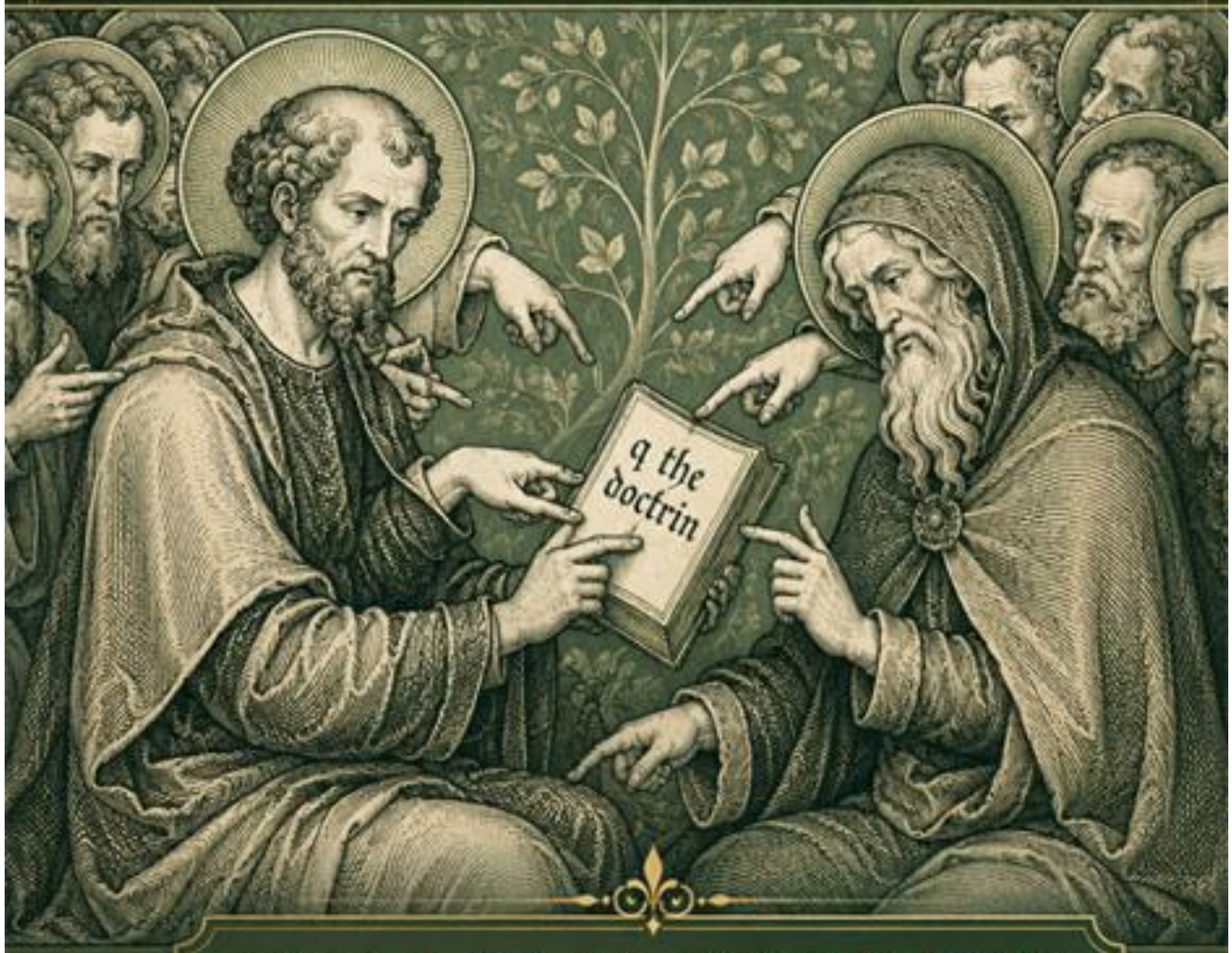
Exposition of the Apostles' Creed

An Exposition of the Symbol or Creed of the Apostles according to the tenor of the Scripture and the consent of orthodox Fathers of the church



WILLIAM PERKINS

Exposition of the Apostles' Creed

by William Perkins

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Introduction

Reviewed and corrected by William Perkins

No man justly can be offended at this: that I begin to treat of the doctrine of faith without a text, though some be of mind that in catechising the minister is to proceed as in the ordinary course of preaching, only by handling a set portion of Scripture; and therefore that the handling of the Creed being no scripture, is not convenient. Indeed I grant that other course to be commendable; yet I doubt not but in catechising the minister hath his liberty to follow, or not to follow a certain text of Scripture, as we do in the usual course of preaching. My reason is taken from the practice of the primitive church; whose catechism (as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews sheweth) was contained in six principles or grounds of religion, which were not taken out of any set text in the Old Testament; but rather was a form of teaching gathered out of the most clear places thereof. Hence I reason thus: that which in this point was the use and manner of the primitive church, is lawful to be used of us now. But in the primitive church it was the manner to catechise without handling any set text of Scripture; and therefore the ministers of the gospel at this time may with like liberty do the same; so be it they confirm the doctrine which they teach with places of Scripture afterwards.

Now to come to the Creed, let us begin with the name or title thereof. That which in English we call the Apostles' Creed, in other tongues is called *Symbolum*, that is, a shot or a badge. It is called a shot because as in a feast or banquet every man payeth his part; which being all gathered, the whole (which is called the shot) amounteth. And so out of the several writings of the apostles, ariseth this Creed, or brief confession of faith. It is a badge, because as a soldier in the field by his badge and finery is known of what band he is, and to what captain he doth belong; even so by this belief a Christian man may be distinguished and known from all Jews, Turks, atheists, and all false professors; and for this cause it is called a badge.

Again, it is called the Creed of the Apostles, not because they were the penners of it, conferring to it besides the matter, the very style and frame of words, as we have them now set down.

Reasons:

1. There are in this Creed certain words and phrases which are not to be found in the writings of the apostles; and namely these: *he descended into hell*; *the catholic church*. The latter whereof, no doubt, first began to be in use when after the apostles' days the church was dispersed into all quarters of the earth.

2. If both matter and words had been from the apostles, why is not the Creed canonical Scripture, as well as any other writings?

3. The apostles had a summary collection of the points of Christian religion which they taught, and also delivered to others to teach by; consisting of two heads, *faith and love*; as may appear by Paul's exhortation to Timothy, wishing him *to keep the pattern of wholesome words; which he had heard of him, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus* (2 Tim. 3:15). Now the Creed consists not of two heads but of one, namely of faith only, and not of love also. Wherefore I rather think that it is called the Apostles' Creed because it doth summarily contain the chief and principal points of religion, handled and propounded in the doctrine of the apostles. And because the points of the Creed are conformable and agreeable to their doctrine and writings.

And thus much of the title. Now let us hear what the Creed is. It is a sum of things to be believed concerning God and concerning the church, gathered forth of the Scriptures.

For the opening of this description, first I say, it is a sum of things to be believed, or an abridgement. It hath been the practice of teachers both in the

New and Old Testament, to abridge and contract summarily the religion of their time. This the prophets used. For when they had made their sermons to the people, they did abridge them and penned them briefly; setting them in some open places, that all the people might read the same. So the Lord bad Habakkuk to *write the vision which he saw, and to make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it* (Hab. 2:2). And in the New Testament, the apostles did abridge those doctrines which otherwise they did handle at large, as may appear in the place of Timothy aforenamed (2 Tim. 1:13). Now the reason why both in the Old and New Testament the doctrine of religion was abridged, is that the understanding for the simple, as also their memories, might be hereby helped and they better enabled to judge of the truth, and to discern the same from falsehood. And for this end the Apostles' Creed being a summary collection of things to be believed, was gathered briefly out of the Word of God for helping of the memory and understanding of men. I add that this Creed is concerning God and the church. For in these two points consisteth the whole sum thereof. Lastly, I say that it is gathered forth of the Scripture, to make a difference between it and other writings, and to shew the authority of it; which I will further declare on this manner:

There be two kinds of writings in which the doctrine of the church is handled, and they are either divine or ecclesiastical.

1. Divine, are the books of the Old and New Testament, penned either by prophets or apostles. And these are not only the pure Word of God, but also the Scripture of God; because not only the matter of them; but the whole disposition thereof, with the style and the phrase, was set down by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And the authority of these books is divine, that is, absolute and sovereign; and they are of sufficient credit in and by themselves, needing not the testimony of any creature; not subject to the censure either of men or angels; binding the consciences of all men at

all times, and being the only foundation of our faith, and the rule and canon of all truth.

2. Ecclesiastical writings are all other ordinary writings of the church consenting with Scriptures. These may be called the word or truth of God, so far forth as their matter or substance is consenting with the written Word of God; but they cannot be called the Scripture of God, because the style and phrase of them was set down according to the pleasure of man, and therefore they are in such sort the word of God, as that also they are the word of men. And their authority in defining of truth and falsehood in matters of religion is, not sovereign, but subordinate to the former; and it doth not stand in the authority and pleasure on men and councils, but in the consent which they have with the Scriptures.

Ecclesiastical writings are either general, particular or proper. *General*, are the creeds and confessions of the church dispersed over the whole world, and among the rest the *Creed of the Apostles*, made either by the apostles themselves or by their hearers and disciples, apostolical men, delivered to the church, and conveyed from hand to hand to our times. *Particular* writings are the confessions of particular churches. *Proper* writings are the books and confessions of private men.

Now between these we must make a difference; for the general *Creed of the Apostles* (other universal creeds in this case not excepted), though it be of less authority than Scripture; yet hath it more authority than the particular and private writings of churches and men. For it hath been received and approved by universal consent of the catholic church in all ages, and so were never these. In it the meaning and doctrine cannot be changed by the authority of the whole catholic church; and if either the order of the doctrine, or the words by which it is expressed, should upon some occasion be changed, a particular church of any country cannot do it, without catholic consent of the whole church. Yet particular writings and

confessions made by some special churches, may be altered in the words, and in the points of doctrine by the same churches, without offence to the catholic church. Lastly, it is received as a rule of faith among all churches, to try doctrines and interpretations of Scriptures by, not because it is a rule of itself, for that the Scripture is alone; but because it borroweth his authority from Scripture with which it agreeth. And this honour no other writings of men can have.

Here some may demand the number of creeds. *Answer*: I say but one creed, as there is but one faith. And if it be alleged that we have many creeds, as besides this of the Apostles, the Nicene Creed, and Athanasius' Creed etc., I answer, the several creeds and confessions of churches contain not several faith and religions, but one and the same; and this called the Apostles' Creed, is most ancient, and principal; all the rest are no new creeds in substance, but in some points penned more largely for the exposition of it, that men might better avoid the heresies of their times.

Further, it may be demanded, in what form the creed was penned? *Answer*: In the form of an answer to a question. The reason is this: In the primitive church, when any man was turned from Gentilism to the faith of Christ, and was to be baptised, this question was asked him: *What believest thou*? Then he answered according to the form of the Creed: *I believe in God* etc. And this manner of questioning was used even from the time of the apostles. When the eunuch was converted by Philip, he said, *What doth let me to be baptised*? Philip said, *If thou dost believe with all thine heart, thou mayest* (Acts 8:37). By this it appears that although all men for the most part among us can say this Creed, yet not one of a thousand can tell the ancient and first use of it; for commonly at this day of the simpler sort it is said for a prayer, being indeed no prayer; and when it is used so, men make it no better than a charm.

Before we come to handle the particular points of the Creed, it is very requisite that we should make an entrance thereto by describing the nature, properties and kinds of faith, the confession and ground whereof is set forth in the Creed. *Faith therefore is a gift of God, whereby we give assent or credence to God's Word*. For there is necessarily a relation between faith and God's Word. The common property of faith is noted by the author of the Hebrews, when he saith, *Faith is the ground of things hoped for, and the demonstration of things that are not seen* (Heb. 11:1). For all this may be understood, not only of justifying faith, but also of temporary faith, and the faith of miracles. Where faith is said to be a *ground*, the meaning is that though there are many things promised by God, which men do not presently enjoy, but only hope for, because as yet they are not; yet faith doth after a sort give subsisting or being unto them. Secondly, it is an *evidence* or *demonstration* etc., that is, by believing a man doth make a thing as it were visible, being otherwise invisible and absent.

Faith is of two sorts, either common faith, or the faith of the elect; as Paul saith, he is an apostle *according to the faith of God's elect* (Tit. 1:1); which is also called *faith without hypocrisy* (1 Tim. 1:5). The common faith is that which both the elect and reprobate have, and it is threefold:

(1) The first is *historical faith*, which is when a man doth believe the outward letter and history of the Word. It hath two parts: knowledge of God's Word, and assent to the same knowledge; and it is to be found in the devil and his angels. So St James saith, *the devils believe and tremble* (Jam. 2:19). Some will say, What a faith have they? *Answer*: Such as thereby they understand both the law and the gospel; besides they give assent to it to be true. And they do more yet, in that they tremble and fear. And many a man hath not so much. For amongst us there is many a one which hath no knowledge of God at all, more than he hath learned by the common talk of the world; as, namely, that there is a God and that he is merciful etc., and yet this man will say that he believeth with all his heart. But without

knowledge it cannot be that any should truly believe, and therefore he deceiveth himself. *Question*: But whence have the devils historical faith? Were they illuminated by the light of the Spirit? *Answer*: No; but when the gospel was preached, they did acknowledge it, and believed it to be true, and that by the virtue of the relics of God's image which remained in them since their fall. And therefore this their faith does not arise from any special illumination by His Spirit, but they attain to it even by the very light of nature, which was left in them from the beginning.

(2) The second kind of faith is *temporary faith*, so called because it lasteth but for a time and season, and commonly not to the end of a man's life. This kind of faith is noted unto us in the parable of the seed that fell in the stony ground. And there be two differences or kinds of this faith:

(i) The first kind of temporary faith hath in it three degrees: The first is to know the Word of God, and particularly the gospel. The second, to give an assent to it. The third to profess it, but to go no further; and all this may be done without any love to the Word. This faith hath one degree more than historical faith. Examples of it we have in Simon Magus (Acts 8:13), who is said to believe, because he held the doctrine of the apostles to be true; and withal professed the same. And in the devils also, who in some sort confessed that Christ was the Son of the most Highest, and yet looked for no salvation by Him (Mark 5:7; Acts 19:15). And this is the common faith that abounds in this land. Men say they believe as the prince believeth, and if religion change, they will change. For by reason of the authority of the prince's laws, they are made to learn some little knowledge of the Word. They believe it to be good, and they profess it. And thus for the space of thirty or forty years men hear the Word preached, and receive the sacraments, being for all this as void of grace as ever they were at the first day. And the reason is because they do barely profess it, without either liking or love of the law.

(ii) The second kind of temporary faith hath in it five degrees: For by it, first a man knows the Word. Secondly, he assenteth unto it. Thirdly, he professeth it. Fourthly, he rejoiceth inwardly in it. Fifthly, he bringeth forth some kind of fruit; and yet for all this hath no more in him but a faith that will fail in the end, because he wanteth the effectual application of the promise of the gospel, and is without all manner of sound conversation. This faith is like corn in the housetop, which groweth for a while, but when heat of summer cometh, it withereth. And this is also set forth unto us in the parable of the seed, which fell in stony ground, which is hasty in springing up; but because of the stones, which will not suffer it to take deep root, it withereth. And this is a very common faith in the church of God; by which, many rejoice in the preaching of the Word, and for a time bring forth some fruits accordingly, with shew of great forwardness; yet afterward shake off religion and all.

But (some will say) how can this be a temporary faith, seeing it hath such fruits? *Answer*: Such a kind of faith is temporary because it is grounded on temporary causes, which are three:

(a) A desire to get knowledge of some strange points of religion. For many a man doth labour for the five former degrees of temporary faith, only because he desires to get more knowledge in Scripture than other men have.

(b) The second cause is a desire of praise among men, which is of that force that it will make a man put on a shew of all the graces which God bestoweth upon His own children, though otherwise he want them; and to go very far in religion; which appeareth thus: Some there are which seem very bitterly to weep for the sins of other men, and yet have neither sorrow nor touch of conscience for their own; and the cause hereof is nothing else but pride. For he that sheds tears for another man's sins, should much more weep for his own, if he had grace. Again, a man for his own sins will pray very slackly and dully, when he prayeth privately; and yet when he is in the

company of others, he prays very fervently and earnestly. From whence is this difference? Surely, often it springeth from the pride of heart, and from a desire of praise among men.

(c) The third cause of temporary faith is profit, commodity, the getting of wealth and riches; which are common occasions to move to choose or refuse religion, as the time serveth. But such a kind of believers embrace not the gospel because it is the gospel, that is, the glad tidings of salvation; but because it brings wealth, peace and liberty with it.

And these are the three causes of temporary faith.

(3) The third kind of faith is the *faith of miracles*; when a man grounding himself on some special promise or revelation from God, doth believe that some strange and extraordinary things which he hath desired or foretold, shall come to pass by the work of God. This must be distinguished from historical and temporary faith. For Simon Magus, having both these kinds of faith, wanted this faith of miracles, and therefore would have bought the same of the apostles for money (Acts 8:19). Yet we must know that this faith of miracles may be in hypocrites, as it was in Judas, and at the last judgment it shall be found to have been in the wicked and reprobate; which shall say to Christ, *Lord in thy name we have prophesied; and cast out devils, and done many great miracles* (Matt. 7:22,23; 1 Cor. 13:2).

And thus much for the three sorts of common faith.

Now we come to true faith; which is called *the faith of the elect*. It is thus defined: *Faith is a supernatural gift of God in the mind, apprehending the saving promise with all the promises that depend on it*.

First, I say, it is a gift of God (Phil. 1:29), to confute the blind opinion of our people that think that the faith whereby they are to be saved, is bred and born with them. I add that this is a gift supernatural, not only because it is

above that pure nature in which our first parents were created; for in the state of innocency they wanted this faith, neither had they then any need of faith in the Son of God as He is Messiah. But this faith is a new grace of God added to regeneration after the fall, and first prescribed and taught in the Covenant of grace. And by this one thing, faith differeth from the rest of the gifts of God, as the fear of God, the love of God, the love of our brethren etc., for these were in man's nature before the fall; and after it, when it pleaseth God to call us, they are but renewed; but justifying faith admits to no renewing. For the first engrafting of it into the heart, is in the conversion of a sinner after his fall.

The place and seat of faith (as I think) is *the mind* of man, not the will; for it stands in a kind of particular knowledge or persuasion, and there is no persuasion but in the mind. Paul saith indeed that we believe with the heart (Rom. 10:9). But by the heart he understands the soul, without limitation to any part. Some do place faith partly in the mind and partly in the will, because it hath two parts: knowledge and affiance. But it not greatly to stand with reason, that one particular and single grace should be seated in divers parts or faculties of the soul.

The form of faith is to *apprehend the promise* (Gal. 3:14) *That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*; and (John 1:12) to *receive Christ* and to *believe*, are put one for another; and to believe is to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ; to apprehend properly, is an action of the hand of man, which lays hold of a thing and pulls to himself; and by resemblance it agrees to faith, which is the hand of the soul, receiving and applying the saving promise.

The apprehension of faith is not performed by any affection of the will, but by a certain and particular persuasion whereby a man is resolved that the promise of salvation belongs unto him; which persuasion is wrought in the

mind by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 2:12). And by this, the promise which is general, is applied particularly to one subject.

By this one action, saving faith differeth from all other kinds of faith. From historical; for it wanteth all apprehension, and standeth only in a general assent. From temporary faith; which though it make a man profess the gospel and to rejoice in the same, yet doth it not throughly apply Christ with His benefits; for it never brings with it any thorough touch of conscience, or lively sense of God's grace in the heart. And the same may be said of the rest.

The principal and main object of this faith is the saving promise: *God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3:16). But some will say, Christ is said to be the object of faith. *Answer*: In effect it is all one to say, the saving promise and Christ promised, who is the substance of the Covenant. Christ then, as He is set forth unto us in the Word and sacraments, is the object of faith. And here certain questions offer themselves to be scanned:

(1) The first: What is that particular thing which faith apprehendeth? *Answer*: Faith apprehendeth whole Christ: God and man. For His Godhead without His manhood, and His manhood without His Godhead, doth not reconcile us to God. Yet this which I say, must be conceived with some distinction according to the difference of His two natures. His Godhead is apprehended, not in respect of His efficacy or nature, but in respect of His efficacy manifested in the manhood, whereby the obedience thereof is made meritorious before God. As for His manhood, it is apprehended both in respect of the substance or thing itself, and also in respect of the efficacy and benefits thereof.

(2) The second: In what order faith apprehends Christ? *Answer*: First of all, it apprehends the very body and blood of Christ; and then in the second

place, the virtue and benefits of His body and blood; as a man that would feel in his body the virtue of meat and drink, must first of all receive the substance thereof.

To go forward. Besides this main promise, which concerns righteousness and life everlasting in Christ, there be other particular promises touching strength in temptations, comfort in afflictions, and such like, which depend on the former; and they also are the objects of justifying faith; and with the very same faith we believe them, wherewith we believe our salvation. Thus Abraham by the same faith wherewith he was justified, believed that he should have a son in his old age (Rom. 4:9,22). And Noah by that faith whereby he was made heir of righteousness, believed that he and his family should be preserved in the flood; this conclusion being always laid down: that to whom God gives Christ, to them also He gives all things needful for this life, or the life to come, in and by Christ. And hereupon it comes to pass that in our prayers, besides the desire of things promised, we must bring faith, whereby we must be certainly persuaded that God will grant us such things as He hath promised. And this faith is not a new kind or distinct faith from justifying faith. Thus we see plainly what saving faith is.

Whereas some are of the opinion that faith is an affiance or confidence; that seems to be otherwise, for it is a fruit of faith; and indeed no man can put any confidence in God till he be first of all persuaded of God's mercy in Christ towards him.

Some again are of a mind that love is the very nature and form of faith. But it is otherwise, for as confidence in God, so also love is an effect which proceedeth from faith (1 Tim. 1:5*), The end of the law is love from a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned*. And in nature they differ greatly. Christ is the fountain of the water of life. Faith in the heart is as the pipes and leads that receive in and hold the water. And love in some part is as the cock of the conduit, that lets out the water to every comer. The

property of the hand is to hold, and of itself it cannot cut. Yet by a knife or other instrument put into the hand, it cuts. The hand of the soul is faith, and his property is to apprehend Christ with all His benefits; and by itself it can do nothing else. Yet join love unto it, and by love it will be effectual in all good duties.

Now to proceed further: First, we are to consider how faith is wrought; secondly, what be the differences of it.

1. For the first, faith is wrought in and by the outward ministry of the gospel, accompanied by the inward operation of the Spirit; and that not suddenly, but by certain steps and degrees; as nature frameth the body of the infant in the mother's womb, (1) by making the brain and heart; (2) by making veins, sinews, arteries, bones; (3) by adding flesh to them all. And the whole operation of the Spirit stands in two principal actions: (1) first, the enlightening of the mind, (2) secondly, the moving of the will.

(1) For the first, the Holy Ghost enlightens men's minds with a further knowledge of the law than nature can afford; and thereby makes them to see the sins of their hearts and lives with the ugliness thereof; and withal to tremble at the curse of the law. Afterward the same Spirit opens the eye to understand and consider seriously of righteousness and life eternal promised in Christ.

(2) This done, then comes the second work of the Holy Ghost, which is the inflaming of the will, that a man having considered his fearful estate by reason of sin, and the benefit of Christ's death, might hunger after Christ; and have desire not so much to have the punishments of sin taken away as God's displeasure; and also might enjoy the benefits of Christ. And when he hath stirred up a man to desire reconciliation with God in Christ, then withal He gives him grace to pray not only for life eternal, but especially for the free remission and pardon of all his sins. And then the Lord's promise is (Matt. 7:7), *Knock and it shall be opened, seek and ye shall find*. After

which He further sends His Spirit into the same heart that desireth reconciliation with God and remission of sins in Christ; and doth seal up the same in the heart by a lively and plentiful assurance thereof.

2. The differences and degrees of faith are two: (1) a weak faith, and (2) a strong faith.

(1) Concerning the first, this weak faith shews itself by this grace of God, namely, an unfeigned desire, not only of salvation (for that the wicked and graceless man may have), but of reconciliation with Christ. This is a sure sign of faith in every touched and humbled heart, and it is peculiar to the elect. And they which have this, have in them also the ground and substance of true saving faith; which afterwards in time will grow up to great strength.

Reason 1. Promise of life everlasting is made to the desire of reconciliation (Psa. 10:17*), Lord thou hast heard the desire of the poor*. (Psa. 143:6), *My soul desireth after thee, as the thirsty land*. (Psa. 145:19), *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him*. (Matt. 5:6), *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied*. (Rev. 21:6), *I will give unto him which is athirst, of the well of the water of life freely*.

Reason 2. The hungering desire after grace is a sanctified affection. Where one affected is sanctified, all are sanctified. Where all are sanctified, the whole man is sanctified. And he that is sanctified, is justified and believes.

Reason 3. God accepts the will and desire to repent and believe, for repenting and believing indeed. Wherefore this desire of reconciliation (if it be soundly wrought in the heart) is in acceptation with God as true faith indeed. But carnal men will say, If faith, yea true faith, shew itself by a desire of reconciliation with God in Christ for all our sins, then we are well enough, though we live in our sins; for we have very good desires. *I answer*: that there be many sundry fleeting motions and desires to do good things, which grow to no issue or head, but in time vanish as they come.

Now such passions have no soundness in them, and must be distinguished from the desire of reconciliation with God, that comes from a bruised heart, and brings always with it reformation of life. Therefore such, whatsoever they are that live after the course of this world and think notwithstanding that they have desires that are good, deceive themselves.

Now faith is said to be weak, when a man either fails in the knowledge of the gospel; or else having knowledge, is weak in grace to apply unto himself the sweet promises thereof. As for example, we know that the apostles had all true saving faith (except Judas) and when our Saviour Christ asked them whom they though He was; Peter in the person of the rest, answered for them all, and said: *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God* (Matt. 16:16); for which our Saviour commended Him, and in Him them all, saying, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock* (that is, upon Christ, which Peter confessed in the name of all) *will I build my church* (v.18). And yet about that time we shall find in the gospel that they are called *men of little faith* (Matt. 8:26; 16:8). Now they failed in knowledge of the death of Christ and of His passion and resurrection; and were carried away with a vain hope of an earthly kingdom. And therefore when our Saviour shewed them of His going down to Jerusalem, and of His sufferings there, Peter, a little after his notable confession, began to rebuke Christ and said, *Master have pity on thyself, this shall not be unto thee* (Matt. 16:22). And until He had appeared unto them after His death, they did not distinctly believe His resurrection.

Again, weak faith, though it be joined with knowledge, yet it may fail in the applying or in the apprehension and appropriating of Christ's benefits to a man's own self. This is to be seen in ordinary experience. For many a man there is of humble and contrite heart, that serveth God in Spirit and truth, yet is not able to say without great doubtings and waverings: *I know I am fully assured that my sins are pardoned*. Now shall we say that all such are without faith? God forbid. Nay, we may resolve ourselves that the true child

of God may have an hungering desire in his heart after reconciliation with God in Christ for all his sins, with care to keep a good conscience, and yet be weak sometime in the apprehension of God's mercy, and the assurance of the remission of his own sins.

But if faith fail either in the true knowledge, or in the apprehension of God's mercies, how can a man be saved by it? *Answer*: We must know that this weak faith will as truly apprehend God's merciful promises for the pardon of sin, as strong faith, though not so soundly. Even as a man with a palsy hand can stretch it out as well to receive a gift at the hand of a king as he that is more sound, though it be not so firmly and steadfastly. And Christ saith that *He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax* (Matt. 12:20).

The church of Rome bears men in hand that they are good Catholics, if they believe as the church believes; though in the mean season they cannot tell what the church believes. And some papists commend this faith, by the example of an old devout father, who being tempted of the devil and asked how he believed, answered that he believed as the church believes. Being again asked how the church believed, he answered, as I believe. Whereupon the devil (as they say) was fain to depart. Well, this fond and ridiculous kind of faith we renounce, as being a means to nuzzle men in blindness, superstition and perpetual ignorance. Yet withal, we do not deny but there is an implicit or enfolded faith; which is when a man as yet having but some little portion of knowledge in the doctrine of the gospel; doth truly perform obedience according to the measure thereof; and withal hath care to get more knowledge, and shews good affection to all good means whereby it may be increased. In this respect a certain ruler, who by a miracle wrought upon his child, was moved to acknowledge Christ for the Messiah, and further to submit himself to His doctrine, is commended for a believer (John 4:53; 4:42). And so are in like case the Samaritans.

(2) And thus much of weak faith; which must be understood to be in a man, not all the days of his life, but while he is a young babe in Christ. For as it is in the state of the body, first we are babes and grow to greater strength as we grow in years; so it is with a Christian man. First he is a babe in Christ, having weak faith, but after grows from grace to grace, till he come to have a strong faith. Example whereof we have in Abraham, who was strong and perfect both in knowledge and apprehension.

This strong faith is when a man is endued with the knowledge of the gospel, and grace to apprehend and apply the righteousness of Christ unto himself for the remission of his own sins; so as he can say distinctly of himself, and truly, that he is resolved in his own conscience that he is reconciled unto God in Christ for all his sins, and accepted in Him to life everlasting. This degree of faith is proper to him that begins to be a tall man, and of ripe years in Christ. And it comes not at the first calling of a man unto grace. And if any shall think that he can have it at the first, he deceiveth himself; for as it is in nature, first we are babes, and then as we increase in years, so we grow in strength; so it is in the life of a Christian; first, ordinarily, he hath a weak faith and after grows from grace to grace, till he come to stronger faith; and at the last be able to say he is fully assured in his heart and conscience of the pardon of his sins, and of reconciliation to God in Christ. And this assurance ariseth from many experiences of God's favour and love in the course of his life by manifold preservations and other blessings, which being deeply and duly considered, bring a man to be fully persuaded that God is his God, and God the Father his Father, and Jesus Christ his redeemer, and the Holy Ghost his sanctifier.

Now howsoever this faith be strong, yet it is always imperfect, as also our knowledge is; and shall so long as we live in this world be mingled with contrary unbelief and sundry doubtings more or less. A great part of men amongst us, blinded with gross ignorance, say they have faith, and yet indeed have not. For ask them what faith they have, they will answer they

believe that God is their Father, and the Son their redeemer etc., ask them how long they have had this faith, they will answer, ever since they could remember. Ask them whether they ever doubt of God's favour, they will say they would not once doubt for all the world. But the case of these men is to be pitied; for howsoever they may persuade themselves, yet true it is that they have no sound faith at all, for even strong faith is assaulted with temptations and doubtings; and God will not have men perfect in this life, that they may always go out of themselves and depend wholly on the merit of Christ.

And thus much of these two degrees of faith. Now in whomsoever it is, whether it be a weak faith or a strong, it bringeth forth some fruit, as a tree doth in the time of summer. And a special fruit of faith is the confession of faith: *I believe in God* etc. So Paul saith, *With the heart a man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth man confesseth to salvation* (Rom. 10:10). Confession of faith is when a man in speech and outward profession doth make manifest his faith for these two causes: (1) That with his mouth outwardly he may glorify God, and do Him service both in body and soul. (2) That by confession of his faith, he may sever himself from all false Christians, from atheists, hypocrites, and all false seducers whatsoever. And as this is the duty of a Christian man, to make profession of his faith; so here in this Creed of the Apostles, we have the right order and form of making confession set down, as we shall see in handling the parts thereof.

The Creed therefore sets down two things concerning faith, namely, the action of faith, and his object, which also are the parts of the Creed. The action, in these words, *I believe*; the object in all the words following, *in God the Father Almighty, maker* etc. And first let us begin with the action.

I Believe in God

We are taught to say, *I believe*, not *we believe*, for two causes:

1. First, because (as we have touched before) in the primitive church this Creed was made to be an answer to a demand or question, which was demanded of every particular man that was baptised; for they asked him thus*: What dost thou believe*? Then he answered, *I believe in God the Father* etc. And thus did everyone of years make profession of his faith; and it is likely that Peter alluded hereunto, saying, *The stipulation* or answer *of a good conscience maketh request to God* (1 Pet. 3:21).

2. The second cause is: howsoever we are to pray one for another by saying, *Our Father* etc., yet when we come to years, we must have a particular faith of our own. No man can be saved by another man's faith, but by his own, as it is said, *The just shall live by his faith* (Hab. 2:4). But some will say, this is not true, because children must be saved by their parents' faith. The answer is this: The faith of the parent doth bring the child to have a title or interest to the Covenant of grace, and to all the benefits of Christ; yet doth it not apply the benefits of Christ's death, His obedience, His merits and righteousness unto the infant; for this the believer doth only unto himself, and to no other. Again, some may say, if children do not apprehend Christ's benefits by their parents' faith, how then is Christ's righteousness made theirs and they saved? *Answer*: By the inward working of the Holy Ghost, who is the principal applier of all graces, whereas faith is but the instrument. As for the places of Scripture that mention justification and salvation by faith, they are to be restrained to men of years; whereas infants dying in their infancy, and therefore wanting actual faith, which none can have without actual knowledge of God's will and Word, are no doubt saved by some other special working of God's Holy Spirit, not known to us.

Furthermore, *to believe* signifieth two things: to conceive or understand anything, and withal to give assent unto it to be true. And therefore in this place, *to believe* signifieth to know and acknowledge that all the points of religion which follow are the truth of God. Here therefore we must remember that this clause (*I believe*) placed in the beginning of the Creed, must be particularly applied to all and every article following. For so the case stands that if faith fail in one main point, it faileth a man in all. And therefore faith is said to be *wholly copulative*. It is not sufficient to hold one article, but he that will hold any of them for his good, must hold them all. And he which holds them all in shew of words, if he overturn but one of them indeed, he overturns them all.

Again, *to believe* is one thing, and *to believe in this or that* is another thing; and it contains in it three points or actions of a believer:

1. To know a thing.

2. To acknowledge the same.

3. To put trust and confidence in it.

And in this order must these three actions of faith be applied to every article following, which concerns any of the Persons in Trinity. And this must be marked as a matter of a special moment. For always by adding them to the words following, we do apply the article unto ourselves in a very comfortable manner. As I believe in the Father, and do believe that He is my Father; and therefore I put my whole trust in Him; and so of the rest.

Now we come to the object of general faith, which is either God or the church; in handling both of which, I will observe this order:

1. I will speak or the meaning of every article.

2. Of the duties which we ought to learn thereby.

3. And lastly, of the consolations which may be gathered thence.

1. Concerning God, three things are to be considered:

(1) And first, by reason of manifold doubtings that rise in our minds, it may be demanded whether there be a God? Many reasons might be used to resolve those that have scruples of conscience; otherwise we are bound to believe that there is a God without all doubting. As for the atheists which confidently avouch there is no God, by God's law they ought to die the death. Nay, the earth is too good for such to dwell on. Malefactors, as thieves and rebels, for their offences have their reward of death. But the offence of those which deny that there is a God is greater; and therefore deserves a most cruel death.

(2) The second point followeth, namely, what God is? *Answer*: Moses, desiring to see God's face, was not permitted but to see His hinder parts. And therefore no man can be able to describe God by His nature, but by His effects and properties, on this or such like manner: *God is an essence spiritual, simple, infinite, most holy*. I say first of all, that God is *an essence*, to shew that He is a thing absolutely subsisting in Himself, and by Himself, not receiving His being from any other. And herein He differs from all creatures whatsoever, which have subsisting and being from Him alone. Again, I say He is *an essence spiritual*, because He is not any kind of body, neither hath He the parts of the bodies of men or other creatures, but is in nature a spirit invisible, not subject to any man's senses. I add also that He is *a simple essence*, because His nature admits no manner of composition of matter or form of parts. The creatures are compounded of divers parts, and of variety of nature, but there is no such thing in God; for whatsoever thing He is, He is the same by one and the same singular and indivisible essence. Furthermore He is *infinite*, and that divers ways: infinite in time, without any beginning and without end; infinite in place, because He is everywhere and excluded nowhere, within all places and forth of all places. Lastly, He

is *most holy*, that is, of infinite wisdom, mercy, love, goodness etc., and He alone is rightly termed *most holy*, because holiness is of the very nature of God Himself; whereas among the most excellent creatures it is otherwise. For the creature itself is one thing, and the holiness of the creature another thing. Thus we see what God is, and to this effect God describes Himself to be *Jehovah Elohim*; and Paul describes Him to be a *King everlasting, immortal, invisible, and only wise, to whom is due all honour and glory for ever* (Exod. 3:6,14; 1 Tim. 1:17).

(3) The third point is touching the number of Gods, namely whether there be more Gods than one or not. *Answer*: There is not, neither can there be any more Gods than one. Which point the Creed avoucheth in saying, *I believe in God*, not *in Gods*. And yet more plainly the Nicene Creed, and the Creed of Athanasius, both of them explaining the words of the Apostles' Creed in this manner: *I believe in one God*. Howsoever some in former times have erroneously held that two Gods were the beginning of all things, one of good things and the other of evil things. Others, that there was one God in the Old Testament, another in the New. Others again, namely the Valentinians, that there were thirty couples of gods. And the heathen people (as Augustine reporteth) worshipped thirty thousand gods. Yet we that are members of God's church must hold and believe one God alone and no more. (Deut. 4:39), *Understand this day and consider in thine heart that Jehovah He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none other*. (Eph. 4:5), *One God, one faith, one baptism*. If it be alleged that the Scripture mentioneth many gods; because (a) magistrates are called gods (Psa. 82:6), (b) Moses is called Aaron's god (Exod. 4:16), (c) the devil and all idols are called gods (2 Cor. 4:4). The answer is this: They are not properly or by nature gods, for in that respect there is only one God; but they are so termed in other respects. Magistrates are gods because they are vicegerents placed in the room of the true God to govern their subjects. Moses is Aaron's god because he was in the room of God to reveal His will to Aaron. The devil is a god because the hearts of the wicked would give the

honour unto him, which is peculiar to the everlasting God. Idols are called gods because they are such in mens' conceits and opinions, who esteem of them as gods. Therefore Paul saith, *an idol is nothing in the world* (1 Cor. 8:4), that is, nothing in nature subsisting, or nothing in respect of the divinity ascribed to it.

To proceed forward: To believe in this one God is in effect thus much: 1. To know and acknowledge Him as he hath revealed Himself in His Word; 2. To believe Him to be my God; 3. From mine heart to put all mine affiance in Him. To this purpose Christ saith, *This is eternal life, to know thee the only God, and whom thou hast sent Jesus Christ* (John 17:3). Now the knowledge here meant, is not a bare or general knowledge, or that the devils have, but a more special knowledge whereby I know God not only to be God, but also to be my God, and thereupon do put my confidence in Him.

2. And thus much of the meaning of the first words, *I believe in God*. Now followeth the duties which may be gathered hence:

(1) First of all; if we are bound to believe in God, then we are also bound to take notice of our natural unbelief whereby we distrust God; to check ourselves for it, and to strive against it. Thus dealt the father of the child that had a dumb spirit (Mark 9:24), *Lord* (saith he), *I believe, Lord help mine unbelief*. And David (Psa. 42:11*), Why art thou cast down my soul? And why art thou so disquieted within me? Wait on God*. And that which our Saviour Christ said once to Peter (Matt. 14:31), men should daily speak to themselves: *O thou of little faith. Why hast thou doubted*? But some may say, Wherein stands our unbelief? *Answer*: It stands in two things: (i) In distrusting the goodness of God, that is in giving too little or no affiance to Him; (ii) or in putting affiance in the creature.

(i) For the first, few men will abide to be told of their distrust in God, but indeed it is a common and rife corruption. And though they soothe themselves never so, yet their usual dealings proclaim their unbelief. Go

through all places, it shall be found that scarce one of a thousand in his dealings makes conscience of a lie. A great part of men get their wealth by fraud and oppression, and all kinds of unjust and unmerciful dealing. What is the cause that they can do so? Alas, alas, if there be any faith, it is pinned up in some by-corner of the heart, and unbelief bears sway as the lord of the house. Again, if a man had as much wealth as the world comes to, he could find in his heart to wish for another; and if he had two worlds, he could be casting for the third, if it might be compassed. The reason hereof is because men have not learned to make God their portion, and to stay their affections on Him; which if they could do, a mean portion in temporal blessings would be enough. Indeed these and such like persons will in no wise yield that they do distrust the Lord, unless at some time they be touched in conscience with a sense and feeling of their sins, and be thoroughly humbled for the same. But the truth is that distrust of God's goodness is a general and a mother sin, the ground of all other sins, and the very first and principal sin in Adam's fall.

(ii) And for the second part of unbelief, which is an affiance in the creatures, read the whole book of God, and we shall find it a common and usual sin in all sorts of men, some putting their trust in riches, some in strength; some in pleasures, some placing their felicity in one sin, some in another. When king Asa was sick (2 Chr. 16:12), he put his whole trust in the physicians, and not in the Lord. And in our days the common practice is when crosses an calamities fall, then there is trotting out to that wise man, to this cunning woman, to this sorcerer, to that wizard, that is, from God to the devil; and their counsel is received and practised without any bones making. And this shews the bitter root of unbelief, and confidence in vain creatures, let men smooth it over with goodly terms as long as they will. In a word, there is no man in the world, be he called or not called, if he look narrowly unto himself, he shall find his heart almost filled with manifold doubtings and distrustings whereby he shall feel himself even carried away from believing in God. Therefore the duty of every man, that will truly say

that he believes in God, is to labour to see his own unbelief and the fruits thereof in his life. As for such as say they have no unbelief, nor feel none; more pitiful is their case, for so much greater is their unbelief.

(2) Secondly, considering that we profess ourselves to believe in God, we must every one of us learn to know God. As Paul saith (Rom. 10:14), *How can they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher*? Therefore none can believe in God but he must first of all hear and be taught by the ministry of the Word to know God aright. Let this be remembered of young and old, it is not the pattering over the belief for a prayer that will make a man a good believer, but God must be known of us, and acknowledged as He hath revealed Himself partly in His Word, and partly in His creatures. Blind ignorance and the right use of the Apostles' Creed will never stand together. Therefore it stands men in hand to labour and take pains to get knowledge in religion, that knowing God aright, they may come steadfastly to believe in Him, and truly make confession of their faith.

(3) Thirdly, because we believe in God, therefore another duty is to deny ourselves utterly, and to become nothing in ourselves. Our Saviour Christ requires of us to become as little children, if we would believe. The beggar depends not upon the relief of others, till he find nothing at home; and till our hearts be purged of self-love and pride, we cannot depend upon the favour and goodness of God. Therefore he that would trust in God, must first of all be abased and confounded in himself, and in regard of himself, be out of all hope of attaining to the least spark of the grace of God.

(4) Fourthly, in that we believe in God, and therefore put our whole trust and assurance in Him; we are taught that every man must commit his body, his soul, goods, life, yea all that he hath, into the hands of God and to His custody. So Paul saith (2 Tim. 1:12), *I am not ashamed of my sufferings, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep*

that which I have committed unto Him against that day. A worthy saying, for what is the thing which Paul committed unto the Lord? It was his own soul, and the eternal salvation thereof. But what moves him to trust God? Surely his persuasion whereby he knew that God would keep it. And Peter saith (1 Pet. 4:19*), Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator*. Look as one friend layeth down a thing to be kept of another; so must a man give that he hath to the custody of God. Few or none can practise this, and therefore when any evil befalls them either in body or in goods, or any other way whatsoever, then they presently shew themselves rather beasts than men in impatience. For in prosperity they had no care to put their trust in God, and therefore in adversity when crosses come, they are void of comforts. But when a man hath grace to believe and trust in God, he commits all into God's hands; and though all the world should perish, yet he would not be dismayed. And undoubtedly, if a man will be thankful for the preservation of his goods, or of his life, he must shew the same by committing all he hath into God's hands, and suffer himself to be ruled by Him.

3. Now follows the consolations and comforts which God's church and children reap hereby. He that believes in God, and takes God for his God, may assure himself of salvation and of a happy deliverance in all dangers and necessities. When God threatened a plague upon Israel for their idolatry (2 Chr. 34:27), good king Josiah humbled himself before the Lord his God; and he was safe all his days. And so king Hezekiah (2 Chr. 32:2ff.), when Sennacherib the king of Assyria offered to invade Judah, trusted likewise in the Lord, and prayed unto Him and was delivered. Whereby we see if a man puts his whole trust in God, he shall have security and quietness, as Jehoshaphat said to the men of Judah (2 Chr. 20:20). And our Saviour Christ when He was upon the cross, and felt the whole burden of the terrible wrath of God upon Him, cried (Mark 15:34), *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*? And it appears in the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 5:7) that Christ *was heard in that He feared*; whereby we are given to

understand that they shall never be utterly forsaken that take God for their God. And king David, having experience of this, useth most excellent speeches for this end, to shew that the ground of his comfort was that God was his God. And it is said (Dan. 6:22) that Daniel had no manner of hurt in the lions' den because he trusted in the Lord his God. And contrariwise, such as distrust God are subject to all miseries and judgments. The Israelites in the wilderness (Psa. 78:21,22) *believed not God, and trusted not in His help. Therefore God was kindled in Jacob, and wrath came upon Israel*.

God, the Father, Almighty

Some have thought that these words are to be coupled to the former without distinction, as if the title of God had been proper to the first Person the Father, and not common to the rest. And thus have some heretics thought. But indeed there must a pause or distinction be made, that the name or title of God may be set in the forefront, as common to all the three Persons following. For that is the very intent of the order of this Creed, to teach us to believe in one God; who is distinct in three subsistences or Persons, called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And here offers itself to be considered, even one of the greatest mysteries of our religion; namely, that God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And again, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one and the same God. Some at the first may possibly say that this cannot stand, because it is against all reason that one should be three or three one. The answer is that indeed if one and the same respect be kept, it is not possible, but in divers considerations and respects it may. And thus the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three, namely in Person; and again, they three are one, not in Person, but in nature. By *nature* is meant a thing subsisting by itself, that is common to

many; as the substance of man consisting of body and soul common to all men, which we call the *humanity* of a man, is the nature of man. By *person*, is meant a thing or essence subsisting by itself, not common to many, but incommunicable; as among men, these particulars: Peter, John, Paul, are called *persons*. And so in the mystery of the Trinity, the divine nature is the Godhead itself, simply and absolutely considered; and a Person is that which subsisteth in that Godhead, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Or again, a Person is one and the same Godhead, not absolutely considered, but in relation, and as it were restrained by personal or characteristical properties; as the Godhead or God begetting is the Father; God, again considered not simple but so far forth as he is begotten, is the Son; and God proceeding of the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost. And if any man would conceive in mind rightly the divine nature, he must conceive God or the Godhead absolutely; if any of the Persons, then he must conceive the same Godhead relatively with personal properties. Thus the Godhead considered with the propriety of Fatherhood or begetting, is the Father. And concerning the same Godhead with the propriety of generation, we conceive the Son. And the Godhead with the propriety of proceeding, we conceive the Holy Ghost. Neither must it seem strange to any that we use the names of *nature* and *person*, to set forth this mystery by; for they have been taken up by common consent in the primitive church, and that upon weighty consideration, to manifest the truth, and to stop the mouths of heretics; and they are not so used against the proper sense of the Scriptures, nay they are therein contained (Heb. 2:3). Thus we see how it comes to pass that the three things signified by these names, *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, are each of them one and the same God. And this mystery may well be conceived by a comparison borrowed from light. The light of the sun, the light of the moon, and the light of the air, for nature and substance are one and the same light; and yet they are three distinct lights. The light of the sun being of itself and from none, the light of the moon from the sun, and the light of the air from them both. So

the divine nature is one and the Persons are three, subsisting after a divers manner in one and the same nature.

And for the further clearing of this point, we must yet further mark and remember two things; namely, the union and the distinction of the Persons.

1. The union is, whereby three Persons are not one simply, but one in nature, that is, coessential, or consubstantial; having all one Godhead. For the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. Now, there are not three distinct gods, but one God, because there is one God and no more in nature, considering that the thing which is infinite is but one, and is not subject to multiplication. And the Father is this one God, as also the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And as these three Persons are in nature, so whatsoever agrees to God simply considered, agrees to them all three. They are all coequal and coeternal; all most wise, just, merciful, omnipotent, by one and the same wisdom, justice, mercy, power. And because they have all one Godhead, therefore they are not only one with another, but also each in other, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost in them both. And we must not imagine that these three are one God, as though the Father had one part of the Godhead, the Son another part, and the Holy Ghost a third. For that is most false, because the infinite and the most simple Godhead is not subject to composition or division; but every Person is whole God, subsisting not in a part, but in the whole Godhead. And the whole entire Godhead is communicated from the Father to the Son, and from both Father and Son to the Holy Ghost.

But some may yet say that this doctrine seems to be impossible; because three creatures, as for example, Peter, Paul, Timothy, be three persons, and so remaining, cannot have one and the same nature, that is, the same body and the same soul. *Answer*: Three or more men may have the same nature in kind, but the truth is, they cannot possibly have a nature which shall be one and the same in number, in them all three. For a man is a substance created

and finite, and the bodies of men are quantities, and therefore divisible and separable one from another. Hereupon it comes that the persons of men are not only distinguished by propriety, but also divided and sundered one from another. And though Peter, Paul and Timothy have all one common and universal form, yet they three are not one man, but three men. Now it is otherwise with the divine nature or Godhead, which is uncreated and infinite, and therefore admits neither composition nor division, but a distinction without any separation; so as the three Persons subsisting in it, shall not be three gods, but one and the same God.

Yet further, some will object that it is truly said of the Father that he is God, but the same Godhead is not in the Son, nor in the Holy Ghost; for the Son and the Holy Ghost have their beginning from the Father. *Answer*: The Son and the Holy Ghost have not a beginning of their nature or of their Godhead from the Father, but of their Person only, the Person of the Son is from the Father, and the person of the Holy Ghost is both from the Father and from the Son; but the Godhead of all three Persons is uncreated and unbegotten and proceeding from none.

Yet some may say, both the Son and the Holy Ghost have received from the Father all their attributes, as wisdom, knowledge, power etc. Now he that receiveth anything from another, is in that respect inferior to him that giveth it; and therefore the Son and the Holy Ghost are not God as He is. *Answer*: We must know that that which the Son receiveth of the Father, He receiveth it by nature, and not by grace. And He receiveth not a part, but all that the Father hath, saving the personal propriety. And the Holy Ghost receiveth from the Father and the Son by nature, and not by grace. And therefore though both the Son and the Holy Ghost receive from the Father, yet they are not inferior to Him, but equal with Him.

And thus much is both necessary and profitable to be learned of the union between the three Persons in Trinity, whereby they being three have all one

and the same Godhead.

2. The second point to be considered is that though these three have but one Godhead, and all make but one God, yet they are distinguished one from another; for the Father is the Father and not the Son or the Holy Ghost; the Son is the Son, and not the Father nor the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost, not the Father nor the Son. This distinction of the Persons is notably set forth unto us in the baptism of our Saviour Christ; where it is said that *when Jesus was baptised, He came out of the water* (Matt. 3:16,17). There is the second Person; and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove; there is the third Person. And the Father the first Person pronounced from heaven that He was His only beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. And we must not conceive this distinction in such manner as though these three, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, were three names of one God; for the three Persons do not in name or word, but really in truth, distinctly subsist in the same divine nature. Neither must we imagine that the three Persons are three forms or differences of one God, as some heretics have dreamed, who taught that the Father alone is God, and that He is called a Father in one respect, the Son in another and the Holy Ghost in a third. For this were nothing else but to make the personal proprieties to be nothing but imaginary accidents, which indeed, or at the least in man's conceit, might come and go, and be either in the Persons or forth of them. For the personal relations, though in mind they may be distinguished from the divine essence, yet indeed they are one with it. But some will say, if they make this distinction, there is rather a quaternity than a Trinity, for the Godhead is one, the Father another, the Son a third, and the Holy Ghost a fourth. Thus some heretics have objected against the distinction of the Trinity; but it is untrue which they say. For the Godhead must not be severed from the Father, nor from the Son, nor from the Holy Ghost; for the Father is God or the whole Godhead, so also is the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the Godhead likewise is in every one of these three Persons, and every one of them subsisting in the Godhead, the same

must be conceived to be in them all, and not as a fourth thing out of them. And therefore we must still maintain that these three Persons are distinguished and not divided, as three men are divided in being and substance; for this division cannot be in them, because all three have one divine nature and one Godhead. This is the mystery of all mysteries to be received of us all, namely, the Trinity of the Persons in the unity of the Godhead. This form of doctrine must be retained and holden for these causes:

(1) Because by it we are able to distinguish this true God from all false gods and idols.

(2) Because among all other points of religion, this is one of the chiefest, being the very foundation thereof. For it is not sufficient for us to know God as we can conceive of Him in our own imagination; but we must know Him as he hath revealed Himself in His Word. And it is not sufficient to salvation to believe in God confusedly, but we must believe in one God distinct in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Yea, and more than this, we must hold and believe that God the Father is our Father, the Son our redeemer, the Holy Ghost our sanctifier and comforter. Well then, if we must in this manner believe in God, then we must also know Him; for we can have no faith in the thing which is utterly unknown. Wherefore if we would believe in the Father, Son or Holy Ghost, we must know them in part. (John 17:3), *This is life eternal, to know thee the only God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ*. (John 14:17), *The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it hath neither seen Him, nor known Him*. (1 John 2:23), *Whosoever denieth the Son, hath not the Father*.

(3) Thirdly, this doctrine directs us in worshipping God aright; for unity in Trinity and Trinity in unity is to be worshipped. One God must be worshipped in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; and if we worship God the Father without the Son and the Holy Ghost; or if we

worship the Son without the Father and the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost without the Father and the Son; we worship nothing but an idol. Again, if we worship the three Persons not as one God, but as three Gods, then likewise we make three idols.

Note further that of all the three Persons, the first Person the Father is set in the first place, and described to us by three things:

I. By His title, that He is *a Father*

II. By His attribute, that He is *Almighty*

III. By His effect, that He is *maker of heaven and earth*.

Of these in order.

I.

And first of the title: *Father*.

It may seem that He hath some prerogative over the Son and the Holy Ghost, because He is set before them; but we must know that he is set before them neither in regard of time, nor of dignity, for therein all three are equal; but in regard of order only. The Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third; as may appear by this similitude. If three emperors equal in dignity should meet all in one place, being equal also in power and majesty, if all three should sit down, though one be no better than another, yet one of them must needs sit down the first, and another in the second place, and then the third. But yet we cannot say that he which sat down first is the chiefest. And so it is in the Trinity. Though none be greater or above another; yet the Father is in the first place, not because He is before the Son or the Holy Ghost in dignity and honour, but because he is the fountain of the deity, the Son being from Him, and the Holy Ghost from them both.

Now let us come to the title of the first Person. The name *Father* in Scripture, is ascribed either to God taken indefinitely, and so by consequent to all the three Persons in Trinity; or particularly to the first Person alone. For the first, God is a Father properly and principally, according to the saying of Christ, *Call no man father upon earth, for there is but one your Father which is in heaven* (Matt. 23:9); that is, principally; whereas earthly parents, whom we are commanded to worship and honour, are but certain images or resemblances of our heavenly Father, having this blessing: that they are fathers from Him. And hereupon, this title agrees to men, not simply, but so far forth as God honoureth them with fatherhood in calling them to be fathers, whereas God Himself receives this honour from none. God is termed a Father in respect both of nature and grace. He is Father in regard of nature, because He created and governeth all things. In this regard He is called the *Father of spirits* (Heb. 12:9); and Adam is called *the son of God* (Luke 3:38). He is a Father in respect of grace because we are regenerate by Him, accepted to be His sons by adoption through the merits of Christ. And in this respect, the second Person as well as the first is called a Father (Isa. 9:6), and said to have an offspring (Isa. 53:10) or seed, and children (Isa. 8:18). But when the name of Father is given to the first Person, it is done upon a special consideration, because He is a Father by nature to the second Person, begetting Him of His own substance before all worlds. By this it appears that out of the title of the first Person, we may fetch a description thereof on this manner. The Father is the first Person in Trinity, begetting the Son. Now to beget, is the personal property whereby He is distinguished from the other two. If it be said that creatures do beget, and that therefore to beget is not proper to the Father; the answer is that in this point there are many differences between God the Father and all creatures. First, the Father begets the Son before all eternity; and therefore God the Father begetting, and the Son begotten are equal in time; whereas in earthly generation, the father is before the son in time. Secondly, God the Father begets His Son by communicating to Him His whole essence or Godhead, which cannot be in earthly parents, unless they should be

abolished and come to nothing. Whereas, nevertheless, God the Father giving His whole nature to His Son, retains the same still, because it is infinite. Thirdly, the Father begets the Son in Himself, and not forth of Himself; but in earthly generation, the father begetting is forth of the child, and the child forth of the father. And that must not trouble us which heretics allege against this doctrine, namely, that if the Father who is of one nature with the Son, did beget the Son, then he did beget Himself; for the Godhead of the Father doth not beget either the Godhead or the Person of the Son; but the Person of the Father begets the Person of the Son, both which in one Godhead are really distinct.

Thus we see what the Father is. Now to believe in the Father, is to be persuaded that the first Person in Trinity is the Father of Christ, and in Him my Father particularly, and that for this cause, I intend and desire for ever to put my trust in Him.

The duties which we may learn hence are manifold.

1. And here we have occasion offered, first of all to consider who is our father by nature. *I shall say to corruption* (saith Job) *thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother* (Job 17:14). Seeing God vouchsafeth this great prerogative to them that love Him, that He will be their Father, therefore Job in consideration hereof, would have every man to have recourse to his own natural condition, to see who is his father by nature. Job saith, corruption is his father; but if we mark well the condition of our nature, we shall further see every man to be the child of wrath, and that Satan is his father; for so long as a man walks in his sins (which every man doth by nature), so long doth he shew himself to be the lively child of the devil. And thus Christ reasoneth against the Scribes and Pharisees. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do* (John 8:44). And true it is that no child is so like his father that begat him, as every man

by nature is like the devil; and the whole tenor and course of his natural life without grace, is a lively resemblance of the disposition of Satan.

