions to interrupt, and divert his mind from others.

20. The very temperature of the body inclineth some all to fears and grief, and others to love and contentedness of mind: and it vehemently inclineth some to passion, some to their appetite, some to pride, and some to idleness, and some to lust; when others are far less inclined to any of them: and many other providential accidents, do give men more helps to one duty than to another, and putteth many upon the trials, which others are never put upon: and all this set together is the reason that few Christians are entire or complete, or escape the sin and misery of deformity; or ever use God's graces and their duties, in the order and harmony as they ought.

IV. I shall be brief also in telling you what inferences to raise from hence for your instruction.



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there is a habit of praying, of meditating, of thanksgiving, of mercy, of chastity, of temperance, of diligence, &c. The acts would not vary as they do, if there were not a variety and disposition in these habits; which appear to us only in their acts. We must go against Scripture, reason, and the manifold hourly experience of ourselves, and all the Christians in the world, if we will say that all these graces and duties are equal in the habit in every Christian. How impotent are some in bridling a passion, or bridling the tongue, or in controlling pride and self-esteem, or in denying the particular desires of their sense, who yet are ready at many other duties, and eminent in them. Great knowledge is too oft with too little charity or zeal; and great zeal and diligence often with as little knowledge. And so in many other instances.

So that if the potentiality of the radical graces of life, light and love, be or were equal, yet certainly proper and particular habits are not.

But here note further, 1. That no grace is strong where the radical graces, faith and love are weak; as no part of the body is strong, where the brain and heart are weak; yea, or the naturals, the stomach and liver.

2. The strength of faith and love is the principal means of strengthening all other graces; and of right performing all other duties.

3. Yet are they not alone a sufficient means, but other inferior graces and duties may be weak and neglected, where faith and love are strong; through particular obstructing causes. As some branches of the tree may perish when the root is sound; or some members may have an atrophy, though the brain and heart be not diseased.

4. That the three principles, life, light, and love, do most rarely keep any disproportion; and would never be disproportionable at all, if some things did not hinder the actings of one more than the other, or turn away the soul from the influences and impressions of the Spirit more as to one than to the rest.

Hence you may learn, That the image of God is much more clearly and perfectly imprinted in the holy Scriptures, than in any of our hearts. And that our religion, objectively considered, is much more perfect, than subjectively

in us. In Scripture, and in the true doctrinal method our religion' is entire, perfect and complete; but in us, it is confused, lame, and lamentably imperfect. The sectaries that here say, 'None of the Spirit's works are imperfect,' are not to be regarded: for so they may as well say, that there are no infants, diseased, lame, distracted, poor, or monsters in the world; because none of God's works are imperfect. All that is in God is God, and therefore perfect; and all that is done by God is perfect as to his ends, and as it is a part in the frame of his own means to that end which man understandeth not: but many things are imperfect in the receiving subject. If not, why should any man ever seek to be wiser or better than he was in his infancy, or at the worst.

3. Therefore we here see that the Spirit in the Scripture is the rule by which we must try the Spirit in ourselves, or any other. The fanatics or enthusiasts, who rail against us, for trying the Spirit by the Scriptures, when as the Spirit was the author of the Scriptures, do but rave in the dark, and know not what they say. For the essence of the Spirit is every where; and it is the effects of the Spirit in both which we must compare: The Spirit is never contrary to itself: and seeing it is the sunshine which we here call the sun; the question is but, where it shineth most? whether in the Scripture, or in our hearts? The Spirit in the apostles indited the Scriptures, to be the rule of our faith and life unto the end; the Spirit in us doth teach and help us to understand and to obey those Scriptures. Was not the Spirit in a greater measure in the apostles than in us? Did it not work more completely, and unto more infallibility in their writing the Scriptures, than it doth in our understanding, and obeying them? Is not the seal perfect, when the impression is oft imperfect? Doth not the master write his copy more perfectly, than his scholar's imitation is, though he teach him, yea, and hold his hand? He that knoweth not the religious distractions of this age, will blame me for troubling the reader with the confutation of such dreams: but so will not they that have seen and tasted their effects.

4. Hence we may learn that he that would know what the Christian religion is indeed (to the honour of God, or their own just information), must rather look into the Scripture to know it, than into believers. For though in be-

believers it be more discernible in the kind, (as men's lives are more conspicuous than laws and precepts, and the impress than the seal, &c.), yet it is in the laws or Scriptures more complete and perfect, when in the best of Christians (much more in the most) it is broken, maimed, and confused.

5. This telleth us the reason why it is unsafe to make any men (popes, or councils, or the holiest pastors, or strictest people) the rule either of our faith or lives. Because they are all imperfect and discordant, when the Scripture is concordant and complete. He that is led by them, may err, when as the Scripture hath no error. And yet it is certain, that even the imperfect knowledge and grace of faithful pastors and companions, is of great use to those that are more imperfect than they, to teach them the Scriptures, which are more perfect than they all.

6. Hence we see why it is, that religion bringeth so much trouble, and so little comfort to the most, or too many that are in part religious; because it is lame and confused in them. Is it any wonder that a displaced bone is painful? Or that a disordered body is sick, and hath no great pleasure in life? Or that a disordered or maimed watch, or clock, doth not go right? O what a life of pleasure should we live, if we were but such as the Scripture doth require! and the religion in our hearts and lives were fully agreeable with the religion described in the word of God.

7. And hence we see why most true Christians are so querulous, and have always somewhat to complain of and lament; which the senseless, or self-justifying hypocrites overlook in themselves. No wonder if such diseased souls complain.

8. And hence we see why there is such diversity and divisions among believers, and such abundance of sects and parties, and contentions, and so little unity, peace, and concord. And why all attempts for unity take so little in the church: because they have all such weakness, and distempers, and lameness, and confusedness, and great disproportions in their religion. Do you wonder why he liveth not in peace, and concord, and quietness with others, who hath no better agreement in himself? And no more composedness and true peace at home? Men's grace and parts are much unequal.



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crooked fruit of the tempting serpent. . . You cannot know sin, but by the law ; Róm. vii. 14, &c.

Direct. 3. 'Set sin before the cross of Christ : Let faith sprinkle his blood upon it, and it will die and wither. See it still as that which killed your Lord ; and that which pierced his side, and hanged him up in such contempt ; and put the gall and vinegar into his mouth.

Direct. 4. 'Forget not the sorrows and fears of your conversion (if you are indeed converted) : or (if not) at least the sorrows, and fears which you must feel if ever you be converted.' God doth purposely cast us into grief and terrors, for our former sins, that it may make us the more careful to sin no more, lest worse befall us : If the pangs of the new birth were sharp and grievous to you, why will you again renew the cause, and drink of those bitter waters ? Remember what a mad and sad condition you were in while you lived according to the flesh, and how plainly you saw it when your eyes were opened ? And would you be in the same condition again ? Would you be unsanctified, and unjustified, and unpardoned, and unsaved ? Every wilful sin is a turning backward, toward the state of your former captivity and misery.

Direct. 5. 'When Satan sets the bait before you, let faith always set heaven and hell before you, and take altogether, the end with the beginning.' And think when you are tempted to lie, to steal, to deceive, to lust, to pride, to gulosity or drunkenness, &c. what men are now suffering for these same sins ! And what all that are in hell and in heaven do think of them ! Suppose a man offered you a cup of wine, and a friend telleth you, 'I saw him put poison into it, and therefore take heed what you do.' If the offerer were an enemy, you would hardly take it. The world, and the flesh, and the devil, are enemies : when they offer you the delights of sin, hear faith, and it will tell you, there is poison in it ; there is sin, and hell, and God's displeasure in it.

Direct. 6. 'Let faith keep you under the continual apprehensions of the Divine authority and rule ; that as a child, a servant, a scholar, a subject, doth still know that he is not masterless, but one that must be ruled by the will or law of his superior ; so may you always live with the yoke of Christ upon your necks, and his bridle in your

mouths : remembering also that you are still in your Master's eye.

Direct. 7. 'Remember still that it is the work of faith to overcome the world and the flesh, and to overrule your sense and appetite ; and to make nothing of all that would stand up against your heavenly interest ; and to crucify it by the cross of Christ ;' Gal. vi. 14. v. 24. Rom. viii. 1. 9, 10. 13. Set faith therefore upon its proper work ; and when you live by faith, and walk after the Spirit, you will not live by sight, nor walk after the flesh ; 2 Cor. v. 7.

Direct. 8. 'It is also the work of faith to take off all the masks of sin and open its nakedness and shame, and cast by all shifts, pretences, and excuses.' When Satan saith, It is a little one, and the danger is not great, and it will serve thy pleasure, profit, or preferment ; faith should say, Doth not God forbid it ? There is no dallying with the fire of God : "Be not deceived, man ; God will not be mocked ! Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap : If you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you shall reap corruption ;" Gal. vi. When Satan saith, "Ye shall not die : " And when the sinner with Adam hideth himself, faith will call him out to judgment, and say, "What hast thou done ? Hast thou eaten the fruit which God forbade ?"

Direct. 9. 'Let faith still keep you busied in your master's work.' Nothing breedeth and feedeth sin so much as idleness of mind and life : sins of omission have this double mischief, that they are the first part of Satan's game themselves, and they also bring in sins of commission. When men are not taken up with good, they are at leisure for temptations to entice them ; and they set open their doors to the tempter, and tell him he may speak with them when he will. Wanton thoughts, and covetous thoughts, may dwell there when better thoughts are absent. But when you are so wholly taken up with your duty (spiritual or corporal), and so constantly and industriously busy in your proper work, sin cannot enter, nor Satan find you at leisure for his service.

Direct. 10. 'Let faith make God's service pleasant to you, and lose not your delight in God and godliness, and then you will not relish sinful pleasures.' You will find no need of such base delights, when you live on the foretaste of angelical pleasures. You will not be easily drawn to

steal a morsel of dung or poison from the devil's table, while you daily feast your souls on Christ: or to steal the onions of Egypt, when you dwell in a land that floweth with milk and honey. But while you keep yourselves in the wilderness, you will be tempted to look back again to Egypt. The great cause of men's sinning, and yielding to the temptations of forbidden pleasures, is because they are negligent to live upon the pleasures of believers.

Direct. 11. 'Take heed of the beginnings, if ever you would escape the sin.' No man becometh stark naught at the first step. He that beginneth to take one pleasing unprofitable cup or bit, intendeth not drunkenness and gluttony in the grossest sense: but he hath set fire in the thatch, though he did not intend to burn his house; and it will be harder to quench it, than to have forborne at first. He that beginneth but with lascivious dalliance, speeches or embraces, thinketh not to proceed to filthy fornication; but he might better have secured his conscience, if he had never meddled so far with sin. Few ruining, damning sins, began any otherwise than with such small approaches, as seemed to have little harm or danger.

Direct. 12. 'If ever you will escape sin, keep off from strong temptations and opportunities.' He that will be still near the fire or water, may be burnt or drowned at last. No man is long safe in the midst of danger, and at the next step to ruin. He that liveth in a tavern or alehouse, had need to be very averse to tippling. And he that sitteth at Dives' table, had need to be very averse to gulosity: and he that is in the least danger of the fire of lust, must keep at a sufficient distance, not only from the bed, and from immodest actions, but from secret company and opportunities of sin, and from a licentious, ungoverned eye and imagination. This caused Christ to say, How hard it is for the rich to be saved! because they have a stronger fleshly interest to keep them from Christ, and godliness, which must be denied; and because their sin hath plentiful provision, and the fire of concupiscence wanteth no fuel; and it is a very easy thing to them still to sin, and always a hard thing to avoid it; and man's sluggish nature will hardly long either hold on in that which is hardly done, or forbear that which is still hard to forbear. Good must be made sweet and easy to us, or else we shall never be constant in it.



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temptations to which are near, and importunate, and constant, and for which they have the greatest opportunities: they have senses and appetites as well as others: and if the bait be great, and always as at their very mouths, even a David, a Solomon, a Noah, is not safe.

2. They are in danger of those sins which they little think of; for it is a sign that they are not forewarned and fortified; nor have they overcome that sin; for victory here is never got at so cheap a rate: especially as to inward sins. If it have not cost you many a groan, and many a day's diligence, to conquer selfishness, pride and appetite; it is twenty to one they are not conquered.

3. They are much in danger of those sins which they extenuate, and count to be smaller than they are. For indeed their hearts are infected already, by those false and favourable thoughts. And they are prepared to entertain a nearer familiarity with them. Men are easily tempted upon a danger which seemeth small.

4. They are much in danger of those sins, which their constitutions and temperature of body doth incline them to; and therefore must here keep a double watch. No small part of the punishment of our original sin (both as from Adam, and from our nearest parents) is found in the ill complexion of our bodies: the temperature of some inclineth them vehemently to passion; and of others unto lust; and of others to sloth and dullness; and of others to gulosity, &c. And grace doth not immediately change this distemper of the complexion; but only watch over it, and keep it under, and abate it consequently, by contrary actions, and mental dispositions: therefore we shall have here incessant work, while we are in the body. Though yet the power of grace by long and faithful use, will bring the very sense, and imagination, and passions into so much calmness, as to be far less raging, and easily ruled: as a well ridden horse will obey the rider; and even dogs and other brutes will strive but little against our government: and then our work will grow more easy: For as Seneca saith, 'Maxima pars libertatis est bene moratus venter:' A good conditioned belly is a great part of a man's liberty: meaning, an ill conditioned belly is a great part of men's slavery. And the same may be said of all the senses, fantasy and passions in their respective places.

5. We are much in danger of the sins which our callings, trades and worldly interest, do most and constantly tempt us to. Every man hath a carnal interest, which is his great temptation; and every wise man will know it, and there set a double watch. The carnal interest of a preacher, is applause or preferment. The carnal interest of rulers and great men, I shall pass by; but they must not pass it by themselves. The carnal interest of lawyers and tradesmen, is their gain, &c. Here we must keep a constant watch.

6. We are much in danger of those sins, the matter of which is somewhat good and lawful, and the danger lieth only in the manner, circumstances or degree. For there the lawfulness of the matter, occasioneth men to forget the accidental evil. The whole kingdom feeleth the mischief of this, in instances which I will now pass by. If eating such or such a meat were not lawful itself, men would not be so easily drawn to gluttony. If drinking wine were not a lawful thing, the passage to drunkenness were not so open. The apprehension that a lusory lot is a lawful thing (as cards, dice, &c.) doth occasion the heinous sin of time-wasting, and estate-wasting gamesters. If apparel were not lawful, excess would not be so easily endured. Yea, the goodness of God's own worship, quieteth many in its great abuse.

7. We are much in danger of those sins, which are not in any great disgrace among those persons whom we most honour and esteem. It is a great mercy to have sin lie under a common odium and disgrace: as swearing and drunkenness, and cursing, and fornication, and Popish errors, and superstition, is now amongst the forwardest professors in England: for here conscience is most awakened, and helped by the opinion of men; or if there be some carnal respect to our reputation in it sometimes, yet it tendeth to suppress the sin: and it is a great plague to live where any great sin is in little disgrace (as profanation of the Lord's day in most of the reformed churches beyond sea; and they say, tippling, if not drunkenness in Germany; and as backbiting and evil-speaking against those that differ from them, is among the professors in England, for too great a part; and also many superstitions of their own; and dividing principles and practices).

8. But especially if the greater number of godly people

live in such a sin, then is the temptation great indeed ; and it is but few of the weaker sort, that are not carried down that stream. The Munster case, and the rebellion in which Munster perished in Germany, and many others ; but especially abundance of schisms from the apostles' days till now, are too great evidences of men's sociableness in sinning. " We all like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one to his own way ;" Isa. liii. 6. And like sheep in this, that if one that is leading, get over the hedge, all the rest will follow after ; but especially if the greater part be gone. And do not think that our churches are infallible, and that the greater part of the godly cannot err, or be in the wrong : for that would be but to do as the Papists, when we have sinned by fallibility, to keep off repentance by the conceit of infallibility.

9. We are in great danger of sinning, in cases where we are ignorant : for who can avoid the danger which he seeth not ? And who can walk safely in the dark ? Therefore we see that it is the more ignorant sort of Christians, and such as Paul calleth novices, that most err ; especially when pride accompanieth ignorance, for then they fall into the special condemnation of the devil ; 1 Tim. iii. 6. Study therefore painfully and patiently till you understand the truth.

10. But above all, we are in danger of those sins which are masked with a pretence of the greatest truths and duties, and use to be fathered on God and Scripture ; and go under the specious titles of holiness and of free grace. For here it is the understanding chiefly that resisteth, while the very names and pretences secretly steal in, and bring them into love and reverence with the will. And the poor honest Christian is afraid of resisting them, lest it should prove a resisting God. What can be so false that a man will not plead for, if he take it to be a necessary truth of God ? And what can be so bad that a man will not do, if he take it once to be of God's commanding ? The aforesaid instances of the Munster and German actions, with those of the followers of David George in Holland, (who took himself to be the Holy Ghost, or the immediate prophet of his kingdom,) and Hacket and his Grundletonians, and the Familists, the Ranters, the Seekers, the Quakers, the Church-dividers, and the Kingdom and State-overturers in England, have given



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by perverting and misapplying it; which could be of no use to them, if its authority were not acknowledged.

11. We are in constant danger of those sins which we think we can conceal from men: therefore suppose still that all that you do will be made known; and do all as in the open streets. It is written (by two) in the life of holy Ephrem Syrus, that when a harlot tempted him to uncleanness, he desired but that he might choose the place; which she consenting to, he chose the open market-place, among all the people; and when she told him, that there they should be shamed, for all would see; he told her such a lesson of sinning in the sight of God, who is every where, as was the means of her conversion. Conceit of secrecy emboldeneth to sin.

12. We are in constant danger of sins of sudden passion and irruption, which allow us not season to deliberate, and surprise us before our reason can consider.

13. We are in danger of sins that come on by insensible degrees, and from small beginnings creep upon us, and come not by any sudden wakening assaults: thus pride, and covetousness, and ambition, do infect men: and thus our zeal and diligence for God, doth usually decay.

14. Lastly, We are in much danger of all sins which require a constant, vigorous diligence to resist them; and of omitting those duties, or that part or mode of duty, which must have a constant vigorous diligence to perform it; because feeble souls are hardly kept (as is aforesaid) to constant vigorous diligence.

Quest. 2. 'Wherein differeth the sins of a sanctified person from other men's that are unsanctified?'

Answ. 1. In a sanctified man the habitual bent of his will, is ever more against sin, than for it; however he be tempted into that particular act.

2. And as to the act also, it is ever contrary to the scope and tenor of his life; which is for God and sincere obedience.

3. He hath no sin which is inconsistent with the true love of God, in the predominant habit: it never turneth his heart to another end, or happiness, or master.

4. Therefore it is more a sin of passion, than of settled interest and choice. He is more liable to a hasty passion,

or word, or unruly thoughts, than to any prevalent, covetousness, or ambition, or any sin which is a possessing of the heart instead of God; 1 John ii. 15. James iii. 2. Though some remainders of these are in him, they prevail not so far as sudden passions.

5. There are some sins which are more easily in the power of the will, so that a man that is, but truly willing, may forbear them; as a drunkard may pass by the tavern or alehouse, or forbear to touch the cup; and the fornicator to come near, or commit the sin, if they be truly willing; but there be other sins which a man can hardly forbear though he be willing; because they are the sins of those faculties over which the will hath not a despotical power: as a man may be truly willing to have no sluggishness, heaviness, sleepiness at prayer, no forgetfulness, no wandering thoughts, no inordinate appetite or lust at all stirring in him, no sudden passions of anger, grief or fear; he may be willing to love God perfectly; to fear him and obey him perfectly, but cannot. These latter are the ordinary infirmities of the godly: the former sort are, if at all, his extraordinary falls; Rom. vii. 14, to the end.

6. Lastly, The true Christian riseth by unfeigned repentance, which his conscience hath but leisure and helps to deliberate, and to bethink him what he hath done. And his repentance much better resolveth and strengtheneth him against his sin for the time to come.

To sum up all; 1. Sin more loved than hated. 2. Sin wilfully lived in, which might be avoided by the sincerely willing. 3. Sin made light of, and not truly repented of when it is committed. 4. And any sin inconsistent with habitual love to God, in predominancy, is mortal, or a sign of spiritual death, and none of the sins of sanctified believers.

CHAPTER XIV.

How to live by Faith in Prosperity.

THE work of faith in respect of prosperity, is twofold: 1. To save us from the danger of it. 2. To help us to a sanctified improvement of it.

1. And for the first, that which faith doth, is especially, 1. To see deeper and further into the nature of all things in the world, than sense can do: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. To see that they were never intended for our rest or portion, but to be our wilderness-provision in our way. To foresee just how the world will use us, and leave us at the last, and to have the very same thoughts of it now, as we foresee we shall have when the end is come, and when we have had all that ever the world will do for us. It is the work of faith, to cause a man to judge of the world, and all its glory, as we shall do when death and judgment come, and to have taken off the mask of splendid names, and shows, and flatteries: that we may use the world as if we used it not; and possess it as if we possessed it not; because its fashion doth pass away. It is the work of faith to crucify the world to us, and us to the world by the cross of Christ, (Gal. vi. 14.) that we may look on it as disdainfully as the world looked upon Christ, when he hanged as forsaken on the cross. That when it is dead, it may have no power on us, and when we are dead to it, we may have no inordinate love, or care, or thoughts, or fears, or grief, or labour to lay out upon it. It is the work of faith to make all worldly pomp and glory, to be to us but loss, and dross, and dung, in comparison of Christ, and the righteousness of faith; Phil. iii. 7—9. And then no man will part with heaven for dung, nor set his God below his dung, nor further from his heart; nor will he feel any great power in temptations to honour, wealth, or pleasure, if really he count them at all but dung; nor will he wound his conscience, or betray his peace, or cast away his innocency for them.

2. Faith sheweth the soul those sure, and great, and glorious things, which are infinitely more worthy our love and labour. And this is the highest and most proper work; Heb. xi. It conquereth earth by opening heaven; and shewing it us as sure, and clear, and near. And no man will dote on this deceitful world, till he have turned away his eyes from God; and till heaven be out of his sight and heart. Faith saith, I must shortly be with Christ; and what then are these dying things to me? I have better things, which God that cannot lie hath promised me with Christ; Titus i. 2. Heb. vi. 18. I look every day when I



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when the flesh is mortified, the world is conquered ; for it is loved only as it is the provision of the flesh.

5. Moreover, faith doth observe God's particular providence, who distributeth his talents to every man as he pleaseth, and disposeth of their estates and comforts : so that the " race is not to the swift, nor the victory to the strong, nor riches to men of understanding ;" Eccles. ix. 11.

Therefore it convinceth us, that our lives and all being in his hand, it is our wisdom to make it our chiefest care to use all so as is most pleasing unto him ; 2 Cor. v. 8. It foreseeth also the day of judgment, and teacheth us to use our prosperity and wealth, as we desire to hear of it in the day of our accounts. Faith is a provident and a vigilant grace, and useth to ask when we have any thing in possession, Which way may I make the best advantage of it for my soul ? Which way will be most comfortable to me in my last review ? How shall I wish that I had used my time, my wealth, my power, when time is at an end, and all these transitory things are vanished ?

6. And faith doth so absolutely devote and subject the soul to God, that it will suffer us to do nothing (so far as it prevaieth) but what is for him, and by his consent. It telleth us that we are not our own, but his ; and that we have nothing but what we have received ; and that we must be just in giving God his own : and therefore it first asketh, Which way may I best serve and honour God with all that he hath given me ? Not only with my substance, and the first-fruits of mine increase, but with all ; 1 Cor. x. 31. When love and devotion hath delivered up ourselves entirely to God, it keeps nothing back, but delivereth him all things with ourselves : even as Christ with himself doth give us all things ; Rom. viii. 32. And faith doth so much subject the soul to God, that it maketh us like servants and children, that use not their master's or parent's goods at their own pleasure ; but ask him first, how he would have us use them, " Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do ?" is one of the first words of a converted soul ; Acts ix. 6. In a word, faith writeth out that charge upon the heart, " Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life). For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Ye cannot serve God and mammon ;" 1 John ii. 15.

But on this subject Mr. Alleine hath said so much in his excellent book of the "Victory of Faith over the World," that I shall at this time say no more.

The Directions which I would give you in general, for preservation from the danger of prosperity by faith, are these that follow.

Direct. 1. 'Remember still that the common cause of men's damnation is their love of this world more than God and heaven; and that the world cannot undo you any other way, but by tempting you to over-love it, and to undervalue higher things:' and therefore that is the most dangerous condition, which maketh the world seem most pleasing, and most lovely to us. And can you believe this, and yet be so eager to be humoured, and to have all things fitted to your pleasure and desires? Mark here what a task faith hath! And mark what the work of self-denial is! The worldling must be pleased; the believer must be saved. The worldling must have his flesh and fancy gratified: the believer must have heaven secured, and God obeyed. Men sell not their souls for sorrow, but for mirth: they forsake not heaven for poverty, but for riches: they turn not away from God for the love of sufferings and dishonour, but for the love of pleasure, preferments, dignities and estimation in the world. And is that state better and more desirable, for which all that perish turn from God, and sell their souls, and are befooled and undone for ever? Or that which no man ever sinned for, nor forsook God for, or was undone for? Read over this question once and again, and mark what answer your hearts give to it, if you would know whether you live by sense or faith. And mark what contrary answers the flesh and faith will give to it, when it comes to practice! I say, though many sin in poverty, and in sufferings and in disgrace, yea, and by occasion of them, and by their temptations, yet no man ever sinned for them. They are none of the bait that stole away the heart from God. Set deep upon your heart the sense of the danger of a prosperous state, and fear and vigilancy will help to save you.

Direct. 2. 'Imprint upon your memory the characters of this deadly sin of worldliness, that so you may not perish by it, whilst you dream that you are free from it; but may always see how far it doth prevail.' Here, therefore, to help you, I will set before you the characters of this sin; and I

will but briefly name them, lest I be tedious because they are many.

1. The great mark of damning worldliness is, when God and heaven are not loved and preferred before the pleasures, and profits, and honours of the world.

2. Another is, when the world is esteemed and used more for the service and pleasure of the flesh, than to honour God, and to do good with, and to further our salvation. When men desire great places and riches, more to please their appetites and carnal minds with, than to benefit others, or to serve the Lord with: when they are not rich to God, but to themselves; Luke xii. 20, 21.

3. It is a mark of some degree of worldliness, to desire a greater measure of riches and honour, than our spiritual work, and ends, and benefit do require: for when we are convinced that less is as good or better to our highest ends, and yet we would have more; it is a sign that the rest is desired for the flesh; Rom. xiii. 14. viii. 8—10. 13.

4. When our desires after worldly things are too eager and violent: when we must needs have them, and cannot be without them; 1 Tim. vi. 9.

5. When our contrivances for the world are too solicitous, and our cares for it take up an undue proportion of our time; Matt. vi. 24, 25. to the end.

6. When we are impatient under want, dishonour or disappointments, and live in trouble and discontent, if we want much, or have not our wills.

7. When the thoughts of the world are proportionably so many more than our thoughts of heaven, and our salvation, that they keep us in the neglect of the duty of meditation, and keep empty our minds of holy things; Matt. vi. 21.

8. When it turneth our talk all towards the world, or taketh up our most free, and our sweetest and most serious words, and leaveth us to the use of seldom, dull, or formal, or affected words, about the things which should profit the soul, and glorify our great Creator.

9. When the world encroacheth upon God's part in our families, and thrusts out prayer, or the reading of the Scriptures, or the due instruction of children or servants: when it cometh in upon the Lord's day: when it is intruding in God's worship, and at sermon, or prayer, our thoughts are



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nesses and gifts from others ; and are too much pleased in it ; and grudge at all that goeth beside you ; and think that it is men's duty to mind all your concernments, and further your commodity more than other men's.

16. When you are selfish and partial about worldly interest, and have little sense of your neighbours' concernments in comparison of your own. If one give never so liberally to many others, and give nothing to you, it doth never the more content you, nor reconcile your mind to the charity of the giver. If one give to you, and pass by many that have more need, you love and honour the bounty which satisfieth your own desires. If you sell dear, you rejoice ; and if you buy cheap, you are glad of your good bargain, though perhaps the seller be poorer than you. He that wrongeth you, or any way hindereth your commodity, is always a bad man in your esteem : no virtue will save him from your censures and reproach : but he that dealeth as hardly by your neighbour, and well with you, is a very honest man, and worthy of your praise.

17. When you are quarrelsome for worldly things, and the love of them can at any time break your charity and peace, and make an enemy of your nearest friend ; or engage you in causeless lawsuits and contentions. What abundance doth the world set together by the ears !

18. When you can see your poor brother or neighbour in want, and shut up the bowels of your compassion from him ; and do little good with what God hath given you, but the flesh and self devoureth all.

19. When you will venture upon unlawful ways of getting ; or will sin for honour or commodity ; or at least will let go your innocency and conscience, rather than lose your prosperity in the world ; and will distinguish yourselves out of every danger, or costly duty, or suffering for righteousness sake ; and will prove every thing lawful, which seemeth necessary to the prosperity and safety of the flesh.

20. When you are more careful to provide riches and honours for your children after you, than to save them from worldliness, voluptuousness and pride, and to bring them up to be the heirs of heaven : and had rather venture their souls in the most dangerous temptations, than abate any of their plenty or grandeur in the world.

These be the plain marks of worldly minds, whatever a blinded heart may devise to hide them.

Direct. 3. 'Take heed of those blinding pretences which worldly minds do commonly use, to flatter, deceive and undo themselves. For instance.

1. The most common pretence is 'That God's creatures are good, and prosperity is his blessing, and that our bodies must be cherished, and that cynical and eremitical extremes and austerities, are far from the genius of true Christianity.'

There is truth in all this, or else it would not be so fit to be made a cloak for sin by misapplication. The world and all God's works are good; and to the pure they are pure: to the sanctified they are sanctified; that is, they are devoted to the service of God, and used for him from whom they come: God hath given us nothing which may not be used for his service, and our salvation. No doubt but you may make you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, to further your reception into the everlasting habitations: you may lay up a good foundation for the time to come; and you may sow to the Spirit, and reap in the end everlasting life; Gal. vi. You may provide you bags that wax not old. You may please God by the sacrifices of distributing and communicating; Heb. xiii. But yet I must tell you, the world and all God's creatures in it, are too good to be sacrificed to the flesh, and to the devil; and not good enough to be loved and preferred before God, and your innocency and salvation.

The body must be cherished, but yet the flesh must be subdued; and if you live after it you shall die. Health and alacrity must be preserved, because they make you fit for duty; but wanton appetites must be restrained, and no provision must be made for the flesh, to satisfy its lusts (or wills); Rom. xiii. 14. It must be cherished as your horse or servant for his work; but it must not be pampered, and made unruly, or your master. You may seek food for your necessity and use; and ask of God your daily bread (Matt. vi. Psal. cxlv.); but you may not with the Israelites, ask meat for your lust, as being weary of eating manna so long; Psal. lxxviii. Hurting your health by useless austerities, is not pleasing unto God; but sensuality; and flesh-pleasing, and love of the world, is nevertheless abominable in his sight.

Object. 2. ‘Necessity makes me mind the world. I have children to maintain, and am in debt, and cannot pay every one his own.’

Ans^w. Whether you have necessity or not, you ought to labour faithfully in your callings: but no necessity will excuse your worldly love and cares. What will the love of the world do towards the supply of your necessities? Or what will your eager desires, and your cares do, more than the labours and quiet forecast of one that hath a contented mind? Surely in reason, the less you have in the world, and the harder your condition is, the less you should love it, and the more you should abound in care and diligence, to make sure of a better world hereafter.