2. Secondly, everyone that believes God to be a Father, and in Christ his Father, must as a good child be obedient to his Father's will. So Solomon saith (Prov. 10:1), *A wise son maketh a glad father*. How? By doing His will. And therefore when one told our Saviour Christ that His mother and brethren stood without desiring to speak with Him, He said, *Whosoever shall do my Father's will which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother* (Matt. 12:50); wherein we may note that he that will have God the Father to be his Father, and Christ Jesus his brother, must do the will of God the Father. And hence God saith (Mal. 1:6*), If I be a master, where is my fear? If I be a Father, where is my honour*? Where it is plainly taught this second duty: that if God be our Father, then as good children we must shew obedience unto Him; but if we disobey Him, then we must know that that former saying of Christ will be verified upon us, that because men do the lusts of the devil, therefore they are the children of the devil. But lest this fearful sentence be verified of us, it is the duty of every man that maketh this confession, that he believes God to be his Father, first, to labout to know God's will; and secondly, to perform continual obedience unto the same; like unto a good child that would fain please his father, and therefore is always ready to do the best he can. And without doubt, that man which unfeignedly takes God for his Father, is then most grieved when as by any sin he displeaseth Him, and no other cross or calamity is so grievous unto him. The greatest grief that the prodigal son upon his repentance had, was that he had offended his father, by sinning against heaven and against him. The same also must be our grief; and all our care must be set on this: to consider how we may be obedient children to this our loving Father.

3. Thirdly, that man that believes God to be his Father, must imitate and follow Him; for it is the will of God that His children should be like unto Himself. Now we follow God specially in two things:

(1) In doing good to them that persecute us. So saith our Saviour Christ (Matt. 5:45), *Pray for them that hurt you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust*.

(2) Our heavenly Father is merciful; for He is the father of the fatherless, and therefore he that will be a son of this Father, must be merciful to his poor brethren. As Job saith of himself (Job 29:15,16*), I was eyes to the blind, and I was the feet unto the lame, I was a father to the poor*.

4. Fourthly, seeing we believe God to be our Father, we are hereby taught to use moderate care for the things of this life; for if a man know himself to be the child of God, then he also knows that God will provide for him, as we know in a family the father provideth for all. Now God is a Father and His church is this family; therefore if thou wilt be a member of God's church, and a child of God, thou must cast thy care on God, and follow the counsel of Christ (Matt. 6:25,26), *Be not too careful for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink*. And mark His reason drawn from the point which we have in hand: *The fowls of the heaven* (saith He) *they neither sow nor reap, nor carry into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they*? But alas, the practice of the world is contrary; for men have no care for the knowledge of God's Word, nor the means of their salvation. All their minds are set on the things of this life, when as Christ saith (Matt. 6:33), *First seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be ministered unto you*. If you should see a young man provide for himself, and no man else for him, we should presently say, surely his father is dead. Even so, when a man's care is set wholly both day and night for the things of this life, it argues that God hath either cast him off, or else that he takes Him for no father of his.

5. Fifthly, if God be our Father, then we must learn to bear any cross patiently that He shall lay upon us, either in body or in mind, and always

look for deliverance from Him; for whom the Lord loveth, them He chastiseth; and *if ye endure chastening (saith the apostle), God offereth Himself unto you as unto children* (Heb. 12:7); which may appear more plainly by this comparison: If two children should fight, and a man coming by should part them, and after beat the one, and let the other go free; every man that seeth this will say that that child which he beats is his own son. Even so, when God chastiseth us, He sheweth Himself unto us as a Father, if we submit ourselves. (Heb. 12:9), *Now if our earthly fathers corrected us, and we gave them reverence, taking it patiently, should we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, that we may live*? Therefore the conclusion is this: If we displease God, be ye sure He will correct us; and when His hand is upon us, we must not murmur against Him, but bear it with a mild spirit. And furthermore, when we are under the cross, we must always look for deliverance from this Father only. If a son when he is beaten should fly to his father's enemies for help and counsel; it would argue that he were but a graceless child. Sundry and diverse calamities and crosses befall men in this life; which they cannot brook, and therefore it is a common practice of many among us in these days, when God's hand is upon them, to go for help to the devil. They seek counsel at witches and wise men (as I have said) but let them look unto it, for that is the right way to double their misery, and to shew themselves lewd children.

6. Lastly, if we confess and believe God to be the Father of Christ, and in Him our Father also; then in regard of our conversation, we must not frame ourselves like unto the world; but the course of our lives must be in righteousness and true holiness. Paul exhorteth the Corinthians to separate themselves from idolaters, alleging the place out of the Old Testament where the Lord biddeth the Israelites to *come out from idolaters, and to touch no unclean thing* (2 Cor. 6:17; Isa. 52:11). And the reason followeth out of Jeremiah, that if they do so (Jer. 31:1; 2 Cor. 6:18), then *God will be their Father, and they shall be His children, even His sons and daughters*; which reason Paul urgeth in the next chapter to this effect (2 Cor.

7:1): *Considering we have these promises, that therefore we should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and grow up unto holiness in the fear of the Lord*. Where, if we mark the place diligently, we shall find this lesson: that every man who takes God for his Father, must not only in this sin of idolatry, but in all other sins, separate himself that men by his godly life may know whose child he is. But some will say, this exhortation is needless amongst us, for we have no cause to separate ourselves from others, because all amongst us are Christians, all believe in God, and are baptised, and hope to be saved by Christ. *Answer*: In outward profession, I confess we carry the shew of Christians, but in deed and truth, by our lives and conversations, many among us deny Christ; for in every place the common practice is to spend the time in drunkenness and surfeiting, in chambering and wantonness. Yea, great is the company of those that make a trade of it. Take this lewd conversation from many men, and take away their lives. And on the Lord's day, it may be seen both publicly and privately, in houses and in the open streets, there is such revel, as though there were no God to fear. In the six days of the week, many men walk very painfully in their calling; but when the Lord's day cometh, then every man takes licence to do what he will. And because of the prince's laws, men will come formally to the church for fashion's sake; but in the meantime, how many do nothing else but scorn, mock and deride, and as much as in them lieth, disgrace both the Word and the ministers thereof; so that the common saying is this: Oh, he is a precise fellow, he goes to hear sermons, he is too holy for our company. But it stands men in hand to take out a better lesson; which is, if we will have God to be our Father, we must shew ourselves to be the children of God by repentance and newness of life. He cannot be but a graceless child that will lead a rebellious life flat against his father's mind. Let us then so behave ourselves, that we may honour our Father which is in heaven, and not dishonour Him in our lives and callings. Rather let us separate ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh, loathing those things which our Father loatheth, and flying from those things which our Father abhorreth.

And thus much for the duties. Now follow the consolations which arise from this point.

But first we are to know that there are three sorts of men in the world. The first are such as will neither hear nor obey the Word of God. The second sort are those which hear the Word preached unto them, but they will not obey. Both of these sorts of men are not to look for any comfort thence. Now there is a third sort of men which, as they hear God's Word, so they make conscience of obeying the same in their lives and callings. And these are they to whom the consolations that arise out of this place do rightly belong, and must be applied.

1. First therefore, seeing God the Father of Christ, and in Him the Father of all that obey and do His will, is our Father; here note the dignity and prerogative of all true believers; for they are sons and daughters of God, as saith St John (John 1:12), *So many as received Him, to them He gave a prerogative to be the sons of God; even to them that believe in His name*. This privilege will appear the greater, if we consider our first estate; for as Abraham saith (Gen. 18:27), We are *but dust and ashes*; and in regard of the depravity of our natures, we are the children of the devil. Therefore of such rebels to be made the sons of God, it is a wonderful privilege and prerogative, and no dignity like unto it. And to enlarge it further, he that is the son of God is the brother of Christ, and fellow-heir with Him; and so heir apparent to the kingdom of heaven, and in this respect is not inferior to the very angels. This must be laid up carefully in the hearts of God's people, to confirm them in their conversation among the ungodly men in this world.

2. Secondly, if a man do endeavour himself to walk according to God's Word, then the Lord of His mercy will bear with his wants; for as a father spareth his own son, so will God spare them that fear Him. Now a father commands his child to write, or to apply his book; though all things herein be not done according to his mind, yet if he find a readiness with a good

endeavour, he is content, and falls to praise his child's writing or learning. So God giveth His commandment, and though His servants fail in obedience; yet if the Lord see their hearty endeavour, and their unfeigned willingness to obey His will, though with sundry wants, he hath made this promise, and will perform it: that as a father spareth his son, so will He spare them. If a child be sick, will the father cast him off? Nay, if through the grievousness of his sickness he cannot take the meat that is given him, or if he take it and for faintness pick it up again, will the father thrust him out of doors? No, but He will rather pity him. And so when a man doth endeavour himself through the whole course of his life to keep God's commandments, God will not cast him away, though through weakness he will fail in sundry things and displease God. This prerogative can none have, but he that is the child of God. As for others, when they sin, they do nothing else but draw down God's judgments upon them, for their deeper condemnation.

3. Thirdly, hence we learn that the child of God cannot wholly fall away from God's favour. I do not say that he cannot fall at all; for he may fall away in part, but he cannot wholly. Indeed so oft as he sins, he deprives himself wholly of God's favour as much as in him lieth. Yet God for His part still keepeth the mind and purpose of a Father. David loved his son Absalom wonderfully, but Absalom like a wicked son, played a lewd prank, and would have thrust his father out of his kingdom. And David, although he was sore offended with Absalom and shewed tokens of his wrath, yet in heart he loved him, and never purposed to cast him off. Hereupon when he went against him, he commanded the captains to *entreat the young man Absalom gently for his sake* (2 Sam. 18:5). And when he was hanged by the hair of the head in pursuing of his father, then David wept and cried, *O my son Absalom, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, Absalom my son* (2 Sam. 18:33). And so it is with God our heavenly Father, when His children sin against Him, and thereby lose His love and favour, and fall from grace, He forsakes them. But how far? Surely He shews signs of anger

for their wickedness, and yet indeed His love remains towards them still; and this is a true conclusion. The grace of God in the adoption of the elect is unchangeable, and he that is the child of God, can never fall away wholly or finally. On the contrary, that is a bad and comfortless opinion of the church of Rome, which holdeth that a man may be justified before God, and yet afterward by a mortal sin, finally fall from grace and be condemned.

4. Fourthly, the child of God that takes God the Father for his Father, may freely come into the presence of God, and have liberty to pray unto Him. We know it is a great privilege to come into the chamber of presence before an earthly prince; and few can always have this prerogative, though they be great men. Yet the king's own son may have free entrance, and speak freely unto the king himself, because he is his son. Now the children of God have more prerogative than this; for they may come into the presence, not of an earthly king, but of almighty God the King of kings. And as they are the sons of God in Christ, so in Him they may freely speak unto God their Father by prayer. And this overthrows the doctrine of such as be of the church of Rome, which teach and hold that a man must come to speak to God by prayer through the intercession of saints; for, say they, the presence of God is so glorious that we may not be so bold, as of ourselves, to speak unto Him; but needs must have the intercession of others.

5. Lastly, God will provide for all His church and children all things needful both for their bodies and souls. So our Saviour Christ bids His disciples, take no thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewith they should be clothed, adding this reason: *for your heavenly Father knoweth all your wants* (Matt. 6:31,32). And if we take thought, it must be moderate and not distrustful. It is a part of the father's duty to provide for his family and children, and not the children for the father. Now shall an earthly father have this care for his children; and shall not our heavenly Father much more provide for those that fear and love Him? Nay, mark further, in God's church there be many hypocrites which receive

infinite benefits from God, by reason of His elect children with whom they live. And we shall see this to be true, that the wicked man hath ever fared better for the godly man's cause. Sodom and Gomorrah received many benefits by reason of righteous Lot; and when the Lord was purposed to destroy Sodom, He was fain to pull Lot forth of the city; for the text saith, the angel of the Lord *could not do anything, till he was come out of it* (Gen. 19:22). So also in Paul's dangerous voyage towards Rome, all the men in it fared better for Paul's company; for the Lord told Paul by an angel that there should be no loss of any man's life, *for the Lord had given to him all that sailed with him* (Acts 27:24). And undoubtedly, if it were not for some few that fear God, He would pour down His vengeance upon many nations and kingdoms, there is such excess of wickedness in all sorts. Again, if the Lord do thus carefully provide for His children all kinds of benefits; what a wonderful wickedness is this, for men to get their living by ungodly means; as usury, carding, dicing and such like exercises? If a man were persuaded that God were his Father, and would provide sufficiently both for his body and soul; so that using lawful means he should ever have enough; out of all doubt he would never after the fashion of the world use unlawful and profane means to get a living. But this reproveth that howsoever much men say God is their Father, yet indeed they deny Him.

And thus much of this title *Father*, the first thing whereby the first person is described.

II.

Now followeth the second point, namely, His attribute of omnipotency, in the word *Almighty*.

And whereas the Father is said to be almighty, it is not so to be understood as though the Son were not almighty, or the Holy Ghost not almighty; for every property or attribute (save the personal properties) is common to all the three Persons. For as God the Father doth impart His Godhead unto the

Son, and to the Holy Ghost, so doth He communicate the properties of the Godhead to them also.

God is omnipotent two ways: (1) Because He is able to do whatsoever He will. (2) Because He is able to do whatsoever he will do. For the first, that God is able to do whatsoever He will, David saith (Psa. 115:3), *Our God is in heaven, and he doth whatsoever He will*. For there is nothing that can hinder God; but as He willeth, so everything is done. Secondly, that God can do more than He willeth to be done, it is plain where John Baptist saith (Matt. 3:9), *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*. For though God can do thus much, yet He will not do it. So likewise, when Christ was betrayed, the Father could have given Him more than twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53) to have delivered Him out of their hands, but yet He would not. And the like may be said of many other things. The Father is and was able to have created another world, yea a thousand worlds, but He would not, nor will not. And likewise, Christ being upon the cross, was able at their bidding to have come down and saved Himself from death, but He would not. And therefore this is true: The Lord can do anything that He willeth to be done actually, yea, and more than He will. But some will say, God cannot do some things which man can do, as God cannot lie, nor deny Himself; and therefore He is not omnipotent. *Answer*: Although some have thought that God could do even these things, and He did them not because He would not; yet we must know and believe that God can neither lie, nor deny Himself. Indeed, man can do both, but these and many other such things if God could do them, He could not be God. God indeed can do all things which shew forth His glory and majesty; but such things as are against His nature He cannot do. As for example, God cannot sin, and therefore cannot lie. And because He cannot do these things, for this very cause He is omnipotent; for these things and such like are works of impotency; which if God could do, He should even by His own Word be judged impotent. Secondly, He cannot do that which implies contradiction; as when a thing is, to make it at the same time to be, and not

to be. As when the sun doth shine, to make it at the same instant to shine and not to shine. And therefore false is the doctrine of that church which in their transubstantiation make the body of Christ (whose essential property is to be only in one place at once), to be circumscribed, and not to be circumscribed; to be in one place, and not to be in one place.

And thus much for the meaning. Now follow the duties whereunto we are moved by this doctrine of God's omnipotence.

1. First, whereas God the Father is said to be almighty, we are taught true humiliation. *Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God*, saith Peter (1 Pet. 5:6); where he giveth an exhortation to humility, and allegeth the cause: because God is almighty. To make this more plain: Every one of us was born in sin, and by nature we are most wretched in ourselves. Now what an one is God? Surely He is able to do whatsoever He will, yea, and more than He will, and is able to destroy such as rebel against Him every moment. Therefore our duty is to cast down ourselves for our sins in His presence. This true humiliation was that which our Saviour Christ would have brought the young man in the gospel unto, when He bad him go sell all that he had and give to the poor. Therefore, whosoever thou art, take heed thou must; for if thou run on in thy wickedness, and still rebel against God, it is a thousand to one at length He will destroy thee; for He is an almighty God, and able to do whatsoever He will. His hand is mighty, it boots not a man to strive with Him; for He was never yet overmastered; and for this cause we must needs cast down ourselves under His hand. *It is a fearful thing* (saith the Holy Ghost) *to fall into the hands of the living God* (Heb. 10:31). Therefore if we would escape His heavy and terrible displeasure, the best way for us is to abase ourselves, and be ashamed to follow our sins. Christ biddeth us *not to fear him that is able to kill the body, and can go no further; but we must fear Him that is able to cast both body and soul into hell fire* (Matt. 10:28). Example of this we have in David, who, when he was persecuted by his own son Absalom, he said unto

the Lord*, If He thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let Him do to me as seemeth good in His eyes* (2 Sam. 15:26). But some will say, I will live a little longer in my sins, in lying, pride, Sabbath-breaking, in swearing, dicing, gaming and wantonness; for God is merciful, and in my old age I will repent. *Answer*: Well, soothe not thyself, but mark; usually when God holds back His hand for a season, He doth as it were fetch a more mighty blow, for the greater confusion of a rebellious sinner. Therefore humble, submit, and cast down thyself before God, and do not strive against Him. His hand is mighty and will overthrow thee. Though thou hadst all learning, wisdom, might, riches etc., yet (as Christ said to the young man) one thing is wanting, that thou shouldest be humbled; and until thou be humbled, nothing is to be looked for but God's judgments for sin.

2. Secondly, seeing God is almighty, we must tremble and fear at all His judgments, we must stand in awe, quake and quiver at them, as the poor child doth when he seeth his father come with the rod. Example of this we have often in God's Word; as when the sons of Aaron offered strange fire before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-3), He sent fire from heaven, and burned them up. And though Aaron was very sorry for his sons, yet when Moses told him *that the Lord would be glorified in all that came near Him*, then the text saith, *Aaron held his peace*. So also we read that the apostles reproved Peter for preaching unto the Gentiles (Acts 11:18); but when Peter had expounded the things in order which he had seen, then *they held their peace and glorified God*. As also David saith (Psa. 39:9), *I held my tongue, O Lord; because thou didst it*. Isaiah saith (Isa. 30:15), *In hope and silence is true fortitude*. If a man be in trouble he must hope for deliverance, and be quiet and patient at God's judgments. But the practice of the world is flat contrary; for men are so far from trembling at them, that they use to pray to God that plagues, curses and vengeance may light upon them, and upon their servants and children. Now the Lord being a mighty God often doth answerably bring His judgments upon them. Again, many carried away with impatience, with themselves hanged or drowned, which evils they think

shall never befall them; yet at the length God doth in His justice bring such punishments upon them according as they wished. And (which is more) in all ages there have been some which have scorned and mocked at God's judgments. Hereof we had not far hence a most fearful example. One being with his companion in a house drinking on the Lord's day, when he was ready to depart thence, there was great lightning and thunder; whereupon his fellow requested him to stay, but the man, mocking and jesting at the thunder and lightning, said (as report was), *It was nothing but a knave cooper knocking on his tubs*; come what would, he would go; and so went on his journey. But before he came half a mile from the house, the same hand of the Lord, which before he had mocked, in a crack of thunder, struck him about the girdlestead, that he fell down stark dead. Which example is worthy of our remembrance, to put us in mind of God's heavy wrath against those which scorn His judgments. For our duty is to tremble and fear; and it were greatly to be wished that we could with open eye behold the terribleness and fearfulness of God's judgments; it would make a man to quake and to leave off sin. If a man pass by some high and dangerous place in the night, when he cannot see, he is not afraid; but if ye bring him back again in the day, and let him see what a steep and dangerous way he came, he will not be persuaded to pass the same way again for anything. So it is in sinning; for men living in ignorance and blindness, practise any wickedness, and do not care for God's judgments; but when God of His goodness bringeth them back, and openeth their eyes to see the downfall to the pit of hell, and the judgments of God due to their sins; then (they say) they will never sin as they have done, but become new men, and walk in the way to eternal life.

3. Thirdly, we are taught by the apostle Paul, that if we be to do any duty to our brethren, as to relieve them, we must do it with cheerfulness; for he laboureth to persuade the Corinthians to cheerful liberality, and the reason of his persuasion is *because God is able to make all grace to abound towards them* (2 Cor. 9:7,8). Where also this duty is taught us, that seeing

God is omnipotent, and therefore able to make us abound, therefore we must give cheerfully to our poor brethren which want.

4. Fourthly, whereas there are many in every place which have lived long in their sins, even from their cradle; some in wantonness, some in drunkenness, some in swearing, some in idleness, and such like; out of this place to all such there is a good lesson, namely, that every one of them do now become new men and repent of all their sins, for all their life past. For mark what Paul saith of the Jews which are cut off from Christ through unbelief, and have continued in hardness of heart and desperate malice against Him almost 1600 years (Rom. 11:23), *If* (saith he*) they abide not still in unbelief, they may be grafted in their olive again*. And his reason is this: *because God is able to graft them in again*. Even so, though we have lived many years in sin (and sure it is a dangerous and fearful case for a man to live twenty, thirty or forty years under the power of the devil), yet we must know that if we will now live a new life, forsake all our sins and turn to God, we may be received to grace, and be made a branch of the true olive, though we have borne the fruits of the wild olive all our life long. But some will object that they have no hope of God's favour because they have been so grievous sinners, and continued in them so long. *Answer*: But know it, whosoever thou art, God is able to graft thee in; and if thou repent, He will receive thee to His love and favour. This must be observed of all, but especially such as are old in years and remain ignorant without knowledge; they must turn to the Lord by repentance; otherwise, if they continue still profane and impenitent, they must know this: that their damnation comes post-haste to meet them, and they to it.

And thus much for the duties. Now follow the consolations which God's church reap from this, that God the Father is omnipotent.

1. First, the wonderful power of God serveth to strengthen us in prayer unto God; for he that will pray truly, must only pray for those things for which

he hath warrant in God's Word. All our prayers must be made in faith, and for a man to pray in faith, it is hard. Therefore a special means to strengthen us herein is the mighty power of God. This was the ground and stay of the leper, whom our Saviour Christ cleansed (Matt. 8:2). *Lord* (saith he), *if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*. And in the Lord's prayer, when our Saviour Christ hath taught us to make six petitions; in the end he giveth us a reason, or motive to induce us to stand upon and to wait for the benefits before craved, in these words (Matt. 6:13): *Thine is the kingdom, thine is the power* etc.

2. Secondly, hence we learn this comfort, that all the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail against the least member of Christ. I do not say, they shall never be able to assault or tempt them, for that may be; but they shall never overcome them. How (will some say) may we be resolved of this? *I answer*, By reason of faith; for if a Christian man do believe that God the Father and Christ His Son is almighty, no enemy shall ever be able to prevail against him. So St John reasoneth (1 John 4:4), *Little children, ye are of God, and have overcome them*, that is, all false teachers*, because greater is He that is in you* (Christ Jesus by His Holy Spirit, who is God, and therefore almighty*) than he that is in the world*, that is, the spirit of Satan; therefore you need not to fear. So David compareth himself to a silly sheep (Psa. 23:4), and saith: *Though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death*, that is, as it were in the mouth of the lion, *yet I would fear none evil*. Why so? Because the Lord is with him: *Thy rod* (saith he) *and thy staff comfort me*.

Thus much for the benefits.

Now whereas it is said the first person is a *Father*, and also *Almighty*, join these two together, and hence will arise singular benefits and instructions.

1. First, whereas we are taught to confess that the first Person is a Father Almighty, we, and every man, must learn to have experience in himself of

the mighty power of this Almighty Father. Why, will some say, that is nothing, for the devil and all the damned souls feel the power of the Almighty. True indeed they feel the power of God, namely as He is an almighty judge condemning them; but they feel not the power of an Almighty Father. This is the point whereof we must endeavour to have experience in ourselves. Paul prayeth (Eph. 1:19,20), that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto the Ephesians the spirit of wisdom, *to see what is the exceeding greatness of His power in them which believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ*. Which place must be considered; for here the apostle would have us have such a special manifestation of God's power in ourselves, like to that which He did once shew forth in Christ.

But how did Christ see and find the power of God as He was man? *Answer*: Divers ways:

(1) On the cross He died the first death; which is the separation of body and soul; and He suffered the sorrows of the second death, for in His soul He bare the whole wrath of God, and all the pangs of hell, and after was buried and laid in the grave, where death triumphed over Him for the space of three days. Now in this extremity, God did shew His power in that He raised Christ from death to life. And look as His power was manifested in Christ the Head, so must it be manifested in all His members; for every man hath his grave, which is natural sin and corruption, which we draw from our first parents, and look as a man lies dead in the grave, and can move neither hand nor foot; so every man by nature lieth dead in sin. Now as God did shew His power in raising Christ from death; so everyone must labour to have this knowledge and experience in himself of the mighty power of God, in raising him from the grave of sin to newness of life. For thus Paul makes a special request, that he *might know Christ, and the virtue of His resurrection* (Phil. 3:10), that is, that he might feel in himself that power

whereby Christ was raised from death to life, to raise him also from the bondage of his sins to a new life more and more.

(2) Furthermore, when Christ was upon the cross, and all the gates of hell were open against Him, then did he vanquish Satan, He bruised the serpent's head; and, as Paul saith (Col. 2:15), He *spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, and hath triumphed over them on the cross*. He overcame the devil and all his angels by the power of His Almighty Father, and by His own power as He is God. And even so must Christian men labour to find the same power in themselves of this Almighty Father by which Christ did triumph over Satan; that by it they may tread him under their feet, which men can never do by any power in themselves.

(3) Again, Christ prayeth that that cup might pass from Him; and yet he saith (Luke 22:42*), Not my will, but thy will be fulfilled*. For it was necessary that Christ should suffer. And this request was heard, not because He was freed from death, but because God His Father Almighty gave Him power and strength in His manhood to bear the brunt of His indignation. Now look as this power was effectual in Christ Jesus the Head, to make Him able and sufficient to bear the pangs of hell; so the same power of God is in some measure effectual in all the members of Christ, to make them both patient, and of sufficient strength to bear any affliction, as St Paul saith (Col. 1:11), *Being strengthened with all might through His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness*. And this is a notable point which everyone ought to learn, that whereas they confess God to be their Almighty Father, they should here withal labour to feel and have experience in themselves that he is Almighty in the beginning and continuing of grace unto them, and in giving them power and patience to suffer afflictions.

(4) Further, Christ Jesus, when the work of our redemption was accomplished, was lifted up into heaven (Eph. 1:20-22), and *set at the right*

hand of God, in heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers etc.; even by the power of His Father. Well, as this power was made manifest in the Head, so must it be in the members thereof. Every child of God shall hereafter see and feel in himself the same power to translate him from this vale of misery in this life, to the kingdom of heaven.

Wherefore, to conclude, we have great cause to be thankful and to praise God for this privilege: that He shews His power in His children in regenerating them, in making them die unto sin and to stand against the gates of hell, and to suffer afflictions patiently; as also that he translates them from death to life. And everyone should shew his thankfulness, in labouring to have experience of this power in himself, as Paul exhorteth us in his epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. Yea, read all his epistles, and we shall find he mentioneth no point so often as this, namely, the mighty power of God, manifested first in Christ, and secondly in His members; and he *accounts all things loss*, that he *might know Christ, and the virtue of His resurrection* (Phil. 3:8,10).

This point is the rather to be marked because this power in the matter of grace is not to be seen with eye; and few there be in respect that have felt the virtue thereof in themselves; for the devil doth mightily shew his contrary power in the greatest part of the world, in carrying them to sin and wickedness.

2. Secondly, hence we learn that which Paul teacheth (Rom. 8:28), namely, to know that *all things work together for the best unto them that love God*. God is Almighty, and therefore able to do whatsoever He will. He is also a Father, and therefore is willing to do that which is for our good. But some will say, we are subject to many crosses, yea, to sin. What? Can our sins turn to our good? *Answer*: If God Almighty be thy Father, He will turn thine afflictions, yea thy sins which by nature are evil, beyond all expectation

unto thy salvation. And thus much God will do to all such as be obedient unto Him. Yet no man must hereupon presume to sin.

3. Thirdly, whereas we believe that God is a mighty Father, it serves to confirm God's children in the promises of mercy revealed in His Word. The chiefest whereof is that if men will turn from their sins, and believe in Christ, they shall not perish, but have life everlasting. I know some men will make it an easy thing to believe, especially those which never knew what faith meant. But such persons need no means of confirmation of faith. Therefore let all those which have tasted of the hardness of attaining unto it, learn how to establish their wavering hearts in the promise of God, by the consideration of these two points: God is a Father, and therefore He is willing; He is Almighty, and therefore He is able to perform His promise. He that will be resolved of God's promises, must have both these settled in his heart and build on them as on two foundations.

Creator of Heaven and Earth

III.

We have spoken of the title of the first Person, and of His attributes; now we come to speak of His effect, namely, the Creation. But before we come to it, we are to answer a certain objection which may be made. At the first it must seem strange to some that the work of Creation is ascribed to the first Person in Trinity, the Father; whereas in the Scripture it is common to them all three equally.

And first, that the Father is Creator, it was never doubted. As for the second Person, the Son, that He is Creator it is evident (John 1:3), *All things were*

made by Him, that is, by the Son, who is the substantial Word of the Father, *and without Him was made nothing that was made*. And again it is said (Heb. 1:2) that God by His Son made the world. As for the Holy Ghost, the work of Creation is also ascribed unto Him. And therefore Moses saith (Gen. 1:2), *The Spirit moved upon the waters*. And Job saith (Job 26:13), *His Spirit hath garnished the heavens*. How then is this peculiar to the Father, being common to all three Persons in Trinity? *I answer*, The actions of God are twofold: either inward or outward.

The inward actions are those which one Person doth exercise toward another; as the Father doth beget the Son, and this is an inward action peculiar to the Father. And all inward actions are proper to the Persons from whom they are. So the Son doth receive the Godhead by communication from the Father; and the Holy Ghost from them both; and these are inward actions peculiar to these Persons. So likewise, for the Father to send His Son, it is an inward action proper to the Father, and cannot be communicated to the Holy Ghost. And the Son to be sent by the Father only, is a thing proper to the Son, and not common to the Father, or to the Holy Ghost.

Now outward actions are the actions of the Persons in the Trinity to the creatures, as the work of Creation, the work of preservation, and of redemption. These and all such actions are common to all the three Persons. The Father createth, the Son createth, and the Holy Ghost createth. And so we may say of the works of government, and of redemption, and of all outward actions of the Persons to the creatures.

But some again may say, How then can the work of Creation, being an outward action of God to the creature, be peculiar to the first Person, the Father? *I Answer*: the work of Creation is not so proper to the first Person as that it cannot also be common to the rest; for all the three Persons jointly created all things of nothing; only they are distinguished in the manner of

creating. For the Father is the cause that beginneth the work, the Son puts it in execution, the Holy Ghost is the finisher of it. And again, the Father createth by the Son (Col. 1:16; Rom. 11:36) and by the Holy Ghost; the Son createth by the Holy Ghost and from the Father; the Holy Ghost createth not by the Father nor by the Son, but from the Father and the Son. And this is the reason why the work of Creation is ascribed here unto the Father, because He alone createth after a peculiar manner, namely, by the Son and by the Holy Ghost. But the Son and the Holy Ghost create not by the Father, but from Him.

Thus, having answered the objection, we come to speak of the Creation itself. In handling whereof, we must withal treat of the counsel of God as being the cause thereof, and of the government of the creatures as being a work of God whereby he continues the Creation. And the order which I will observe is:

1. First to speak of the counsel of God

2. Secondly of the execution of His counsel, which hath two special branches:

2a. The first, the creation,

2b. The second, the preservation or government of things created.

1.

The counsel of God is His eternal and unchangeable decree whereby He hath ordained all things either past, present or to come, for His own glory. First, I call it a decree because God hath in it set down with Himself as appointed sovereign Lord, what shall be, what shall not be. I add further that all things whatsoever come under the compass of this decree, as Paul saith (Eph. 1:11), *He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will*.

And our Saviour Christ saith (Matt. 10:29) that a sparrow cannot fall on the ground *without the heavenly Father*. Yea, further, He tells His disciples (v.30) that *the very hairs of their head are numbered*, meaning that they are known and set down in the counsel of God. And considering that God is King over heaven and earth; and that most wise, yea wisdom itself; and most mighty, yea might and power itself; it must needs be that He hath determined how all things shall come to pass in His kingdom, with all their circumstances, time, place, causes etc. in such particular manner that the very least thing that may be, is not left unappointed and undisposed.

The counsel of God hath two properties: eternity and unchangeableness. It is eternal because it was set down by God from everlasting before all times, as Paul saith (Eph. 1:4), God hath chosen the Ephesians *to salvation before all worlds*. And he saith of himself (2 Tim. 1:9) that he was called *according to the purpose of God, which was before all worlds*. Again, the same counsel once set down, is unchangeable. God saith (Mal. 3:6), *I am Jehovah, and I change not*. *With God* (saith St James (Jam. 1:17)) *there is no variableness nor shadow of change*. Now such as God is, such is His decree or counsel. And being unchangeable, His counsels also are unchangeable.

God's counsel hath two parts: His foreknowledge and His will or pleasure. His foreknowledge, whereby He did foresee all things which were to come. His will, whereby in general manner He wills and ordains whatsoever is to come to pass; and therefore such things as God altogether nilleth, cannot come to pass. Now these two parts of the counsel of God must be joined together, and not severed. Will without knowledge is impotent, and foreknowledge without will is idle. And therefore such as hold that God doth barely foresee sundry things to come, no manner of way either willing or decreeing the issue and event of them, do bring in little better than atheism. For if we say that anything comes to pass either against God's will,

or God not knowing of it or not regarding it, we shall make Him either impotent or careless, and raise the very foundation of God's providence.

And this decree of God must be conceived of us as the most general cause of all things subsisting; being first in order, having all other causes under it, and most principal, overruling all, overruled by none.

Thus we see what is to be held touching God's counsel. Now for the better clearing of the truth, three objections of some difficulty are to be answered:

(1) First may some man say, If God decree and ordain all things whatsoever, then He decreeth and ordaineth sin. But God decrees not sin inasmuch as it is against His will. And therefore He decrees not all things. *Answer*: We use not to say that God doth simply will or decree sin, but only in part, adding withal these caveats:

(i) That God willeth and decreeth sin, not properly as it is sin, but as it hath in it sundry regards and respects of goodness, so far forth as it is a punishment, or chastisement, or trial, or action, or hath an existence in nature.

(ii) God can so use evil instruments that the work done by them being a sin, shall nevertheless in Him be a good work; because He knows how to use evil instruments well. If it be further alleged that God willeth no wickedness (Psa. 5:5), we must know that God's will is twofold: general and special.

(a) General, whereby God willeth and decreeth that a thing shall be; and by this kind of will He may be said to will sin; and that without sin. For though He decreeth it thus, yet doth He not instil wickedness into the heart of any sinner, and His decree is only for a most excellent end. For in regard of God which decreeth it, it is good that there should be evil. To this purpose, Augustine saith excellently, By an unspeakable manner it comes to pass, that that which is against God's will, is not without His will.

(b) Now the special will of God is that whereby He willeth anything in such manner that he approveth it and delighteth in it. And thus indeed we cannot say without blasphemy that God willeth sin.

Thus then we see in what manner, and how far forth God may be said to decree sin, that is, to will and appoint the permission of it.

(2) Again, it may be objected thus: If all things be determined by the unchangeable decree of God, then all things come to pass by an unchangeable necessity; and men in their actions have no free will at all, nor liberty in doing anything. *Answer*: This must be learned as a certain rule: that the necessary decree of God doth not abolish the nature of the second causes, and impose necessity upon the will of man, but only order and incline it without any constraint, to one part. As, for example, when a people is gathered together to hear God's Word, there is none of them but they know that they come thither by God's providence (and in that respect, necessarily), yet before they come, they had all freedom and liberty in themselves to come or not to come. And God's eternal counsel did not hinder the liberty of our wills in coming or not coming, nor take away the same; but only incline and turn them to the choice of one part. Another example hereof we may have in our Saviour Christ, whose state and condition of body, if we regard, He might have lived longer. Yet by the eternal counsel of God, He must die at that place, at that time, at that hour, where and when He died. Whereby we may see that God's counsel doth not hinder the will of man; but only order and dispose it. Which answer being well marked, we shall see these two will stand together: the necessary and unchangeable counsel of God, and the free will of man. And again, that the same action may be both necessary and contingent: necessary in regard of the highest cause, the counsel of God; not necessary but contingent in respect of the second causes, as, among the rest, the will of man.

(3) Thirdly, some will yet object against this doctrine, that if all things come to pass according to God's unchangeable decree, then what needs the use of any means? What needs the preaching of the Word? And receiving of the sacraments? What needs any laws, princes, magistrates or government? What needs walking in men's ordinary callings? All is to no end; for let men play, or work, sleep or wake; all is one, for God's eternal counsel must needs come to pass. Therefore it may seem in vain for men to busy themselves about such things. *Answer*: But we must know that as God hath appointed all things to come to pass in His eternal and unchangeable counsel; so in the same decree, He hath together set down the means and ways whereby He will have the same things brought to pass; for these two must never be severed, the thing to be done, and the means whereby it is done. We may read in the Acts in Paul's dangerous voyage towards Rome (Acts 27:23,24), an angel of the Lord told Paul that God had given him all that sailed with him in the ship. Now the soldiers and mariners hearing this, might reason thus with themselves: Seeing God hath decreed to save us all, we may do what we will, there is no danger, for we shall all come to land alive. But mark what Paul saith (v.31), *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe*; where we see that as it was the eternal counsel of God to save Paul and all that were with him, so He decreed to save all by this particular means of their abode in the ship. King Hezekiah (2 Kin. 20:6,7) was restored to his health, and received from God a promise that he should have fifteen years added to his days, and the promise was confirmed by a sign. Now what doeth he? Cast off all means? No; but as he was prescribed, so he applieth a bunch of dry figs to his sore, and useth still his ordinary diet. Therefore it is gross ignorance and madness in men, to reason so against God's decree: God in His unchangeable counsel hath decreed and set down all things how they shall be; therefore I will use no means, but live as I list. Nay, rather we must say the contrary: because God hath decreed this thing or that to be done; therefore I will use the means which God hath appointed to bring the same to pass.

2a.

Now followeth the Creation, which is nothing else but a work of the blessed Trinity, forming and framing His creatures which were not before, and that of nothing.

The points to be known concerning the Creation are many:

(1) The first, is the thing by which God did begin and finish the Creation. And we must understand that at the first God made all things without any instrument or means, and not as men do which bring to pass their business by servants and helps, but only by His Word and commandment; as the Psalmist saith (Psa. 148:5), *He commanded, and all things were made*. In the beginning, God said (Gen. 1:3), *Let there be light*, and there was light; and by the same means was the creation of every creature following. The very power of the Word and commandment of God was such, as by it that thing was made and had a being, which before was not. It may be demanded, what Word this was by which God is said to make all things? *Answer*: The Word of God in Scripture is taken three ways: for the substantial Word, for the founding, or written Word, and for the operative, or powerful Word. The substantial Word is the Second Person begotten of the substance of the Father. Now howsoever it be true that God the Father did create all things by His Word, that is, by His Son; yet doth it not seem to be true that by these words Ò*God said, Let there be*É this or thatÓ that the Son is meant. For that Word which God gave out in the Creation was in time, whereas the Son is the Word of the Father before all times. And again, it is a Word common to the three persons equally, whereas the Son is the Word of the Father only. Furthermore, it is not like that it was any sounding word standing of letters and syllables, and uttered to the creatures after the usual manner of men, that was the cause of them. It remains therefore that all things were made by the operative Word, which is nothing but the pleasure, will, and appointment of God; and is more powerful to bring a

thing to pass than all the means in the world besides. For God willing of anything, is His effecting and doing of it. And this is proved by David when he saith (Ps. 33:9), *He spake the Word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created*. Hence we must take out a special lesson, needful to be learned of every man. Look what power God used and shewed in making the creatures when they were not; the same power He doth, can and will shew forth in re-creating and redeeming sinful men by the precious blood of Christ. By His Word He created man's heart when it was not; and He can and will as easily create in us all new hearts specially when we use the good means appointed for that end. As, when Christ said to dead Lazarus (John 11:43), *Lazarus, come forth*, he arose and came forth of his grave, though bound hand and foot. So when the Lord speaks to our dead heart by His Word and Spirit, we shall rise forth of the graves of our sins and corruptions. In the Creation of the great world, God said, *Let there be light*, and presently darkness gave place. And the same He can do to the little world, that is, to man. We are by nature darkness, and let God but speak to our blind understandings, our ignorance shall depart, and we shall be enlightened with the knowledge of the true God and of His will. As Paul saith (2 Cor. 4:6), *God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, is He which hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*.

(2) Secondly, God made all creatures, without motion, labour or fatigue; for His very bidding of the work to be done, was the doing of it. And this thing no creature can do, but God only, though unto Adam labour was without pain before the fall.

(3) Thirdly, the matter and the first beginning of all creatures was nothing; that is, all things were made, when as there was nothing whereof they might be made, as Paul saith (Rom. 4:17), *God calleth those things which be not, as though they were*. And indeed in the first Creation, all things must be made either of the essence of God, or of nothing. But a creature cannot be

made of the essence of God, for it hath no parts, it is not divisible. And therefore God made all things that were made out of Himself or His own essence. The conclusion then is that the framing of the creatures in the beginning, was not of any matter, but of nothing, because before the Creation, out of God there was nothing. This must teach us to humble ourselves. Many there be that stand upon their ancestors; but let them here look whence they came first, namely, as Abraham saith of himself (Gen. 18:27), *of dust and ashes*. And what was this dust and ashes made of? Surely of nothing. Wherefore every man's first beginning is of nothing. Well then, such men as are carried away with their pedigree and descent, if they look well unto it, they shall find small cause to boast or brag. And this consideration of our first beginning, must move us to true humiliation in ourselves.

(4) Fourthly, God in framing His creatures in the beginning made them good; yea, very good. Now the goodness of the creature is nothing else but the perfect estate of the creature, whereby it was conformable to the will and mind of the Creator allowing and approving of it, when He had made it. For a creature is not first good, and then approved of God; but because it is approved of God, thereof it is good. But wherein, will some say, stands this goodness of the creature? *I answer*, in three things:

(i) In the comeliness, beauty and glory of every work in his kind, both in form and constitution of the matter.

(ii) In the excellency of the virtue which God hath given to it; for as He hath appointed every creature for some especial end, so He hath fitted and furnished it with sufficient power and virtue to the accomplishing of the same end.

(iii) In the exceeding benefit and profitableness that came by them to man.

But since the fall of man, this goodness of the creature is partly corrupted and partly diminished. Therefore when we see any want, defect or deformity in any of them, we must have recourse back again to the apostasy of our first parents, and remember our fall in them, and say with a sorrowful heart, this comes to pass by reason of man's most wretched sin, which hath defiled heaven and earth, and drawn a curse not only upon himself, but upon the rest of the creatures for his sake; whereby their goodness is much defaced.

(5) Fifthly, the end of creation, is the glory of God, as Solomon saith (Prov. 16:4), *God made all things for His own sake, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*. And God propounds this principal end to Himself, not as though He wanted glory, and would purchase it unto Himself by the creation; for He is most glorious in Himself, and His honour and praise being infinite, can neither be increased nor decreased; but rather that He might communicate, and make manifest His glory to His creatures, and give them occasion to magnify the same. For the reasonable creatures of God, beholding His glory in the creation, are moved to testify and declare the same among men.

(6) The sixth shall be touching the time of the beginning of the world, which is between five thousand and six thousand years ago. For Moses hath set down exactly the computation of time from the making of the world to his own days; and the prophets after him have with diligence set down the continuance of the same to the very birth of Christ. But for the exact account of years, chronologers are not all of one mind. Some say there be 3929, from the creation to Christ's birth, as Belroaldus; some 3952, as Jerome and Bede; some 3960, as Luther, and lo, Lucidus; some 3963, as Melanchthon in his Chronicle, and Functius; some 3970, as Bullinger and Tremellius; some towards 4000, as Buntingus. Now from the birth of Christ to this day are 1592 years, and adding these together, the whole time

amounteth. And God would have the very time of the beginning of the world to be revealed:

(i) First, that it might be known to the church when the Covenant of grace was first given by God to man, and when it was afterward renewed, and how Christ came in the fulness of time (Gal. 4:4).

(ii) Secondly, that we might know that the world was not made for the eternal and ever-living God, but for man.

(iii) Thirdly, that we might learn not to set our hearts on the world, and on the things therein, which have beginning and end, but seek for things eternal in heaven.

And before the time which I have named began, there was nothing beside God; the world itself, and all things else were uncreated. Some men used to object and say, What did God all that while before the world was? How did He employ Himself? What, was He idle? *Answer*: The Jews to which bad this question, made as bad an answer; for they say He was continually occupied in making many little worlds, which He continually destroyed as He made them, because none pleased Him till He made this. But we must rather say that some things are revealed which God did then, as that He decreed what should come to pass when the world was, and that the blessed Persons in Trinity did take eternal delight each in other. If any man will needs know more, let him hear what Moses saith (Deut. 29:29), *Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but things revealed, to us and our children for ever*. And let them mark what one eluding the question answered; namely, that God was making hell fire to burn all such curious persons as will needs know more of God than He hath revealed to them. For where God hath not a mouth to speak, there we must not have a care to hear. Therefore our duty is to let such curious questions pass.

(7) Seventhly, some may ask in what space of time did God make the world? *Answer*: God could have made the world and all things in it, in one moment; but He began and finished the whole work in six distinct days.

In the first day He made the matter of all things and the light.

In the second, the heavens.

In the third day, He brought the sea into His compass, and made the dry land appear, and caused it to bring forth herbs, plants and trees.

In the fourth day, He made the sun, the moon and the stars in heaven.

In the fifth day, He made the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the heaven, and every creeping thing.

In the sixth day, He made the beasts of the field, and all cattle, and in the end of the sixth day, He made man.

Thus in six distinct spaces of time, the Lord did make all things; and that especially for three causes:

(i) To teach men that they ought to have a distinct and serious consideration of every creature; for if God had made the world in a moment, some might have said, This work is so mystical, that no man can speak of it. But, for the preventing of this cavil, it was His pleasure to make the world and all things therein, in six days; and the seventh day, He commanded it to be sanctified by men, that they might distinctly and seriously meditate upon every day's work of the Creation.

(ii) God made the world and everything therein, in six distinct days, to teach us what wonderful power and liberty He had over all His creatures; for He made the light when there was neither sun nor moon, nor stars, to shew that in giving light to the world, He is not bound to the sun, to any creature, or

to any means; for the light was made the first day, but the sun, the moon and the stars were not created before the fourth day. Again, trees and plants were created the third day, but yet the sun, the moon and the stars, and rain, which nourish and make herbs, trees and plants to grow, were not created till after the third day; which shews plainly that God can make trees, plants and herbs to grow without the means of rain, and without the virtue and operation of the sun, the moon and the stars.

(iii) He made the world in six distinct days and framed all things in this order, to teach us His wonderful providence over all His creatures; for before man was created, He provided for him a dwelling place, and all things necessary for his perpetual preservation and perfect happiness and felicity. So also He created beasts and cattle; but not before He had made herbs, plants and grass, and all means whereby they are preserved. And if God had this care over man, when as yet he was not; much more will God have care over him now when he is, and hath a being in nature.

And thus much concerning the points of doctrine touching the creation.

The duties follow.

(1) And first, by the work of creation, we may discern the true Jehovah from all false gods and idols in the world. This, Isaiah maketh plain (Isa. 45:6,7), *I am God, and there is none other God besides me*. How is that produced? Thus: *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things*. If a man ask thee how thou knowest the true God from all false gods, thou must answer, By the works of Creation; for He alone is the maker of heaven and earth, and all things in them. This property cannot agree to any creature, to any man, saint or angel; nay, not to all men and all angels. They cannot give being to a creature which before was nothing.

(2) Secondly, whereas God the Father is creator of all things, and hath given unto man reason, understanding and ability more than to other creatures; we are taught to consider and meditate on the work of God's creation. This, the wise man teacheth us (Eccl. 7:13), saying, *Consider the works of God*. And indeed, it is a special duty of every man who professeth himself to be a member of God's church, as he acknowledgeth God to be the Creator, so to look upon His workmanship, and view and consider all creatures. A skilful workman can have no greater disgrace, than when he hath done some famous thing, to have his friend pass by his work, and not so much as look upon it. If it be demanded for what end we must look upon the work of God's Creation, I answer, that in it we may see and discern God's power, wisdom, love, mercy and providence, and all His attributes, and in all things, His glory. This is a most necessary duty to be learned of every man. We think nothing too much or too good to bestow on vain shews and plays, idle sports and pastimes, which are the vanities of men, and we do most willingly behold them; in the mean season utterly neglecting and condemning the glorious work of God's Creation. Well, the Lord hath appointed His Sabbath to be sanctified, not only by the public ministry of the Word, and by private prayers, but also by an especial consideration and meditation of God's creatures, and therefore the duty of every man is this: distinctly and seriously to view and consider the creatures of God; and thereby take occasion to glorify His name, by ascribing unto Him the wisdom, glory, power and omnipotence that is due unto Him, and appears in the same.

(3) Thirdly, we must give God glory in all His creatures, because He is the Creator of them all. So in the Revelation, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him, and say (Rev. 4:11), *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power*; giving this reason, *for thou hast created all things, and for thy will's sake they are and have been created*. Read Psalms 147 and 148, both of which tend to this effect, that God must be praised because He is the Creator of all things, to whom all glory is due. We know

that when men behold any curious work of a cunning and skilful craftsman, straightway they will leave the work, and enquire after him that made it, that they may praise his skill. The same is our duty in this case, when we come abroad and behold everywhere in all the creatures the admirable and unspeakable wisdom, goodness and power of God, then we must make haste from the creature, and go forward to the Creator, to praise and glorify Him. And herein must we shew ourselves to differ from brute beasts, in that by the use and view of God's creatures, we do return due glory, praise and honour unto the Creator.

(4) Our fourth duty is set down by the prophet Amos, who moving the people to meet God by repentance, addeth a reason taken from the Creation (Amos 4:13). *He that formeth the mountains and createth the winds, which declareth unto man what is His thought, which maketh the morning darkness* etc., *The Lord God of hosts is His name*. The meaning of the prophet is this: God is a terrible judge, and we are as traitors and rebels against Him. Therefore the best way that we can take is this: He is coming to judgment, let us therefore meet Him, fall down before Him, and humble ourselves under His mighty hand. And the Holy Ghost by the prophet would move the people to meet God by serious repentance, by a reason framed thus: If God who is their judge, be able to create the winds, and to form the mountains, and to make the morning darkness, then He is also able to make an eternal judgment for their confusion. And therefore all such as be impenitent sinners, let them prepare themselves to turn unto Him; and surely if men had grace to lay this to their hearts, they would not live so long in their sins without repentance as they do; nay, rather they would prepare themselves to meet Him in the way before He come to judgment, because He is a Creator, and therefore able to bring infinite punishments upon them at His pleasure, and to bring them to nothing, as He made them of nothing. And let them know it whosoever they be that go forward in their sins, that God the Creator whensoever He will, can open hell to devour them; and that He can shew Himself as mighty in His judgments to man's

destruction, as He was mighty in the beginning in giving us being when we were nothing. Wherefore notable is the practice of David, who inures himself to the fear of God (Psa. 139:14) by the consideration of His Creation, saying, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made* etc.

(5) Lastly, those that have been impenitent sinners though all their life past, must not only learn to repent for their sins, but also endeavour to perform obedience unto God's Word. God is a Creator, and the thing created should in all respects be conformable to His will; for David saith (Psa. 119:73), *Thine hands have fashioned me, and framed me; give me understanding therefore, that I may learn thy commandments*. And good reason; for there is no man of any trade, but that he would fain have all that he maketh and deviseth, to be used; but yet so as the use thereof must be conformable to the will of the maker. For this cause, Moses, that faithful servant of God, saith (Deut. 32:6) that the people of Israel dealt wrongfully with the Lord. Why? *For He hath created them, and proportioned them. He is their Father and He bought them. Yet they have dishonoured Him by corrupting themselves towards Him by their vice*.

All creatures in heaven and earth do the will of the Creator, except man, and the devil and his angels; for the sun, the moon and the stars, they keep that course which God hath appointed them; but man, though he be bound to do the will of God because God is his Creator, yet he rebels against Him. The potter, if in tempering his clay, he cannot make and frame it according to his mind, at length he will dash it in pieces. So God, He createth man, not that he should do his own will, but God's will; and therefore the Lord in His wrath will confound him eternally, whosoever he be that followeth the lusts of his own wicked heart, and will not be brought to be conformable to God's will, but goes on in his rebellion without stay. For this cause it stands every man in hand to yield himself pliable to God's will, and to endeavour to obey it by keeping a good conscience before God and all men, and by walking faithfully in his calling, lest the end be confusion. If a man have a trade and

other men come into his shop, and use such tools and instruments as be there, to wrong ends, he will in no wise brook it, but take the abuse in great displeasure. Now the world is as it were an opened shop, in which God hath set forth unto His glory and majesty, and the creatures of all kinds to be instruments appointed for excellent uses, and specially man for the accomplishment of His will. And therefore when he rebels against the will of God, and by sin puts the creatures to wrong ends, he cannot but most grievously offend God.

And thus much of the duties.

Now in the third place follow the consolations unto God's church and people.

(1) First, as St Peter saith (1 Pet. 4:19), God is a Creator, yea, *a faithful Creator*. The properties of faithful Creators are two:

(i) He will preserve His creature. No man is so tender over any work as he that made it, for he cannot abide to see it in any way abused. God therefore being a faithful Creator, tenderly loves all His creatures. So Job reasoneth with God (Job 10:3) that He will not cast him off, because he is *the work of His hands*.

(ii) God will bear with His creature, to see whether it will be brought to any good end and use, before He will destroy it. And to use the former comparison, the potter will turn and work the clay every way to make a vessel unto his mind; but if it frame no way, then will he cast it away, and dash it against the wall. And so God who created man, still preserveth him, and useth all means to make him conformable to His will, before He cast him off. The Lord did long strive with men in the old world, to turn them from their wickedness; but when nothing would serve them, it is said (Gen. 6:6), *It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth*. And in like manner, if we which are the creatures of God, shall rebel against this our

Creator, it may be, He will bear with us for a time; but if we continue therein, and do not turn to Him by repentance, He will bring upon us a final destruction both in body and soul. Yet I say, before He does this, His manner is to try all means to preserve us, and turn us unto Him; and afterward if nothing will serve, then will He shew forth His power in men's confusion; and therefore it stands us in hand to look unto it betime.

(2) Secondly, look what power the Lord did manifest in the creation of all things, the same power He both can and will make manifest in the redemption of mankind. In the beginning God made all things by His Word; and so likewise He is able still to make by the power of His Word, of a wicked man that is dead in sin, a true and lively member of Christ; which the prophet Isaiah signifieth when he saith (Isa. 45:12,13), *The Lord hath created the heavens, and spread them abroad, He that stretcheth forth the earth, and the bounds thereof* etc., *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness*. This must not encourage evil men in their wickedness, but it serveth to comfort the people of God, considering that the same God which once created them, is also as able to save them; and will shew Himself as mighty in their redemption as He was in their creation of nothing.

And thus much of the Creation in general. Now it followeth that we come to the handling of the parts thereof. For it is not said barely that God is a Creator, but particularly that He is a Creator of heaven and earth; of both which we will speak in order.

(1) And first of the creation of heaven.

Heaven.

Heaven, in God's Word signifieth all that is above the earth; for the air wherein we breathe is called heaven. And according to this acceptation of the word, there are three heavens, as Paul saith (2 Cor. 12:2), He was *taken up into the third heaven*. The first of these heavens is that space which is

from the earth upward unto the firmament where the stars are. Thus the birds which fly in the air between the earth and the stars, are called *the fowls of heaven* (Gen. 6:7). And when God sent the flood to drown the old world, Moses saith, *The windows of heaven were opened* (Gen. 7:11), meaning that God poured down rain from the clouds abundantly, for the making of a flood to drown the world. The second heaven is that which containeth the sun, the moon and the stars. So Moses saith (Gen. 1:14), that God in the beginning created the sun, the moon and the stars, and placed them *in the firmament of heaven*. Besides these two heavens, there is a third, which is invisible. And yet it is the work of God's hands. And it is that glorious place where Christ even in His manhood sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and whither the souls of the faithful departed are carried and placed; and in which at the end of the world shall all the elect both in body and soul have perfect joy and bliss in the glorious sight and presence of God for ever. But for the better conceiving the truth, we are to scan and consider diligently three questions:

(i) First, whether this third heaven be a creature; for many have thought it was never created, but was eternal with God Himself. But it is a gross error contrary to God's Word. For the Scripture saith (Heb. 11:10), Abraham *looked for a city* (meaning the heavenly Jerusalem, this third heaven) *having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God*. Further, if it be eternal, it must either be a creator or a creature. But it is no creator, for then it should be God; and therefore it must needs be a creature. But some will say, the Lord is eternal, and this third heaven hath always been the place of the Lord's abode, and therefore it is also eternal. *Answer*: True it is indeed that God doth shew His glory and majesty in the third heaven. But yet that cannot possibly contain His Godhead, as Solomon saith (1 Kin. 8:27), *Behold the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, are not able to contain thee*. Wherefore though God doth manifest His eternal glory in this third heaven, yet doth it not follow that therefore this place should be

eternal; for He needs no habitation to dwell in, He is everywhere, filling all things with His presence, excluded from no place.

(ii) The second question is, where this third heaven is? *Answer*: There are some Protestants who say, it is everywhere. And they hold this opinion to maintain the real presence of the Lord's body in or about the sacrament. But if it were everywhere, then hell should be in heaven, which no man will say. But heaven is indeed above these visible heavens which we see with our eyes. So the apostle saith (Eph. 4:8,10), *Christ ascended on high far above all heavens* etc. and again it is said of Stephen (Acts 7:55,56) that, *being full of the Holy Ghost, He looked up steadfastly into the heavens, and saw them open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God*.

(iii) Thirdly, it may be demanded, why God created this third heaven? *Answer*: God made it for this cause: that there might be a certain place wherein He might make manifest His glory and majesty to His elect angels and men; for the which cause it was created a thousandfold more glorious than the two former heavens are, and in this respect is called *Paradise* (Luke 23:43), by reason of the joy and pleasure arising from God's glorious presence. And our Saviour Christ calleth it *the house of God His Father* (John 14:2), because into it must be gathered all God's children. It is called *the kingdom of heaven*, because God is the King thereof, and ruleth there in perfect glory. True it is, God hath His kingdom here on earth; but He ruleth not so fully and gloriously here, as He shall in heaven; for this is the kingdom of grace, but that is the kingdom of His glory, where He so reigneth that He will be all in all, first in Christ, and then in the elect, both angels and men.

Now follow the duties whereunto we are moved principally in consideration of the making of the third heaven:

(i) First, if God created it especially for the manifestation of His glory unto men, that at the end of the world, by the fruition of God's most glorious

presence, there they might have perfect joy and felicity; we have occasion here to consider the wonderful madness and forgetfulness that reigneth everywhere among men which only have regards to the estate of this life, and cast all their care on this world, and never so much as once dream of the joyful and blessed estate which is prepared for God's children in the highest heaven. If a man having two houses; one but a homely cottage and the other a princely palace, should leave the better and take all the care and pains for the dressing up of the first, would not every man say he were a mad man? Yes, undoubtedly. And yet this is the spiritual madness that takes place everywhere among men; for God hath prepared for us two houses, one is this, our body which we bear about us which is an house of clay, as Job saith (Job 4:19*), We dwell in houses of clay whose foundation is dust, which shall be destroyed before the moth*; and as Peter saith (2 Pet. 1:14), *a tabernacle*, or tent, which we must shortly take down, and where we abide but as *pilgrims and strangers* (1 Pet. 2:11). Again, the same God of His wonderful goodness hath provided for us a second house in the third heaven, wherein we must not abide for a time and so depart; but for evermore enjoy the blessed felicity of His glorious presence. For all this mark a spiritual frenzy possessing the minds of men; for they employ all their care and industry for the maintaining of this house of clay, whose foundation is but dust; but for the blessed estate of the second house, which is prepared for them in the kingdom of heaven, they have little regard or care. They will both run and ride from place to place day and night, both by sea and land; but for what? Is it for the preparing of a mansion in the heavenly Jerusalem? Nothing less, for they will scarce go out of the door to use any means whereby they may come unto it; but all their study is to patch up the ruins and breaches of their earthly cabin. Now let all men judge in their own consciences whether, as I have said, this be not more than senseless madness? Again, the body is but a tabernacle wherein we must rest as it were for a night, as a stranger doth in an inn, and so away; but the second house is eternal in the heavens, an everlasting seat of all felicity and happiness. And therefore our duty is above all things to seek the

kingdom of God and His righteousness, as Christ Himself biddeth us (Matt. 6:33). And if the Lord have there prepared such a place for us, then we must in this world use all good means whereby we may be made worthy of the fruition of it; and also fit and ready at the day of death to enter into it; which at the day of judgment we shall fully possess both in soul and body, and there reign eternally in all happiness with God Almighty our Creator, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But some may say, How shall a man so prepare himself that he may be fit for that place? *Answer*: This the Holy Ghost teacheth us; for speaking of this heavenly Jerusalem, He saith (Rev. 21:27), *There shall enter into it none unclean thing, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or lies*. The means then to make ourselves fit is to seek to be reconciled to God in Christ for our sins past, and withal to endeavour to have an assurance of the free remission and pardon of them all in the blood of Christ. And as touching that part of life which is to come, we must remember what St John saith (1 John 3:3), *Everyone that hath this hope purifieth himself*, meaning that he which hath hope to reign with Christ in heaven, useth the means whereby he may purify and keep himself from sin. As also he saith after (1 John 5:18), that *he which is born of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not*, signifying that all such persons as are truly justified and sanctified, carry such a narrow and strait watch over the whole course of their lives and conversations that the devil can never give them deadly wounds, and so wholly overcome them. Now the man that is resolved in his conscience of the pardon of his sin for the time past, and hath steadfast purpose in his heart to keep himself upright, and continually to walk in righteousness and true holiness all the days of his life; this man, I say, is prepared and made fit to enter into the heavenly Jerusalem. Come death when it will, he is ready. And howsoever he must not look for heaven here upon earth, yet he is as it were in the suburbs of this heavenly city; and at the end of this life, the King thereof, the Lord Jesus, will open the gates and receive him into His kingdom, for he is already entered into the kingdom of grace. To conclude this point, let every man in the fear of God, be moved hereby to set his heart to prepare

himself; that when God shall call him hence, he may be fit to enter into that glory.

(ii) Secondly, seeing God hath prepared the third heaven for us, it teacheth every man in this world to be content with the estate wherein God hath placed him, whether it be high or low, rich or poor. Why so? Because here he is but a pilgrim, and lives in a cottage of clay, and in a tent wherein he must abide but a while, as a pilgrim doth, oftentimes carrying his house about with him. And we shall in better sort accept the afflictions which God sends us in this life, if we remember that there is prepared for us a place of joy, which must be our resting place and perfect felicity for evermore. This was the practice of the children of God, especially of Abraham; for when the Lord called him out of his own country, he obeyed, and *by faith abode in the promised land, as in a strange country, as one that dwelt in the tents, with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him in the same promise*; and the reason followeth*: for he looked for a city having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God* (Heb. 11:9,10). They believed that these things which the Lord promised were shadows of better things; and hereon stayed themselves, being well content with that estate whereto God had called them. So Paul was contented to bear the afflictions which God hath laid upon him, and his reason was (2 Cor. 4:18), *We look not on things that are seen, but on things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*. And in the next chapter (2 Cor. 5:1,2), *We know* (saith he*) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a dwelling given us of God, that is, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens*. And for this cause his desire was rather to remove out of this body and to be with the Lord.

(2) And thus much concerning heaven. Now followeth the second part of God's creation in these words:

And earth.

Earth signifieth the huge mass or body standing of sea and land on which we live, and all things that be in or upon the earth whatsoever. As Paul saith (Col. 1;16), *For by Him were created all things that are in heaven or in earth* etc. In other creeds which were made since this of the apostles, being expositions of that; there is added *maker of all things visible and invisible*. Here we have occasion to speak of all creatures, but that were infinite. Therefore I will make choice of these two: (i) good angels and (ii) men.

(i)

(a) That angels had a beginning it is no question; for Paul saith (Col. 1:16) that *by God all things were created in heaven and earth, things visible and invisible whether thrones, principalities or powers*. And in respect of the creation, angels are called *the sons of God* (Job 38:7). But the time and day of their creation cannot be set down further than this: that they were created in the compass of the six days. For Moses saith (Gen. 2:1), *Thus*, namely in the compass of the first six days, *the heavens and the earth were fashioned, and all the host of them*; that is, all variety of creatures in heaven and earth, serving for the beauty and glory thereof; whereof no doubt the angels are the principal.

(b) Touching the nature of angels, some have thought that they are nothing but qualities and motions in the minds of men, as the Sadducees and Libertines of this time. But the truth is that they are spirits, that is, spiritual and invisible substances created by God, and really subsisting; for the Scripture ascribes unto them such kind of actions which cannot be performed by the creatures, save only such as be substances; as to stand before the throne of God, to behold the face of the Father, to carry men's souls to heaven. Yet we must not imagine that they are bodily substances consisting of flesh and bone. And though they took upon them visible shapes and forms, and did eat and drink in company of men, and thereupon are called *men* in Scripture (Luke 24:4); yet they did this by divine

dispensation for a time, that they might the better perform the actions and businesses among men, to which they were by God appointed. And the bodies of men which they assumed, were no parts of their natures united to them, as our bodies are to us; but rather they were as garments are to us, which they might put off and on at their pleasure. If any shall ask whence they had these bodies, the answer is that either they were created of nothing by the power of God, or framed of some other matter subsisting before. If again it be asked, what became of these bodies when they laid them down, because they used them but for a time, the answer may be that if they were made of nothing, they were again resolved into nothing; if made of other creatures, that then they were resolved into the same bodies of which they were first made, though indeed we can define nothing certainly in this point.

(c) Angels are reasonable creatures, of excellent knowledge and understanding, far surpassing all men save Christ. Their knowledge is threefold: natural, revealed and experimental. *Natural*, which they received from God in the creation. *Revealed*, which God makes manifest to them in process of time, whereas before they knew it not. Thus God revealed to Gabriel the mystery of the seventy weeks (Dan. 8,9). And in the apocalypse many things are revealed to the angels that they might reveal them to us. *Experimental* knowledge is that which they get by observing the dealing of God in the whole world, but especially in the church. And thus Paul saith (Eph. 3:10) *that to principalities and powers in heavenly places is known the manifold wisdom of God by the church*.

(d) And as the knowledge, so also the power of the good angels is exceeding great (Psa. 103:20). They are able to do more than all men can. Therefore Paul calls them *mighty angels* (2 Thess. 1:7). Yea, their power is far superior to the power of the wicked angels who, since the fall, are under them and cannot prevail against them.

(e) The place of abode of angels is the highest heaven, unless they be sent thence by the Lord to do some thing appointed by Him. This our Saviour Christ teacheth, when he saith (Matt. 18:10) that *the angels of little ones do always behold the face of their Father in heaven*. And the wicked angels before their fall, were placed in heaven, because they were cast hence.

(f) That there be certain distinctions and diversities of angels, it is very likely, because they are called thrones and principalities and powers, cherubim and seraphim. But what be the distinct degrees and orders of angels, and whether they are to be distinguished by their natures, gifts or offices, no man by Scripture can determine.

(g) The ministry of angels to which the Lord hath set them apart is three-fold, and it respecteth either God Himself, of His church, or His enemies.

i. The ministry which they perform to God is, first of all, to adore, praise and glorify Him continually. Thus the cherubim in Isaiah's vision (Isa. 6:3) cry one to another*, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the world is full of His glory*. And when they were to publish the birth of the Messiah, they begin on this manner (Luke 2:14), *Glory to God in the highest heavens, peace on earth*. And John in his vision heard the angels about the throne (Rev. 5:11,12) crying with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches and strength, wisdom, and honour, and glory, and praise*. And indeed the highest end of the ministry of angels is the manifestation of the glory of God. The second is to stand in God's presence, evermore ready to do His commandments, as David saith (Psa. 103:26), *Praise the Lord ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments in obeying the voice of His Word*. And here is a good lesson for us. We pray daily that we may do the will of God, as the angels in heaven do it. Let us therefore be followers of the holy angels in praising God and doing His commandments as they do.

ii. The ministry of angels concerning the church stands in this: that they are ministering spirits for the good of them which shall be the heirs of salvation. This good is threefold: in this life, at the end of this life, and in the last judgment. Again, the good which they procure to the people of God in this life is either in respect of body or soul. In respect of the body, in that they do most carefully perform all manner of duties which do necessarily tend to preserve the temporal life of God's children, even from the beginning of their days to the end. David saith (Psa. 34:7) that they pitch their tents about him that fears the Lord. When Hagar was cast forth of Abraham's family (Gen. 16:7), and wandered in the wilderness, an angel comes unto her and gives her counsel to return to her mistress and humble herself. When Elijah fled from Jezabel (1 Kin. 19:5,7), he was both comforted, directed and fed by an angel. And an angel bids the same Elijah (2 Kin. 1:3) be of good courage and without fear to go to king Ahaziah and reprove him. Angels (Gen. 19:15-17) bring Lot and his family out of Sodom and Gomorrah before they burn the cities with fire and brimstone. When Jacob feared his brother Esau (Gen. 32:1,2), he saw angels coming unto him; and he plainly acknowledgeth that they were sent to be his protectors and his guides in his journey. Abraham, being persuaded of the assistance of God's angels in all his ways (Gen. 24:7), said to his servant, The Lord God of heaven who took me from my father's house etc., *will send his angel before thee*. The wise men that came to see Christ (Matt. 2:12,13), are admonished by angels to return another way, and Joseph by the direction of an angel fled into Egypt that he might preserve Christ from the hands of the cruel tyrant. The tents of the Israelites (Exod. 14:19; 23:20) were guarded by angels. The three children (Dan. 3:28) are delivered from the fiery furnace, and (Dan. 6:22) Daniel out of the lions' den by angels. When Christ was in heaviness (Matt. 4:11), they ministered unto Him and comforted Him. And (Acts 12:7) they brought Peter out of prison, and set him at liberty.

Again, the angels procure good unto the souls of the godly, in that they are maintainers and furtherers of the true worship of God, and of all good means whereby we attain to salvation. The law was delivered in mount Sinai by angels (Acts 7:38), and a great part of the Revelation of John. They expound to Daniel the seventy weeks (Dan. 9:22). They instruct the apostles touching the return of Christ to the last judgment (Acts 1:11). An angel forbids John to worship him (Rev. 22:9), but worship God the Creator of heaven and earth. They fetch the apostles out of prison (Acts 5:19,20), and bid them teach in the temple. An angel brings Philip to the eunuch (Acts 8:26), that he may expound the Scriptures to him. Lastly, they reveal the mysteries and the will of God: as to Abraham (Gen. 22:12) that he should not kill his son Isaac; to Mary and Elizabeth (Luke 1:13, 28, 35), the nativity of John Baptist and of Christ our Saviour; and all this they do according unto the will of God (Gal. 1:8). Beside all this, angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners by the ministry of the gospel (Luke 15:7,10). And for the church's sake, they protect not only particular men, but even whole nations and kingdoms.

The ministry of angels in the end of this life is to carry the souls of the godly into Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22), as they did the soul of Lazarus. And in the day of judgment (Matt. 25:31,32) to gather all the elect that they may come before Christ, and enter into eternal fruition of glory both in body and soul.

iii. The third and last part of the ministry of angels concerns God's enemies; and it is to execute judgments on all wicked persons and impenitent sinners. Thus all the firstborn of Egypt are slain by an angel (Exod. 12:23,29). When Joshua was about to sack Jericho (Josh. 5:13), an angel appeared unto him as a captain, with drawn sword to fight for Israel. When the host of Sennacherib (2 Kin. 19:35) came against Israel, the angel of the Lord in one night slew an hundred eighty and five thousand. Because Herod gave not

glory unto God (Acts 12:23), the angel of the Lord smote him, as he was eaten up of worms and died.

Uses.

And thus we see what points we are to mark touching the good angels. Now followeth the use which we are to make in regard of their creation.

(a) First, whereas they are God's ministers to inflict punishments upon the wicked, here is a special point to be learned of us: that every man in the fear of God take heed how he liveth and continueth in his sins, for the case is dangerous, considering that God hath armies of angels which stand ready everywhere to execute God's heavy judgments upon them that live thus. When the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord (Exod. 32:25), Moses saith, *they were naked*, that is, open to all the judgments of God; even destitute of the guard of His good angels. Wretched Balaam, that wizard (Num. 22:31), went to Balak to curse the children of Israel; and as he went it is said, *the angel of the Lord stood in his way with a drawn sword*; and if the ass had been no wiser than his master, the angel had slain him. Whereby it appears that when we rush on into the practice of any sin, we do as much as in us lieth to cause God to send down His judgments upon us for our sins, and that by the ministry of His angels.

(b) Secondly, we are taught another lesson by Christ Himself (Matt. 18:10). *See* (saith he*) that you despise not one of these little ones*. Now mark His reason: *For I say unto you, that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father*. By *little ones* He meaneth young infants which are within the Covenant; or others which are like to young infants in simplicity and innocence of life and humility. And Christ will not have them to be despised. A duty very needful to be stood upon in these times. For nowadays, if a man carry but a shew of humility, of good conscience, and of the fear of God, he is accounted but a silly fellow, he is hated, mocked, and despised on every hand. But this should not be so. For him whom God

honoureth with the protection of His good angels, why should any mortal man despise? And it stands mockers and scorners in hand to take heed whom they mock. For though men for their parts put up many abuses and injuries, yet their angels may take just revenge, by smiting them with plagues and punishments for their offences.

(c) Thirdly, seeing angels are about us, and serve for the good of men, we must do whatsoever we do in reverent and seemly manner, as Paul gives counsel to the Philippians (Phil. 4:8), *Brethren* (saith He) *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, and pertain to love, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things*. Many men do all their affairs orderly for avoiding shame, but we must do the same upon a further ground, namely, because God's holy angels wait on us. And considering that men have care to behave themselves well when they are before men, what a shame is it for a man to behave himself unseemly either in open or in secret, he then being before the glorious angels? Paul saith (1 Cor. 11;10), that *the woman ought to have power on her head because of the angels*; that is, not only the ministers of the church, but God's heavenly angels, which daily wait upon His children and guard them in all their ways.

(d) Fourthly, this must teach us modesty and humility; for the angels of God are very notable and excellent creatures, and therefore they are called in the Psalms, *Elohim*, gods. Yet how excellent soever they be, they abase themselves to become guardians and keepers unto sinful men. Now if the angels do so abase themselves; then much more ought every man to abase and humble himself in modesty and humility before God. And whatsoever our calling is, we must not be puffed up, but be content. This is a necessary duty for all, but especially for those which are in the schools of the prophets; whatsoever their gifts or birth be, they must not think themselves too good for the calling of the ministry, And if God hath called us thereto, we must be content to become servants unto all in the matter of salvation;

though the men whom we teach be never so base or simple; for no man doth so far excel the basest person in the world, as the glorious angels of God do exceed the most excellent man that is. Therefore seeing they vouchsafe to become servants unto us, we must not think ourselves too good to serve our poor brethren.

And thus much of the duties. Now follow the consolations that arise from this, that God hath given His glorious angels to serve for the protection and safeguard of His church and people. If men's spiritual eyes were opened, they should see the devil and his angels, and all the wicked of this world to fight against them. And if there were no means of comfort in this case, then our estate were most miserable. But mark, as God's servant hath all these wicked ones to be his enemies; so he hath garrisons of angels that pitch their tents about him and defend him from them all. So David saith (Psa. 91:11,12), *He shall give thy angels charge over thee, and they shall keep him in all thy ways, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone*; where the angels of God are compared to nurses which carry little children in their arms, feed them, and are always ready at hand to save them from falls and many other dangers. When the king of Syria sent his horses (2 Kin. 6:15-17) to take Elisha the Lord's prophet, because he revealed his counsel to the king of Israel; his servant saw them round about Dothan where he was, and he cried, *Alas, master, what shall we do*? Then Elisha answered*, Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them*; and he besought the Lord to open his servant's eyes, and he looked, and behold, the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. So likewise not many years ago, our land was preserved from the invasion of the Spaniard, whose huge navy lay upon our sea coasts. But how were we delivered from them? Surely by no strength, nor power, nor cunning of man; but it was the Lord, no doubt, by His angels that did keep our coasts, and did scatter our enemies, and drown them. Let enemies rage, and let them do that they will, if a man keep himself in the ways which God prescribeth, he hath God's angels to guide and preserve him; which thing

must move men to love and embrace the true religion, and conform themselves in all good conscience to the rule of God's Word. For when a man doth not so, all the angels of God are his enemies; and at all times ready to execute God's vengeance upon him. But when men carry themselves as dutiful children to God, they have this prerogative: that God's holy angels do watch about them, and defend them day and night from the power of their enemies, even in common calamities and miseries. Before God sends His judgments on Jerusalem, an angel is sent to mark them in the foreheads that mourn for the abominations of the people (Ezek. 9). And this privilege none can have, but he whose heart is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and that man shall have it unto the end (Exod. 12:23 with 1 Cor. 5:7).

And thus much of the creation of angels.

(ii)

Now it followeth to speak of the creation of man; wherein we must consider two things: the points of doctrine and the uses.

For the points of doctrine:

(a) First, man was created and framed by the hand of God, and made after the image of God. For Moses brings in the Lord speaking thus (Gen. 1:26,27): *Let us make man in our image* etc., *in the image of God created He them*, which also must be understood of angels. The image of God is nothing else but a conformity of man unto God, whereby man is holy as God is holy; for Paul saith (Eph. 4:24), *Put on the new man, which is after God*, that is, in God's *image is created in righteousness and holiness*. Now I reason thus: wherein the renewing of the image of God in man doth stand, therein was it at the first. But the renewing of God's image in man doth stand in righteousness and holiness. Therefore God's image wherein man was created at the beginning, was a conformity to God in righteousness and

holiness. Now whether God's image doth further consist in the substance of man's body and soul, or in the faculties of both, the Scripture speaks not. This image of God hath two principal parts: i. Wisdom; ii. Holiness.

i. Concerning wisdom, Paul saith (Col. 3:10*), Put ye on the new man, which is created in knowledge after the image of Him which created him*. This wisdom consists in three points:

a. In that he knew God his Creator perfectly; for Adam in his innocency knew God so far forth as it was convenient for a creature to know his Creator.

b. He knew God's will so far forth as it was convenient for him, to shew his obedience thereunto.

c. He knew the wisdom and will of his Creator touching the particular creatures; for after Adam was created, the lord brought every creature unto him, presenting them unto him, as being lord and king over them, that he might give names unto them. Whereby it appears that Adam in his innocency did know the nature of all creatures and the wisdom of God in creating them, else he could not have given them fit names. And when God brought Eve unto Adam, he knew her at the first, and said (Gen. 2:23), *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman* etc.

ii. The second part of God's image in man is holiness and righteousness; which is nothing else but a conformity of the will and affections, and of the whole disposition of man both in body and soul, to the will of God his Creator. Yet we must remember that Adam in his innocency had a changeable will, so as he could either will good or evil. He was created with such liberty of will, as that he could indifferently will either. And we must not think that the will of the creature was made unchangeably good, for that

is peculiar to the will of God, and hereby is the Creator distinguished from the creature.

And here two things offer themselves to be considered:

a. The first: Why the man is called the image of God, and not the woman. *Answer*: He is so called, not because holiness and righteousness is peculiar to him which is common to both; but because God hath placed more outward excellency and dignity in the person of a man than of a woman.

b. The second: How Christ should be called the image of God (Col. 1:15). *Answer*: He is so called for two special causes: First, because He is of the same substance with the Father, and therefore is His most absolute image, and as the author of Hebrews saith (Heb. 1:3), *The brightness of His glory, and the engraven form of His Person*. Secondly, because God, being invisible, doth manifest Himself in Christ, in whom as in a glass we may behold the wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy of God.

(b) The second point to be considered in the creation of man is the dignity of his person. For David saith (Psa. 8:5), *Thou hast Him little inferior to the angels, and crowned Him with glory and worship*. This dignity stands in four points:

i. A blessed communion with the true God. For Paul speaking of the Gentiles which were not called, saith (Eph. 4:18) they were *strangers from the life of God*. Where, by the contrary, we may gather that our first parents in their innocency lived the life of God, which is nothing else but to lead a life here on earth, as that the creature shall have a blessed and immediate fellowship with God; which stands in this: that before the fall of man, God revealed Himself in a special manner unto him, so as his very body and soul was a temple and dwelling place of the Creator. This fellowship between God and man in his innocency, was made manifest in the familiar

conference which God vouchsafed to man. But since the fall, this communion is lost; for man cannot abide the presence of God. And therefore when Peter had fished all night and caught nothing, our Saviour bad him cast down his net to make a draught, who did so; but when he saw the great multitude of fishes that were taken, at this sight beholding but as it were some sparks of the glorious majesty of God in Christ, he fell down at His feet, saying (Luke 5:8), *Lord depart from me, for I am a sinner*.

ii. The second point wherein man's dignity consisteth, is that man was made lord and king over all creatures. As David saith (Psa. 8:6), *Thou hast made him to have dominion in the works of thy hands*. And therefore God, having created him in His image, biddeth him (Gen. 1:28), *Rule over the fishes of the sea, over the fowls of the heaven, and over every beast that moveth upon the earth*. And afterward, He brought them all to him, as a sovereign lord and king, to be named by him. And answerably every creature in his kind gave reverence and subjection unto man, before his fall, as unto their lord and king. Where, by the way, we must remember that when we see any creature that is hurtful and noisome unto man, and would rather devour than obey him; it must put us in mind of our sin. For by creation, we were made lords and kings over all creatures. And they durst not but reverence and obey us. But the rebellion of man unto God is the cause of the rebellion of the creatures unto us.

iii. The third part of man's dignity by creation, is that before his fall he had a wonderful beauty and majesty above all creatures in his body. Whereupon David saith (Psa. 8:5), the Lord hath crowned him with *glory and worship*. And in the renewing of the covenant with Noah, God saith (Gen. 9:2) that *the dread and fear of man shall be upon all creatures*; which now though it be but small, yet doth it plainly shew what was the glory and majesty of man's person at the first.

iv. The fourth dignity of man's estate in innocency, is that his labour was without pain or weariness. If he had never fallen, he should have laboured in the garden; but so as he should have never been wearied therewith. For when Adam was fallen, God said (Gen. 3:19), *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread*. Now if the pain in labour come after as a curse upon man for his transgression, then before his fall, man felt no pain in his affairs.

And in these four things consisteth man's dignity which he had in the Creation.

(c) Now in the third, followeth man's calling before his fall, which is twofold: i. Particular. ii. General.

i. Man's particular calling was to come into the garden of Eden, to keep it, and to dress the trees and fruits thereof. This shews unto us a good lesson that every man must have a particular calling wherein he ought to walk. And therefore such as spend their time idly in gaming and vain delights, have much to answer to God at the day of judgment. This will not excuse a man to say then that he had land and living to maintain himself, and therefore was to live as he list; for even Adam in his innocency had all things at his will, and wanted nothing, yet even then God employed him in a calling. Therefore none must be exempted, but every man both high and low must walk in his proper calling.

ii. Adam's general calling was to worship his Creator, to which he was bound by the right of creation, considering the moral law was written in his heart by nature. Which is signified in the Decalogue (Exod. 20:2), where the Lord requires worship and obedience of His people because He is Jehovah, that is, one which hath being in Himself, and gives being to all men by creation. For the better understanding of this point, we are to consider three things: a. The place where Adam did worship. b. The time. c. The sacraments.

a. For the first, God ever since the beginning had a place where He would be worshipped, and it is called *God's house*, which then was the garden of Eden. For it was unto Adam a place appointed by God for His worship; as church assemblies are unto us; where also the Lord at sometime did in a special manner shew Himself unto His creature.

b. Touching the time of God's worship, it was the seventh day from the beginning of the creation, the Sabbath day. And here we must note that the keeping of the Sabbath is moral. Some indeed do plead that it is but a ceremony, yet falsely; for it was ordained before the fall of man, at which time ceremonies signifying sanctification had no place. Nay, mark further, Adam in his innocency was not clogged with sin as we are; yet then he had a set Sabbath to worship God His Creator. And therefore much more need hath every one of us of a Sabbath day wherein we may sever ourselves from the works of our callings, and the works of sin, to the worship of God in the exercise of religion and godly meditation of our creation. This point must be learned of us, for when no occasion is offered of business, then men will formerly seem to keep the Sabbath; but if there come occasion of breaking the Sabbath, as traffic, gaming and vain shews, then Sabbath farewell, men will have their pleasures, let them worship God that will. But let us remember in the fear of God, that whosoever continue in the breach of this law, being moral, God will no less pour forth His punishments upon them, than for the breach of any other commandment. The consideration whereof, must move every man to a reverent sanctifying of the Lord's day.

c. Now for Adam's sacraments, they were two: The tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. These did serve to exercise Adam in obedience unto God. The tree of life was to signify assurance of life for ever, if he did keep God's commandments. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was a sacrament to shew unto him that if he did transgress God's commandments, he should die. And it was so called because it did signify

that if he transgressed this law, he should have experience both of good and evil in himself.

(d) Now in the fourth place followeth the end of the creation of man, which is twofold:

i. First, that there might be a creature to whom God might make manifest Himself, who in a special manner should set forth and acknowledge His wisdom, goodness, mercy, in the creation of heaven and earth, and of things that are in them, as also His providence in governing the same.

ii. Secondly, God having decreed to glorify His name in shewing His mercy and justice upon His creature, hereupon in time createth men to shew His mercy in the salvation of some, and to shew His justice in the just and deserved damnation of other some. And therefore He hath appointed the creation specially of man, to be a means of manifestation and beginning of the execution of His eternal counsel.

Thus much concerning man's creation in general. The special parts of men are two: body and soul. And the reason why the Lord would have him stand on these two parts is this: Some creatures made before him were only bodily; as beasts, fishes, fowls. Some spiritual, as angels. Now man is both, spiritual in regard of his soul, corporal and sensible in regard of his body, that nothing might be wanting to the perfection of nature. If it be alleged that man consists of three parts, body soul and spirit, because Paul prayeth (1 Thess. 5:23) that the Thessalonians may be *sanctified in body, soul and spirit*; the answer is that the spirit signifies the mind, whereby men conceive and understand such things as may be understood; and the soul is there taken for the will and affections; and therefore these twain are not two parts, but only two distinct faculties of one and the same soul.

The body of man at the first was formed by God of clay, or of the dust of the earth, not to be the grave of the soul, as Plato said, but to be an excellent

and most fit instrument to put in execution the powers and faculties of the soul. And howsoever in itself considered, it is mortal, because it is compounded of contrary natures called elements; yet by the appointment and blessing of God in the creation, it became immortal till the fall of man.

As for the soul, it is no accidental quality, but a spiritual and invisible essence or nature, subsisting by itself. Which plainly appears in that the souls of men have being and continuance as well forth of the bodies of men as in the same; and are as well subject to torments as the body is. And whereas we can and do put in practice sundry actions of life, sense, motion, understanding, we do it only by the power and virtue of the soul.

Hence ariseth the difference between the souls of men and beasts. The souls of men are substances, but the souls of other creatures seem not to be substances; because they have no being out of the bodies in which they are; but rather they are certain peculiar qualities arising of the matter of the body, and vanishing with it. And it may be for this cause (Gen. 9:4) that the soul of the beast is said to be *in the blood*, whereas the like is not said of the soul of man.

And though men's souls be spirits as angels are, yet a difference must be made; for angels cannot be united with bodies, so as both shall make one whole and entire person, whereas men's souls may. Yea, the soul coupled with the body is not only the mover of the body, but the principal cause that makes man to be a man.

The beginning of the soul is not of the essence of God, unless we will make every man's soul to be God; neither doth it spring of the soul of the parents, for the soul can no more beget a soul than an angel can beget an angel. And Adam is called a living soul, and not a quickening soul. And earthly fathers are called the fathers of our bodies, and not of our souls. It remains therefore as being most agreeable to the Scriptures, that the souls of men are then created by God of nothing when they are infused into the body.

And though the souls of men have a beginning, yet they have no end, but are eternal. And when they are said to die, it is not because thy cease at any time to subsist or have being in nature, but because they cease to be righteous, or to have fellowship with God.

Uses.

(a) Whereas our bodies are God's workmanship, we must glorify Him in our bodies, and all the actions of body and soul, our eating and drinking, our living and dying, must be referred to His glory. Yea, we must not hurt or abuse our body, but present them as holy and living sacrifices unto God. And whereas God made us of the dust of the earth, we are not to glory and boast ourselves, but rather to take occasion to praise the great goodness of God, that hath vouchsafed to honour us being but dust and ashes. And after that man is created, what is his life? Alas, it is nothing but a little breath. Stop his mouth and his nostrils, and he is but a dead man. By this we are put in mind to consider of our frail and uncertain estate, and to lay aside all confidence in ourselves. And for this cause Isaiah teacheth us (Isa. 2:22) to have no confidence in man, because his breath is in his nostrils.

(b) Again, let us mark the frame and shape of man's body. All other creatures go with their bodies and eyes to the groundward; but man was made to go upright; and whereas all other creatures have but four muscles to turn their eyes round about, man hath a fifth, to pull his eyes up to heavenward. Now what doth this teach us? Surely, that howsoever we seek for other things, yet, first of all, and above all, we should seek for the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof; and that our whole desire should be set to enjoy the blessed estate of God's children in heaven. Secondly, it teaches us in receiving God's creatures, to return thankfulness unto God, by lifting up the heart to heaven for the same. These are very needful and profitable lessons in these days; for most men indeed go upright; but look into their lives, and they might as well go on all fours; for

in their conversation they set their whole hearts upon the earth as the beast doth, and their eyes upon the things of this world. Hereby they do abase themselves, and deface their bodies, and being men, make themselves as beasts. We shall see great numbers of men that run and ride from place to place, to provide for the body; but to seek the kingdom of heaven, where their souls should dwell after this life in joy for ever, they will not stir one foot.

(c) Thirdly, man's body by creation was made a temple framed by God's own hands for Himself to dwell in; therefore our duty is to keep our bodies pure and clean, and not to suffer them to be instruments whereby to practise the sin of the heart (1 Cor. 6:19). If a man had a fair house wherein he must entertain a prince, and should make thereof a swine sty, or a stable, would not all men say that he did greatly abuse both the house and the prince? Even so, man's body being at the first made a palace for the ever-living God; if a man shall abuse it by drunkenness, swearing, lying, fornication, or any uncleanness, he doth make it instead of a temple for the Holy Ghost, to be a sty or stable for the devil. For the more filthy a man's body is, the more fit it is to be a dwelling place for sin and Satan.

(d) Fourthly, man by creation was made a goodly creature in the blessed image of God; but by Adam's fall, men lost the same, and are now become the deformed children of wrath. Our duty therefore is to labour to get again our first image, and endeavour ourselves to become new creatures. If a nobleman should stain his blood by treason, after his death the posterity will never be at rest till they have got away the spot. Man, by Adam's fall, is become a limb of the devil, a rebel and a traitor against God's majesty; and this is the state of every one of us: by nature we are at enmity with God, and therefore we ought to labour above all things in the world, to be restored in Christ to our first estate and perfection, that so we may become bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, being justified and sanctified by His obedience, death and passion.

(e) Fifthly, man was created that there might be a way prepared whereby God might shew His grace and mercy in the salvation of some, and His justice in the deserved damnation of others for their sins. And in the creation of man, God's eternal counsel begins to come into execution. Hereupon it stands us in hand to make conscience of every evil way, being repentant for all our sins past, and having a constant purpose never to sin more as we have done, that by our good conversation here in this life, we may have assurance that we be eternally chosen to salvation by the Lord Himself.

(f) Lastly, whereas we have learned that the soul of man is immortal, we are hereby taught to take more care for the soul than for the body; for it cannot be extinguished. When it is condemned, even then it is always in dying, and can never die. But alas, in this point the case is flat contrary in the world; for men labour all their lives long to get for the body, but for the soul they care little or nothing at all, whether it sink or swim, go to heaven or hell, they respect not. This doth appear to be true by the practice and behaviour of men on the Lord's day; for if the number of those which come to hear God's Word, were compared with those which run about their worldly wealth and pleasure, I fear me the better sort would be found to be but a little handful to a huge heap, or as a drop to the ocean sea, in respect of the other. But wilt thou go an hundred miles for the increase of thy wealth and delight of thy body? Then think it not much to go ten thousand miles (if need were) to take any pains for the good of thy soul, and to get food for the same, it being everlasting.

And thus much for the duties. Now follow the consolations. Although by reason of the fall of man we can have but little comfort now; yet the Creation doth confirm the unspeakable providence of God over His creatures, but especially over man, in that the Lord created him the sixth day; and so before he was made, prepared him a paradise for his dwelling place, and all creatures for his use and comfort. And if He were thus careful

for us when we were not, then no doubt He will be much more careful for us at this present, in which we live and have being. Nay, mark further; since the fall, man eats and drinks in quantity a great deal which in common reason should rather kill him than turn to the strength and nourishment of his body. Yet herein doth the wonderful power of the Creator most notably appear, who hath made man's stomach as a limbeck or still to digest all meats that are wholesome for his nourishment and preservation.

2b.

And thus much for the Creation. Now in these words, *Maker of heaven and earth*, is more to be understood than the works of creation, namely, God's providence in governing all things created, as He appointeth in His eternal decree. And therefore St Peter saith (1 Pet. 4:19), God is a *faithful Creator*, that is, God did not only make heaven and earth, and so leave them, as masons and carpenters leave houses when they are built; for by His providence He doth most wisely govern the same.

Now therefore let us come to speak of God's providence. And first of all, the question offers itself to be considered, whether there be any providence or not? For the minds of men are troubled with many doubtings hereof. And to make the question out of all doubt, I will use four arguments to confirm the providence of God:

(1) The first is the testimony of the Scripture, which ascribes the event of all particular actions, even such as are in themselves casual as the casting of lots and such like (Prov. 16:33), to the disposition of God. Which very thing also teacheth that even men themselves, endued with reason and understanding, have need to be guided in all things, and governed by God (Prov. 20:24; Jer. 10:23); and it serves to confute those that deny God's providence. *Why sayest thou O Jacob, and speakest O Israel, My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over by my God*? (Isa. 40:27).

(2) The second argument may be taken from the order which appeareth in the whole course of nature. First, to begin with families, there is to be seen an eutaxie or seemly order, in which some rule and some obey. And the like is to be found in towns, cities, countries and kingdoms; yea, even in the whole world in which all things are so disposed that one serveth for the good of another. Trees and herbs and the grass of the field serve for beasts and cattle; beasts and cattle serve for men; the heavens above serve for them which are beneath; and all the creatures which are above and beneath serve for God. This argueth that God is most wise and provident in ordering and disposing all things whatsoever.

(3) The third argument is taken from conscience, specially of malefactors. Suppose a man that commits a murder so closely that no man knows thereof, and that the party himself is free from all the danger of the law; yet shall he have his own conscience to accuse, upbraid and condemn him, yea even to fright him out of his wit, and to give him no more rest than he can find upon the rack or gibbet. Now this accusation and terror of conscience, is nothing else but the forerunner of another most terrible judgment of God, who is Lord of all creatures, and judge of all men. And this also proves the providence of God. For if the conscience can find a man out and lay his faults to his charge, how much more shall God Himself the Creator of the conscience see and consider all his doings?

(4) The fourth and last argument is this: The prophecies of things to come should be uncertain or false, if God governed not the world. But now considering things many years ago foretold, come to pass in the same manner as they were foretold by the prophets and apostles; hereby we must certainly conclude that there is a providence of God whereby all and everything is governed.

Against the providence of God sundry things be alleged:

(1) The first and special is that providence and disorder, confusion and order, cannot stand together. Now, in the world there is nothing but disorder and confusion, in seditions, treasons, conspiracies, and subversions of kingdoms; where also sin and wickedness prevails. *Answer*: It is true indeed there hath been confusion in the world ever since the fall of man and angels; and it ariseth not from God, but from them alone; who as they did at the first transgress the will of God, so they do what they can to turn all upside down. Now then, confusion and disorder is only in respect of the devil and his instruments; but in regard of God, in the very midst of all confusion, there is order to be found, because He can, and doth, dispose it to the glory of His own name, and to the good and salvation of His chosen, as also to the confusion of His enemies.

(2) Again, it may be objected that with ungodly and wicked men, all things go well; and contrariwise with the godly, all things go hardly. For through the world, none are more molested and more under outward misery than they. But if there were any providence in God, then it should be otherwise; the godly should flourish and the wicked perish. *Answer*: The consideration of the outward estate of men in the world, was to David an occasion of a sore temptation. For when he saw the wicked to prosper always, and their riches to increase, he brake forth and said (Psa. 73:13), *Certainly, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency*. Now if we would repel this temptation, as David afterward did, then we must go into the Lord's sanctuary with him, and learn to be resolved in these points:

(i) Though the godly be laden with miseries, yet even that, by the especial providence of God, turns to their great good. For every man since the fall of Adam is stained with the loathsome contagion of sin. Now the child of God that is truly regenerate, and must be fellow-heir with Christ after this life in the kingdom of glory, must in this life be cast into the Lord's furnace, that in the fire of affliction he may more and more be scoured and purified from

the corruption of his nature, and be estranged from the wickedness of the world.

(ii) The prosperous success of the wicked, their spoils, their revenues, and all their honour, turns to their greater woe in the end; as doth appear in Job's history, and in the examples of the Chaldeans, of David's enemies, and of Dives and Lazarus.

(3) Thirdly, it may be objected that many things come to pass by chance, and therefore not by God's providence; because chance and providence cannot stand together. *Answer*: We must distinguish between *chance* and *mere chance*. *Chance* is when anything comes to pass, the cause thereof being unknown not simply, but in respect of man; and therefore in regard of men which know not the reason of things, we may say there is chance. And so the Spirit of God speaks (Eccl. 9:11) *Time and chance come to them all*. And again (Luke 10:31*), By chance there came down a priest the same way*. Now this kind of chance is not against the providence of God, but is ordered by it. For things which in regard of men are casual, are certainly known and determined by God. *Mere chance* is when things are said or thought to come to pass without any cause at all. But that must be abhorred of us as an overturning the providence of God.

Thus seeing it is plain that there is a providence, let us in the next place see what it is. Providence is a most free and powerful action of God, whereby he hath care over all things that are.

Providence hath two parts: *knowledge* and *government*.

(1) God's *knowledge* is whereby all things from the greatest to the least are manifest before Him at all times. As David saith (Psa. 11:4), *His eyes will consider, His eyelids will try the children of men*. And again (Psa. 113:6), *He abaseth Himself to behold the things that are in the heaven and the earth*. And the prophet Hanani said to Asa (2 Chr. 16:9), *The eyes of the*

Lord behold all the earth. And St James saith (Acts 15:18), *From the beginning of the world God knoweth all His works*. This point hath a double use, as St Peter saith (1 Pet. 3:11,12), it must move us *to eschew evil and do good*. Why? Because, saith he, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His countenance against evildoers*. Secondly, it must comfort all those that labour to keep a good conscience. For the eyes of God behold all the earth *to shew Himself strong with them that are of perfect heart towards Him* (2 Chr. 16:9).

(2) *Government* is the second part of God's providence, whereby He ordereth all things and directeth them to good ends. And it must be extended to the very least thing that is in heaven or earth, as to the sparrows, and to oxen, and to the hairs of our heads (Matt. 6:26; Deut. 25:4; Matt. 10:29,30).And here we must consider two things: the manner of government and the means.

(i) The manner of government is diverse, according as things are good or evil.

(a) A *good* thing is that which is approved of God. As, first of all, the substances of all creatures, even of the devils themselves; in whom whatsoever is remaining since their creation is in itself good. Secondly, the quantities, qualities, motions, actions and inclinations of the creatures in themselves considered with all their events are good. Again, good is either natural or moral. *Natural*, which is created by God for the lawful use of man. *Moral*, which is agreeable to the eternal and unchangeable wisdom of God revealed in the moral law.

Now God governeth all good things two ways: First, by sustaining and preserving them that they decay not. Secondly, by moving them that they may attain to the particular ends for which they were severally ordained. For the quality and virtues which were placed in the sun, moon, stars, trees, plants, seeds, etc., would lie dead in them and be unprofitable, unless they

were not only preserved, but also stirred up and quickened by the power of God so oft as He employs them to any use.

(b) *Evil* is the destruction of nature; and it is taken [a] for sin, or [b] for the punishment of sin.

[a] Now sin is governed by two actions:

i The first is an *operative pemission*. I so call it, because God partly permitteth sin and partly worketh in it. For sin as it is commonly taken hath two parts: the subject or matter, and the form of sin. The subject of sin is a certain quality or action; the form is the anomie or transgression of God's law. The first is good in itself, and every quality or action, so far forth as it is a quality or action, is existing in nature, and hath God to be the author of it. Therefore sin, though it be sufficiently evil to eternal damnation, yet can it not be said to be absolutely evil as God is absolutely good, because the subject of it is good, and therefore it hath in its respects and regards of goodness. In respect of the second, that is, the breach of the law itself, God neither willeth, nor appointeth, nor commandeth, nor causeth, nor helpeth sin, but forbiddeth, condemneth and punisheth it; yet so as withal He willingly permitteth it to be done by others as men and wicked angels, they being the sole authors and causes of it. And this permission by God is upon a good end; because thereby He manifesteth His justice and mercy. Thus it appears that in original sin, the natural inclination of the mind, will and affections in itself considered is from God; and the ataxie or corruption of the inclination is in no wise from Him, but only permitted. Again, that in actual sin the motion of the body or mind is from God, but the evilness and disorder of the motion is not from Him, but freely permitted to be done by others. As for example, in the act of murder, the action of moving the whole body, of stirring the several joints, and the fetching of the blow whereby the man is slain, is from God; for *in Him we live, move, and have our being* (Acts 17:28); but the disposing and applying of all these actions to

this end, that our neighbour's life may be taken away, and we thereby take revenge upon him, is not from God, but from the wicked will of man and the devil.

ii. God's second action in the government of sin is after the just permission of it; partly to restrain it more or less, according to His good will and pleasure, and partly to dispose and turn it against the nature thereof to the glory of His own name, to the punishment of His enemies, and to the correcting and chastisement of His elect.

[b] As for the second kind of evil, called the punishment of sin, it is the execution of justice, and hath God to be the author of it. And in this respect, Isaiah saith (Isa. 45:7) that God *createth evil*; and Amos (Amos 3:6), that *there is no evil in the city which God hath not done*. And God as a most just judge may punish sin by sin, Himself in the mean season free from all sin. And thus the places must be understood in which it is said that *God giveth kings in His wrath* (Hos. 13:11; Neh. 9:37)*; hardeneth the heart, blindeth the eyes* (Exod. 4-7)*; mingleth the spirit of errors* (Isa. 19:14)*; giveth up men to a reprobate sense* (Rom. 1:28)*; sendeth strong illusions to believe lies* (2 Thess. 2:11)*; sendeth evil spirits giving them commandment to hurt, and leave to deceive* (1 Kin. 22:22) etc.

(ii) Thus having seen in what manner God governeth all things, let us now come to the means of government. Sometimes God worketh without means, thus He created all things in the beginning; and He made trees and plants to grow and flourish without the heat of the sun or rain. Sometimes He governs according to the usual course and order of nature, as when He preserves our lives by meat and drink; yet so, as He can and doth most freely order all things by means either above nature or against nature, as it shall seem good unto Him. As when He caused the sun to stand in the firmament (Josh. 10:12), and go back in Ahaz's dial (Isa. 38:8); when He caused the fire not to burn the three children (Dan. 3:27); when He kept

back dew and rain three years in Israel (1 Kin. 18:45; Jam. 5:17); when He made waters flow out of the rock (Exod. 17:6); when He caused Elijah's cloak to divide the waters of Jordan (2 Kin. 2:8); when He caused iron to swim (2 Kin. 6:6); when He preserved Jonah alive three days and three nights in the whale's belly (Jon. 1:17); when He cured diseases by the strength of nature incurable, as the leprosy of Naaman (2 Kin. 5:14), the issue of blood (Matt. 9:20), and blindness (John 9:6,7) etc.

Among all the means which God useth, the special are the reasonable creatures, which are no passive instruments, as the tools in the hand of workmen, but active; because as they are moved by God, so again being endued with will and reason, they move themselves. And such instruments are either good or evil.

Evil, as wicked men and angels. And these He useth to do His good will and pleasure, even then when they do least of all obey Him. And considering that the sinning instrument which is moved by God doth also move itself freely without any constraint on God's part; God Himself is free from all blame, when the instrument is blameworthy. In directing the instrument, God sinneth not. The action indeed is of Him, but the defect of the action from the instrument; which, being corrupt, can itself do nothing but that that is corrupt; God in the mean season by it, bringeth that to pass which is very good. The whole cause of sin is in Satan and in us. As for God, He puts no wickedness into us, but the evil which he finds in us He moves, that is, orders and governs, and bends it by His infinite wisdom, when and in what manner it pleaseth Him, to the glory of His name, the evil instrument not knowing so much, nay, intending a far other end. As in the mill, the horse blindfolded goes forward, and perceives nothing but that he is in the ordinary way, whereas the miller himself whips him and stirs him forward for another end, namely for the grinding of corn. And this is that which we must hold touching God's providence over wicked men and angels. And it stands with the tenor of the whole Bible. Joseph's brethren sold him to

Egypt very wickedly, even in the testimony of their own consciences; yet Joseph having respect to the counsel and work of God which He performed by His brethren, saith that the Lord sent him hither (Gen. 45:7,8). And the church of Jerusalem saith that Herod and Pontius Pilate did nothing in the death of Christ but that which *the hand and counsel of God had determined to be done* (Acts 4:28); because though they wickedly intended nothing but to shew their malice and hatred in the death of Christ; yet God propounding a further matter by them than ever they dreamed of, shewed forth His endless mercy to man in the work of redemption. On this manner must all the places of Scripture be understood in which it is said that God gave the wives of David to Absalom (2 Sam. 12:11); that God moved David to number the people (2 Sam. 24:1); that He commanded Shimei to rail on David (2 Sam. 16:11); that the Medes and Persians are His sanctified ones (Isa. 10:5; 13:3); that the revolt of the ten tribes was done by God (2 Chr. 11:4) etc. By all these examples it appears that we must not sever God's permission from His will or decree; and that we must put difference between the evil work of man; and the good work of God which He doth by man. And the whole matter may yet be more clearly perceived by this comparision: A thief at the day of assize is condemned, and the magistrate appoints him to be executed; the hangman owing a grudge to the malefactor, useth him hardly, and prolongeth his punishment longer than he should. Now the magistrate and the hangman do both one and the same work, yet the hangman for his part is a murderer, the magistrate in the mean season no murderer, but a just judge putting justice in execution by the hangman. So God, though He use evil instruments, yet is He free from the evil of the instruments.

And further we must here mark the difference which must be made in God's using all kinds of instruments. When He useth good creatures, as angels, He worketh His will not only by them, but also in them; because He inspires them and guides them by His Spirit so as they shall will and do that which He willeth and intendeth. As for evil instruments, He worketh by them only,

and not in them; because He holds back His grace from them and leaves them to themselves, to put in practice the corruption of their own hearts.

Thus much of the parts of God's providence; now follow the kinds thereof. God's providence is either *general* or *special*.

(1) *General*, is that which extends itself to the whole world and all things indifferently, even to the devils themselves. By this providence God continues and maintains the order which He set in nature in the Creation, and he preserves the life, substance and the being of all and every creature in his kind.

(2) The *special* providence is that which God sheweth and exerciseth towards His church and chosen people, in gathering and guiding them by His mighty power against the gates of hell. And therefore God's church here upon earth is called the kingdom of grace, in which He shews not only a general power over His creatures, but withal the special operation of His Spirit in bowing and bending the hearts of men to His will.

Thus much concerning the doctrine of God's providence. Now follows the duties:

(1) First, seeing there is a providence of God over everything that is, we are hereby taught to take good heed of the transgression of the least of God's commandments. If men were persuaded that the prince had an eye everywhere, doubtless many subjects in England would walk more obediently to the laws of the land than they do; and durst in no wise work such villainies as are daily practised. Well, howsoever it is with earthly princes, yet this all-seeing presence is least wanting in God. He hath an eye everywhere. Wheresoever thou art, there God beholdeth thee, as David saith (Psa. 53), *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek God*. Therefore, except thou be brutish and past shame, take heed of sin. If men had but a spark of grace,

the consideration of this would make them loathe the practice of any evil work. Elijah saith to Ahab (1 Kin. 17:1*), As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these three years*. Where the prophet confirmeth his speech with an oath saying, *As the Lord of hosts liveth* it shall be so. And lest Ahab should think he made no conscience what he said, he addeth this clause: that he stood in the presence of God. As if he should say: Howsoever thou thinkest of me, yet as it stands me in hand, so do I make conscience of my word, for I stand in the presence of God, and therefore know it, as the Lord liveth there shall be no rain nor dew these three years. So Cornelius having an eye to God's providence, doth move himself and all his household to a solemn hearing of the Word of God delivered by the mouth of Peter, saying that *they were all present before God, to hear all things commanded of Him* (Acts 10:33). As these men had regard to God's providence, so we likewise must behave ourselves reverently, making conscience of our behaviour both in words and works; because wheresoever we be, we are in the presence of God.

(2) Secondly, if there be a providence of God over everything, then we must learn contentment of mind in every estate; yea, in adversity under the cross when all goes against us we must be content, because God's providence hath so appointed. So David in the greatest of his griefs was dumb and spake nothing (Psa. 39:9), because *thou Lord didst it*. And when Shimei cursed David (2 Sam. 16:10), Abishai would have had the king to have given him leave to have slain him; but David would not suffer it, but said, He curseth even *because the Lord hath bidden him, Curse David; who dare then say, Wherefore hast thou done so*? In whose example we may see a pattern of quietness of mind. When a cross cometh, it is a hard thing to be patient; but we must draw ourselves thereunto by consideration of God's especial providence.

(3) Thirdly, when outward means of preservation in this life do abound, as health, honour, riches, peace and pleasure, then we must remember to be

thankful; because these things always come by the providence of God. Thus Job was thankful both in prosperity and adversity (Job 1:21), *The Lord*, saith he, *gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord*. Indeed to be patient in every estate and thankful to God is a very hard matter; yet will it be more easy if we learn in all things that befall us in this life, never to sever the consideration of the things that come to pass from God's providence. For as the body and soul of man (though we see only the body) are always together as long as man liveth; so is God's providence joined with the thing done; so we must also in it, labour to see and acknowledge the good pleasure and appointment of God. As for example, a man's house is set on fire, and all his goods consumed; this very sight would make him at his wits end; but now as he beholds this event with one eye, so with the other eye he must at that very instant look upon God's blessed providence. When a man beholds and feels the loss of his friends, he cannot but grieve thereat, unless he be more senseless than stock or stone; yet that he may not be overwhelmed with grief, he must ever with one eye look at the pleasure of God herein. This will be an especial means to stay the rage of any headstrong affection in all our afflictions. In the world, the manner of men is, if health, wealth and ease abound, to think all is well; but if crosses come, as loss of friends, and loss of goods, then men cry out, as being straught of their wits. The reason is because they look only at the outward means, and tie God's providence to them; not being able to see any goodness or providence of God out of ordinary means. Again, when a man is stored with riches, honour, wealth and prosperity, he must not barely look on them, but behold withal God's goodness and blessing in them; for if that be wanting, all the riches in the world are nothing. Likewise in receiving thy meat and drink, thou must look further into the blessing of God upon it; which if it be away, thy meat and thy drink can no more nourish thee than the stone in the wall. And the same must we do in every business of our callings; which if men would learn to practise, they would not so much trust to the means, as honour, wealth, favour etc., but rather to God Himself. The Lord by the prophet Habakkuk (Hab. 1:16),

reproves the Chaldeans for *offering sacrifice unto their nets*; which sin they committed because they looked only upon outward things; and like moles had no power to see further into them, and to behold the work of God in all their proceedings. And this is the very cause why we are unthankful for God's benefits; for though we behold the bare creatures, yet are we so blind, that we cannot discern any blessing and providence of God in them. Therefore let us learn to look upon both jointly together, and so shall we be thankful unto God in prosperity, and patient in adversity with Job and David. This lesson Paul learned (Phil. 4:12,13); *I can be abased* (saith he) *and I can abound; everywhere in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry; and to abound and to be in want*.

(4) Fourthly, seeing God's providence disposeth all things, we are taught to gather observations of the same in things both past and present, that we may learn thereby to be armed against the time to come. Thus David, when he was to encounter with Goliath, gathered hope and confidence to himself for the time to come, by the observation of God's providence in the time past; for, saith he (1 Sam. 17:36,37), *When I kept my father's sheep, I slew a lion and a bear that devoured the flock. Now the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and our of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*.

(5) Fifthly, because God's providence disposeth all things, when we make lawful promises to do anything, we must put in, or at the least conceive this condition: *Of the Lord's will*. For St James saith that we ought to say (Jam. 4:15), *If the Lord will, and if we live, we will do this or that*. This also was David's practice; for to all the congregation of Israel he said (1 Chr. 13:2), *If it seem good to you, and if it proceed from the Lord our God, we will send to and fro*, etc.

(6) Sixthly, seeing God's providence is manifest in ordinary means, it beholdeth every man in his calling to use them carefully. And when

ordinary means be at hand, we must not look for any help without them, though the Lord be able to do what He will without means. Joab, when many Aramites came against him, he heartened his soldiers though they were but few in number, bidding them (2 Sam. 10:12), *Be strong and valiant for their people, and for the cities of their God, and then let the Lord do that which is good in His eyes*. And our Saviour Christ avoucheth it to be flat tempting of God for Him to leap down from the pinnacle of the temple to the ground (Matt. 4:6,7), whereas there was an ordinary way at hand to descend by stairs. Hence it appears that such persons as will use no means whereby they may come to repent and believe, do indeed no more repent and believe than they can be able to live which neither eat nor drink.

And thus much of the duties. Now follow the consolations. First, this very point of God's special providence is a great comfort to God's church; for the Lord moderateth the rage of the devil and wicked men that they shall not hurt the people of God. David saith (Psa. 16:8), *The Lord is at my right hand, therefore I shall not slide*. And, when Joseph's brethren were afraid because they had sold him into Egypt, he comforteth them saying (Gen. 45:7) that it was God that sent him before them for their preservation. So king David, when his soldiers were purposed to stone him to death, he was in great sorrow; but it is said (1 Sam. 30:6), *He comforted himself in the Lord his God*. Where we may see that a man which hath grace to believe in God and rely on His providence in all his afflictions and extremities, shall have wonderful peace and consolation.

Creator of Heaven and Earth

III.We have spoken of the title of the first Person, and of His attributes; now we come to speak of His effect, namely, the Creation. But before we come to it, we are to answer a certain objection which may be made. At the first it must seem strange to some that the work of Creation is ascribed to the first Person in Trinity, the Father; whereas in the Scripture it is common to them all three equally.