Object. 3. ‘I covet no man’s but my own.’

Ans^w. 1: Why then are you so glad of good bargains, or of gifts? *2.* But what if you do not? You covet to have more to be your own, than God allotteth you. Perhaps you have already as much as your flesh knoweth what to do with; and therefore need not covet more. But will this excuse you for loving your riches more than God? The question is not now, what you covet, but what you love. If the world hath your hearts, the devil hath your lives; for it is by the world that he deceiveth souls: and do you think then that you are fit to dwell with God? “Know ye not that the love of the world is enmity to God?” And that if “ye will be friends of the world; you are God’s enemies?” James iv. 4.

Object. 4. ‘It is not by any unlawful means that I desire to grow rich. I wait on God in my lawful labour, and crave his blessing.’

Ans^w. It is not now your getting, but your loving the world that I am speaking of. If your hearts be more set on your riches or prosperity, than on God, and the world by loving it be made your idol, you do but turn prayer and labour into sin, (though they be good in themselves) while you abuse them to your ungodly, worldly ends.

What wretched muckworm would not pray, if he believed that praying would make him rich? I warrant you then their tune would be turned. They would not cry out, What needeth all this praying? If God would give them money for the asking, they would quickly learn to pray without book, and long prayers would come into request, upon the Pharisees’



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labour for, and there you may see what it is that hath your hearts.

Object. 9. ' Worldliness is indeed a heinous sin, and of all people, I most hate the covetous ; and I use to preach or talk against it, more than against any sin.'

Answ. So do many thousands that are slaves to it themselves, and shall be damned for it. It is easier to talk against it, than to forsake it. And it is easy to hate covetousness in another, because it will cost you nothing for another to forsake his sin ; and perhaps the more covetous he is, the more he standeth in your way, and hindereth you from that which you would have yourselves. Of all the multitude of covetous preachers that be in the world, is there any one that will not preach against covetousness ? Read but the lives of cardinals, and popes, and popish prelates, and you will see the most odious worldliness set forth without any kind of cloak or shame : how such a one laid his design at court, and among the great ones for preferment : how studiously he prosecuted it, and conformed himself to the humours and interest of those, from whom he did seek it : how they first got this living, and then got that prebendary, and then got that deanery, and then got such a bishopric, and then got a better (that is a richer), and then got to be archbishops, and then to be cardinals, &c. O happy progress if they might never die ! They blush not openly before angels and men to own this worldly, ambitious course, as their design and trade of life. And the devil is grown so impudent, as if he were now the confessed master of the world, as to set divines themselves at work, to write the history of such cursed, ambitious, worldly lives, with open applause, and great commendations ; yea to make saints of them, that have a character far worse than Christ gave of him in Luke xvi. that wanted a drop of water to cool his tongue. He openly now saith, " All this will I give thee ;" and they as impudently boast, ' All this have I gotten ;' but they forget or know not how much they have lost. A Judas's kiss is thought sufficient to prove him a true Christian and pastor of the church, though it be but the fruit of " what will you give me ?" Instead of a scourge to whip out these buyers and sellers from Christ's temple, their merchandise is exposed without shame, and their signs set forth, and the trade of getting preferments openly professed, and it is enough to

wipe off all shame, to put some venerable titles upon this den of thieves. "But the Lord whom we wait for, will once more come and cleanse his temple. But who may abide the day of his coming? For he is like a refiner's fire; and like fuller's soap, and will thoroughly purge the sons of Levi;" Mal. iii. 1—4.

If talking against worldliness, would prove that the world is overcome, and that God is dearest to the soul, then preachers will be the happiest men on earth. But it is easier to commend God, than to love him above all; and easier to cry out against the world, than to save a heart that is truly weaned from it, and set upon a better world.

Object. 10. 'But all this belongeth only to them that are in prosperity; but I am poor, and therefore it is nothing to me.'

Answ. Many a one loveth prosperity, that hath it not: and such are doubly sinful, that will love a world which loveth not them; even a world of poverty, misery and distress. Something you would have done, if you had a full estate, and honour, and fleshly delights to love. Nay, many poor men think better of riches and honour, than those that have them; because they never tried how vain and vexatious they are; and if they had tried them, perhaps would love them less. The world is but a painted strumpet, admired afar off; but the nearer you come to it, and the more it is known, the worse you will like it. Is it by your own desire that you are poor? Or is it against your wills? Had you not rather be as great and rich as others? Had you not rather live at ease and fulness? And do you think God will love you ever the better, for that which is against your wills? Will he count that man to be no worldling, that would fain have more of the world, and cannot? And that loveth God and heaven no better than the rich? Nay, that will sin for a shilling, when great ones do it for greater sums? Who can be more unfit for heaven, than he that loveth a life of labour, and want, and misery better? Alas! it is but little that the greatest worldlings have for their salvation; but poor worldlings sell it for less than they, and therefore do despise it more.

Direct. 4. 'Let the true nature and aggravations of the sin of worldliness, be still in your eye to make it odious to you.' As for instance:

1. It is true and odious idolatry ; Ephes. v. 5. Col. iii. 5. To have God for our God indeed, is to love him as our God, and to delight in him, and be ruled by him. Who then is an idolater, if he be not one who loveth the world, and delighteth in it more than in God, or esteemeth it fitter to be the matter of his delight ? And is ruled by it, and seeketh it more ? Isa. lv. 1—3.

2. It is a blasphemous contempt of God and heaven, to prefer a dunghill world before him : to set more by the provisions and pleasures of the flesh, than by all the blessedness of heaven. It is called profaneness in Esau, to sell his birthright for one morsel ; Heb. xii. 16. What profaneness is it then to say, as worldlings' hearts and lives do, ' The satisfying of my flesh and fancy for a time, is better than God and the joys of heaven to all eternity.'

3. It is a sin of interest and not only of passion ; and therefore it possesseth the very heart and love, which is the principal faculty of the soul, and that which God most reserveth for himself. No actual sin, which is but little loved, is so heinous and mortal, as that which is most loved. Because these do most exclude the love of God. Some other sins may do more hurt to others, but this is worst to the sinner himself. We justly pity poor heathenish idolaters, and pray for their conversion (and I would we did it more) : but do not you think that our hypocrite worldlings, do love their riches, and their honours and pleasures, better than the poor heathens love their idols ? They bow the knee to a creature, and you entertain it in your heart.

4. It is a sin of deliberation and contrivance, which is much worse than a surprise by a sudden temptation. You plot how you may compass your voluptuous, covetous and ambitious ends : therefore it is a sin that standeth at the furthest distance from repentance, and is both voluntary and a settled habit.

5. It is a continued sin. Men be not always lying, though they be never so great liars ; nor always stealing, if they be the most notorious thieves ; nor always swearing, if they be the profanest swearers. But a worldly mind is always worldly : he is always committing his idolatry with the world, and always denying his love to God.

6. It is not only a sin about the means to a right end (as mischosen ways of religion may be), but it is a sin against



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so it is now ;” Gal. iv. 29. “ The world cannot love us because we are not of the world ;” John xv. 19, 20. Pride, covetousness and sensuality, are the matter which the burning fever lodgeth in, which hath consumed so much of the church of Christ.

4. It is the sin that hath corrupted the sacred office of the ministry throughout most of the Christian churches in the world : and thereby caused both the schisms and cruelties, and the decay of serious godliness among them, which is their present deplorable case. Ignorant persons are like sick men in a fever : they lay the blame on this and that, and commonly on that which went next before the paroxysm ; and know not the true cause of the disease. We are all troubled (or should be) to see the many minds, the many ways, the confused state of the Christian churches, and to hear them cry out against each other. And one layeth the blame on this party or opinion, and another on that : but when we come to ourselves, we shall find that it is, the worldly mind that causeth our calamity. Many well-meaning friends of the church do think how dishonourable it is to the ministry, to be poor and low, and consequently despicable ; and what an advantage it is to their work, to be able to relieve the poor, and rather to oblige the people, than to depend upon them, and to be above them rather than below them. And supposing the pastors to be mortified, holy, heavenly men, all this is true ; and the zeal of these thoughts is worthy of commendation. But that which good men intend for good, hath become the church’s bane. So certain is the common saying, that Constantine’s zeal did poison the church, by lifting up the pastors of it too high, and occasioning those contentions for grandeur and precedency, which to this day separate the east and west. When well-meaning piety hath adorned the office with wealth and honour, it is as true as that the sun shineth, that the most proud, ambitious, worldly men, will be the most studious seekers of that office ; and will make it their plot, and trade, and business, how by friends, and observances, and wills, to attain their ends : and usually he that seeks shall find. When in the meantime the godly, mortified, humble man, will not do so ; but will serve God in the state to which he is clearly called. And consequently, except it be under the government of an admirably wise and holy ruler, a worthy pastor,

in such a wealthy station, will be a singular thing, and a rarity of the age; whilst worldly men, whose hearts are habited with that which is utterly contrary to holiness, and contrary to the very ends and work of their own office, will be the men that must sit in Moses' chair; that must have the doing and ruling of the work which their hearts are set against. And how it will go with the church of Christ, when the Gospel is to be preached, and preachers chosen, and godliness promoted by the secret enemies of it; and when ambitious, fleshly, worldly men, are they that must cure the people's souls (under Christ) of the love of the flesh and the world, it were easy to prognosticate from the causes, if the Christian world could not tell by the effects. So that, except by the wonderful piety of princes——there is no visible way in the eye of reason, to recover the miserable churches, but to retrieve the pastoral office into such a state, as that it may be no bait to a worldly mind, but may be desired and chosen purely upon heavenly accounts. And then the richer the pastors are the better; when they are the sons of nobles, whose piety bringeth with them their honour, and their wealth to serve God and his church with, and they do not find it there to be their end or inducement to the work; but instead of invitations or encouragements to pride and carnal minds, there may be only so much as may not deter or drive away candidates from the sacred function.

5. Worldliness is a sin, which maketh the word of God unprofitable; (Matt. xiii. 22. John xii. 43. Ezek. xxxiii. 31.) prepossessing the heart, and resisting that Gospel which would extirpate it.

6. It hindereth prayer, by corrupting men's desires, and by intruding worldly thoughts.

7. It hindereth all holy meditation, by turning both the heart and thoughts another way.

8. It drieth up all heavenly, profitable conference, whilst the world doth fill both mind and mouth.

9. It is a great profaner of the Lord's day, distracting men's minds, and alienating them from God.

10. It is a murderous enemy of love to one another: all worldly men being so much for themselves, that they are seldom hearty friends to any other.

11. Yea, it maketh men false and unrighteous in their

dealings : their being no trust to be put in a worldly man any farther than you are sure you suit his interest.

12. It is the great cause of discord and divisions in the world. It setteth families, neighbours, and kingdoms together by the ears ; and setteth the nations of the earth in bloody wars, to the calamity and destruction of each other.

13. It causeth cheating, stealing, robbing, oppressions, cruelties, lying, false witnessing, perjury, murders, and many such other sins.

14. It maketh men unfit to suffer for Christ, because they love the world above him : and consequently it maketh them as apostates to forsake him in a time of trial.

15. It is a great devourer of precious time. That short life which should be spent in preparing for eternity, is almost all spent in drudging for the world.

16. Lastly, it greatly unfitteth men to die ; and maketh them loath to leave the world : and no wonder when there is no entertainment for worldlings in any better place hereafter.

Direct. 6. ‘ If you would be saved from the world, and the snares of prosperity, foresee death, and judge of the world as it will appear and use you at the last.’ Dream not of long life : he that looks to stay but a little while in the world, will be the less careful of his provisions in it. A little will serve for a little time. The grave is a sufficient disgrace to all the vanities on earth, though there be more to raise the heart to heaven.

Direct. 7. ‘ Mortify the flesh, and you overcome the world.’ Cure the thirsty disease, and you will need none of the worldling’s ways to satisfy it. When the flesh is mastered, there is no use for plenty, or pleasures, or honours, to satisfy its lusts : your daily bread to fit you for your work, will then suffice.

Direct. 8. ‘ But it is the lively belief of endless glory, and the love of God prevailing in the soul, that must work the cure.’ Nothing below a life of faith and a heavenly mind and conversation, and the love of God, will ever well cure a sensual life, and an earthly mind and conversation, and the the love of the world.

Direct. 9. ‘ Turn away from the bait ; desire not to have



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that he spake it to both, viz. that he called his disciples to him, and as it were pointed the finger at them, and made his text on which he preached to the multitude; and the sense is contained in these propositions; as if he had said, 'See you these followers of me: you take them to be contemptible or unhappy, because they are poor in the world; but I tell you, 1. That poverty maketh not believers miserable: 2. Yea, they are the truly blessed men, because they shall have the heavenly riches: 3. And the evidence of their right to that, is, that they are poor in spirit, that is, their hearts are suited to a low estate, and are saved from the destructive vices of riches and prosperity. 4. And their outward poverty is better suited and conducive to this deliverance, and this poverty of spirit, than a state of wealth and prosperity is.' All these four propositions are the true meaning of the text.

That we may see here what is the special work of faith, we must know which are the special sins of prosperity, which riches and honours occasion in the world. And though the apostle tells us, (1 Tim. vi. 10.) that "the love of money is the root of all evil," I will confine my discourse to that narrower compass, in the enumeration of the sins of Sodom, in Ezek. xvi. 49. **PRIDE, FULNESS of bread, IDLENESS:** and of these but briefly, because I have spoken more largely of them elsewhere (in my Christian Directory).

And first of the pride of the rich and prosperous.

PRIDE is a sin of so deep radication, and so powerful in the hearts of carnal men, that it will take advantage of any condition; but riches and prosperity are its most notable advantage. As the boat riseth with the water; so do such hearts rise with their estates. Therefore saith the apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 17. "Charge the rich that they be not high-minded." Highmindedness is the sin that you are first here to avoid. In order whereunto I shall give you now but these three general directions.

Direct. 1. 'Observe the masks or covers of highmindedness or pride, lest it reign in you unknown.' For it hath many covers, by which it is concealed from the souls that are infected, if not undone and miserable by it.

For instance: 1. Some think that they are not proud, because that their parts and worth will bear out all the

estimation which they have of themselves. And he that thinketh of himself but as he really is, being in the right, is not to be accounted proud.

But remember that the first act of pride is the over-valuing of ourselves: and he that is once guilty of this first act, will justify himself both in it, and all that follow. So that pride is a sin which blindeth the understanding, and defendeth itself by itself, and powerfully keepeth off repentance. When once a man hath entertained a conceit, that he is wiser or better than indeed he is, he then thinketh that all his thoughts, and words, and actions, which are of that signification, are just, and sober, because the thing is so indeed. And for a man to deny God's graces, or gifts, and make himself seem worse than he is, is not true humility, but dissimulation or ingratitude.

But herein you have great cause to be very careful, lest you should prove mistaken: Therefore, 1. Judge not of yourselves by the bye as of self-love; but, if it be possible, lay by partiality, and judge of yourselves as you do by others, upon the like evidences. 2. Hearken what other men judge of you, who are impartial and wise, and are near you, and thoroughly acquainted with your lives. It is possible they may think better or worse of you than you are: but if they judge worse of you, than you do of yourselves, it should stop your confidence, and make you the more suspicious, and careful to try lest you should be mistaken.

2. And remember also that you are obliged to a greater modesty in judging of your own virtues, and to a greater severity in judging of your own faults, than of other men's; though you must not wilfully err about yourselves, or any others, yet you are not bound to search out the truth about the faults of another, as you are about your own. We are commanded to "prefer one another in honour;" Rom. x. 21. And ver. 3. "For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly, than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

2. Another cloak for pride is, the reputation of our religion, profession or party, which will seem to be disgraced by us, if we seem not to be somewhat better than we are. If we should not hide or extenuate our faults, and set out

our graces and parts to the full, we should be a dishonour to Christ, and to his servants, and his cause.

But remember, 1. That the way by which God hath appointed you to honour him, is, by being good, and living well, and not by seeming to be good, when you are not, or seeming better than you are: The God of truth, who hateth hypocrisy, hath not chosen lying and hypocrisy to be the means by which we must seek his honour. It is damnable, to seek to glorify him by a lie; Rom. iii. 7, 8. We must indeed cause our light so to shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our heavenly Father; Matt. v. 16. But it is the light of sincerity and good works, and not of a dissembling profession that must so shine.

2. And the goodness of the pretended end doth greatly aggravate the crime: as if the honour of God and our religion must be upheld, by so devilish a means as proud hypocrisy.

3. And, though it be true, that a man is not imprudently without just cause, to open his sins before the world, when it is like to tend to the injury of religion, and any way to do more hurt than good; yet it is as true, that when there is no such impediment, true repentance is forward to confess, and when the fault is discovered, defending and extenuating it, is then the greatest dishonour to religion. (As if you would father all on Christ, and make men believe that he will justify or extenuate sin as you do.) And then it is a free self-abasing confession, and taking all the shame to yourselves (with future reformation) which is the reparation which you must make of the honour of religion. For what greater dishonour can be cast upon religion, than to make it seem a friend to sin? Or what greater honour can be given it, than to represent it as it is, as an enemy to all evil; and to take the blame, as is due, unto yourselves?

3. Another cloak for pride, is the reputation of our offices, dignities and places. 'We must live according to our rank and quality: all men must not live alike. The grandeur of rulers must be maintained, or else the magistracy will fall into contempt. The pastor's office must not by a mean estate, and low deportment, be exposed to the people's scorn.' And so abundance of the most ambitious practices, and hateful enormities of the proud, must be veiled by these fair pretences.



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3. And I must tell you, that there is abundance of difference betwixt the case of the civil magistrates, and the pastors of the church in this. Magistracy must have more fear and pomp: but pastors must govern by light and love: When his apostles strove for superiority, Christ left a decision of the controversy for the use of all following ages. It is the contempt of the world, and the mortifying of the flesh, and self-denial, that pastors have to teach the people, and withal to seek a heavenly treasure: and will not their own example further the success of their doctrine? The reverence that a pastor must expect, is not to be feared as one that can do hurt (for all coercion or corporal force is proper to the magistrate): but it is to be thought one that is above all the riches and pleasures of the world; and hath set his heart on higher things: such a one therefore he must both be and seem. A pastor will be but the sooner despised, if he look after that riches and worldly pomp, which is seemingly for a magistrate: If he have a sword in his hand, it is the way to be hated; if he have teeth that are bloody, or claws that can tear, he will be accounted a wolf, though he have the clothing of a sheep. When our divines give the reason of Christ's humiliation, they say, that if he had preached up heavenymindedness, self-denial, and mortification, and had himself lived in pomp and fulness, the people would not have regarded his words: and surely the same reason holdeth in some measure 'as to all his ministers. Again, I say, that if ever the church be universally reformed, the pastoral office must be only encouraged with necessary support, to keep the pastors from despondency, and distracting cares; but it must not be made a bait of ambition, covetousness or sloth; but must be stripped of that which makes it thus desirable to a carnal mind. Otherwise we must expect, that except when princes are very holy, the churches be ordinarily guided by carnal and ungodly men; who will do it according to their minds and interest. All the world cannot answer the reason of this: which is, honours and wealth will be certainly sought with greatest industry by the worldly, that is, the worst of men: and not by the heavenly, mortified persons: And they that seek shall usually find: and so while the humble, holy person stayeth till he is called, and the proud and worldly, who

have the keenest appetite, use all their art and friends to rise, the conclusion is as sure as sad, and hath been so proved by woful experience almost thirteen hundred years.

4. Another of pride's pretences is decency; and the avoiding of reproach and scorn: If we live not as high as others, we shall be derided and contemned; or thought to be sordid, beggarly, or base.

Ans. 1. This is one of the signs and effects of pride; that it maketh a greater matter of other men's thoughts of you, than you ought to make: it cannot bear contempt and scorn so easily as humility can do: too careful avoiding of contempt, is the proper work of pride. 2. It is granted that you should not be contemptuous of your just reputation; and also that you must not by any causeless, affected singularity, or by any practice which is indeed uncomely, make yourselves the scorn of others. But it is as true that you must not desire a higher estimation than is really your due; nor yet be over solicitous for that which is your due indeed; nor must you follow the proud in any thing which is contrary to true humility, for the keeping of their good report, nor go above your rank to avoid contempt. 3. And forget not whose good word it is that you should especially regard: Your truest honour is in the esteem of God, and all good men, and not in the opinion or praises of the proud. They that are addicted to this vice themselves, perhaps may deride those that go below them (and yet they will more envy those that go above them): but the humble will think much better of you for being humble, and nothing can make you viler in their eyes than pride. If you were humble yourselves, you would prefer your honour with humble, wise and sober persons, above the opinions of the proud, who know not good from evil.

5. Another cloak of pride is opinionative and doctrinal humility. When we have heard and read much against pride, and can speak (or preach) against it, as freely, and fluently, and vehemently, and movingly, as any others; and in all company and conference signify our dislike of it; when we are much in dissuading others from it, and in extolling humility, and lowliness of mind; this doth not only deceive others, but very often the speaker himself; and makes him think that he hath no great degree of pride.

But speculation, and opinion, and talk, are one thing;

and a renewed, truly humble soul is another thing. If all this while you are as great, and wise, and good in your own esteem, and make as great a matter of men's opinion of you, as others do, that speak less against pride, your speeches and preachings serve but to condemn yourselves. It is easy to talk against covetousness, gluttony, and other sins, whilst he that condemneth them, continueth in them, and condemneth himself. Talking against an enemy, obtaineth no victory; and talking against sin, may signify what you have learned to say, or perhaps what dislike you have to that sin at a distance, or in specie, or in another; when yet you may damnably love it in yourselves. It were well for preachers, if it were as easy or common to conquer sin, as to preach against it: but alas! it is not so.

6. Another cloak of pride is, the presence of a real partial humility, together with an outward, humble garb. A man may be really humble in some, yea, in many respects, and yet be exceeding proud in others: he may be vile in his own eyes, because he is conscious of many great and odious sins, and because he knoweth that sin is a thing odious to God, and all that will be saved, must be humble for it; and because he knoweth that his body is earth, and must return by death to filth and dust: and he may go in sordid poor apparel; and such may have a humble tone and manner of speech; and perhaps speak so self-abasingly, as if there were none so lowly as they: and yet they may be exceeding proud of their supposed wisdom, or spiritual understanding, and of a supposed extraordinary measure of holiness, or revelations, or interest in God, or of this humility itself: yea, their common natural pride may be taken down, though there be frequent expressions of great humiliation.

And if the proudest gallants can, with their hat at your foot, profess themselves your humble servants, why may not religious pride go as far?

And note here, that this religious pride is of a higher and more aggravated strain than the other: 1. Because it is committed against more humbling means. 2. Because it is a sin against more knowledge. 3. Because it is accompanied with the profession of humility, and so is aggravated by more hypocrisy. 4. Because it is an abuse of more excellent things: it is more odious to turn the pretence of



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when they understand not the catechism or creed, but have need to be taught which are the principles of the oracles of God; they think they are taken into the counsels of the Almighty; they think they abound in the Spirit, and in wisdom, in revelations, and in holiness; and the wisest and holiest of Christ's ministers and people, who are as far above them in knowledge and godliness, as the aged are above a stammering infant, are proudly despised by them, and openly and impudently reviled and railed at, as ignorant fools, and ungodly, worldly, self-seeking men, and as the deceivers of the people, and as void of the Spirit; which could never proceed to the height that we have seen it, and which their words and writings utter at this day, without a very strange degree of pride, and such as either maketh men mad, or is made by madness, or little less.

And here note also, that it is no wonder if religious pride can despise the common applause of the world, and bear a great deal of ignominy from the vulgar; because they have learned so much as to know that wicked men are fools, and base, and their judgment is no great honour or dishonour to any man; and that godly men only are truly wise, and their judgment most to be regarded. And therefore it is with them whom they think most highly of themselves, that they desire to be thought most highly of; and it is among the religious sort, that religious pride doth fish for honour: even as men that are proud of their learning, do hunt after the applause of learned men, and can despise the judgment of the unlearned-vulgar, as quite below them.

I know that this last instance of pride, is not always an attendant of prosperity: but oft it is, a kind of wantonness thence arising, which is much restrained in suffering times; and being speaking of the rest, I thought not meet to pass it by.

Direct. 2. 'Understand which are the ordinary effects and characters of pride, that you may not live in it, and perish by it, whilst you thought you had overcome it.' At this time (having said more of it elsewhere,) I shall recite but these marks of prosperous pride, and shew the contrary signs of lowliness.

1. The highminded are self-willed, and much addicted to rule and domineer. They would have their own wills, in all their own matters, and are hardly brought to submit to the

judgment and will of others. Obeying, goeth quite against their grain, any further than they like the commands of their superiors: and if they are in any hope of reaching it, they aspire to be the governors of others, that they may still stand uppermost, and have their will in all the matters about them, as well as in their own. If there be a place of power and preferment void, the proud man is the forwardest expectant; and maketh no great question of his fitness; but thinketh that he is injured if he be put by, how worthy a man soever be preferred before him: he snuffs and scorns at inferiors that stick at his most sinful and unreasonable commands; and thunders out the charge of rebellion or schism against those that question his infallibility, or that will stick at obeying him before God, and against him; as if he had been born to rule, and other men to obey him; and all do him wrong, who fall not down and worship not his will, at the first intimation: though perhaps he be but a minister of Christ, who should be as a little child, and the servant of all, and should stoop to the feet of the poorest of the flock, and should receive the weak, and bear with their infirmities; yet pride will their lift up the head, and forget all the humbling examples and admonitions of Christ, and will either seek to draw disciples after it, by speaking perverse things, (Acts xx. 30.) or forget 1 Pet. v. 3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."

But on the contrary, the poor in spirit are readier to obey than rule; as knowing that ruling requireth the greater parts and graces; and are inclined to think others to be fitter for places of teaching or authority than themselves (further than clear experience constraineth them to know the contrary): for in honour they prefer others, instead of striving to be preferred before others: they have a tractable, humble, yielding disposition; except when they are tempted to sin: They are gentle, and easy to be entreated; (James iii. 17.) and can submit themselves to one another; yea, and be their voluntary subjects; 1 Pet. v. 5. Ephes. v. 21. (Yet not becoming unnecessarily the servants of men; but choosing it rather when they may be free.) They are as little children, in that they expect not rule, but to be ruled; Matt. xviii. 3. They have learned to serve one another in love, (Gal. v. 13.) and take it not for Christian love, that

can do good only upon terms of equality, and cannot stoop to voluntary service. They can go two miles with him that compelleth them to go one: no man more obedient when you command not sin. For as he affecteth not to be called Master, or Rabbi, or to have the highest seat or name (Matt. xxiii. 11, &c.); so he hath learned not to please himself, but to please others for their good to edification; Rom. xv. 2. Especially if he be a pastor of the church, though he do by an excelling light, and love, and good life, keep up the true honour of his calling; yet is he the more averse to lord it over the flock, because he knoweth that he must be an example to them: and it is not an example of pride, but of lowliness, which Christ did give, and he must give; and therefore both are joined together; 1 Pet. v. 3. 5.

2. The proud do make too great a matter of that honour which perhaps may be their due: they plot for it: they set their hearts upon it. If they are slighted, or others preferred before them, their countenances are cast down, as Cain's; or they are troubled, as Haman; or they will revenge it, as Cain, and as Joab upon Abner. Touch their honour, and you touch their hearts: despise them, and you torment them, or make them your enemies.

But the poor in spirit regard their honour, as they do other matters of this world; that is, with moderation, and so far as it is conducive to the honour of religion, or their country, or to the service and business of their lives. They will not be prodigals of that which they may serve God by: and they will not be over-desirous of that which may be a bait to pride, and a snare to their souls, though it gratify the fleshly fancy. They will seek it, as if they sought it not; and possess it, as if they possessed it not, remembering how vain a thing man is, and how little his thoughts or breath can do, to make us happy: God is so great in a believer's eye, and man and worldly vanity is so small, that a lowly mind can scarce have room and time to regard the honour which is the proud man's portion; because he is taken up with honouring his God, and esteemeth the honour which consisteth in his approbation.

Therefore it is tolerable to him, to be made of no reputation, to be laden with reproaches, to be spit upon and buffeted; to be made as the scorn and offscouring of the



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lend them) because as his stewards, they must be accountable for them to their Lord. But they take it to be no shame, to be more like Christ than Cræsus; or more like his apostles than the prelates and cardinals of Rôme; or to be of those poor that are poor in spirit, who are rich in faith, and heirs of heaven; James ii. 5. Matt. v. 3. Nor is it any desirable honour to have our salvation so much hindered and hazarded, as the rich have. God, and angels, and wise men, do think never the worse of a good man for being poor.

5. The highminded are therefore usually addicted to some excess in ornaments and apparel, because they would be taken to be rich and comely (unless when their pride worketh some other way). Yea, if they be never so mean and poor, they would seem by their clothing to be somewhat richer than they are; or would be rich in hypocrisy, or outward appearance, except it hinder their relief. They that wear soft clothing were wont to dwell in the houses of kings, (Matt. xi. 8.) but now they dwell in the houses of most citizens, tradesmen, husbandmen; yea, of ministers themselves; wives, children and servants are commonly sick at once of this disease: and though it be one of the lowest and foolishest games, which pride hath to play; yet women, and children, and lightheaded youths, do make up the greater number of this vanity; while the pride of the graver, wiser sort, doth turn itself to greater things.

But the lowly who are not ashamed to be poor, are not ashamed of poor apparel; though they are not for uncleanness, nor for an affected singularity, for ostentation of humility; yet they had rather go below their rank, than above it, as taking pride to be a greater shame and hurt than poverty: if their clothing be convenient to their health and use, and not offensive to others, it sufficeth them: and a patch, or a rent, or a garment that is old, will not make them blush: they have learned, 1 Pet. iii. 3. "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward, of plaiting the hair, or of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

6. The highminded have high thoughts of worldly pomp, and wealth, and greatness; and think of such as ex-

cel in these, with great esteem and reverence: they bow to the man that hath the gold ring, and the gay apparel, while they slight the best and wisest that are poor: "They bless the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth;" Psal. x. 3. And they think if they be poor and low themselves, how brave a thing is it to be high and rich: and had far rather be rich than gracious, and be higher in the world, than to have a lowly mind.

But the humble have learned of Christ to be meek and lowly; Matt. xi. 29. and are still learning it of him more and more: they had rather have Paul's heart, that counted all things as loss and dung for Christ, and learned to abound and to suffer want, and in every state to be content, than to be lifted up with worldly vanity. They know that "it is better to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoils with the proud;" Prov. xvi. 19. And as the brother of low degree (being a sanctified believer that can use all for God) must rejoice when he is exalted; so must the brother of high degree, when he is made low; James i. 9, 10. They pity a Dives in his purple and silk, more than a Lazarus at his gates in rags. They wish not too eagerly for so dangerous an exaltation, from which they see so many terribly cast down. They much more honour a poor believer, than a pompous sinner. For in "their eyes a vile person is contemned, but they honour them that fear the Lord;" Psal. xv. 4.

7. The highminded are ashamed of low employments: if they be seen doing such work as is accounted base, or proper to poor, inferior persons, they think they are dishonoured: if the proud sort of the pastors of the church, had been sent as Paul and the apostles, to travel about the world on foot, and to preach the Gospel in their humble, self-denying terms, they would have said that this was an unsufferable drudgery; and Christ must have provided more encouraging rewards of learning, or else he should have been no Master of their's. Yea, a servant that is proud, will disdain the lowest works of your service, as if it were a disgrace to stoop so low.