And first, that the Father is Creator, it was never doubted. As for the second Person, the Son, that He is Creator it is evident (John 1:3), *All things were made by Him*, that is, by the Son, who is the substantial Word of the Father, *and without Him was made nothing that was made*. And again it is said (Heb. 1:2) that God by His Son made the world. As for the Holy Ghost, the work of Creation is also ascribed unto Him. And therefore Moses saith (Gen. 1:2), *The Spirit moved upon the waters*. And Job saith (Job 26:13), *His Spirit hath garnished the heavens*. How then is this peculiar to the Father, being common to all three Persons in Trinity? *I answer*, The actions of God are twofold: either inward or outward.

The inward actions are those which one Person doth exercise toward another; as the Father doth beget the Son, and this is an inward action peculiar to the Father. And all inward actions are proper to the Persons from whom they are. So the Son doth receive the Godhead by communication from the Father; and the Holy Ghost from them both; and these are inward actions peculiar to these Persons. So likewise, for the Father to send His Son, it is an inward action proper to the Father, and cannot be communicated to the Holy Ghost. And the Son to be sent by the Father only, is a thing proper to the Son, and not common to the Father, or to the Holy Ghost.

Now outward actions are the actions of the Persons in the Trinity to the creatures, as the work of Creation, the work of preservation, and of redemption. These and all such actions are common to all the three Persons. The Father createth, the Son createth, and the Holy Ghost createth. And so we may say of the works of government, and of redemption, and of all outward actions of the Persons to the creatures.

But some again may say, How then can the work of Creation, being an outward action of God to the creature, be peculiar to the first Person, the Father? *I Answer*: the work of Creation is not so proper to the first Person as that it cannot also be common to the rest; for all the three Persons jointly created all things of nothing; only they are distinguished in the manner of creating. For the Father is the cause that beginneth the work, the Son puts it in execution, the Holy Ghost is the finisher of it. And again, the Father createth by the Son (Col. 1:16; Rom. 11:36) and by the Holy Ghost; the Son createth by the Holy Ghost and from the Father; the Holy Ghost createth not by the Father nor by the Son, but from the Father and the Son. And this is the reason why the work of Creation is ascribed here unto the Father, because He alone createth after a peculiar manner, namely, by the Son and by the Holy Ghost. But the Son and the Holy Ghost create not by the Father, but from Him.

Thus, having answered the objection, we come to speak of the Creation itself. In handling whereof, we must withal treat of the counsel of God as being the cause thereof, and of the government of the creatures as being a work of God whereby he continues the Creation. And the order which I will observe is:

1. First to speak of the counsel of God

2. Secondly of the execution of His counsel, which hath two special branches:

2a. The first, the creation,

2b. The second, the preservation or government of things created.

1.

The counsel of God is His eternal and unchangeable decree whereby He hath ordained all things either past, present or to come, for His own glory. First, I call it a decree because God hath in it set down with Himself as appointed sovereign Lord, what shall be, what shall not be. I add further that all things whatsoever come under the compass of this decree, as Paul saith (Eph. 1:11), *He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will*. And our Saviour Christ saith (Matt. 10:29) that a sparrow cannot fall on the ground *without the heavenly Father*. Yea, further, He tells His disciples (v.30) that *the very hairs of their head are numbered*, meaning that they are known and set down in the counsel of God. And considering that God is King over heaven and earth; and that most wise, yea wisdom itself; and most mighty, yea might and power itself; it must needs be that He hath determined how all things shall come to pass in His kingdom, with all their circumstances, time, place, causes etc. in such particular manner that the very least thing that may be, is not left unappointed and undisposed.

The counsel of God hath two properties: eternity and unchangeableness. It is eternal because it was set down by God from everlasting before all times, as Paul saith (Eph. 1:4), God hath chosen the Ephesians *to salvation before all worlds*. And he saith of himself (2 Tim. 1:9) that he was called *according to the purpose of God, which was before all worlds*. Again, the same counsel once set down, is unchangeable. God saith (Mal. 3:6), *I am Jehovah, and I change not*. *With God* (saith St James (Jam. 1:17)) *there is no variableness nor shadow of change*. Now such as God is, such is His decree or counsel. And being unchangeable, His counsels also are unchangeable.

God's counsel hath two parts: His foreknowledge and His will or pleasure. His foreknowledge, whereby He did foresee all things which were to come. His will, whereby in general manner He wills and ordains whatsoever is to come to pass; and therefore such things as God altogether nilleth, cannot come to pass. Now these two parts of the counsel of God must be joined together, and not severed. Will without knowledge is impotent, and foreknowledge without will is idle. And therefore such as hold that God doth barely foresee sundry things to come, no manner of way either willing or decreeing the issue and event of them, do bring in little better than atheism. For if we say that anything comes to pass either against God's will, or God not knowing of it or not regarding it, we shall make Him either impotent or careless, and raise the very foundation of God's providence.

And this decree of God must be conceived of us as the most general cause of all things subsisting; being first in order, having all other causes under it, and most principal, overruling all, overruled by none.

Thus we see what is to be held touching God's counsel. Now for the better clearing of the truth, three objections of some difficulty are to be answered:

(1) First may some man say, If God decree and ordain all things whatsoever, then He decreeth and ordaineth sin. But God decrees not sin inasmuch as it is against His will. And therefore He decrees not all things. *Answer*: We use not to say that God doth simply will or decree sin, but only in part, adding withal these caveats:

(i) That God willeth and decreeth sin, not properly as it is sin, but as it hath in it sundry regards and respects of goodness, so far forth as it is a punishment, or chastisement, or trial, or action, or hath an existence in nature.

(ii) God can so use evil instruments that the work done by them being a sin, shall nevertheless in Him be a good work; because He knows how to use

evil instruments well. If it be further alleged that God willeth no wickedness (Psa. 5:5), we must know that God's will is twofold: general and special.

(a) General, whereby God willeth and decreeth that a thing shall be; and by this kind of will He may be said to will sin; and that without sin. For though He decreeth it thus, yet doth He not instil wickedness into the heart of any sinner, and His decree is only for a most excellent end. For in regard of God which decreeth it, it is good that there should be evil. To this purpose, Augustine saith excellently, By an unspeakable manner it comes to pass, that that which is against God's will, is not without His will.

(b) Now the special will of God is that whereby He willeth anything in such manner that he approveth it and delighteth in it. And thus indeed we cannot say without blasphemy that God willeth sin.

Thus then we see in what manner, and how far forth God may be said to decree sin, that is, to will and appoint the permission of it.

(2) Again, it may be objected thus: If all things be determined by the unchangeable decree of God, then all things come to pass by an unchangeable necessity; and men in their actions have no free will at all, nor liberty in doing anything. *Answer*: This must be learned as a certain rule: that the necessary decree of God doth not abolish the nature of the second causes, and impose necessity upon the will of man, but only order and incline it without any constraint, to one part. As, for example, when a people is gathered together to hear God's Word, there is none of them but they know that they come thither by God's providence (and in that respect, necessarily), yet before they come, they had all freedom and liberty in themselves to come or not to come. And God's eternal counsel did not hinder the liberty of our wills in coming or not coming, nor take away the same; but only incline and turn them to the choice of one part. Another example hereof we may have in our Saviour Christ, whose state and condition of body, if we regard, He might have lived longer. Yet by the

eternal counsel of God, He must die at that place, at that time, at that hour, where and when He died. Whereby we may see that God's counsel doth not hinder the will of man; but only order and dispose it. Which answer being well marked, we shall see these two will stand together: the necessary and unchangeable counsel of God, and the free will of man. And again, that the same action may be both necessary and contingent: necessary in regard of the highest cause, the counsel of God; not necessary but contingent in respect of the second causes, as, among the rest, the will of man.

(3) Thirdly, some will yet object against this doctrine, that if all things come to pass according to God's unchangeable decree, then what needs the use of any means? What needs the preaching of the Word? And receiving of the sacraments? What needs any laws, princes, magistrates or government? What needs walking in men's ordinary callings? All is to no end; for let men play, or work, sleep or wake; all is one, for God's eternal counsel must needs come to pass. Therefore it may seem in vain for men to busy themselves about such things. *Answer*: But we must know that as God hath appointed all things to come to pass in His eternal and unchangeable counsel; so in the same decree, He hath together set down the means and ways whereby He will have the same things brought to pass; for these two must never be severed, the thing to be done, and the means whereby it is done. We may read in the Acts in Paul's dangerous voyage towards Rome (Acts 27:23,24), an angel of the Lord told Paul that God had given him all that sailed with him in the ship. Now the soldiers and mariners hearing this, might reason thus with themselves: Seeing God hath decreed to save us all, we may do what we will, there is no danger, for we shall all come to land alive. But mark what Paul saith (v.31), *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe*; where we see that as it was the eternal counsel of God to save Paul and all that were with him, so He decreed to save all by this particular means of their abode in the ship. King Hezekiah (2 Kin. 20:6,7) was restored to his health, and received from God a promise that he should have fifteen years added to his days, and the promise was confirmed by a

sign. Now what doeth he? Cast off all means? No; but as he was prescribed, so he applieth a bunch of dry figs to his sore, and useth still his ordinary diet. Therefore it is gross ignorance and madness in men, to reason so against God's decree: God in His unchangeable counsel hath decreed and set down all things how they shall be; therefore I will use no means, but live as I list. Nay, rather we must say the contrary: because God hath decreed this thing or that to be done; therefore I will use the means which God hath appointed to bring the same to pass.

2a.

Now followeth the Creation, which is nothing else but a work of the blessed Trinity, forming and framing His creatures which were not before, and that of nothing.

The points to be known concerning the Creation are many:

(1) The first, is the thing by which God did begin and finish the Creation. And we must understand that at the first God made all things without any instrument or means, and not as men do which bring to pass their business by servants and helps, but only by His Word and commandment; as the Psalmist saith (Psa. 148:5), *He commanded, and all things were made*. In the beginning, God said (Gen. 1:3), *Let there be light*, and there was light; and by the same means was the creation of every creature following. The very power of the Word and commandment of God was such, as by it that thing was made and had a being, which before was not. It may be demanded, what Word this was by which God is said to make all things? *Answer*: The Word of God in Scripture is taken three ways: for the substantial Word, for the founding, or written Word, and for the operative, or powerful Word. The substantial Word is the Second Person begotten of the substance of the Father. Now howsoever it be true that God the Father did create all things by His Word, that is, by His Son; yet doth it not seem to be true that by these words Ò*God said, Let there be*É this or thatÓ that

the Son is meant. For that Word which God gave out in the Creation was in time, whereas the Son is the Word of the Father before all times. And again, it is a Word common to the three persons equally, whereas the Son is the Word of the Father only. Furthermore, it is not like that it was any sounding word standing of letters and syllables, and uttered to the creatures after the usual manner of men, that was the cause of them. It remains therefore that all things were made by the operative Word, which is nothing but the pleasure, will, and appointment of God; and is more powerful to bring a thing to pass than all the means in the world besides. For God willing of anything, is His effecting and doing of it. And this is proved by David when he saith (Ps. 33:9), *He spake the Word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created*. Hence we must take out a special lesson, needful to be learned of every man. Look what power God used and shewed in making the creatures when they were not; the same power He doth, can and will shew forth in re-creating and redeeming sinful men by the precious blood of Christ. By His Word He created man's heart when it was not; and He can and will as easily create in us all new hearts specially when we use the good means appointed for that end. As, when Christ said to dead Lazarus (John 11:43), *Lazarus, come forth*, he arose and came forth of his grave, though bound hand and foot. So when the Lord speaks to our dead heart by His Word and Spirit, we shall rise forth of the graves of our sins and corruptions. In the Creation of the great world, God said, *Let there be light*, and presently darkness gave place. And the same He can do to the little world, that is, to man. We are by nature darkness, and let God but speak to our blind understandings, our ignorance shall depart, and we shall be enlightened with the knowledge of the true God and of His will. As Paul saith (2 Cor. 4:6), *God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, is He which hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*.

(2) Secondly, God made all creatures, without motion, labour or fatigue; for His very bidding of the work to be done, was the doing of it. And this thing

no creature can do, but God only, though unto Adam labour was without pain before the fall.

(3) Thirdly, the matter and the first beginning of all creatures was nothing; that is, all things were made, when as there was nothing whereof they might be made, as Paul saith (Rom. 4:17), *God calleth those things which be not, as though they were*. And indeed in the first Creation, all things must be made either of the essence of God, or of nothing. But a creature cannot be made of the essence of God, for it hath no parts, it is not divisible. And therefore God made all things that were made out of Himself or His own essence. The conclusion then is that the framing of the creatures in the beginning, was not of any matter, but of nothing, because before the Creation, out of God there was nothing. This must teach us to humble ourselves. Many there be that stand upon their ancestors; but let them here look whence they came first, namely, as Abraham saith of himself (Gen. 18:27), *of dust and ashes*. And what was this dust and ashes made of? Surely of nothing. Wherefore every man's first beginning is of nothing. Well then, such men as are carried away with their pedigree and descent, if they look well unto it, they shall find small cause to boast or brag. And this consideration of our first beginning, must move us to true humiliation in ourselves.

(4) Fourthly, God in framing His creatures in the beginning made them good; yea, very good. Now the goodness of the creature is nothing else but the perfect estate of the creature, whereby it was conformable to the will and mind of the Creator allowing and approving of it, when He had made it. For a creature is not first good, and then approved of God; but because it is approved of God, thereof it is good. But wherein, will some say, stands this goodness of the creature? *I answer*, in three things:

(i) In the comeliness, beauty and glory of every work in his kind, both in form and constitution of the matter.

(ii) In the excellency of the virtue which God hath given to it; for as He hath appointed every creature for some especial end, so He hath fitted and furnished it with sufficient power and virtue to the accomplishing of the same end.

(iii) In the exceeding benefit and profitableness that came by them to man.

But since the fall of man, this goodness of the creature is partly corrupted and partly diminished. Therefore when we see any want, defect or deformity in any of them, we must have recourse back again to the apostasy of our first parents, and remember our fall in them, and say with a sorrowful heart, this comes to pass by reason of man's most wretched sin, which hath defiled heaven and earth, and drawn a curse not only upon himself, but upon the rest of the creatures for his sake; whereby their goodness is much defaced.

(5) Fifthly, the end of creation, is the glory of God, as Solomon saith (Prov. 16:4), *God made all things for His own sake, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*. And God propounds this principal end to Himself, not as though He wanted glory, and would purchase it unto Himself by the creation; for He is most glorious in Himself, and His honour and praise being infinite, can neither be increased nor decreased; but rather that He might communicate, and make manifest His glory to His creatures, and give them occasion to magnify the same. For the reasonable creatures of God, beholding His glory in the creation, are moved to testify and declare the same among men.

(6) The sixth shall be touching the time of the beginning of the world, which is between five thousand and six thousand years ago. For Moses hath set down exactly the computation of time from the making of the world to his own days; and the prophets after him have with diligence set down the continuance of the same to the very birth of Christ. But for the exact account of years, chronologers are not all of one mind. Some say there be

3929, from the creation to Christ's birth, as Belroaldus; some 3952, as Jerome and Bede; some 3960, as Luther, and lo, Lucidus; some 3963, as Melanchthon in his Chronicle, and Functius; some 3970, as Bullinger and Tremellius; some towards 4000, as Buntingus. Now from the birth of Christ to this day are 1592 years, and adding these together, the whole time amounteth. And God would have the very time of the beginning of the world to be revealed:

(i) First, that it might be known to the church when the Covenant of grace was first given by God to man, and when it was afterward renewed, and how Christ came in the fulness of time (Gal. 4:4).

(ii) Secondly, that we might know that the world was not made for the eternal and ever-living God, but for man.

(iii) Thirdly, that we might learn not to set our hearts on the world, and on the things therein, which have beginning and end, but seek for things eternal in heaven.

And before the time which I have named began, there was nothing beside God; the world itself, and all things else were uncreated. Some men used to object and say, What did God all that while before the world was? How did He employ Himself? What, was He idle? *Answer*: The Jews to which bad this question, made as bad an answer; for they say He was continually occupied in making many little worlds, which He continually destroyed as He made them, because none pleased Him till He made this. But we must rather say that some things are revealed which God did then, as that He decreed what should come to pass when the world was, and that the blessed Persons in Trinity did take eternal delight each in other. If any man will needs know more, let him hear what Moses saith (Deut. 29:29), *Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but things revealed, to us and our children for ever*. And let them mark what one eluding the question answered; namely, that God was making hell fire to burn all such curious

persons as will needs know more of God than He hath revealed to them. For where God hath not a mouth to speak, there we must not have a care to hear. Therefore our duty is to let such curious questions pass.

(7) Seventhly, some may ask in what space of time did God make the world? *Answer*: God could have made the world and all things in it, in one moment; but He began and finished the whole work in six distinct days.

In the first day He made the matter of all things and the light.

In the second, the heavens.

In the third day, He brought the sea into His compass, and made the dry land appear, and caused it to bring forth herbs, plants and trees.

In the fourth day, He made the sun, the moon and the stars in heaven.

In the fifth day, He made the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the heaven, and every creeping thing.

In the sixth day, He made the beasts of the field, and all cattle, and in the end of the sixth day, He made man.

Thus in six distinct spaces of time, the Lord did make all things; and that especially for three causes:

(i) To teach men that they ought to have a distinct and serious consideration of every creature; for if God had made the world in a moment, some might have said, This work is so mystical, that no man can speak of it. But, for the preventing of this cavil, it was His pleasure to make the world and all things therein, in six days; and the seventh day, He commanded it to be sanctified by men, that they might distinctly and seriously meditate upon every day's work of the Creation.

(ii) God made the world and everything therein, in six distinct days, to teach us what wonderful power and liberty He had over all His creatures; for He made the light when there was neither sun nor moon, nor stars, to shew that in giving light to the world, He is not bound to the sun, to any creature, or to any means; for the light was made the first day, but the sun, the moon and the stars were not created before the fourth day. Again, trees and plants were created the third day, but yet the sun, the moon and the stars, and rain, which nourish and make herbs, trees and plants to grow, were not created till after the third day; which shews plainly that God can make trees, plants and herbs to grow without the means of rain, and without the virtue and operation of the sun, the moon and the stars.

(iii) He made the world in six distinct days and framed all things in this order, to teach us His wonderful providence over all His creatures; for before man was created, He provided for him a dwelling place, and all things necessary for his perpetual preservation and perfect happiness and felicity. So also He created beasts and cattle; but not before He had made herbs, plants and grass, and all means whereby they are preserved. And if God had this care over man, when as yet he was not; much more will God have care over him now when he is, and hath a being in nature.

And thus much concerning the points of doctrine touching the creation.

The duties follow.

(1) And first, by the work of creation, we may discern the true Jehovah from all false gods and idols in the world. This, Isaiah maketh plain (Isa. 45:6,7), *I am God, and there is none other God besides me*. How is that produced? Thus: *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things*. If a man ask thee how thou knowest the true God from all false gods, thou must answer, By the works of Creation; for He alone is the maker of heaven and earth, and all things in them. This property cannot agree to any creature, to any man, saint or angel;

nay, not to all men and all angels. They cannot give being to a creature which before was nothing.

(2) Secondly, whereas God the Father is creator of all things, and hath given unto man reason, understanding and ability more than to other creatures; we are taught to consider and meditate on the work of God's creation. This, the wise man teacheth us (Eccl. 7:13), saying, *Consider the works of God*. And indeed, it is a special duty of every man who professeth himself to be a member of God's church, as he acknowledgeth God to be the Creator, so to look upon His workmanship, and view and consider all creatures. A skilful workman can have no greater disgrace, than when he hath done some famous thing, to have his friend pass by his work, and not so much as look upon it. If it be demanded for what end we must look upon the work of God's Creation, I answer, that in it we may see and discern God's power, wisdom, love, mercy and providence, and all His attributes, and in all things, His glory. This is a most necessary duty to be learned of every man. We think nothing too much or too good to bestow on vain shews and plays, idle sports and pastimes, which are the vanities of men, and we do most willingly behold them; in the mean season utterly neglecting and condemning the glorious work of God's Creation. Well, the Lord hath appointed His Sabbath to be sanctified, not only by the public ministry of the Word, and by private prayers, but also by an especial consideration and meditation of God's creatures, and therefore the duty of every man is this: distinctly and seriously to view and consider the creatures of God; and thereby take occasion to glorify His name, by ascribing unto Him the wisdom, glory, power and omnipotence that is due unto Him, and appears in the same.

(3) Thirdly, we must give God glory in all His creatures, because He is the Creator of them all. So in the Revelation, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him, and say (Rev. 4:11), *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power*; giving this reason, *for thou hast created all*

things, and for thy will's sake they are and have been created. Read Psalms 147 and 148, both of which tend to this effect, that God must be praised because He is the Creator of all things, to whom all glory is due. We know that when men behold any curious work of a cunning and skilful craftsman, straightway they will leave the work, and enquire after him that made it, that they may praise his skill. The same is our duty in this case, when we come abroad and behold everywhere in all the creatures the admirable and unspeakable wisdom, goodness and power of God, then we must make haste from the creature, and go forward to the Creator, to praise and glorify Him. And herein must we shew ourselves to differ from brute beasts, in that by the use and view of God's creatures, we do return due glory, praise and honour unto the Creator.

(4) Our fourth duty is set down by the prophet Amos, who moving the people to meet God by repentance, addeth a reason taken from the Creation (Amos 4:13). *He that formeth the mountains and createth the winds, which declareth unto man what is His thought, which maketh the morning darkness* etc., *The Lord God of hosts is His name*. The meaning of the prophet is this: God is a terrible judge, and we are as traitors and rebels against Him. Therefore the best way that we can take is this: He is coming to judgment, let us therefore meet Him, fall down before Him, and humble ourselves under His mighty hand. And the Holy Ghost by the prophet would move the people to meet God by serious repentance, by a reason framed thus: If God who is their judge, be able to create the winds, and to form the mountains, and to make the morning darkness, then He is also able to make an eternal judgment for their confusion. And therefore all such as be impenitent sinners, let them prepare themselves to turn unto Him; and surely if men had grace to lay this to their hearts, they would not live so long in their sins without repentance as they do; nay, rather they would prepare themselves to meet Him in the way before He come to judgment, because He is a Creator, and therefore able to bring infinite punishments upon them at His pleasure, and to bring them to nothing, as He made them

of nothing. And let them know it whosoever they be that go forward in their sins, that God the Creator whensoever He will, can open hell to devour them; and that He can shew Himself as mighty in His judgments to man's destruction, as He was mighty in the beginning in giving us being when we were nothing. Wherefore notable is the practice of David, who inures himself to the fear of God (Psa. 139:14) by the consideration of His Creation, saying, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made* etc.

(5) Lastly, those that have been impenitent sinners though all their life past, must not only learn to repent for their sins, but also endeavour to perform obedience unto God's Word. God is a Creator, and the thing created should in all respects be conformable to His will; for David saith (Psa. 119:73), *Thine hands have fashioned me, and framed me; give me understanding therefore, that I may learn thy commandments*. And good reason; for there is no man of any trade, but that he would fain have all that he maketh and deviseth, to be used; but yet so as the use thereof must be conformable to the will of the maker. For this cause, Moses, that faithful servant of God, saith (Deut. 32:6) that the people of Israel dealt wrongfully with the Lord. Why? *For He hath created them, and proportioned them. He is their Father and He bought them. Yet they have dishonoured Him by corrupting themselves towards Him by their vice*.

All creatures in heaven and earth do the will of the Creator, except man, and the devil and his angels; for the sun, the moon and the stars, they keep that course which God hath appointed them; but man, though he be bound to do the will of God because God is his Creator, yet he rebels against Him. The potter, if in tempering his clay, he cannot make and frame it according to his mind, at length he will dash it in pieces. So God, He createth man, not that he should do his own will, but God's will; and therefore the Lord in His wrath will confound him eternally, whosoever he be that followeth the lusts of his own wicked heart, and will not be brought to be conformable to God's will, but goes on in his rebellion without stay. For this cause it stands every

man in hand to yield himself pliable to God's will, and to endeavour to obey it by keeping a good conscience before God and all men, and by walking faithfully in his calling, lest the end be confusion. If a man have a trade and other men come into his shop, and use such tools and instruments as be there, to wrong ends, he will in no wise brook it, but take the abuse in great displeasure. Now the world is as it were an opened shop, in which God hath set forth unto His glory and majesty, and the creatures of all kinds to be instruments appointed for excellent uses, and specially man for the accomplishment of His will. And therefore when he rebels against the will of God, and by sin puts the creatures to wrong ends, he cannot but most grievously offend God.

And thus much of the duties.

Now in the third place follow the consolations unto God's church and people.

(1) First, as St Peter saith (1 Pet. 4:19), God is a Creator, yea, *a faithful Creator*. The properties of faithful Creators are two:

(i) He will preserve His creature. No man is so tender over any work as he that made it, for he cannot abide to see it in any way abused. God therefore being a faithful Creator, tenderly loves all His creatures. So Job reasoneth with God (Job 10:3) that He will not cast him off, because he is *the work of His hands*.

(ii) God will bear with His creature, to see whether it will be brought to any good end and use, before He will destroy it. And to use the former comparison, the potter will turn and work the clay every way to make a vessel unto his mind; but if it frame no way, then will he cast it away, and dash it against the wall. And so God who created man, still preserveth him, and useth all means to make him conformable to His will, before He cast him off. The Lord did long strive with men in the old world, to turn them

from their wickedness; but when nothing would serve them, it is said (Gen. 6:6), *It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth*. And in like manner, if we which are the creatures of God, shall rebel against this our Creator, it may be, He will bear with us for a time; but if we continue therein, and do not turn to Him by repentance, He will bring upon us a final destruction both in body and soul. Yet I say, before He does this, His manner is to try all means to preserve us, and turn us unto Him; and afterward if nothing will serve, then will He shew forth His power in men's confusion; and therefore it stands us in hand to look unto it betime.

(2) Secondly, look what power the Lord did manifest in the creation of all things, the same power He both can and will make manifest in the redemption of mankind. In the beginning God made all things by His Word; and so likewise He is able still to make by the power of His Word, of a wicked man that is dead in sin, a true and lively member of Christ; which the prophet Isaiah signifieth when he saith (Isa. 45:12,13), *The Lord hath created the heavens, and spread them abroad, He that stretcheth forth the earth, and the bounds thereof* etc., *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness*. This must not encourage evil men in their wickedness, but it serveth to comfort the people of God, considering that the same God which once created them, is also as able to save them; and will shew Himself as mighty in their redemption as He was in their creation of nothing.

And thus much of the Creation in general. Now it followeth that we come to the handling of the parts thereof. For it is not said barely that God is a Creator, but particularly that He is a Creator of heaven and earth; of both which we will speak in order.

(1) And first of the creation of heaven.

Heaven.

Heaven, in God's Word signifieth all that is above the earth; for the air wherein we breathe is called heaven. And according to this acceptation of the word, there are three heavens, as Paul saith (2 Cor. 12:2), He was *taken up into the third heaven*. The first of these heavens is that space which is from the earth upward unto the firmament where the stars are. Thus the birds which fly in the air between the earth and the stars, are called *the fowls of heaven* (Gen. 6:7). And when God sent the flood to drown the old world, Moses saith, *The windows of heaven were opened* (Gen. 7:11), meaning that God poured down rain from the clouds abundantly, for the making of a flood to drown the world. The second heaven is that which containeth the sun, the moon and the stars. So Moses saith (Gen. 1:14), that God in the beginning created the sun, the moon and the stars, and placed them *in the firmament of heaven*. Besides these two heavens, there is a third, which is invisible. And yet it is the work of God's hands. And it is that glorious place where Christ even in His manhood sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and whither the souls of the faithful departed are carried and placed; and in which at the end of the world shall all the elect both in body and soul have perfect joy and bliss in the glorious sight and presence of God for ever. But for the better conceiving the truth, we are to scan and consider diligently three questions:

(i) First, whether this third heaven be a creature; for many have thought it was never created, but was eternal with God Himself. But it is a gross error contrary to God's Word. For the Scripture saith (Heb. 11:10), Abraham *looked for a city* (meaning the heavenly Jerusalem, this third heaven) *having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God*. Further, if it be eternal, it must either be a creator or a creature. But it is no creator, for then it should be God; and therefore it must needs be a creature. But some will say, the Lord is eternal, and this third heaven hath always been the place of the Lord's abode, and therefore it is also eternal. *Answer*: True it is indeed that God doth shew His glory and majesty in the third heaven. But yet that cannot possibly contain His Godhead, as Solomon saith (1 Kin.

8:27), *Behold the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, are not able to contain thee*. Wherefore though God doth manifest His eternal glory in this third heaven, yet doth it not follow that therefore this place should be eternal; for He needs no habitation to dwell in, He is everywhere, filling all things with His presence, excluded from no place.

(ii) The second question is, where this third heaven is? *Answer*: There are some Protestants who say, it is everywhere. And they hold this opinion to maintain the real presence of the Lord's body in or about the sacrament. But if it were everywhere, then hell should be in heaven, which no man will say. But heaven is indeed above these visible heavens which we see with our eyes. So the apostle saith (Eph. 4:8,10), *Christ ascended on high far above all heavens* etc. and again it is said of Stephen (Acts 7:55,56) that, *being full of the Holy Ghost, He looked up steadfastly into the heavens, and saw them open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God*.

(iii) Thirdly, it may be demanded, why God created this third heaven? *Answer*: God made it for this cause: that there might be a certain place wherein He might make manifest His glory and majesty to His elect angels and men; for the which cause it was created a thousandfold more glorious than the two former heavens are, and in this respect is called *Paradise* (Luke 23:43), by reason of the joy and pleasure arising from God's glorious presence. And our Saviour Christ calleth it *the house of God His Father* (John 14:2), because into it must be gathered all God's children. It is called *the kingdom of heaven*, because God is the King thereof, and ruleth there in perfect glory. True it is, God hath His kingdom here on earth; but He ruleth not so fully and gloriously here, as He shall in heaven; for this is the kingdom of grace, but that is the kingdom of His glory, where He so reigneth that He will be all in all, first in Christ, and then in the elect, both angels and men.

Now follow the duties whereunto we are moved principally in consideration of the making of the third heaven:

(i) First, if God created it especially for the manifestation of His glory unto men, that at the end of the world, by the fruition of God's most glorious presence, there they might have perfect joy and felicity; we have occasion here to consider the wonderful madness and forgetfulness that reigneth everywhere among men which only have regards to the estate of this life, and cast all their care on this world, and never so much as once dream of the joyful and blessed estate which is prepared for God's children in the highest heaven. If a man having two houses; one but a homely cottage and the other a princely palace, should leave the better and take all the care and pains for the dressing up of the first, would not every man say he were a mad man? Yes, undoubtedly. And yet this is the spiritual madness that takes place everywhere among men; for God hath prepared for us two houses, one is this, our body which we bear about us which is an house of clay, as Job saith (Job 4:19*), We dwell in houses of clay whose foundation is dust, which shall be destroyed before the moth*; and as Peter saith (2 Pet. 1:14), *a tabernacle*, or tent, which we must shortly take down, and where we abide but as *pilgrims and strangers* (1 Pet. 2:11). Again, the same God of His wonderful goodness hath provided for us a second house in the third heaven, wherein we must not abide for a time and so depart; but for evermore enjoy the blessed felicity of His glorious presence. For all this mark a spiritual frenzy possessing the minds of men; for they employ all their care and industry for the maintaining of this house of clay, whose foundation is but dust; but for the blessed estate of the second house, which is prepared for them in the kingdom of heaven, they have little regard or care. They will both run and ride from place to place day and night, both by sea and land; but for what? Is it for the preparing of a mansion in the heavenly Jerusalem? Nothing less, for they will scarce go out of the door to use any means whereby they may come unto it; but all their study is to patch up the ruins and breaches of their earthly cabin. Now let all men

judge in their own consciences whether, as I have said, this be not more than senseless madness? Again, the body is but a tabernacle wherein we must rest as it were for a night, as a stranger doth in an inn, and so away; but the second house is eternal in the heavens, an everlasting seat of all felicity and happiness. And therefore our duty is above all things to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, as Christ Himself biddeth us (Matt. 6:33). And if the Lord have there prepared such a place for us, then we must in this world use all good means whereby we may be made worthy of the fruition of it; and also fit and ready at the day of death to enter into it; which at the day of judgment we shall fully possess both in soul and body, and there reign eternally in all happiness with God Almighty our Creator, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But some may say, How shall a man so prepare himself that he may be fit for that place? *Answer*: This the Holy Ghost teacheth us; for speaking of this heavenly Jerusalem, He saith (Rev. 21:27), *There shall enter into it none unclean thing, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or lies*. The means then to make ourselves fit is to seek to be reconciled to God in Christ for our sins past, and withal to endeavour to have an assurance of the free remission and pardon of them all in the blood of Christ. And as touching that part of life which is to come, we must remember what St John saith (1 John 3:3), *Everyone that hath this hope purifieth himself*, meaning that he which hath hope to reign with Christ in heaven, useth the means whereby he may purify and keep himself from sin. As also he saith after (1 John 5:18), that *he which is born of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not*, signifying that all such persons as are truly justified and sanctified, carry such a narrow and strait watch over the whole course of their lives and conversations that the devil can never give them deadly wounds, and so wholly overcome them. Now the man that is resolved in his conscience of the pardon of his sin for the time past, and hath steadfast purpose in his heart to keep himself upright, and continually to walk in righteousness and true holiness all the days of his life; this man, I say, is prepared and made fit to enter into the heavenly Jerusalem. Come death when it will, he is ready. And howsoever

he must not look for heaven here upon earth, yet he is as it were in the suburbs of this heavenly city; and at the end of this life, the King thereof, the Lord Jesus, will open the gates and receive him into His kingdom, for he is already entered into the kingdom of grace. To conclude this point, let every man in the fear of God, be moved hereby to set his heart to prepare himself; that when God shall call him hence, he may be fit to enter into that glory.

(ii) Secondly, seeing God hath prepared the third heaven for us, it teacheth every man in this world to be content with the estate wherein God hath placed him, whether it be high or low, rich or poor. Why so? Because here he is but a pilgrim, and lives in a cottage of clay, and in a tent wherein he must abide but a while, as a pilgrim doth, oftentimes carrying his house about with him. And we shall in better sort accept the afflictions which God sends us in this life, if we remember that there is prepared for us a place of joy, which must be our resting place and perfect felicity for evermore. This was the practice of the children of God, especially of Abraham; for when the Lord called him out of his own country, he obeyed, and *by faith abode in the promised land, as in a strange country, as one that dwelt in the tents, with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him in the same promise*; and the reason followeth*: for he looked for a city having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God* (Heb. 11:9,10). They believed that these things which the Lord promised were shadows of better things; and hereon stayed themselves, being well content with that estate whereto God had called them. So Paul was contented to bear the afflictions which God hath laid upon him, and his reason was (2 Cor. 4:18), *We look not on things that are seen, but on things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*. And in the next chapter (2 Cor. 5:1,2), *We know* (saith he*) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a dwelling given us of God, that is, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens*. And for this cause his desire was rather to remove out of this body and to be with the Lord.

(2) And thus much concerning heaven. Now followeth the second part of God's creation in these words:

And earth.

Earth signifieth the huge mass or body standing of sea and land on which we live, and all things that be in or upon the earth whatsoever. As Paul saith (Col. 1;16), *For by Him were created all things that are in heaven or in earth* etc. In other creeds which were made since this of the apostles, being expositions of that; there is added *maker of all things visible and invisible*. Here we have occasion to speak of all creatures, but that were infinite. Therefore I will make choice of these two: (i) good angels and (ii) men.

(i)

(a) That angels had a beginning it is no question; for Paul saith (Col. 1:16) that *by God all things were created in heaven and earth, things visible and invisible whether thrones, principalities or powers*. And in respect of the creation, angels are called *the sons of God* (Job 38:7). But the time and day of their creation cannot be set down further than this: that they were created in the compass of the six days. For Moses saith (Gen. 2:1), *Thus*, namely in the compass of the first six days, *the heavens and the earth were fashioned, and all the host of them*; that is, all variety of creatures in heaven and earth, serving for the beauty and glory thereof; whereof no doubt the angels are the principal.

(b) Touching the nature of angels, some have thought that they are nothing but qualities and motions in the minds of men, as the Sadducees and Libertines of this time. But the truth is that they are spirits, that is, spiritual and invisible substances created by God, and really subsisting; for the Scripture ascribes unto them such kind of actions which cannot be performed by the creatures, save only such as be substances; as to stand before the throne of God, to behold the face of the Father, to carry men's

souls to heaven. Yet we must not imagine that they are bodily substances consisting of flesh and bone. And though they took upon them visible shapes and forms, and did eat and drink in company of men, and thereupon are called *men* in Scripture (Luke 24:4); yet they did this by divine dispensation for a time, that they might the better perform the actions and businesses among men, to which they were by God appointed. And the bodies of men which they assumed, were no parts of their natures united to them, as our bodies are to us; but rather they were as garments are to us, which they might put off and on at their pleasure. If any shall ask whence they had these bodies, the answer is that either they were created of nothing by the power of God, or framed of some other matter subsisting before. If again it be asked, what became of these bodies when they laid them down, because they used them but for a time, the answer may be that if they were made of nothing, they were again resolved into nothing; if made of other creatures, that then they were resolved into the same bodies of which they were first made, though indeed we can define nothing certainly in this point.

(c) Angels are reasonable creatures, of excellent knowledge and understanding, far surpassing all men save Christ. Their knowledge is threefold: natural, revealed and experimental. *Natural*, which they received from God in the creation. *Revealed*, which God makes manifest to them in process of time, whereas before they knew it not. Thus God revealed to Gabriel the mystery of the seventy weeks (Dan. 8,9). And in the apocalypse many things are revealed to the angels that they might reveal them to us. *Experimental* knowledge is that which they get by observing the dealing of God in the whole world, but especially in the church. And thus Paul saith (Eph. 3:10) *that to principalities and powers in heavenly places is known the manifold wisdom of God by the church*.

(d) And as the knowledge, so also the power of the good angels is exceeding great (Psa. 103:20). They are able to do more than all men can.

Therefore Paul calls them *mighty angels* (2 Thess. 1:7). Yea, their power is far superior to the power of the wicked angels who, since the fall, are under them and cannot prevail against them.

(e) The place of abode of angels is the highest heaven, unless they be sent thence by the Lord to do some thing appointed by Him. This our Saviour Christ teacheth, when he saith (Matt. 18:10) that *the angels of little ones do always behold the face of their Father in heaven*. And the wicked angels before their fall, were placed in heaven, because they were cast hence.

(f) That there be certain distinctions and diversities of angels, it is very likely, because they are called thrones and principalities and powers, cherubim and seraphim. But what be the distinct degrees and orders of angels, and whether they are to be distinguished by their natures, gifts or offices, no man by Scripture can determine.

(g) The ministry of angels to which the Lord hath set them apart is three-fold, and it respecteth either God Himself, of His church, or His enemies.

i. The ministry which they perform to God is, first of all, to adore, praise and glorify Him continually. Thus the cherubim in Isaiah's vision (Isa. 6:3) cry one to another*, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the world is full of His glory*. And when they were to publish the birth of the Messiah, they begin on this manner (Luke 2:14), *Glory to God in the highest heavens, peace on earth*. And John in his vision heard the angels about the throne (Rev. 5:11,12) crying with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches and strength, wisdom, and honour, and glory, and praise*. And indeed the highest end of the ministry of angels is the manifestation of the glory of God. The second is to stand in God's presence, evermore ready to do His commandments, as David saith (Psa. 103:26), *Praise the Lord ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments in obeying the voice of His Word*. And here is a good lesson for us. We pray daily that we may do the will of God, as the angels in

heaven do it. Let us therefore be followers of the holy angels in praising God and doing His commandments as they do.

ii. The ministry of angels concerning the church stands in this: that they are ministering spirits for the good of them which shall be the heirs of salvation. This good is threefold: in this life, at the end of this life, and in the last judgment. Again, the good which they procure to the people of God in this life is either in respect of body or soul. In respect of the body, in that they do most carefully perform all manner of duties which do necessarily tend to preserve the temporal life of God's children, even from the beginning of their days to the end. David saith (Psa. 34:7) that they pitch their tents about him that fears the Lord. When Hagar was cast forth of Abraham's family (Gen. 16:7), and wandered in the wilderness, an angel comes unto her and gives her counsel to return to her mistress and humble herself. When Elijah fled from Jezabel (1 Kin. 19:5,7), he was both comforted, directed and fed by an angel. And an angel bids the same Elijah (2 Kin. 1:3) be of good courage and without fear to go to king Ahaziah and reprove him. Angels (Gen. 19:15-17) bring Lot and his family out of Sodom and Gomorrah before they burn the cities with fire and brimstone. When Jacob feared his brother Esau (Gen. 32:1,2), he saw angels coming unto him; and he plainly acknowledgeth that they were sent to be his protectors and his guides in his journey. Abraham, being persuaded of the assistance of God's angels in all his ways (Gen. 24:7), said to his servant, The Lord God of heaven who took me from my father's house etc., *will send his angel before thee*. The wise men that came to see Christ (Matt. 2:12,13), are admonished by angels to return another way, and Joseph by the direction of an angel fled into Egypt that he might preserve Christ from the hands of the cruel tyrant. The tents of the Israelites (Exod. 14:19; 23:20) were guarded by angels. The three children (Dan. 3:28) are delivered from the fiery furnace, and (Dan. 6:22) Daniel out of the lions' den by angels. When Christ was in heaviness (Matt. 4:11), they ministered unto Him and comforted

Him. And (Acts 12:7) they brought Peter out of prison, and set him at liberty.

Again, the angels procure good unto the souls of the godly, in that they are maintainers and furtherers of the true worship of God, and of all good means whereby we attain to salvation. The law was delivered in mount Sinai by angels (Acts 7:38), and a great part of the Revelation of John. They expound to Daniel the seventy weeks (Dan. 9:22). They instruct the apostles touching the return of Christ to the last judgment (Acts 1:11). An angel forbids John to worship him (Rev. 22:9), but worship God the Creator of heaven and earth. They fetch the apostles out of prison (Acts 5:19,20), and bid them teach in the temple. An angel brings Philip to the eunuch (Acts 8:26), that he may expound the Scriptures to him. Lastly, they reveal the mysteries and the will of God: as to Abraham (Gen. 22:12) that he should not kill his son Isaac; to Mary and Elizabeth (Luke 1:13, 28, 35), the nativity of John Baptist and of Christ our Saviour; and all this they do according unto the will of God (Gal. 1:8). Beside all this, angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners by the ministry of the gospel (Luke 15:7,10). And for the church's sake, they protect not only particular men, but even whole nations and kingdoms.

The ministry of angels in the end of this life is to carry the souls of the godly into Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22), as they did the soul of Lazarus. And in the day of judgment (Matt. 25:31,32) to gather all the elect that they may come before Christ, and enter into eternal fruition of glory both in body and soul.

iii. The third and last part of the ministry of angels concerns God's enemies; and it is to execute judgments on all wicked persons and impenitent sinners. Thus all the firstborn of Egypt are slain by an angel (Exod. 12:23,29). When Joshua was about to sack Jericho (Josh. 5:13), an angel appeared unto him as a captain, with drawn sword to fight for Israel. When the host of

Sennacherib (2 Kin. 19:35) came against Israel, the angel of the Lord in one night slew an hundred eighty and five thousand. Because Herod gave not glory unto God (Acts 12:23), the angel of the Lord smote him, as he was eaten up of worms and died.

Uses.

And thus we see what points we are to mark touching the good angels. Now followeth the use which we are to make in regard of their creation.

(a) First, whereas they are God's ministers to inflict punishments upon the wicked, here is a special point to be learned of us: that every man in the fear of God take heed how he liveth and continueth in his sins, for the case is dangerous, considering that God hath armies of angels which stand ready everywhere to execute God's heavy judgments upon them that live thus. When the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord (Exod. 32:25), Moses saith, *they were naked*, that is, open to all the judgments of God; even destitute of the guard of His good angels. Wretched Balaam, that wizard (Num. 22:31), went to Balak to curse the children of Israel; and as he went it is said, *the angel of the Lord stood in his way with a drawn sword*; and if the ass had been no wiser than his master, the angel had slain him. Whereby it appears that when we rush on into the practice of any sin, we do as much as in us lieth to cause God to send down His judgments upon us for our sins, and that by the ministry of His angels.

(b) Secondly, we are taught another lesson by Christ Himself (Matt. 18:10). *See* (saith he*) that you despise not one of these little ones*. Now mark His reason: *For I say unto you, that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father*. By *little ones* He meaneth young infants which are within the Covenant; or others which are like to young infants in simplicity and innocence of life and humility. And Christ will not have them to be despised. A duty very needful to be stood upon in these times. For nowadays, if a man carry but a shew of humility, of good conscience, and of

the fear of God, he is accounted but a silly fellow, he is hated, mocked, and despised on every hand. But this should not be so. For him whom God honoureth with the protection of His good angels, why should any mortal man despise? And it stands mockers and scorners in hand to take heed whom they mock. For though men for their parts put up many abuses and injuries, yet their angels may take just revenge, by smiting them with plagues and punishments for their offences.

(c) Thirdly, seeing angels are about us, and serve for the good of men, we must do whatsoever we do in reverent and seemly manner, as Paul gives counsel to the Philippians (Phil. 4:8), *Brethren* (saith He) *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, and pertain to love, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things*. Many men do all their affairs orderly for avoiding shame, but we must do the same upon a further ground, namely, because God's holy angels wait on us. And considering that men have care to behave themselves well when they are before men, what a shame is it for a man to behave himself unseemly either in open or in secret, he then being before the glorious angels? Paul saith (1 Cor. 11;10), that *the woman ought to have power on her head because of the angels*; that is, not only the ministers of the church, but God's heavenly angels, which daily wait upon His children and guard them in all their ways.

(d) Fourthly, this must teach us modesty and humility; for the angels of God are very notable and excellent creatures, and therefore they are called in the Psalms, *Elohim*, gods. Yet how excellent soever they be, they abase themselves to become guardians and keepers unto sinful men. Now if the angels do so abase themselves; then much more ought every man to abase and humble himself in modesty and humility before God. And whatsoever our calling is, we must not be puffed up, but be content. This is a necessary duty for all, but especially for those which are in the schools of the prophets; whatsoever their gifts or birth be, they must not think themselves

too good for the calling of the ministry, And if God hath called us thereto, we must be content to become servants unto all in the matter of salvation; though the men whom we teach be never so base or simple; for no man doth so far excel the basest person in the world, as the glorious angels of God do exceed the most excellent man that is. Therefore seeing they vouchsafe to become servants unto us, we must not think ourselves too good to serve our poor brethren.

And thus much of the duties. Now follow the consolations that arise from this, that God hath given His glorious angels to serve for the protection and safeguard of His church and people. If men's spiritual eyes were opened, they should see the devil and his angels, and all the wicked of this world to fight against them. And if there were no means of comfort in this case, then our estate were most miserable. But mark, as God's servant hath all these wicked ones to be his enemies; so he hath garrisons of angels that pitch their tents about him and defend him from them all. So David saith (Psa. 91:11,12), *He shall give thy angels charge over thee, and they shall keep him in all thy ways, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone*; where the angels of God are compared to nurses which carry little children in their arms, feed them, and are always ready at hand to save them from falls and many other dangers. When the king of Syria sent his horses (2 Kin. 6:15-17) to take Elisha the Lord's prophet, because he revealed his counsel to the king of Israel; his servant saw them round about Dothan where he was, and he cried, *Alas, master, what shall we do*? Then Elisha answered*, Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them*; and he besought the Lord to open his servant's eyes, and he looked, and behold, the mountains were full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. So likewise not many years ago, our land was preserved from the invasion of the Spaniard, whose huge navy lay upon our sea coasts. But how were we delivered from them? Surely by no strength, nor power, nor cunning of man; but it was the Lord, no doubt, by His angels that did keep our coasts, and did scatter our enemies, and drown them. Let enemies rage, and let

them do that they will, if a man keep himself in the ways which God prescribeth, he hath God's angels to guide and preserve him; which thing must move men to love and embrace the true religion, and conform themselves in all good conscience to the rule of God's Word. For when a man doth not so, all the angels of God are his enemies; and at all times ready to execute God's vengeance upon him. But when men carry themselves as dutiful children to God, they have this prerogative: that God's holy angels do watch about them, and defend them day and night from the power of their enemies, even in common calamities and miseries. Before God sends His judgments on Jerusalem, an angel is sent to mark them in the foreheads that mourn for the abominations of the people (Ezek. 9). And this privilege none can have, but he whose heart is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and that man shall have it unto the end (Exod. 12:23 with 1 Cor. 5:7).

And thus much of the creation of angels.

(ii)

Now it followeth to speak of the creation of man; wherein we must consider two things: the points of doctrine and the uses.

For the points of doctrine:

(a) First, man was created and framed by the hand of God, and made after the image of God. For Moses brings in the Lord speaking thus (Gen. 1:26,27): *Let us make man in our image* etc., *in the image of God created He them*, which also must be understood of angels. The image of God is nothing else but a conformity of man unto God, whereby man is holy as God is holy; for Paul saith (Eph. 4:24), *Put on the new man, which is after God*, that is, in God's *image is created in righteousness and holiness*. Now I reason thus: wherein the renewing of the image of God in man doth stand, therein was it at the first. But the renewing of God's image in man doth

stand in righteousness and holiness. Therefore God's image wherein man was created at the beginning, was a conformity to God in righteousness and holiness. Now whether God's image doth further consist in the substance of man's body and soul, or in the faculties of both, the Scripture speaks not. This image of God hath two principal parts: i. Wisdom; ii. Holiness.

i. Concerning wisdom, Paul saith (Col. 3:10*), Put ye on the new man, which is created in knowledge after the image of Him which created him*. This wisdom consists in three points:

a. In that he knew God his Creator perfectly; for Adam in his innocency knew God so far forth as it was convenient for a creature to know his Creator.

b. He knew God's will so far forth as it was convenient for him, to shew his obedience thereunto.

c. He knew the wisdom and will of his Creator touching the particular creatures; for after Adam was created, the lord brought every creature unto him, presenting them unto him, as being lord and king over them, that he might give names unto them. Whereby it appears that Adam in his innocency did know the nature of all creatures and the wisdom of God in creating them, else he could not have given them fit names. And when God brought Eve unto Adam, he knew her at the first, and said (Gen. 2:23), *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman* etc.

ii. The second part of God's image in man is holiness and righteousness; which is nothing else but a conformity of the will and affections, and of the whole disposition of man both in body and soul, to the will of God his Creator. Yet we must remember that Adam in his innocency had a changeable will, so as he could either will good or evil. He was created with such liberty of will, as that he could indifferently will either. And we must

not think that the will of the creature was made unchangeably good, for that is peculiar to the will of God, and hereby is the Creator distinguished from the creature.

And here two things offer themselves to be considered:

a. The first: Why the man is called the image of God, and not the woman. *Answer*: He is so called, not because holiness and righteousness is peculiar to him which is common to both; but because God hath placed more outward excellency and dignity in the person of a man than of a woman.

b. The second: How Christ should be called the image of God (Col. 1:15). *Answer*: He is so called for two special causes: First, because He is of the same substance with the Father, and therefore is His most absolute image, and as the author of Hebrews saith (Heb. 1:3), *The brightness of His glory, and the engraven form of His Person*. Secondly, because God, being invisible, doth manifest Himself in Christ, in whom as in a glass we may behold the wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy of God.

(b) The second point to be considered in the creation of man is the dignity of his person. For David saith (Psa. 8:5), *Thou hast Him little inferior to the angels, and crowned Him with glory and worship*. This dignity stands in four points:

i. A blessed communion with the true God. For Paul speaking of the Gentiles which were not called, saith (Eph. 4:18) they were *strangers from the life of God*. Where, by the contrary, we may gather that our first parents in their innocency lived the life of God, which is nothing else but to lead a life here on earth, as that the creature shall have a blessed and immediate fellowship with God; which stands in this: that before the fall of man, God revealed Himself in a special manner unto him, so as his very body and soul was a temple and dwelling place of the Creator. This fellowship between

God and man in his innocency, was made manifest in the familiar conference which God vouchsafed to man. But since the fall, this communion is lost; for man cannot abide the presence of God. And therefore when Peter had fished all night and caught nothing, our Saviour bad him cast down his net to make a draught, who did so; but when he saw the great multitude of fishes that were taken, at this sight beholding but as it were some sparks of the glorious majesty of God in Christ, he fell down at His feet, saying (Luke 5:8), *Lord depart from me, for I am a sinner*.

ii. The second point wherein man's dignity consisteth, is that man was made lord and king over all creatures. As David saith (Psa. 8:6), *Thou hast made him to have dominion in the works of thy hands*. And therefore God, having created him in His image, biddeth him (Gen. 1:28), *Rule over the fishes of the sea, over the fowls of the heaven, and over every beast that moveth upon the earth*. And afterward, He brought them all to him, as a sovereign lord and king, to be named by him. And answerably every creature in his kind gave reverence and subjection unto man, before his fall, as unto their lord and king. Where, by the way, we must remember that when we see any creature that is hurtful and noisome unto man, and would rather devour than obey him; it must put us in mind of our sin. For by creation, we were made lords and kings over all creatures. And they durst not but reverence and obey us. But the rebellion of man unto God is the cause of the rebellion of the creatures unto us.

iii. The third part of man's dignity by creation, is that before his fall he had a wonderful beauty and majesty above all creatures in his body. Whereupon David saith (Psa. 8:5), the Lord hath crowned him with *glory and worship*. And in the renewing of the covenant with Noah, God saith (Gen. 9:2) that *the dread and fear of man shall be upon all creatures*; which now though it be but small, yet doth it plainly shew what was the glory and majesty of man's person at the first.

iv. The fourth dignity of man's estate in innocency, is that his labour was without pain or weariness. If he had never fallen, he should have laboured in the garden; but so as he should have never been wearied therewith. For when Adam was fallen, God said (Gen. 3:19), *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread*. Now if the pain in labour come after as a curse upon man for his transgression, then before his fall, man felt no pain in his affairs.

And in these four things consisteth man's dignity which he had in the Creation.

(c) Now in the third, followeth man's calling before his fall, which is twofold: i. Particular. ii. General.

i. Man's particular calling was to come into the garden of Eden, to keep it, and to dress the trees and fruits thereof. This shews unto us a good lesson that every man must have a particular calling wherein he ought to walk. And therefore such as spend their time idly in gaming and vain delights, have much to answer to God at the day of judgment. This will not excuse a man to say then that he had land and living to maintain himself, and therefore was to live as he list; for even Adam in his innocency had all things at his will, and wanted nothing, yet even then God employed him in a calling. Therefore none must be exempted, but every man both high and low must walk in his proper calling.

ii. Adam's general calling was to worship his Creator, to which he was bound by the right of creation, considering the moral law was written in his heart by nature. Which is signified in the Decalogue (Exod. 20:2), where the Lord requires worship and obedience of His people because He is Jehovah, that is, one which hath being in Himself, and gives being to all men by creation. For the better understanding of this point, we are to consider three things: a. The place where Adam did worship. b. The time. c. The sacraments.

a. For the first, God ever since the beginning had a place where He would be worshipped, and it is called *God's house*, which then was the garden of Eden. For it was unto Adam a place appointed by God for His worship; as church assemblies are unto us; where also the Lord at sometime did in a special manner shew Himself unto His creature.

b. Touching the time of God's worship, it was the seventh day from the beginning of the creation, the Sabbath day. And here we must note that the keeping of the Sabbath is moral. Some indeed do plead that it is but a ceremony, yet falsely; for it was ordained before the fall of man, at which time ceremonies signifying sanctification had no place. Nay, mark further, Adam in his innocency was not clogged with sin as we are; yet then he had a set Sabbath to worship God His Creator. And therefore much more need hath every one of us of a Sabbath day wherein we may sever ourselves from the works of our callings, and the works of sin, to the worship of God in the exercise of religion and godly meditation of our creation. This point must be learned of us, for when no occasion is offered of business, then men will formerly seem to keep the Sabbath; but if there come occasion of breaking the Sabbath, as traffic, gaming and vain shews, then Sabbath farewell, men will have their pleasures, let them worship God that will. But let us remember in the fear of God, that whosoever continue in the breach of this law, being moral, God will no less pour forth His punishments upon them, than for the breach of any other commandment. The consideration whereof, must move every man to a reverent sanctifying of the Lord's day.

c. Now for Adam's sacraments, they were two: The tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. These did serve to exercise Adam in obedience unto God. The tree of life was to signify assurance of life for ever, if he did keep God's commandments. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was a sacrament to shew unto him that if he did transgress God's commandments, he should die. And it was so called because it did signify

that if he transgressed this law, he should have experience both of good and evil in himself.

(d) Now in the fourth place followeth the end of the creation of man, which is twofold:

i. First, that there might be a creature to whom God might make manifest Himself, who in a special manner should set forth and acknowledge His wisdom, goodness, mercy, in the creation of heaven and earth, and of things that are in them, as also His providence in governing the same.

ii. Secondly, God having decreed to glorify His name in shewing His mercy and justice upon His creature, hereupon in time createth men to shew His mercy in the salvation of some, and to shew His justice in the just and deserved damnation of other some. And therefore He hath appointed the creation specially of man, to be a means of manifestation and beginning of the execution of His eternal counsel.

Thus much concerning man's creation in general. The special parts of men are two: body and soul. And the reason why the Lord would have him stand on these two parts is this: Some creatures made before him were only bodily; as beasts, fishes, fowls. Some spiritual, as angels. Now man is both, spiritual in regard of his soul, corporal and sensible in regard of his body, that nothing might be wanting to the perfection of nature. If it be alleged that man consists of three parts, body soul and spirit, because Paul prayeth (1 Thess. 5:23) that the Thessalonians may be *sanctified in body, soul and spirit*; the answer is that the spirit signifies the mind, whereby men conceive and understand such things as may be understood; and the soul is there taken for the will and affections; and therefore these twain are not two parts, but only two distinct faculties of one and the same soul.

The body of man at the first was formed by God of clay, or of the dust of the earth, not to be the grave of the soul, as Plato said, but to be an excellent

and most fit instrument to put in execution the powers and faculties of the soul. And howsoever in itself considered, it is mortal, because it is compounded of contrary natures called elements; yet by the appointment and blessing of God in the creation, it became immortal till the fall of man.

As for the soul, it is no accidental quality, but a spiritual and invisible essence or nature, subsisting by itself. Which plainly appears in that the souls of men have being and continuance as well forth of the bodies of men as in the same; and are as well subject to torments as the body is. And whereas we can and do put in practice sundry actions of life, sense, motion, understanding, we do it only by the power and virtue of the soul.

Hence ariseth the difference between the souls of men and beasts. The souls of men are substances, but the souls of other creatures seem not to be substances; because they have no being out of the bodies in which they are; but rather they are certain peculiar qualities arising of the matter of the body, and vanishing with it. And it may be for this cause (Gen. 9:4) that the soul of the beast is said to be *in the blood*, whereas the like is not said of the soul of man.

And though men's souls be spirits as angels are, yet a difference must be made; for angels cannot be united with bodies, so as both shall make one whole and entire person, whereas men's souls may. Yea, the soul coupled with the body is not only the mover of the body, but the principal cause that makes man to be a man.

The beginning of the soul is not of the essence of God, unless we will make every man's soul to be God; neither doth it spring of the soul of the parents, for the soul can no more beget a soul than an angel can beget an angel. And Adam is called a living soul, and not a quickening soul. And earthly fathers are called the fathers of our bodies, and not of our souls. It remains therefore as being most agreeable to the Scriptures, that the souls of men are then created by God of nothing when they are infused into the body.

And though the souls of men have a beginning, yet they have no end, but are eternal. And when they are said to die, it is not because thy cease at any time to subsist or have being in nature, but because they cease to be righteous, or to have fellowship with God.

Uses.

(a) Whereas our bodies are God's workmanship, we must glorify Him in our bodies, and all the actions of body and soul, our eating and drinking, our living and dying, must be referred to His glory. Yea, we must not hurt or abuse our body, but present them as holy and living sacrifices unto God. And whereas God made us of the dust of the earth, we are not to glory and boast ourselves, but rather to take occasion to praise the great goodness of God, that hath vouchsafed to honour us being but dust and ashes. And after that man is created, what is his life? Alas, it is nothing but a little breath. Stop his mouth and his nostrils, and he is but a dead man. By this we are put in mind to consider of our frail and uncertain estate, and to lay aside all confidence in ourselves. And for this cause Isaiah teacheth us (Isa. 2:22) to have no confidence in man, because his breath is in his nostrils.

(b) Again, let us mark the frame and shape of man's body. All other creatures go with their bodies and eyes to the groundward; but man was made to go upright; and whereas all other creatures have but four muscles to turn their eyes round about, man hath a fifth, to pull his eyes up to heavenward. Now what doth this teach us? Surely, that howsoever we seek for other things, yet, first of all, and above all, we should seek for the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof; and that our whole desire should be set to enjoy the blessed estate of God's children in heaven. Secondly, it teaches us in receiving God's creatures, to return thankfulness unto God, by lifting up the heart to heaven for the same. These are very needful and profitable lessons in these days; for most men indeed go upright; but look into their lives, and they might as well go on all fours; for

in their conversation they set their whole hearts upon the earth as the beast doth, and their eyes upon the things of this world. Hereby they do abase themselves, and deface their bodies, and being men, make themselves as beasts. We shall see great numbers of men that run and ride from place to place, to provide for the body; but to seek the kingdom of heaven, where their souls should dwell after this life in joy for ever, they will not stir one foot.

(c) Thirdly, man's body by creation was made a temple framed by God's own hands for Himself to dwell in; therefore our duty is to keep our bodies pure and clean, and not to suffer them to be instruments whereby to practise the sin of the heart (1 Cor. 6:19). If a man had a fair house wherein he must entertain a prince, and should make thereof a swine sty, or a stable, would not all men say that he did greatly abuse both the house and the prince? Even so, man's body being at the first made a palace for the ever-living God; if a man shall abuse it by drunkenness, swearing, lying, fornication, or any uncleanness, he doth make it instead of a temple for the Holy Ghost, to be a sty or stable for the devil. For the more filthy a man's body is, the more fit it is to be a dwelling place for sin and Satan.

(d) Fourthly, man by creation was made a goodly creature in the blessed image of God; but by Adam's fall, men lost the same, and are now become the deformed children of wrath. Our duty therefore is to labour to get again our first image, and endeavour ourselves to become new creatures. If a nobleman should stain his blood by treason, after his death the posterity will never be at rest till they have got away the spot. Man, by Adam's fall, is become a limb of the devil, a rebel and a traitor against God's majesty; and this is the state of every one of us: by nature we are at enmity with God, and therefore we ought to labour above all things in the world, to be restored in Christ to our first estate and perfection, that so we may become bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, being justified and sanctified by His obedience, death and passion.

(e) Fifthly, man was created that there might be a way prepared whereby God might shew His grace and mercy in the salvation of some, and His justice in the deserved damnation of others for their sins. And in the creation of man, God's eternal counsel begins to come into execution. Hereupon it stands us in hand to make conscience of every evil way, being repentant for all our sins past, and having a constant purpose never to sin more as we have done, that by our good conversation here in this life, we may have assurance that we be eternally chosen to salvation by the Lord Himself.

(f) Lastly, whereas we have learned that the soul of man is immortal, we are hereby taught to take more care for the soul than for the body; for it cannot be extinguished. When it is condemned, even then it is always in dying, and can never die. But alas, in this point the case is flat contrary in the world; for men labour all their lives long to get for the body, but for the soul they care little or nothing at all, whether it sink or swim, go to heaven or hell, they respect not. This doth appear to be true by the practice and behaviour of men on the Lord's day; for if the number of those which come to hear God's Word, were compared with those which run about their worldly wealth and pleasure, I fear me the better sort would be found to be but a little handful to a huge heap, or as a drop to the ocean sea, in respect of the other. But wilt thou go an hundred miles for the increase of thy wealth and delight of thy body? Then think it not much to go ten thousand miles (if need were) to take any pains for the good of thy soul, and to get food for the same, it being everlasting.

And thus much for the duties. Now follow the consolations. Although by reason of the fall of man we can have but little comfort now; yet the Creation doth confirm the unspeakable providence of God over His creatures, but especially over man, in that the Lord created him the sixth day; and so before he was made, prepared him a paradise for his dwelling place, and all creatures for his use and comfort. And if He were thus careful

for us when we were not, then no doubt He will be much more careful for us at this present, in which we live and have being. Nay, mark further; since the fall, man eats and drinks in quantity a great deal which in common reason should rather kill him than turn to the strength and nourishment of his body. Yet herein doth the wonderful power of the Creator most notably appear, who hath made man's stomach as a limbeck or still to digest all meats that are wholesome for his nourishment and preservation.

2b.

And thus much for the Creation. Now in these words, *Maker of heaven and earth*, is more to be understood than the works of creation, namely, God's providence in governing all things created, as He appointeth in His eternal decree. And therefore St Peter saith (1 Pet. 4:19), God is a *faithful Creator*, that is, God did not only make heaven and earth, and so leave them, as masons and carpenters leave houses when they are built; for by His providence He doth most wisely govern the same.

Now therefore let us come to speak of God's providence. And first of all, the question offers itself to be considered, whether there be any providence or not? For the minds of men are troubled with many doubtings hereof. And to make the question out of all doubt, I will use four arguments to confirm the providence of God:

(1) The first is the testimony of the Scripture, which ascribes the event of all particular actions, even such as are in themselves casual as the casting of lots and such like (Prov. 16:33), to the disposition of God. Which very thing also teacheth that even men themselves, endued with reason and understanding, have need to be guided in all things, and governed by God (Prov. 20:24; Jer. 10:23); and it serves to confute those that deny God's providence. *Why sayest thou O Jacob, and speakest O Israel, My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over by my God*? (Isa. 40:27).

(2) The second argument may be taken from the order which appeareth in the whole course of nature. First, to begin with families, there is to be seen an eutaxie or seemly order, in which some rule and some obey. And the like is to be found in towns, cities, countries and kingdoms; yea, even in the whole world in which all things are so disposed that one serveth for the good of another. Trees and herbs and the grass of the field serve for beasts and cattle; beasts and cattle serve for men; the heavens above serve for them which are beneath; and all the creatures which are above and beneath serve for God. This argueth that God is most wise and provident in ordering and disposing all things whatsoever.

(3) The third argument is taken from conscience, specially of malefactors. Suppose a man that commits a murder so closely that no man knows thereof, and that the party himself is free from all the danger of the law; yet shall he have his own conscience to accuse, upbraid and condemn him, yea even to fright him out of his wit, and to give him no more rest than he can find upon the rack or gibbet. Now this accusation and terror of conscience, is nothing else but the forerunner of another most terrible judgment of God, who is Lord of all creatures, and judge of all men. And this also proves the providence of God. For if the conscience can find a man out and lay his faults to his charge, how much more shall God Himself the Creator of the conscience see and consider all his doings?

(4) The fourth and last argument is this: The prophecies of things to come should be uncertain or false, if God governed not the world. But now considering things many years ago foretold, come to pass in the same manner as they were foretold by the prophets and apostles; hereby we must certainly conclude that there is a providence of God whereby all and everything is governed.

Against the providence of God sundry things be alleged:

(1) The first and special is that providence and disorder, confusion and order, cannot stand together. Now, in the world there is nothing but disorder and confusion, in seditions, treasons, conspiracies, and subversions of kingdoms; where also sin and wickedness prevails. *Answer*: It is true indeed there hath been confusion in the world ever since the fall of man and angels; and it ariseth not from God, but from them alone; who as they did at the first transgress the will of God, so they do what they can to turn all upside down. Now then, confusion and disorder is only in respect of the devil and his instruments; but in regard of God, in the very midst of all confusion, there is order to be found, because He can, and doth, dispose it to the glory of His own name, and to the good and salvation of His chosen, as also to the confusion of His enemies.

(2) Again, it may be objected that with ungodly and wicked men, all things go well; and contrariwise with the godly, all things go hardly. For through the world, none are more molested and more under outward misery than they. But if there were any providence in God, then it should be otherwise; the godly should flourish and the wicked perish. *Answer*: The consideration of the outward estate of men in the world, was to David an occasion of a sore temptation. For when he saw the wicked to prosper always, and their riches to increase, he brake forth and said (Psa. 73:13), *Certainly, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency*. Now if we would repel this temptation, as David afterward did, then we must go into the Lord's sanctuary with him, and learn to be resolved in these points:

(i) Though the godly be laden with miseries, yet even that, by the especial providence of God, turns to their great good. For every man since the fall of Adam is stained with the loathsome contagion of sin. Now the child of God that is truly regenerate, and must be fellow-heir with Christ after this life in the kingdom of glory, must in this life be cast into the Lord's furnace, that in the fire of affliction he may more and more be scoured and purified from

the corruption of his nature, and be estranged from the wickedness of the world.

(ii) The prosperous success of the wicked, their spoils, their revenues, and all their honour, turns to their greater woe in the end; as doth appear in Job's history, and in the examples of the Chaldeans, of David's enemies, and of Dives and Lazarus.

(3) Thirdly, it may be objected that many things come to pass by chance, and therefore not by God's providence; because chance and providence cannot stand together. *Answer*: We must distinguish between *chance* and *mere chance*. *Chance* is when anything comes to pass, the cause thereof being unknown not simply, but in respect of man; and therefore in regard of men which know not the reason of things, we may say there is chance. And so the Spirit of God speaks (Eccl. 9:11) *Time and chance come to them all*. And again (Luke 10:31*), By chance there came down a priest the same way*. Now this kind of chance is not against the providence of God, but is ordered by it. For things which in regard of men are casual, are certainly known and determined by God. *Mere chance* is when things are said or thought to come to pass without any cause at all. But that must be abhorred of us as an overturning the providence of God.

Thus seeing it is plain that there is a providence, let us in the next place see what it is. Providence is a most free and powerful action of God, whereby he hath care over all things that are.

Providence hath two parts: *knowledge* and *government*.

(1) God's *knowledge* is whereby all things from the greatest to the least are manifest before Him at all times. As David saith (Psa. 11:4), *His eyes will consider, His eyelids will try the children of men*. And again (Psa. 113:6), *He abaseth Himself to behold the things that are in the heaven and the earth*. And the prophet Hanani said to Asa (2 Chr. 16:9), *The eyes of the*

Lord behold all the earth. And St James saith (Acts 15:18), *From the beginning of the world God knoweth all His works*. This point hath a double use, as St Peter saith (1 Pet. 3:11,12), it must move us *to eschew evil and do good*. Why? Because, saith he, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His countenance against evildoers*. Secondly, it must comfort all those that labour to keep a good conscience. For the eyes of God behold all the earth *to shew Himself strong with them that are of perfect heart towards Him* (2 Chr. 16:9).

(2) *Government* is the second part of God's providence, whereby He ordereth all things and directeth them to good ends. And it must be extended to the very least thing that is in heaven or earth, as to the sparrows, and to oxen, and to the hairs of our heads (Matt. 6:26; Deut. 25:4; Matt. 10:29,30).And here we must consider two things: the manner of government and the means.

(i) The manner of government is diverse, according as things are good or evil.

(a) A *good* thing is that which is approved of God. As, first of all, the substances of all creatures, even of the devils themselves; in whom whatsoever is remaining since their creation is in itself good. Secondly, the quantities, qualities, motions, actions and inclinations of the creatures in themselves considered with all their events are good. Again, good is either natural or moral. *Natural*, which is created by God for the lawful use of man. *Moral*, which is agreeable to the eternal and unchangeable wisdom of God revealed in the moral law.

Now God governeth all good things two ways: First, by sustaining and preserving them that they decay not. Secondly, by moving them that they may attain to the particular ends for which they were severally ordained.

For the quality and virtues which were placed in the sun, moon, stars, trees, plants, seeds, etc., would lie dead in them and be unprofitable, unless they were not only preserved, but also stirred up and quickened by the power of God so oft as He employs them to any use.

(b) *Evil* is the destruction of nature; and it is taken [a] for sin, or [b] for the punishment of sin.

[a] Now sin is governed by two actions:

i The first is an *operative pemission*. I so call it, because God partly permitteth sin and partly worketh in it. For sin as it is commonly taken hath two parts: the subject or matter, and the form of sin. The subject of sin is a certain quality or action; the form is the anomie or transgression of God's law. The first is good in itself, and every quality or action, so far forth as it is a quality or action, is existing in nature, and hath God to be the author of it. Therefore sin, though it be sufficiently evil to eternal damnation, yet can it not be said to be absolutely evil as God is absolutely good, because the subject of it is good, and therefore it hath in its respects and regards of goodness. In respect of the second, that is, the breach of the law itself, God neither willeth, nor appointeth, nor commandeth, nor causeth, nor helpeth sin, but forbiddeth, condemneth and punisheth it; yet so as withal He willingly permitteth it to be done by others as men and wicked angels, they being the sole authors and causes of it. And this permission by God is upon a good end; because thereby He manifesteth His justice and mercy. Thus it appears that in original sin, the natural inclination of the mind, will and affections in itself considered is from God; and the ataxie or corruption of

the inclination is in no wise from Him, but only permitted. Again, that in actual sin the motion of the body or mind is from God, but the evilness and disorder of the motion is not from Him, but freely permitted to be done by others. As for example, in the act of murder, the action of moving the whole body, of stirring the several joints, and the fetching of the blow whereby the man is slain, is from God; for *in Him we live, move, and have our being* (Acts 17:28); but the disposing and applying of all these actions to this end, that our neighbour's life may be taken away, and we thereby take revenge upon him, is not from God, but from the wicked will of man and the devil.

ii. God's second action in the government of sin is after the just permission of it; partly to restrain it more or less, according to His good will and pleasure, and partly to dispose and turn it against the nature thereof to the glory of His own name, to the punishment of His enemies, and to the correcting and chastisement of His elect.

[b] As for the second kind of evil, called the punishment of sin, it is the execution of justice, and hath God to be the author of it. And in this respect, Isaiah saith (Isa. 45:7) that God *createth evil*; and Amos (Amos 3:6), that *there is no evil in the city which God hath not done*. And God as a most just judge may punish sin by sin, Himself in the mean season free from all sin. And thus the places must be understood in which it is said that *God giveth kings in His wrath* (Hos. 13:11; Neh. 9:37)*; hardeneth the heart, blindeth the eyes* (Exod. 4-7)*; mingleth the spirit of errors* (Isa. 19:14)*; giveth up men to a reprobate sense* (Rom. 1:28)*; sendeth strong illusions to believe lies* (2 Thess. 2:11)*; sendeth evil spirits giving them commandment to hurt, and leave to deceive* (1 Kin. 22:22) etc.

(ii) Thus having seen in what manner God governeth all things, let us now come to the means of government. Sometimes God worketh without means, thus He created all things in the beginning; and He made trees and plants to grow and flourish without the heat of the sun or rain. Sometimes He governs according to the usual course and order of nature, as when He preserves our lives by meat and drink; yet so, as He can and doth most freely order all things by means either above nature or against nature, as it shall seem good unto Him. As when He caused the sun to stand in the firmament (Josh. 10:12), and go back in Ahaz's dial (Isa. 38:8); when He caused the fire not to burn the three children (Dan. 3:27); when He kept back dew and rain three years in Israel (1 Kin. 18:45; Jam. 5:17); when He made waters flow out of the rock (Exod. 17:6); when He caused Elijah's cloak to divide the waters of Jordan (2 Kin. 2:8); when He caused iron to swim (2 Kin. 6:6); when He preserved Jonah alive three days and three nights in the whale's belly (Jon. 1:17); when He cured diseases by the strength of nature incurable, as the leprosy of Naaman (2 Kin. 5:14), the issue of blood (Matt. 9:20), and blindness (John 9:6,7) etc.

Among all the means which God useth, the special are the reasonable creatures, which are no passive instruments, as the tools in the hand of workmen, but active; because as they are moved by God, so again being endued with will and reason, they move themselves. And such instruments are either good or evil.

Evil, as wicked men and angels. And these He useth to do His good will and pleasure, even then when they do least of all obey Him. And considering that the sinning instrument which is moved by God doth also move itself freely without any constraint on God's part; God Himself is free from all blame, when the instrument is blameworthy. In directing the instrument, God sinneth not. The action indeed is of Him, but the defect of the action from the instrument; which, being corrupt, can itself do nothing but that that is corrupt; God in the mean season by it, bringeth that to pass which is very good. The whole cause of sin is in Satan and in us. As for God, He puts no wickedness into us, but the evil which he finds in us He moves, that is, orders and governs, and bends it by His infinite wisdom, when and in what manner it pleaseth Him, to the glory of His name, the evil instrument not knowing so much, nay, intending a far other end. As in the mill, the horse blindfolded goes forward, and perceives nothing but that he is in the ordinary way, whereas the miller himself whips him and stirs him forward for another end, namely for the grinding of corn. And this is that which we must hold touching God's providence over wicked men and angels. And it stands with the tenor of the whole Bible. Joseph's brethren sold him to Egypt very wickedly, even in the testimony of their own consciences; yet Joseph having respect to the counsel and work of God which He performed by His brethren, saith that the Lord sent him hither (Gen. 45:7,8). And the church of Jerusalem saith that Herod and Pontius Pilate did nothing in the death of Christ but that which *the hand and counsel of God had determined to be done* (Acts 4:28); because though they wickedly intended nothing but to shew their malice and hatred in the death of Christ; yet God propounding a further matter by them than ever they dreamed of, shewed forth His endless mercy to man in the work of redemption. On this manner must all the places of Scripture be understood in which it is said that God gave the wives of David to Absalom (2 Sam. 12:11); that God moved David to number the people (2 Sam. 24:1); that He commanded Shimei to rail on David (2 Sam. 16:11); that the Medes and Persians are His sanctified ones (Isa. 10:5; 13:3); that the revolt of the ten tribes was done by God (2 Chr.

11:4) etc. By all these examples it appears that we must not sever God's permission from His will or decree; and that we must put difference between the evil work of man; and the good work of God which He doth by man. And the whole matter may yet be more clearly perceived by this comparision: A thief at the day of assize is condemned, and the magistrate appoints him to be executed; the hangman owing a grudge to the malefactor, useth him hardly, and prolongeth his punishment longer than he should. Now the magistrate and the hangman do both one and the same work, yet the hangman for his part is a murderer, the magistrate in the mean season no murderer, but a just judge putting justice in execution by the hangman. So God, though He use evil instruments, yet is He free from the evil of the instruments.

And further we must here mark the difference which must be made in God's using all kinds of instruments. When He useth good creatures, as angels, He worketh His will not only by them, but also in them; because He inspires them and guides them by His Spirit so as they shall will and do that which He willeth and intendeth. As for evil instruments, He worketh by them only, and not in them; because He holds back His grace from them and leaves them to themselves, to put in practice the corruption of their own hearts.

Thus much of the parts of God's providence; now follow the kinds thereof. God's providence is either *general* or *special*.

(1) *General*, is that which extends itself to the whole world and all things indifferently, even to the devils themselves. By this providence God continues and maintains the order which He set in nature in the Creation, and he preserves the life, substance and the being of all and every creature in his kind.

(2) The *special* providence is that which God sheweth and exerciseth towards His church and chosen people, in gathering and guiding them by

His mighty power against the gates of hell. And therefore God's church here upon earth is called the kingdom of grace, in which He shews not only a general power over His creatures, but withal the special operation of His Spirit in bowing and bending the hearts of men to His will.

Thus much concerning the doctrine of God's providence. Now follows the duties:

(1) First, seeing there is a providence of God over everything that is, we are hereby taught to take good heed of the transgression of the least of God's commandments. If men were persuaded that the prince had an eye everywhere, doubtless many subjects in England would walk more obediently to the laws of the land than they do; and durst in no wise work such villainies as are daily practised. Well, howsoever it is with earthly princes, yet this all-seeing presence is least wanting in God. He hath an eye everywhere. Wheresoever thou art, there God beholdeth thee, as David saith (Psa. 53), *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek God*. Therefore, except thou be brutish and past shame, take heed of sin. If men had but a spark of grace, the consideration of this would make them loathe the practice of any evil work. Elijah saith to Ahab (1 Kin. 17:1*), As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these three years*. Where the prophet confirmeth his speech with an oath saying, *As the Lord of hosts liveth* it shall be so. And lest Ahab should think he made no conscience what he said, he addeth this clause: that he stood in the presence of God. As if he should say: Howsoever thou thinkest of me, yet as it stands me in hand, so do I make conscience of my word, for I stand in the presence of God, and therefore know it, as the Lord liveth there shall be no rain nor dew these three years. So Cornelius having an eye to God's providence, doth move himself and all his household to a solemn hearing of the Word of God delivered by the mouth of Peter, saying that *they were all present before God, to hear all things commanded of Him* (Acts 10:33). As these

men had regard to God's providence, so we likewise must behave ourselves reverently, making conscience of our behaviour both in words and works; because wheresoever we be, we are in the presence of God.

(2) Secondly, if there be a providence of God over everything, then we must learn contentment of mind in every estate; yea, in adversity under the cross when all goes against us we must be content, because God's providence hath so appointed. So David in the greatest of his griefs was dumb and spake nothing (Psa. 39:9), because *thou Lord didst it*. And when Shimei cursed David (2 Sam. 16:10), Abishai would have had the king to have given him leave to have slain him; but David would not suffer it, but said, He curseth even *because the Lord hath bidden him, Curse David; who dare then say, Wherefore hast thou done so*? In whose example we may see a pattern of quietness of mind. When a cross cometh, it is a hard thing to be patient; but we must draw ourselves thereunto by consideration of God's especial providence.

(3) Thirdly, when outward means of preservation in this life do abound, as health, honour, riches, peace and pleasure, then we must remember to be thankful; because these things always come by the providence of God. Thus Job was thankful both in prosperity and adversity (Job 1:21), *The Lord*, saith he, *gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord*. Indeed to be patient in every estate and thankful to God is a very hard matter; yet will it be more easy if we learn in all things that befall us in this life, never to sever the consideration of the things that come to pass from God's providence. For as the body and soul of man (though we see only the body) are always together as long as man liveth; so is God's providence joined with the thing done; so we must also in it, labour to see and acknowledge the good pleasure and appointment of God. As for example, a man's house is set on fire, and all his goods consumed; this very sight would make him at his wits end; but now as he beholds this event with one eye, so with the other eye he must at that very instant look upon God's

blessed providence. When a man beholds and feels the loss of his friends, he cannot but grieve thereat, unless he be more senseless than stock or stone; yet that he may not be overwhelmed with grief, he must ever with one eye look at the pleasure of God herein. This will be an especial means to stay the rage of any headstrong affection in all our afflictions. In the world, the manner of men is, if health, wealth and ease abound, to think all is well; but if crosses come, as loss of friends, and loss of goods, then men cry out, as being straught of their wits. The reason is because they look only at the outward means, and tie God's providence to them; not being able to see any goodness or providence of God out of ordinary means. Again, when a man is stored with riches, honour, wealth and prosperity, he must not barely look on them, but behold withal God's goodness and blessing in them; for if that be wanting, all the riches in the world are nothing. Likewise in receiving thy meat and drink, thou must look further into the blessing of God upon it; which if it be away, thy meat and thy drink can no more nourish thee than the stone in the wall. And the same must we do in every business of our callings; which if men would learn to practise, they would not so much trust to the means, as honour, wealth, favour etc., but rather to God Himself. The Lord by the prophet Habakkuk (Hab. 1:16), reproves the Chaldeans for *offering sacrifice unto their nets*; which sin they committed because they looked only upon outward things; and like moles had no power to see further into them, and to behold the work of God in all their proceedings. And this is the very cause why we are unthankful for God's benefits; for though we behold the bare creatures, yet are we so blind, that we cannot discern any blessing and providence of God in them. Therefore let us learn to look upon both jointly together, and so shall we be thankful unto God in prosperity, and patient in adversity with Job and David. This lesson Paul learned (Phil. 4:12,13); *I can be abased* (saith he) *and I can abound; everywhere in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry; and to abound and to be in want*.

(4) Fourthly, seeing God's providence disposeth all things, we are taught to gather observations of the same in things both past and present, that we may learn thereby to be armed against the time to come. Thus David, when he was to encounter with Goliath, gathered hope and confidence to himself for the time to come, by the observation of God's providence in the time past; for, saith he (1 Sam. 17:36,37), *When I kept my father's sheep, I slew a lion and a bear that devoured the flock. Now the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and our of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*.

(5) Fifthly, because God's providence disposeth all things, when we make lawful promises to do anything, we must put in, or at the least conceive this condition: *Of the Lord's will*. For St James saith that we ought to say (Jam. 4:15), *If the Lord will, and if we live, we will do this or that*. This also was David's practice; for to all the congregation of Israel he said (1 Chr. 13:2), *If it seem good to you, and if it proceed from the Lord our God, we will send to and fro*, etc.

(6) Sixthly, seeing God's providence is manifest in ordinary means, it beholdeth every man in his calling to use them carefully. And when ordinary means be at hand, we must not look for any help without them, though the Lord be able to do what He will without means. Joab, when many Aramites came against him, he heartened his soldiers though they were but few in number, bidding them (2 Sam. 10:12), *Be strong and valiant for their people, and for the cities of their God, and then let the Lord do that which is good in His eyes*. And our Saviour Christ avoucheth it to be flat tempting of God for Him to leap down from the pinnacle of the temple to the ground (Matt. 4:6,7), whereas there was an ordinary way at hand to descend by stairs. Hence it appears that such persons as will use no means whereby they may come to repent and believe, do indeed no more repent and believe than they can be able to live which neither eat nor drink.

And thus much of the duties. Now follow the consolations. First, this very point of God's special providence is a great comfort to God's church; for the Lord moderateth the rage of the devil and wicked men that they shall not hurt the people of God. David saith (Psa. 16:8), *The Lord is at my right hand, therefore I shall not slide*. And, when Joseph's brethren were afraid because they had sold him into Egypt, he comforteth them saying (Gen. 45:7) that it was God that sent him before them for their preservation. So king David, when his soldiers were purposed to stone him to death, he was in great sorrow; but it is said (1 Sam. 30:6), *He comforted himself in the Lord his God*. Where we may see that a man which hath grace to believe in God and rely on His providence in all his afflictions and extremities, shall have wonderful peace and consolation.

Of the Fall of Man, and the Covenant of Grace

Before we can proceed to the articles which follow, it is requisite that we should entreat of one of the greatest works of God's providence that can be, because the opening of it giveth light to all that ensueth. And this work is a preparation of such means whereby God will manifest His justice and mercy. It hath two parts: The just permission of the fall of man, and the giving of the Covenant of grace.

1.

Touching the first, that we might rightly conceive of man's fall, we are to search out the nature and parts of sin. Sin is anything whatsoever is against

the will and Word of God. As St John saith (1 John 3:4), *Sin is the transgression of the law*. And this definition Paul confirmeth when he saith (Rom. 3:20), *By the law comes knowledge of sin*, and (Rom. 4:15), *Where no law is there is no transgression*, and (Rom. 5:13), *Sin is not imputed where there is no law*.

In *sin*, we must consider three things: the fault, the guilt, the punishment.

(1) The *fault* is the anomie or the disobedience itself, and it comprehends not only huge and notorious offences, idolatry, blasphemy, theft, treason, adultery, and all other crimes that the world cries shame on; but every disordered thought, affection, inclination; yea, every defect of that which the law requireth.

(2) The *guilt* of sin is whereby a man is guilty before God, that is, bound and made subject to punishment. And here two questions must be scanned: Where man is bound? And by what? For the first, man is bound in conscience. And hereupon the conscience of every sinner sits within his heart as a little judge to tell him that he is bound before God to punishment. For the second, it is the order of divine justice set down by God which binds the conscience of the sinner before God; for He is Creator and Lord, and man is a creature, and therefore must either obey His will and commandment, or suffer punishment. Now then, by virtue of God's law, conscience binds over the creature to bear a punishment for his offence done against God; yea, it tells him that he is in danger to be judged and condemned for it. And therefore the conscience is as it were the Lord's sergeant to inform the sinner of the bond and obligation whereby he always stands bound before God.

(3) The third thing which followeth sin is *punishment*, and that is death. So St Paul saith (Rom. 6:23), *The stipend of sin is death*; where by death, we must understand a double death, both of body and soul. The death of the body is a separation of the body from the soul. The second death is a

separation of the whole man, but especially of the soul from the glorious presence of God. I say not simply from the presence of God, for God is everywhere; but only from the joyful presence of God's glory. Now these two deaths are the stipend or allowance of sin; and the least sin which a man committeth, doth deserve these two punishments. For in every sin, the infinite justice of God is violated; for which cause there must needs be inflicted an infinite punishment, that there may be a proportion between the punishment and the offence. And therefore that distinction of sin which papists make, namely that some are in themselves venial and some mortal, is false, and hereby confuted; otherwise in respect of the divers estate and condition of men, sins are either venial or mortal. Venial they are to the elect, whose sins are pardonable in Christ; but to the reprobate, all sins are mortal.

Nevertheless, we hold not all sins equal, but that they are greater or less according to the diversity of objects and other circumstances.

This much of sin in general; now we come to the parts of it. The first sin of all that ever was in man is the sin of Adam, which was his disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit. In handling whereof, sundry points are to be opened, but let us begin with the causes thereof:

The outward efficient cause was the devil. And though he be not named by Moses in the history of the fall, yet that is not to trouble us, for we must not conceive otherwise of the serpent than of the instrument and mouth of the devil. For it is not likely that it being a brute creature should be able to reason and determine of good and evil, of truth and falsehood. Now in the temptation, the devil shews his malice and his fraud. His malice is that whereas he cannot overturn God Himself, yet he labours to disturb the order which He hath set down in the Creation, and especially the image of God in the most excellent creatures on earth, that they may be in the same miserable condition with himself. His fraud, first in that he begins his

temptation with the woman being the weaker person, and not with the man, which course he still continues; as may appear by this: that more women are entangled with witchcraft and sorcery than men. Secondly, he shews his fraud in that he proceeds very slyly and entangles Eve by certain steps and degrees. For first, by moving a question, he draws her to listen unto him and to reason with him of God's commandment. Secondly, he brings her to look upon the tree and wish to view the beauty of the fruit. Thirdly, he makes her to doubt of the absolute truth of God's Word and promise, and to believe his contrary lies. Fourthly, having blinded her mind with his false persuasion, she desires and lusts after the forbidden fruit, and thereupon takes it, eats it and gives it to her husband.

The inward cause was the will of our first parents, even in the testimony of their own consciences, as Solomon saith (Eccl. 7:29), *This have I found, that God made man righteous, but they have found many inventions*. But it may be objected that if Adam were created good, he could not be the cause of his own fall, because a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. *Answer*: Freedom of will is fourfold: First, freedom to evil alone, this is only in wicked men and angels, and is indeed a bondage; the second is freedom to good alone, and that is in God and the good angels by God's grace; the third is freedom to do good in part, joined with some want of liberty by reason of sin, and this is in the regenerate in this life; the fourth is freedom either to good or evil indifferently. And this was in Adam before his fall, who though he had no inclination to sin, but only to that which was acceptable to God; yet was he not bound by any necessity, but had his liberty freely to choose or refuse either good or evil. And this is evident by the very tenor of God's commandment, in which He forbids Adam to eat the forbidden fruit; and thereby shewing that he being created righteous, and not prone to sin, had power to keep or not to keep the commandment; though since the fall, both he and we after him cannot but sin. Wherefore Adam being allured by Satan, of his own free accord, changed himself and fell from God. Now then, as the good tree changed from good to evil brings forth evil fruit; so

Adam by his own inward and free motion changing from good to evil, brings forth evil.

As for God, He is not to be reputed as an author or cause any way of this sin, for He created Adam and Eve righteous, endued them with righteous wills; and He told them what He would exact at their hand and what they could perform. Yea, He added threatenings that with the fear of danger He might terrify them from sin. Some may say, whereas God foresaw that Adam would abuse the liberty of his will, why would He not prevent it? *Answer*: There is a double grace: the one to be able to will to do that which is good, the other to be able to persevere in willing and doing the same. Now God gave the first to Adam and not the second; and He is not to be blamed of us, though He confirmed him not with new grace, for He is a debtor to no man to give him so much as the least grace; whereas He had already given a plentiful measure thereof to him. And God did hold back to confer any further grace upon just cause:

(1) It was His pleasure that this fact should be an occasion or way to exercise His mercy in the saving of the elect and His justice in the deserved condemnation of impenitent sinners. And unless Adam had fallen for himself and others, there should have been found no misery in men, on whom God might take pity in His Son, nor wickedness which He might condemn; and therefore neither manifestation of justice, nor mercy.

(2) It was the will of God in part to forsake Adam, to make manifest the weakness that is in the most excellent creatures, without the special and continual assistance of God.

(3) There is a double liberty of will: one is to will good or evil. This belongs to the creature in this world and therefore Adam received it. The other is to will good alone. This he wanted, because it is reserved to the life to come. And though we knew no cause of this dealing of God, yet is it one step to the fear of God for us to hold that good and righteous which He appointeth

or willeth; and not to square the works and judgments of God by our crooked reason.

And yet to come to reason itself; Who can here complain of God? Can the devil? But God did not cause him to tempt or deceive our first parents. Can Adam and Eve? But they fell freely without any motion or instigation from God, and their own conscience accused them for it. Can the posterity of Adam? But the elect receive more in Christ than they lost in Adam; and the reprobate, overwhelmed with the burden of their own sins, and thereupon receiving nothing but due and deserved damnation, cannot find fault. But some may further reply and say, He that forseeth an evil and doth not prevent it, is a cause of it. But God did foresee the fall of man, and did not prevent it. *Answer*: The rule is generally true in man, that the foreseer of an evil not preventing it, is in some sort a doer of it; for it is the sentence of the law of God, to which man is bound from the first creation. But God is above all His laws, and not bound to them. He is an absolute Lord and lawgiver, and therefore His actions are not within the compass of moral laws, as men's are. Whereupon it follows that though he did foresee man's defection, yet is He free from all blame in not preventing it. For with Him there be good causes of permitting evil.

And though God be no cause of man's fall, yet must we not imagine that it came to pass by chance or fortune, whereas the least things that are, come to pass with God's providence. Neither was it by any bare permission without His decree and will; for that is to make an idle providence. Neither did it happen against the will of God; He utterly nilling it; for then it could not have been, unless we deny God to be omnipotent. It remains therefore that this fall did so proceed of the voluntary motion of Adam, as that God did in part ordain and will the permitting of it, not as it was a sin against His commandment, but as it was further in the counsel of God a way to execute His justice and mercy. Against this which I say, divers things are objected:

(1) First, that if Adam did that which God in any respect willed, then he did not sin at all. *Answer*: He that willeth, and doth that which God willeth, for all that, sinneth, unless he willeth it in the same manner with God, and for the same end. Now in the permitting of this fact, God intended the manifesting of His glory; but our first parents, intending no such thing, sought not only to be like, but also to be equal with God.

(2) Secondly, it is alleged that Adam could not but fall necessarily, if God decreed it. *Answer*: Adam's fall, that came not to pass without God's decree, and therefore in that respect was necessary; was nevertheless in respect of Adam's free will contingent and not necessary; God's decree not taking away the freedom of will, but only ordering it.

(3) Lastly, it is alleged that God's will is the cause of Adam's will, and Adam's will the cause of his fall, and that therefore God's will shall be the cause of the fall. *Answer*: It must needs be granted that God's will is a moving cause of the wills of evil men; yet, mark how: not as they are evil wills, but as they are wills; and therefore when God inclines the evil will of His creature to His good purpose, He is nothing at all entangled with defect or evil of His will.

Touching the *time* of the fall, the received opinion in former ages hath been that our first parents fell the same day in which they were created, and therefore Augustine writes that they stood but six hours. And though we cannot determine of the certain time, yet in all likelihood it was very short. For Moses presently after that he had set down the creation of man, without the interposition of anything else, comes immediately to the fall. And considering the nature of the devil is without ceasing to shew his malice, no doubt he took the first occasion that possibly might be had to bring man to the same damnation with himself. And our Saviour Christ saith (John 8:44) that the devil was a manslayer from the beginning not of the creation of the world, or of time, but of man. And Eve saith (Gen. 3:2), *We shall eat of the*

fruit of the trees of the garden, it may be, insinuating that as yet she had not eaten when the devil tempted her.

Touching the *greatness* of man's fall, some have made a small matter of it, because it was the eating of an apple or some such fruit. But we must not measure the greatness or smallness of a sin by the object or matter whereabout it is occupied, but by the commandment of God, and by the disobedience or offence of His infinite majesty. And that this act of Adam and Eve was no small fault, but a notorious crime and apostasy, in which they withdrew themselves from under the power of God, nay rejected and denied Him, will evidently appear if we take a view of all the particular sins that be contained in it:

The first is *unbelief*, in that they doubted and distrusted of the truth of God's Word which He spake to them. The second is *contempt of God*, in that they believed the lies of the devil rather than Him. For when God saith, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall die the death* (Gen. 2:17), it is as nothing with Eve; but when the devil comes and saith (Gen. 3:4), *Ye shall not die at all*; that she takes hold on. The third is *pride* and ambition; for they did eat the forbidden fruit that they might be *as gods* (Gen. 3:5), namely, as the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. The fourth is *unthankfulness*. God had made them excellent creatures in His own image, that is nothing with them to be like unto Him, unless they may be equal with Him. The fifth is *curiosity*, whereby they affected greater wisdom than God had given them in creation, and a greater measure of knowledge than God had revealed to them. The sixth is *reproachful blasphemy*, in that they subscribe to the saying of the devil, in which he charged God with lying and envy. The seventh is *murder*; for by this means they bereave themselves and their posterity of the fellowship and graces of God's Spirit, and bring upon ther own heads the eternal wrath of God. The eighth is *discontentment*, in that they sought for an higher condition than that was in which God had placed them. In a word, in this one single act is

comprised the breach of the whole law of God. And we should often think upon this, that we may learn to wonder at the just judgments of God in punishing this fall, and His unspeakable goodness in receiving men to mercy after the same.

And here we must not omit to remember the *largeness* of Adam's fall. Sins are either personal or general. Personal are such as are peculiar to one or some few persons, and make them alone guilty. General are such as are common to all men; and such is Adam's fall. It is a sin not only of the person of one man; but of the whole nature of man. And Adam must be considered not as a private man, but as a root or head bearing in it all mankind; or as a public person representing all his posterity, and therefore when he sinned, all his posterity sinned with him; as in a parliament, whatsoever is done by the Burgess of the shire, is done by every person in the shire. As Paul saith ((Rom. 5:12), *By one man sin entered into the world, and so death went over all for as much as all have sinned*. And here lies the difference between Adam's fall and the sins of men, as Cain's murder, which makes not the posterity of Cain guilty, because he was never appointed by God to be the root of his posterity as Adam was; and therefore his sin is personal, whereas Adam's is not. Yet this which I say must not be understood of all the sins of Adam, but only of the first.

From the fall of Adam springeth *original sin*, so commonly called not only as a fruit thereof, but also as a just punishment of it. And after the aforesaid fall, it is in Adam and his posterity, as the mother and root of all other sin; yet with this distinction: that actual sin was first in Adam, and then came original; but in us, first original sin and then after follows actual.

Original sin is termed diversely in Scripture as *flesh*, *the old man*, because it is in us before grace; *concupiscence*, sin that is ready to compass us about, the *sinning* sin; and it is termed *original*, because it hath been in man's nature ever since the fall, and because it is in every man at the very instant

of his conception and birth, as David plainly saith (Psa. 51:5), *Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me*; not meaning properly his parent's sin (for he was born in lawful marriage) but his own hereditary sin, whereof he was guilty in his mother's womb.

But let us a little search the nature of it. Considering it hath place in man, it must be either the substance of body or soul, or the faculties of the substance, or the corruption of the faculties. Now it cannot be the substance of man corrupted; for then our Saviour Christ in taking our nature upon Him, should also take upon Him our sins, and by that means should as well have need of a redeemer as other men; and again the souls of men should not be immortal. Neither is it any one or all of the faculties of men; for every one of them, as namely, the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of body or soul were in man from the first creation; whereas sin was not before the fall. Wherefore it remains that *original sin* is nothing else but a disorder or evil disposition in all the faculties and inclinations of man whereby they are all carried inordinately against the law of God.

The subject or place of this sin is not any part of man, but the whole body and soul. For, first of all, the natural appetite to meat and drink, and the power of nourishing is greatly corrupted, as appears by diseases, aches, surfeits, but specially by the abuse of meat and drink. Secondly, the outward senses are as corrupt, and that made David to say (Psa. 119:37) that God would *turn his eyes from beholding vanity*; and St John to say (1 John 2:16), *Whatsoever is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life*. Thirdly, touching the understanding, the Spirit of God saith (Gen. 6:5; 8:21) that *the frame of the heart of man is only evil continually*; so as we are not able of ourselves to think a good thought. And therefore withal, the will of man and his affections are answerably corrupt; and hereupon the doctrine of Christ is that we must renounce our own wills. Lastly, all men's strength to good things is nothing out of Christ.

The propagation of this sin is the deriving of it from Adam to all his posterity, whereby it runneth as a leprosy over all mankind. But in what manner this propagation is made, is hard to define. The common opinion of divines is that it may be done two ways:

The first is this: God when He created Adam in the beginning, set down this appointment and order touching the estate of man, that whatsoever Adam received of God, he should receive it not only for himself, but for his posterity, and whatsoever grace of God he lost, he should lose not only to himself, but to all his posterity. And hereupon Adam, when he sinned, he deprived first of all himself, and then secondly all his posterity, of the image of God; because all mankind was in his loins when he sinned. Now then upon the former appointment, when the souls of men are created and placed in the body, God forsakes them, not in respect of the substance of the soul or the faculties, but only in respect of His own image, whereof the souls are deprived; after which follows the defect or want of righteousness, which is original sin. And God in depriving man of that which Adam lost, is not therefore to be thought to be the author or maintainer of sin, but a judge. For this deprivation of the image of God, so far forth as it is inflicted by Him upon mankind, it must be conceived as deserved punishment for the sin of Adam and all men in him, which punishment they pulled upon themselves.

The second way is that the corruption of nature is derived from the parents in generation by the body; for as a sweet oil poured into a fusty vessel loseth its pureness, and is infected by the vessel; so the soul created good, and put into the corrupt body, receives contagion thence. And this conjunction of the pure soul with the corrupt body, is not against the goodness of God; because it is a just punishment of the sin of all men in Adam.

It may be this which hath been said will not satisfy the minds of all; yet if any will be curious to search further into this point, let them know that there is another matter which more concerns them to look into. When a man's house is on fire, there is no time then to enquire how, and which way, and whence the fire came, but our duty is with all speed and expedition to use all good means to stay it. And so considering that our whole natures are really infected and poisoned with the loathsome contagion of original sin, which is a weight sufficient to press down the soul to the gulf of hell, it stands us in hand a thousand fold more to use the means whereby it may be taken away, than to dispute how it came.

Some may allege against the propagation of sin that holy parents beget holy children, which are void of original sin; because it stands not with reason that parents should convey that to their children which they themselves want, namely, the guilt and the punishment and the fault of sin in part. *Answer*: Men are not in this life perfectly holy. For sanctification is but in part, and therefore they cannot possibly beget children pure from all sin. Secondly, parents beget children as they are men, and not as they are holy men; and by generation they derive unto their children nature with the corruption thereof, and not grace, which is above nature. Take any corn, yea, the finest wheat that ever was, winnow it as clean as possibly may be; afterward sow it, weed it also when it is sown, reap it in due time, and carry it to the barn; when it is threshed, you shall find as much chaff in it as ever was before. And why? Because God hath set this order in the creation, that it shall spring and grow, so oft as it is sowed, with the stalk, ear, blade and all. So likewise though the parents be never so holy, the children as they come of them, are conceived and born wholly corrupt, because God took this order in the creation, that whatsoever evil Adam procured, he should bring it not only on himself, but upon all his posterity; by virtue of which degree, the propagation of sin is continued without any interruption, though parents themselves be born anew by the Spirit of God.

And here we must not omit to speak of the quantity or greatness of original sin, for the opening whereof we must consider three points:

(1) The first, that original sin is not diverse, but one and the same in kind in every man, as the general and common nature of man is one and the same in all men.

(2) The second, that this sin is not in some men more, in some men less, but in every man equally, as all men do equally from Adam participate in the nature of man, and are equally the children of wrath. Some, it may be, will say that this cannot be true, because some men are of better natures than others are; some of disposition cruel and severe, some against gentle and mild; some very licentious and disordered, some very civil. *Answer*: The differences that be in men wanting the fear of God, arise not of this, that they have more or less original corruption; but of the restraint and limitation of man's corruption. For in some God bridleth sin more than in others, and in them is found civility; and again in some less, and in such the rebellion of nature breaks forth unto all misdemeanour. And indeed, if God should not keep the untoward disposition of men within compass, otherwhiles more, otherwhiles less, as shall seem good unto His majesty; impiety, cruelty, injustice and all manner of sins would break out into such a measure that there should be no quiet living for men in the world, and no place for God's church. And thus it is manifest that although all men be not equal in the practice of wickedness, yet there is no hindrance but they may be equal in the corruption of nature itself.

(3) The third point is that original sin is so huge and large every way, that it may truly be termed the root or seed, not of some few sins, but of all sins whatsoever, even of the very sin against the Holy Ghost. We must not imagine it to be an inclination or proneness to one or two faults, but a proneness to all and every sin that is practised in the world; and that in all persons young and old, high and low, male and female. It is a most horrible

villany for a man to kill his father or mother, or his child; yet some there be that do so; at the hearing whereof we used to wonder, and to testify our dislike by saying that the doers thereof were wicked and devilish persons, and it is truly said. Nevertheless we must understand that although we abstain from such heinous practices, yet the very root of such sins, that is, a disposition unto them, is found in us also. Julian the Apostate both living and dying blasphemed Christ. Herod and Pontius Pilate and the wicked Jews crucified Him, and Judas betrayed Him. Men used to say that if Christ were now alive, they would not do so for all the world. But let us better consider of the matter. The same natural corruption of heart that was in them, is also in us, we being the children of Adam as well as they; and by force of this corruption, if Christ were now living on earth, thou wouldest if like occasion were offered, either do as Judas did in betraying Him, or as Pilate did, deliver Him to be crucified, or as the soldiers, thrust Him through with their spears, or as Julian, pierce Him with all manner of blasphemies, if God withheld His graces from thee, and leave thee to thyself. In a word, let men conceive in mind the most notorious trespass that can be, though they do it not, nor intend to do it, and never do it; yet the matter, beginning and seed thereof is in themselves. This made Jeremiah say (Jer. 17:9), *The heart of man is deceitful, and wicked above all things, who can know it*? It is like a huge sea, the banks whereof cannot be seen, nor the bottom searched. In common experience we see it come to pass that men, Protestants today, tomorrow papists; of Christians, heretics; now friends, but presently after foes; this day honest and civil men, the next day cruel murderers. Now what is the cause of this difference? Surely, it is the hidden corruption of the heart that will thrust a man forward to any sin when occasion is offered. This point must be remembered and often thought upon.

From *original sin* springeth *actual*, which is nothing else but the fruit of the corrupt heart, either in thought, word or deed.

Thus much touching man's fall into sin by God's just permission. Now follows the good use which we must make thereof:

(1) First, by this we learn to acknowledge and bewail our own frailty. For Adam in his innocence being created perfectly righteous, when he was once tempted by the devil, fell away from God; what shall we do then in like case which are by nature sold under sin, and in ourselves a thousand times weaker than Adam was? Many men there be that mingle themselves with all companies; tell them of the danger thereof, they will presently reply that they have such a strong faith that no bad company can hurt them. But alas; silly people. Satan bewitcheth them, and makes them to believe falsehood to be truth; they know not their miserable estate. If Adam, saith Bernard, had a downfall in Paradise, what shall we do that are cast forth to the dunghill? Let us therefore often come to a serious consideration of our own weakness, and follow withal the practice of David, who being privy to himself touching his own corruption, prayeth to God in this manner (Psa. 86:11): *Knit my heart to thee, O Lord, that I may fear thy name*.

(2) Secondly, we learn hereby to submit ourselves to the authority of God, and simply to resolve ourselves that whatsoever He commandeth is right and just, though the reason of it be not known to us. For Eve condescended to listen to the speech of the serpent, and without any calling, she reasoned with it of a most weighty matter, and that in the absence of Adam her head and husband, namely, of the truth and glory of God; and hereby was brought to doubt of God's Word and so overturned.

(3) Thirdly, if all men by Adam's fall be shut up under damnation, there is no cause why any of us should stand upon his birth, riches, wisdom, learning, or any other such gifts of God. There is nothing in us that is more able to cover our vileness and nakedness than fig tree leaves were able to cover the offence of Adam from God's eyes. We are under the wrath of God by nature, and cannot attain to everlasting life of ourselves. Wherefore it

doth stand every one of us in hand to abase ourselves under the mighty hand of God, in that we are become by our sins the very basest of all the creatures upon earth, yea utterly to despair in respect of ourselves, and with bleeding hearts to bewail our own case. There is no danger in this; it is the very way to grace. None can be a lively member of Christ till his conscience condemn him, and make him quite out of heart in respect of himself. And the want of this is the cause why so few perceive any sweetness or comfort in the gospel; and why it is so little loved and embraced nowadays.

(4) Lastly, if all mankind be shut up under unbelief, the duty of every man is to labour in using all good means whereby we may be delivered from this bondage, and to pray to God with David (Psa. 51:10), *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me*. And cry out with Paul (Rom. 7:24), *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death*? And we must never be at rest till we have some assurance in conscience that in Christ we have freedom from this bondage, and can with the Colossians (Col. 1:13) give thanks that we are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. This should be the affection of every man, because the spiritual thraldom under sin is of all miseries most loathsome and burdensome. And in this respect the day of death should be unto us most welcome, because it doth unloose us from this miserable estate in which we do almost nothing but displease God. For this is the greatest grief that can be to such as are indeed the children of God, by their sins to offend their merciful Father. As for those which feel not the weight of their natural guiltiness and corruption, but lie slumbering in the security of their own hearts, they are therefore the more miserable, in that being plunged in the gulf of all misery, yet they feel no misery.

2.

Thus much of the permission of the fall of man. Now we come to the Covenant of grace; which is nothing else but *a compact made between God and man touching reconciliation and life everlasting by Christ*. This covenant was first of all revealed and delivered to our first parents in the garden of Eden, immediately after their fall, by God Himself, in these words (Gen. 3:15), *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*; and afterward it was continued and renewed with a part of Adam's posterity, as with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David etc.; but it was most fully revealed and accomplished at the coming of Christ.

In the Covenant I will consider two things: The parties reconciled, between whom the Covenant is made, and the foundation thereof.

(1) The parties are God and man. God is the principal, and He promiseth righteousness and life eternal in Christ. Man again binds himself by God's grace to believe and to rest upon the promise. Here it may be demanded, why man is more in covenant than the angels? *Answer*: The will of God in this point is not revealed, unless it be because angels fell of themselves, not moved by any other; but man did fall by them. Again, it may be asked, whether all mankind were ever in the Covenant or not? *Answer*: We cannot say that all and every man hath been the church of God, and hath by faith embraced the Covenant; as Paul plainly announceth (Gal. 3:22), *The Scripture* (saith he) *hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of the faith of Jesus Christ should be given* [not unto all men but] *to them that believe*. *Without faith, no man can please God* (Heb. 11:6); and therefore God makes no covenant of reconciliation without faith. Again, since the beginning of the world there hath been always a distinction between man and man. This appears in the very tenor of the words of the Covenant made with our first parents, where God saith He will *put difference between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent* (Gen. 3:15); meaning by the seed of the woman, Christ with all the elect whom the Father hath given unto Him, who shall *bruise the serpent's head*, and *tread Satan under their*

feet (Rom. 16:20). And by the seed of the serpent He meaneth wicked men that live and die in their sins, as St John saith (1 John 3:8), *He that committeth sin is of the devil*. And according to this distinction in times following was Abel received into the Covenant and Cain rejected. Some were the *sons of God* in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:2), some the *sons of men*. In Abraham's family (Gen. 17:21), Ishmael is cast out, and the Covenant established in Isaac. *Jacob is loved, and Esau hated* (Rom. 9:13). And this distinction in the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Paul approveth when he maketh some to be the *children of the flesh*, and some other the *children of the promise* (Rom. 9:8). And again, the Jews a people of God in the Covenant, the Gentiles no people. For Paul makes it a privilege of the Jews to have *the adoption, and covenant; and the service of God, and the promises* (Rom. 9:3,4) belonging to them, whereas he saith of the Ephesians (Eph. 2:12), that they *were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and were strangers from the covenants of promise, and had no hope, and without God in the world*. And the same may be said of the whole body of the Gentiles excepting here and there a man who were converted and became proselytes. And this is manifest in that they wanted the Word and the sacraments and teachers. And this saying of the prophet Hosea (Rom. 9:25), *I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved*, is alleged by Paul to prove the calling of the Gentiles.

Objection 1: Some do allege to the contrary, that when the Covenant was made with our first parents, it was also in them made with all mankind, not one man excepted; and that the distinction and difference between man and man ariseth out of their unbelief and contempt of the Covenant afterwards.

Answer: Indeed in the estate of innocence, Adam by creation received grace for himself and his posterity; and in his fall he transgressed not only for himself, but for all his posterity. But in receiving the Covenant of grace, it cannot be proved that he received it for himself and for all mankind; nay,

the distinction between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, mentioned in the very first giving of the Covenant, shews the contrary; for if, after the fall, all and every part of mankind were received into the Covenant, then all men without restraint should be the seed of the woman, bruising the serpent's head, and the serpent should have no seed at all. And again, all men cannot be charged with unbelief and contempt in respect of the evangelical Covenant, but only such persons as have known it, or at the least heard of it. And therefore sundry heads of the nations may be charged with unbelief, as Cain, Ham, Japheth, Ammon, Moab, Ishmael, Esau, Midian, for they being near to the fathers, heard the promises concerning Christ, offered sacrifices, and observed external rites of the church, but afterwards fell away from the sincere worship of the true God to idolatry and all manner of wickedness, and became enemies of God and His people. But we plainly deny that there was or could be the like unbelief and contempt of God's grace in their posterity, which for the most part never so much as heard of any covenant; their ancestors endeavouring always to bury and extinguish the memory of that which they hated.

Objection 2: It is objected again that the Covenant was made with Abraham and with all mankind after him, *because* (saith the Lord) *thou hast obeyed my voice, in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* (Gen. 22:18).

Answer: Paul gives a double answer: first, that the place must be understood of many nations; secondly, that it must be understood not of all nations in all ages, but of all nations of the last age of the world. For saith he (Gal. 3:8), *The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed*.

Well, to conclude this point, in the making of the Covenant there must be a mutual consent of the parties on both sides, and besides the promise of

God's part, there must also be a re-stipulation on man's part; otherwise the Covenant is not made. Now then, it must needs follow that all unbelievers condemning grace offered in Christ, are out of the Covenant, as also such as never heard of it; for where there is no knowledge, there is no consent; and before the coming of Christ, the greatest part of the world never knew the Messiah, nor heard of the Covenant, as Paul saith to the learned Athenians (Acts 17:30), *The time of this ignorance God regardeth not, but now he admonisheth all men everywhere to repent*.

(2) The foundation and groundwork of the Covenant is Christ Jesus the Mediator, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, and therefore He is called the *Angel of the covenant* (Mal. 3:1), and the *Covenant of the people* (Isa. 49:8) to be made with all nations in the last age.