But the lowly do learn of Christ another lesson. He stooped to wash and wipe the feet of his disciples, to teach them what to do toward one another. Not as the Pope doth once a year wash some poor men's feet, by a scenical cere-

mony (for piety and charity are both turned into imagery and ceremony by Satan, when he would destroy them); but seriously to instruct his ministers themselves, what lowliness they must use towards one another, and to all the flock. Christ went on foot to preach the Gospel, and so did his apostles; not to oblige us to do so when weakness doth forbid us; nor to deny the benefit of a horse, when we may have it; but to teach us that neither pride should make us ashamed to go on foot, nor laziness make it seem intolerable, when we are called to it. When Christ would appear in state at Jerusalem, he rode upon a borrowed ass, to fulfil the prophecy; Zech. ix. 9. "Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass;" Matt. xxi. 5. Paul refused not (with other preachers) to labour at the trade of a tent-maker; Acts xviii. 3. And Timothy was not ashamed to bring him his cloak and parchments, so great a journey; 2 Tim. iv. 13. Nothing is avoided by the lowly as a shame, but that which is displeasing to God, and disagreeable to his Christian duty; but not that which he can call the service of God, and which God accepteth and will reward.

8. The highminded are ashamed of the company and familiarity of the poor (unless when they seek for applause by popularity): and they greatly affect the favour and company of the rich; James v. 4. 6. Therefore Solomon saith, that "the rich hath many friends, when the poor is hated of his neighbour;" Prov. xiv. 20.

But the lowly choose to converse with the low. For so did Christ who was our pattern: and it is his law, (Rom. xii. 16.) "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." Christ was not ashamed to call us brethren, (Heb. iii. 11.) nor will he be ashamed so to call the least of his true disciples before God and angels at the dreadful day; Matt. xxv. 40. xxviii. 10. John xx. 17. They are the most honourable company, who are likest to Christ, and are the wisest and the holiest; and not those who are most like to his crucifiers and enemies, and have their portion in this world.

9. Pride is usually attended with vain curiosity: curiosity in ornaments, in fashions, in dressings, in attendance, in furniture, in rooms, and in abundance of small, inconsiderable circumstances. The proud (who go this lower way)



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most necessary parts or pillars thereof, nothing could more content their humour,

But the lowly mind desireth rather to do good, than to be known to do it. And it is not men's unthankfulness that will take him off, because it is not their thanks which is his reward. He would be as like God as he can in doing good, but not for his own glory, but for God's. As he is God's steward, it is with God that he keepeth reckoning; and if his accounts will pass with him, he hath enough. And if God will have him to need the help of others, he is not too stout to seek and be beholden. Though every ingenuous man should value his freedom from the servitude of man (1 Cor. vii. 23.), and if he can be free, "should choose it rather;" ver. 21. And "the borrower is a servant to the lender;" Prov. xxii. 7. And we may say with him in Luke xvi. 3. "To beg I am ashamed." Yet here humility will make us stoop, when God requireth it. Christ himself refused not to be a receiver; Luke viii. 3. No, nor to ask a draught of water; John iv. And poverty is of a great mercy to the proud, to take them down, and make them stoop. "The rich answereth roughly; but the poor useth entreaties;" Prov. xviii. 23. So much of the marks of Pride.

Direct. 3. 'Overlook not the odiousness and peril of pride.' I will name you now but a few of its aggravations, because I have more largely mentioned them elsewhere.

1. It is the most direct opposition to God, to set up ourselves as idols in his place, and seek for some of his honour to ourselves.

2. It is the firstborn of the devil, and an imitation of him whom God in nature hath taught us to take for the greatest enemy of him and us; and the most odious of all the creatures of God.

3. It is madness to fall by that same sin, which we know was the overthrow of our first parents, and of the world.

4. And it is sottish impudency in such as we, who know that our bodies are going into rottenness and dust, and think in what a place and plight we must there lie, and that those days of darkness will be many; and who know that our souls are defiled with sin, and if we have any saving knowledge and grace, it is small, and mixed with abundance of

ignorance and corruption; and the nature of it is contrary to pride.

5. It is contrary to the design of redeeming grace, which is to save the humble, contrite soul.

6. It betrayeth men to a multitude of other sins (as vanity of mind, loss of time, neglect of duty, striving for preferment, quarrelling with others, upon matters of reputation or precedency, &c.).

7. And it is a sin that God is especially engaged against, and the surest way to dejection and self-frustration; 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 6. Isa. ii. 12. Prov. xv. 22. xvi. 5. xxi. 4. Psal. cxxxviii. 6. xxxi. 23. Job xl. 11, 12. Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14.

II. After these three general Directions, I shall briefly name a few particular ones.

Direct. 1. 'Remember continually what you are, and what you were, what your bodies are, and will be; and what your souls are by the pollution of sin; and how close it still adhereth to you; and from how great a misery Christ redeemed you.' He neither knoweth his body, nor his soul, his sin, or misery, nor Christ, nor grace, who is a servant unto pride.

Direct. 2. 'Remember the continual presence of the most holy, dreadful God: and can pride lift up the head before him?'

Direct. 3. 'Look to the example of a humbled Saviour, and learn of God incarnate to be lowly; Matt. xi. 29. From his birth to his ascension, you may read the strangest lecture of lowliness, that ever was delivered to the haughty world.'

Direct. 4. 'Turn all your desires to the glorifying of God; remembering that you were not made for your own glory, but for his.'

Direct. 5. 'Think much of the heavenly glory, and it will cloud all the vainglory of the world.'

Direct. 6. 'Think what it is that is your honour among the angels in heaven, and what is most approved and honoured by God himself; and therein place your honour; and not in the conceits of foolish men.'

Direct. 7. Lastly, 'Make use of humbling occasions to exercise your self-denial and lowliness of mind.' I commend not to you the pious folly of those popish saints, who are

magnified by them for making themselves purposely ridiculous to exercise their humility, (as by going through the streets with their breeches on their heads, and other such fooleries); for God will give you humbling occasions enough, when he seeth good: but when he doth it, be sure that you improve them to the abasing of yourselves. And use yourselves to be above the esteem of man, and to bear contempt when it is cast upon you (as Christ did for your sakes), though not to draw it foolishly or wilfully upon yourselves. He that hath but once borne the contempt of men, is better able to bear it afterwards, than he that never underwent it, but thinketh that he hath an entire reputation to preserve: and he that is more solicitous of his duty, and most indifferent in point of honour, doth usually best secure his honour by such neglect, and always best undergo dishonour.

CHAPTER XVI.

How to escape the Sin of Fulness or Luxury by Faith.

THE second sin of Sodom, and fruit of abused prosperity, is Fulness of Bread; Ezek. xvi. 49. Concerning which (having also handled it elsewhere more at large), I shall now briefly give you these general Directions first, and then a few that are more particular.

Direct. 1. 'Understand well what sinful fulness is.' It is sinful when it hath any one of these ill conditions.

1. When you eat or drink more in quantity than is consistent with the due preservation of your health: or so much as hurteth your health or reason. For the use of food is to fit us for our duty; and therefore that which disableth or unfitteth us, is too much. But here both the present and future must be considered.

2. When you have no higher end in eating and drinking, than the pleasing of your appetite. Be it little or much, it is to be judged of according to its end. A beast hath no other end because he hath no reason, and so properly hath no end at all; but we are bound to eat and drink to the glory of God, and to do all to further us in his service; 1 Cor. x. 31. The appetite may be pleased in order to a higher end; that is, 1. So far as it is a true director what is for our health,



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(2.) Others that are phlegmatic and dull, can never feed fully; but they are heavy and drowsy, unfit for prayer, and unfit for work: usually the health, as well as the consciences of these persons, doth require a spare kind of diet; and that which is but enough for others, is too much for them. Because the avoiding of sin, and the performance of our duties, is the measure of our food.

4. It is sinful fulness, when any of God's creatures are taken without any benefit, and in vain. It is a sin to take any more than we have cause to think is like to do us good; though we thought it were like to do no harm. That which is used only to gratify the appetite, or for any other unprofitable cause, and neither furthereth health nor duty, is sinfully cast away. And if vain words be forbidden, vain eating and drinking can be no better.

The evil of the sin is, 1. Because man being a rational creature, should do nothing in vain. 2. Because we are God's stewards, and must give an account of all our talents. 3. Because God's mercies are not to be contemned, nor cast away as nothing worth. 4. But especially because there are thousands in want, while you abound; and if you spend that in vain, which others need, you wrong God, and rob them, and shew that you want love to your brethren, and prefer your appetites before their necessities. If you think any thing that you have is absolutely your own, you are but foolish pretenders against God; but if you know that God hath lent it you for his service, how dare you cast it away in vain? Job vi. 12. When Christ had multiplied food (or satisfied men's appetite) by miracle, he saith, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost:" nothing then must be lost, on yourselves or others.

5. To bestow too much cost upon the belly, is a sinful fulness too, though the quantity of food be never so small. Cost is too much when it is more than is profitable; or when the cost exceedeth the profit. The reasons of this are the same as of the former; because we are God's stewards, and must give account of all that we have, and must improve it all to our Master's use; and because thousands want what we might spare, and superfluously spend. What are the occasions which will justify some extraordinary costliness, is too long now to explicate. In general, it must be for some end and benefit, which is better than any which might be

procured otherwise by that expence : but pride or appetite are no justifying causes of it. It was faring sumptuously which was that carnal gentleman's sin, in Luke xvi. It is said of such, that their "belly is their God;" (Phil. iii. 18.) for they daily sacrifice much more to it, than they do to God. Many hundred pounds a year, is little enough for many men to sacrifice to their throats. It is such a sacrifice which James calleth, the "cherishing of their hearts as in a day of slaughter;" James v. 5. This is the hid treasure which their bellies are filled with; Psal. xvii. 14. The rich man's full barns (Luke xii. 20.) were but to fill his belly, and please his flesh; "Thou hast enough laid up for many years." For what? Why for ease, and eating, and drinking, and mirth. They think it is their own, and that they may spend it on themselves; but O the terrible account! As David would not offer that to God which cost him nothing (2 Sam. xxiv. 24.), so neither will they offer too cheap a sacrifice to their bellies. But lust deserveth not much cost: he that is your God, is the God of others as well as of you; and careth for them as well as for you; even when he giveth them less than you: and he giveth it you, that you may have the trial, and the honour of giving it according to his will to them.

It is every man's duty to choose the cheapest diet (and other accommodations) which will but answer his lawful ends; that is, 1. His health and welfare. 2. And the meet entertainment of others, and the avoiding of those evils which are greater than the charge.

He that loveth his neighbour as himself, will not see multitudes cold and hungry, while he gratifieth his own sensuality with superfluities. Though all men are not to live at the same rates, yet all are to observe this common rule of charity and frugality. The rule given by Paul for apparel, must be used also for our food; that women adorn themselves with modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 1 Tim. ii. 9. So must we feed with moderation and sobriety, and not with too rich and costly food.

6. And it is a great aggravation of this sin, to bestow too much of our time upon it. When those precious hours are spent in needless eating and drinking, or sitting at it, which are given us for far greater work. Though no set

time can be determined for all men, yet all must feed as those that have still necessary business upon their hand, which stayeth for them, and for which it is that they cherish themselves: and therefore let not time pass away in vain, but make haste to your work, and feed not idleness instead of diligence.

7. And the root of all this mischief is, when the hearts of men are set upon their bellies; and their fancies and wits are slaves unto their appetites: when they are not indifferent about things indifferent, but make a great matter of it, what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, beyond the necessity or real benefit of it. When they are troubled if their appetite be but crossed, and they are like crying children, or swine, that are discontented and complaining if they have not what they would have, and if their bellies are not full. When they are like the Israelites, that wept for flesh; Numb. xi. 4. Because "they serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies;" Rom. xvi. 17, 18. But the poor in spirit can live upon a little, and mind the things of the Spirit so much, that they are more indifferent to their appetite. And custom maketh abstinence and temperance sweet and easy to them. For a well-used appetite is like well taught children; not so unmannerly, nor craving, nor bawling, nor troublesome, as the glutton's ill-used appetite is. It troubles men's minds, and taketh up their thoughts, and commandeth their estates, and devoureth their time, and turneth out God, and all that is holy; and like a thirst in a dropsy, it devour-eth all, and is satisfied with nothing, but increaseth itself and the disease: as if such men did live or eat, when the temperate do eat to live.

8. Lastly, it is the height of his sin, when you also cherish the gulosity and excess of others. When for the pride of great housekeeping, you cause others to waste God's creatures and their time; and waste your estates to satisfy their luxury, and to procure their vain applause. "Woe to him that giveth his neighbour drink; that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also;" Hab. ii. 15. This is the fulness which is forbidden of God.

Object. ' But is it not said that Christ came eating and drinking, and the Pharisees quarrelled with him and his disciples, because they did not fast as John and his disciples



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covetousness ; Ezek. xxxiii. 31. And as some of Christ's hearers were after the loaves.

4. The use of pleasing the fleshly appetite doth make men need riches ; which is a misery, and a snare. Such must needs have their desires satisfied, and therefore cannot live on a little : and therefore if they have riches, their flesh devoureth almost all, and they have little to spare for any charitable uses : and if they have none, they are tempted to steal or get by some unlawful means. And so it tempteth them to the love of money (which is the root of all evil) because they love the lust which needeth it.

5. And it maketh them utterly unfit for suffering (which Christ will have all his followers to expect). He that is used to please his appetite, will take that for a grievous life, which another man will feel no trouble in. If a full fed gentleman or Dives were tied to fare as the poor labourer doth at the best, he would lament his case as if he were undone, and would take for half a martyrdom (if it were on a pious pretence) which his neighbour would account no suffering, but a feast. And will God reward men for such self-made sufferings ? How unfit is he to endure imprisonment, banishment and want, who hath always used to please his flesh ? If God cast him into poverty, how impatient would he be ! How plentifully and pleasantly would most poor countrymen think to live, if they had but a hundred pounds a year of their own ! But if he that hath thousands, and is used to fulness, should be reduced to a hundred, how querulous or impatient would he be.

6. It maketh the body heavy and unfit for duty : both duties of piety, and the honest labours of your calling.

7. It maketh the body diseased ; and so more unfit to serve the soul. It is to be noted, that the excess reproved by Paul at their love-feasts, was punished with sickness, and with death : and as that punishment had a moral suitability to their sin ; so it is not unlike that (according to God's ordinary way of punishing) it was also a natural effect of their excess.

8. It is a most unsuitable thing to such great sinners as we are, who have forfeited all our mercies, and are called so loud to penitent humiliation ; when we should turn to the Lord with all our hearts, with fasting, weeping and mourning, to be then pleasing our fleshly appetites with curiosities

and excess, is a sin that God once threatened in a terrible sort; Isa. xxii. 12, 13. Fasting is in such cases a duty of God's appointment; Joel ii. 12. Luke ii. 37. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Cornelius's fasting and alms-deeds came up before God; Acts x. 30. Daniel was heard upon his fast; Dan. ix. 3. Christ fasted when he entered solemnly on his work; Matt. iv. And some devils would not be cast out without fasting and prayer: and is luxury fit in such a case?

9. Lastly, remember what was said before, that others are empty, while we are full. Thousands need all that we can spare: and they are members of Christ, and of the same body with us: and so much as we waste on our appetite or pride, so much the less we have to give. And "he that seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him (when he cannot deny superfluities to himself), how dwelleth the love of God in him!" When the "poor we have always with us," that we may always have exercise for our love: and he that glutteth his own flesh to the full, and giveth the poor but the leavings of his lust, if it were a thousand pounds a year that he giveth, must look for small reward from God, however he may do good to others.

More particular Directions may be as followeth.

Direct. 1. 'Understand well how much the flesh in this lapsed state is our enemy;' and how much gulosity doth strengthen it against us; and how much of the work of grace lieth in resisting and overcoming it; and what need we have to serve the Spirit, and not to be helpers of the flesh: and the true consideration of these things may do much; Gal. v. 17—19, 22, 23. Rom. viii. 6—10. 13.

Direct. 2. 'Set yourselves to the work of God according to your several places; and live not idly. And then mark what helpeth or hindereth you in your work.' If you play not the loitering hypocrite, but make your duties the serious business of all your lives, you will quickly find how inconsistent a brutish appetite, and a full belly, and a curious, costly and time-wasting pampering of the flesh, is with such a Christian life.

Direct. 3. 'Study well the life of Christ, and the example of the ancient saints.' Remember what diet was in use with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; with the apostles, and holiest servants of Christ. And that it was Solomon the most

voluptuous king of Israel, that was told by his mother, that “it is not for kings to drink wine, but for them that are of a sorrowful heart:” and that the description of the luxurious then was “riotous eaters of flesh;” Prov. xxxi. 5. xxiii. 20. And that it was the mark of fleshly heretics, “to feast themselves without fear;” Jude 12. And that they were destroyed by God’s wrath, though they had their desire who murmured for want of flesh, after many years abstinence in a wilderness; and it is called, “Asking meat for their lust;” Psal. lxxviii. 18. I doubt many of our servants now would be discontented, and think their bellies too hardly used, if they had no better than the milk and honey of the land of promise; yea, or the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt.

Direct. 4. ‘Think what a base and swinish kind of sin it is, to be a slave to one’s guts or appetite.’ And how far it is below, not only a Christian, but a man, and what a shame to human nature.

Direct. 5. ‘Look often to the grave,’ and observe those skulls into which once the pleasant meats and drinks were put; and those jaws that were so often employed, in grinding for the belly: and remember how quickly this will be your case, and think then whether such a carcase deserve so much care, and cost, and curiosity, to the neglect and danger of an immortal soul.

Direct. 6. ‘Lay a constant law upon your appetite, and use it not to be pleased without cause and benefit;’ but use it to a wholesome, but not a full, a costly, a curious, or a delicious food: and use will make intemperance to be loathsome to you, and temperance to be sweet.

Direct. 7. ‘Learn so much reason as to know truly what is most conducive to your health, both for quantity and quality;’ and mark what diseases and deaths are usually caused by excess. It is more reasonable to be temperate for prevention of diseases, than under the power and feeling of them; when pain and sickness force you to it, whether you will or not. If you will not obey God so carefully as your physician; yet obey the preventing counsels of your physician, before you need his curing counsel.

Direct. 8. ‘Neglect not the manly and the sacred delights which God alloweth.’ I mean, the pleasures of honest labours, and of your calling, and of reading and knowledge, of meditation and prayer, and of a well ordered soul



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stead of a recreation. If it be a man's calling, he must be constant and laborious in it.

4. Yea, no interposed recreation or idleness is lawful, but that which is either necessitated by disability, or that which is needful to fit the mind or body for its work : as whetting to the mower.

5. All men's callings tie them not constantly to one kind of labour ; but some may be put to vary their employments every day : as poor men that live by going on errands, and doing other men's business, under several masters, several ways : and as many rich people whose occasions of doing good may often vary.

6. The rich and honourable are not bound to the same kind of labour as the poor. A magistrate or pastor is not bound to follow the plough ; nay, he is bound not to do it ordinarily, lest he neglect his proper and greater work. Some men's labours are with the hand, and some men's with the head.

7. Every man should choose that calling which is most agreeable to his mind and body. Some are strong, and some are weak. Some are of quick wits, and some are dull. All should be designed to that which they are most fit for.

8. Every one should choose that calling (if he be fit for it) in which he may be most serviceable to God, for the doing of the greatest good in the world : and not that in which he may have most ease, or wealth, or honour. God and the public good must be our chiefest ends in the choice.

9. And in the labours of our calling, the getting or riches must never be our principal end ; but we must labour to do the most public good, and to please God by living in obedience to his commands.

10. Yet every man must desire the success of his labour, and the blessing of God on it, and may continue his work as best tendeth to success. And though we may not labour to be rich (Prov. xxiii. 4.) as our principal end ; yet we must not be formal in our callings ; nor think that God is delighted in our mere toil, to see men fill a bottomless vessel ; but we must endeavour after the most successful way, and pray for a just prosperity of our labours. And when God doth prosper us with wealth, we must take it thankfully

(though with fear), and use it to his service, and do all the good with it we can. Lay by as God hath prospered every man; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. "Let him work with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth;" Ephes. iv. 28. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted;" James i. 9.

11. The lowness of a man's calling, or baseness of his employment, will not allow him to be negligent or weary of it, or uncomfortable in it: seeing God must be obeyed in the lowest service, as well as in the highest; and will reward men according to their faithful labour, and not according to the dignity of their place: and indeed no service should be accounted low and base, which is sincerely done for so great and high a Master, and hath the promise of so glorious a reward; Col. iii. 23, 24.

12. The greater and more excellent any man's work and calling is, his idleness and negligence is the greater sin. It is bad in a ploughman, or any daylabourer; but it is far worse in a minister of the Gospel, or a magistrate. Because they wrong many, and that in the greatest things, and violate the greatest trust from God. Christ biddeth us pray the "Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest;" (Luke x. 27.) and not proud, covetous, idle drones, that would have honour only for their wealth and titles: and he saith, that the labourer is worthy of his hire, but not the loiterer. Among the elders that rule the church, it is especially the labourers in the word and doctrine that are worthy of double honour. Dr. Hammond noteth on 1 Thess. v. 12, that the bishops whom they are required to know and honour, were those that laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and admonished them; and that it was "for their work's sake" that they were to esteem them very highly in love. The highest title that ever was put on pastors, was to be "Labourers together with God;" 1 Cor. iii. 9.

And the calling of magistrates also requireth no small diligence; Jethro persuadeth Moses to take helpers, not that he might himself be idle, but lest he should wear away himself with doing more than he could undergo; Exod. xviii. 18.

So the calling of a schoolmaster; and of parents and masters of families, who have rational souls to instruct and govern, requireth a special diligence: and negligence in

such is a greater sin, than in him that neglecteth sheep or horses.

So also it is a great sin in a physician, because he doth neglect men's lives; and in a lawyer, when by sloth he destroyeth men's estates. The greatness of the trust, must greaten men's care.

13. He that hath hired his labour to another (as a servant, a lawyer, a physician,) is guilty of a thievish fraud, if he give him not that which he hath paid for. "Owe nothing to any man but love;" Rom. xiii. Hired labour is a debt that must be paid.

14. Religious duties will not excuse idleness, nor negligence in our callings (but oblige us to it the more): nor will any bodily calling excuse us from religious duties; but both must take their place in their seasons and due proportions.

Quest. 1. 'But what if a man can live without labour; may not he forbear who needeth it not?' *Answer.* No, because he is nevertheless a subject of God, who doth command it: and a member of the commonwealth which needeth it.

Quest. 2. 'What if I were not brought up to labour; am I bound to use it?' *Answer.* Yes, you must yet learn to do your duty, and repent, and ask pardon for living so long in sinful idleness. What if you had not been brought up to pray, or to read, or to any needful trade, or ornament of life? What if your parents had never taught you to speak? Is it not your duty therefore to learn it when you are at age, rather than not at all?

Quest. 3. 'But what if I find that it hurteth my body to labour; may I not forbear?' *Answer.* If it so hurt you, that you are unable to do it, there is no remedy. Necessity hath no law. Or if one sort of labour hurt you, when you can take up another in which you may be as serviceable to the commonwealth, you may choose that to which your strength is suitable; but if you think that every sudden pain or weariness is a sufficient excuse; or that some real hurt will warrant you in an idle life, you may as well think that your servant, and your horse or ox may cease all their labour for you, when they are weary. Or that your candle should not burn, nor your knife be used in cutting, because that use consumeth them.

Quest. 4. 'What if I find that wordly business doth hin-



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meddle with no lower things, which would hinder them in the higher. But no man can be excused from doing all the good he can to others, by any pretences of looking to his soul: for he can no way more surely further his salvation; nor can he hinder it more, than by sinful negligence or sloth.

Quest. 8. ‘ But was not labour and toil a curse upon Adam, after his sin? And any man that can may labour to escape a curse.’

Answ. 1. Adam in innocency was set to dress and keep the garden. 2. The curse was in the toil and the frustration of his labour. 3. And even that is such a curse, as God will not take off, or remit.

Quest. 9. ‘ Doth not Paul say to servants, “ If ye can be free, use it rather ?” ’

Answ. True; but he saith not, ‘ If you can be idle use it rather.’ A freeman may work as hard as a bondman.

Quest. 10. ‘ May not a man that hath several callings before him, choose the easiest?’

Answ. Not merely or chiefly because it is easy; but he must choose the most profitable to the common good, be it easy or hard, if it be such as he can undergo. Yet he may avoid such a calling, as by tiring his body, indisposeth him to spiritual things; or by taking up all his time, will deprive him of convenient leisure for things spiritual. But he that only to ease his flesh, doth put by more profitable employments because they will cost him labour, doth serve his flesh, and cast off his duty to his God.

II. The signs of wealthy-idleness are these:

1. When men think it unnecessary for them to labour constantly and diligently, because they are rich, and can live without it; or because they are great, and it is below them. The confutation of which error I gave you before, and shall give you more of it anon. The poor in spirit think not a laborious life below them.

2. When men have time to spare. This is a most evident mark of idleness: for God hath given us no time in vain; but hath given us full work for all our time. They that have time to play away needlessly, to sleep away needlessly, to prate away needlessly, do tell the world that Sodom's idleness is their sin. Especially poor souls, who are

yet unsanctified, and are strangers to a renewed heart and life, and are utterly unfit to die: O what abundance of important work have these to do! And can they be idle, while all this lieth undone? Indeed if they are in despair of being saved, it is no wonder: and one would think by their lives that they did despair: for surely a man so near another world, that must be in heaven or hell for ever, would never live idly, if he had any good hope that his endeavours should not be all in vain. The poor in spirit have no time to spare: labour is their life: eternity is still before their eyes: necessity is upon them; and they know the woe that followeth idleness. Repentance for sin and negligence past, is a constant spur to future diligence. And their work is sweet, and incomparably more pleasant to them than idleness. If the devil be so diligent, because he knoweth that his time is short (Rev. xii. 12.), it is a shame to them that are not so, who call themselves the servants of the Lord.

3. When men's labour hath but the time that is due to recreation; and recreation and idleness hath the great part of time that is due to labour. The labour of the idle Sodomite, is like the religion of the reserved hypocrite: it is but the leavings of the flesh, or somewhat that cometh in upon the bye. But God is not inconstant in his mercies unto us: he is still preserving us, and maintaining us: the angels are still guarding us: the faithful ministers of Christ are constant in teaching us (and loath that Satan should hinder them, and save their labour). Faithful magistrates also watch continually, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, as the ministers of God for our good. And can a short and idle kind of labour then excuse us? Christ said, "It was his meat to do his Father's will," when he was endeavouring man's salvation; John iv. 34. And that "he must do the work of him that sent him while it was day;" John ix. 4. And shall idleness be excused in us? Even in us who must be "judged according to our works" (Rev. xxii. 12. Mark xiii. 34.) by him that hath commanded every man his work? Yea, when we are redeemed and purified to be "zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14.), and "are his workmanship created to good works in Christ, which God hath ordained, that we should walk in them;" Ephes. ii. 10.

4. When men make a great matter of all their labour;

and of that which to a diligent man is small. The sluggard hath his thorn hedge, and “a lion in the way;” Prov. xxii. 13. xxvi. 13. 15, 16. But the diligent say, when they have done their best, “We are unprofitable servants.” Nothing is so weary to them as unprofitable idleness (except hurtful wickedness). They think still, O how short is time! and how much work is yet undone! And as every faithful minister in his calling, is never so well pleased as when he doth most for the good of souls; so it is with every faithful Christian in his place. A candle if it be not burnt, is lost, and good for nothing.

5. The idle Sodomite hath a mind which followeth the affections of his body: and as soon as his body is a little weary, his mind is so too, and suffereth the weariness of the body to prevail; because the flesh is king within them. Nay, a slothful mind doth often begin, and they are weary to look upon their work, or to think of it, before it hath wearied the body at all. And what they do, they do unwillingly; because they are in love with idleness; Mal. i. 13. But the lowly and laborious are in love with diligence and work: and therefore though they cannot avoid the weariness of the body, their willing minds will carry on the body as far as it can well go. The diligent woman “worketh willingly with her hands; her candle goeth not out by night,” &c.; Prov. xxxi. 13, &c. Servants must “do service with good will, as to the Lord;” Ephes. vi. 7. If ministers preach and labour “willingly, they have a reward;” 1 Cor. ix. 17. But not if they are only driven on by necessity, and the fear of woe; 1 Pet. v. 2. What shall we do willingly, if not our duties? He that sinneth willingly, and serveth God, and followeth his labour unwillingly, shall be rewarded according to his will.

6. The idle Sodomite doth love and choose that kind of life which is easiest, and hath least work to be done. This is the chief provision by which he fulfilleth his fleshly lust. An idle servant thinketh that the best place, in which he shall have most ease and fulness. An idle parent will cast all the burden of his children’s teaching, upon the schoolmaster and the pastor. An idle minister thinketh himself best, where he may have no more labour, than what tendeth to his public applause; and when he hath the most wealth and honour, and least to do, he taketh that to be the flourishing



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her family, &c. shew yours by the good which you have done in the world, and by the preparation of your souls for a better world. "Let every man prove his own work, that he may have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another;" Gal. vi. 3, 4. What case are your children in? Are they taught, or untaught? What case is your soul in? Your fruit must judge you.

III. The mischiefs of this Sodomitical idleness, and the reasons against it, are (briefly) these.

1. It is contrary to the active nature of man's soul; which in activity exceedeth the fire itself. It is as natural for a soul to be active, as for a stone or clod of earth to lie still. And this active nature animateth the passive body, to move it, and use it in its proper work. And should this heavenly fire be imprisoned in the body, which it should command and move? "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening;" Psal. civ. 23.

2. It is contrary to the common course of nature. Doth the sun shine for you as well as for others; or doth it not? Doth all the frame of nature continue in its course (the air, the waters, summer and winter,) for you as well as for others, or not? If not, then you take not yourselves beholden to God for them: and if you have no use for the sun and other creatures, you have no use for life; for by them you live. But if yea, then what is it that they serve you for? Did God ever frame you so glorious a retinue, to attend you only to sleep, and laugh, and play, and to be idle? What! is all this for no higher an end? Or rather do you not by your idleness forfeit life, and all these helps and maintainers of your lives.

3. It is an unthankful reproach and blasphemy against the God of nature; yea, and against the Lord our Redeemer, to think that the wise Almighty God did make so noble a thing as a soul, and place it in so curious an engine as the body, where spirits, and blood, and heart, and lungs, are never idle, but in constant motion; and that he hath appointed us so glorious a retinue as aforesaid, and all this to do nothing with, or worse than nothing! To sleep, and rise, and dress yourselves, and talk, and eat, and drink; to tell men only that you are not dead, lest they should mistake, and bury you alive! What is it but to put a scorn on your

Creator and Redeemer, to live as if he had created and redeemed you for no better and nobler ends than these?

4. You do as it were pray for death, or provoke God to take away your lives. For if they be good for nothing else but idleness and beastly pleasures, why should you expect to have them continued? Or at least, why should he not use you as Nebuchadnezzar, and take away your reason, and turn you into beasts, if the life and pleasure of a beast be all that you desire? Could not you eat, and drink, and sleep, and play, without an intellectual soul? Cannot the birds make their nests, and breed, and feed their young, and sit and sing, without an intellectual nature? Cannot a swine have his ease, and meat, and lust, without reason? What should you do with reason for such uses?