And Jesus Christ His Only Son, Our Lord

Now then, that we may proceed at large to open up the Covenant, we are in the next place to come to that part of the Creed which concerns the second Person in Trinity, set down in these words: *And Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord*. From which words to the very end of the Creed, such points only are laid down as do notably unfold the benefits and matter of the Covenant. Now the second Person is described to us by three things: First, His titles; Secondly, His incarnation; Thirdly, His two-fold estate.

His titles are in number four:

I. Jesus.

II. Christ.

III. His only Son.

IV. Our Lord.

I.

To come to His titles, the first is *Jesus*, to which, if we add the clause, *I believe*, on this manner, *I believe in Jesus* etc., the article which we now have in hand will appear to be most excellent; because it hath most notable promises annexed to it. When Peter confessed Christ to be the Son of the living God, He answered (Matt. 16:18), *Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. And again (1 John 4:15), *He that confesseth that Christ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*. And again (Acts 10:43), *To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name all that believe in Him shall receive remission of sins*. Paul saith (Acts 16:31), *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and all thy household*. Thus then the confession in which we acknowledge that we believe in Jesus Christ, hath a promise of fellowship with God, and of life everlasting. But it may be objected that *every spirit* (as St John saith (1 John 4:2)) *which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God*. Now the devil and all his angels and unbelievers do thus much; therefore why may not they also have the benefit of this confession? *Answer*: By *spirit* in that place is neither meant angels nor men, nor any creature, but the doctrine which teacheth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; and it is of God because it is holy and divine, and hath God to be the author of it. As for the devil and his angels, they can indeed confess that Christ the Son of God was made man, and a wicked man may teach the same; but unto the confession whereunto is annexed a promise of eternal life, is required true faith, whereby we do not only know and acknowledge this or that to be true in Christ, but also rest upon Him; which neither Satan nor wicked men can do. And therefore by this confession, the church of God is distinguished from all other companies of men in the

world which believeth not; as pagans, heretics, atheists, Turks, Jews and all other infidels.

This name *Jesus* was given to the Son of God by the Father, and brought from heaven by an angel unto Joseph and Mary; and on the day when He was to be circumcised as the manner was, this name was given unto Him by His parents, as they were commanded from the Lord by the angel Gabriel (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31). And therefore the name was not given by chance, or by the alone will of the parents, but by the most wise appointment of God Himself.

The name in Hebrew is *Jehoshua*, and it is changed by the Grecians into *Jesus*, which signifieth a Saviour. And it may be called the proper name of Christ, signifying His office and both His natures, because He is both a perfect and absolute Saviour, as also the alone Saviour of man, because the work of salvation is wholly and only wrought by Him, and no part thereof is reserved to any creature in heaven or in earth. As Peter saith (Acts 4:12), *For among men there is no other name given under heaven whereby we may be saved but by the name of Jesus*. And the author to the Hebrews saith (Heb. 7:25) that *He is able perfectly to save them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*.

If any shall object that the promises of salvation are made to them which keep the commandments; the answer is that the law of God doth exact most absolute and perfect obedience, which can be found in no man but in Christ, who never sinned; and therefore it is not given to us now that we might by ourselves fulfil it and work out our own salvation, but that being condemned by it, we might wholly depend upon Christ for eternal life.

If any further allege that such as walk according to the commandments of God, though their obedience be imperfect, yet they have the promises of this life and of the life to come; the answer is that they have so indeed, yet not for their works, which are the fruits of their faith, whereby they are

joined to Christ, for whose merits only they stand righteous and are acceptable before God. And whereas it is said by Peter (1 Pet. 3:21) that baptism saveth us, his meaning is not to signify that there is any virtue in the water to wash away our sins and to sanctify us, but that it serves visibly to represent and confirm unto us the inward washing of our souls by the blood of Christ.

It may further be said (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8) that others have been saviours besides Christ, as Joshua the son of Nun, who for that cause is called by the same name with Christ. *Answer*: Joshua, after the death of Moses, was appointed by God to be a guide to the children of Israel, which might defend them from their enemies, and bring them to the land of Canaan; but this deliverance was only temporal, and that only of one people. Now the Son of God is called *Jesus*, not because He delivereth the people of the Jews only, or because He saveth the bodies of men only, but because He saveth both body and soul, not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, from hell, death and damnation. And whereas prophets and ministers of the Word are called saviours (Obad. 21; 1 Tim. 4:16); it is because they are the instruments of God to publish the doctrine of salvation which is powerful in men's hearts, not by any virtue of theirs, but only by the operation of the Spirit of Christ.

Lastly, it may be objected that the Father and the Holy Ghost are Saviours, and therefore not only the Son. *Answer*: True it is that in the work of salvation all the three Persons must be joined together, and in no wise to be severed; the Father saveth, the Son saveth, the Holy Ghost saveth; yet must we distinguish them in the manner of saving. The Father saveth by the Son, the Son saving by paying the ransom and price of our salvation, the Holy Ghost saveth by a particular applying of the ransom unto men. Now therefore whereas the Son pays the price of our redemption, and not the Father or the Holy Ghost, therefore in this special respect he is called in Scripture, and entitled by the name of *Jesus*, and none but He.

By this which hath been said, the papists are faulty two ways: First, that they give too much to the name of Jesus; for they write in plain terms that the bare name itself being used hath great power, and doth drive away devils, though the parties that use it be void of good affection; whereas indeed it hath no more virtue than other titles of God or Christ. Secondly, they are faulty that they give too little to the thing signified. For Christ must either be our alone and whole Saviour, or no Saviour. Now they make Him but half a Saviour, and they join others with Him as partners in the work of salvation when they teach that with Christ's merits must be joined our works of grace in the matter of justification; and with Christ's satisfaction for the wrath of God, our satisfaction for the temporal punishment; and when they add to Christ's intercession, the intercession and patronage of saints, especially of the virgin Mary, whom they call the queen of heaven, the mother of mercy, withal requesting her that by the authority of a mother she would command her Son. If this doctrine of theirs may stand, Christ cannot be the only Saviour of mankind, but every man in part shall be Jesus to himself.

But let us go on yet further to search the special reason of the name, which is notably set down by the angel (Matt. 1:21), *Thou shalt* (saith he) *call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins*. In which words we may consider three points: 1. Whom the Son of God shall save; 2. By what? 3. From what?

1. For the first, He shall save *His people*, that is the elect of the Jews and Gentiles; and therefore He is called the *Saviour of His body* (Eph. 5:23). We must not here imagine that Christ is a Saviour of all and every man, for if that were true, then Christ should make satisfaction to God's justice for all and every man's sins; and God's justice being fully satisfied, He could not in justice condemn any man; nay, all men should be blessed, because satisfaction for sin and the pardon of sin depend one upon another inseparably. Again, if Christ be an effectual Saviour of all and every

particular man, why is any man condemned? It will be said, because they will not believe; belike then man's will must overrule God's will; whereas the common rule of divines is that the first cause ordereth the second.

2. The means of salvation by Christ are two: *His merit* and *His efficacy*:

(1) *His merit*, in that by His obedience to the law and by His passion, He made a satisfaction for our sins, freed us from death and reconciled us unto God. Some may object that the obedience and passion of Christ being long ago ended, cannot be able to save us now, because that which he did 1600 years ago may seem to be vanished and come to nothing at this day. *Answer*: If Christ's obedience be considered as an action, and His passion as a bare suffering, they are both ended long ago; yet the value and price of them before God is everlasting; as in Adam's fall, the action of eating the forbidden fruit is ended, but the guilt of his transgression goes all over mankind, and continues still even to this hour, and shall do to the end of the world, in those which shall be born hereafter.

(2) The *efficacy* of Christ is in that He gives His Spirit to mortify the corruption of our natures, that we may die unto sin and live unto righteousness, and have true comfort in terrors of conscience, and in the pangs of death.

3. The evils from which we are saved are *our own sins*, in that Christ freeth us from the guilt and the punishment and fault of them all, when we believe.

Thus much for the meaning of this title *Jesus*. Now follow the uses which arise out of it:

1. First of all, whereas we are taught to make confession that the Son of God is Jesus, that is, a Saviour; hence it must needs follow that we are lost in ourselves. And indeed before we can truly acknowledge that Christ is our

Saviour, this confession must needs go before: that we are in truth, and therewithal do feel ourselves to be miserable sinners under the wrath of God, utterly lost in regard of ourselves; for Christ *came to save that which was lost* (Matt. 18:11). And when He talked with the woman of Canaan, He checked her and said, He was not sent *but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matt. 15:24). Christ Jesus came to pour oil into our wounds. Christ came to set them at liberty which are in prison; and to place them in freedom that are in bondage. Now a man cannot pour oil into a wound before there be a wound, or before it be opened, and we feel the smart of it. And how can we be set at liberty by Christ, except we feel ourselves to be in bondage, under hell, death and damnation? When the disciples of Christ were upon the sea in a great tempest, they cried, *Master, save us, we perish* (Matt. 8:25). So no man can heartily say, I believe Jesus Christ to be my Saviour, before he feel that in himself he is utterly lost and cast away, without His help. But after that we perceive ourselves to be in danger, and to be overwhelmed in the sea of the wrath of God, then we cry out with the disciples, *Lord Jesus, save us, we perish*. Many Protestants in these days hold Christ to be their Saviour, but it is only formally from the teeth outwards and no further; for they were never touched with the sense of their spiritual misery, that they might say with Daniel (Dan. 9:7), *Shame and confusion belongeth unto us*; and with the publican (Luke 18:13), *I am a sinner, Lord be merciful to me*. And therefore the conclusion is this: that if we will have Christ to be our Saviour, we must first believe that in ourselves we are utterly lost; and so must that place be understood where Christ saith, He is *not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; that is, to those which in their own sense and feeling are lost in themselves.

2. Secondly, if Christ be a Saviour, then we must acknowledge Him to be so. But how shall we do this? *I answer*, Thus: A man is taken to be a skilful physician by this: that many patients come unto him and seek for help at his hands. And so should it be with Christ. But alas, the case is otherwise. Every man can talk of Christ, but few acknowledge Him to be a Saviour by

seeking to Him for their salvation, because they judge themselves righteous, and feel themselves not to stand in need of the help of Christ. Nay, which is more, if a man be known that he can cure strange diseases, men will seek to him by sea and land, and sell both goods and lands to get help at his hands. Even so, if men were persuaded that Christ were a perfect Saviour, and that they were sick and utterly unable to be saved without Him, they would never rest nor be quiet, but seek unto Him for His help, and cry with David (Psa. 35:3), *O Lord, say unto my soul that thou art my salvation*. The woman that was diseased with an issue of blood, came behind our Saviour Christ, and when she had touched Him, she was healed (Matt. 9:20). In the same manner, if we shall seek to come to Christ, and do not touch His precious body and blood by the hands of faith, the issue and the bleeding wounds of our souls shall be dried up. When a man that had been sick eight and thirty years was come to the pool of Bethesda (John 5:7), he was fain to lie there uncured; because when the angel troubled the water, evermore some stepped before him. But if we will seek to Christ for the salvation of our souls, no man shall prevent us, or step before us. And if we find ourselves to be so laden with the burden of our sins that we cannot draw near unto Him, then let us do as the palsy man did (Mark 2:4): he got four men to carry him on their shoulders to the place where Christ was; and when they could not by reason of the press of the people enter into the house, they opened the roof, and let him down in his bed by cords to Christ, that he might be healed. And so let us use the help of such as be godly, that by their instructions and consolations, they may as it were put their shoulders, and by their prayers, as with cords, bring us to Christ that we may receive eternal salvation, being otherwise dead in sin and subject to damnation.

3. Lastly, whereas Joseph and Mary gave this name not at their own pleasure, but at the appointment of God Himself; this ministers a good instruction to all parents touching the naming of their children when they are baptised, that they are with care and deliberation to give convenient

names unto them, which may put them in mind of duties either to God or men. This is worthy of our observation, for many care not how they name their children, yea it is at this day, and ever hath been, that some give such names to them as that at the very rehearsing thereof, laughter ensueth. But this ought not to be so; for the name is given unto children at the time of their baptism in the presence of God, of His church and angels, even then when they are to be entered into the church of God, and that in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Therefore, though we do not place religion in titles or names, yet nevertheless, a wise and godly choice in this matter is to be had that the names imposed may be instead of instructions and admonitions to the parties named. And for this cause in the Old Testament, names are given by the prophetical instinct, or according to the event of things which came to pass about the time of the birth of children, or they were borrowed from the holy ancestors, to put the posterity in mind to follow their steps.

And thus much of the duties. Now follow the consolations that God's church and people reap from this: that the Son of God is our Saviour. When as all mankind was included under sin and condemnation, then the Lord had mercy upon us, and gave unto man the Covenant of grace, in which He promised that His own Son should be our Redeemer. This is a great and unspeakable comfort, as may appear in that the angels so greatly rejoiced herein when Christ was born (Luke 2:10,11), *Behold*, say they, *I bring you tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people*, that is, *that unto you is born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*. Now if they rejoice thus exceedingly at Christ's birth, who was not their Saviour, because they stood not in need to be redeemed; then much more ought the church of God to rejoice herein, whom it doth principally concern; and no marvel, for if we had wanted this blessed Saviour, it had been better to have been a brute beast or any other creature than a man; for the death of a beast is the end of his woe, but the death of a man without a Saviour is the beginning of endless misery. Satan and his angels are fallen and have no

Saviour, but when man was fallen, God of His mercy dealt not so with him, but gave His own Son to restore him to a better estate, whereas He might as justly have damned all men for the fall of our first parents, as He did the wicked angels for theirs; for God is not bound to any creature. Behold then a matter of unspeakable joy. Let us therefore receive and embrace Christ our Saviour, flee to Him for the pardon of all our sins, and praise His name therefore.

II.

Now we come to the second title of the Son of God, whereby He is termed *Christ*; which title is as it were the surname of the second Person, as some do think; yet according to the opinion of some others, it is no name at all, but only a mere appellation, as when in the like case a particular man is called a duke or a king. It is all one with *Messiah* in Hebrew wherewith the Redeemer was named in the Old Testament, and both signify *Anointed*.

Among the Jews before the coming of Christ, three estates or orders of men were anointed with oil: First of all, *kings*, as Saul, David, and the rest of the kings of Judah. Secondly, the *priests* that served in the tabernacle and temple before the Lord, when they were ordained, and as it were, installed into the priesthood, were anointed with oil, as first of all Aaron and his sons, but afterward the high priests alone. Thirdly, *prophets* were thus anointed, as Elijah.

Now this legal anointing was a type and figure of the anointing of Christ; which was not with bodily oil, but by the Spirit, and it was more excellent than all other anointings were. For David saith (Psa. 45:7) *He was anointed with the oil of gladness above all His fellows*, signifying that neither king, priest, nor prophet was ever anointed in the same manner as He was.

Christ's anointing is according to both His natures; for in what nature He is Mediator, in the same He is anointed; but according to both His natures

jointly He is a Mediator; the Godhead is no Mediator without the manhood, nor the manhood without the Godhead; and therefore His anointing extends itself both to His Godhead and to His manhood.

Christ's anointing hath two parts, both of them figured by the anointing of the Jews:

1. The first is His consecration whereby He was set apart to do the office of a Mediator between God and man; and therefore to be a king, a priest, a prophet. A king, to gather and withal to govern His church and people. A priest, to make satisfaction and intercession for the sins of the elect. A prophet, to reveal and teach His people the will of God His Father. And though it be true that Christ is set apart to the work of mediation, as He is a Mediator, or as He is man, yet as He is God, He doth design and set Himself apart to the same work. For to design the Mediator is a common action of the three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and yet considering the Father is first in order, and therefore hath the beginning of the action. For this cause, He is said especially to design, as when St John saith (John 6:27), *Him hath God the Father sealed*.

2. The second part of Christ's anointing is the pouring out of the fulness of the Spirit or grace into the manhood of Christ (Isa. 61:1); and it was particularly figured by the holy oil. For, first, that oil had no man but God alone to be the author of it; so the most excellent and unspeakable graces of the manhood of Christ have their beginning from the Godhead of Christ. Again (Exod. 30:23,24), though the same oil was most precious, yet was it compounded of earthly substances, as myrrh, calamus and cassia, and such like; to signify that the spiritual oil of grace, whereof the manhood of Christ was as it were a vessel or storehouse, did not consist of the essential properties of the Godhead, as Eutyches and his followers in these days imagine, but in certain created gifts and qualities placed in His human nature; otherwise we should not have any participation of them. Thirdly, the

sweet savour of the holy oil figured that the riches of all graces with the effect thereof in the obedience of Christ, doth take away the noisome scent of our loathsome sins from the nostrils of God, and withal doth make our persons, and all our actions, acceptable to Him as a sweet perfume, as Paul saith (2 Cor. 2:16), *We are unto God the sweet savour of Christ*, etc. And Christ's death is for this cause termed a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour.

And we must understand that those gifts of Christ's manhood are not conferred in small scantling or measure; for John saith (John 3:34), *God giveth Him the Spirit not by measure*; because the graces which are in Christ are far more both in number and degree than all men or angels have or shall have; though the good angels and the saints of God in heaven are very excellent creatures stored with manifold graces and gifts of God. For this cause Christ is called (1 Cor. 11:4) the *Head* of men; because He is every way the most principal and glorious man that ever was. Yet for all this are not the gifts of Christ's manhood infinite any way; because it is a creature and finite in nature, and therefore not capable of that which is infinite.

By Christ's anointing, the people of God reap great benefit and comfort because they are to be partakers thereof. For this cause the oil wherewith He was anointed is called the *oil of gladness* (Psa. 45:7), because the sweet savour of it gladdeth the hearts of all His members, and brings the peace of God which passeth all understanding. The holy oil poured upon Aaron's head (Psa. 133:2) came down to his beard, and to the very skirts of his garments; and it signifieth that the spiritual oil of grace was first of all poured upon our Head Christ Jesus, and from thence consequently derived to all His members, that by this means He might not only be anointed Himself, but also our Anointer.

Now the benefits which we receive by His anointing are two:

1. The first is that all the elect when they are called to the profession of the gospel of Christ, are in and by Him set apart and made spiritual kings, priests and prophets, as St John saith (Rev. 1:6), *He hath made us kings and priests unto His Father*. And St Peter (Acts 2:17), out of Joel, *I will pour* (saith the Lord) *my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy*.

2. The second benefit is that all the faithful receive the same oil, that is, the same Spirit of God in some little and convenient measure, which He received above measure, as St John saith (1 John 2:17), *The anointing which ye have received abideth in you, and teacheth you all things*; where by *anointing* is meant the Holy Ghost. And hence it is that men are called *Christians* of the name of Christ, that is, anointed with the same oil wherewith Christ was anointed (Psa. 105:15). And the holy oil might not be given to a stranger (Exod. 30:33), to signify that to have the Spirit of Christ, and to be guided by it, is peculiar to them that are Christ's.

Now then let us all lay these things to our hearts, and extol the unspeakable goodness of God, that hath advanced us to the dignity of kings, priests, prophets before Him, and hath given His Spirit unto us, to enable us to be so indeed.

Now follow the duties which are to be learned hence:

1. And first, whereas all Christians receive anointing from the Holy One Christ Jesus, to become prophets in a sort (1 John 2:20; Dan. 9:24), we must do our endeavours that the Word of God may dwell plentifully in us, and for that cause we must search the Scriptures, even as hunters seeking for the game, and as men seek gold in the very mines of the earth. There is nothing more unseeming a man than gross ignorance a Christian. Therefore the author of the epistle to the Hebrews reproves them (Heb. 5:12), that whereas for the time they ought to have been teachers, they had need again to be taught the first principles of the Word of God.

Again, that portion of knowledge which we have received of God, is further to be applied to the benefit and good of others; that is the most precious balm that on our parts should never be wanting to the heads of men. And here every man that is set over others must remember, within the compass and calling of his charge, to instruct those that be under him, so far forth as possibly he can. Governors of families must teach their children, and servants, and their whole household, the doctrine of true religion, that they may know the true God, and walk in His ways in doing righteousness and judgment. If householders would make conscience of this their duty, and in some sort and measure prepare their families against they come to the public congregation, the ministers of the gospel with great comfort and far more ease should perform their duty; and see far more fruit of their ministry than now they do. But whereas they neglect their duty, falsely persuading themselves that it doth not belong to them at all to instruct others; it is the cause of ignorance both in town and families, in masters themselves, in servants and children, and all. Lastly, by this we are admonished to take all occasions that possibly can be offered, mutually to edify each other in knowledge, saying among ourselves (as it was foretold of these times (Isa. 2:3)), *Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Israel, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths*; and withal, we should confirm each other, as Christ saith to Peter (Luke 22:32), *When thou art converted, confirm thy brethren*; and be ready at all times to render an account of our faith and religion even before our enemies, when we are justly called so to do.

2. Secondly, because we are set apart in Christ, to become spiritual priests unto God, we must therefore offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto Him; and they be in number seven:

(1) The first is an affiance whereby we rest upon God, as David saith (Psa. 4:5), *Offer the sacrifice of righteousness and trust in the Lord*.

(2) The second is wholly to subject ourselves to the ministry of the gospel that we may be changed and converted by it, as Paul saith (Rom. 15:16), that he *ministereth the gospel to the Gentiles, that the offering up of them might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost*.

(3) The third is all manner of prayers and supplications made unto God. *Let my prayer* (saith David (Psa 141:2)) *be directed in thy sight as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice*.

(4) The fourth is praising and thanksgiving unto God. *Let us by Him offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is, the fruit of our lips which confess His name* (Heb. 13:15). And in the Revelation (Rev. 5:8), the *golden vials full of odours* are *the prayers of the saints*.

(5) The fifth is the relief of our poor brethren according to our ability, as Paul saith (Phil. 4:18), *I was even filled, after that I had received of Epaphroditus that which came from you, an odour that smelleth sweet, a sacrifice pleasant and acceptable to God*.

(6) The sixth is the denial of ourselves with *a contrite and broken heart* (Psa. 51:17).

(7) The seventh is to resign ourselves, bodies and souls, wholly to the service of God. *Set yourselves* (saith Paul (Rom. 6:13)) *to God, as they that are alive from the dead; and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God*. In which words he alludes to the manner of the Old Testament; when a man offered any sacrifice for himself, he brought the beast into the temple or tabernacle, and set it before the altar, in token that he did resign it unto God. And so we for our parts must not give our bodies and souls to become the instruments of sin and Satan, but we must have them always in readiness, freely presenting them unto God, that He may have the whole disposition of them according to His good pleasure, to the honour and glory of His name. Again, in the whole burnt offering all was consumed and

turned to smoke, no man having benefit of it, to signify that we must give ourselves not in part, but wholly to the service of God, even to death if needs be. If this be so, miserable is the practice of such that give up their bodies and souls to live in licentious wantonness in the pleasures of their beastly sins, in idleness. For they offer themselves a sacrifice, not to God, but to the devil.

3. Thirdly, considering we are anointed to be spiritual kings even in this life, we must walk worthy so great a calling. That this may be so; first of all, such as are governors set over others, must rule not according to their wills and pleasures, but in the Lord; withal, doing homage to their Head and King Christ Jesus Himself. Secondly, we must every one of us rule and bear sway even as kings over our own thoughts, wills, affections, over-mastering them as much as we possibly can by God's Word and Spirit; withal, maintaining and proclaiming continual war against our corrupt natures, the devil and the world. And truly he which can bear rule over his own heart, is a right king indeed; and having received some measure of grace to reign over himself in this life, he shall reign for ever with Christ in the life to come. As for such as are carried away with the swing of their corruptions, having blindness and ignorance to reign in their minds, rebellion in their wills and affections, looseness in their whole lives, they may carry the outward form and shew of Christians as long as they will, but indeed they are no spiritual kings, but very bondmen; the strong man Satan keeps as yet the hold of their hearts, and as Lord and king holds up his sceptre there.

4. Lastly, seeing that Christ is anointed with the most precious balm that ever was, and that for our sakes, He must be sweet and savoury unto us, and all other things must be as unsavoury dross and dung in regard of Him. We must in this case endeavour to say as the spouse of Christ doth (Song 1:3), *Because of the savour of the good ointments, thy name is an ointment poured out; therefore the virgins love thee*. O that we could savour in the

fear of God, that we might feel *how all His garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, coming forth of His ivory palaces unto us* (Psa. 45:8).

And because the holy ointment of Christ is poured forth upon all His members to make them savoury and sweet in the presence of God, let us make conscience of all manner of sin lest by the poison and stink thereof we infect not only ourselves, but all the creatures of God which we use, yea heaven and earth itself. It stands now with equity that after we have been embalmed and sweetened by the precious merits of Christ, we should make ourselves two-footed swine, to return to the mire of our old sins.

The coupling and combining of these two former titles together, contains the principal question of the whole Bible, which is, whether Jesus the Son of Mary be Christ or not. As St John saith (John 10:31), *These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that in believing ye might have life everlasting*. This conclusion was denied by the Jews, but avouched and confirmed both by Christ and His apostles; and their principal argument was framed thus: He which hath the true notes of Christ, is the Messiah or Christ indeed. But Jesus the Son of Mary hath the true notes of Christ. Therefore Jesus is Christ. The proposition is opened at large in the prophecies of the Old Testament; the assumption is confirmed in the writings of the New Testament; and the principal reasons of the confirmation are touched in the Articles which concern the second Person. The conclusion follows, and it is set down, as I have said, in the knitting together of the titles, *Jesus* and *Christ*.

III.

Thus much of the second title, now follows the third, *His only Son*; that is, the only Son of the first Person, the Father. In this title we must consider two things: the first, that He is the Son of God; the second, that He is the only Son of God.

1.

Touching the first, Christ is called the Son of God because He was begotten of the Father. Now for the opening of this eternal generation, we must consider three points: the thing begotten, the manner of begetting and the time.

(1) For the thing itself, it is Christ; who must be considered two ways, as He is a Son, and as he is God. As He is a Son, He is not of Himself, but the Son of the Father begotten of Him; nevertheless as He is God, He is of Himself; neither begotten, nor proceeding; for the essence or Godhead of the Father is of itself without all beginning, but the Godhead of the Son is one and the same with the Godhead of the Father; because by what Godhead the Father is God, by the same and no other the Son is God; therefore the Son, as He is God, He is God of Himself without beginning even as the Father. Whereupon it follows that the Son is begotten of the Father, as He is a Son, but not as He is God.

(2) The manner of this generation is this: The Son is begotten of the substance of the Father, not by any flux, as when water is derived from the head of the spring to the channel; nor by decision, as when a thing is cut in pieces; nor by propagation, as when a graft is transplanted into a new stock; but by an unspeakable communication of the whole essence or Godhead from the Father to the Son; in receiving whereof the Son doth no more diminish the majesty or Godhead of the Father than the light of one candle doth the light of the other from which it is taken. Whereupon the Council of Nice hath said well, that *the Son is of the Father as light of light, not proceeding but begotten*.

(3) The time of this generation hath neither beginning, middle nor end; and therefore it is eternal before all worlds. And it is a thing to be wondered at, that the Father begetting and the Son begotten are co-eternal, and therefore equal in time. Wisdom in the Proverbs (Prov. 8:23) (which with one consent

of all divines is said to be Christ) affirmeth that she was *before the world was created*, that is, from eternity; for before the world was made there was nothing but eternity. But it may be alleged to the contrary, that the saying of the Father, *This day have I begotten thee* (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33), is expounded by Paul of the time of Christ's resurrection. *Answer*: We must distinguish between generation itself and the manifestation of it; and of the second must the place be understood, which was indeed accomplished at the time of Christ's resurrection in which He was mightily declared to be the Son of God; and though this be so, yet the generation itself may be eternal. If any man allege further that the Person which begetteth must needs go before the Person begotten, the answer is that there is a double priority; one of order, the other of time. Now in the generation of creatures there is priority both of order and time; but in the generation of the second Person in Trinity, there is priority of order alone; the Father being first, the Son second, without priority of time; because they both in that respect are equal, and neither is before or after the other; because the being or subsisting of the Persons is not measured by time.

Hence it followeth necessarily that Jesus Christ is true God; and the whole tenor of the Scriptures confirm it sufficiently.

(1) He is made equal to God the Father, who (Phil. 2:6) *being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; again (John 16:15), *All things that the Father hath are mine*. The children of Israel are said to have tempted Jehovah (Num. 14:22); and Paul saith (1 Cor. 10:9) that He whom they tempted was Christ. Jehovah founded the earth (Psa. 102:25), and the same is said of Christ (John 1:3).

(2) Christ the Son of God is by name called God (1 John 5:20), Jesus Christ is *very God and life eternal*.

(3) The properties of the Godhead are ascribed unto Him. He is eternal, because He was then when there was no creature (John 1:1), *In the*

beginning was the Word, and (John 8:58) *Before Abraham was, I am*. He is omnipresent (Matt. 18:20,26), *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst amongst them*. Lastly, He is omnipotent (John 5:17), *Whatsoever thing the Father doth, the same doth the Son also*.

(4) The works of creation and preservation are as well ascribed to the Son as the Father. By Him the Father made the world, and He beareth up all things by His mighty power; and miracles, which are works either above or against the order of nature peculiar to God, were done by Christ.

(5) Divine worship is given to Him; for He is adored, invocated and believed in, as God the Father. To Him is given a *name at which every knee doth bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth* (Phil. 2:10,11).

As for the reasons which be alleged to the contrary, they are of no moment:

Objection 1. The Word of God cannot be God; the Son is the Word of the Father; therefore He is not God. *Answer*: The Word is taken two ways: First, for a sounding Word, standing of letters and syllables uttered either by God or by the creatures. Now on this manner Christ is not the Word of God. Secondly, there is a substantial Word, which is of the substance of Him whose Word it is. And thus Christ is the Word of God the Father. And He is so termed:

(1) In respect of the Father; for as reason and speech hath his beginning from the mind, so hath He beginning from the Father. And as the speech is in the mind and the mind in the speech, so the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father.

(2) In respect of all creatures. The Father doth all things by the Son; by whose powerful Word the world was made, is now preserved and shall be abolished.

(3) In respect of the church; for the Father by Him speaks unto us both in the outward ministry of the Word, and by the inward operation of the Spirit; and again, we by Him speak to the Father.

Objection 2. It may be objected thus: God hath no beginning from any other. Christ hath beginning from the Father. Therefore He is not God. *Answer*: Christ must be considered both in regard of His Godhead, and in regard of His Person. In regard of His Godhead, He came not of any but is of Himself, as well as the Father is; yet in regard of His Person, He is from the Father, who is a beginning to the rest of the Persons, both in respect of order (for the Scripture saith not the Holy Ghost, the Son, the Father; but the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19)) as also in respect of the communication of the Godhead. And whereas it is said that God is of Himself, if the name of God be taken from the Godhead, it is false.

Objection 3. None is greater than God. But the Father is greater than Christ, for so He saith (John 14:28), *The Father is greater than I*. *Answer*: Christ there speaks of Himself as he was a man abased in the form of a servant; in which respect He is less than the Father, who was never incarnate and abased in our nature. And though Christ in respect of His nature assumed, be inferior to the Father, yet doth it not hinder but that He may be equal to Him, as He is the second Person in Trinity, or as He is God by one and the same Godhead with the Father.

Objection 4. He that is made of God, this or that, is not God. But Christ is made of God, as Paul saith (1 Cor. 1:30), *Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness* etc. *Answer*: Christ is said to be made, not because there was any beginning of His Godhead, or any change or alteration in His Person; but because in the eternal counsel of the Father, He was set apart before all times to execute the office of a Mediator, and was withal in time called, and

as it were consecrated and ordained thereunto in His baptism. He is made therefore in respect of His office, but not in respect of His Person or nature.

Objection 5. God hath no Head. Christ hath an Head, as Paul saith (1 Cor. 11:3). *Answer*: God, that is, the Father, is Head of Christ, not as He is God simply. But as He is God incarnate, or made manifest in the flesh, and in respect of the office to which He willingly abased Himself.

Objection 6. He which gives up His kingdom is not God. Christ gives up His kingdom. *Then*, saith Paul (1 Cor. 15:24), *shall be the end, when He hath delivered up His kingdom to God even the Father*. *Answer*: Christ is King two ways: as He is God, and as He is Mediator. As He is God, He reigns eternally with the Father and the Holy Ghost; but as He is Mediator, in the end of the world, when all the company of the elect are gathered, His kingdom shall cease, not simply, but in respect of the outward manner of administration; for the execution of civil and ecclesiastical functions shall cease. And whereas in the same place, it is said that Christ shall be subject unto God eternally after the end, it must be understood partly in regard of the assumed manhood, partly in respect of His mystical body the church most nearly joined unto Him in heaven.

Objection 7. The firstborn of every creature, and of many brethren, is a creature and not God. But Christ is the firstborn of every creature, and of many brethren (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15). *Answer*: He is called the firstborn in the Old Testament; for as they were principal heirs having double portions allowed them; and the chief or governors of the family; so Christ is made heir of the world; and the head of God's family which is His church, elected and adopted in Him. And again, He is called the firstborn of every creature, because He was begotten of the substance of His Father before any creature was made, and therefore it is not here said that He was first created, but first begotten.

By the reasons which have been alleged, as also by the sufficiency of the contrary arguments, it is more than manifest against all heretics that Christ is very God. Yet to stop the mouths of all atheists and to satisfy all wavering and doubting minds, I will add one reason further. The gospel of St John was chiefly penned for this end, to prove the deity of Christ; and among other arguments alleged, this is one: that Christ gave a resolute and a constant testimony of Himself that He was the Son of God, and very God. Now if any man shall say that sundry persons since the beginning of the world have taken upon them, and that falsely, to be gods; I answer that never any creature took this title and honour upon him to be called God, but the fearful judgments of God were upon him for it. In the estate of man's innocency, the devil told our first parents that by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they should be as gods, knowing good and evil. Now, they believed him, and affected divine honour. But what came of it? Surely Adam with all his posterity is shut up for this very cause under eternal damnation. Herod likewise arrayed in royal apparel and sitting on the judgment seat, made an oration to the men of Tyre and Sidon, who gave a shout, saying (Acts 12:22,23), *The voice of god, and not of man*. Now because he took the glory of God to himself, and did not return it to Him to whom it was due, immediately the angel of the Lord smote him. And so, if Christ had been but a mere man and not very God, as He avouched, undoubtedly the hand of God would have been upon Him likewise for His confusion; but when He suffered for us, and bare the punishment due for our sins, He most triumphed. And the judgments of God were upon Herod, Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, and upon all those that were enemies to Him, and to His church afterwards, and that partly in life, partly in death. Wherefore considering God cannot abide that His glory should be given to any creature, and seeing for that cause He takes revenge on all those that exalt themselves to be gods, it remains that the testimony which Christ gave of Himself that He was God, is infallibly true, and without all question to be believed of us. And to conclude, I would have all the devils in hell, with the cursed orders of Lucians, Porphyrians and atheists whatsoever to answer

this one point: how it could come to pass that Christ by publishing the doctrine of the gospel, that is as contrary to man's reason, will and affection, as water is to fire, should win almost the whole world to become His disciples, and to give their lives for Him, unless He were God indeed, as He professed Himself to be?

There be sundry special reasons wherefore it was necessary that Christ should be God:

(1) There is none which can be a Saviour of body and soul but God. *I even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour* (Isa. 45:21). And, *I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour besides me* (Hos. 13:4).

(2) There must be a proportion between the sin of man and the punishment of sin. Now the sin of man in respect of the offence of the majesty of God is infinite, in that He is infinitely displeased with man for the breach of His law; therefore the punishment of sin must be infinite. And hence it followeth that He which suffereth the punishment being man, must withal be God, that the manhood by the power of the Godhead may be supported, that in suffering it may vanquish death and make sufficient satisfaction.

(3) He that must be a Saviour, must be able first to deliver men from the bondage of their spiritual enemies, namely, sin and Satan. Secondly, to restore the image of God lost by the fall of Adam, and to confer righteousness and life everlasting. Thirdly, to defend them from hell, death, damnation, the flesh, the devil, the world. Fourthly, to give them full redemption from all their miseries both in body and soul, and to place them in eternal happiness; all which none can do but He which is very God.

(4) It was the pleasure of God to shew His incomprehensible goodness in this: that His grace should not only be equal to our sin, but also by many degrees go beyond it. And therefore the first Adam being but a mere man,

the second Adam must be both God and man; that as the second was more excellent than the first, so our comfort might be greater in our redemption by the second than our misery and discomfort was by the fall of the first.

2.

Hitherto, we have shewed that Christ is the Son of God; now let us come to the second point, namely, that He is the *only* Son of God. And He is so termed because He is the Son of the Father, in a special manner, so as nothing can be the Son of God as He is. Angels indeed are termed the sons of God (Job 1:6), but that is only in respect of their creation; and all that believe in Christ are sons of God by adoption, being received into the family of God, which is His church, by the merit of Christ, whereas by nature they were the children of wrath. Christ also as He is man (I say not His manhood which is a nature and no person) is the Son of God by the grace of personal union, and not by nature or adoption. Lastly, Christ as He is the second Person in Trinity, the eternal Word of the Father coeternal and consubstantial with Him, is also the Son of God. But how? Neither by creation, nor adoption, nor by the virtue of personal union, but by nature; as He was begotten of the very substance of the Father before all worlds; and therefore He is called the proper and *only begotten* Son of God. It may be objected on this manner: If the Father beget the Son, He doth it either willingly, or against His will. If willingly, then the Son is begotten by the free will of the Father, and no Son by nature. *Answer*: The Father did communicate to the Son His whole Godhead willingly without constraint, yet not by His will, and therefore He is the Son of the Father by nature, not by will. It may be further said that if Christ be the Son of God by nature, as He is the essential Word of the Father, and by personal union as He is man, then He is not one but two Sons. *Answer*: As He is but one Person, so He is but one Son; yet not in one, but in two respects. Two respects make not two things, whereas one and the same thing not altered, but still remaining one, may admit sundry respects.

Thus much of the meaning of the third title; now follow the comforts which may be gathered hence. Whereas Christ Jesus is the Son of God, it serves as a means to make miserable and wretched sinners, that are by nature the children of wrath and damnation, to be the sons of God by adoption; as St John saith (John 1:12). Now what a benefit this is to be the child of God, no tongue can express. Christ saith (Matt. 5:9), *Blessed are the peacemakers*; but why are they blessed? *For* (saith He) *they shall be called the sons of God*. Whereby He testifieth that the right of adoption is a most excellent privilege; and not without cause. For he which is the child of God, is spiritually allied to Christ and to all the saints and servants of God, both in heaven and earth, having his own Redeemer for his elder brother, and all his members as his brethren and sisters. Yea, if we be God's adopted children, we are also heirs, even heirs of God, and heirs annexed with Christ. Well, how great soever this prerogative is, yet few there be that rightly weigh it and consider of it. Children of noblemen and prince's heirs are had in account and reputation of all men, they are the very speech and wonder of the world. But it is a matter of no account to be the son of God, and fellow heir with Christ. The dearest servants of God have been esteemed but as the off-scouring of the world. And no marvel, for they which are after the flesh, savour the things of the flesh. Few men have their understandings enlightened to discern of such spiritual things as these are, and therefore they are little or nothing regarded. A blind man never seeing the sun, is not brought to wonder at it; and earthly minded men neither seeing nor feeling what an excellent thing it is to be the child of God, cannot be brought to seek after it. But let all such as fear God, enter into a serious consideration of the unspeakable goodness of God, comforting themselves in this: that God the Father hath vouchsafed by His own Son to make them of the vassals of Satan, to be His own dear children.

Now follow the duties which are two:

(1) First, we believe that Jesus Christ who was to be the Saviour of mankind, must needs be God. What is the reason hereof? Surely because no creature, no not all the creatures in heaven and earth, were able to save one man; so vile, wretched and miserable is our estate by Adam's fall. And therefore the Son of God Himself pitied our estate, and being King of heaven and earth, was fain to come from heaven, and lay down His crown and become a servant, and taking upon Him our nature, was also fain to take upon Him our case and condition, and suffer death for our sins, which otherwise every one of us should have suffered both in body and soul world without end. To make this more plain, let us suppose that someone that hath committed an offence against a prince; and the trespass to be so grievous that no man can appease the king's wrath save only the king's son; and which is more, the king's son himself cannot release him, unless he suffer the punishment for him in his own person, which is due unto the malefactor. Now what is to be thought of this man's estate? Surely all men will say that he is in a most miserable taking, and that his trespass is notorious, and so it is with every one of us by nature, whatsoever we are. No man could save our souls, no not all the angels of heaven, unless the king of heaven and earth, the only Son of God, had come down from heaven and suffered for us, bearing our punishment. Now the consideration of this must humble us and make us to cast down ourselves under the hand of God for our sins, and pray continually that the Lord would send some Moses or other which might smite the rocks of our hearts, that some tears of sorrow and repentance might gush out for this our woeful misery.

(2) Secondly, whereas God the Father of Christ gives His only Son to be our Saviour, as we must be thankful to God for all things, so especially for His great and unspeakable benefit. Common blessings of God, as meat, drink, health, wealth and liberty, must at all times move us to be thankful, but this, that Christ Jesus the only Son of God, redeemed us being utterly lost, this I say, must be the main point of our thankfulness. But alas, men's hearts are so frozen in the dregs of their sins, that this duty comes little in practice

nowadays. When our Saviour Christ cleansed ten lepers, there was but one of them that returned to give Him thanks (Luke 17:12-19). And this is as true in the leprosy of the soul, for though salvation by Christ be offered unto us daily by God's ministers, yet not one of ten, nay scarce one of a thousand gives praise and thanks to God for it, because men take no delight in things which concern the kingdom of heaven, they think not that they have need of salvation, neither do they feel any want of a Saviour. But we for our parts must learn to say with David (Psa. 116:12), *What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?* Yea, we are to practise that which Solomon saith (Prov. 23:26), *My son, give me thine heart*; for we should give unto God both body and soul in token of our thankfulness for this wonderful blessing, that He hath given His only Son to be our Saviour; and we are to hold this for truth, that they which are not thankful for it, let them say what they will, they have no soundness of grace or power of religion at the heart.

IV.

And thus much of the third title. The fourth and last title is in these words, *Our Lord*. Christ Jesus the only Son of God is our Lord three ways:

1. First, by creation, in that He made us of nothing when we were not.

2. Secondly, He is our Lord in the right of redemption. In former times the custom hath been, when one is taken prisoner in the field, he that pays his ransom shall become always afterwards his lord. So Christ, when we were bond slaves under hell, death and condemnation, payeth the ransom of our redemption, and freed us from the bondage of sin and Satan, and therefore in that respect He is our Lord.

3. Thirdly, He is the Head of the church (as the husband is the wife's head) to rule and govern the same by His Word and Spirit. And therefore in that respect also, Christ is our Lord.

And thus much for the meaning. Now follow the duties, and:

1. First of all, if Christ be our sovereign Lord, we must perform absolute obedience unto Him, that is, whatsoever He commands us, that must we do. And I say, absolute obedience, because magistrates, masters, rulers and fathers may command, and must be obeyed, yet not simply, but so far forth as that which they command doth agree with the Word and commandment of God. But Christ's will and Word is righteousness itself, and therefore it is a rule and direction of all our actions whatsoever. And for this cause He must be absolutely obeyed. Thus He requires the obedience of the moral law. But why? Because He is the Lord our God (Exod. 20:2). And in Malachi (Mal. 1:6) He saith, *If I be a Lord, where is my fear*? And again, we must resign both body and soul, heart, mind, will, affections and the course of our whole lives to be ruled by the will of Christ. He is Lord not only of the body, but of the spirit and soul of man. He must therefore have homage of both. As we adore Him by the knee of the body, so must the thoughts and the affections of our hearts have their knees also to worship Him, and to shew their subjection to His commandments. As for such as do hold Him for their Lord in word, but in the mean season will not endeavour to shew their loyalty in all manner of obedience, they are indeed no better than stark rebels.

2. Secondly, when by the hand of Christ strange judgments shall come to pass, as it is usual in all places continually; we must stay ourselves without murmuring or finding fault, because He is an absolute Lord over all His creatures; all things are in His hands, and He may do with His own whatsoever He will; and therefore we must rather fear and tremble whensoever we see or hear of them. So David saith (Psa. 39:9), *I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*. And again (Psa. 119:120), *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments*.

3. Thirdly, before we use any of God's creatures or ordinances, we must sanctify them by the direction of His Word and by prayer. The reason is this: because He is our Lord over all, and therefore from His Word we must fetch direction to teach us whether we may use them or not, and when and how they are to be used; and secondly, we must pray to Him that He would give us liberty and grace to use them aright in holy manner. Also we are so to use the creatures and ordinances of God, as being always ready to give an account of our doings at the day of judgment; for we use that which is the Lord's, not our own; we are but stewards over them, and we must come to a reckoning for the stewardship. Hast thou learning? Then employ it to the glory of God and the good of the church; boast not of it as though it were thine own. Hast thou any other gift or blessing of God, be it wisdom, strength, riches, honour, favour, or whatsoever? Then look thou use it so, as thou mayest be always ready to make a good account thereof unto Christ.

4. Lastly, everyone must in such manner lead his life in this world that at the day of death, he may with cheerfulness surrender and give up his soul into the hands of his Lord, and say with Stephen (Acts 7:59) *Lord Jesus, receive my soul*. For consider this with thyself: that thy soul is none of thine own, but His who hath bought it with a price, and therefore thou must so order and keep it as that thou mayest in good manner restore in into the hands of God at the end of thy life. If a man should borrow a thing of his neighbour, and afterward hurt it, and make a spoil of it, he would be ashamed to bring it again to the owner in that manner, and if he do, the owner will not receive it. Ungodly men in this life do so stain their souls with sin, that they can never be able willingly to give them up into the hands of God at the day of death; and if they would, yet God accepts them not, but casts them quite away. We must therefore labour so to live in the world that with a joyful heart at the day of death, we may commend our souls into the hands of our Lord Christ Jesus, who gave them unto us. This is a hard thing to be done, and he that will do it truly, must first be assured of the pardon of his own sins, which a man can never have without true and

unfeigned faith and repentance. Wherefore while we have time, let us purge and cleanse our souls and bodies that they may come home again to God in good plight.

And here all governors must be put in mind that they have an higher Lord, that they may not oppress or deal hardly with their inferiors. This is Paul's reason (Eph. 6:9), *Ye masters*, saith he*, do the same things unto your servants, putting away threatening; and know that even your master is also in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him*. Inferiors again must remember to submit themselves to the authority of their governors, especially of magistrates. For they are set over us by our sovereign Lord and King Christ Jesus; as Paul saith (Rom. 13:1), *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God and the powers that be ordained of God*. And again (Eph. 6:5), *Servants be obedient to your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your hearts, as unto Christ*.

The comfort which God's church may reap hence, is very great; for if Christ be the Lord of lords, and our Lord especially whom He hath created and redeemed; we need not to fear what the devil or wicked men can do unto us. If Christ be on our side, who can be against us? We need not fear them that can destroy the body and do no more; but we must cast our fear on Him that is Lord of body and soul, and can cast both to hell (Matt. 10:28).

Thus much of the fourth title.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary

Now follows Christ's incarnation in these words, *Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary*. And they contain in them one of the most principal points of the doctrine of godliness, as Paul saith (1 Tim. 3:16), *Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, which is, God is made manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit* etc. And that we may proceed in order in handling them, I will first speak of the incarnation generally, and then after come to the parts thereof.

I.

In general we are to propound three questions, the answering whereof will be very needful to the better understanding of the doctrine following:

1. The first question is: Who was incarnate, or made man? *Answer*: The second Person in Trinity, the Son of God alone, as it is set down in this first article, according to the Scripture. St John saith (John 1:14), *The Word was made flesh*; and the angel saith (Luke 1:35), *The Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Most High*. And Paul saith (Rom. 1:3), that *Christ Jesus our Lord was made of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh*. And there be sundry reasons why the second Person should rather be incarnate than any other:

(1) By whom the Father created all things, and man especially; by Him, man being fallen is to be redeemed, and as I may say re-created. Now man was at the first created of the Father by the Son; and therefore to be redeemed by Him.

(2) It was most convenient that that which is the essential image of the Father, should take man's nature that He might restore the image of God lost and defaced in man; but the second Person is the essential image of the Father, and therefore He alone must take man's nature.

(3) It was requisite that that Person which was by nature the Son of God, should be made the Son of man, that we which are the sons of man, yea the sons of wrath, should again by grace be made the sons of God. Now the second Person alone is the Son of God by nature, not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost.

As for the Father, He could not be incarnate. For to take flesh is to be sent of another, but the Father cannot be sent of any person, because He is from none. Again, if the Father were incarnate, He should be father to him which is by nature God, and the son of a creature, namely, the virgin Mary, which things cannot well stand.

And the Holy Ghost could not be incarnate; for then there should be more sons than one in the Trinity, namely, the second Person the Son of the Father, and the third Person, the Holy Ghost, the son of the virgin Mary.

It may be objected to the contrary on this manner: The whole divine essence is incarnate, every Person in Trinity is the whole divine essence, therefore every Person is incarnate. *Answer*: The whole Godhead indeed is incarnate, yet not as it is absolutely considered, but so far forth as it is restrained and limited to the Person of the Son; and to speak properly, the Godhead itself is not incarnate, but the very Person of the Son subsisting in the Godhead. And though all the Persons be one and the same essence, yet do they really differ each from other in regard of the peculiar manner of subsisting; and therefore man's nature may be assumed of the second Person, and be not assumed either of the Father or of the Holy Ghost; as in the like case the soul of man is wholly in the head and wholly in the feet, yea, wholly in

every part; and yet the soul cannot be said to use reason in the feet or in any other part, but only in the head.

Again, it may be alleged that the incarnation, being an outward action of God to the creature, is not proper to the Son. *Answer*: The incarnation stands of two actions, the first is the framing and creating of that manhood which was to be assumed by the Son, or Word of the Father; and this action is common to all three Persons equally. The second, is the limiting or the receiving of it into the unity of any Person, and in respect of this action, the work of incarnation is peculiar to the Son. To this purpose Augustine speaks, *That creature* (saith he) *which the virgin conceived and brought forth, though it appertain to the Person of the Son alone, yet was it made by the whole Trinity*; as when three men weave one and the same garment, and the second only wears it.

2. The second question is: What manner of man was the Son of God made? *Answer*: He was made a proper or *particular* man, and a *perfect* or a *very* man.

I say that He was a particular man to shew that He took not unto Him the general form or idea of man's nature conceived only in mind, nor the common nature of man as it is existing in every man; but the whole nature of man, that is, both a body and a reasonable soul, existing in one particular subject.

I say further that He was and is a true and perfect man, being in everything that concerns man's nature like unto Adam, Abraham, David, and all other men, saving only in sin. For, first of all, He had the substance of a true body and of a reasonable soul. Secondly, the properties of body and soul: in the body, length, breadth, thickness, circumscription etc.; in the soul, the faculties of understanding both simple and compound: will, affections, as love, hatred, desire, joy, fear, etc., the powers also of hearing, feeling, seeing, smelling, tasting, moving, growing, eating, digesting, sleeping etc.

Thirdly, he took unto Him the infirmities of man's nature, which are certain natural defects or passions in body or mind, as to be hungry, thirsty, weary, sad and sorrowful, ignorant of some things, angry, to increase in stature, and wisdom, and knowledge etc.; yet this which I say must be understood with two caveats: The first is that infirmities be either certain unblameable passions, or else such defects as are sins in themselves. Now Christ taketh the first only, and not the second. Secondly, infirmities be either general, or personal. General, which appertains to the whole nature of man, and are to be found in every man that cometh of Adam; as to be born unlearned, and subject to natural affections, as sorrow, anger etc. Personal, are such as appertain to some particular men, and not to all, and arise of some private causes and particular judgments of God, as to be born a fool, to be sick of an ague, consumption, dropsy, pleurisy, and such like diseases. Now the first sort be in Christ, and not the second; for as He took not the person of any man, but only man's nature, so was it sufficient for Him to take unto Him the infirmities of man's nature, though He took not the private infirmities of any man's person. And the reason why Christ would put on not only the substance and faculties of a true man, but also his infirmities, was that He might shew Himself to be very man indeed, also that he might suffer for us both in body and soul, and that He might give us an example of patience in bearing all manner of evil for God's glory, and the good of our neighbour.

Now the things which may be alleged to the contrary for infringing of the truth of Christ's manhood, are of no moment. As first, because Christ appeared in the form of a man in the Old Testament, being no man; therefore He did so at His coming in the New Testament; but the reason is not like. For Christ in the Old Testament (Gen. 18:9ff.), as the angel of His Father in some special affairs, took unto Him the body of a man for some space of time; but He did not receive it into the unity of His Person, but laid it down when the business which He had enterprised with men was ended. Now in the fulness of time, He came from heaven as the angel of the

Covenant, and for that cause He was to unite into His own Person the nature of man, which thing was never done before. And when as Paul saith (Rom. 8:3) that Christ *came in the similitude of sinful flesh*, his meaning is not to signify that He was a man only in resemblance and shew; but to testify that being a true man which was indeed void of sin, He was content to abase Himself to that condition in which He became like to a miserable sinner in bearing the punishment for our sin. For Paul doth not say that He took upon Him the similitude of flesh simply as it is flesh, but of the flesh of sin or sinful.

3. The third question is: Why must the Son of God become man? *Answer*: There be sundry reasons of this point, and the most principal are these:

(1) First of all, it is a thing that greatly stands with the justice of God, that in that nature in which God was offended, in the same should a satisfaction be made to God for sin. Now sin was committed in man's nature. Adam sinned first, and in him all his posterity. Therefore it was necessary that in man's nature there should be a satisfaction made to God's justice, and for this cause the Son of God must needs abase Himself and become man for our sakes.

(2) Secondly, by right of creation every man is bound in conscience to fulfil even the very rigour and extremity of the moral law. But considering man is now fallen from his first estate and condition, therefore it was requisite that the Son of God should become man, that in man's nature He might fulfil all righteousness which the law doth exact at our hands.

(3) Thirdly, He that is our Redeemer must die for our sins; for there is no remission of sins without shedding of blood. But Christ as He is God cannot die; for no passion can befall the Godhead. Therefore it was needful that He should become man, that in man's nature He might die and fully satisfy God's justice for man's offence.

(4) Lastly, He that must make reconciliation between God and man, must be such an one as may make request or speak both to God and man. For a mediator is as it were a middle person making intercession between two other persons, the one offended, the other offending. Therefore it is necessary that Christ should not only be God, to speak unto the Father for us and to present our prayers unto Him; but also man, that God might speak to us and we to God by Christ. For howsoever before the fall, man could speak to God even face to face, yet since the fall, such fear possesseth man's corrupt nature that he cannot abide the presence of God, but fleeth from it.

Now, whereas I say that it was necessary that the Son of God for the causes before alleged must become man; the necessity must be understood in respect of God's will, and not in respect of His absolute power. For if it had so pleased God, He was able to have laid down another kind of way of man's redemption than by the incarnation of the Son of God; and He appointed no other way, because He would not.

Thus much of the incarnation in general. Now follow the duties which arise of it.

1. And first, we are taught hereby to come to Christ by faith, and with all our hearts to cleave unto Him. Great is the deadness and sluggishness of man's nature; for scarce one of a thousand care for Him, or seek to Him for righteousness and life everlasting. But we should excite ourselves every way to draw near to Him as much as possible we may; for when He was incarnate, He came near unto us by taking our nature upon Him, that we again whatsoever we are, might come near unto Him by taking unto us His divine nature. Again, when Christ was incarnate, He was made bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and therefore proportionally we must labour to become bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh; which we shall be when we are mystically united unto Him by faith, and born anew by His Spirit. Moreover, Christ by His incarnation came down from heaven to us, that we

being partakers of His grace, might ascend up to heaven by Him. And thus we see how the meditation of Christ's incarnation should be a spur to prick us forward still more and more to come to Christ.

2. Secondly, Christ's incarnation must be a pattern unto us of a most wonderful and strange humility. For as Paul saith (Phil. 2:6,7), *Being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, He made Himself of no reputation; and took on Him the form of a servant; and humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross*. Yea, so far forth He abased Himself, that as David saith (Psa. 22:6), *He was a worm and no man*. And this teacheth us to lay aside all self-love and pride of heart, and to practise the duties of humility, as the apostle exhorts the Philippians in the same place, and that shall we do when we begin to cast off that high opinion which every man by nature conceives of Himself, and become vile and base in our own eyes. Secure and drowsy Protestants think themselves blessed, and say in their hearts as the angel of the church in Laodicea said (Rev. 3:17), *I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing*; whereas indeed they are most miserable and wretched, and poor, and naked and blind. And the same fond opinion possesseth the minds of our ignorant people, who chant it in the very same tune, saying that God loves them, and that they love God with all their hearts and their neighbours as themselves; that they have perfect faith in Christ and ever had, not once so much as doubting of their salvation; that all is well with them and that they are past all danger whatsoever, in the matter of their salvation, and therefore need not take so much care for it. Thus ye may see how men are commonly carried away with vain and fond conceits of their own excellency. And truly so long as this overweening of our own righteousness reigns in our hearts, let preachers speak and say what they will, we can never become followers of Christ in the practice of humility. Some will say, peradventure that they never had any such opinion of their own righteousness; but I answer again that there was never yet any man descended of Adam, save Christ, but he had this proud fantasy ruling and

reigning in him, till such time as God gave grace to change and alter his heart. And this inward pride, the less we discern it, the more it is; and the more we discern it, the less it is. Therefore though as yet thou see it not in thyself, yet labour both to see and to feel it, and to strive against it, casting down thyself for thy own misery after Christ's own example, who being God, abased Himself to the condition of a miserable man. For thou shalt never be filled with the good things of God, till thou be emptied of self-love and self-liking. For this cause let us purge and empty ourselves of all conceit of our own righteousness, that God may fill our hearts with His grace.

Furthermore the incarnation of Christ is the ground and foundation of all our comfort, as the names of Christ serving to express the same do testify. Jacob in his last testament saith (Gen. 49:10) that *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh*, that is the Messiah, *come*. Now the name Shiloh signifieth the tunicle or skin that lappeth the infant in the mother's womb, called by the physicians the secundine; and by a kind of figure it is put for the Son of God in the womb of the virgin made man. And Job (Job 19:25) to comfort himself in his affliction saith, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*. Now the word which he useth to signify his Redeemer by, is very emphatical, for it signifieth a kinsman near allied unto him of his own flesh that will restore him to life. And the Lord by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 7:14) calleth Christ Immanuel, that is, *God with us*; which name importeth very much, namely, that whereas by nature we have lost our fellowship with God, because our sins are a wall of partition (Isa. 59:2) severing us from Him; yet nevertheless the same is restored to all that believe, by the Mediator Christ Jesus (Col. 1:21); because His divine nature is coupled to man's nature, and so the Word is made flesh. And this strait conjunction of two natures in one Person joins God to men, and men to God; yea, by Christ we are brought to God and have free access unto Him; and again in Him we apprehend God, and are made one with Him.

And further, whereas Christ beside our nature took our infirmities also, it is a wonderful comfort to God's church, for it shews that He is not only a Saviour, but also a very compassionate and pitiful Saviour. As the Holy Ghost saith (Heb. 2:17), *In all things it became Christ to be like unto His brethren, that he might be merciful and a faithful High Priest in things concerning God*. Let a man be sick of a grievous disease, and let a friend come that hath been troubled with the very same disease, he will presently shew more compassion than twenty others. And so Christ having felt in His own souls and body the anguish and the manifold perplexities that we feel in our temptations and afflictions, hath His bowels as it were yearning towards us, evermore being pressed and ready to relieve us in all our miseries. In the days of His flesh, He wept over Jerusalem when He saw it afar off, because she continued in her old sins, and did not know the time of her visitation; and no doubt, though now He be exalted in glory in heaven, yet His compassion to His poor members upon earth is no what diminished.

II.

Now we come to speak of the incarnation more particularly; and the Creed yet further expresseth it by two parts: the first, is the conception of Christ in these words: *Conceived by the Holy Ghost*; the second, is His birth, in the words following: *Born of the virgin Mary*.

1.

The conception of Christ is set down with His efficient cause, the Holy Ghost, as the angel said to Joseph (Matt. 1:20), *Fear not to take Mary for thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost*. Here it may be demanded, why the conception of Christ should be ascribed to the Holy Ghost alone, which is common to all the Persons in Trinity, as all other such actions are? *Answer*: It is not done to exclude the Father or the Son Himself from this work; but to signify that it comes of the free gift and grace of God (which commonly is termed by the Holy Ghost) that the manhood of Christ

being but a creature, should be advanced to this dignity, that it should become a part of the Son of God. And again, the Holy Ghost is the author of His conception in a special manner; for the Father and the Son did cause it by the Holy Ghost from them both immediately.

In the conception of Christ, we must observe and consider three things: (1) the framing of the manhood, (2) the sanctifying of it and (3) the personal union of the manhood with the Godhead. And howsoever I distinguish these three for order's sake, yet must we know and remember that they are all wrought at one and the same instant of time. For when the Holy Ghost frames and sanctifies the manhood in the womb of the virgin; at the very same moment it is received into the unity of the second Person.

(1) In the framing of Christ's manhood, two things must be considered: the matter and the manner.

(i) The matter of His body was the very flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, otherwise He could not have been the son of David, of Abraham, and Adam according to the flesh. As for His soul, it was not derived from the soul of the virgin Mary as a part thereof, but it was made as the souls of all other men be; that is, of nothing by the very power of God, and placed in the body; both of them from the first moment of their being, having their substance in the person of the Son. And here we must take heed of two opinions:

(a) The first is of the Anabaptists which hold that the flesh of Christ came down from heaven, and passed through the virgin Mary as through a pipe, without taking any substance from her. The places which they allege for the purpose are manifestly abused. For whereas Christ saith of Himself (John 3:13) that He *descended from heaven*, His speech must be understood in respect of His Godhead, which may be said in some sort to descend, in that it was made manifest in the manhood here upon earth. And whereas Paul calleth Him *heavenly*, and *the Lord from heaven* (1 Cor. 15:47,48), it is not

in respect of the substance of His body, but in respect of His glorious qualities which he received after His resurrection.

(b) The other opinion is of the papists, that hold the bread in the sacrament to be turned substantially into the body of Christ; which thing if it be true, then the body of Christ is made of bread kneaded and tempered by the hand of the baker, and not of the substance of the virgin Mary.

(ii) As for the manner of the making and framing of the human nature of Christ, it was miraculous; not by generation according to the ordinary course of nature; but by an extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost above nature; and for this cause, it is not within the compass of man's reason, either to conceive or express the manner and order of this conception. The angel ascribes two actions to the Holy Ghost in this great work, the one to *come upon* the virgin Mary, the other to *overshadow* her (Luke 1:35). By the first is signified the extraordinary work of the Holy Ghost in fashioning the human nature of Christ, for so much the phrase elsewhere importeth (Jud. 14:6). The second signifieth that the Holy Ghost did as it were cast a cloud over her (Acts 1:8), to teach us that we should not search overmuch into the mystery of the incarnation.

It may be objected against this which hath been said, that if Christ be in this manner conceived by the Holy Ghost, then the Holy Ghost shall be Father to Christ, and Christ His Son. *Answer*: The reason is not good; for he that is a father, is not a bare efficient cause, but one which in the effecting of anything confers the matter unto it from himself, whereof it shall be made. Now the Holy Ghost did not minister any matter unto Christ from His own substance, but did only as it were, take the mass and lump of man's nature from the body of the virgin Mary, and without ordinary generation made it the body of Christ, as Basil saith, *Christ was conceived not of the substance, but of the power, not by any generation, but by the appointment and benediction of the Holy Ghost*.

(2) The second point in the conception is the sanctifying of the mass or lump which was to be the manhood of Christ. And that was done upon special cause: First, that it might be joined to the Person of the Son, which could not have been, if it had been defiled with sin. Secondly, Christ was a Saviour as He is both God and man. Now then, being man, if He had been sinful Himself, He could not have saved others, but should have stood in need of a Saviour Himself.

This sanctification hath two parts: The first is the stay and stoppage of the propagation of original sin, and of the guilt of Adam's sin; which was on this manner: God in the beginning set down this order touching man, that what evil or defect soever he brought upon himself, he should derive the same to every one of his posterity begotten of him. And hereupon when any father begets his child, he is in the room of Adam, and conveys unto it beside the nature of man, the very guilt and corruption of nature. Now for the preventing of this evil in Christ, God in great wisdom appointed that He should be conceived by the Holy Ghost without any manner of generation by man. And by this means He takes substance from the virgin without the guilt and corruption of the substance. But it may further be objected thus: All that be in Adam have sinned in him; but Christ was in Adam as He is man; therefore He sinned in him. *Answer*: The proposition is false, unless it be expounded on this manner: All that were in Adam have sinned in him, so be it they come of him by generation. Paul saith (Rom. 5:12) not, out of one man, but *by one man sin entered into the world*, to shew that man propagates his corruption to no more than he begets. Again, Christ is in Adam not simply as other men are, but in some part; namely, in respect of substance which He took from him, and not in respect of the propagation of the substance by ordinary generation. Other men are both *from* Adam and *by* Adam. But Christ is *from* him alone and not *by* him as a begetter or procreant cause. The second part of sanctification is the infusion of all pureness and holiness into the manhood of Christ, so far forth as was meet for the nature of a Redeemer.

The duties to be learned hence are these: First, whereas Christ was sanctified in the womb of the virgin Mary, we likewise must labour to be sanctified in ourselves, following the commandments of God (1 Pet. 1:16), *Be ye holy as I am holy*. St John saith (1 John 3:3) that *he which hath hope* to be with Christ in glory in heaven, *purifieth himself even as He is pure*; no doubt setting before himself the example of Christ as a pattern to follow in all His ways. And because our hearts are as it were seas of corruption, we must daily cleanse ourselves of them by little and little, following the practice of the poor beggar that is always piecing and mending, and day by day pulls away some rags and puts better cloth in the room. And if we shall continually endeavour ourselves to cast off the remnants of corruption that hang so fast on and make supply thereof by some new portion of God's heavenly grace; we shall be vessels of honour sanctified and meet for the Lord, and prepared unto every good work. Christ could not have been a fit Saviour for us unless He had first of all been sanctified, neither can we be fit members unto Him unless we be purged of our sins and in some measure truly sanctified.

The comforts which God's people may reap of the sanctification of Christ's manhood is great: For why was He sanctified? Surely, if we mark it well, we shall find it was for the good and benefit of His elect. For Adam and Christ be two roots, as hath been shewed. Adam by creation first received God's image, and after lost the same for himself and his posterity. Now Christ to remove the sin of man is made the second Adam, and the root and very head of all the elect. His manhood was filled with holiness above measure; that from thence as from a storehouse it might be derived to all His members. And therefore by His most holy conception, our sinful birth and conception is sanctified, and His holiness serves as a cover to hide our manifold corruptions from the eyes of God. Yea, it serves as a buckler to award the temptations of the devil; for when he shall say to our hearts on this manner: No unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of heaven; but thou by reason of the remnants of original sin art unclean, therefore thou

canst not enter into the kingdom of heaven; we return our answer, saying that Christ's righteousness is our righteousness, serving to make us stand without blame or spot before God. And as Jacob put on Esau's garments that he might get his father's blessing; so if by faith we do put on the white garment of righteousness of our elder brother Christ Jesus, and present ourselves in it unto our heavenly Father, we shall obtain His blessing, which is eternal happiness.

(3) Now remains the third and last part of the conception, which is the union of the Godhead and the manhood; concerning which, many points are to be particularly handled:

(i) The first is: What kind of union is this? *Answer*: In the Trinity, there be two sorts of unions: union in nature, and union in person. Union in nature is when two or more things are joined and united into one nature, as the Father, the Son the Holy Ghost, being and remaining three distinct Persons, are one and the same in nature or Godhead. Union in person, is when two things are in that manner united that they make but one person, or substance; as a body created by God, and a reasonable soul joined both together make one particular man, as Peter, Paul, John etc. And this second is the union whereof we entreat in this place; by which the second Person in Trinity, the Son of God, did unite unto Himself the human nature, that is, the body and soul of man; so as the Godhead of the Son and the manhood concurring together, made but one Person.

(ii) The second point is: In what thing this union doth consist? *Answer*: It consists in this: that the second Person the Son of God doth assume unto it a manhood in such order that it, being void of all personal being in itself, doth wholly and only subsist in the same Person. As the plant called mistle, or mistletoe, having no root of its own, both grows and lives in the stock or body of the oak or some other tree; so the human nature having no proper subsistence, is, as it were, engrafted into the Person of the Son, and is

wholly supported and sustained by it so as it should not be at all, if it were not sustained in that manner. And for the better understanding of this point, we must consider that there be four degrees of the presence of God in His creatures:

(a) The first is His general presence, and it may be called the presence of His providence, whereby He preserveth the substances of all creatures, and giveth unto them to live, move and have being; and this extendeth itself to all creatures good and bad.

(b) The second degree is the presence of grace, whereby He doth not only preserve the substances of all His creatures, but also giveth grace unto it; and this agreeth to the church and people of God upon earth.

(c) The third degree is the presence of glory peculiar to the saints and angels in heaven; and this stands in three things: for God not only preserves their substances and gives them plenty of His grace, but also admits them into His glorious presence, so as they may behold His majesty face to face.

(d) The fourth and last is that whereby the Godhead of the Son is present, and dwells with and in the manhood, giving unto it in some part His own subsistence. Whereby it comes to pass that this manhood assumed is proper to the Son, and cannot be the manhood of the Father or of the Holy Ghost, or of any creature whatsoever. And this is a thing so admirable and so unspeakable, that among all the works of God there cannot be found another example hereof in all the world.

Hence it follows necessarily that the manhood of Christ consisting of body and reasonable soul, is a nature only, and not a person; because it doth not subsist alone, as other men, Peter, Paul, John do; but wholly depends on the Person of the Word, into the unity whereof it is received.

(iii) The third point is in what order the divine and human nature of Christ are united together. *Answer*: The common consent of divines is that, albeit all the parts of the manhood and the Godhead of Christ be united at one instant; yet in respect of order, He unites unto Himself first and immediately the soul, and by the soul, the body. And it seems unmeet that God being a most simple essence, should immediately be joined to a compound body; and therefore it may well be said that He is united unto it by the more simple part of man, which is the soul. Again, the manhood of Christ is first and immediately joined to the Person of the Son Himself, and by the Person, to the Godhead of the Son.

(iv) The fourth point is whether there remain any difference or diversity of the two natures after that the union is made. *Answer*: The two natures concurring make not the Person of the Son to be compounded properly, but only by analogy, for as body and soul make one man, so God and man make one Christ; neither are they turned one into another, the Godhead into the manhood, or the manhood into the Godhead, as water was turned into wine at Cana in Galilee. Neither are they confused and mingled together as meats in the stomach; but they now are, and so remain without composition, conversion or confusion, really distinct, and that in three respects:

(a) First, in regard of essence. For the Godhead of Christ is the Godhead, and cannot be the manhood. And again, the manhood of Christ is the manhood, and not the Godhead.

(b) Secondly, they are distinguished in properties. The Godhead is most wise, just, merciful, omnipotent; yea, wisdom, justice, mercy and power itself; and so is not the manhood, neither can it be. Again, Christ as He is God hath His will eternal and uncreated, which is all one with the will of the Father and the Holy Ghost. And as He is man, He hath another will created in time, and placed in His reasonable soul, and this Christ signifieth when He saith (Luke 22:42), *Not my will, but thy will be done*.

(c) Thirdly, they are distinct in their actions or operations; which though they go together inseparably in the work of redemption; yet they must in no wise be confounded, but distinguished as the natures themselves are. Christ saith of Himself (John 10:18), *I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again*; and hereby He shews the distinctions of operation in His two natures; for to lay down His life is an action of the manhood, because the Godhead cannot die; and to take it up again is the work of the Godhead alone, which reunites the soul to the body after death.

(v) The fifth and last point is: What ariseth out of this union? *Answer*: By reason of this hypostatic union, though the Godhead receive nothing from the manhood, yet the manhood itself, which is assumed, is thereby perfected and enriched with unspeakable dignity. For, first of all, it is exalted above all creatures whatsoever, even angels themselves, in that it hath subsistence in the second Person of the Trinity. Secondly, together with the Godhead of the Son, it is adored and worshipped with divine honour, as in like case the honour done to the king himself redounds to the crown on his head. Thirdly, by reason of this union, the Godhead of Christ works all things in the matter of our redemption, in and by the manhood. And hereupon the flesh of Christ though it profit nothing of itself, yet by the virtue which it receiveth from that Person to which it is joined it is quickening flesh, and the bread of life (John 6:35). Again, from this union of two nature into one Person, ariseth a kind of speech or phrase peculiar to the Scripture called the *communication of properties*, where the property of one nature is attributed to the whole Person, or to the other nature; as when Paul saith (Acts 20:28) that God shed His blood, or (1 Cor. 2:8) that the Lord of glory was crucified. And when Christ saith that He, talking with Nicodemus, was then in heaven (John 3:13).

Uses.

The use of the personal union is threefold:

Use 1. First, it serves to shew the heinousness of our sins, and the greatness of our misery. For it had not been possible to make a satisfaction to God's justice in man's nature for the least offence; unless the same nature had first of all been nearly joined to the Godhead of the Son that thereby it might be so far forth supported and sustained that it might overcome the wrath of God.

Use 2. Secondly, it sets forth unto us the endless love of God to man. For whereas by reason of Adam's fall we were become the vilest of all creatures, except the devil and his angels; by this mystical conjunction, our nature is exalted to such an estate and condition, as is far above all creatures, even the angels themselves.

Use 3. Thirdly, it is as it were the key of all our comfort; for all found comfort stands in happiness, all happiness is in fellowship with God, all fellowship with God is by Christ, who for this cause, being very God, became very man, that He might reconcile man to God and God to man.

2.

Thus much of the conception of Christ; now follows His birth, whereby in the ordinary time of travail, according to the course of nature, He was brought forth into the world by the virgin Mary. And it was the will of God that Christ should not only be conceived, but also born, and that after the manner of men, that He might be known to be very man indeed. In the birth we may consider four things: the time, the place, the manner, the manifestation of it:

(1) The time was in *the last days* (Isa. 2:2), toward the end of the seventy weeks of Daniel (Dan. 9:24), which are to be accounted from the end of the captivity of Babylon, and make in all 490 years; or more plainly 3,900 years and more from the beginning of the world, and as Paul saith (Gal. 4:4), *in the fulness of time*. And the evangelists have noted of purpose the time to

have been when Augustus Caesar taxed the Jews and all nations under his dominion (Luke 2:1); to signify that Christ was born at the very time foretold by Jacob, when the crown and sceptre was taken from Judah (Gen. 49:10); and withal to shew that His kingdom was not of this world. And it was the good pleasure of God that Christ should not be born either later or sooner, but so many ages from the beginning of the world. And this consideration of the very time itself, serves greatly for the confirmation of our faith. For thus may we reason with ourselves: If God who in the beginning made a promise to our first parents concerning the seed of the woman, deferred it almost 4,000 years, and yet at length accomplished the same to the very full; then no doubt God having promised the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting, will in His good time bring them to pass, though as yet we see them not. And thus by the accomplishment of all things past, should we confirm our hopes concerning things to come.

(2) The place was not at Jerusalem, nor Nazareth, nor any other city, but only a village of Judah called Bethlehem, that the prophecy of Micah (Mic. 5:2) might be fulfilled: *Thou Bethlehem Ephrathah art little to be among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall be come forth unto me, that shall be ruler in Israel*. And here we may observe a memorable example of God's providence which overruleth the proceedings of civil tyrants, to the accomplishing of His own will, they themselves for their parts intending nothing less. Augustus, not so much as dreaming of the birth of the Messiah, gave commandment that every man should go to his own city to be taxed; and hereupon Joseph and Mary take their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem; which journey God Himself appointed and disposed to this end: that the Messiah might be born in the place which he preordained and foretold by His prophets.

(3) The manner of Christ's birth was very base and poor; for the place where He was born was a stable, and the cradle where He lay was a cratch. And He willingly took upon Him this poverty for sundry causes:

(i) That the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith that He should be *the shame and contempt of the people* (Psa. 22:6); and that He shall grow up *as a root out of a dry ground and have neither form nor beauty* (Isa. 53:2).

(ii) That He might afterward from this base condition be exalted even in His manhood to that rich and glorious estate in which He should manifest Himself to be Lord of heaven and earth.

(iii) He was born in exceeding poverty that He might shame the wise men of this world, who exceedingly esteem of their riches, power and glory, persuading themselves that without such means nothing can be done. And yet for all this they cannot so much as reconcile one man to God by all their might and wealth; whereas Christ Himself hath done the same both in poverty and weakness; and can enlarge and preserve His kingdom without earthly helps. When He hung upon the cross, the soldiers stripped Him of His garments; and being naked, He brought that to pass which all the monarchs of the earth in all their royalties could never have performed. And whether Christ lie in the manger between the ox and the ass, or in the palace of the king, it matters not in regard of our salvation.

(iv) He came in this manner that there might be a difference between His first coming in the flesh and His last coming to judgment. In the first, He came only for this end: not to make any outward alterations in the world, but to change the conscience and to put in execution the work of our spiritual redemption; and therefore He hath reserved the overturning of all earthly estates, with the manifestation of His own glory, to the latter.

(v) Lastly, He was born in a poor estate that He might procure true riches for us in heaven; and withal sanctify unto us our poverty upon earth. As Paul saith (2 Cor. 8:9), *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He being rich, for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich*. He was content to lie in the manger, that we might rest in heaven.

This serves to teach us to be content to bear any mean condition that the Lord shall send upon us; for this is the very estate of the Son of God Himself. And if for our cause He did not refuse the basest condition that ever was, why should we murmur at the same? For what are the best of us but miserable sinners, and therefore utterly unworthy either to go or lie upon the bare earth? And though we fare and lie better than our Lord Himself, yet such is our daintiness, we are not pleased therewith; whereas He for His part distained not the manger of the ox. And if the Lord of heaven and earth coming into the world find so little entertainment or favour, we for our parts, being His members, should willingly prepare ourselves to take as hard measure at the hands of men.

(4) The last point is the manifestation of Christ's birth that it may be known to the world. Where, consider two circumstances:

(i) The first: To whom? Namely, to poor shepherds tending their flocks by night, and not to great or mighty men, lovers of this world, not to the priests at Jerusalem, contemners of God's grace; and that for two causes: one, because the shepherds were the fittest persons to publish the same at Bethlehem; the other, it was God's pleasure to manifest that in the birth of Christ, which Paul saith (1 Cor. 1:26,27), *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise*.

(ii) The second is: By whom? By the angels of the Lord appearing in great glory unto the shepherds. For the priests of Jerusalem and the rulers of the synagogues, to whom this office did belong, held their peace; being blinded in their manifold errors and wicked ways.

The duties to be learned of the birth of Christ are these:

(1) First, we are admonished hereby to magnify and praise the name of God, saying with Mary (Luke 1:46,47), *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and*

my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. And with Zachariah (Luke 1:68), *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people*. And with the angels of heaven (Luke 2:14), *Glory to God in the highest heavens*. For in this birth is made manifest the wisdom, the truth, the justice and mercy and goodness of God towards us, more than ever it was before; yea as Christ, God and man, is more excellent than the first Adam, created according to God's own image; and as the spiritual life is better than the natural life; and as the eternal and most holy marriage of Christ the husband and His spouse the church, arising as it were out of the blood that trickled out of His side, is more wonderful than the creation of Eve of the rib of Adam; lastly, as it is a far greater matter by death to overcome death and to turn it unto eternal life, than to command that to exist and be which was not before; so is the work of redemption begun in the birth of Christ more unspeakable and admirable than the first creation of man. Hereupon, not six cherubim, as in the vision of Isaiah, nor twenty four elders, as in the Apocalypse, but a great multitude of angels like armies were heard to praise God at the birth of Christ; and no doubt the like sight was not seen since the beginning of the world. And the angels by their example put us in mind to consider aright of this benefit and to praise God for it. But alas, this practice is very rare in this fruitless and barren age of the world; where sin and iniquity abounds, as may be seen by experience; for by an old custom we retain still in the church the feast of the nativity of Christ, so commonly called; which nevertheless is not spent in praising the name of God who hath sent His Son from His own bosom to be our Redeemer, but contrariwise in rifling, dicing, carding, masking, mumming, and in all licentious liberty for the most part, as though it were some heathen feast of Ceres or Bacchus.

(2) Secondly, Christ was conceived and born in bodily manner that there might be a spiritual conception and birth of Him in our hearts, as Paul saith (Gal. 4:19), *My little children of whom I travail till Christ be formed in you*; and that is when we are made new creatures by Christ, and perform new

obedience to our Creator. When this people said to Christ that His mother and His brethren sought Him, He answered (Mark 3:35), *He that doth the will of God is my brother, my sister, and mother*. Therefore let us go with the shepherds to Bethlehem, and finding our blessed Saviour swaddled and lying in a cratch, let us bring Him thence and make our own hearts to be His cradle, that we may be able to say that we live not, but Christ lives in us. And let us present unto Him ourselves, our bodies and souls, as the best gold, myrrh and frankincense that may be; and thus conceiving Him by faith, He remaining without change, we shall be changed into Him and made bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. The world, I know, never so much as dreameth of this kind of conception and birth, for as David saith (Psa. 7:14), *Men travail with wickedness, conceive mischief, and bring forth a lie*. And St James saith (Jam. 1:14,15), *Men are drawn away by their own concupiscence, which when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin*. And these are the ugly and monstrous births of these days. But let us, I pray you, contrariwise wail and mourn for the barrenness of our hearts that do so little conceive the grace of Christ in heart, and bring it forth in action. The mother of Christ undoubtedly was a blessed woman; but if she had not as well conceived Christ in her heart as she did in her womb, she had not been saved, and no more can we unless we do the same.

The birth of Christ to them that have touched hearts, is the comfort of comforts and the sweetest balm of confection that ever was. *Behold*, say the angels to the shepherds (Luke 2:10,11), *we bring tidings of great joy that shall be to all people*. But wherein stands the joy? They add further, *Unto you this day is born in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord*. And no marvel, for in that birth is manifested the good will of God to man, and by it we have peace, first, with God; secondly, with ourselves in conscience; thirdly, with the good angels of God; fourthly, with our enemies; lastly, with all the creatures. For this cause the angels sang (v.14), *Peace on earth, good will towards men*.

In the last place the Creed notes unto us the parent or mother of Christ, *the virgin Mary*. And here at the very first it may be demanded how He could have either father or mother, because He was prefigured by Melchizedek who had neither father nor mother. *Answer*: Melchizedek is said to be without father and mother, not because he had none at all; for according to the ancient and received opinion it is very likely he was Shem the son of Noah, but because where he is mentioned under this name of Melchizedek in the 14th chapter of Genesis there is no mention made of father or mother. And so Christ in some sort is without father or mother. As He is man, He hath no father; as He is God, He hath no mother. And whereas Christ is called the son of Joseph, it was not because He was begotten of Him, but because Joseph was His reputed father; or, which is more, because he was a legal father, namely, according to the Jews; in that (as sundry divines think) He was the next of his kin, and therefore to succeed him as his lawful heir.

Mary became the mother of Christ by a kind of calling thereto, which was by an extraordinary message of an angel concerning the conception and birth of Christ in and by her; to which calling and message she condescended, saying (Luke 1:38), *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word*. And hereupon she conceived by the Holy Ghost. This being so, it is more than senseless folly to turn the salutation of the angel, *Hail freely beloved* etc., into a prayer. For it is as much as if we should still call her to become a mother of Christ.

And she must be held to be the mother of whole Christ, God and man; and therefore the ancient church hath called her the mother of God, yet not the mother of the Godhead.

Furthermore, the mother of Christ is described by her quality, *a virgin*, and by her name, *Mary*:

(1) She was a virgin, first, that Christ might be conceived without sin and being a perfect Saviour. Secondly, that the saying of the prophet Isaiah

might be fulfilled (Isa. 7:14), *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*; according as it was foretold by God in the first giving of the promise (Gen. 3:15), *The seed of the woman*, not the seed of the man, *shall bruise the serpent's head*. Now the Jews to elude the most pregnant testimony of the prophet, say that *alma* signifies not a virgin but a young woman which hath known a man. But this is indeed a forgery. For Isaiah there speaks of an extraordinary work of God above nature, whereas for a woman having known man to conceive, is no wonder. And the word *alma*, through the whole Bible is taken for a virgin, as by a particular search will appear (Gen. 24:16; Exod. 2:5).

As Mary conceived as a virgin, so it may be well thought that she continued a virgin to the end, though we make it no article of our faith. When Christ was upon the cross, He commended His mother to the custody of John; which probably argueth that she had no child to whose care and keeping she might be commended. And though Christ be called her firstborn, yet doth it not follow that she had any children after Him; for as that is called last after which there is none, so that is called first before which there were none. And as for Joseph, when he was espoused to Mary, he was a man of eighty years old.

And here we have an occasion to praise the wisdom of God in the forming of man. The first man Adam was born of no man; but immediately created of God; the second, that is Eve, is formed not of woman but of a man alone; the third and all after, begotten both of woman and man; the fourth, that is Christ, God and man, not of no man as Adam, not of no woman as Eve, not of man and woman as we; but after a new manner, of a woman without a man He is conceived and born.

And hereupon our duty is not to despise, but highly reverence the virgin Mary, as being the mother of the Son of God (Luke 1:48), a prophetess upon the earth, a saint in heaven. And we do willingly condescend to give

her honour three ways: first, by thanksgiving to God for her; secondly, by a reverend estimation of her; thirdly, by imitation of her excellent virtues; yet far be it from us to adore her with divine honour, by prayer to call upon her as though she knew our hearts and heard our requests, and to place her in heaven as a queen above the Son of God.

(2) The name of the mother of Christ is added to shew that He came of the lineage of David, and that therefore He was the true Messiah before spoken of. It may be objected that both Matthew and Luke set down the genealogy of Joseph, of whom Christ was not. *Answer*: Matthew sets down indeed in Christ's genealogy, the natural descent of Joseph the husband of Mary, having Jacob for his natural father; but Luke taking another course, propounds the natural descent of Mary the mother of Christ; and when he saith that Joseph was the son of Eli, he means of a legal son. For sons and daughters in law are called sons and daughters to their fathers and mothers in law. Mary herself and not Joseph being the natural daughter of Eli. And whereas Luke doth plainly say that Mary was the daughter of Eli, but puts Joseph the son in law in her room, the reason hereof may be because it was the manner of the Jews to account and continue their genealogies in the male and not in the female sex, the man being the head of the family and not the woman. And though Ruth and Rahab and other women be mentioned by Matthew, yet that is only by the way; for they make no degrees herein. Again, it may be further demanded how Christ could come of David by Solomon, as Matthew saith, and by Nathan, as Luke saith; they twain being two distinct sons of David. *Answer*: By virtue of the law whereby the brother was bound to raise up seed to his brother, there was a double descent in use among the Jews, the one was natural, the other legal. Natural, when one man descended of another by generation, as the child from the natural father; legal, when a man not begotten of another, yet did succeed him in his inheritance; and this Salathiel is the natural son of Neri, and the legal son of Jechonias. Now St Luke sets down a natural descent of Christ from David by Nathan, and St Matthew the other descent which is

legal, by Solomon; whom Christ succeeded in the right of the kingdom, being born the king of the Jews; none that could possibly be named having more right to it than He.

By this descent of Christ we have occasion to consider that Christ was even in His birth the most excellent and notable man that ever was, descending of the eternal Father as He is the Son of God, and as He is man, descending of the patriarchs and of the renowned kings of Judah. And this His nobility He conveys in part to His members in that He makes them the sons of God, a royal priesthood, and a peculiar people to Himself; enriching them also with the revenues of the whole world, and with title and right to the kingdom of glory in heaven, as their inheritance.

And withal, Christ, being the lively pattern of true nobility, by His example men of blood are taught not to stand so much on their pedigree and their ancestors, as though nobility stood in this: that man descends of man; but to labour withal that they may be the sons and daughters of God by regeneration in Christ. This indeed is the ornament of the blood, the best part in the nobleman's skutcheon and the finest flower in his garland. And though a man be never so noble or great in estate, yet if he be not a repentant sinner, he is base and vile, and his nobility stinks in the nostrils of God. Christ in His genealogy doth not so much as vouchsafe to name those His ancestors that ruled wickedly; and hereupon St Matthew omitteth three kings of Judah, Ahaziah, Jehoahaz and Amaziah; whereas nevertheless heinous offenders that repented are mentioned, as Ruth and Tamar and Bathsheba.

Thus much of the incarnation of Christ.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate

Now followeth the third and last point which is to be considered in the description of Christ; namely, the estate of Christ after His birth, which is twofold: the estate of humiliation and the estate of exaltation.

I.

The estate of humiliation is the condition of Christ the Mediator in which he abased Himself even to the death of the cross, that by that means He might perform the office of a priest in making satisfaction to the justice of His Father.

This estate agrees to the whole Person of Christ according to both natures. For first of all His manhood was abased and humbled in that it was made subject to the infirmities of man's nature, as also to the miseries and punishments which were due unto man for sin. Secondly, His Godhead was abased; not as it is considered in itself, for so it admits no alteration or change; but in respect of the flesh or manhood assumed; under the which, as under a veil, the Godhead lay hid from the first moment of the incarnation to the time of His resurrection, without any great manifestation of His power and majesty therein.

The order of these two estates must be marked. The first is the estate of humiliation, and in the second place follows the estate of exaltation. As Christ saith of Himself (Luke 24:25,26), *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*? And here, we for our part must learn a lesson. The same which was true of Christ the Head, must be verified in all His members; they must all have their twofold estate: first, in this life the estate of humiliation; secondly, after this life the estate of glory. And as Christ first entered into the state of His humiliation and then into

glory; so it is with His members, first they must be abased in this life, and secondly exalted in the world to come. He that will reign with Christ and be exalted, must first suffer with Him and be humbled. He that will wear a crown of glory must wear first a crown of thorns; they that will have all tears wiped from their eyes, must here first in this life shed them. And the children of God before they can sing the song of Moses and of the servants of God and of the Lamb, must first swim through the sea of burning glass; whereby is signified that those which after this life would sing songs of praise to Christ, must in this life be cast into a sea of misery. And if this be true, then we may here learn that it is a wretched case for a man in this life to have perpetual ease, rest and quietness both in body and soul, goods and good name; for we see by Christ's example, that through adversity we must come to happiness; and if a man would have rest and peace in the life to come, then in this life he must look for trouble, persecution and sorrow. Indeed in the judgment of the world, they are blessed that always live at rest; but before God they are most miserable, and (as oxen which are made fat in the best pasture) ready for the slaughterhouse every day. Secondly, here is an excellent consolation for those which profess the gospel of Christ; in the time of trouble and persecution they must rejoice, because the state of humiliation in this life is a sign that they are in the plain and right way to salvation and glory. A man is to take his journey into a far country, and enquiring for the way it is told him that there are many plain ways, but the straight and right way is by woods, and hills, and mountains, and great dangers. Now when he is travelling and comes in to those places, he gathereth certainly that he is in the right way; so the child of God that is going to the kingdom of heaven, though there be many ways to walk in, yet he knows that there is but one right way; which is very strait and narrow, full of trouble, sorrow and persecution; full of all manner of crosses and afflictions; and when in this life he is persecuted and afflicted for good causes, whether in body or in mind, if he be content to bear his cross, it argueth plainly that he is in the right way to salvation; for (Acts 14:22), *Through many afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heaven*.

The humiliation of Christ is first of all set down in the Creed generally, and secondly by his parts and degrees.

Generally, in these words: *Suffered under Pontius Pilate*. Where we must consider two things: the passion itself, and under whom it was.

1.

For the first, that we may the better conceive the passion in His own nature, seven special points must be opened:

1. The cause efficient. The principal cause of the passion, as it is the price of our redemption, was the decree and providence of God; as Peter saith expressly (Acts 2:23) that Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. The impulsive cause that moved God to work our salvation by this means was nothing in man (for all mankind was shut up under unbelief, and therefore unable to procure the least favour at God's hands), but the will and good pleasure of God within Himself. The instrument which the Lord useth in His business were the wicked Jews and Gentiles, and the devil himself, by whom He brought to pass the most admirable work of redemption, even then when they according to their kind did nothing else but practise wickedness and malice against Christ.

2. The matter of the passion, is the whole malediction or curse of the law, containing in it all manner of adversities and miseries both of body and mind. All which may be reduced to three heads: the temptations of Christ, His ignominies and slanders, His manifold sorrows and griefs, especially those which stand in the apprehension of the unsupportable wrath of God.

3. The form of the passion, is that excellent and meritorious satisfaction which in suffering, Christ made unto His Father for man's sin. We do not rightly consider of the passion, if we conceive it to be a bare and naked suffering of punishment, but withal we must conceive it as a propitiation, or

a means satisfactory to God's justice. The passion considered as a passion ministers no comfort; but all our joy and rejoicing stands in this: that by faith we apprehend it as it is a satisfaction or a means of reconciliation for our offences. In this very point stands the dignity of the passion, whereby it differs from all other sufferings of men whatsoever. Therefore most damnable and wicked is the opinion of the papists, who besides the alone passion of Christ, maintain works of satisfaction, partly of their own, and partly of the saints departed; which they add to the passion as an appendage thereof.

4. The end of the passion, is that God might bring to pass a work in which He might more fully manifest His justice and mercy than He did in the creation; and that is the reconciliation between God and man. And here remember with the passion to join the active obedience of Christ in fulfilling the law; for Christ in suffering obeyed, and in obeying suffered. And they must be jointly conceived together for this cause. In reconciliation with God, two things are required: the removing of sin in regard of the guilt, of the fault and of the punishment, and the conferring or giving of righteousness. Now the passion of Christ considered apart from His legal obedience, only takes away the guilt and punishment, frees man from death, and makes him of a sinner to be no sinner; and that he may be fully reconciled to God and accepted as righteous to life everlasting, the legal obedience of Christ must also be imputed. And therefore in the Scriptures, where all our redemption is ascribed to the death and passion of Christ, this very obedience which stands in the perfect love of God and man must be included and not excluded.

5. The time of the passion was from the very birth of Christ to His resurrection; yet so as the beginning only of His sufferings were in the course of His life, and the accomplishment thereof to the very full upon the cross.

6. The Person that suffered was the Son of God Himself; concerning whom in this case two questions must be resolved: The first: How can it stand with God's justice to lay punishment upon the most righteous man that ever was, and that for grievous sinners, considering that tyrants themselves will not do so? *Answer*: In the passion, Christ must not be considered as a private person, for then it could not stand with equity that he should be plagued and punished for our offences; but as one in the eternal counsel of God set apart to be a public surety or pledge for us, to suffer and perform those things which we in our own persons should have suffered and performed. For this cause God the Father is said to give His Son unto us (John 3:16), and the Son again to give His life for His friends (John 15:13). The second question is: How by the short and temporary death of the Son of God, any man can possibly be freed from eternal death and damnation which is due unto him for the least sin? *Answer*: When we say that the Son of God suffered, it must be understood with distinction of the natures of Christ, not in respect of the Godhead, but in respect of the assumed manhood; yet nevertheless the passion is to be ascribed to the whole Person of Christ, God and man; and from the dignity of the Person which suffered ariseth the dignity and excellency of the passion, whereby it is made in value and price to countervail everlasting damnation. For when as the Son of God suffered the curse for a short time, it is more than if all men and angels had suffered the same for ever.

7. The difference of the passion of Christ and the sufferings of the martyrs; and that stands in two things: First, Christ's passion was a cursed punishment, the sufferings of the martyrs are no curses but either chastisements or trials. Secondly, the passion of Christ is meritorious for us even before God, because He became our Mediator and surety in the Covenant of grace; but the sufferings of the martyrs are not of value to merit for us at God's hand, because in suffering they were but private men, and therefore they nothing appertain to us. By this, it appears that the treasury of the church of Rome, which is as it were a common chest

containing the overplus of the merits of the saints mingled with the merits of Christ, kept and disposed by the pope himself, is nothing else but a senseless dotage of man's brain. And whereas they say that Christ by His death did merit, that saints might merit both for themselves and others, it is as much as if they should say the Son of God became Jesus, to make everyone Jesus. And it is a manifest untruth which they say; for the very manhood of Christ considered apart from the Godhead, cannot merit properly; considering whatsoever it is, hath or doth; it is, hath and doth the same, wholly and only by grace; whereas therefore Christ merits for us, it is by reason He is both God and man in one person. For this cause it is not possible that one mere man should merit for another.

Uses.

The uses of the passion followeth.

1. It is the manner of friars and Jesuits in the church of Rome to use the consideration of the passion of Christ as a means to stir up compassion in themselves, partly towards Christ, who suffered grievous torments, and partly towards the virgin Mary, who for the torments of her dear Son was exceedingly troubled, and withal to kindle in their hearts an indignation towards the Jews that put Christ to death. But indeed this kind of use is mere human, and may in like manner be made by reading of any human history. But the proper and special use of the passion indeed is this: first of all, we must set it before our eyes as a looking glass, in which we may clearly behold the horribleness of our sins that could not be pardoned without the passion of the Son of God; and the unspeakable love of Christ that died for us, and therefore loved His own enemies more than His own life; and lastly, our endless peace with God and happiness; in that, considering the Person of our Redeemer, who suffered the pangs of hell, we may after a sort find our paradise even in the midst of hell.

2. Secondly, the meditation of Christ's passion serves as a most worthy means to begin and to confirm grace, specially when it is mingled with faith; and that two ways:

(i) For first, it serves to breed in our hearts a godly sorrow for our sins past, when we do seriously with ourselves consider that our own sins were the cause of all the pains and sorrows and calamities which He suffered in life and death. (Lev. 4:4,29), When any man had sinned under the law, he brought unto the temple or tabernacle some kind of beast for an offering, according as he was prescribed, laying his hand upon the head of it, and afterwards slaying it before the Lord. Now by the ceremony of laying on the hand, he testified that he for his part had deserved death, and not the beast; and that it being slain and sacrificed, was a sign unto him of the sacrifice of Christ offered upon the cross for his sins. And hereby we are taught that so often as we remember the passion of Christ, we should lay our hands as it were upon our own heads, utterly accusing and condemning ourselves, evermore keeping this in our hearts: that Christ suffered not for Himself, but for our offences, which were the proper cause of all His woe and misery. And as Christ's passion was grievous and bitter unto us, let us always remember this; otherwise we shall never reap any sound benefit by the passion of Christ.

(ii) Again, the passion of Christ is a notable means to stir up in our hearts a purpose and a care to reform ourselves, and live in holiness and newness of life, on this manner: Hath the Son of God so mercifully dealt with me as to suffer the curse of the whole law for my manifold iniquities, and to deliver me from just and deserved damnation? Yea, no doubt He hath, I am resolved of it. If I should go on in mine old course, I should be the most ungrateful of all creatures to this my loving Saviour. I will therefore by His grace return and reform my life. And in this very point of reformation, the passion of Christ is set before us as a most lively pattern and example to follow. *Forasmuch* (saith St Peter (1 Pet. 4:1)) *as Christ hath suffered for us*

in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, which is that he which hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; where he teacheth that there must be in us a spiritual passion answerable to the passion of Christ. For as His enemies did lade Him with miseries even to the death of the cross; so should we lade our own flesh, that is, the corruption of our natures, with all such means as may subdue and weaken, crucify and kill it. To the doing of this, three things especially are required:

(a) First, we must consider that the corruption of our rebellious nature is like the great and mighty Goliath, and the grace of God, which we receive like young and little David; and therefore if we desire that grace should prevail against corruption, we must disarm the strong man, and strip him of all his weapons; which is done by giving all the members of our bodies to be instruments of the service of God in righteousness and holiness.

(b) Secondly, we must endeavour to keep in the corruption of nature as it were choking and smothering it in the heart; that by it neither the world nor the devil prevail against us. And this must be done by having a narrow regard unto all the powers and faculties of body and soul, setting a watch before our eyes, ears and lips, and all other parts of the body that are in any action the instruments of the soul, and above all, as Solomon saith (Prov. 4:23), *By counterguarding the heart with all diligence*. By the outward senses of the body, as through open windows, the devil creeps into the heart; and therefore our duty is to stop all such ways of entrance.

(c) Thirdly, when original corruption begins to rebel either in mind, will, or any of the affections, then must we draw out the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and encounter with that hideous giant, laying load upon him by the judgment and threatenings of the law, and as it were beating him down with clubs (2 Cor. 10:5), as Paul speaketh. And if it fall out that concupiscence begin to conceive and bring forth any sin, we must bruise it

in the head, and dash it against the ground, as a bird in the shell, lest it grow up to our utter confusion.

These are the duties which we should learn by the passion of Christ. But lamentable are our days in which all for the most part goes contrary; for commonly men are so far from killing and subduing the rebellion of the natural concupiscence, that all they study and care is how they may feed and cherish it, and make it stronger than the mighty Goliath. But let us for our parts be conformable to Christ in His passion, suffering in our flesh as He suffered in body and soul for us. And let us daily more and more by the hand of faith, apprehend and apply to our hearts and consciences the passion of Christ that it may as a fretting corrosive eat out the poison of our sinful natures and consume it.

2.

Now follows the second point concerning the passion of Christ, which is, under whom He suffered, namely under Pontius Pilate. And Christ may be said to suffer under him in two respects:

1. First, because he was then president of Jewry. For a little before the birth of Christ, the kingdom of the Jews was taken away by the Roman emperor and reduced into a province, and Pontius Pilate was placed over the Jews, not as king, but as the Roman emperor's deputy. And this circumstance is noted in the history of the gospel, and here specified in the Creed, to shew that the Messiah was exhibited in the time foretold by the prophets. Jacob foretold (Gen. 49:10) that Shiloh must be born after the sceptre is removed from Judah; Isaiah saith (Isa. 11:1) that the family of Jesse shall be worn as it were to the root before Christ as a branch shall spring out of it.

2. Again, Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate as he was a judge; whereby we are given to understand of a wonder; namely, that Christ the Son of God, King of heaven and earth, was arraigned at the bar of an earthly judge and

there condemned. For this much the words in meaning import: that Pontius Pilate sat as a judge upon Christ, to examine Him, to arraign Him, and give sentence against Him.

Wherefore, before we come to speak of the degrees of the passion of Christ, we must needs entreat of His arraignment upon earth. In handling whereof, we must generally consider these points:

(1) First, that when He was arraigned before Pilate, He was not a private man, but as a pledge and surety that stood in the place and stead of us miserable sinners (Heb. 7:22), as the prophet Isaiah saith (Isa. 53:4), *He bare our infirmities, and carried our sorrows*; and withal in Him was mankind arraigned before God.

(2) Secondly, this arraignment was made not privately in a corner, but openly in the public court, and that in a great feast of the Jews, as it were in the hearing of the whole world.

(3) Thirdly, though Pilate in citing, examining and condemning Christ, intended not to work any part of man's redemption, yet was this wholly set down in the counsel and good pleasure of God, in whose room Pilate sat, and whose judgment was exercised.

The general use of Christ's arraignment is twofold:

1. First, it is a terror to all impenitent sinners; for there is no freedom or protection from the judgment of God, but by the arraignment of Christ; and therefore such as in this life receive Him not by faith, must at the end of this world be brought out to the most terrible bar at the last judgment, there to be arraigned before the King of heaven and earth. And mark the equity hereof. Christ Himself could not have been our Saviour and Redeemer unless He had been brought out to the bar of an earthly judge and arraigned as a guilty malefactor; and there is no man upon earth that lives and dies out

of Christ, but he must, whether he will or not, hold up his hand at the bar of the great Judge of all mankind, where he shall see hell underneath him burning red hot and opening itself wide to swallow him up; and on the right hand of God standing all the prophets, apostles and saints of God giving judgment against him; on the left hand, the devil and all his angels accusing him; and within him a guilty conscience condemning him. And thus one day shall the arraignment of those persons be, that with full purpose of heart cleave not to Christ; and yet, alas, huge and infinite is the number of those which make more account of transitory and earthly matters, even of their pigs with the Gaderenes, than of Him and His benefits; and such persons should rather be pitied than despised of us all, considering their estate is such that every day they are going as traitors pinioned to their own judgment, that they may go hence to eternal execution.

2. Secondly, Christ's arraignment is a comfort to the godly. For He was arraigned before Pilate, that all such as truly believe in Him might not be arraigned before God at the day of the last judgment. He was accused before an earthly judge that they might be cleared and excused before the heavenly Judge. Lastly, He was here condemned on earth that we might receive the sentence of absolution and be eternally saved in heaven.

The arraignment of Christ hath three parts: His apprehension, His accusation and His condemnation.

1. In the apprehension we must consider two things: (1) the dealing of Christ; and (2) the dealing of Judas and the Jews.

(1) The dealing and proceeding of Christ was this: when He saw that the time of His apprehension and death was near, He solemnly prepared Himself thereto. And His example must teach every one of us who know not the shortness of our days, every hour to prepare ourselves against the day of death that then we may be found ready of the Lord. What? Shall the Son of God Himself make preparation to His own death and shall not we

most miserable sinners do the same, who stand in need of a thousand preparations more than He? Wherefore let us continually think with ourselves that every present day is the last day of our life that so we may address ourselves to death against the next day.

(i) The first thing which Christ doth in this preparation is to make choice of the place in which He was to be apprehended, as will appear by conferring the evangelists together. St Matthew saith (Matt. 26:36), He went to *the place called Gethsemane*; St Luke saith (Luke 22:39), He went *to the Mount of Olives as He was accustomed*. And that we might not imagine that Christ did this that He might escape and hide Himself from the Jews, St John saith (John 18:2), that *Judas which betrayed Him knew the place, because oftentimes He resorted thither with His disciples*; whereas if He had feared apprehension, He would have rather gone aside to some other secret and unwonted place. This then is the first point to be considered: that Christ knowing the time of His own death to be at hand, doth willingly of His own accord resort to such a place in which His enemies in all likelihood might easily find Him and have fit opportunity to attack Him. For if He should have still remained in Jerusalem, the Scribes and Pharisees durst not have enterprised His apprehension because of the people whom they feared; but out of the city in the garden, all occasion of fear is cut off. By this it is manifest that Christ yielded Himself to death willingly, and not of constraint; and unless His sufferings had been voluntary on His part, they could never have been a satisfaction to God's justice for our sins.

Here a question offers itself to be considered: whether a man may lawfully flee in danger and persecution, seeing Christ Himself doth not. *Answer*: When good means of flying and just occasion is offered, it is lawful to flee. When the Jews sought to kill Paul at Damascus (Acts 9:15), the disciples took him by night, and put him through the wall, and let him down in a basket to escape their hands. When Moses (Exod. 2:15) was called by God to deliver the Israelites, after he had slain the Egyptian and the fact was

known, and Pharaoh sought to kill him for it, he fled to the land of Midian. And our Saviour Christ sundry times (John 8:20; John 10:31, 39; John 11:54) when He was to be stoned and otherwise hurt by the Jews, withdrew Himself from among them. It is lawful then to flee in persecution, these caveats observed: (i) If a man find not himself sufficiently strengthened to bear the cross. (ii) His departure must be agreeable to the general calling of a Christian, serving to the glory of God, and the good of his brethren and the hurt of none. (iii) There must be freedom at the least for a time from the bond of a man's particular calling. If he be a magistrate, he must be freed from ruling; if a minister, from preaching and teaching; otherwise he may not flee. And in this respect, Christ, who withdrew Himself at other times, would not flee at this time; because the hour of His suffering was come, wherein He intended most willingly to submit Himself to the good pleasure and will of His Father.

(ii) The second part of the preparation is the prayer which Christ made unto His Father in the garden. And herein His example doth teach us earnestly to pray unto God against the danger of imminent death, and the temptations which are to come. And if Christ who was without sin, and had the Spirit above measure, had need to pray, then much more have we need to be watchful in all kinds of prayers, who are laden with the burden of sin and compassed about with manifold impediments and dangerous enemies.

In this prayer, sundry points worthy of our marking are to be considered:

(a) First, Who prayed? *Answer*: Christ the Son of God; but still we must remember the distinction of natures and of their operations in one and the same Christ. He prays not in His Godhead, but according to His manhood.

(b) The second is, For whom doth He pray? *Answer*: Some have thought that this and all other His prayers were made for His mystical body the church; but the truth is, He now prays for Himself, yet not as He was God, for the Godhead feels no want; but as He was a man abased in the form of a

servant; and that for two causes: First, in that He was a man, He was a creature, and in that respect was to perform homage to God the Creator. Secondly, as He was man, He put on the infirmities of our nature, and thereupon prayed that He might have strength and power in His manhood to support Him in bearing the whole brunt of the passion to come.

(c) The third point is, To whom doth He pray? *Answer*: To the Father. Neither must this trouble us, as though Christ in praying to the Father should pray to Himself, because He is one and the same God with Him. For though in essence they admit no distinction, yet in person or in the proper manner of subsisting they do. The Father is one Person, the Son another; therefore as the Father saying from heaven, *This is my well-beloved Son*, spake not to Himself but to the Son; so again the Son when He prayeth, He prays not to Himself but to the Father.

(d) The fourth point, What was the particular cause of His prayer? *Answer*: His agony in which His soul was heavy unto death; not because He feared bodily death, but because the malediction of the law, even the very heat of the fury and indignation of God was poured forth upon Him, wherewith He was affected and troubled, as if He had been defiled with the sins of the whole world. And this appears first by the words whereby the evangelists express the agony of Christ, which signify exceeding great sorrow and grief (Matt. 26:37). Secondly, His doleful complaint to His disciples in the garden (v.38), *My soul is heavy unto the death*. Thirdly, by His fervent prayer thrice repeated, full of doleful passions. Fourthly, by the coming of an angel to comfort Him. Fifthly, by His bloody sweat, the like whereof was never heard. And herein lies the difference between Christ's agony and the death of the martyrs. He put on the guilt of all our sins, they in death are freed from the same; He was left to Himself void of comfort, they in the midst of their afflictions feel the unspeakable comfort of the Holy Ghost; and therefore we need not marvel why Christ should pray against death, which nevertheless His members have received and born most joyfully.

Again, the most bitter agony of Christ is the ground of all our rejoicing, and the cause why Paul bids all the faithful in the person of the Philippians, to *rejoice always in the Lord, and again to rejoice* (Phil. 4:4). And here we are further taught that when we are plunged into a sea of most grievous afflictions and overwhelmed with the gulfs of most dreadful temptations, even then, then I say, we should not be discouraged, but lift up our hearts by fervent prayer to God. Thus did Christ when in the garden He was about to drink the cup of the wrath of God, and to suck up the very dregs of it. And David saith (Psa. 130:1), that *out of the deeps* he called on the name of the Lord and was heard.

(e) The fifth point, What is the matter and form of this prayer? *Answer*: Christ prays to be delivered from the death and passion which was to come, saying on this manner (Mark 14:35), *Father, let this cup pass from me*; yet with two clauses added thereto: *If it be possible*, and, *Not my will but thy will be done*. But it may be demanded: How it could be that Christ, knowing that it was His Father's will and counsel that He should suffer death for man, and also coming into the world for that end, should make such a request to His Father without sin? *Answer*: The request proceeds only of a weakness or infirmity in Christ's manhood without sin, which appears thus: We must still consider that when He made His prayer to His Father, the whole wrath of God, and the very dolours and pangs of hell seized upon Him; whereby the senses and powers of His mind were astonied, and wholly bent to relieve nature in His agony. For as when the heart is smitten with grief, all the blood in the body flows thither to comfort it; so when Christ was in this astonishment, the understanding and memory, and all the parts of His human nature (as it were for a time suspending their own proper actions) concurred to sustain and support the spirit and life of Christ, as much as possibly might be. Now Christ being in the midst of this perplexed estate, prays on this manner: *Father, if it be possible let this cup pass*. And these words proceed not from any sin or disobedience to His Father's will, but only from a mere perturbation of mind (John 12:27),

caused only by an outward means, namely, the apprehension of God's anger; which neither blinded His understanding nor took away His memory, so as He forgot His Father's will, but only stopped and stayed the act of reasoning and remembering for a little time; even in the most perfect clock that is, the motion may be stayed by the air, or by man's hand, or by some outward cause without any defect or breach made in any part of it. It may be objected that Christ's will is flat contrary to the will of His Father. *Answer*: Christ's will as He is man and the will of His Father in this agony, were not contrary, but only diverse, and that without any contradiction or contrariety. Now a man may will a diverse thing from that which God willeth, and that without sin. Paul desired to preach the Word of God in Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6,7), but he was hindered by the Spirit. For all this, there is no contrariety between Paul and the Spirit of God; but in shew of discord great consent. For that which Paul willeth well, the Spirit of God willeth not, by a better will; though the reason hereof be secret, and the reason of Paul's will manifest. Again, the minister in charity reputing the whole congregation to be elect, in holy manner seeks and wills the salvation of everyone, which nevertheless the Lord in His eternal counsel wills not. Now between both these wills there may be and is a difference without contrariety. For one good thing as it is good, may differ from another, but it cannot be contrary unto it. It may further be alleged that in His prayer there seems to be a combat and fight in the mind, will and affections of Christ, and therefore sin. *Answer*: There be three kinds of combats: the one between reason and appetite, and this fight is always sinful, and was not in Christ; the second is between the flesh and the spirit, and this may be in God's child who is, but in part regenerate; but it did not befall Christ who was perfectly holy; the third is the combat of divers desires, upon sundry respects drawing a man to and fro. This may be in man's nature without fault; and was in Christ, in whom the desire of doing His Father's will, striving and struggling with another desire whereby nature seeks to preserve itself, caused Him to pray in this manner.

(f) The sixth point is, In what manner Christ prayed? *Answer*: He prayed to His Father partly kneeling, partly lying on His face, and that with strong cries and tears, sweating water and blood, and all this He did for our sins. Here then behold the agony of Christ, as a clear crystal in which we may fully see the exceeding greatness of our sins, as also the hardness of our hearts. We go vaunting with our heads to heaven as though it were nothing to sin against God, whereas the horror of the wrath of God for our rebellions, brought down even the Son of God Himself, and laid Him grovelling upon the earth. And we cannot so much almost as shed one tear for our iniquities, whereas He sweats blood for us. Oh let us therefore learn to abase ourselves and to carry about us contrite and bleeding hearts, and be confounded in ourselves for sins past.

(g) The last point is the event of the prayer which is to be heard, as the author to the Hebrews saith (Heb. 5:7), Christ Jesus *in the days of His flesh, did offer up unto His Father prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him; and was also heard in that thing which He feared*. But some will say, How was Christ heard, seeing He suffered death and bare the pangs of hell and the full wrath of God? If He had been heard, He should have been delivered from all this. *Answer*: We must know that God hears our prayers two ways: When He directly grants our requests; and when knowing what is good for us, He gives not us our requests directly, but a thing answerable thereunto. And thus was Christ heard; for He was not delivered from suffering; but yet He had strength and power given Him whereby His manhood was made able to bear the brunt of God's wrath. And in the same manner, God heareth the prayers of His servants on earth. Paul prayed to be delivered from the angel of Satan that buffeted him (2 Cor. 12:9), but the Lord answered that it should not so be, because His grace whereby he was enabled to resist his temptation, was sufficient; and Paul finding the fruit of his prayers on this manner, protests hereupon that he will rejoice in his infirmities. Others pray for temporal blessings as health, life, liberty etc., which notwithstanding God holds back,

and gives instead thereof spiritual graces, patience, faith, contentment of mind. Augustine saith, God hears not our prayers always according to our wills and desires, but according as the thing asked, shall be for our salvation. He is like the physician, who goes on to lance the wound, and hears not the patient though he cry never so, till the cure be ended.