5. You shew a stupid, senseless heart, that can live idly, and have so much to do; and have so many spurs to rouse you up. To live continually in the sight of God, to have a soul so ignorant, so unbelieving, so unholy, so unfurnished of faith and love, so unready for death, so uncertain of salvation; nay, in such apparent danger of damnation, and to be still uncertain of living one day or hour longer; and yet to live idly in such a case, as if all were well, and your work were done, and you had no more to fear or care for. O what a mad, what a dead, what a sottish kind of soul is this! To see the graves before your eyes; to see your neighbours carried thither; to feel the tokens of mortality daily in yourselves; to be called on and warned to prepare, and yet under this to live as if you had nothing to do, but to shew yourselves in the neatest dress, and as a peacock, to spread your plumes for yourselves and others to look upon, or to pamper a carcase for worms and rottenness! O what a deplorable case is this! The Lord pity you, and awaken your understandings, and bring you to your wits, and you will then wonder at your own stupidity.

6. Idleness is a sin which is contrary to God's universal law: the law which extended to all times and places. Adam in innocency was to labour: he that had all things prepared for his sustenance by God, was yet himself to labour: he that was Lord of all the world, and was richer than any of our proud ones whosoever, was yet to dress and keep the garden. Cain was a tiller of land, and Abel was a keeper of cattle, when they were heirs of all the earth.

Noah also was lord of all the world, and richer than you, and yet he was an husbandman. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were princes, and yet keepers of sheep and cattle: It is not a bare permission, but a precept of diligence in the fourth commandment, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do." Christ himself did not live idly, but before his ministry they said, "Is not this the carpenter?" Mark vi. 3. And afterwards how incessantly was he doing good to men's bodies and souls? And what laborious lives did his apostles live? See 2 Cor. vi. 5. xi. 23. Acts xviii. 3. And are you exempt from the universal law?

7. You shew a base and fleshly mind. The noblest natures are the most active, and the basest the most dead and dull. The earth is not baser than the fire, in a greater degree than an idle soul is baser than one that is active, and spendeth himself in doing good. Methinks your pride itself should keep you from proclaiming such a dead and earthen disposition.

8. Idleness is of the same kind with fornication, gluttony, drunkenness, and other such beastly sins: for all is but sinful flesh-pleasing, or sensuality: the same fleshly nature which draweth them to the one, doth draw you to the other; and they do but gratify their flesh in one kind of vice, as you do in another. And it is pity that idleness should be in so much less disgrace than they. And truly if you cannot deny your flesh its ease, I cannot see if the temptation lay as strong that way, how you should deny it in any of those lusts; so that you seem to be virtually fornicators, gluttons, drunkards, &c. and ready to commit the acts.

9. And hereby you strengthen the flesh as it is your enemy for the time to come. When you have long used to please it by idleness, it will get the victory, and must be pleased still: and then you are undone for ever, if grace do not yet cause you to overcome it. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" Rom. viii. 13. None are freed from condemnation, nor are members of Christ, but they that "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" Rom. viii. 1. For "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" ver. 7.

10. Idleness is a sin much aggravated by its continuance.



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serve in your daily callings. He that will labour when he is poor, and feeleth the necessity of it, and will give over all, and live idly, and playfully when he is rich, doth shew that he laboureth not in obedience to God (or else he would continue it), but merely to supply his bodily wants. You have your reward then from yourselves, and you cannot in reason expect any from God. But true believers have another rule, by which they live: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ;" Col. iii. 23, 24.

15. Idleness is a forfeiture of your protection, and of your daily bread. God is not bound to keep you to play, and loiter, and do nothing. You have not a plenary right to your meat, if you live in wilful idleness. I shewed you God's commands before. God's promise of prosperity, is, "Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands;" Psal. cxxviii. 2. (And if many in England that have most, should eat no other than the labour of their hands, it would cure their fulness.) The diligent woman, (Prov. xxxi. 27.) doth "not eat the bread of idleness." And Paul maketh it a church-canon (2 Thess. iii. 6. 10. 12.), and commandeth and exhorteth us, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all work with quietness, and eat their own bread; and that the church withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; and "that if any would not work, neither shall he eat."

16. The idle rob themselves and others: you rob yourselves of the fruit of your own labours; and you rob your masters, or your families, or whomsoever you should labour for: "He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster;" Prov. xviii. 9. "The desire of the slothful killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour;" (Prov. xxi. 25.) that is, 1. The sluggishness of the wisher famisheth him: And, 2. The hunger of desire tormenteth him when he hath not the thing desired. "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through;" Eccles. x. 18. "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger;" Prov. xix. 15. And he that provideth not for his own (kindred and relations), but especially for those of his family, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;

I Tim. v. 8: Hath no one need of you? Hath no one hired you? Hath no one any right to your labours, that you are so long idle? If none have need of you, what do you in the world?

17. The idle are drones and burdens of the commonwealth: and the best ordered governments have made laws against them, as they did against other pernicious crimes; Paul laboured day and night that he might not be liable to any; 2 Thess. iii. 8. And you think because you have enough, that other men must labour for you, but you may live idly without any blame. You live then upon the labours of others, but who liveth upon yours? Yea, I have known some lazy persons, that because they are professors of zeal in religion; or because they are ministers or scholars, live idly in their callings, and take their ease, and think that all others that have riches are bound to maintain them (like the popish begging friars), and they say, He is covetous that cherisheth not them in idleness; and he that giveth not to them, doth them wrong; when Paul commandeth that they should not eat: and when we ask them how they live, they say, 'Upon the providence of God:' and when the tenderness of people causeth them to contribute to relieve these drones, they hypocritically admire the providence of God, who provideth for them, and live in idleness, and call it living upon Providence.

18. Idleness depriveth you of the great delight of doing good. There is no such pleasure in this world, as is found in successful doing good; no man knoweth it but he that trieth it, (and that without any conceits of merit, in commutative justice). To do good in magistracy for the piety, peace and safety of the people; to do good as ministers, for the saving of souls; to do good as parents, to educate a holy seed; to do good as physicians, to save men's lives, &c. It is a pleasure exceeding all voluptuousness. And this the idle wilfully reject.

19. You lose all the reward of well-doing at the last, and fall under the doom of the unprofitable servant (Matt. xxv.), who must be cast into outer darkness. You must answer for all the talents of time, and health, and strength, and parts, to Him who will judge all according to what they have done in the body: and where shall the idle then appear?

20. Idleness will destroy your health and lives : nothing but fulness (which is its companion) doth bring so many thousands unseasonably to the grave. And do you neither love your souls, nor your lives? Are you only for your present ease?

21. Idleness breedeth melancholy, and corrupteth the fantasy and mind, and so uufitteth you for all that is good. Therefore the idle that will do no good, are fain to devise some vanity to do; some game, or play, or dress, or compliment, &c. or else they would grow addle-brained, and a shame and burden to themselves. The constant labours of a lawful calling is one of the best cures of melancholy in the world, if it be done with willingness, success, and pleasure.

22. Lastly, Idleness is the nursery of a world of vices. It is the field of temptation, where Satan soweth his tares while men are sleeping. When they are idle, they are at leisure for lustful thoughts; for wanton dalliance; for idle talk; for needless sports, and plays, and visits; for gaming, and riotous feasting, drinking and excess; for pride, and an hundred curiosities: yea, for contentions and mischievous designs: needless and sinful things must be done, when necessary duties are laid by.

And if they are poor, idleness prepareth them to murmur and be discontent, and fall out, and contend with one another; to defraud others, and to steal. These and more are the natural fruits of idleness.

But here I must annex two cautions.

1. That none make this a pretence for a worldly mind and life; nor think that religion is a fruit of idleness; nor say as Pharaoh did of the Israelites, when they would go to sacrifice to God, "Ye are idle;" Exod. v. 17. It is idleness that maketh most men ungodly: they are convinced that it is better to meditate on God's word, and call upon his name, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure: but they are idle, and say, There is a lion in the way; what a weariness is it? We shall never endure it. As if their souls and heaven were not worth their labour, and as if they would go to hell for ease; and as if the feast of joy and glory were not worth the labour of eating or receiving it.

2. Make not this a pretence to oppress your servants



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more liable to be tempted into idleness, as thinking their work is to no purpose: when the well-furnished person doth long to be exercising his wisdom and virtue in profitable well-doing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How by Faith to overcome Unmercifulness to the Needy.

IV. THE fourth sin of Sodom, and of prosperity, mentioned Ezek. xvi. 49. is, They did not “strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” Against which at the present I shall give you but these brief directions.

Direct. 1. Love God your Creator and Redeemer, and then you will love the poorest of your brethren for his sake. And love will easily persuade you to do them good.

Direct. 2. Labour most diligently to cure your inordinate self-love, which maketh men care little for any but themselves, and such as are useful to themselves: and when once you love your neighbours as yourselves, it will be as easy to persuade you to do good to them as to yourselves, and more easy to dissuade you from hurting them than yourselves: (because sensuality tempteth you more strongly to hurt yourselves, than any thing doth to hurt them).

Direct. 3. Overvalue not the things of the world; and then you will not make a great matter of parting with them, for another’s good.

Direct. 4. Do as you would be done by: and ask yourselves how you would be judged of and used, if you were in their condition yourselves.

Direct. 5. Set the life of Christ and his apostles before you: and remember what a delight it was to them to do good: and at how much dearer a rate Christ shewed mercy to you and others, than he requireth you to shew mercy at to any.

Direct. 6. Read over Christ’s precepts of charity and mercy, that a thing so frequently urged on you, may not be senselessly despised by you.

Direct. 7. Remember that mercy is a duty applauded by all the world: as human interest requireth it; so human

nature approveth it in all. Good and bad, even all the world do love the merciful: or if the partial interest of some proud and covetous persons (as the popish clergy for instance), do call for cruelty against those that are not of their mind, and for their profit; yet this goeth so much against the stream of the common interest, and the light of human nature, that mankind will still abhor their cruelty, though they may affright a few that are near them from uttering their detestation. All men speak well of a merciful man, and ill of the unmerciful.

Direct. 8. Believe Christ's promises which he hath made to the merciful, so fully and frequently in Scripture: as in Matt. v. 7. Luke vi. 36. Prov. xi. 17. Psal. xxxvii. 26, &c. And believe his threatenings against the unmerciful, that they shall find no mercy; Prov. xii. 10. James ii. 13. And remember how Christ hath described the last judgment, as passing upon this reckoning; Matt. xxv.

Direct. 9. Live not in fleshly sensuality yourselves: for else your flesh will devour all; and if you have hundreds and thousands, a year, will leave you but little or nothing to do good with.

Direct. 10. Engage yourselves. (not by rash vows, but by resolution and practice) in a stated way of doing good, and take not only such occasions as fall out unexpectedly. Set apart a convenient proportion of your estates, as God doth bless you; and let not needless occasions divert it, and defraud the poor, and you of the benefit.

Direct. 11. Remember still that nothing is absolutely your own, but God who lendeth it. you hath the true propriety, and will certainly call you to an account. And ask yourselves daily, How shall I wish at the day of reckoning, that I had expended and used all my estate? and do accordingly.

Direct. 12. Forget not what need you stand in daily of the mercy of God; and what need you will shortly be in, when your health and wealth will fail you. And how earnestly then you will cry to God for mercy, mercy! "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard;" Prov. xxi. 13.

Direct. 13. Hearken not to an unbelieving heart, which will tell you that you may want yourselves, and therefore would restrain you from well-doing. If God be to be trusted

with your souls, he is to be trusted with your bodies. God trieth whether indeed you take him for your God, by trying whether you can trust him. If you deal with him as with a bankrupt, or a deceitful man, whom you will trust no further than you have a present pawn or security, in case he should deceive you; you blaspheme him, instead of taking him for your God.

Direct. 14. Let your greatest mercy be shewed in the greatest things; and let the good of men's souls be your end even in your mercy to their bodies. And therefore do all in such a manner as tendeth most to promote the highest end. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

CHAPTER XIX.

How to live by Faith in Adversity.

IF I should give you distinct directions, for the several cases of poverty, wrongs, persecutions, unkindnesses, contempt, sickness, &c. it would swell this treatise yet bigger than I intended. I shall therefore take up with this general advice.

Direct. 1. 'In all adversity remember the evil of sin, which is the cause, and the holiness and justice of God which is exercised;' and then the hatred of sin, and the love of God's holiness and justice will make you quietly submit. You will then say, when repentance is serious, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;" Micah vii. 9. And, "why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. iii. 39. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord; for he hath smitten, and he will heal," &c.; ver. 40, 41.

Object. 'But doth not Job's case tell us, that some afflictions are only for trial, and not for sin?'

Answ. No; it only telleth us that the reason why Job is chosen out at that time, to suffer more than other men, is not because he was worse than others, or as bad; but for his trial and good. But, 1. Affliction as it is now existent in the world upon mankind, is the fruit of Adam's sin at



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and cold in prayer, and liveth as if he were grown weary of God, and weary of well-doing. His work must be to feel the smart of God's displeasure, so far as to awaken him to repentance, and set him again with former seriousness, upon his duty: and when he mendeth his pace, he may desire to be eased of the rod and spur. But to give unseasonable cordials to any of these, is but to frustrate the affliction, and to hurt them, and prepare for worse. Nay, and when they are comforted in season, it must be with due caution: "Go thy way, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." It is pernicious unskilfulness in those comforters of the afflicted, who have the same customary words of comfort for all; and by their improper cordials unseasonably applied, delude poor souls, and hinder that necessary repentance which God by so sharp a means doth call them to.

Direct: 4. 'Remember that your part in affliction is to do your duty, and to get the benefit of it: but to remove it is God's part:' Therefore be you careful about that part which is your own, and then make no question but God will do his part. Let it be your first question therefore, 'What is it that I am obliged to in this condition?' 'What is the special duty of one in this sickness, this poverty, imprisonment, restraint, contempt, or slander, which I undergo?' Be careful daily to do that duty, and then never fear the issue of your suffering: nothing can go amiss to him that is found in the way of his duty.

And let it be your next question, 'What spiritual good may be got by this affliction? May not my repentance be renewed? My self-denial, humility, contempt of the world, patience, and confidence on God, be exercised and increased by it? And is not this the end of my heavenly Father? Is not his rod an act of love and kindness to me? Doth he not offer me by it all this good?'

And let your next question be, 'Have I yet got that good which God doth offer me? Have I any considerable benefit to shew, which I have received by this affliction since it came?' If not, why should you desire it to be taken away? Play not the hypocrite in speaking that good of an afflicting God, which you do not seriously believe: If you believe that God is wiser than you, to know what is

fittest for you, and that he is better than you, and therefore hath better ends than you can have; and that really he offereth you far greater good by your sufferings, than he taketh from you: let your affections then be agreeable to this belief: Are you afraid of your own commodity? Do you impatiently long to be delivered from your gain? Are you so childish as to pull off the plaister, if you believe that it is curing the sore? And that it cannot be well and safely done without it: Do you call it the fruit of God's wisdom and love, and yet be as weary of it, as if there were nothing in it but his wrath? Trust God with his work who never faileth; and be careful of your own, who are conscious of untrustiness.

Direct. 5. 'Look principally to your hearts, that they grow not to an overvaluing of the prosperity of the flesh; nor to an undervaluing of holiness and the prosperity of the soul. For this unhappy carnality doth both cause affliction, and make us unprofitable and impatient under it.

1. He that is a worldling, or a voluptuous flesh-pleaser, and savoureth nothing but the things of the flesh, will think himself undone, when his pleasure, and plenty, and honour with men, is taken away. Nothing maketh men grieve for the loss of any worldly commodity, so much as the overloving of it. It is love that seeketh it when you are in hope, and love that mourneth when you are in want, as well as love which delighteth in it when you possess it: as sick men use to love health better than those that never felt the want of it; so it is too common with poor men to love riches better than the rich that never needed: (and yet, poor souls, they deceive themselves, and cry out against the rich, as if they were the only lovers of the world, when they love it more themselves, though they cannot get it.) Never think of bearing affliction with a patient and submissive mind, as long as you overlove the things which affliction taketh from you: for the loss of them will tear those hearts which did stick so inordinately to them.

2. And if you grow to an undervaluing of holiness, you can never be reconciled to afflicting Providence. For it is for our profit that God correcteth us; but for what profit? That we "may be partakers of his holiness;" Heb. xii. 10. 14. If therefore you undervalue that which is God's end,

and goeth for your gain, you will never think that you are gainers or savers by his rod. In correction God doth as it were make a bargain with you; he will take away your riches, or your friends, or your health, and he will give you (if you refuse it not) increase of patience, and mortification in the stead of them: he will exchange so much heavenly-mindedness, for so much of the treasures or pleasures of the world. And now, if you do not like the bargain, if really you had rather have more health, than more holiness; more of the world, than more heavenly-mindedness; more fleshly pleasure, than more mortification of fleshly desires, you will never then like the correcting hand of God, nor rightly profit by it: you will grudge at his dealing, and wish that you were out of his hand, and in your own; and that your estates, and health, and friends, were not at his disposal, but at your's; and you will lose the offered benefit, because you value it not, and accept it not as it is offered you.

3. And those that have some esteem of holiness, and yet neglect the duty which should procure the exercise and increase of grace, do make correction burdensome by making it unprofitable to them. For to hear that they may be gainers by affliction, and to find that they are not, will not reconcile them to it. Whereas if they had really got the benefit, it would quiet them, and comfort them, and make them patient, and thankful to their Father. What have you to shew that you gained by your sufferings? Are you really more mortified, more penitent, more humble, more heavenly, more obedient, more patient than you were before? If you are so, you cannot possibly think that it hath been to your loss to be afflicted: for no one that hath these graces can so undervalue them, as to think that worldly prosperity or ease is better. But if you have not such gain to shew, what wonder if you are weary of the medicine which healeth not? And if, when you have made it to do you no good, you complain of it, when it is yourselves, that you should complain of. If you could say, that before you were afflicted, you went astray, but now you have learnt and kept God's precepts, you might then say by experience, "It is good for me that I was afflicted;" Psal. cxix. 67. 71. And men are taught by natural self-love, not to think ill of



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way, where you see before you the footsteps of your Lord, and of so many holy martyrs and believers: you would say, sure this is the safe and blessed way, in which Christ, and all the heavenly army have passed hence unto their crown: you would say, “Is the servant greater than his Lord?” If thus the innocent Lord of life, and Master of the house was injured and afflicted, am I better than he? Though he suffered to save me from hell, yet not to save me from the purifying trials here on earth. “Doubtless you would count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and count them but dung that you might win him—and that you might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death;” Phil. iii. 8. 10.

Direct. 8. ‘Keep the eye of faith still fixed on the eternal glory; that you may understand what affliction is, when you take it with its ends.’ Remember what eternal joys it leadeth to; and what thoughts you will have of all your pain, when you find yourselves in the everlasting rest. Remember where all tears shall be wiped from your eyes; and who dare blame that way as narrow or foul, which bringeth us to such an end. “They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy: He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;” Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;” Matt. v. 4. Is not eternal joy sufficient for you? When you are suffering with the church-militant, look up to the church-triumphant; and remember that they were lately as low, as sad, as sorrowful as you, and you shall shortly be as high, as glad, as joyful as they. Look into heaven, and see what you suffer for, and think whether that be not worthy of harder terms than any you can undergo. “If we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together: For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;” Rom. viii. 17, 18. “For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: For

the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ;” 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. Heaven well believed, will enable us patiently and cheerfully to bear all things. He will account the very reproach of Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of the world, who looketh believingly to the recompence of reward ; Heb. xi. 26.

Direct. 9. ‘ Learn to die, and then you have learned to suffer.’ He that can bear death, by the power of faith, can bear almost any thing. And he that is well prepared to die, is prepared for any affliction ; and he that is not, is unprepared for prosperity.

Direct. 10. ‘ Remember still that life being so very short, the afflictions of believers are as short.’ We have so little a time to live, that we have but a little while to suffer. And “if thou faint in the day of adversity,” when it is so little awhile to night, “thy strength is small ;” Prov. xxiv. 10.

Direct. 11. ‘ Remember that thou bearest but the common burden of the sons of Adam, who are born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward : and that thou art like to all the members of Christ, who must take up their cross, and suffer with him, if they will reign with him : and that thou art but going the common way to heaven, which that heavenly society hath trod before thee.’ And canst thou expect to be exempted both from the lot of human lapsed nature, and from the lot of all the saints ? If thou wouldst be carried to heaven in the chariot of Elias, and couldst expect to escape the jaws of death, yet must thou endure the persecution, weariness and hunger of Elias, before such a change.

Direct. 12. ‘ Think also how unreasonable it is, for one that must have eternal glory, to grudge at a little suffering in the way, and for one that is saved from the torments of hell, to think it much to be duly chastened on earth.’ For a Lazarus that must be comforted in Abraham’s bosom, to murmur that he waiteth awhile in poverty at the rich man’s doors ? Shall a wicked worldling venture into endless pains, and put himself out of the hopes of heaven, and all this for a short and foolish pleasure ? And will you grudge to suffer so small and short a chastisement in the way to an endless rest and joy ?

Direct. 13. ‘Think why it is that Christ hath so largely commanded, and blest a suffering state, and chosen such a life for those that he will save: and why he so often pronounceth a woe to the prosperous world:’ It is not for want of love to his disciples; nor for want of power to secure their peace. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their’s is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven;” Matt. v. 3, 4. 10. “Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets;” Luke vi. 24—26. “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (that is, trying afflictions), knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience;” James i. 2, 3. “Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you;” James v. 1, 2. All these words are not for nothing: and judge how he should think of adversity who believeth them.

Direct. 14. ‘Mark well whether you find not that yourselves and others are usually much better in affliction, than in prosperity:’ and whether there be not something in the one to make you better, and in the other to delude men, and make them worse. O look and tremble at the dangers and doleful miseries of most that are lifted high! how they are blinded, flattered, and captivated in sin, and are the shame of nature, and the calamity of the world! and mark when they come to die, or lie in sickness, how enlightened, how penitent, how humble, how mortified and reformed they then seem to be, and how much they condemn all sin, and justify a holy life: and observe yourselves whether you be not wiser and better, more penitent, and less worldly in an afflicted state: and will you think that intolerable, which so much bettereth almost all the world? Alas! were it not for affliction, there are some Nebuchadnezzars that would never be humbled, and some Pharaohs that would never confess their sins, and some Manassehs that would never be converted. Many in heaven are thankful for affliction, and so should we. “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting: for that is the end



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16.) God's time is best ; and eternity is long enough for our ease and comfort. It is by patient continuance in well doing, that glory, honour and immortality must be sought ; Rom. ii. We shall reap in due season, if we faint not ; Gal. vi. 9. " Be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient : stablish your hearts ; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh ;" James v. 7—9. When others by impatience lose themselves, do you " in your patience possess your souls ;" Luke xxi. 19. " Patience worketh experience, and experience hope, which maketh not ashamed ;" Rom. v. 4. " If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it ;" Rom. viii. 25. Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures it is that we have hope ; Rom. xv. 4. Therefore we have need of patience, that when we have done the will of God, we may inherit the promise ; Heb. x. 36. 11.

CHAPTER XX.

How to live by Faith, in Troubles of Conscience, and Doubts or Terrors about our Spiritual and Everlasting State.

HAVING written a treatise called, " The Right Method for Spiritual Peace and Comfort," &c. upon this subject already, I must refer the reader thither, and here only add these few directions.

Direct. 1. ' Distinguish of the several causes of these troubles ;' and take heed of those unskilful mountebanks, who have the same cure for every such disease, and speak present comfort to all that they hear complain ; and that think every trouble of mind is some notable work of the Spirit of God ; when it is often the fruit of the manifold weakness or wilfulness of the troubled complainers.

Direct. 2. ' When it is some heinous sin committed, or great corruption indulged, which doth cause the trouble, be sure that sound repentance be never omitted in the cure ; and that a real reformation prove the truth of that repentance.' For Christ never died to justify and save the im-

penitent sinner : and a deceitful repentance is the common self-deceit and undoing of the world. And how can that be true repentance, which changeth not the will and life ? God will not give you peace and comfort, as long as you indulge your wilful sin.

Note here the difference between, 1. The grossly impenitent : 2. And the mock-repentance of the hypocrite : 3. And the true repentance of sound believers.

1. The grossly impenitent cannot bring his heart to a serious purpose to let go his sin, nor to a consent or willingness that God should cure him, and change his mind : but he had rather have his pride, and covetousness, and sensuality, to be fully pleased, than to be mortified. Like a fool in a fever or dropsy, that had rather have drink, than have the cure of his thirst.

2. The mock-repentance of the hypocrite hath some purposes under an extraordinary conviction, to leave his sin ; and for a time may seem to do it. But when the temptation is as strong again, he is the same, and returneth to his vomit ; or else exchangeth his sin for a worse. And if you ask him whether he had rather have the mortifying of all his lusts, or the pleasing of them, his understanding and conviction may cause him truly to say at the present, that if God would presently mortify his sin, or offer him this in choice, he would rather consent to it, than take the pleasing of them. But mark it, 1. That though he consent that God should do this himself ; yet he will not consent to use the means, and do his duty to attain it. If a cold wish, or a bare consent would change his soul, and take away all sinful inclinations at once, that he might never more desire the pleasure of sin, nor be put to any conflict to overcome it, nor any great difficulty to deny it, and all this might be done without any labour of his own, I doubt not but the hypocrite would consent to be so mortified. But to watch, and pray, and read, and meditate, and use the means which God appointeth him, both to get mortification, and to use it for the conquering of every temptation ; this the hypocrite will not consent to.

2. And what he doth consent to at the present, he consenteth not to when his sinful pleasure is revived by the next temptation.

3. But the true penitent Christian is both willing to be

changed and had rather have his lusts to be killed, than pleased; and also willing to use God's means both to mortify the inward lust, and to overcome the outward sin: and this in sincerity is his habitual state.

Direct. 3. 'Never forget that, 1. The gracious nature of God: 2. The sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and merit: And, 3. The truth of the universal offer or promise of pardon to all (if they will accept the offer) are the foundation of all our faith and comforts; and are that universal grace which is before our special grace or faith, and is presupposed to it:' On this foundation all our faith and peace is to be built.

Direct. 4. 'The particular application of this to ourselves, is, 1. By believing, and then by knowing that we do believe; and then by discerning our privileges upon believing.'

1. Our believing itself is, 1. Our assent to the truth of the Gospel: 2. Our acceptance of the good (even Christ and life) which is offered in it, and consent to the baptismal covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: And, 3. Our affiancing in Christ and his covenant.

2. To know that we do believe (somehow) is easy, when we do it: but to be sure that this belief is sincere and saving; is more difficult, because of the deceitfulness of the heart of man, and the mixtures of unbelief, and other sins, and the weakness of grace where it is true, and the counterfeits of it, and the insufficient degrees which are in hypocrites; so that it is not easy to discern whether the faith which we have be sincere, and predominant above our sense and our unbelief (as it must be). But yet it may be known by such means as these:

1. By labouring to strengthen and increase our faith and grace, that it may not by the smallness be next to undiscernible. 2. By subduing all contrary inward corruptions, which obscure it. 3. By frequent exercising it; seeing habits are discerned only in their acts. 4. By resisting and conquering temptations, and doing all the good we can in the world, and living as wholly devoted to God, above all worldly, fleshly interest; and so, 1. Faith may be evidenced by its fruits: 2. And God may reward the faithful soul with his assuring seal, and light, and comfort. 5. By escaping all those lapses into heinous and wilful sin,



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Therefore true joy requireth much more than bare self-examination, and discernings of our evidences, and right to life.

Direct. 6. ‘When doubts and troubles are caused by ignorance or error, about the true nature and signs of grace, and the way of assurance (which is very common) nothing then is more necessary than a sound and skilful teacher;’ to work out those mistakes, and to help the ignorant Christian to a clearer understanding of the terms of the covenant, and the sense of the promise, and the true methods of Christ in his gifts and operations. Otherwise the erring soul will be distracted and lost in a wilderness of doubts, and either sit down at last presumptuously on false grounds, or turn to one error to cure the troubles of another; or languish in despair; so lamentable a thing is it to be possessed with false principles, and to attempt so great work in the dark.

Direct. 7. ‘And here there are these two extremes to be carefully avoided: 1. That of the infidel and justiciary, who trusteth and teacheth others to trust to his own virtues and works without a Saviour, or ascribeth the part of a Saviour to them. 2. The Antinomian and libertine, who teach men not to look at any thing in themselves at all, no not as an evidence, or condition, or means, much less as any cause of life; but to trust to Christ’s blood, to be to you instead of faith, and repentance, and obedience, and all your use of means; and do ascribe the part of these duties of man, to the blood of Christ; as if it did belong only to Christ to do that same thing which belongeth unto them.’

Therefore here you must be sure to be well acquainted what is truly the office and part of Christ; and what is truly the office and part of faith, of repentance, of confession, of prayer, &c. And to be sure that you wholly trust Christ for his part, and join not faith, nor any of your own works or duties in the least degree of that trust or honour which belongeth to Christ, and his office and work: and that you faithfully use (yea, I will say, trust too, though ignorance snarl at it) your faith, repentance, prayer, &c. in and for its own office and part; and do not foolishly blaspheme Christ, by ascribing the part and office of your duty unto him and his office, under pretence of giving him the honour of them. It is Christ’s office and honour to be a sacrifice for sin, and

a propitiation for us, and a perfect Saviour and Intercessor, and to give us the Spirit, by which we believe, repent, pray, obey, hope, love, &c. But not to be a penitent believing sinner, nor to accept of an offered Saviour, nor to be a consenting covenanter with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; nor to be washed from sin in his blood, reconciled, adopted, nor to pray for pardon in the name of another, nor to trust upon a Saviour, nor to be a Disciple, a Subject, a Member of a Saviour, &c. Nor yet that his blood, or merits, or righteousness, should be to you instead of these. No, these are to be done by you.

Direct. 8. In this case also take heed of those ignorant guides, who know not the errors of fancy, melancholy, or disturbed passions, from the proper works of the Spirit of God: for they wrong the Spirit, when they ascribe men's sinful weaknesses to him. And they greatly wrong the troubled sinner many ways. 1. They puff up men with conceits that they are under some great and excellent workings of the Spirit, when they are the works of Satan, and their own infirmity or sin. 2. They teach them hereby to magnify and cherish those distempers, and passions; and thoughts, which they should resist, and lament, and cast away. 3. And they set them in an enthusiastic, or truly fanatical way of religion, to look for revelations, or live still upon their own fancies, and passions, and distempers; and Satan's temptations, conceiting that they live upon the incomes of God, and are actuated in all this by the Holy Ghost. And of what mischievous importance and consequence all this is, and how much hurt such zealous ignorance doth, both in the teachers and the people, the thing itself doth plainly shew; and the sad experience of this age doth shew it more plainly, in Ranters, Quakers, and other true fanatics, and in many women, and other weak persons, of better principles than theirs.

And it is an unsafe course which many such weak persons use, to think in their troubles that every text of Scripture which cometh into their mind, or every conceit of their own is a special suggestion of the Spirit of God. You shall ordinarily hear them say, 'Such a text was brought to me, or was set upon my heart, and such a thing was set upon my mind,' when two to one, it was no otherwise brought unto them, nor set upon them, than any other ordinary thoughts

are; and had no special or extraordinary-operation of God in it at all. Though it is certain that every good thought which cometh into our minds, is some effect of the working of God's Spirit, as every good word, and every good work is; and it is certain that sometimes God's Spirit doth guide and comfort Christians as a remembrancer, by bringing informing and comforting texts and doctrines to their remembrance; yet it is a dangerous thing to think that all such suggestions or thoughts are from some special or extraordinary work of the Spirit, or that every text that cometh into our minds, is brought thither by the Spirit of God at all.

The reasons are these,

1. Satan can bring a text or truth to our remembrance for his own ends, as he did to Christ (Matt. iv.) in his temptations.

2. Our own passions or running thoughts, may light upon some text or truth accidentally, as they do on other things which so come in.

3. When the Spirit doth in an ordinary way help us in remembering or meditating on any text or holy doctrine, he doth it according to our capacity and disposition, and not in the way of infallible inspiration, and therefore there is much of our weakness and error usually mixed with the Spirit's help, in the product: as when you hold the hand of a child in writing, you write not so well by his hand, as by your own alone, but your skill and his weakness and unskilfulness do both appear in the letters which are made; so is it in the ordinary assistance of the Spirit in our studies, meditations, prayers, &c. otherwise all that we do would be perfect, in which we have the Spirit's help; which Scripture, and all Christians' experience do contradict.

4. And to ascribe that to the Spirit which is not at all his work, or that which is partly our own work, so far as it is our own, and savoureth of our weaknesses and error, is a heinous injury to the Spirit.

5. And it tosseth such mistaken Christians up and down in uncertainties; while they think all such thoughts are the suggestions of the Spirit, they meet with many contrary thoughts, and so are carried like the waves of the sea, sometimes up, and sometimes down; and they have sometimes a humbling, terrible text, and the next day perhaps a com-



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righteousness; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light;" 2 Cor. xi. 12—15.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God;" 1 John iv. 1.

"If we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel to you, let him be accursed;" Gal. i. 7, 8.

Quest. 'But how then shall I know when it is the Spirit which putteth any thing into my mind?'

Answ. 1. The matter itself must be tried, whether it agree with the sacred Scripture, and must be proved true by the word of God. 2. The end to which that truth is brought, must be proved to be just and good; for Satan pleadeth truths to sinful ends. 3. The application of them to your own case, must be such as will hold trial, and it must be proved by sound argument; that indeed they do thus and thus belong to you: for God's Spirit will not belie you, nor make you better or worse than you are; no more than he will belie the Scriptures.

Object. 'But is it not the same Spirit which spake to the apostles, which speaketh to us? If they were to believe him immediately, so must we; and seeing the Spirit is above the Scripture, we must try the Scriptures by the Spirit, and not the Spirit by the Scriptures.'

Answ. Alas! how pitifully ignorance bewildereth men! 1. It is the same Spirit which was in the apostles, and is in the weakest Christian; but he worketh not in the same degree. He inspired them to infallibility; being promised to "lead them into all truth, and to bring all things which Christ had spoken to their remembrance; and he enabled them to prove this by manifold miracles: doth he do all this by you? Or had you the same promises?"

2. The same Spirit in them was given to one end, and to you for another. To them it was given to cause them by his inspiration to deliver all that Christ had taught them, and to leave it on record to all generations, as his infallible word and law, to be the rule of doctrine and practice to the end of the world. But to you the same Spirit is given, to cause you to understand, and love, and obey this law which is already written, and not to write or know another.

3. The Spirit indited the Scriptures before you were born: and we are sure that that is the word of God; and we are

sure that God's Spirit contradicteth not itself. Therefore your after pretended revelations, must be tried by the certain ancient rule, which had the seal of miracles which yours hath not.

Object. ' But how shall I know what application to make of Scripture to myself, but by the teaching of the Spirit of God ?'

Answ. But you must not take every thought and suggestion or remembrance, to be the Spirit's application. God's Spirit teacheth men by the light of sound evidence, which may be proved, and will hold good in trial. He teacheth you by exciting you to rational studies and argumentation, and by blessing you in such sober use of God's means : but he doth not teach you to know your state, by the bare remembering of a text.

Direct. 9. ' Take heed also of misunderstanding what is the witness of the Spirit; that we are God's children.'

Many think it is like some voice, or suggestion, or inspiration within them, saying, Thou art the child of God. And so many Christians languish in terrors, that feel no such persuading Spirit in them. And many hypocrites are deluded by the persuasions of their own imaginations. But in Scripture the word *witness* is oft taken for *evidence*, or an objective testimony. And the Spirit's being a witness, and being a seal; an earnest, a pledge, a white stone, a new name, &c. are all of the like signification : and the meaning is; " By this we know that we are the children of God, or that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us ;" 1 John iii. 10. 24. iv. 13. And " if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his ;" Rom. viii. 9. As if he should say, Have you the Spirit of Christ, or have you not ? If you have, that is a seal, an earnest, a pledge of God's love, and of your heavenly inheritance, and a certain evidence or witness that you are his children; Gal. iv. 6. He that loveth God as his Father in Christ, and is sanctified to God, hath the Spirit. Shew this love, and this sanctification; and you produce the true witness that you are the heirs of life. Holiness, and heavenliness, and love, is the witness, seal and earnest; and not chiefly an inward persuasion that we are God's children.

2. Yet this much more the Spirit doth; when it hath sanctified us, and given us the witness or evidence in our-

selves (1 John v. 10, 11.), he also helpeth us to see and know that grace which he giveth and actuateth in us.

3. And also to conclude from that evidence, that we are God's children: and also to feel the inward comfort of that conclusion. But all this he doth by these means in a discursive or rational way, and by blessing such reasoning to our comfort.

4. Also he comforteth the soul in another way, distinct from the way of concluding from evidence; and that is by exciting the love of God and his praises in us, which are of themselves delighting acts. But of this anon.

Direct. 10. 'Take heed of heretical seducers, who use to fish in troubled waters, and to fall in with such perplexed consciences, to persuade them that all the cause of their trouble is their opinions, and unsound religion, and not in them; and that the only way to comfort, is to change their religion, and to come over unto them.'

No person more fit for a Quaker, a Papist, or any sectary to work upon, than a troubled mind. For such are like the ignorant country people in their sickness, who will hearken to any one who putteth them in hope, and promiseth them ease, and most confidently tells them, that he can cure them; and saith, 'I was just in your case, and such, or such a thing cured me:' so will the formalist, and the fanatic, the Papist, and the Quaker say, 'I was just in your condition.' 'I was troubled, and could get no peace of conscience, no joy in the Holy Ghost, but was always held in fears and doubting, till I changed my religion; and ever since that I have been well, and O what joys I have to boast of!' And if it be an unsound hypocrite that is thus tempted, perhaps God may give them over to find abundance of bedlam joy, in the sudden change of their opinion: and falsehood may comfort that man, whom the truth which he was false to, would not comfort. But if it be a weak, sincere believer; if God shew him not so much mercy as to rescue him from the temptation, he will do as the aforesaid country patient; he will try one man's medicines, and another woman's medicines, and hearken to every one that can speak confidently, and promise him a cure, till he hath tried, that their case and his were not the same, and that they were all but ignorant, deceived deceivers; and when all fail him, he will come back again, to the faithful, experienced directors of his soul.



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truth of his own faith, repentance and sanctification, is to prate impertinently, and to delude the sinner, and to deal injuriously with Christ.

Direct. 13. 'If melancholy be the cause of the trouble (which is very ordinary) it will be necessary, 1. Well to understand it: And, 2. To know the cure:' Of which having spoken more largely elsewhere, I shall now give you only this brief information.

1. The signs of this melancholy are, overstretched, confused, ungovernable thoughts; continual fear, and inclination to despair, and to cry out, undone, undone; I am forsaken of God; the day of grace is past; I have sinned against the Holy Ghost; never any man's case was like mine! And usually their sleep is gone or broken, and they are inclined to be alone, and to be always musing, with their confounded thoughts; and at last are tempted to blasphemous thoughts against the Scriptures, and the life to come, and perhaps urged to utter some blasphemous words against God; and if it go to the highest, they are tempted to famish or make away with themselves.

2. The cure of it lieth, 1. In setting those truths before them which tend most to quiet and satisfy their minds. 2. In engaging them in the constant labours of a calling, in which both mind and body may be employed. 3. In keeping them in fit and cheerful company which they love, and suffering them to be very little alone. 4. In keeping them from musing, and that meditation or thoughtfulness which to others is most profitable, and a duty. 5. Keeping them from over-long secret prayer (because they are unable for it, and it doth but confound them, and disable them for other duties); and let them be the more in other duties which they can bear. 6. And if the state of their bodies require it, physic is necessary, and hath done good to many (if rightly chosen).

Direct. 14. 'Take heed of foolish, carnal, hasty expectations of comfort from the bare words of any man; but use men's advice only to direct you in that way, where, by patience and faithfulness, you may meet with it in due season.'

Nothing is more usual with silly souls, than to go to this or that excellent minister, whom they deservedly admire, and to look that with an hour or two's discourse he should comfort them, and set all their bones in joint: and

when they find that it is not done, they either despair, or turn to the next deceivers, and say, 'I tried the best of them: and if such a man cannot do it, none of them can do it.' But, silly soul, do physicians use to charm men into health? Wilt thou go and talk an hour with the ablest physician, and say, that because his talk doth not cure thee, thou wilt never go to a physician more, but go to ignorant people that will kill thee? Thou hast then thy own deserving; even take the death that thou hast chosen; and drink as thou hast brewed. The work of a minister is not to cure thee always immediately, by comfortable words. (What words can cure an ignorant, melancholy, or incapable soul!) But to direct thee in thy duty, and in the use of those means, which if thou wilt faithfully and patiently practise, thou shalt certainly be cured in due time: if thou wilt use the physic, diet and exercise, which thy physician doth prescribe thee, it is that which must restore thy health and comfort, and not the saying over a few words to thee. If thou lazily look that other men's words or prayers should cure and comfort thee without thy own endeavours, thou mayest thank thyself when thou art deceived.

Direct. 15. 'The principal means of comfort is to live in the exercise of comfortable duties.'

Faith, hope, and especially the love of God, are duties which are also man's felicity: and the exercise of these in praises and thanksgiving, are the proper pleasure of the soul. Give up thyself wholly to study the goodness and love of God in Jesus Christ, till thou feel thy heart inflamed with his love, and spend half thy godly conference in God's praises, and half thy daily prayers in that, and in thanksgiving; and this will comfort thee not only by the reasoning way of evidence; but as a feast pleaseth thy taste, and as a fire warmeth thee, or as the loving of thy friend delighteth thee, or as health itself is the pleasure of thy flesh.

As the sins themselves of not knowing God, nor loving him, nor delighting in him, are the greatest part of the penalty, or rather misery of the sinner (which hath its peculiar way of remission), so the knowledge, and love, and praise of God, and delighting in him, is instead of a reward unto itself, and a beginning of heaven to the heavenly believer.

Direct. 16. 'Dwell much in heaven, if thou would dwell

in comfort. Comfort yourselves and one another with these words, that we shall for ever be with the Lord.' Heaven is the place or state of our everlasting comfort; and all that we have here must come from thence: and faith, and hope, and love must fetch it. He that will have carnal joy, must go for it to pastime, or lusts and pleasure, to an alehouse, or a whore, or to a gaming-house, or a playhouse, or to his wealthy and worldly honours: but he that will have heavenly joy, must go for it by faith to heaven; and dwell there every day by faith, where he hopes to dwell for ever. Heaven will not comfort either them that believe it not, or them that remember it not; but them whose conversation and hearts are there; Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Direct. 17. 'Set yourselves wholly to do good.' Resolve that you will be faithful to Christ, and do all the good that you can in the world, and let him do with you what he will: and in this way you shall quickly find, that the soundest consolation will come into your souls, before you could expect it. Though no works of our own can add any thing to God, nor must be trusted to at all, in a legal sense; and though blind libertines tell you, that all comfort is legal and unsound, which came by the thoughts of any thing in yourselves, or any of your own doings; yet God is no such enemy to godliness, but he that will hereafter judge you to heaven or hell according to your works, will now judge you to joy and sorrow of heart, usually according to your works: Well-doing shall afford you peace, and ill-doing shall disquiet you, when all is said.

Direct. 18. 'Lastly, Be sure, while you want the comforts of assurance, to hold fast those comforts which rationally belong to common grace, and to them that have the Gospel offers of salvation.' When the Gospel came to Samaria, (Acts viii.) "there was great joy in that city." It is glad tidings in itself for guilty souls to have Christ and pardon freely offered to them. Can you not say, I am sure that I am regenerate, justified, and adopted? For all that, if you be not infidels, you can say, 'I am sure that Christ, and pardon, and heaven, are freely offered me, and ministers are commissioned to entreat me to accept it; and nothing but my wilful and final refusal can deprive me of it, and shut me out.' This is certain; take but so much comfort as this much should rationally infer.



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which is (or is conceited to be) in themselves, that few churches on earth are thought worthy of their communion.

Note also, that it is sacrificing which is commonly the hypocrite's worship in the Old Testament, and hearing and obeying which he neglecteth, and God calls him to: as you may see at large in Isa. i. throughout; and many other places: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not require; mine ears hast thou opened," &c.; Psal. xl. 6. "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices and burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me; I will take no bullock out of thy house—For every beast of the forest is mine, &c. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof—Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows to the Most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble—But to the wicked, saith God, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee—; Psal. l. 8, 9, &c.

"Hath the Lord delight in burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams;" 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.

"Know, that the Lord hath chosen the man that is godly for himself—Stand in awe and sin not—Offer the sacrifices of righteousness—;" Psal. iv. 3—5.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;" Psal. li. 17.

"Learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice—;" Matt. ix. 13. xii. 7.

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they know not that they do evil;" Eccles. v. 1.

All this telleth us, that fools and hypocrites, while they disobeyed God's law, do think to make up all with sacrifice, or to appease God with offering him something that is excellent: but the acceptable worshipper cometh to God as a penitent, a learner, resolving to obey; as a receiver of mercy, and not a meriter.

Direct. 2. 'Over-value not therefore the manner of your own worship, and over-vilify not other men's of a different mode:' And make not men believe that God is of your childish humour, and valueth or vilifieth words, and or-

ders, and forms, and ceremonies, as much as self-conceited people do.

If one man hear another pray only from the habits of his mind, and present desires, he reproacheth him as a rash, presumptuous speaker, that talketh that to God which he never fore-considered. As if a beggar did rashly ask an alms, or a corrected child, or a malefactor did inconsiderately beg for pardon, unless they learn first the words by rote: or as if all men's converse, and the words of judges on the bench were all rash; or the counsel of a physician to his patient, because they use not books and forms, or set not down their words long before.

And if another man hear a form of prayer, especially if it be read out of a book; and especially if it have any disorder or defect, he sticketh not to revile it, and call it false worship, and man's inventions, and perhaps idolatry, and to fly from it, and make the world believe, that it is an odious thing which God abhorreth. And why so? Are your words so much more excellent than the words of others? Or doth the book, or press, or pen, make them odious to God? Or are all words bad which are resolved on beforehand? Is the Lord's Prayer, and Psalms all odious, because they are book-forms? Or doth the command of other men make God hate them? Let parents take heed then of commanding their children prescribed words. (Nay, rather let them take heed lest they omit such prescripts :) Or, is it the disorder or defects that makes them odious? Such are not to be justified indeed wherever we find them: but woe to us all, if God will not pardon disorders and defects, and accept the prayers that are guilty of them.

Many a time I have heard such forms of prayers, whose disorders and defects I have much lamented (and done my part to have cured), and yet I durst not so reproach them as to say, God will not accept and hear them: or that it is unlawful to join in communion with them. And many a time I have heard as sad disorder in extemporate prayers; sometimes by wrong methods, or no method at all; sometimes by vain repetitions; sometimes by omitting the chiefest parts of prayer, and sometimes in the whole strain, by turning a prayer into a sermon to the hearers, or a mere talk or narrative to God, that had little of a prayer in it, save very good matter, and honest zeal. And though this prayer was

more disorderly than the forms which (perhaps in that prayer) were accused of disorder ; yet durst I not run away from this neither, nor say, it is so bad, that God will not hear it, nor good men should have no communion in it.

It is easy (but abominable) to fall in love with our own, and to vilify that which is against our opinion, and to think that God is of our mind, and is as fond of our mode and way as we are, and as exceptious against the way or words of other men, as childish, peevish Christians are. Look on your book, and read; or learn your prayer in words, saith one, or else God will not hear you: look off your book, and read not, or learn not the words, saith another, or God will not hear you. But oh lamentable! that both of them tremble not thus to abuse God, and add unto his word, and to prophesy or speak falsely against their brethren in his name; nor to reproach the prayers which Christ presenteth from his servants to the Father, and which (notwithstanding their defects) are his delight!

Direct. 3. ' Offer God nothing as worship, which is contrary to the perfection of his nature, as far as you can avoid it: ' and yet feign not that to be contrary to his nature which he commandeth. For then it is certain that you misunderstand either his nature or command.

Direct. 4. ' Never come to the Father but by the Son; and dream not of any immediate access of a sinner unto God, but wholly trust in Christ's mediation. Receive the Father's will from Christ your Teacher, and his commands from Christ your King, and all his mercies from Christ your Head, and the Treasury of the Church, and your continual Intercessor with God in heaven. And put all your prayers, praises, duties, alms, into his hand; that through him alone they may be accepted of God.

Direct. 5. ' Understand well how far the Scripture is a particular rule (as to the substance of God's worship), and how far it is only a general rule (as to the circumstances), that so you may neither offer God a worship which he will not accept; nor yet reject or oppose all those circumstances as unlawful, which are warranted by his general commands.' (Of which I have said enough elsewhere.)

Direct. 6. ' Look first and most to the exercise of inward grace, and to the spiritual part of worship; (for God will be worshipped in Spirit, and in truth, and hateth the hypocrite,



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Now an able and faithful pastor is suited to all these effects. 1. He is a lively preacher to awaken the understanding: 2. He is a clear, intelligent, methodical and convincing teacher, to illuminate it: 3. He can confute gainsayers, and refute objections, and shame the cavils of tempters and deceivers to preserve it.

And, 2. He speaketh all from the unfeigned love of God and men; and as all his words do breathe forth love; so they are apt to kindle such love in the hearers: for every active nature tendeth to propagation.

3. And the holiness of his life, as well as doctrine, tendeth to win the people to a holy life: so that he that loveth his own soul, must not be indifferent what pastor he chooseth for the help and conduct of his soul; but should most carefully seek to get the best or fittest for such necessary ends.

But yet it followeth not that a weaker or worse may not be heard, or may not be accepted or submitted to, in a case of necessity; when a better cannot be had, without more disturbance and hurt than the benefits are like to recompense. And when we live under such a weak, or cold, or faulty pastor, our care must be so much the greater, that we may make up that in the diligence of our attention, which is wanting in his manner of expression; and that we make up that in a care of our own souls, which is wanting in his care: and that our knowledge of his failings tempt us not to slight the truth which he delivereth; and that we reject not the matter for the manner. The sheep of Christ do know his voice, and they know his words, and reverence and love them, from what mouth soever they proceed. A religious, zealous man that preacheth false doctrine, is more to be avoided, than a cold or scandalous man who preacheth the truth. If you doubt this, observe these texts.

“The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do: But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not;” Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

“For he (Judas) was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry;” Acts i. 17. Judas the thief and traitor was an apostle, called and sent out by Jesus Christ.

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife,

and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds——what then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I do therein rejoice, yea, and will rejoice——; Phil. i. 15, &c. .

“ Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them——;” Rom. xvi. 17.

“ Of your ownelves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;” Acts xx. 30.

“ If we, or an angel from heaven, bring another Gospel, let him be accursed——;” Gal. i. 7, 8.

Is not all this a plain decision of the case?

Direct. 8. ‘ While you prefer local communication with the purest churches, and best taught and ordered, for your own edification, take heed that you disown not a distant and mental communion with any part of the church of Christ on earth, which Christ himself disowneth not.’ But first remember that you are members of the universal church, and as such in mental communion with the whole present yourselves and services to Christ; and next as members of your particular church.

It is true, that you must not own the corruptions of any church, or of any of their worship; but you must own the church itself, and own all the substance of the worship which is good, and which God owneth. God doth not reject the matter for the manner, nor the whole for a faulty part, where the heart is sincere that offereth it: nor no more must you. And if they force you not to any actual sin (as by false speaking, subscribing, or the like) you must sometimes also locally join with such churches, when occasion requireth it: (As when you have no better to go to, or when it is necessary to shew your mental communion, or to avoid schism, scandal or offence.) As you must not approve of your own failings in God’s worship (as in the manner of praying, preaching, &c.) and yet must not give over worshipping God, though you are always sure to fail; even so must you do by your communion with others.

And here I would earnestly entreat all those that are inclinable to sinful separation, to think but of these few things.

1. What is more contrary to Christianity than pride? and what is a plainer sign of pride, than to separate from

whole churches (and perhaps from most part of the Christian world) for such faults as are no greater than others of our own? and to say, They are too bad for such as you to communicate with?

2. Whether it be not much contrary to the clemency of Jesus Christ, by which he pardoneth the failings of believers; and which we have need of ourselves as well as others? And whether it be not an horrid injury to our Lord; to ascribe his inheritance to the devil, and to cast those out of his church whom he himself receiveth, and to deny so many of his servants to be his?

3. How great a loss is it, to lose your part in all those prayers of the churches (how weak soever) which you disown? And how can you justly expect the benefit of such prayers?

... I would not take all their riches for my part of the benefit of those prayers of the churches of Christ, which some reject because they are extemporate, and others because they are forms, or book-prayers, or imposed; nor would I take all their wealth and honour, for my part in all the prayers of the universal church, which are guilty of more disorders, tautologies, unmeet expressions, and manifold defects, than any that I ever yet heard from those ministers that pray either by habit or book.

Direct. 9. 'Take heed both of carelessness and curiosity in the worshipping of God.' Avoid carelessness, because it is profaneness and contempt: therefore watch against idleness of mind, and wandering thoughts, and remember how great a work it is, to speak to God, or to hear from him about your everlasting state.

And yet curiosity is a heinous sin: when men are so nice, that unless there be quaint phrases, and fine cadences and jingles, or at least a very laudable style, they nauseate all, and are weary of hearing a homely style, or common things: when every unmeet expression, or tautology of the speaker, doth turn their stomachs against the wholesomest food. This curiosity cometh from a weak and an unhealthful state of soul.

Direct. 10. Lastly, 'Let your eye of faith be all the while upon the heavenly host, or church triumphant:' remember how they worship God: with what wisdom, and purity, and fervour of love, and sacred pleasure, and with what unity,



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prayer; and that the heart-searching God doth hate hypocrisy, and will not be mocked ;” Matt. vi. 1. 3, 4.

Direct. 2. ‘ Yet do not forbear prayer, because your desires are not so earnest as you would have them.’ For, 1. Even good desires are to be begged of God: 2. And such desires as you have towards God, must be exercised and expressed. 3. And this is the way of their usual increase. 4. And a profane turning away from God, will kill those weak desires which you have, when drawing near him in prayer may revive and cherish them.

Direct. 3. ‘ Remember still that you pray to a heavenly Father, who is readier to give, than you are to receive or ask.’ If you knew his fulness and goodness, how joyfully would you run to him, and cry, “ Abba, Father !” John xx. 17. Luke xii. 30. 32. Mark xi. 25. Matt. vi. 8. 32.

Direct. 4. ‘ Go boldly to him in the name of Christ alone.’ Remember that he is the only Way and Mediator. When guilt and conscience would drive you back, believe the sufficiency of his sacrifice and atonement. When your weakness and unworthiness would discourage you, remember that no one is so worthy, as to be accepted by God on any other terms, than Christ’s mediation. Come boldly then to the throne of grace, by the new and living way, and put your prayers into his hand, and remember that he still liveth to make intercession for you, and that he appeareth before God in the highest, in your cause; Heb. x. 19. Ephes. iii. 12. Rom. v. 2. Heb. ix. 24. vii. 25, 26.

Direct. 5. ‘ Desire nothing in your hearts which you dare not pray for, or which is unmeet for prayer:’ Let the rule of prayer be the rule of your desires. And undertake no business in the world, which you may not lawfully pray for a blessing on.

Direct. 6. ‘ Desire and pray to God, first, for God himself, and nothing lower; and next for all those spiritual blessings in Christ, which may fit you for communion with him. And lastly, for corporal mercies, as the means to these;’ Matt. vi. 33. Psal. xlii. 1—3, &c. Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Direct. 7. ‘ Pray only for what is promised you, or you are commanded to pray for:’ and make not promises to yourselves, and then look that God should fulfil them, be-

cause you confidently believe that he will do it; and do not so reproach God, as to call such self-conceits and expectations, by the name of a particular faith: for where there is no word, there is no faith.

Direct. 8. ‘What God hath promised, confidently expect; though you feel no answer at the present.’ For most of our prayers are to be granted (or the things desired to be given) at the harvest time, when we shall have all at once. Whether you find yourselves the better at present for prayer or not; believe that a word is not in vain, but you shall reap the fruit of all in season; Luke xviii. 1. 7. 8. James v. 7, 8.

Direct. 9. ‘Let the Lord’s Prayer be the rule, for the matter and method of your desires and prayers.’ But with this difference: It must always be the rule which your desires must be formed to, both in matter and method. You must always first, and most desire the hallowing of God’s name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is in heaven, before your own being, or well-being; but this is only a rule for your general prayers (which take in all the parts): for when you either intend to pray only, or chiefly for some one particular thing, you may begin with that, or be most upon it.

Therefore all Christians should specially labour to understand the true sense and method of the Lord’s Prayer (which, God willing, I hope elsewhere to open).

Direct. 10. ‘Be more careful in secret of your affections, than of the order of your words (yet choosing such as are aptest to the matter, and fittest to excite your hearts); but in your families, or with other, be very careful to speak to God, in words which are apt, and orderly, and moving; and to do all with such skill, and reverence, and seriousness, as tendeth (not to increase, but) to cure the dulness, hypocrisy and unreverence of others; Eccles. v. 1, 2. Matt. vi. 7—10, &c.

Direct. 11. ‘Pray as earnestly as if God himself were to be moved with your prayers:’ yet so as to remember, that the change is not to be made upon him, but upon you. As when the boatman layeth hold upon the bank, he draweth the boat to it, and not the bank unto the boat. Prayer fitteth you to receive the mercy; both naturally as it exciteth your desires after it, and morally as it is a condition

on which God hath promised to give it. When you pray you tell God nothing which before he knew not better than you : but you tell him that in confession and petition, which he will hear from your own mouths, before he will judge you meet for the mercies which you are to pray for.

In sum, pray, because you believe that praying believers shall have the promised blessing : and believe particularly and absolutely, that you shall have that promised blessing through Christ, because you are praying believers, and therefore the persons to whom it is promised.

CHAPTER XXIII.

How to live by Faith towards Children, and other Relations.

Direct. 1. BELIEVE God's promises made to believers and their seed : (of which I have written at large in my "Treatise of Infant Baptism.") And labour to understand how far those promises extend, both as to the persons and the blessings. There was never an age in the world, in which God did not distinguish the holy seed, even believers and their children, from the rest of the world, and take them as those that were specially in his covenant.

Direct. 2. ' Let not your conceits of the bare birth-privilege, make you omit your serious, solemn, and believing dedication of them unto God, and entering them into his covenant.'

For the reason why your seed is called holy, and in a better case than the seed of infidels, is not merely because they are the offspring of your bodies, and have their natures from you ; much less as deriving any grace or virtue from you by generation : but because you are persons yourselves who have dedicated yourselves with all that you have, absolutely to God by Christ : and they being your own, and therefore at your disposal, your wills are taken for their wills, so far as you act in their names, and on their behalf : and therefore when you dedicate them to God, you do but that which you have both power and command to do : and therefore God accepteth what you so dedicate to him. And baptism is the regular way in which this dedication should be solemnly made : but if through the want of a minister,



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at all himself, either for inward, or for outward blessings. He hath not one covenant which giveth outward, and another which giveth inward blessings.

And it is here supposed, that the only condition prerequisite on the infant's part, that he may have right to this covenant, and its blessing, is that he be the seed of a true believer, and dedicated in covenant to God by the parent's will or act. Actual faith is not pre-required: seminal grace may be inherent, but, 1. Not known to the baptizer: 2. Nor pre-required as a condition; but more likely to be given by virtue of the covenant. Nothing else therefore being prerequisite as a condition, it followeth, that as the parents dedicating themselves to God, if baptized at age, is the condition of their certain title to the present blessings of the covenant, (viz. that God be their Father, Christ their Saviour, and the Spirit in covenant to operate in them to sanctification, and their sins are all pardoned, and they are heirs of heaven,) even so upon the parents' dedication of their children to God, they have right to the same blessings; else why do we baptize them, seeing baptism in the true nature and use of it, is a solemn dedicating them to God, in that same covenant, and a solemn investing them in the relations and rights of that same pardoning covenant, and not in any other.

I do not say that all baptized infants, so dying, are saved, be they the children of infidels, or heathens, and remaining their true propriety; nor those that are offered and baptized never so wrongfully, or hypocritically; nor will I stay to dispute for what I have asserted. But, 1. I exhort Christians believingly to dedicate their children in covenant with God in Christ: And, 2. To believe that if they so die, that covenant of Christ forbiddeth them to doubt of their salvation.

Direct. 4. 'Let your duty be answerable to your hope: and do not only pray for your children's sanctification, but if they live, endeavour it by all possible care, in a wise and godly education.'

Remember that nature, and your dedicating them to God, do both oblige you to this care of their salvation. And that the education of children, is one of the greatest duties in the world, for the service of Christ, and the pros-

perity of church and state: and the neglect of it, not the smallest cause of the ruin of both, and of the world's calamity.

Many a poor, sottish, lazy professor have I known, who cry out against ignorant, dumb, and unfaithful ministers, as guilty of the blood of souls, and are so religious, as to separate from the assemblies that have ministers that are but partly such; when as their own children are almost as ignorant as heathens, and they only use them to a few customary formal duties (while they think they are enough against forms), and turn over the chief care of their instruction to the schoolmaster. And are themselves so ignorant, dumb, and idle; unfaithful and unnatural to their poor children's souls, as that it is a doubt whether in a well-ordered church they ought not to be denied communion themselves. They so little practise Deut. xi. 18, 19. vi. 7. Ephes. vi. 4, &c.

Direct. 5. 'If your children live to the flesh in an ungodly course of life, contrary to the covenant which by you they made, they forfeit all the benefits of the covenant: and you can have no assurance by any thing that you can do for them, that ever they should be converted (though it is not past hope). And if they be converted at age, their pardon and adoption will be the effect of God's covenant, as then it was newly entered with themselves, and not as it was made before for them in infancy.'

Direct. 6. 'Yet because that still while there is life, there is hope, you ought not by despair or negligence to omit prayer, exhortation, or any other duty which you can perform in order to their recovery:' and though now they have wills of their own, their salvation is not laid so much upon you, as it was in infancy, at their first covenanting with God; yet still God will shew his love to his servants in their seed; and faithful endeavours are not vain or hopeless; and therefore it is still one of your greatest duties in the world, to seek their true recovery to Christ.

Direct. 7. 'If God make your children a scourge, or a heart-breaking to you, bear and improve it as becomes believers:' That is;

1. Repent of your own former sin; your own youthful lusts; your disobedience to your parents; your carnal

fondness on your children; your loving them too much, and God too little; the evil examples you have given them; and your manifold neglect of a prudent, seasonable, earnest, unwearied instructing them in godliness; your bearing with their sin, and giving them their own wills, till they were masterless, &c. Renew your repentance, and you have got some benefit.

2. Think how unkindly and unthankfully you have dealt with a gracious Saviour, and a heavenly Father.

3. Let it take off your affections from all things under the sun, and call them up the more to God: for who would love a world, where none are to be trusted, and where all things are vexatious, even the children of your love and bowels.

Direct. 8. 'If they die impenitently, and perish, mourn for them, but with the moderation of believers: That is, 1. Consider that God is more the owner of your children, than you are; and may do with his own as he list. 2. And he is more wise and merciful than you; and therefore not to be murmured at as wanting either. 3. And it is an invaluable mercy that your own soul is sanctified, and shall be saved. 4. And the most godly have had ungodly children before you. Adam had a Cain, Noah had a Ham, Isaac had an Esau, David had an Absalom, &c. 5. And if all the godly that pray for their children's salvation must be therein gratified, all the world would then have been saved. For Noah would have prayed for all his children, and they for their's, and so to the world's end.

Object. 'Oh but my conscience telleth me, that it is my own sin which hath had a hand in their undoing.'

Answer. Suppose it be so; it is certainly a pardonable sin. Do you then repent of it, or not? If you repent; as you mourn for your relations; so you should rejoice that God hath forgiven you. For repented sin is certainly pardoned to you, and pardoned sin to you, is as great cause of joy, as unpardoned sin in your relations is cause of sorrow. Therefore mourn with such moderation, and mixed comfort and thanksgiving, as becometh one that liveth by faith. The affliction indeed is near and great; and heavier than any calamity that could have befallen their bodies, and is not to be slighted by an unnatural insensibility: but yet



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pray with any importunity for their conversion. Is this men's love to mankind? Is this their love to the kingdom of Christ? or to God and godliness? Is God of as narrow a mind as you? Are you and your party all the world, or all the church, or all that is to be regarded and prayed for?

Direct. 2. 'Do not only pray for them, but study what is within the reach of your power to do for their conversion.' For though private men can do little in comparison of what Christian princes might do (who must not be told their duty by such as I). Yet somewhat might be done by merchants and their chaplains, if skill and zeal were well united; and somewhat might be done by writing and translating such books as are fittest for this use: "And greater matters might be done, by training up some scholars in the Persian, Indostan, Tartarian, and such other languages, who are for mind and body fitted for that work, and willing with due encouragement to give up themselves thereto. Were such a college erected, natives might be got to teach the languages: and no doubt but God would put it into the hearts of many young men, to devote themselves to so excellent a service; and of many rich men, to settle lands sufficient to maintain them; and many merchants would help them in their expedition." But whether those that God will so much honour, be yet born, I know not.

Direct. 3. 'Pray and labour for the reformation and concord of all the Christian churches; as the most probable means to win to Christ the world of heathens and unbelievers.'

If the Protestant churches were more pure and peaceable, more holy, and more unanimous and charitable to each other, it would do much to win the Papists that are near them: and if the Papists, and Greeks, and Armenians, and Abassines were more reformed, wise and holy, it would do much to win the Heathens and Mahometans round about them. They would be the salt of the earth, and the lights of the world, and the leaven which must leaven the whole lump: the neighbouring Mahometans, and Heathens, would see their good works, and glorify God; Matt. v. 16. A holy, harmless, loving conversation, is a sermon which men of all languages can understand: thus as apostles we might preach to men of several tongues, though we have but one.

O. that the sanctifying Spirit would teach Christians this art, and reform and unite the churches of Christ, that they might be no longer a scandal, to hinder the saving of the world about them! It is the sense of Christ's prayer before his death, (John xvii. 21—23. 25.) that "they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me; and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Direct. 4. 'Be sure at least that your holy, loving and blameless lives, be an example to those that are about you.' If you cannot convert kingdoms, nor get other men to do their duty towards it, be sure that you do your part within your reach: and believe that your lives must be the best part of your labours, and that good works, and love, and good example must be the first part of your doctrine.

Direct. 6. 'When you see that the world lieth still in wickedness, and there seemeth to be no possibility of a cure, yet search the Scripture, and so far as you can find any prophecy or promise of their conversion, believe that God in his time will make it good.'

Direct. 6. 'But take heed that on this pretence, you plunge not yourselves into any inordinate studies, or conceited expositions of the Revelations, and other Scripture prophecies, as many have done, to the great wrong of themselves, and the church of God.'

By inordinate studies, I mean, 1. When you begin there where you should end, and before you have digested the necessary greater truths in theology, you go to those that should come after them. 2. When an undue proportion of your zeal, and time, and study, and talk, is bestowed upon these prophecies, in comparison of other things. 3. When you are proudly and causelessly-conceited of your singular expositions: That when of ten of the most learned and hardest studied expositors of the Revelation, perhaps in many things scarce two are of a mind; yet when you differ from them all, or all save one, you can be as peremptory and confident in your opinion, as if you were far wiser, or more infallible than they. 4. When you place a greater necessity in it than there is; as if salvation, or church-communion lay upon your conceits. Whereas God hath

made the points that are of necessity to salvation, to be few and plain.

Direct. 7. ‘When you look on the sin and misery of the world, and see small hope of its recovery, look up by faith to that better world, where all is light, and love, and peace.’ And pray for the coming of Christ, when all this sin shall be brought to judgment, and wisdom and godliness be fully justified before all the world. Let the badness of this world drive up your hearts to that above, where all is better than you can wish.

Direct. 8. ‘When you are ready to stumble at the consideration of God’s desertion of so great a part of the world, quiet your minds in the implicit submission to his infinite wisdom and goodness.’ Dare you think that you are more gracious and merciful than God? Or that it is meet you should know all the secrets of his providence, who must not know the mysteries of government, in the state or kingdom where you live? He that cannot rest in the wisdom, will, and mercies of Infinite Goodness itself, but must have all his own expectations satisfied, shall have no rest.

And think withal, how little a spot of God’s creation this earthly world is; and how incomprehensibly vast the superior regions are in comparison of it. And if all the upper parts of the world be possessed with none but holy spirits, and even this lower earth, have also many millions of saints, prepared here for the things above, we have no more reason to judge God to be unmerciful, because this lower world is so bad, than we have to judge the king unmerciful, when we look into the common gaol; nor to judge of his government by the rogues in a gaol, but by his court, and all the subjects of his kingdom.

If God should forsake no place but hell, of all his creation, you could not grudge at him as unmerciful. And it is a very hard question whether this earth, and the air about it, be not the place of hell; when you consider that the devils are cast down from heaven, and yet that they dwell and rule in the air, and compass the earth, and tempt the wicked, and “work in the children of disobedience;” Ephes. ii. 1, 2. Job i., 2 Tim. ii. 26. And that Satan is called, the God and “prince of this world;” John xii. 31, xiv. 30. xvi. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Ephes. vi. 12.

But if it be not the place of final execution, it is the



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see what to love, and why. He that cannot see God in a glass in this world, cannot see him at all, and cannot love him. Remember that it is in his servants and creatures, that he exposeth himself to be seen, and known, and loved; 1 John ii. 10. iii. 10. 14. iv. 7, 8. 20, 21. v. 1. Matt. xxv. 40.

Direct. 4. ‘ Abhor that proud malignant censoriousness, which is apt to make the worst of others, and to deny, and extenuate, and overlook God’s graces in them (as the devil did by Job): and which can see no goodness in them that are not eminently good.’ For this is but the devil’s artifice, to kill men’s love to one another. Though he pretend the honour of godliness, and the hatred of sin, when he telleth you,—such an one is an hypocrite, and such an one hath nothing but a form, and no power of godliness; I can see nothing of God in him; alas, they are poor carnal people: all is but to destroy your love. And thus he mightily prospereth in the malignant spirit of separation; by which he can make you unchurch whole churches, and unchristian whole towns and parishes, and all because that you that are strangers to them, see not their godliness, or hear of nothing eminent in them. But the world of dividers will take no warning, any more than the world of the profane. Satan doth deceive them all.

Direct. 5. ‘ Abhor therefore the sin of backbiting and evil-speaking; and when you hear a malignant censurer thus unchristian and unchurch men without proof, behind their backs, if gentler reproofs will not serve the turn, frown them away, and say,—“Get thee behind me Satan.”’ The accuser of the brethren and the spirit of hatred, maketh it his work in the world to destroy men’s love to one another; and he hath no such way to do it, as by making them seem unlovely to one another: and he that persuadeth me that my neighbour is not good, persuadeth me that he is not lovely, and so persuadeth me from loving him; Prov. xxv. 23. Rom. i. 30. Psal. xv. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Rom. xiv. 3, 4. 10. 13. James iv. 11, 12. Matt. vii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Direct. 6. ‘ Above all, seek to mortify selfishness, which is the great enemy of love to God and man.’ A selfish man can faithfully love none but himself; for he loveth all others but for himself; his own opinions, interests and ends, are the disposers of his love. Therefore he never heartily loveth

his enemy; no nor the best, that do not honour him, but seem to slight him. If any should neglect him, or speak hardly of him, or do him any real or seeming wrong, or be of another side, against his party or his cause, no censures are too sharp, and no love too little for such a one. And yet these that can love none heartily but themselves, will find that they had no greater enemies than themselves, and that hell and earth did not so much as themselves against them.

Direct. 7. ‘ Subject yourselves truly to God’s authority, and his commands will further love :’ for it is the sum of them all, and the fulfilling of his law, both old and new ; Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 8—10. John xiii. 34. xv. 12. 17. Matt. xii. 30. 32, 33.

Direct. 8. ‘ Remember that love is the bond, and life, and interest of the church and of the world.’ Without love the world would have neither unity, peace or safety : what were a family without it ? Were it not for love, men that were not kept fettered in jails or bedlams, would be as robbers, or wolves, or mad dogs, one to another. Were it not for love, the church would be crumbled into malicious sects, that would spend their time in prating and militating against each other ; and preach and talk down love to one another ; and would call this devilish work,—the preaching of the Gospel, or the worshipping of God ; while they blaspheme him by offering him a sacrifice of hatred and reviling, as they do that offer him a sacrifice of man’s blood. “ But speaking the truth in love, you may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love ;” Ephes. iv. 15, 16.

Yea their own sects would turn to dust and atoms, if love, which is there confined, did not solder them together, when it is dead in them as to all others, or as to the most.

Direct. 9. ‘ Love is our spiritual health, and selfishness is our sickness, sin and death. When we fell from the love of God to ourselves, we fell also from the love of others to ourselves : the individuate creature was contracted in himself, and altogether set upon propriety, and forgot his relations to God and man : and when grace destroyeth this selfish privateness of spirit, it setteth us again in love with

God and man together; and the better any man is, the more public spirit he is of, and the less difference he maketh between his neighbour's interest and his own (when God and his interest make not a difference). And this is to love our neighbour as ourselves; that is, without the vice of partial selfishness; nor setting up our own interest against his, but equally measuring both by God's; and referring them thereunto; Levit. xix. 18. 34. Matt. xix. 19. Gal. xv. 4.

Direct. 10. 'Remember that loving others as ourselves is our own interest and benefit, as well as our duty.'

And a notable instance it is, how much our duty is our own interest and good, and how merciful God is in his strictest laws. As the love of God is heaven itself, and sinners that love him not do damn themselves, and put themselves from heaven and happiness (and to pardon them is to sanctify them), even so it is an unspeakable loss and misery which sinners draw upon themselves, by not loving their neighbours as themselves, but only in a subordination to themselves, and for their proper private ends. I pray you mark but these few particular instances:

1. If I love my neighbour as myself, my very love is my delight and ease. The form of love consisteth in complacency or pleasedness; and therefore it must needs be pleasant to every one that useth it (however bad love hath bitter fruits). And whenever wrath, or envy, or hatred, comes instead of love, it is my sickness, I feel myself diseased by it.

2. If I love others, others will love me. They are scarce free to do otherwise. You may almost constrain any man to love you, if you love him heartily, and shew it plainly, and were within his view to make him see it. All men love a loving nature; but especially if they be loved by such themselves.

3. If I love my neighbour as myself; to do good to him will be as easy and pleasant as to myself. I can ride, and run, and labour contentedly for myself; I can stoop to the most sordid employment for myself; and so I should as easily do for others: whereas want of love doth make all tedious that I do, and maketh my duty a continual burden, and too often tempts me to omit it. Love made both Christ and his apostles do so much for souls with ease and pleasure, which else they could not have undergone; John xv. 13. 9. 2 Cor. xii. 15. Ephes. iii. 17. v. 2. Col. ii. 2.



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with them? Patience and rejoicing are the duty of all believers in affliction.

2. The mercies and happiness of every one that feareth God is far more than his misery : therefore his joy and gratitude should be more than his sorrows and complaints. If a man's tooth do ache, and all the rest of his body be well, should not he and I be more thankful for the health of all the rest, than troubled for a tooth? A believer hath always the Spirit of God, and a part in Christ, and the pardon of sin, and a right to heaven : and then how much greater should his joy be than his sorrows, and mine also on his behalf?

3. The goodness and love of God is manifested to the world more abundantly than his justice and severity. We know of no afflicted saints, but on this spot of earth ; and we know of no damned ones but devils and wicked men : But we know that the worlds above us are incomparably more vast than this, and that the glory of the celestial spirits, is far greater than our sufferings and sorrows here : therefore our joy which love procureth, should be a thousandfold greater than our sorrows.

4. And as for the wicked, as the consequent will of God layeth by compassion, so consequently, considering them as the obstinate final refusers of grace, they are not those neighbours whom we are bound to love as ourselves ; for they are enemies to God, and deprived of his image, and therefore our obligations to mourn for them are abated, as Samuel's for Saul, when he knew that God had rejected him (I Sam. xv. 35. xvi. 1.) ; and we are obliged to rejoice in the declarations of the justice and holiness of God, and the universal benefit which redoundeth from his judgments ; Rev. xviii. 20. xii. 12. Esther viii. 15. So that it still remaineth clear, that loving our neighbours as ourselves, doth entitle us to the comforts of all men's health, estates, prosperity, honours ; yea, and their holiness and wisdom too ; and this without any such participation of their sorrows, as should be any considerable eclipse of our delights ; if we do it all regularly, as God requireth us.

5. If I love my neighbour as myself, I am freed from all the trouble of cross interests ; in buying and selling, in trespassing, in lawsuits ; it will comfort me as much if he

get by me, as if I get by him; if his bargain prove the better, as if mine did; if he have the better at law, as if it were judged to myself. Yea all his successes, prosperity, and whatever good befalleth any that I know of in the world, will all be mine.

6. And I shall never be loath by death to leave the world (while I have no cause to fear the missing of salvation), because whatever I leave behind me, will be possessed by such as I love as myself. They will have life, and time, and health, and comforts, and whatever my nature is loath to leave: therefore whilst I live, why should it not be as comforting to me to think that so many shall live and prosper, whom I love as myself, as if I were myself to live and prosper.

7. Yea, more than so, I have by love a part in the joys of heaven, before I am actually there. For the joys of all those blessed souls, and of those holy angels, are mine by participation, so far as to cause me to rejoice in their felicity, as if it were my own, as far as I can now apprehend it.

Yea the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the eternal blessedness of God himself, would rejoice us more than our own felicity; if we loved him as much above ourselves, as we ought to do, we should partake of our Master's joy.

And now judge whether loving God as God, and our neighbours sincerely as ourselves, would not cure almost all the calamities of our minds and give us a kind of heaven, and be a cheap and certain way, to have what we can wish in all the world, and even to make all the world our own. And whether it be not sin itself, which is the first part of all men's hell and misery?

Object. 'But my neighbour's meat will not fill my belly; nor his health doth not ease my pain, nor his fire keep me warm.'

Answ. The flesh hath got the dominion indeed, when men cannot distinguish between soul and body, between the pain and pleasures of the body and of the mind. I do not say that love will change the pain or pleasure of your bodies, but of your minds. Your appetites will not be satisfied with your neighbour's food, but your minds may be comforted to see his welfare. Your pain is not eased by your neighbour's health, but your minds may be pleased by it, as much as if it were your own, if you loved him as much as

if it were your own, if you loved him as much as you do yourself. And therefore many in a danger have saved the life of a prince, a captain, a parent, a child, a friend, with the voluntary loss of their own.

Object. ' This is all true ; but who is there in the world that doth it, or findeth it possible to love another as himself? And how can that be a duty, which is to nature itself an impossibility? Therefore, let us first know what this duty is, of loving our neighbours as ourselves.'

Answ. Doubtless if it be the sum of the law, all true Christians do it in sincerity, though not in perfection. And as to the sense of it,—1. You must distinguish between that sensitive and passionate affection, which is in the soul as sensitive, and is common to beasts with men, and that rational appetite, which doth will, and choose, and is pleased according to the conduct of pure reason. The first we doubt not will be still more to ourselves than others; and it is not the use of grace to destroy it, but to rule and moderate it.

2. You must distinguish between love, and outward actions, which are the expressions of it. When our love is due as much to one, as to another, yet our outward actions may be under a particular law, which obligeth us to do that for one, which we are not bound to do for others. As to maintain our own children, families, servants, and so ourselves, rather than others. And the reason is, because the difference of individuals maketh that fit for one, which is not fit for another; and so maketh every man the fittest chooser for himself, and those that are nearest to him; and nature instigateth him to the greatest care in doing it: and all good must be done in a regular order, or else confusion will destroy it. And nature maketh this most orderly, as every parish must keep their own poor, and yet must love other poor as well.

3. You must know that love is formally nothing but complacence (as aforesaid), but love joined with a will and purpose to do good to another, is called love of benevolence; when yet the love there is one thing, and the doing good, or purpose to do it, is another; and I may, in obedience to God, purpose and do more good to one whom I am bound to love, not more but less.



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fishness or partiality: not to forbear loving them, because they are not ourselves, or because they are against any inordinate selfish interest or appetite of our own. And also comparatively, to love them in the same degree with ourselves; if they have the same degree of loveliness; so that it cannot extend to the kind, and the end, and reason of the love, but it must needs also extend to the degree. If I love him less than myself, who is better than myself, I love him not as myself, as to ends and reason.

6. Yea I am bound by this law to love every man better or more than myself, who is really better, and is so manifest to me: or else I love him not as myself, that is, on the same true reason as I must love myself (for God and the goodness of the object).

7. But as all men fail in the degree of this love (and therefore none perfectly keep the law); so the sincerity which all God's servants have, doth consist in this; that, 1. Our love to others is for God's sake, and for the goodness which he has endued them with, and the service they may do him. 2. That this God and his service, for whose sake we love them, be preferred before ourselves; and every creature, and loved better than all our sinful pleasures. 3. That our love to them for God's sake and grace's be such, as ordinarily in the exercise and effects will prevail against our love of sensual interest and delights; and will bring us effectually to succour, relieve, and do them good, though to our fleshly loss, when God requireth it. He that cannot love Christ in his servants, better than his carnal pleasures, loveth him not at all sincerely. God's image and interest in his servants, and in mankind, must be practically more precious to us, and more beloved by us, than all our carnal sinful pleasures. (For as for our own spiritual good, it standeth in such a connexion with God's will and glory, and our neighbour's good, that I know not how to put them into comparison in the trial, much less in opposition.) 4. That all carnal self-love and uncharitableness contrary to this, be hated, resisted; repented of, and subdued, and be not predominant in us, against the love of God and man.

8. The meaning of the command is not that we shall love our neighbours as we inordinately and sinfully love ourselves; but as we ought to love ourselves; and as we regularly and justly do love ourselves. He that loveth himself

too much and sinfully, must not therefore so love his neighbour.

9. He that loveth his neighbour as himself (that is, without selfish partiality, and for the same reasons as he must love himself, viz. for the image and interest of God,) is obliged by this very rule, to love himself more than his neighbour, when he is better, and more pleasing and serviceable to God. (Therefore he that would warrantably love himself most, must labour to be himself the best, and then he may lawfully do it, so far as his own goodness, and other men's defects are truly known to him.)

10. As a father's love may consist with the correction of his children, and self-love with blood-letting, purging, labour, and other unpleasing things; so we may love our neighbours as ourselves, and yet correct and punish evil doers: for sometimes their own good requireth it; and ordinarily the public good requireth it ('*pœna debetur reipublicæ*'), and also God's command requireth it; so that this is not loving ourselves more than our neighbour; but loving him more than his ease, or his favour; and loving God, and the commonwealth, more than him.

11. Our love of our neighbours as ourselves, doth not at all make our natural selfish appetites and senses, or desire of food, health, ease, rest, &c. to be sinful: nor oblige us to have such natural senses and appetites for others; but only rationally to equal them in estimation and complacence, and to do them so much good as God requireth us.

12. And it doth not oblige us to do as much for them as for ourselves, for the reasons before alleged; but to do them good without the hindrance of self-interest: That selfishness be not to us as a bile or imposthume, which draweth the humours and spirits unequally and disorderly from the rest of the body to itself.

By all this it is evident, 1. That no man hath an inequality in his love to himself and his neighbour, beyond the inequality of goodness, but it is sinful (speaking of rational love).

2. That all love to our neighbour is not sincere. There is a real love to them, which bad men may have, which is not the sincere love which God requireth.

3. Every man that loveth another for his goodness and godliness, loveth him not sincerely: for he may have a love

to goodness itself, which is not sincere: as if he love his lusts and pleasures more.

4. Every man that doth good to another in love, doth not therefore sincerely love him. A Dives may give Lazarus his scraps: and the very sensualist may give another some of the leavings of his fleshly lusts. And though the giving of a ^{cup} of cold water to a disciple, when we have no better to give, doth shew sincerity, and shall have its reward (because God accepteth it, according to men's will, and to what they have, and not according to what they have not); yet it is certain that an unhappy worldling may give much more. And if Christ had bid him, Luke xviii. 23. sell part, instead of selling all, it is like he might not have gone away sorrowful.

5. It is not therefore the value or proportion of the gift, which is it that must try our love to others, in itself considered; for it may oft fall out that a widow's mite may signify more true charity, than the substance of some others. But it is the prevalency of the love of God in man, and of man for the sake of God, against our sinful self-love, and carnal interest.

And now I will add a little more evidence, to the principal thing in question, viz. that in the very degree the rational appetite or will should love another equal with ourselves.

And 1. The forementioned reason is undeniable, that the will should love that best which is best, and must measure that by the respect which things have to God, and not to our own commodity in the world.

2. No man can deny this principle but by setting up natural self-love or appetite, and making the rational stoop to that, which would infer as well, that we may love ourselves better than God himself; and that our sense is nobler than our reason, and must rule it.

3. We find our own reason tells us much more of our duty in this, than our corrupted wills do follow. The best way therefore to discern the truth, is to treat with reason alone, and leave out the will, till we have dispatched with reason. And you will find that the common light of nature justifieth this law of God.

1. He that would not confess that it is better he had no being, than that there were no God, or no world besides



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tions, frauds and cruelties on the earth : For want of loving men's neighbours as themselves : otherwise how tenderly would they handle one another ! How easily would they pardon wrongs ! How patiently would they bear the dissent of honest, upright Christians, who cannot force their judgments to be of other men's mould and size ! How apt would men be to suspect their own understandings, of weakness, presumption, or error, rather than to rave with the fury of the dragon against all others, who think them to be mistaken ! How safely and quietly might we live by them in the world, if they loved their neighbours as themselves ! I do not say now, How plentiful would men be in doing good to others ? I am but pleading a lower cause, How seldom they would be in doing hurt ? But, alas, miserable Britain ! it was in thee that one extraordinary emperor, Alexander Severus was betrayed and murdered, who made that Christian precept his motto, and wrote it on his doors, and books, and goods, " Do as you would be done by." In thee it is that love hath been beheaded, while nothing hath been more acknowledged and professed. If love be treacherous, hurtful, envious, scandalous, ensnaring, and plotting for men's destruction : If love teach proud and vicious sots, to take themselves for deities, and oracles, and all for vermin that must be hunted unto death, who bow not to their carnal, erroneous conceits, and do not with the readiest prostitute consciences, serve their carnal interests and ends : If love be known by reviling those that are much better than ourselves ; and stigmatizing the faithfulest servants of Christ with the most odious character that lies can utter : If it was love that called Paul a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people, and represented Christ as an enemy to Cæsar and his followers, as the filth and off-scouring of the earth ; then happy age in which we live ; and happy they which are possessed with the proud and factious spirit. But if it be otherwise, alas, where be they, and how few that love their neighbours, or betters, as themselves ?

5. You see here what a plague sin is to the earth, and how great (a punishment may I call it, or rather) a misery to the sinner, and to the world.

6. And you see how joyful and heavenly a life we should

live, if we did but follow God's commands: and what a felicity love itself is to the soul.

7. And you see by what measure to try men's spirits, and to know who are the best among all the pretenders to goodness in the world. Certainly not the most censorious, contemptuous, backbiters and cruel, that seek to make all odious that are not for their interest: but those that most abound in love, which faith itself is given to produce.

Object. 'All this is true; but still we find it a thing impossible to love our neighbour equally with ourselves: Can you teach us how to do it?'

Answ. It is that I have been teaching you in the ten directions before set down: but it is this which I have reserved to the close that must do the work indeed, and without it nothing else will do it.

Direct. 11. 'Make it the work of all your lives, by faith in Christ, to bring up your souls to the unfeigned love of God, and then it will be done.' For then you will love God above all, and love God in all; and love yourselves and your neighbours principally for God: then God's image, and glory, and will, will be goodness or amiableness in your eyes; and not carnal pleasure, honour, or commodity. And then it will be easy to you to love that most, which hath most of God. You will then easily see the reason of this seeming paradox, and that the contrary is most unreasonable. You will then be as Timothy, who had a natural love to others, as others have to themselves, and who sought the things of Jesus Christ, when all others (even the best ministers too much) sought their own; Phil. ii. 20, 21. You will understand Paul's charge, Phil. ii. 3—5. "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." You will learn of Christ to take your nearest friend for a Satan, that would persuade you to save or spare yourself (yea, your life) when you ought to lay it down for the glory of God, and the good of many, (Matt. xvi. 22, 23.) SELF and OWN are words which would then be better understood, and be more suspected: and the reason of the great Gospel duty of SELF-DENIAL would be better discerned.

Therefore set yourselves to the study of God, especially in his goodness; study him in his works, and in his word, and in his Son, and in the glory where you hope everlastingly to see him: and if you once love God as God indeed, it will teach you to love your brethren, and in what sort, and in what degree to do it. For many ways are we taught of God to love one another: Even, 1. By the great and heavenly teacher of love, Jesus Christ: 2. And by God's own example; Matt. v. 44, 45. 3. And by the shedding abroad of his love in our hearts by the spirit of love; Rom. v. 5. 4. And by this actual loving God, and so loving all of God in the world.

Object. 'But by this doctrine you will prepare for the Levellers and Friars, to cast down, or cry down propriety.'

Answ. 1. There is a propriety of food, raiment, &c. which individuation hath made necessary. 2. There is a propriety of stewardship, which God causeth by the various disposal of his talents, and which is the just reward of human industry, and the necessary encouragement of wit, and labour in the world: none of these would we cast down, or preach down. 3. But there is a common abuse of propriety to the maintenance of men's own lusts, and to the hurt of others, and of all societies! This we would preach down if we could: but it is love only which must be the Leveller. In the primitive church, love shewed its power by such a voluntary community; Acts iv. And all politicians, who have drawn the idea of a perfect commonwealth, have been fumbling at other ways of accomplishing it: but it is Christian love alone that must do it. Unfeignedly love God as God, and love your neighbours really as yourselves, and then keep your proprieties as far as this will give you leave.

I will conclude with this considerable observation; that though it is false which some affirm, that individuation is a punishment for some former sin (for how could a soul not individuate sin?) And though sensitive self-love, which is the principle of self-preservation, be no sin itself; nor doth grace destroy it; yet the inordinacy of it is the sum and root of all positive sin, and an increaser of privative sin: and this inseparable sensitive self-love, was made to be more under the power of reason, and to be ruled by it, than



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As we are commanded first, to “look to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith,” (Heb. xii. 2, 3.) so are we commanded to remember our guides, and to follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation; Heb. xiii. 7. And “not to be slothful; but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;” Heb. vi. 12. To which end we have a cloud of witnesses set before us; in Heb. xi. that next to Jesus whom they followed, we should look to them, and follow them; James v. 10. My brethren, take the prophets for an example—

The reasons of this duty are these.

1. God hath made them our examples two ways: 1. By his graces, making them holy and fit for our imitation. He gave them their gifts, not only for themselves, nor only for that present generation, but for us also, and all that must survive, to the end of the world. As it is said of Abraham’s justification, Rom. iv. 23, 24. It was said that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, not for his sake alone, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe—So I may say in this case; their faith, their piety, their patience was given them, and is recorded, not for their salvation, or their honour only; but also to further the salvation of their posterity, by encouragement and imitation. If “all things are for our sakes” (2 Cor. iv. 15.), then the graces of God’s saints were for our sakes: For the church’s edification it is that Christ giveth both offices, gifts and graces to his ministers (Ephes. iv. 5. 12. 14—16.), yea, and sufferings too; Phil. i. 12. 20. 2 Cor. i. 4. 6. “I endure all things for the elect’s sake;” 2 Tim. iii. 10.

2. By commanding us to follow them. For “yourselves know how ye ought to follow us—To make ourselves an example for you to follow us;” 2 Thess. iii. 7. 9. “Be followers together of me, and mark them that so walk, as ye have us for an ensample;” Phil. iii. 17. “I beseech you be ye followers of me;” 1 Cor. iv. 16. “Ye became followers of us and of the Lord;” 1 Thess. i. 6. So well are both examples consistent.

2. The likeness of other men’s cases to ours, is greatly useful to our direction and encouragement. If we are to travel in dangerous ways, we will be glad to hear how others have sped before us; and if we were to deal with a crafty deceiver, we would willingly advise with others that

have dealt with him. If we be to learn any trade or artifice, we would learn it of them who with best success have practised it before us. If we are sick of any disease, we are glad to talk with them that have had the same, and have been cured of it; to hear what means they used for their cure. In all such cases reason teacheth us, both to observe how others were affected; whether their case and our's were the same; what course they took; and how they sped; especially if they were persons known to us, and the likeness of their case well known; and if they were such as for wisdom and fidelity we could trust: so is it in this great business of our salvation. We have nothing to do, but what many thousands have done before us; nothing to suffer but what they have suffered; no temptation to resist, but what they have been assaulted with, and overcome (I Cor. x. 13.), and we want no grace, no help or comfort, but what they did attain: and the glory which we seek and hope for, they possess. To look to them therefore, must needs be useful to us in this our wilderness state.

3. And as experience is a powerful teacher; so to be the master of other men's experience, and so many, and so wise, and in such various cases, and in so many ages, must needs be very useful to us. We that are born in the last ages of the world, have the benefit of the experience of all the world that have gone before us: therefore is the Scripture written so much historically; that all who are there mentioned, may still be our instructors. Even the first brethren that were born into the world, were so plain a discovery of the nature of sin and grace, and of the difference of the woman's and the serpent's seed, that their history is useful to all generations. And Abel by his faith, and sacrifice, and righteousness, "being dead (by malignant cruelty) yet speaketh;" Heb. xi. 4. He that will but soberly look back to all the world's experience, may quickly be resolved, whether wisdom or folly, labour or idleness, godliness or ungodliness, temperance or sensuality, furthering the Gospel of Christ, or persecuting it, have sped better at the last, and have provided best to the actors upon full experience.

I shall therefore here give you some directions how you may believingly follow the saints. And first observe that the duty hath these parts, which you must distinctly mind; 1. To take them for your examples under Christ, and so to fix

your eyes upon them, and look at them, and mind them as examples must be minded: 2. To improve these examples which you look upon: And that is, 1. For your direction in duty, and for your warning against sin: 2. To your encouragement and consolation.

Direct. 1. 'Look after them to their end,' and consider, 1. Whither they are gone. We see nothing of them after death, but the corpse which we leave in dust and darkness: but faith can attend their souls to glory, and see where they now are; even with Christ, according to his promise, (John xii. 26. Phil. i. 23. John xvii. 24.) with angels, and with one another, in the heavenly society, the city of God.

2. What they are doing. And faith can see that they are beholding God, and their glorified Redeemer; Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14. 1 John iii. 2. They are loving God with perfect love; 1 Cor. xii. xiii. 1, 2, &c. They are praising him with perfect alacrity and joy; saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," &c.; Rev. iv. 8. They are so far minding the state of the world, as to cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth: and they are waiting in white robes, till their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that shall be killed as they were, shall be fulfilled;" Rev. vi. 10, 11. They are rejoicing when the enemies of Christ and his church are subdued; Rev. xviii. 20. And they shall judge the malignant angels and the world; 1 Cor. iv. 2, 3. And this seemeth not to be only an approbation of Christ's final judgment: For, 1. Judging is very often put in Scripture for governing: as in the book of the Judges, it is said, such and such a one "judged Israel;" that is, ruled them according to the laws of God. 2. And a kingdom and reign is often promised to the saints: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne;" Rev. iii. 21. Which must needs signify some participation in power of government, and not only in splendour of glory. And so Christ expoundeth, Matt. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30. Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (And of God it is said, "Thou satest in the thrones judging right;" Psal. ix. 4.) It is too jejune and forced an exposition of them that say this is



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it is, that Michael and his angels shall be the conquerors of the dragon and his angels; Rev. xii. 7. 9. And that the serpent's head shall be bruised by all the woman's seed, though chiefly by the Captain of our Salvation. But this shall now suffice concerning their employment.

3. Behold also by faith what the departed saints are now enjoying. And what is said of their place and work will tell you that. They enjoy the sight of their glorified Head; John xvii. 24. They are "with him in Paradise," and therefore also enjoy the sight of the "glory of God: being absent from the body, they are present with the Lord;" 2 Cor. v. 8. They see not as in a glass, as here they did, but with open face. They enjoy the pleasures of a more perfect knowledge of God and all his wondrous works, than this world affords. They are happy in their works, in the perfect love and praises of God; and they are filled with the pleasures of his love to them. This is their fruition.

4. Let faith also behold what evils they are delivered from. 1. From a heavy drossy body which since the fall hath been an enemy, a prison and fetters to the soul: and therefore they here groaned to be better clothed; 2 Cor. v. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 21. 2. From the world's temptations: 3. From wicked men's malice and persecutions: 4. From sickness, pain, necessities, labours, weariness, and all the troublesome effects of sin: 5. From all troublesome passions, desires, anger, discontent, disappointments, griefs, and cares, and fears of evil. 6. Specially from the fears of hell, and the doubts of their own sincerity and salvation; and from the desertions of God, and the terrible sense of his displeasure. 7. From the troubles and errors of ignorance, and all our natural imperfection. 8. From the fears of death, which now is more painful than death itself. 9. From the suggestions of Satan, and his malicious vexing, disquieting temptations, and from his flattering allurements, which are much worse. 10. From the company, and the tempting or grieving examples of ungodly men. 11. From all sin itself, and all our moral imperfections and defects. 12. And finally from all danger, and fear of ever losing the felicity they possess. These are the immunities of the blessed.

Direct. 2. 'When faith hath seen the saints in glory,

look back and think next what they were lately here, on earth; that it may help you to compare your state and theirs.' And here you will see, 1. That they were lately in flesh, as we now are. They had bodies as drössy, as vile, as frail, as burdensome as ours are. It cost them as dear (not as it doth the sensual, but) as it doth the temperate person now to keep them up awhile for the service to which they were appointed. 2. They had pains and sicknēsses as we have. The souls in heaven have escaped thither from bodies which have lain as long tormented with the stone, with stranguries, colics, gripes, convulsions, consumptions, fevers, and other the most tedious, painful, and loathsome diseases, as sober men on earth now feel. 3. Satan was as malicious to them, as he is to us; and to many of them as troublesome: he haunted them with as ugly temptations, to the greatest sins, to unbelief, and pride, and despair, and self-murder, and horrid blasphemy, as he doth any of us. (Yea, he did so by Christ himself, Matt. iv.) 4. They met with as many allurements to worldlinēss, sensuality, pride, and lust, in the world's deceiving baits, and flatteries, as now we do; and were fain to proceed every step towards heaven, by conflict and conquest as we must do. 5. They were in as many wants and straits; in as poor, and low, and despised a state, as we are now: they wēre tempted to cares, and murmurings, and discontents, through their wants and crosses, as well as we. 6. They have been in dangers, and in fears, and many a time at the brink of death, before it came: and put to cry to God for deliverance in the terrors and anguish of their hearts. Their flesh, and heart, and friends have failed them, and all the creatures cast them off. 7. They have gone through far greater persecutions for the sake of Christ and righteousness, than ever we did: "So persecuted they the prophets before you;" Matt. v. 11, 12. Which of the prophets did not your fathers kill and persecute? Even of them for whom their posterity erected monuments? Matt. xxiii. 36—38. We have not resisted unto blood, as many of them did; Heb. xi. The same and greater afflictions which we have undergone, were accomplished on our brethren in this world; 1 Pet. v. 9. We go through the same conflict as they did; Phil. i. 30. We are no more falsely nor odiously slandered in any of our sufferings than they were; Matt. v. 11, 12. 8. They

were men of like passions as we are ; for so James saith even of Elias, that was carried to heaven without our kind of death. They had their ignorances, uncertainties, doubts, mistakes ; their dark thoughts of God, and that world where they now are. Many of them knew as little of it, till they saw it, as we do now. Many a fearful, trembling hour, many a thought that God had forsaken them, and that the day of grace was past, have many of them had as well as we. 9. Yea, they were imperfect in all their graces ; they had an imperfect faith, an imperfect hope, an imperfect love to God and man, and many an hour in such groans as ours now are, O when shall we be saved from our darkness and unbelief ! When shall we better love the Lord ! 10. They had their actual sins also. (Though none that were regnant after conversion) their obedience was imperfect as ours now is. Many of their faults and falls are left on record for our warning. There is not one human soul in heaven besides our Saviour's, that was not once a sinner : they all came thither by a Redeemer as we must do. They had their too great selfishness ; Phil. ii. 21. They had their pusillanimity and fears of men (as Peter and the apostles). They had their sinful controversies, as Paul and Barnabas ; and sinful separations in compliance with the censorious, as Peter and Barnabas had ; Gal. ii. 16, 17. They had their carnal sidings, factions, and divisions in the church ; 1 Cor. i. iii. Many a time have they been put to groan, " O wretched man, who shall deliver me from this body of death ;" Rom. vii. &c. 11. They had as difficult duties to go through, as any of us : they were put upon as many tears and troubles, watchings and travels, fastings and self-denial, as the most laborious and suffering Christians now. 12. They had as long delays of the accomplishment of their desires, as any of us. 13. And lastly, they passed through death itself, as we must do. They lay gasping on their beds of languishing, and death broke in upon every part, and they underwent that separation of soul and body, as we must do : their flesh was turned to rottenness and dust, and laid out of the sight of man in darkness, and remaineth to this day as common earth.

All this the saints in heaven have undergone. This was their case awhile ago, who are now in glory. And this was not only the case of some few, but of thousands and mil-



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mortify those fleshly lusts, which others make it their interest and work to please; Gal. v. 17, 21, 22. vi. 14.

5. They suffered afflictions and persecutions patiently; and being reviled, they did not revile: they “loved their enemies, and blessed those that cursed them, and prayed for those that despitefully used and persecuted them;” Matt. v. 44, 45. 1 Cor. iv. 11—13. 2 Cor. i. 6, 7. Heb. xi. They would not accept of deliverance from imprisonment, torments and death, upon sinning terms.

6. They endured to the end, and did not fall off and forsake the covenant of their God; Rev. ii. iii.

7. Lastly, they did all this by the motive of their hopes of heaven, and by a confidence in the promises of it, and in a heavenly mind and conversation, as knowing that they did not labour or suffer in vain; 1 Cor. xv. 58. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Tim. iv. 10. Rom. viii. 18. Matt. v. 11. 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Heb. xii. 2.

This was the way by which the saints have gone to heaven; the only true, successful way.

Direct. 4. ‘Consider next what helps and means God gave them for this work, and compare our own with them, and see whether ours be not as great.’

1. We have the same natural capacity as they: we are intellectual, free agents, made for another world, and capable of all that they attained. There is no difference in our natural faculties.

2. We have the same God to shew us mercy; 1 Cor. xii. 5. There are divers operations, but the same God; Ephes. iv. 4, 5. “There is one God, one Lord, &c. even the Lord over all, good to all that call upon him;” Rom. x. 12. The same mercy which called them, and waited on them, calleth us, even a God who hath “no respect of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him;” Acts x. 37. Though he be a free benefactor, he is a righteous Judge, and he is good to all, and the Father of every member of his Son.

3. They had the same Saviour as we have; the same Sacrifice for their sins; the same Teacher, and the same Example; the same Intercessor with the Father: for though “there be divers administrations, there is the same Lord;” 1 Cor. xii. 5. Ephes. iv. 4. “For other foundation can no

man lay, than Him who is the chief Corner-stone ;” 1 Cor. iii. 11. “ They all did eat of the same spiritual meat, and drank of the same rock as we do, which is Christ ;” 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. It was the reproach of Christ which Moses in Egypt esteemed better than their treasures ; Heb. xi. 26. The same Physician of souls who hath us in cure, did cure all them : the same Captain who is conducting us to salvation, is he that saved them. The same Prince of the Covenant, and Lord of Life, who conquered death and all their enemies, hath conquered them for us, and is preparing us for life with them. They had no greater or better High Priest and Mediator with God than we have.

4. They had the same rule to walk by, and the same way to go, as all we have ; Gal. i. 7, 8. vi. 16. Phil. iii. 14, 15. The same Gospel and word of God in the main, though under various promulgations and administrations. Those before the flood were under the covenant of the Promised Seed, made universally to mankind in Adam. Those after the flood were under the same covenant renewed universally to mankind in Noah. The Israelites were under the same covenant renewed to them especially in Abraham, with special additions ; and after under that covenant seconded with the law which was given to Moses : and all Christians after Christ’s resurrection are under the perfected covenant of grace, and have the same word of salvation for their rule ; even the “ Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God, to the salvation of every one that believeth ;” Rom. i. 16.

5. They had but the same promises in this covenant to believe, and to assure them of the salvation which they now possess. They had no other character from God to shew, nor any but this universal act of oblivion to trust to for the pardon of all their sins, which we have to trust to for the pardon of ours ; John iii. 16. 18. Mark xvi. 16. The promise which was made to the Jews, and to their children, was made also to them “ that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord shall call ;” Acts ii. 39. “ For the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith ;” Rom. iv. 13. “ And therefore it was of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the Fa-

ther of us all ;” ver. 16. That it might appear that God justified not Abraham for any peculiar carnal privilege, but as a believer, which is a reason common to him with all believers. “To whom also their faith shall be imputed for righteousness ;” ver. 24. “Godliness still is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come ;” 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Yea, what difference there is in both these forementioned respects, it is to our advantage. We have the most perfected rule, and the fullest promises ; and we have many promises fulfilled to us, which were not fulfilled to them in their days ; Heb. xi. 40. And we are near the final accomplishment of all the promises.

6. They had the same motives to faith, and patience, and godliness as we have. They could have no greater happiness offered them, nor any greater punishment threatened to drive them from sin by fear. They could have no higher ends than ours ; nor any nobler reasons to be religious. The same reasons and ends did bring them through all temptations and difficulties, to everlasting life, which we have also to satisfy us, and to carry us on ; 2 Tim. iv. 8.

7. The same Spirit did illuminate, sanctify and quicken them, which is illuminating, sanctifying and quickening us. All the most excellent and heavenly endowments and workings of their souls, were wrought by the same operator who is still at work in all the saints ; Rom. viii. 9. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ;” 1 Cor. xii. 4. “We have the same Spirit of faith ;” 2 Cor. iv. 13. All that are sons have the same Spirit of the Son, even the Spirit of adoption (Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 16, 26.), which is the Spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind ; 2 Tim. i. 7. We have the same Almighty Power within us, to destroy our sins, to raise up our sluggish hearts to God, to keep us in his love, to overcome the flesh, which did all these excellent works in them. We are sealed with the same seal, and are known by the same mark (1 John iii. 24.), and are actuated by the same heavenly principle as they were.

8. We are members of the same universal church, which is the body of Christ : for there is but one body, whatever diversity of the members there be ; Ephes. iv. 4—7. 12. 1 Cor. xii. We are members of the same city and family of God ; Ephes. ii. 19. We are in the same ship which conveyed



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if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified with him; Rom. xv. 16, 17. The kingdom is prepared for all them that love him. Christ prayed for all that the Father had given him; and for all that should believe by his word (John xvii. 2. 20. 27.), even that they may have eternal life, and may be with him where he is, to see his glory. Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life; John iii. 16.

In all this you may see, how like their condition in this world was unto ours, and that our way is the same which all those have gone, that are now past all these snares and dangers, sins and miseries, in the presence of their Lord.

Direct. 5. ‘When you have made these comparisons, think next what an excellent benefit it will be to you, to look thus believingly and frequently to the saints, that are gone before you into glory. All these unspeakable benefits will follow it.

1. It will much quicken and confirm our faith. As we do the more easily trust the boat, and boatman, when we see many thousand passengers safely landed by him: and we easily trust the physician, when we see many thousands cured by him, who were once in our case; so it will greatly satisfy the soul against the suspicions and fears of unbelief, when faith seeth all the glorified saints, that are actually saved by Christ already, and have obtained all that we believe and seek. Methinks I hear Enoch, Joshua, Abraham, Peter, Paul, John, Cyprian, Macarius, Augustine, Melancthon, Calvin, Zanchius, Rogers, Bradford, Hooper, Jewel, Grindal, Usher, Hildersham, Ames, Dod, Baines, Bolton, Gataker, with thousands such, as men standing on the further side of the river, and calling to us that must come after them, ‘Fear not the depths, or storms, or streams; trust boldly that vessel, and that faithful pilot; we trusted him, and none of us have miscarried, but all of us are here landed safe. We were once in storms, and doubts, and fears, as you now are; but it is our diffidence, and not our confidence, which proved our infirmity and shame.’ Who would not boldly follow such a multitude of excellent persons, who have sped so well?

2. It will also much confirm our hope (that is, our glad expectation of the crown) when our apprehensions of it grow dull and slack, and our fears do grow upon us, and we are

ready to question whether ever such a happiness will be our lot, the sight of these that are now triumphing in the actual possession, will banish despair, and much revive us. We cannot but think, they were once as low and bad as I, and had as many difficulties to overcome. And why may not I then be as holy and as happy as they?

3. Such a sight will greatly quicken our desires, to attain their happiness, and to go their way. As when worldlings see the grandeur, and honours, and power of great men (as they are yet called) it maketh them think, how brave a life is this? And as the sensual, when they see their companions in the tavern, or gaming-house, or play-house, or the merry fool-house, as Solomon accounteth it (Eccles. vii. 4.), do long to be with them, and to partake of their beloved pleasure: so when by faith we see the departed saints in glory, and think where our old acquaintance are, and the multitudes of wise and holy souls, that are gone before, it will greatly stir up our sluggish desires, and make us long for the same felicity, and to be as near to God as they are.

4. And it will do much to direct us in the way: for we must follow them as they followed Christ. As the history of the wars of Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, &c. will teach men how to fight for temporal, tyrannical domination; so the history of the saints does teach us how to fight against spiritual wickednesses and powers, and how to take the prospering way. It is easy there to find, whether laziness or labour, whether sensuality or spirituality hath always been the way to heaven. Whether saints were gluttons, drunkards, whoremongers, riotous, licentious and proud; or temperate, chaste, mortified and humble. Whether the saints were the scorers, or the scorned; the oppressors, or the oppressed; the persecutors, or the persecuted; the burdens, or the blessings of the times they lived in. When the world is divided about matters of religion, and every party hath a several way, for the unity, and the reformation, and the communion of the churches, and the right government, discipline and worshipping of God; how easy and safe is it (in the main, and in all things of necessity) to look back and see which way it was that Peter and Paul did go to heaven by; and what terms they were, on which their union, communion, government, discipline and worship were performed.

5. The sight of blessed souls by faith, will also increase

the resolution and fortitude of the mind. Faintness and pusillanimity seize upon us when we look only on the difficulties and dangers: but when we see the thousands that have overcome them all, by the same means which we are called to use; it steeleth our courage, and maketh us resolve to break through all: when we think only how mortal our diseases are, our hearts do fail us: but when all that were cured of the very same, do call to us, and say, 'Never fear; there is no disease too hard for your Physician; he hath cured us of the very same, and cureth all that ever trust him, and use his remedies.' This will embolden a fainting mind. Therefore in the forecited text, (Heb. vi. 12.) it is said, "Be not slothful, (which there meaneth, such as faint with despondency, despair, or fears) but followers of them who by faith and patience inherit the promises." When we look on the saints' tribulations for the faith, we are apt to faint (as some do that stand by another that is under the surgeon's hands); Ephes. iii. 13. But when we see them in triumph, it cureth our cowardice (and it is they only that labour and faint not, that are crowned, and that reap in due season, &c.; Rev. ii. 3. Gal. vi. 9): that is, who faint not into cessation, or so as to be overcome). Do you think when the Israelites passed through the Red Sea, that the leaders had not the greatest trial? And that it was not an exceeding increase of their courage, who came after in the rear, when they saw most of their brethren safely passed through? Look believingly upon the souls in heaven, and you will do or suffer any thing to follow them.

6. And it will greatly provoke us to diligence in well-doing: Look up to your brethren, and you will mend your pace. If a horse be going towards his pasture, he will go cheerfully; especially when he sees his companions there. It will make us pray hard, and meditate studiously, and work laboriously, and watch diligently, that we may be with Christ, where our brethren are, and receive the end of our faith and labour.

7. And to see our brethren in heaven before us, will greatly help us to suffer for Christ, and to be patient in any tribulation which befalleth us. When we see them in glory, we shall scarce stay to complain of the foulness or narrowness of the way: but look before us, and go on through all. Or if the flesh do repine, and our hearts begin to fail us, it



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own. And though it is the sight of God and our Mediátor by faith, which must be our chiefest hope and joy; yet while we are here men in flesh, yea, more when we have laid by flesh and blood, the presence of all the blessed spirits, and heavenly host, will be a great though subordinate part of our heavenly felicity and delight.

Direct. 6. ‘When you have gone thus far, consider what obligations lie upon you to converse by faith with your brethren in heaven, and to look up frequently to their state and work.’

1. Your necessary love to God requireth it: for as your love to him must be shewed by your loving his image in your brethren; so it requireth you, to love them most that are most like God: or else you love them not for his likeness. And it requireth you to love them most whom God loveth most; and that is those that are most like him, and nearest him. And he that loveth God in his creatures, and loveth any one truly for God, must love the angels and perfected spirits best, because they love him best, and are nearest him, and most like to him, and are also most beloved by him.

2. The common nature of love and humanity requireth it: for it requireth us to love that best which is best (as is said): but the blessed ones in heaven are better than any here on earth; and therefore should be better loved.

3. The nature of our love to the saints requireth it: for if we love them as saints and godly, we shall love those most that are most holy; and that is the blessed ones above. And if we love them most, we shall certainly mind them, and converse with them by faith, and not be voluntary strangers to them.

4. It is part of that heavenly conversation, which is commended to us, Phil. iii. 20, 21. When it is said, that our “conversation is in heaven,” it signifieth that our burgheship is there, and our interest and great concerns are there, and our dwelling is there, and our trading and thriving business is there, and for it; and our friends and fellow-citizens; and those that we daily trade and converse with, in love and familiarity, are there; even as our God, and our Head, and our inheritance are there. He never knew a heavenly conversation, that pretending there to know God alone, hath no converse with his holy ones that attend

him ; and doth not live as a member of their society in the city of God ; that doth not with some delight behold their holiness, unity, and order, &c.

5. The honouring of God and our Redeemer doth require it, (that we daily converse with the saints in heaven :) because it is in them that God is seen, in the greatest glory of his love ; and it is in them that the power, and efficacy, and love of our dear Redeemer most appeareth. You judge now of the father by his children, and of the physician by his patients, and of the builder by the house, and of the captain by his victories. And if you see no better children of God, than such childish crying, feeble, froward, diseased, burdensome ones as we are, you will rob him of the chief of this his honour. And if you look at none of the patients of our Saviour, but such lame and languid, pained, groaning, diseased, half-cured ones as we ; you will rob him of the glory of his skill and cures. And if you look but to such an imperfect broken fabric, as the church on earth, you will dishonour the builder. And if you look to no other victories of Christ and his Spirit, but what is made in this confused, dark, and bedlam world, you will be tempted to dishonour his conduct and his conquests. But if you will look to his children in heaven, who are perfected in his love and likeness, and to Christ's patients which are there perfectly cured, and to his building in the heavenly unity and glory, and to all his victories as there complete, then you will give him the glory which is his due ; Rev. xxi. xxii. 2 Thess. i. 10—12.

6. So also you will dishonour religion, and the church, if you converse not with the saints above. For the reasons last given : for you will judge of the church, and of religion, by such imperfect things as here you see, where men turn religion to the service of their worldly interests and ends, and fight for ambition, faction, tyranny, usurpation, and worldly lusts, under the sacred names of Religion and the Church ; and for the pretended love of Christ, and one another, do tear the church into shreds, and worry, and hunt, and devour one another. You will be tempted to be infidels, if you do not here converse with the sincere, humble, holy, charitable Christians, and look up to heaven to perfect souls : and then you will see a church that is truly amiable, holy, unanimous and glorious in perfect love.

7. If you look not up to those in heaven, you will quite misunderstand the providences of God, in the prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings of the saints, and the changes that are usually made on earth. You will begin to think, that sin is safe, and the wicked are not so miserable as they are, nor godly diligence so profitable a thing; you will not know the reasons of Providence, unless you can see unto the end: and the ultimate end is not on earth. But go into the sanctuary, and take the prospective of the promise, and look to the blessed souls with Christ, and all the riddle will be expounded to you, and you will be reconciled to all the providences of God: you are strange to truth, if you are strange to the triumphing saints in heaven.

8. The progressive nature of your faith and godliness requireth it. You are travelling to heaven, where the blessed are, and are nearer to them than when you first believed: and the nearer you are to them, the more you should mind them, and by faith and love be familiar with them: and when you are almost at home, you should be even ready to embrace your friends at the meeting.

9. Your relation to the blessed spirits doth require it; and your Christian and ingenuous disposition towards them. 1. Are they not such as were lately near you in the flesh; some of them your dearest companions and friends; and should you causelessly forget them? 2. Are they not now your friends who love you better than they could do on earth? Doubtless their knowledge and memory is not grown less, to forget you, if once they knew you; but they are like to know much more: and their goodness being increased, their love is increased, and not diminished. 3. And you belong to the same society with them; even to the body or church of Christ, whose nobler part above, and inferior part on earth, do make up the whole. Is it not expressly said, Heb. xii. 22, 23. that “we are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven?” (that is, to those which as the first-born, are most noble, and possessed of the heavenly inheritance, and are there entered inhabitants already): “And to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new cove-



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a pleasure desirable in such a case? What grief must needs dwell on the minds of sober Catholic Christians, to see the church on earth so torn, so worried, so reproached as it is throughout the earth; so torn in pieces by its zealous, ignorant, self-conceited pastors and members? So worried by its open and secret enemies; even by the usurping tyrannising “wolves in sheep’s clothing, who spare not the flock;” (Matt. vii. 15. x. 16. Acts xx. 29.) so reproached by the world of infidels and heathens, who fly from it as from an infected city, and say, ‘Christians are drunkards, and deceivers, and liars; they are all in pieces among themselves; they revile and persecute one another; we will therefore be no Christians.’ How sad is it to see the one part of the world professing Christianity, to make it odious by their wickedness, and their divisions; and the rest of the world abhorring it, because these have made it seem odious to them! How sad is it to hear all Christians speak of love and concord, unity and peace, while few of them know the way of peace, or how to hold their own hands from tearing the church into more pieces, while these peaceable words are in their mouths! To see the pastors and people, as if it were for unity and peace, contriving the ruin of all that are not of their party and way, and studying how to extirpate one another; and multiplying snares and stumbling-blocks; as necessary means to heal the church! How sad is it to see so great a faction as the Roman kingdom (for it is more properly a kingdom than a church) to lay the necessary unity and communion of all the churches, upon so many forgeries of their own; upon the supposed certainty of the falseness of men’s senses (in point of transubstantiation), and upon the subjection of the church to an universal usurper; and to keep up ignorance, lest knowledge (by reading the translated Scriptures, and such books as do detect their frauds) should mar their markets, and spoil their trade! To see their prelates take their own domination, wealth and greatness, to be really the prosperity of the church, and the interest of the Gospel and kingdom of Christ; and to promote the Gospel by silencing or prohibiting the most able, zealous, faithful preachers of it; and to go with a drawn sword among the people, and say, ‘Love us, or we will kill you: love Christ and us, or the inquisition and rack shall teach you love!’ To see them take the

terrifying of men by corporal penalties, to be their chiefest work, and the way of love to be but such popularity as destroyeth the church. Will not now and then a walk in heaven, be a great refreshing to the mind that hath been long haunted with such hideous and ugly spectres as all these? Will not some converse with the most wise, and holy, and peaceable society, whose life is love, be a great recreation to your minds, when such sights as these have made them sad?

Moreover, you have many burdens of your own to bear; your own ignorance, your own temptations, your passions, your wants, and worst of all, the relics of your sin, which you cannot bear with that hope and support which is needful to you, without oft looking to the happiness of those that have overcome all these, and are now at rest.

And you have many excellent duties to perform, which will not be so well done without looking oft on such a copy. Yea, you have the fears of death to overcome, which will not be so easily done, as by looking to all the world of souls, that have already gone that way before you.

Yea, in your converse with God himself, though you have one only sufficient Mediator, you will cast yourselves upon great disadvantages, if your thoughts leave out the blessed society of saints and angels, who are nearest to him; you cast away your stepping-stones, or stairs of ascent, and you will but tempt yourselves to look at God, as through the great interposing gulf; and hinder the needful familiarity of your thoughts above. Neglect not then a help so needful to you in your present state.

12. Lastly, The remembrance and observation of the heavenly inhabitants, is the way that is commended and commanded to all believers, and that as part of their ordinary duty, in their prayers to God. He hath not only minded us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still living, to prove the resurrection (Matt. xii. 27.), but hath also comforted the expectants of heaven, by describing the joy of Lazarus as in Abraham's bosom (Luke xvi. 22, 23.), and introduced Abraham as pleading Lazarus's cause; ver. 25, 26. And hath made it a part of the comfortable description of his kingdom, that we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in it; Matt. viii. 11. And when he would appear transfigured in a glimpse of his glory, to Peter,

James and John, he would not do it alone, but with Moses and Elias talking with him; Matt. xvii. And the comfort which Paul giveth to the suffering Thessalonians is, “Rest with us;” 2 Thess. i. 7. not only rest with Christ, but with his servants. And when he describeth the glory of Christ’s appearing it is that, “He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that do believe;” ver. 10. As himself describeth his appearing as with his glorious angels, Matt. xxv. 31. “All the holy angels with him.” Whether it be all the blessed spirits of the higher worlds, or only all those of them who were deputed to the service of the church on earth, (Matt. xviii. 10.) and so were made angels to man, I pass over. And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,” &c.; Jude 14. Many other Scriptures tell us, that we must not leave out the saints and angels, when we look towards heaven by faith, and when we converse and walk above.

But this is but as on the by: That which I intend for your special observation is, the third petition of the Lord’s prayer, where the annexed clause (which seemeth to refer to all the three first petitions) doth set the heavenly church before us, as the pattern of that obedience to the will of God, which both we, and all the world must imitate, and pray to God that we may imitate. “Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.” Here Christ requireth all Christians in prayer, to look up to the heavenly society, and to consider how they do the will of God, and make it their pattern, and in their daily prayers, as men that long for their celestial perfection, to pray that they may become their imitators: even as the scholars in the lowest form in the school, must look at those in the highest form, and desire and endeavour to attain to their degree. You see then that this is a commanded ordinary duty.

Direct. 7. ‘Consider next, wherein it is that your converse with angels, and the perfected spirits of the just consisteth; that you may neither, by your mistake, neglect it nor carry it too far.’

I. Negatively: 1. It is not a deifying them, as the heathens did their heroes and their Divi: they are still but God’s ministers, and must have nothing ascribed to them of the Divine prerogative.



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lawful in itself, yet must be done with very great caution. And it is fitter that we pray together in general for the resurrection of all the members of Christ, both those that are dead, and those that will be, than to fix upon the dead distinctly; because as we have no precept nor example for it in the Scriptures, so the minds of the hearers (if it be public,) may easily abuse our example to error and excess.

3. Our thankfulness to them for their love and benefits, must be very cautiously expressed: not by a verbal thanksgiving to them, of whom we are uncertain when they hear us; nor yet in any such language as tendeth to encroach upon the honour of our great Benefactor; nor to acknowledge any more as from them, than as the ministers of Christ.

4. And in our acknowledgments of their general prayers for the church, we must take heed of feigning them to be more particular than we can prove they are.

5. And we must take heed of all such rhetorical proso-popœias as tend to delude the hearers or the readers; as if we would draw them to believe the presence and audience of those spirits which we intend not to express.

6. And our honouring of the memory of their martyrdom or holiness must be so cautious, that it tend not to idolatry or superstition: it is lawful in itself to keep the relics of a saint or a friend, and to keep a solemn, thankful memorial of God's mercy to his church, in her most excellent helpers and most successful instruments of her good: but in a time when these are commonly abused to superstition, the consequence may make that evil, which in other circumstances might be good. When the primitive pastors led their people, sometimes to the places where their neighbours suffered martyrdom for Christ, and there praised God for their praised constancy, to encourage the people, and engage themselves to be true to Christ, and die as constantly as others did; this then had good effects; and if it had been used more cautiously, had been laudable: but they did not foresee the great inconveniences of relics, pilgrimages, prayers to saints, &c. which in after ages it introduced: and now, it must be with very great caution indeed, if we will imitate them.

7. To pray to God to hear their general prayers for the church (such as those mentioned Rev. vi. 9, 10.), doth inti-

mate no false doctrine that I know of. But it is a practice that hath danger, and no Scripture precept or example to encourage it, nor solid reason, that I remember: and if God would have had us use it, it is like he would have made it known.

II. Affirmatively: our converse with those in heaven consisteth in all these parts.

1. We must acknowledge our relation to them, and not think that they are nothing to us.

2. We must not forget them, but see them by faith, and take it as part of our daily business to have some daily conversation with them.

3. We must love them with a peculiar love; even better than we love the godly upon earth: because they are better, and liker unto God, and love him more, and are more beloved by him.

4. We must specially rejoice that God is glorified in and by them; and look often to them as the most illustrious representers of the Divine perfections than any of the saints on earth.

5. We must greatly rejoice in their own felicity and glory, even as if it were our own. If we did see with our eyes our old dear friends, as Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, triumphing now in the glory of the blessed, we could not choose but be daily very glad on their behalf; to see and think, 'O what felicity do my friends enjoy!' And faith should make it in some measure to you, as if you saw it.

6. We must have a grateful sense in our minds of their love to us; and must give God thanks for his angels' ministrations for us. For doubtless, as they are wiser and better than any of our friends on earth; so they have a better, a purer and diviner kind of love to us, than these below have. And the angels disdain not to be Christ's servants for our good, yea for our salvation. For "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation;" Heb. i. 14. "Their angels always behold the face of my Father in heaven;" Matt. xviii. 10. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;" Psal. xxxiv. 7. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy way. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone;" Psal. xci. 11, 12. "There

is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth ;” Luke xv. 10. “The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom ;” Luke xvi. 22. Though the great love is that of God, our creator, redeemer, and sanctifier, and our chiefest gratitude is due to him, even for the benefit which we have by any of his creatures ; yet love and mental thankfulness is due to the rational creatures which are his voluntary instruments ; because they do what they do out of real love to us ; otherwise we should owe thankfulness to none, either benefactor, friend or parents.

7. And our believing converse with the blessed spirits, must make us earnestly desire to be like them ; even to be as like them here as possibly we may, and to be with them that we may be perfect as they are perfect. We must long to be near God, as they are, and to know him, and love him, as they do ; and this holy ambition is well pleasing to God : though we must not desire to be as God, we must desire to know and love him perfectly.

8. And hence we must proceed to a sober imitation of them as they are now employed in heaven : not in those particulars wherein their case and ours differ (as to thank God for that conquest which they have made, and the glory which they do possess, &c.). But in all these duties which in some degree, belong to us as well as them.

For instance, ask what kind of religion is likeliest to that which is in heaven ? Is it studying bare words, and disputing about things unprofitable, or contending and quarrelling about precedency, preeminence or domination ? Or is it not rather the clearest knowledge, and the most fervent love of God, and all his holy ones, and the fullest content, delight and rest of the soul in God, and the highest praises and thanksgivings, with the readiest and most cheerful obedience ?

And what kind of religious performances are most excellent which we must principally intend ? Groans, and tears, and penitent confessions, and moans, are very suitable to our present state, while we have sin and suffering ; but surely they are duties of the lower rank ; for heaven more aboundeth with praises and thanksgiving ; and therefore we must labour to be fitter for them, and more abundant in them ; not casting off any needful humiliations, and peni-



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tience, and making them so great encouragements to us, who may the more boldly follow them in faith, duty and sufferings, who have conquered all, and sped so well: for showing us by faith their present state of glory with Christ, for our confirmation and consolation. Thus far in all these ten particulars we must have a heavenly conversation with the glorified by faith.

Direct. 8. 'Consider next, wherein your imitation of the example of their lives on earth consisteth.'

And it is 1. Not in committing any of their sins, nor indulging any such weaknesses in ourselves, as any of them were guilty of. 2. Nor in extenuating a sin, or thinking ever the better of it, because it was theirs. 3. Nor in doing as they did in exempted cases, wherein their law and ours differed (as in the marriage of Adam's children, in the Jews polygamy, &c.). 4. Nor in imitating them in things indifferent, or accidental, that were never intended for imitation, nor done as morally good or evil: 5. Nor in pretending to, or expecting of their extraordinary revelations, inspirations, or miracles. 6. Nor in pretending the high attainments of the more excellent, to be the necessary measure of all that shall be saved, or the rule of our church-communion: our imitation of them consisteth in no such things as these.

But it consisteth in these.

1. That you fix upon the same ultimate ends as they did. That you aim at the same glory of God, and choose the same everlasting felicity.

2. That you choose the same Guide and Captain of your Salvation; the same Mediator between God and man; the same Teacher and Ruler of the church, and the same Sacrifice for sin, and Intercessor with the Father.

3. That you believe the same Gospel, and build upon the same promises, and live by the same rule, the word of God.

4. That you obey the same Spirit, and trust to the same Sanctifier, and Comforter, and Illuminator, to illuminate, sanctify and comfort your souls.

5. That you exercise all the same graces of faith, hope, love, repentance, obedience, patience, as they did.

6. That you live upon the same truths, and be moved by the same motives as they lived upon and were moved by.

7. That you avoid the same sins as they avoided; and see what they feared, and fled from, and made conscience of, that you may do the same.

8. That you choose and use the same kind of company, helps and means of grace (so far as yours and theirs are the same) as they have done: and think not to find a nearer, or another way to that state of happiness which they are come to. “Walk by the same rule, and mind the same things; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you;” Phil. iii. 16. “If any preach another Gospel, let him be accursed;” Gal. i. 7, 8. “Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them;” Rom. xvi. 17. “We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end, that you be not slothful; but followers of them,” &c. Heb. vi. 11, 12.

9. That you avoid, resist, and overcome the same temptations, as they did, who now are crowned.

10. That you bear the same cross, and exercise the same faith, and hope, and patience, unto the end. Arm yourselves with the same mind, &c. 1 Pet. iv. I.

In brief, this is the true imitation of the saints.

Direct. 9. Never suffer your life of sense to engage you so deeply in sensible converse with men on earth, as to forget your heavenly relations and society; but live as men that unfeignedly believe, that you have a more high, and noble converse every day to mind.

If you are believers indeed, let your faith go along with the souls of your departed friends into glory: and if you have forgot them by an unfriendly negligence, renew your acquaintance with them. Think not that those only that live on earth, are fit for our converse, and our comfort: will you converse with none but ignorant, selfish, worldly sinners? Are you more contemptuous of the heavenly inhabitants, than the gentleman in hell torments was, (Luke xvi. 26, 27.) that thought one from the dead, though it had been but a beggar, would have been revered even by his sensual brethren on earth, so far as to have persuaded them unto saving repentance: I tell you, a dead man's skull is oftentimes a more profitable companion than most you shall converse with in the common world. The dust of your de-

parted friends, and the clay that corpse are turned into, is a good medicine for those eyes that are blinded with the dust of worldly vanities. Much more should you keep your acquaintance with the soul, which may, for all the distance, be perhaps more useful to you, than it was in the flesh. Alas! how carnally, and coldly, or seldom, do most professors look at their brethren, and at the angelical hosts that are above. They long for our conversion, and mind our great concernments, and rejoice in our felicity; and shall we be so swinishly ungrateful, as seldom to look up, and remember their high and blessed state?

Many think that they have no more business with their deceased friends, than to see them decently interred, and to mourn over them, as if their removal were their loss; or to grieve for our own loss, when we perceive their places empty; but we scarce look up after them with an eye of faith, much less do we daily maintain our communion with them in heaven: when Christ was taken up, his disciples gazed after him; Acts i. 10. Stephen looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw Christ sitting at the right hand of God; Acts vii. 55. And how seldom, how slightly do we look up, either to Jesus, his angels or his saints.

I tell you, sirs, you have not done with your friends when you have buried their flesh. They have left you their holy examples: they are entered before you into rest: you are hastening after them, and must be quickly with them, if you are true believers: you must see them every day by faith. When you look to Christ, you must look to them, as his beloved friends, entertained by him in his family of glory. When you look up to heaven, remember that they are there: when you think of coming thither, remember that you must there meet them. You must honour their memories more than you did on earth, because they are more honourable, being more honoured of God. You must love them better than you did when they were on earth, because they are better, and so more lovely: you must rejoice much more for their felicity, than you did whilst they were on earth; because they are incomparably more happy than they were. Either you believe this, or you do not. If you do not believe that the dead are blessed that die in the Lord, and rest from their labours, and are with Christ in Paradise, why do you seem Christians? If you do believe it, why do



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temptible or strange to men on earth? Or would you persuade the world, that the souls of the saints are not immortal, but perish as the brutes? Or that there is no heaven? Or that God is there alone without any company? Are so many fond of the opinion of a personal reign on earth, for Christ with his holy ones; and yet is it popery so much as to speak honourably and joyfully of the saints in heaven? My brethren, these things declare you yet to be too dark, too factious, and too carnal; and to hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, with respect to parties, sides and persons. Christ taketh not his saints as strangers to him: he that judgeth men as they love and use him, in the least of his brethren upon earth, will not so soon censure and quarrel with us as the sectary will do for loving and honouring him in his saints in heaven; for it is his will and prayer that they be with him where he is to behold his glory; John xii. 26. xvii. 24. And he will come with his holy angels to be glorified in his saints (who shall judge the world and angels) and to be admired in all them that do now believe; 2 Thess. i. 10—12.

CHAPTER XXVII.

How to receive the Sentence of Death; and how to die by Faith.

HAVING said so much of this elsewhere (in my books called, “A Believer’s last Work:” “The last Enemy:” My “Christian Directory:” “Treatise of Self-Denial,” &c.), I shall be here but very brief.

I. For the first case, before sickness cometh:

Direct. 1. ‘Be sure that you settle your belief of the life to come, that your faith may not fail.’

Direct. 2. ‘Expect death as seriously all your life, as wise believers are obliged to do:’ that is, as men that are always sure to die; as men that are never sure to live a moment longer; as men that are sure that life will be short, and death is not far off; and as foreseeing what it is to die; of what eternal consequence; and what will then appear to be necessary to your safe, and to your comfortable change.

Direct. 3. ‘All your days habituate your souls to be-

lieving, sweet, enlarged thoughts of the infinite goodness and love of God, to whom you go, and with whom you hope to live for ever.'

Direct. 4. 'Dwell in the studies of a crucified and glorified Christ, who is the way, the truth and life; who must be your hope in life and death;' Ephes. iii. 17—19.

Direct. 5. 'Keep clear your evidences of your right to Christ and all his promises; by keeping grace or the heavenly nature, in life, activity and increase;' 2 Peter i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. John xv. 1. 1 John iii.

Direct. 6. 'Consider often of the possession which your nature in Christ hath already of heaven; and how highly it is advanced, and how near his relation is, and how dear his love is to his weakest members upon earth: and that as souls in heaven have an inclination and desire to communicate their own felicity to their bodies; so hath Christ as to his body the church;' John xvii. 24. Ephes. v. 25. 27, &c.

Direct. 7. 'Look to the heavenly host, and those who have lived before you, or with you in the flesh, to make the thoughts of heaven the more familiar to you (as in the former chapter).'

Direct. 8. 'Improve all afflictions, yea the plague of sin itself, to make you weary of this world, and willing to be gone to Christ;' Rom. vii.

Direct. 9. 'Be much with God in prayer, meditation and other heart-raising duties; that you may not by strangeness to him be dismayed.'

Direct. 10. 'Live not in the guilt of any wilful sin, nor in any slothful neglect of duty,' lest guilt breed terror, and make you fly from God your judge. But especially study to redeem your time, and to do all the good you can in the world, and to live as totally devoted to God, as conscious that you live to no carnal interest, but desire to serve him with all you have; and your consciences' testimony of this will abundantly take off the terrors of death (whatever any erroneous ones may say to the contrary, for fear of being guilty of conceits of merit). A fruitful life is a great preparative for death; 2 Tim. iv. 8. 2 Cor. i. 12, &c.

Direct. 11. 'Fetch from heaven the comforts which you live upon through all your life.' And when you have truly learned to live more upon the comforts of believed glory, than upon any pleasures or hopes below, then you will be

able to die in and for those comforts; Matt. vi. 20, 21. Col. iii. 1. 4. Phil. iii. 20, 21. 1 Thess. iv. 18. Phil. i. 21. 23.

Direct. 12. ‘The knowledge and love of God in Christ is the beginning or foretaste of heaven,’ (John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. xiii. &c.) and the foretastes are excellent preparations; therefore still remember that all that you do in the world, for the getting and exercising the true knowledge and love of God in Christ; so much you do for the foretastes (and best preparations) for heaven. “If any man love God, the same is known of him” (with approbation and love); 1 Cor. viii. 3.

II. In the time of sickness, and near to death.

Direct. 1. ‘Let your first work, when God seemeth to call you away, be, to renew a diligent search of your hearts and lives, and to see lest in either of them there should be any sin which is not truly hated and repented of.’

Though this must be done through all your lives, yet with an extraordinary care and diligence when you are like to come so speedily to your trial: for it is only to repenting believers, that the covenant of grace doth pardon sin: and the impenitent have no right to pardon. Though for ordinary failings which are forgotten, and for sins which you are willing to know and remember, but cannot, a general repentance will be accepted (as when you pray God to shew you the sins which you see not, and to forgive those which you cannot remember or find out); yet those which you know must be particularly repented of: and repentance is a remembering duty, and will hardly forget any great and heinous sins, which are known to be sins indeed. If your repentance be then to begin, alas it is high time to begin it: and though if it be sound, it will be saving (that is, if it be such as would settle you in a truly godly life, if you should recover); yet you will hardly have any assurance of ‘salvation,’ or such comfort in it as is desirable to a dying man: because you will very hardly know whether it come from true conversion; and contain a love to God and godliness; or whether it be only the fruit of fear, and would come to nothing if you were restored to health. But he that hath truly repented heretofore, and lived in uprightness towards God and man, and hath nothing to do, but to discern his sincerity, and to exercise a special repentance for some late or special sins; or to do that again which he hath done unfeignedly before,



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Red Sea, and are triumphing in heaven already ; and that it is but a few stragglers in the end of the world that are left behind : and which part then should you desire to be with ? And remember how ready those angels which rejoiced at your conversion, are to be your convoy unto Christ ; Luke xvi. 23.

Direct. 6. ‘ But especially think with greatest confidence and delight, that Jesus your head is entered into the heavens before you, and is making intercession for you, and is preparing you a place, and loveth your company, and will not lose it. You shall find him ready to receive your souls, and present them spotless unto God, as the fruit of his mediation : he will have you be with him to behold his glory ; and none shall take you out of his hands. Let his love therefore draw up your desires, and establish your hearts in confidence and rest.’

Direct. 7. ‘ Remember, that all that are living must come after you ; and how quickly their turn will come ;’ and would you wish to be exempt from death alone, which the whole world below must needs submit to ?

Direct. 8. ‘ Think still of the resurrection of Christ your head ;’ that you may see that death is a conquered thing, and what a pledge you have of a life to come.

Direct. 9. ‘ Dwell still in the believing forethoughts of the blessedness of the life to which you go, as it is your personal perfection, and the perfect love and fruition of God, with his perfect joyous praise.’

Remember still what it is to see and know the Lord, (and all things else in him, which are fit for us to know ;) and labour to revive your love to God, and then you revive your desires and preparations.

Direct. 10. ‘ Give up yourselves wholly to the will of God ; and think how much better it is for upright souls to be in God’s hand than in your own.’ The will of God is the first and last, the original and end of all the creatures. Besides the will of Infinite Goodness, there is no final rest for human souls. But man’s will is the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning or first efficient, and the ultimate end of all obliquity and sin : be bold then and thankful in your approach to God, remembering how much more safe and comfortable it is to be (for life and death) at God’s disposal, than our own.

Besides these, read the directions against the fear of death, in my book of "Self-Denial;" and what is said in my "Saints' Rest," and other the treatises before mentioned,

CHAPTER XXVIII.

How by Faith to look aright to the coming of Jesus Christ in Glory.

BECAUSE I have said so much of this also, in my "Saints' Rest," and in many other treatises, I will now pass it over with these brief directions,

Direct. 1. 'Delude not your souls, nor corrupt your faith and hope, by placing Christ's kingdom in things too low, or that are utterly uncertain.'

Think not so carnally of the second coming of Christ, as the Jews did of the first, who looked for an earthly kingdom, and despised the spiritual and heavenly: and make not the unknown time, or other circumstances of his coming, to be to you as the certain and necessary things; lest you do as many of those called Millenaries or Fifth-Monarchy-Men among us, who have turned the doctrine of Christian hope into an outrageous fury, to bring Christ down before his time, and to make themselves rulers in the world, that they might presently reign under the name of the Reign of Christ; and have by seditious, rebellious railing at Christ's ministers, and hating those that are not of their mind, done much to promote the kingdom of Satan, while they cried up nothing but the kingdom of Christ.

Direct. 2. 'Do all that you can in this day of grace, to promote Christ's present kingdom in the world, and that will prove your best preparation for his glorious coming.'

To that end labour with all your might, to set up life, and light, and love, abhorring hypocrisy, ignorance, and uncharitableness; turn not religion into a ceremony, carcass, or dead imagery or form: nor yet into darkness, error, or a human, wandering, distracting maze: nor into selfish, proud, censorious faction; Build not Christ's kingdom as the devil would do, by hypocritical dead shows, or by putting out his lights, or by schism, division, hatred and strife. Read James iii.

Direct. 3. ‘ Yet leave not out of your faith and hope, any certain part of Christ’s glorious kingdom.’ We know that we shall for ever be with the Lord, and in the presence of the Father in heavenly glory ; and withal, that we shall be in the New Jerusalem ; and that there shall “ be a new heaven, and a new earth, in which shall dwell righteousness ; and that we shall judge the angels and the world.” And if we know not the circumstances of all these parts, let not therefore any of them be denied ; 1 Thess. iv. 11. 2 Cor. v. 1. 3. 8. Rev. xx. xxii. 2 Peter iii. 13.

Direct. 4. ‘ Think what a day of glory it will be to Jesus Christ ;’ Matt. xxv. 31. O how different from his state of humiliation ! He will not come again to be despised, spit on and buffeted, blasphemed and crucified ; Pilate and Herod must be arraigned at his bar ; it is the marriage-day of the Lamb ; a day appointed for his glory ; Rev. xxi. xxii.

Direct. 5. ‘ Think what a day of honour it will be to God the Father ; how his truth will be vindicated, his love and justice gloriously demonstrated ; Matt. xxv. 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

Direct. 6. ‘ Think what a day it will be to all the children of God ;’ to see their Lord, when he purposely cometh, to be “ admired and glorified in them ;” 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. To see him in whom they have believed, whom they loved and longed for ; 2 Peter iii. 11—13. 1 Peter i. 8. To see him who is their dearest head and Lord ; who will justify them before all the world, and sentence them to life eternal : to see the day in which they must receive the end of all their faith and hope ; their prayers, labours and patience to the full ; 1 Peter i. 8, 9. Rev. ii. iii. Matt. xxv. 2 Peter iv. 13.

Direct. 7. ‘ Think what a day it will be to the shame of sin, when it shall be the reproach and terror of the world ; and to the honour of holiness, when faith, obedience and love shall be the approved honour of all the saints : and what a day of admirable justice it will be, when all that seems crooked here, shall be set straight :’ O the difference that there will then be in the thoughts of sin and holiness, in comparison of those that men have of them now !

Direct. 8. ‘ Think what a confounding day it will be to the infernal serpent, and all his seed ;’ Matt. xxv. 41. 16. When impudent boasters shall then be speechless, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth ; Matt. xxv. 44. xxii. 12.



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he came in meekness and humiliation, not to judge and condemn the world, but to be falsely judged and condemned by them; John iii. 17. xxii. 47. Nor will it be such a meeting as Christ had with thee, either by his ministers, that called thee to repent, who were men whom thou couldst easily despise; or by his Spirit which thou couldst resist and quench: or by his afflicting rod, which did but say to thee, "Go, sin no more, lest worse befall thee; John v. 14. Heb. xii. 10. 12. 1 Tim. v. 24. Nor as the judgment of man's assize, which passeth sentence only against a temporal life; Luke xii. 4. Nor like the treaty of a Judas with his new awakened conscience here. O no! it will be a more glorious, but more dreadful day: it will be the meeting, not only of a creature with his Creator, but of a sinner with a just and holy God, and of a despiser of grace, with the God whom he despised. O terrible day to the unbelieving, ungodly, carnal and impenitent; Heb. x. 31. ii. 3. x. 12. Luke xix. 27. There must thou appear to receive thy final doom; to hear the last word that ever thou must hear from Jesus Christ (unless his everlasting wrath be called his word); and O, how different will it be from the words which thou wast wont to hear! Thou wast wont to hear the calls of grace; mercy did entreat thee to return to God; Christ by his ministers did beseech thee to be reconciled: but if thou entreat him for pardon and peace, with the loudest cries, it would be all in vain; Matt. vii. 21—23. Prov. i. 27, 28. Now the voice is, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" John i. 29. But then it will be, "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail, because of him;" Rev. i. 7. And, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him;" Jude 14, 15. Now he entreateth you to "come to him that you may have life;" John v. 40. But then you will cry to the mountains to fall upon you, and the hills to cover you from his presence; Luke xxiii. 30. Rev. vi. 16. Now he saith, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear

my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" Rev. iii. 20. But when once you hear that midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth and meet him; then they that are ready shall go in, and the door shall be shut against the rest;" Matt. xxv. 9, 10. The door of mercy shall be shut: your reprobation will be then made sure; Rom. ix. 22. ii. 5. The day of thy visitation is then past; Luke xix. 41, 42. No more offers of Christ and mercy: no more entreaties to accept them; no more calls to turn and live. Ministers must no more preach, and persuade, and entreat in vain. Friends must no more warn thee, and pray for thee. All is done already that they can do for thy soul for ever. No more strivings of the Spirit with thy conscience; and no more patience, health or time to be abused upon fleshly lusts and pleasures: all these things are past away; 1 Cor. vii. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 17. And the door of hope will be also shut; no more hope of a part in Christ; no more hope of the success of sermons, of prayers, or of any other means; no hopes of pardon, of justification, of salvation; or of any abatement of woe; Luke xvi. 25, 26. "Behold, this is the accepted time; behold, this is the day of salvation;" 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heb. vi. 4—6. 8. Psal. v. 4, 5. ix. 7. James i. 15.

By this time, methinks, you should better know what the use and meaning of the Gospel, and grace, and ministers are; and what is the design of preaching and in what manner it should be done. Would you have us silent, or talk to you as in jest, while we see such a day as this before us! Every true preacher speaketh to you with judgment and eternity in his eye. Our work is to prepare you, or to help you to prepare to meet the Lord, and to be ready for your final sentence: O then with what seriousness should we speak, and should you hear, and should both we and you prepare! It is a pity to see people hear sermons many years; and not so much as know what a sermon is; and what is the use and nature of it. If our business were to draw away disciples after us, and to make ourselves the admired heads of factions, then we would speak those perverse things contrary to the doctrine which you have been taught, by which our ends might be carried on; Acts xx. 30. Rom. xvi. 17. Or if our design were to be high, and great, and

rich, we would flatter the great ones of the world, that we might rule you with violence instead of love: or if we consulted our ease, we should spare much of this labour, and let you silently alone, at cheaper rates to the flesh, than now we speak to you. But O, who can be silent, who is engaged in this sacred office, when he foreseeth what will shortly be the issue of our prevailing, or not prevailing with you! Now as we love Christ, we must feed his sheep; and “necessity is laid upon us, and woe be unto us, if we preach not the Gospel;” 1 Cor. ix. 16. Our preaching Christ is to “warn every man, and teach every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;” Col. i. 22. And to “persuade men as knowing the terrors of the Lord;” 2 Cor. ix. 10, 11. Heb. xii. 25. 29. If it were only that we loved so to hear ourselves talk; or to be cried up by many followers, we deserve to pay dear indeed for such preaching. But when our Lord loved and pitied souls at the rate of his sufferings and bloody death, surely our rates are not above the worth of souls. O what a doleful sight is it to us, to foresee by faith how loud, how earnestly you would knock and cry, when the door is shut, and hope is gone! and what you would then give for one of these days which you now are weary of; and for a drop of that mercy which now doth beg your entertainment!

What then remaineth, but as ever you believe that day; and as ever you care what becometh of your souls and bodies for ever; and as ever you would not be charged and condemned, as final and obstinate refusers of mercy and salvation; yea, and for wronging the ministers of Christ, by making them study and preach in vain: that you harden not your hearts, but hear Christ’s voice, to day, while it is called to day, before the door of grace be shut: O cry, while crying and begging may do good: meet Christ now as may best prepare you to meet him then. Meet him now as the prodigal met his father, (Luke xv.) saying, “I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants.”

Meet God as Abigail met David, (1 Sam. xxv. 32: 34.) with an offering of peace (even Christ apprehended by an obedient faith): when she heard from David, “Except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, all had been destroyed.”



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surest, and your greatest friend; one that hath done more for you than all the world hath done; and one that is ready now to do much more, and shew his love and friendship to the height. One that will be then your surest friend, when all the world shall cast you off. You go not to be condemned, but to be openly justified; yea, honoured before all the world, and sentenced to endless glory. You go not to be numbered with the enemies of holiness, or with the slothful and unprofitable servants; but to be perfectly incorporated into the heavenly society, and to see the glorified faces of Enoch, Moses, and Elias; of Peter, and John, and Paul, and Timothy, and all the saints that ever you knew, or whose writings you have ever read, or whose names you ever heard of, and millions more. You go to be better acquainted with those angels that rejoice at your repentance, and that ministered for your good, and that bore you in their hands, and were your continual guard both night and day. You go to join in consort with all these, in those seraphic praises which are harmoniously sounded forth continually, through all the intellectual world, in the greatest fervours of perfect love, and the constant raptures of perfect joy, in the fullest intuition of the glory of the Eternal God and the glorified humanity of your Redeemer, and the glory of the celestial world and society, and under the streams of infinite life, and light, and love, poured forth upon you to feed all this, to all eternity. And all this in so near and sweet an union with the glorified ones, who are the body and spouse of Christ, that it shall be all as one praise, one love, one joy in all.

O for a more lively and quick-sighted faith, to foresee this day in some measure as affectingly, as we shall then see it! 'Alas! my Lord, is this dark prospect all that I must here hope for? Is this dull, and dreaming, and amazing apprehension, all that I shall reach to here? Is this senseless heart, this despondent mind, these drowsy desires, the best that I must here employ in the contemplation of so high a glory? Must I come in such a sleepy state to God? And go as in a dream to the beatifical vision? I am ashamed and confounded to find my soul, alas, so dark, so dead, so low, so unsuitable to such a day and state, even whilst I am daily looking towards it, and whilst I am daily talking of

it, and persuading others to higher apprehensions than I can reach myself; and even whilst I am writing of it, and attempting to draw a map of heaven, for the consolation of myself, and fellow-believers. Thou hast convinced my reason of the truth of the predictions, and of the certain futurity of that glorious day: and yet how little do my affections stir! and how unanswerable are my joys, and my desires, to those convictions! When the light of my understanding should cure the deadness of my heart, alas, this deadness rather extinguisheth that light, and cherisheth temptations to unbelief; and my faith, and reason, and knowledge, are as it were asleep, and useless, for want of that life which should awaken them unto exercise and use. Awakened reason serveth faith, and is always on thy side: but sleepy reason in the gleams of prosperity, is ready to give place to flesh and fancy, and had a thousand distracted, incoherent dreams. O now reveal thy power, thy truth, thy love and goodness effectually to my soul, and then I shall wait with love and longing, for the revelation of thy glory. Thy inward, heavenly, powerful light, is kin to the glorious brightness of thy coming; and will shew me that which books and talk only, without thy Spirit, cannot shew. Thy kingdom in me, and my daily faithful subjection to thy government there, must prepare me for the glorious, endless kingdom. If now thou wouldst pour out thy love upon my soul, it would flame up towards thee, and long to meet thee, and think with daily pleasure on that day: and my perfect love would cast out that fear, which maketh the thoughts of thy coming to be a torment. O meet me now when my soul doth seek thee, and secretly cry after thee; that I may know thou wilt meet me with love and pity at the last. O turn not now thine ears from my requests: for if thou receive me not now as thy humble supplicant, how shall I hope that thou wilt receive me then? And if thou wilt not hear me in the day of grace and visitation, and in this time when thou mayest be found, how can I hope that thou wilt hear me then, when the door is shut, and the seeking and finding time is past? If thou cast me out of thy presence now, and turn away thy face from my soul and my supplication, as a loathed thing, how can I then expect thy smiles, or the vital embracements of thy glorifying love? Or to be

owned by thee before all the world, with that cordial and consolatory justification, which may keep my conscience from becoming my hell. If thou wilt permit my flesh and sense to conquer my faith, and to turn away my love and desire from thee; how shall I then expect that joy, that heaven, which consisteth in thy love: and if thou suffer this unstedfast heart to depart from thee now, will it not be the forerunner of that dreadful doom, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not:" and if for the love of transitory vanity, I now deny thee, but can I then expect but to be finally denied by thee? Come Lord, and dwell by thy Spirit in my soul, that I may have something in me to take my part, and may know that I shall dwell with thee for ever: if now thou wilt make me thy temple and habitation, and wilt dwell by faith and love within me; I shall know thee by more than the hearing of the ear, and thy last appearing will be less terrible to my thoughts. Thou wilt be health to my soul, when my body lieth languishing in pain: and when flesh and heart fail, my failing heart will find reviving strength in thee: and when the portion of worldlings is spent, and at the end, I shall find thee a never-ending portion. Why wouldst thou come down from heaven to earth in the days of thy voluntary humiliation, but to bring down grace to dwell where God himself hath dwelt? If the eternal world will dwell in flesh, the Eternal Spirit will not disdain it, whose dwelling is not by so close an union, but by sweet unexpressible inoperations: this world hath had the pledge of thy bodily presence, when thou broughtest life and immortality to light: O let my dark and fearful soul have the pledge of thy illuminating, quickening, comforting Spirit, that life and immortality may be begun within me! Thy word of promise is certain in itself; but knowing our weakness, thou wilt give us more: thy seal, thy pledge, thy earnest, will not only confirm my faith, as settling my doubting mind; but it will also draw up my love and desire, as suited to my intellectual appetite; and will be a true foretaste of heaven. How oft have I gazed in the glass, and yet overlooked, or not been taken with the beauty of thy face! But one drop of thy love, if it fall into my soul, will fill it with the most fragrant and delectable odour, and will be its life, and joy, and vigour. I shall



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allowest and commandest the poorest Lazarus to seek and hope for things ten thousand times more high; in comparison with which these pleasures are pain; these lordships are losses; this wealth is dung; these courts are dens of uncleanness, wild and ravenous beasts; and all this earthly pomp is shame. Thou forbiddest not the pleasures and glory of the world, as too good for thy servants, but as too bad, and base, and hurtful.

‘O therefore encourage in my drooping soul, that holy ambition which thou commandest! Disappoint not the desires which thyself, by thy precept and thy Spirit hast excited. I know thou hast promised to satisfy them that hunger and thirst after righteousness: and (if my soul be acquainted with itself) it is righteousness which I desire. Though the soliciting calls of vanity have drawn me too often to look aside, it is the knowledge and love of my Creator, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier, which I pursue; and my prayer is, that thou wilt turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way. But it is the dullness of my desires which I fear; lest they are not the hungering and thirsting which have thy promise; and lest they should prove but as the desires of the slothful which kill him, because his hands refuse to labour: thou knowest I hate the sluggishness and indifferency of my soul, and the coldness and interruptions of my desires: and what is there in this world which I desire more, than more desires after thee; even more of that desiring, seeking love, which is the way to enjoying and delighting love. O breathe upon my soul, by thy quickening Spirit, that it may pant, and gasp, and breathe after thy presence! The most dolorous motions of life and love, have more contenting sweetness in them, than my dead insensibility and sleep. When I can but long to love thee, or when I lie in tears for want of love, or when I am hating and reviling this sluggish, carnal, disaffected heart, even in my very doubts, and fears, and moans, I find myself nearer to content and pleasure, than when I neglect thee with a dead and drowsy heart. If therefore my vileness make me unfit to enjoy that pleasure in the daily prospect of thy kingdom, which reason itself adjudgeth to a serious, lively faith; O yet keep up the constant fervour of desire, that I may never

grow in love with vanity and deceit, nor ever be indifferent whether I stay on earth, or come to thee! and that in my greatest health I may never think of thee without desire; nor ever kneel in prayer to thee with such an unbelieving, and unprayer-like heart, which doth not unfeignedly say, "Let thy glorious kingdom come:" that so when on the bed of languishing, I am waiting for the dissolution of this frame, I may not draw back, as flying from thy presence; nor look at heaven as less desirable than earth; nor be driven unwillingly from a more beloved habitation; but with that faith, hope, and love, which animateth all thy living members, I may in consort with thy saints to the last sincerely break forth, our common suit;

Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.'

END OF THE TWELFTH VOLUME.