(2) Now followeth the second thing to be considered in Christ's apprehension, namely, the dealing of the Jews; wherein we must consider four things:

(i) How they consult together concerning Christ's apprehension.

(ii) How they came to the place and met Him.

(iii) How they laid hands upon Him.

(iv) How they bound Him and took Him away.

(i) For the first, before they enterprised this matter, they did wisely and warily lay their heads together to consult of the time and place; and also of the manner of apprehending Him. So St Matthew saith (Matt. 26:3-5), *There assembled together the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders of the people into the hall of the chief priest called Caiaphas; and consulted how they might take issue by subtilety*. Whence we learn two good instructions:

(a) First, the Jews having a quarrel against Christ, could never be at rest till they had His blood; and therefore they consult how they might take Him; but God did so order the matter, and dispose of their purposes and consultations, that even thereby He did confound them, and their whole nation. For by reason of this heinous sin against Christ, came the just wrath of God upon them, and so remaineth unto this day. Whereby we see that the Lord will overthrow such in their own wisdom that will be wise without

direction of God's Word, and against Christ. And thus it was with Ahithophel, who for wisdom was as the oracle of God; yet because he rebelled against the Lord's anointed, God confounded him in his own wisdom. For when his counsel which he gave against David was not followed, he thought himself despised, as the text saith (2 Sam. 17:23), *and saddled his ass, and rose and went home into his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself*; and in this action he shewed himself more senseless than a brute beast. And in our days the Leaguers that have bound themselves by oath to root out the church of God; by His most wonderful providence turn their swords against themselves, and destroy each other. Therefore, if we would be wise, we must learn to be wise in Christ; for else our counsel will be our own confusion.

(b) Secondly, hence we learn that if any shall live in stubbornness and rebellion against Christ, the Lord will so carry and order those men, or that people, that in the end they shall be the very causes of their own perdition. This we see most plainly in the example of these Jews; for they evermore envied Christ, and now they go on to take counsel against Him; but God so disposed thereof that even by this means they brought destruction upon themselves and their country. This must teach thee to take heed how thou livest in thy sins; for if thou do so, the Lord hath many ways to work thy confusion; as, thy conscience to condemn thee; thy friends to forsake thee; the devil and his angels to torment and molest thee; and His creatures to annoy thee. Yea, the Lord can leave all these, and make thine own self to be the direct means of working thine own confusion both in body and soul eternally; and that even then when thou art most wary and wise in thine own behalf; and this is the reward of all those that walk on in their evil ways without any true conversion.

(ii) Having consulted, in the next place they come into the garden, where Christ was to be apprehended. And here we are to consider who they were that came (Matt. 26:47; Luke 22:47; John 18:3), namely, the scribes and

Pharisees, the high priests and their servants, a band of soldiers and the servants of Pontius Pilate, and the elders of the Jews; all which came with one consent to the place where Christ was, that they might attack Him. Where we learn a good lesson, that all sorts of wicked men disagreeing among themselves, can agree against Christ. The scribes and Pharisees were two contrary sects, and at discord one with another in matters of religion; and Judas was one of Christ's disciples; the elders differed from them all; the soldiers were Gentiles; all these were at variance among themselves and could not brook one another. So also we read (Luke 23:12) that Herod and Pontius Pilate were not friends; but at the same time when Christ was apprehended, Pilate sent Him to Herod, and they were made friends. Now as these wicked men did conspire against Christ; so do the wicked ones of this world in all countries and kingdoms band themselves against the church of Christ at this day. And howsoever such be at discord among themselves, yet they do all join hand in hand to persecute Christ in His members. And the reason is plain: because Christ and His religion is flat opposite to the corrupt disposition of all men, as light is to darkness.

Again, whereas we see so many sorts of men so amiably consenting to take Christ; we may note how all men naturally do hate and abhor Him and His religion. And look as then it was with Christ, so hath it been with all His members, and will be to the end of the world. They are accounted as the offscouring of the world, men not worthy to live on the face of the earth; as Christ told His disciples (Matt. 10:22), *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*.

Let us also mark how all these came furnished to apprehend Christ. The text saith (Luke 22:52), *They came with clubs and staves as unto a thief*. All the whole nation of the Jews knew right well that Christ was no man of violence, but meek and lowly; and yet they came armed to apprehend Him as though He had been some mighty potentate that would not have been apprehended but have resisted them. Where we see the property of an evil

conscience, which is to fear where there is no cause at all. This causeth some to be afraid of their own shadows; and if they see but a worm peep out of the ground, they are at their wits end, as Solomon saith (Prov. 28:1), *The wicked flee when none pursueth them*.

After that they are now come to Christ, we are to consider two things in their meetings: (a) Christ's communication with them; (b) The treason of Judas.

(a) Concerning their conference, it is said (John 18:4-6), *Jesus knowing all things that should come unto him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus answered, I am he*. Now as soon as He has said, *I am he*, the stoutest of them fell to the ground, as being astonished at the majesty of His Word. Where, note that the Word of God is a Word of power. The same power was in His Word when He raised up Lazarus; for when he had lien in the grave and entered into some degrees of corruption, He did no more but said, *Lazarus come forth* (John 11:43). And hence we may also mark what a wonderful might and power is in the Word preached; for it is the very Word of Christ, and therefore being preached by His ministers lawfully called by Him thereunto, hath the same power and force in it which Christ Himself shewed when He spake on earth. It is the *savour of life unto life* (2 Cor. 2:16), to save those that hear it; or the *savour of death unto death*. It is like a vapour or perfume in the air, which in some men's nostrils is savoury and pleasant and doth revive them; and others again it striketh dead. And therefore everyone that either now or heretofore hath heard this Word preached, shall find it to be unto them either a Word of power to save their souls, or through their corruption the ministry of death and condemnation. Again, if a Word spoken by Christ, being in a base or low estate, be able to overthrow His enemies, then at the last day when He shall come in glory, and power, and majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, what power shall His Words have (Matt. 25:41), *Go ye cursed of my Father, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the*

devil and his angels. The consideration of this, that the Word of Christ shall even be as powerful in that day, must be a motive to everyone of us to cause us to come unto Him; and, while we have time in these days of grace and mercy, to seek to be reconciled unto Him for all our sins, lest at the day we hear that dreadful voice of Christ sounding against us, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire* etc.

(b) And thus much for the communication. Now followeth Judas his treason; wherein we are to observe these things:

i. The qualities and conditions of the man that did the treason. He was called a disciple, chosen to be an apostle, which is the chiefest in ecclesiastical callings; and among the disciples he was in some account, because he was as it were a steward in Christ's family, and bare the bag; but yet he was a traitor, and did more against Christ than all the Jews did. For he brought them to the place where they might apprehend Him; and when they were come, did point Him out unto them, and deliverd Him into their hands; nay, he gave them a sign and token, saying (Mark 14:44), *Whom I kiss, he it is; take him and lead him away warily*. Here we see the cause why Christ called Judas a devil (John 6:70), for He said, *Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil*? He became to be a devil and a traitor by nourishing a wicked and covetous heart. And here we are taught that the ministers of the Word, if they make no conscience of sin, by the just judgment of God do prove devils incarnate. This example of Judas doth manifest the same; and the reason is plain, for the more knowledge a man hath, the more wicked he is, if he want grace. They are like in this case unto a man that hath meat and drink enough, but no stomach to digest meat; whereby the more he eateth, the more it turneth to his hurt. This I spake not to deface the calling of ministers, but that those which preach God's Word should not do it with impenitent hearts, living in their own sins. For it is a fearful thing for a man to speak unto the people of the pardon of their sins, and yet himself not to apprehend the same by faith. A lump of wax, if you

keep it from heat, or from the fire, it keeps his own form still; but if it be held to the fire, it melts and runs abroad; so ministers who by reason of their callings come near God, if they be lumps of iniquity and live in their sins, they shall find that the corruptions of their hearts will melt abroad as wax at the fire. And therefore everyone that is designed to this calling, must first purge himself of his own sin, or else God's judgments shall fall upon him, as they did on Judas that betrayed Christ.

ii. Secondly, let us consider what moved Judas to betray his master; namely, the desire of wealth and gain. And this covetousness, which is an insatiable desire of money, is the root of all sin (1 Tim. 6:10); not that all sins came from it, but because where it is, there all other sins are preserved and do get strength. The desire of thirty pieces of silver caused Judas to make an agreement with the Jews to betray his master. Some man will haply say that this practice of Judas was very strange, and that no man now living would do the like for any money. *Answer*: Judas is dead indeed, but his practice is yet alive; for in the high and weighty calling of the ministry, he hath charge of souls, and either cannot teach and feed his flock, or else will not, though he betray not Christ in His own person, yet he betrays the members of Christ unto the devil. If a nurse should take a man's child to bring up and yet seldom or never give it milk, in so much that the child pineth away for very hunger; is not she the very cause of the death of it? Yes, verily. And so it is with him that taketh upon him the charge of God's people, and never feeds them with the milk of God's Word, or else so seldom that their souls do famish; he is the murderer of them, and hath betrayed them into the hands of their enemies; and shall be condemned for them as a traitor unto God unless he repent. Besides those that live by traffic in buying and selling, make gain by lying, swearing and breaking the Lord's Sabbath; and they also are very Judases; for they chop away their souls with the devil for a little gain. And more lamentable is their case, because it is hard to find one of an hundred in the world that makes conscience of a lie, or of any bad dealing; if any gain at all may come thereby. Men used to cry out on Judas

for betraying Christ; and they do well; yet they themselves for a little worldly pelf betrayeth their own souls. If such would not be counted Judases, they must leave off sin, and keep a good conscience in God's worship and the works of their callings.

iii. Thirdly, let us consider what course Judas took in betraying Christ. He as very submissive, saying (Matt. 26:49), *Hail, master, and kissed him*. Why did he so? Herein he played the most palpable hypocrite; for having gotten a piece of money, he thought that neither Christ nor any of his fellow disciples should have known of it (though Christ knew it well enough) and therefore he comes in this manner to Him thinking that Christ would have conveyed Himself from amongst them at the very pinch as He had done sometimes before. And this practice also of Judas is common in the world. Judas an enemy unto Christ speaks Him fair and salutes Him; and so do most of our secure and drowsy Protestants in England; they salute Christ, both by hearing His Word and receiving His sacraments; and as the prophet saith (Isa. 29:13) *They honour God with their lips, but their hearts are far from him*. We may see daily experience of this. Every man will say, *Lord, Lord*, but in their lives and conversations, few there be that deny Him not, both in their duties which they owe unto God, as also in their duties towards their brethren. Many come to hear God's Word because they are compelled by the magistrate's laws; but when they are come, they worship not God in their hearts, which is plainly seen by the breach of God's holy Sabbath in every place; and that they make more account of a mess of pottage with Esau, than of their birthright; and of thirty pieces of silver, than of Christ Himself.

(iii) The third point to be handled in Christ's apprehension, is that they lay hold on Him; wherein we must consider two things: (a) the resistance made by Christ's disciples; (b) their flight.

(a) For the first, Christ's disciples resisted, and specially Peter drawing his sword, struck one of the high priest's servants and cut off his ear. This fact our Saviour Christ reproves; and that for these causes: First, because His disciples were private men; and they that came to apprehend Him were magistrates. Secondly, He was to work the work of man's redemption. Now Peter by this fact did what he could to hinder Him. And from this practice of Peter we may learn that nothing in the world is so hard to a man as to take up his cross and follow Christ. One would think it should be a hard matter for him to encounter with his enemies, especially they being stronger than he; but Peter stoutly resisting makes nothing of it; whereas a little before when Christ told him and the rest concerning His passion, they were so heavy with grief that they could not hold up their heads; so hard a thing it is to bear the cross; and for this very cause afterward when Christ reproved him for striking, both he and all the rest of the disciples fled away. Secondly, Peter in all man's reason was to be commended, because he struck in the defence of his master; but Christ reproves him for it. Whence we learn that if a man be zealous for Christ, he must be zealous within the compass of his calling; and not be zealous first and then look for a calling, but first look for a calling and then be zealous. Which thing if Peter had marked, he had not deal so rashly; for being without the compass of his calling he could not but do amiss. Here it may be demanded whether Christ and His religion may not be maintained by the sword? *I answer*: that the magistrate, which is the vicegerent of the Lord, is the keeper of both tables; and therefore is to maintain religion with the sword; and so may put to death atheists, which hold there is no God, of which sort there are many in these days; and heretics, which maliciously maintain and hold anything that overthrows the foundation of religion in the churches whereof they are members. But some object that in the parable of the field, the servants are commanded not to pluck up the tares from the wheat, but to suffer both to grow till harvest; and that therefore there must be no separation of heretics and true Christians before the last day of judgment. *Answer*: The scope of that place is not to forbid the execution of heretics; but it speaks only of the

final separation which must be in the end of the world. For there the master of the family doth signify God Himself, and the field, the church militant spread over the face of the whole earth; and by tares is meant not only heretics, but also those that are forth of the church; the servants are God's holy angels, and the harvest is the last judgment. Here further it may be demanded, Who may use the sword? *Answer*: All men may use the sword to strike and to kill, into whose hands God putteth the sword. Now God putteth it into the hand, first and principally of the public magistrate, who when just occasion serves, may draw it out. And again, it is put into a private man's hand sometimes. A private man when he is assailed of his enemy, may take the sword in way of his own defence, and may kill his enemy therewith (if there be no other help) not doing it upon malice, but because he can no otherwise escape and save his own life; and so for want of a magistrate, he is a magistrate unto himself.

(b) In the flight of the disciples, we may consider two things: the time and the quality of the persons.

i. The time was at the apprehension of our Lord and Saviour. And this came to pass not without the special providence of God; that it might be known that Christ had no helper or fellow in the accomplishment of the work of our redemption; and that, whereas we for our sins deserved to be forsaken of all creatures, He being our pledge and surety might be forsaken for us.

ii. As for the quality of the persons that flee, they were the chosen disciples of Christ, such as had believed in Him, confessed Him, and preached in His name. And this serveth to teach us that God will otherwhiles forsake His own children and servants, and leave them to themselves in some part, that they may feel their wants and miseries and their weakness in themselves, and by that means be humbled thoroughly, and be touched with an hungering desire for Christ. As a mother sets down her child and hides herself, suffering it to cry, fall and break the face, not because she hates it,

but that she may teach it to depend upon her and love her; so God giveth grace to His children, and yet again sometimes He doth in part withdraw it from them, and then they fail in their duty sundry ways; and this He doth to make them ashamed of themselves, and to cause them to put all their confidence out of themselves in the merits of Christ.

(iv) The fourth thing to be considered in Christ's apprehension is their binding of Him. In which action of theirs we are to observe first of all the circumstances of time when this binding was. When our Saviour Christ had said unto them (John 18:5-12), *I am he*, they being astonished fell to the ground; and withal, when Peter had smitten off Malchus' ear with a sword, Christ healed the same miraculously. Yet for all this, though they had seen His wonderful power both in word and deed, they proceed in malice against Him; and lay hands on Him, and bind Him as a malefactor. In this we note what a fearful sin hardness of heart is; the danger whereof appeareth in this: that if a man be overtaken with it, there is nothing that can stay or daunt him in his wicked proceedings; no, not the powerful words and deeds of Christ Himself. And indeed among God's judgments there is none more fearful than this; and yet (how fearful soever it be) it is a rife sin amongst us in these our days. For it is very evident by common experience that the more men are taught the doctrine of the law and of the gospel, the more hard and senseless are their hearts; like unto the stithy [*forge*]; which, the more it is beaten upon with the iron hammer, the harder it is. And again, it is hard to find men that sorrow for their sins and feel the want of Christ; which argueth the exceeding deadness of spirit. And let us be resolved that it is a most terrible judgment of God, the rather to be feared, because it is like a pleasant sleep into which, when a man is fallen, he feels neither pain nor grief. And therefore we for our parts must look unto it with fear and trembling, lest it take such hold of us that we be past all hope of recovery.

Furthermore, this binding of Christ was prefigured unto us in the sacrifices of the Old Testament; for the beast that was to be sacrificed was tied with

cords and bound, and so brought to the altar. And whereas Christ was bound, we must not consider Him in His own Person; but as He standing in our room and stead, bears the person of all sinners; and therefore whereas He is thus taken captive by His enemies to be brought before a mortal judge, there to be arraigned for us; hence we learn two good instructions:

(a) First, here is a comfort to all the people of God. Christ was bound by His enemies that they might be unloosed from the bondage of Satan, sin and their own corruptions (under which they lie bound by nature) and might have free liberty in and by Him.

(b) Secondly, all impenitent sinners are taught hereby to reform and amend their hearts and lives. For what exceeding madness is this, that they by Christ's bonds being set at liberty, will yet live and die in their sins, and take pleasure to lie bound hand and foot under the power of sin and Satan. And indeed this shews unto us the fearful and dangerous estate of all those that go on still in their sins. For what can they say for themselves at the day of judgment, when as now they have freedom offered and will not accept of it?

2. Thus much of Christ's apprehension; now followeth the indictment. For they proceed against Him judicially, after the custom of the Jews. Christ's indictment was twofold: One before Caiaphas the High Priest in the great council at Jerusalem; the second before the civil judge Pontius Pilate, as is plainly set forth by all the evangelists.

(1) And Christ's arraignment before Caiaphas was a preparation to the second before Pontius Pilate that the Jews might throughly proceed against Him. In the first, we are to consider these points: (i) the time in which Christ was indicted; (ii) the end of His indictment; (iii) the whole tenor and proceeding thereof.

(i) For the first; Christ was indicted early in the morning at the break of the day; for He was apprehended in the night, and with all haste brought into

Caiaphas' hall, where they kept Him all night; and at the break of the day Caiaphas the High Priest and the elders with the scribes and Pharisees held a solemn council against Him; and there received accusations and condemned Him before morning, at which time they sent Him to the common hall, as St Matthew saith (Matt. 27:1,2), *When the morning was come, all the chief priests, and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death*; and led Him away bound and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate. In which action of theirs we are to mark two points:

(a) First, the diligence of ungodly men, and the quickness of their nature to practise sin and wickedness; as it was said of the old Jews (Isa. 59:7), *Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood*. When the Israelites would sacrifice to the golden calf which they had made, it is said (Exod. 32:6) *they rose up early in the morning*. Hence it appears that if God leave us to ourselves, we are as ready to practise any mischief as the fire is to burn without delay, and that with much violence. Now the consideration of this must move every one of us to take heed of all occasions and provocations to sin whatsoever they be, that the corruption of our nature break not forth in any way.

(b) Secondly, in the circumstance of the time of this council, we may mark the rashness of this solemn assembly in judicial proceedings; whereas they examine Him both of His doctrine and also of His disciples, omitting such circumstances as should have been used; as the serious examining of witnesses and the weighing of His contrary answers; for He is taken and brought before the judge and condemned on the sudden. Now as this was the practice of the council, so on the contrary the common complaint of these times is of the slow dispatch of matters in law, and of the long delay; insomuch that some be almost undone before their suits be ended; whereas judicial proceedings were ordained by God, not for men's undoing, but for the maintenance of the common peace and liberty and wealth. And

therefore justice ought to be dispatched with such speed as men thereby might be furthered and not hindered.

(ii) The end of Christ's indictment was directly to kill Him and put Him to death (Matt. 26:59; Mark 14:55). Here is no indifferent proceeding to be looked for, but plotting on every hand for the very blood of Christ. Where, note that in the hearts of all wicked men there is an engrafted hatred of Christ, and as it were bred in the bone; and the same affection the world carrieth to the members of Christ. This hatred is manifest in the first giving the promise (Gen. 3:15), *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed*. It appears in the hatred that Cain bare to his brother Abel; Ishmael towards Isaac; Esau towards Jacob; and the Gentiles that were without the Covenant towards the church of God at all times. And to come near to ourselves, this engrafted hatred that is in the heart of the wicked against Christ and His members, is as plentiful and as evident as ever it was, even in these our days. For among all men none are more maligned and hated than those that profess Christ; and for none other cause than because they profess Christ. And hereupon the very profession of religion is laden with nicknames and reproachful terms by all sorts of men.

(iii) And thus much of the end and intent of their council. The proceeding in judgment stands in these points: (a) they examine Christ; (b) they bring witnesses against Him; (c) they adjure Him to tell them who He is. Of these in order:

(a) First, they examine our Saviour Christ of His doctrine, suspecting Him to be a false prophet; secondarily, of His disciples, as suspecting Him seditiously to raise up a new sect unto Himself, to make a faction amongst the Jews. Now to this examination let us mark Christ's answer (John 18:20,21), in which He saith nothing at all concerning His disciples; whereas notwithstanding He might have said that one of them betrayed Him, another denied Him and the rest fled away. Whereby we note that it is

not our duty at all times, and in all places, to speak of the faults and wants that we know by others. Secondly, the answer which He makes is only concerning His doctrine; whereby the ministers of God and all men else are taught that being called before their enemies to give a reason of their doctrine, they are (as St Peter saith (1 Pet. 3:15)) *to be always ready to give an account of the hope that is in them*. And further, we are to consider the wisdom that Christ useth in answering, for He said nothing of His doctrine in particular, but said*, I spake openly in the world, I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple whither the Jews resorted; in secret have I taught nothing. Ask them therefore what I said, which heard me; behold, they can tell you what I said*. Now the reason why He answered thus sparingly in general terms, is because their examination served only to entangle Him, and out of His words to gather matter of accusation. After whose example we may learn that being called to make answer of our faith and doctrine before our enemies, we are to do so, as thereby we do not entangle ourselves, nor give any advantage unto our enemies; and hereof we have a notable example in the apostle Paul (Acts 23:6). Again, in the words of Christ's answer we must observe two things:

i. First, that the place where Christ taught was public. Now hence it may be demanded whether ministers may handle the Word of God privately or no? *Answer*: The state of God's church is twofold: peaceable or troublesome. In the time of peace, ministers must preach the Word publicly; but in time of persecution, for the safety and preservation of the church of God, they may with good warrant preach privately; and indeed at such times the assemblies of the church make private places public. And hence we learn that in time of peace all those that are called to the office of the ministry, must (if it be possible) spend their labours publicly, so as they may do most good. Secondly, whereas Christ saith, He preacheth in their synagogues and temple, which at that time were places full of disorder; insomuch as he called the temple a *den of thieves* (Matt. 21:13); and the scribes and Pharisees had corrupted the doctrine of the law (Matt.

15:3) *transgressing the commandments of God by their own traditions*; and they taught justification by the works of the law, as Paul saith (Rom. 10:3*), They being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness*, which is by works, *had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God*. Besides all this, they were loose and wicked men in their lives and conversations; and therefore Christ commanded the people that they should observe and do whatsoever the scribes and Pharisees bid them, sitting in Moses' chair (Matt. 23:2,3); but after their works they must not do; because they say and do not. Now although these corruptions and deformities were in the Jewish church, yet our Saviour Christ made no separation from it, but came and preached both in their temple and synagogues, where these seducers and false teachers were. And hence we gather that the practice of all those men in our church which separate themselves from all assemblies for the wants thereof, holding that our church is no church; that the grace which is wrought by the preaching of the Word among us is nothing else but a Satanic illusion; that sacraments are no sacraments; I say that their practice is condemned by our Saviour Christ's conversing among the Jews. For if Christ should have followed their opinion, He ought to have fled from amongst the Jews, and not so much as once to have come into the temple or taught in their synagogues; but contrariwise He joined Himself with them; and therefore we cannot in good conscience disjoin ourselves from the church of England.

ii. The second thing to be observed in Christ's answer, is that He refers Caiaphas to the judgment of His hearers, being resolved of the truth of His own doctrine; though sundry of them were His utter enemies. Behold then a good example for all the ministers of God's Word to follow; teaching them to deliver God's Word so purely and sincerely that if they be called into question about the same, they may be bold to appeal to the consciences of their hearers although they be wicked men.

Now after this answer, one of the servants of Caiaphas smites Christ with a rod (John 18:22); in whom the saying is verified, *Like master, like servant*; that is, if the masters be wicked, servants commonly will be wicked also; if the master be an enemy to Christ, his servants will be Christ's enemy also. And this is the cause why there are so many lewd apprentices and servants, because there are so many lewd masters. Many masters complain of servants nowadays; but there is more cause why they should complain of themselves; for usually servants will not become obedient to their masters till their masters first become obedient unto Christ; therefore let masters learn to obey God, and then their servants will obey them also.

Further, Christ being smitten, makes this answer (John 18:23), *If I have evil spoken, bear witness of the evil; but if I have well spoken, why smitest thou me*? Making complaint of an injury done unto Him. Now hereupon scoffing Julian the Apostate saith, Christ keeps not His own laws, but goes against His own precept, whenas He said (Matt. 5:39*), If one strike thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also*. But we must know that in these words, Christ's meaning is that a man must rather suffer a double wrong than seek a private revenge. And before Christ spake in His own defence, which a man may lawfully do, and not seek any revenge; for it is one thing to defend His own cause, and another to seek revenge.

(b) Now follow the second point in their proceeding, which is the producing of false witnesses against Him, as St Matthew saith (Matt. 26:60), the whole council *sought false witness against Him, and though many came, yet found they none*; for they could not agree together because they alleged false things against Him which they could not prove. And thus the members of Christ have often such enemies as make no bones shamefully to avouch that against them which they cannot be able to justify. The ten persecutions which were in the first three hundred years after Christ, arose oftentimes of shameless reports that men gave out which said that: i. Christians lived on man's flesh, and therefore slew their own children; ii. That they lived on

raw flesh; iii. That they committed incest one with another in their assemblies; iv. That they worshipped the head of an ass; v. That they worshipped the sun and moon; vi. That they were traitors and sought to undermine the Roman empire; and vii. Lastly, wheresoever was thunder or earthquakes, seditions or tumults, or any disquietness or trouble, Christians were accused as the authors thereof. Such enemies have they had in all ages; and in these our days the same is practised, and will be to the world's end. Now when the first witnesses could not agree among themselves, then two other false witnesses came forth, which avouched that Christ said (Mark 14:58*), I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days will build another made without hands*. Indeed, Christ said some such words; for saith He (John 2:19,21), *Destroy this temple, and within three days I will build it up again*. But He spake this of the temple of His body; whereas they maliciously did interpret Him to have spoken of the temple in Jerusalem. And again, they change the words, for Christ said, *Destroy this temple* etc., but these witnesses affirm He said, *I will destroy this temple made with hands* etc. And thus they change both words and meaning; and therefore the Holy Ghost called them *false witnesses*. By this we must be advertised to take heed how we report men's words; for if we change the meaning, though in part we retain the words, we may soon become slanderers and false witnesses; and as this duty must be performed towards all men, so especially towards the ministers of the gospel; and the neglect of this duty procureth many slanders to them in this our church; whereof indeed the reporters are the cause, and not the ministers themselves.

Now at this false accusation, Christ was silent, so as Caiaphas asked Him (Mark 14:60,61) why He answered nothing. Herein we are to consider many things. Why was Christ silent? The causes be two: First, He was to shew Himself a pattern of true humility and patience; therefore even then would He be silent, when He was most falsely accused of His adversaries. Secondly, He is silent, that standing before the judge to be condemned, the sentence might proceed against Him, and He might suffer the death

appointed which was due unto us, and so become our Redeemer. And in Christ's example we must note that it is a special duty to know when to speak and when to be silent. The ordering of the tongue is a rare gift, and few attain unto it. Some will peradventure ask what rule we have to direct us herein? *Answer*: The general rule for the ordering of the tongue is the law of God. We are commanded to seek the glory of God in the first table; and in the second the good of our neighbour. When thy speech therefore will serve either for God's glory or the good of thy neighbour, then thou must speak; if it serves for neither, then be silent. Again, if thy silence be either for God's glory or the good of thy neighbour, then be silent; if it will not, then speak. And because it is hard for a man to know when his speech or silence will serve for these two ends; therefore we must pray unto God that He will teach and direct us herein; as David doth (Psa. 141:3), *Set a watch* (saith he) *O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips*; and again (Psa. 51:15), *Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise*.

(c) Thus much for the false witnesses produced. Now followeth the third point, which is the adjuring of Christ; for Caiaphas the High Priest charged Him to tell him whether He were the Christ the Son of God or no (Matt. 26:63). To adjure a man, is to charge and command him in the name of God to declare a truth, not only because God is witness thereof, but also because He is a judge to revenge, if he speak not the truth. Thus Paul adjureth the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:27), charging them in the Lord that his epistle should be read unto all the brethren the saints. And the like doth Caiaphas to Christ. And here is a thing to be wondered at, Caiaphas the High Priest adjuring Him in the name of God, who is very God, even the Son of God. And this shews what a small account he made of the name of God; for he did it only to get advantage on Christ's words. And so do many nowadays, who for a little profit or gain make a matter of nothing to abuse the name of God a thousand ways.

Christ being thus adjured, though silent before, now in reverence to God's majesty, answered and said, first (Matt. 26:64), *Thou hast said it*; and in St Mark (Mark 14:62), *I am He*. In this answer appears the wonderful providence of God. For though Caiaphas takes hence the occasion of condemning Christ, yet hath he withdrawn from Him a most excellent confession, that He is the Son of God and our alone Saviour (John 19:7). And by this means he proceeds to shut heaven against himself, and to open the same for us.

(2) Thus we have ended the first indictment of Christ before Caiaphas. Now followeth the second, which was before Pontius Pilate, in the common hall at Jerusalem. The history of it is set down at large in all the evangelists (John 18:29; Luke 23:2; Matt. 27:2; Mark 15:1). In the second indictment of Christ (that we may refer every matter to his place) we are to observe four things: (i) The accusation of Christ before Pilate; (ii) His examination; (iii) Pilate's policy to save Christ; (iv) Pilate's absolving of Him; and then the condemnation of Christ in both courts, ecclesiastical and civil. Of these in order:

(i) In Christ's accusation, we must consider many points:

(a) The first is, who were His accusers, namely, the high priests, the scribes, and Pharisees, and elders of the people, and the common people; all these conspired together to accuse Him. The cause that moved the Pharisees, and elders of the people hereunto is note by St Matthew, who saith (Matt. 27:18), *of envy they delivered Him*. Envy is nothing but a sadness in man's heart at the prosperity of his better. And it reigned in the scribes and Pharisees, and the occasion was this: Christ had taught most heavenly doctrine, and confirmed the same by most wonderful miracles, and did greatly exceed them all, and was in more account among the people; and for this cause the scribes and Pharisees and high priests repined and grudged at Him. Now their example serves to admonish us to take heed of this sin, as

being the mother of many mischiefs. And we must rather follow the example of Moses, who when Joshua desired him to forbid Eldad and Medad to prophesy, answered (Num. 11:26-28*), Enviest thou for my sake? Yea, I would to God all the Lord's people were prophets*. And we must be of the same mind with John Baptist, who, hearing by his disciples that the people left him and followed Christ, said (John 3:30) his joy was fulfilled, *for Christ must increase, and he must decrease*. And so we must be glad and content when we see the prosperity of our neighbours any way. Now the cause why the common people join with them, was because the chief priests and the scribes and elders had persuaded them to a bad conceit of Christ (Matt. 27:20). Hence it appears that it is most requisite for any people, be they never so good, to have good magistrates and godly rulers to govern them by wise and godly counsel. The necessity hereof was well known to Jethro, Moses' father in law, though he were an heathen man (Exod. 18:21); for he biddeth Moses to *provide among the people men of courage, fearing God, men dealing truly, hating covetousness, and appoint them to be rulers over the people*. Teaching us that if covetous, malicious and ungodly men, not fearing God, go before the people, they also shall in all likelihood be carried into the like sins by their example.

(b) The next point concerns the place where they accuse Him, which was at the door of the common hall (John 18:28); for having brought Him before the council at Jerusalem, and there condemned Him of blasphemy, afterwards they bring Him into the common hall where Pilate sat judge. Yet did they not enter in, but stayed without at the door, lest they should be defiled, and made unfit to eat the Passover. In which practice of theirs, we are to mark an example of most notable superstition, and most gross hypocrisy. For they make no bones to accuse and arraign a man most just and innocent, and yet are very strict and curious in an outward ceremony. And in like manner they make no conscience to give thirty pieces of silver to betray Christ; but to cast the same into the treasury, they make it a great and heinous offence. And for this cause, Christ pronounceth (Mark 7:6) a

woe unto the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites; for, saith He (Matt. 23:23*), you tithe mint, anise and cumin, and leave the weightier matters of the law, as judgment and mercy*. And the very same thing we see practised of the church of Rome at this day, and of sundry papists that live amongst us; they will not eat flesh in Lent, or upon any of the pope's fasting days for anything; and yet the same men make no conscience of seeking the blood of the Lord's anointed, and their dread Sovereign. And in this we see the most palpable, and most gross hypocrisy of those that be of that church. But shall we think that our own church is free from such men? No, assuredly; for take a view of the profession that is used among the people of England, and it will appear that they place their whole religion for the most part in the observation of certain ceremonies. The manner of most men is to come to the place of assemblies, where God is worshipped, and they mumble up the Lord's prayer, the Commandments and the Belief instead of prayers, which being done, God is well served think they; whereas in the mean season they neglect to learn and practise such things as are taught them for their salvation by the ministers of God's Word. At the feast of Easter, every man will be full of devotion and charity, and come to receive the Lord's supper, as though he were the holiest man in the world; but when the time is past, all generally turn to their old bias again; and all the year after live as they list, making no conscience of lying, slandering, fraud, and deceit in their affairs among men. But we must know that there is no soundness of religion, but gross hypocrisy in all such men; they worship God with their lips, but there is no power of godliness in their hearts.

(c) The third point is concerning the party to whom they make this accusation against Christ, namely, not to a Jew but to a Gentile; for having condemned Him in their ecclesiastical court before Caiaphas the High Priest, they bring Him to Pontius Pilate the deputy of Tiberias Caesar in Judea. Where we must observe the wonderful providence of God in that not only the Jews, but the Gentiles also had a stroke in the arraignment of

Christ, that that might be true which the apostle saith (Rom. 11:32), *God shut up all under sin, that He might have mercy upon all*.

(d) The fourth point is the matter of their accusation. They accuse our Saviour Christ of three things: i. That He had seduced the people; ii. That He forbad to pay tribute to Caesar; iii. That He said He was a king. Let us well consider these accusations, especially the two last, because they are flat contrary, both to Christ's preaching and to His practice. For when the people would have made Him a king (John 6:15), after He had wrought the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, the text saith, *He departed from among them, unto a mountain Himself alone*. Secondly, when tribute was demanded of Him for Caesar, though He were the king's Son, and therefore was freed, yet saith He to Peter (Matt. 17:27), *Lest we should offend them, go to the sea, and cast in an angle; and take the first fish that cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of twenty pence; that take, and give it unto them for thee and me*. And when He was called to be a judge to divide the inheritance between two brethren, He refused to do it, saying (Luke 12:14), *Who made me a judge between you*? Therefore in these two things they did most falsely accuse Him. Whereby we learn that nothing is so false and untrue but the slanderers dare lay it to the charge of the innocent; the tongues of the slanderers are (Psa. 120:4) *sharp swords and venomous arrows*, to wound their enemies; (Psa. 5:9) *their throats are open sepulchres, the poison of asps is under their lips*. If a man speak gracious words, his tongue is touched with the fire of God's Spirit; but as St James saith (Jam. 3:6), the tongue of the wicked is *fire*, yea, a world of wickedness, *and it is set on fire with the fire of hell*.

(e) The fifth point is the manner of their accusation, which is diligently to be marked; for they do not only charge Him with a manifest untruth, but they beseech Pilate to put Him to death, crying (Matt. 27:22,23) *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*, insomuch that Pontius Pilate was afraid of them; where we see how these shameless Jews go beyond their compass, and the bounds

of all accusers; whose duty is to testify only what they know. Now in the matter of this their accusation, appears their wonderful inconstancy. For a little before, when Christ came to Jerusalem riding upon an ass, shewing some signs of His kingly authority, they cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way crying, *Hosanna, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord* (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9; John 12:13); but now they sing another song, and instead of Hosanna, they cry, *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*. And the like inconstancy is to be found in the people of these our times. They used to receive any religion that is offered unto them; for in the days of King Edward the sixth, the people of England received the gospel of Christ; but shortly after, in Queen Mary's time, the same people received the wretched and abominable doctrine of the church of Rome. And not many years after, when it pleased God to bring again the light of His glorious gospel by our gracious prince, the same people turned from popery, and embraced the true religion again. And thus with the Jews; one while they cry *Hosanna* to Christ, and receive His gospel; and shortly after they cry, *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*, by embracing idolatrous popery. Let us therefore learn in the fear of God, by the fickleness of the Jews that sing two contrary songs in so short a space, to acknowledge our inconstancy and weakness in the matter of religion; whereby if God leave us but a little to ourselves, we shall straightway forsake Christ, His gospel and all.

(ii) Thus much of the accusation. Now follows Christ's examination before Pontius Pilate, for when the Jews had thus falsely accused Him, then Pontius Pilate took Him and brought Him into the common hall and asked Him this question (Luke 23:3): *Art thou the king of the Jews*? Now Christ being thus examined, made, as Paul also testifieth (1 Tim. 6:13), *a good confession*. The sum thereof stands in four heads:

(a) The first is that He confesseth Himself to be a king (John 18:36,37); not such an one as they accused Him to be, yet a true king. Whence we may learn diverse instructions: First, that every Christian man in the midst of his

misery and affliction, hath one that is most sufficient every way to defend him against all his enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. For this king can do whatsoever He will; and therefore when the legion of devils would enter into a herd of swine (Matt. 8:31), they could not without His leave. And when the centurion's daughter was dead (Mark 5:41,42), He but spake the word, and she arose. And when Lazarus was dead (John 11:43,44), and had lien in the grave four days, He but said, *Lazarus, come forth*, and he came forth bound hand and foot. Yea, even hell and death give place to His Word, and nothing can resist His power. And therefore, he that is a true member of Christ needs not to fear any enemies, be they never so great or many. And again, as Christ is able, so is He ready and willing to defend all that believe in Him. For He it is that gave His life for His subjects, which no king would do, and shed His blood for their redemption; which He would never have done, if He had not desired their salvation. Secondly, whereas Christ is a mighty king, which can do whatever He will, let all such among us that have hitherto lived in ignorance, and by reason of ignorance live in their sins, at length begin to come unto Him, and do Him homage, and with penitent hearts fall down before Him; otherwise if they continue in their old rebellion, let them know whatsoever they be, high or low, that He hath a rod of iron in His hand to bruise them in pieces (Psa. 2:9; Psa. 110:2); their souls shall smart for it; as both Pilate, Caiaphas, and the rest of the Jews were with a full cup rewarded for crucifying the Lord of life. And if Christ cannot draw thee in this life from thy crooked ways, be sure at the hour of death He will break thee in pieces like a potter's vessel. This must we learn in regard of the first point, that He said plainly, He was a king.

(b) Now follows the second point of His confession, namely that His *kingdom was not of this world* (John 18:36). Where he sets down what kind of king He is. He is no earthly king. His kingdom stands not in the power of men, nor in earthly and outward government; but His kingdom is spiritual, and His government is in the very hearts and consciences of men. His kingdom is not outward to be seen of men, but inward in the heart and

soul; and therefore it is only begun in this life, and is continued and accomplished in the world to come in the kingdom of glory; where Christ shall be all in all in the hearts and consciences of all the elect. Now then, if this be so, howsoever Satan have heretofore reigned in us, and made our hearts as it were his palaces, yet now let us prepare a room for Christ that He may come and dwell in us; let Him rule in our hearts, wills and affections, that they may become conformable to His will; let us resign ourselves wholly to be ruled by Him, that His spiritual kingdom may be in us. This kingdom in the heart and conscience is the pearl and hidden treasure (Matt. 13:46) which, when a man findeth, he selleth all he hath and buyeth it. Let us therefore in the fear of God, esteem it as the most precious thing that may be, and so live in this world, as that Christ may rule inwardly in us by His Word and Spirit. And again, seeing this regiment of Christ is heavenly, and the full manifestation of it is reserved till the life to come; we must therefore use this world and all things in it, as honour, wealth, ease and liberty, as though we used them not (1 Cor. 7:31). As a traveller useth his staff in his journey; as long as it doth further him, so long will he carry it with him; but when it hinders him, then he casts it away; so must we use the things of this life, namely, as long as they are helps to further and make us fit for the kingdom of heaven; but if they be any hindrance to this spiritual regiment of Christ, we must renounce them and cast them away be they never so precious to us.

(c) The third part of Christ's confession is concerning the means whereby He governeth His kingdom. *I came* (saith He (John 18:37)), *into this world to bear witness of the truth*, that is, to preach the gospel and doctrine of salvation; and hereby he teacheth that the outward administration of His kingdom stands specially in the preaching of the Word; which is a principal ordinance of His, serving to gather His church from the beginning of the world to the end thereof. And for this cause, He hath in all ages set apart chosen ministers for the publishing of the doctrine of the gospel. And hence it is manifest that the gift of prophecy is the greatest gift that God bestows

on His church for the building thereof. And therefore it ought to be most highly esteemed as a most precious jewel. And for this cause also the schools of learning are to be reverenced and maintained, and all other means used for the furthering of them; because they are under God the fountains and well-springs of this gift of prophecy.

(d) The last point is concerning the subjects of Christ's kingdom, expressed in these words: *They which are of the truth hear my voice* (John 18:37). In which He sets down the true mark of His servants and subjects, that they are hearers of that heavenly and saving Word which He revealed from the bosom of His Father. It may be alleged, the most wicked men upon earth, yea, the devils themselves may be hearers of the truth of Christ. *Answer*: There be two kinds of hearers: one, which heareth only the outward sound of the Word with his bodily ears, and he, having ears, doth not hear (Matt. 13:9); the second, is he that doth not only receive the doctrine that is taught with his ears, but also hath his heart opened to feel the power of it, and to obey the same in the course of his life. This distinction is notably set forth by David (Psa. 40:6), saying, *Sacrifice and burnt offerings thou wouldest not have; but my ears hast thou pierced*; whereby he insinuates as it were two kinds of ears: one that is deaf and cannot hear; and thus are the ears of all men by nature in hearing the doctrine of salvation; the other is a new ear pierced and bored by the hand of God, which causes a man's heart to hear the sound and operation of the Word, and the life to express the truth of it. Now the subjects of Christ's kingdom are such as with the outward hearing of the Word, have an inward hearing of the soul, and grace also to obey; and therefore all those that make no conscience of obedience to the Word of God preached unto them, are no less than rebels to Christ. We may persuade ourselves that we are good subjects because we hear the Word and receive the sacraments, but if our lives abound with sin, and if our hearts be not pierced through by the sword of God's Spirit, whether we be high or low, rich or poor, let us be what we will be, we are no right subjects indeed, but rebels and traitors unto the everlasting God. It may be hereafter God will

give further grace; but as yet all impenitent persons, though living in the midst of God's church, are no obedient and faithful subjects; and therefore while we have time, let us labour to perform indeed that which we do in word profess.

(iii) Thus much of the examination and confession of Christ. Now followeth the third point, concerning the policies which Pilate used to save Christ; and they are three:

(a) First, when he heard Christ was of Galilee, he took occasion to send him to Herod, thinking thereby to shift his hands of Him, and not to shed His blood. In which policy, though he seem unwilling to put Christ to death, yet herein he is a most unjust judge; for having given testimony of Christ, that he is innocent, he ought to have acquitted Him, and not have sent Him to Herod for further judgment. In Herod's dealing with Christ, we may observe these points:

i. The first, that he is wonderfully glad of his coming. Why so? The text saith (Luke 23:8), because *he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him, and trusted to have seen some sign done by Him*. Here, mark how he rejoiced, not in Christ because He was Christ, that is, his Messiah and Redeemer, but because He wrought miracles, signs and wonders. And so it is among us at this day; it is a rare thing to find a man that loves Christ because He is Christ; some love Christ for honour, some for wealth, and others for praise; that is, because they get honour, wealth and praise by confessing His name. Again, many profess Christ only because it is the law and custom of their nation. But we must learn to be of this mind: to love Christ because He is Christ, even for Himself; not for any other sinister respect; and we must rejoice in Christ, even for Himself, though we never have profit nor pleasure, neither honour nor wealth by Him. And if we love Him for wealth or pleasure, or for any

other end but for Himself alone, when these things are taken away, then we shall utterly forsake Christ in like manner.

ii. The second point is that Herod desires Christ to work a miracle. He can be content to see the works of Christ; but he cannot abide to hear His Word and to bear His yoke. Like to him are many in these days, which gladly desire to hear the gospel of Christ preached, only because they would hear speech of some strange things, laying aside all care and conscience to obey that which they hear. Yet many in England delight to read the strange histories of the Bible; and therefore can rehearse the most part of it (and it were to be wished that all could do the like), yet come to the practice of it, the same persons are commonly found as bad in life and conversation, yea rather worse than others. Let us therefore labour that with our knowledge we may join obedience, and practice with our learning, and as well to be affected with the Word of Christ, as with His works.

iii. The third point is that Herod derides Christ, and sends Him away clothed in a white garment. This is that Herod whom Christ called a *fox* (Luke 13:32); who also when he heard John Baptist preach, did many things, and heard him gladly (Mark 6:20). How then comes Herod to this outrage of wickedness, thus to abuse Christ? *Answer*: We must know that although Herod at the first heard John preach, yet withal he followed his own affections, and sought how to fulfil the lusts of his flesh. For when John told him that it was not lawful for him to have his brother Philip's wife, he cast him into prison and afterward cut off his head for it; after which offence he is grown to this height of impiety that he now despiseth Christ, and cannot abide to hear Him. Where we learn that as we are willing to hear God's Word preached, so withal we must take heed that we practise no manner of sin; but make conscience of everything that may displease God. Thou mayest, I grant, be one that feareth and favoureth John Baptist for a time, wallowing in thy old sins; but after a while, yielding to the swing of thy corrupt heart, thou wilt neither hear John, nor Christ Himself, but

hate and despise them both. This is the cause why some which have been professors of religion heretofore, and have had great measure of knowledge, are now become very loose persons, and cannot abide to hear the Word preached unto them; the reason is because they could not abide to leave their sins. Therefore that we may begin in the Spirit and not end in the flesh, *let everyone that calls on the name of the Lord depart from iniquity* (2 Tim. 2:19).

(b) Now follows the second policy of Pilate. For when he saw the first would not prevail, then he took a new course; for he took Jesus into the common hall and scourged Him, and the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple garment and said, Hail, King of the Jews, and smote Him with their rods (John 19:2,3). And thus he brought Him forth before the Jews, persuading himself that when they saw Him so abased and so ignominiously abused, they would be content therewith and exact no greater punishment at his hands thinking thus to have pacified the rage of the Jews, and so to have delivered Christ from death, by inflicting upon Him some lesser punishment. This policy is as it were a looking glass in which we may behold of what nature and condition all plots and policies of men are, which are devised and practised without the direction of God's Word. In it we may observe two things:

i. The first is the ground thereof; which is a most silly, simple, or rather senseless argument. For he reasoneth thus: *I find no fault in this man, therefore I will chastise Him and let Him go* (Luke 23:14-16). A man would hardly have thought that one having but common sense, would have made such a reason, much less a great judge sitting in the room of God. But in him we may behold and see the ground of all human policy which is beside the Word of God, namely, the foolish and blind reason of men.

ii. The second thing to be considered is the proceeding and issue of this policy. Pilate must either whip Christ being innocent, or put Him to death;

which are both sins and great offences. Now he makes choice of the lesser, which is to whip Him, and is persuaded that he ought to do so; whereas of two sins or evils, a man ought to do neither. And in doing this, Pilate begins to make a breach in his conscience; and that is the fruit that all politics reap of their devices, which proceed by the light of their own reason without the Word of God. By this example we are admonished of two things: first, that before we enterprise any business, we must rectify our judgments by God's Word. David was a most wise king, and no doubt had withal a grave and wise counsel, but yet he preferred the Word of God before all, saying (Psa. 119:24), *Thy testimonies are my counsellors*. Secondly, in our proceedings, we must keep an upright, pure and unblameable conscience, as Paul exhorteth Timothy (1 Tim. 3:9) to *have the mystery of faith in a pure conscience*; giving us thereby to understand that a good conscience is as it were a chest or cupboard in which we are to keep and lock up our religion, and all other graces of God, as the most precious jewels that can be; and that if we suffer this chest to be broken up, all our riches and jewels are gone.

But let us yet view the dealing of Pilate more particularly: he whips Christ, puts on Him a purple garment, puts a reed in His hand, sets a crown of thorns upon His head, and causes the soldiers to mock Him and spit in His face. Now in this that Christ standing in our room, was thus shamefully abused, we must consider what was due unto every one of us for our sins, namely, shame and reproach in this life, and in the life to come endless confusion. And we see the confession of Christ to be true which He made to Pilate (John 18:36) that His *kingdom was not of this world*; for if it had been so, they would have put a crown of gold upon His head, and not a crown of thorns, which nothing at all beseemed an earthly king; and instead of a reed they would have put a sceptre into His hand; and instead of buffeting and spitting on Him, they would have adored Him and fallen down before Him. Again, whereas Christ our Head in this world, wore no other crown but one made of thorns, it serveth to teach all those that are the members of Christ,

that they must not look for a crown of glory in this life, because that is reserved for the life to come. And if we would then wear the crown of glory with Christ, we must here in this life wear a crown of thorns, as He did; for St Paul saith (2 Tim. 2:12*), If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him*; and that which was fully verified in Christ the Head, must in some sort be verified in every true member of Christ.

(c) Pilate's third policy was this: when he saw that neither of the two former would prevail, he comes forth unto the Jews (Matt. 27:15-18) and makes an oration to this effect: that now was the feast of the Passover, and that they had a custom that the Governor should then deliver unto the people a prisoner whom they would; therefore he asked them whether he should let loose unto them Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ. This Barabbas was a notable malefactor that with insurrection had committed murder. And thus Pilate cunningly matches Christ with Barabbas, thinking that the Jews would rather choose Him than Barabbas, being a notorious malefactor, not worthy to live on the face of the earth; and by this means he thought to have delivered Christ from death, though otherwise he accounted Him as a malefactor. The ground of this policy (as we see) is an old custom of the Jews that a prisoner should be let loose at Easter. And it may be the end of this custom was to increase the solemnity of the feast. But whatsoever in truth the end was, the fact itself was but profanation of the time, and an abomination before the Lord; for Solomon saith (Prov. 17:15), *He that justifieth the wicked and condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination before the Lord*. The like practice takes place with many in these days who think that the Lord's day never well spent unless they may add solemnity thereunto by revel and riot, by frequenting of taverns and alehouses. And furthermore (Matt. 27:21) where Pilate matcheth Christ being innocent with Barabbas, and the people prefer him before Christ, having liberty to choose either; it shews that God in His providence had appointed that Christ should not stand in His own room before Pilate, but in our room and stead, as a Mediator between God and us. And in this fact of

the people we see how sin by degrees takes hold of men, and that speedily. Who would have thought that these Jews, who a little before had cried, *Hosanna* and spread their garments before Christ in the way, would ever have preferred a murderer before Him? But it was the doing of the high priests, the scribes and Pharisees, who did animate and stir them up to this wickedness; and hereupon when they had yielded first to attack Him and then to accuse Him, they are carried to a higher degree of impiety, namely, to seek His blood; and then lest He should escape their hands, they plunge themselves deeper yet, preferring a wretched murderer, even seditious Barabbas before Him. This must teach every one of us to take heed of the beginnings even of the least sins; for the devil is cunning, he will not plunge a man into the greatest sins at the first; but his manner is by little and little to creep into the heart; and having once possession thereof, by steps to bring men to the height of sin, and that with speed. We must therefore in the fear of God prevent sin betimes, and at the first motion cut off all occasions hereof; that which Paul saith of heresy (2 Tim. 2:17), comparing it to a canker or gangrene, may be said of all sin. The nature of the gangrene is to run from one joint to another, from the toe to the foot, from the foot to the leg, and from the leg to the thigh, till it have wasted and destroyed the life of the body; so give any sin but an entrance, and it will soon overspread the whole man; and if the devil may be suffered but to put one talon into thy heart, he will presently wind himself into thee, his head, his body and all. The psalmist saith (Psa. 137:9) that he is blessed that takes the children of the Babylonians and dasheth them against the stones; and as truly it may be said, Blessed is the man that dasheth the head of his sins against the ground while they are young, before they get strength to overmaster him.

(iv) Thus have we seen the policies of Pilate; now followeth the absolution of Christ; for when Pilate had used many means to deliver Him and none would prevail, then he absolves Him by giving divers testimonies of His innocency (Matt. 27:23,24; Mark 15:14; Luke 23:14-22; John 18:38, 19:4);

for he came forth three times and bare witness; and last of all he testified the same by washing of his hands; which rite signifieth properly the defiling of the hands before, but as yet Pilate had not defiled his hands, and therefore he used it as a token to shew that Christ was innocent and that he would not defile his own hands with innocent blood. There were three causes that moved Pilate to absolve Christ:

(a) First, he saw that He was a just man, as St Matthew noteth (Matt.27:19,20), and that the high priests and people had delivered Him up of envy, as St Mark saith (Mark 15:10). By this it is plain that a very pagan or infidel may in some things go beyond such as be in God's church, having better conscience and dealing more justly than they. Pontius Pilate was a heathen man, and a Gentile, the Jews were the church and people of the living God; yet he sees plainly that Christ was a just man, and thereupon is moved to absolve Him; whereas the Jews, which should be men of conscience and religion, seek His death. And thus a very pagan may otherwhiles see more into a matter than they that be reputed of the church. And this must admonish all such as profess the gospel, to look unto their proceedings, that they do all things with upright conscience; for if we deal unjustly in our proceedings, we may have neighbours, men of no religion, that will look through us and see the gross hypocrisy of our profession, which also would be loath to do those things which we do.

(b) The second cause that moved Pilate to absolve Christ, was his wife's dream; for when he was set down upon the judgment seat, she sent unto him, saying (Matt. 27:19), *Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things in a dream by reason of Him*. Dreams are of three sorts: natural, rising from the constitution of the body; diabolical, such as come by the suggestion of the devil; and divine, which are from God. Some have thought that this dream was of the devil; as though he had laboured thereby to hinder the death of Christ, and consequently our salvation; but I rather think it was occasioned by the things which she had heard before of

Christ, or that it was immediately from God, as the dreams of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, and served for a further manifestation of Christ's innocency. Here it may be asked whether we may regard our dreams now, as Pilate's wife did, or no? *Answer*: We have the books of the Old and New Testament to be our direction, as Isaiah saith (Isa. 8:20), *To the law and to the testimony*, they must be our rule and guide. In these days we must not look to be taught by visions and dreams; yet shall it not be amiss to observe this caveat concerning dreams, that by them we may guess at the constitution of our bodies, and oftentimes at the sins whereunto we are inclined.

(c) The last motive which caused Pilate to absolve Christ was a speech of the Jews; for they said (John 19:7,8) that Christ ought to die by their law, *because He said He was the Son of God*. And the text saith, *when Pilate heard that, he was afraid*. Mark how a poor pagan that knew not God's Word, at the hearing of the name of the Son of God is stricken with fear. No doubt He shall rise in judgment against many among us that without all fear rend the name of God in pieces by swearing, blaspheming, cursed speaking. But let all those that fear the Lord learn to tremble and be afraid at His blessed name.

Thus much for the causes that moved Pilate to absolve Christ; as also for the second part of Christ's arraignment, namely, His accusation.

3. Now follows the third part, which is His condemnation; and that is twofold:

(1) The first, by the ecclesiastical assembly and council of the Jews at Jerusalem in the high priest's hall before Caiaphas. The tenor of His condemnation was this (Matt. 26:65,66): *He hath blasphemed. What have we any more need of witnesses? He is worthy to die*. The cause why they say not *He shall die*, but *He is worthy to die*, is this: The Jews had two jurisdictions (Deut. 17:7-9), the one ecclesiastical, the other civil, both

prescribed and distinctly executed by the commandment of God till the time of the Maccabees, in which both jointly together came into the hands of the priests; but afterward about the days of Herod the Great the Roman Emperor took away both jurisdictions from the Jews and made their kingdom a province, so as they could do no more but apprehend, accuse and imprison; as doth appear by the example of Saul (Acts 9:2), who took letters from the high priest to Damascus, that if he found any either man or woman that believed in Christ, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem and imprison them; but kill or condemn they could not.

By the fact of this council we learn sundry points:

(i) First, that general councils, and the pope himself sitting judicially in his consistory, may err. If there were any visible church of God at the time of Christ's arraignment upon the face of the whole world; it was no doubt the church of the Jews. For Caiaphas the high priest was a figure of Christ, the scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' chair, and Jerusalem is called by Christ *the holy city* (Matt. 4:5; 27:53). Yet for all this, that which was foretold is now verified, namely, that the chief corner-stone should be rejected of master builders. For by the general consent of the council of Jerusalem, Christ the Head of the catholic church and the Redeemer of mankind, is accused of blasphemy, and condemned as worthy of death. Wherefore it is a mere dotage of man's brain to avouch that the pope cannot possibly err in giving a definitive sentence in matters either of faith or manners. Neither can the church of Rome plead privilege, for Jerusalem had as many prerogatives as any people in the world could have (Rom. 9:3).

(ii) Again, by this we see, there is no reason why we should ascribe to any man or to oecumenical councils themselves, absolute and sovereign power to determine and give judgment in matters of religion, considering they are in danger to be overtaken with notable slips and errors. And therefore the sovereignty of judgment is peculiar to the Son of God (Matt. 23:10), who is

the only doctor and law-giver of the church; and He puts the same in execution in and by the written Word. As for the speech of the papists, calling the Scriptures a dumb judge, it is little to be regarded; for the Scriptures are, as it were, a letter of the living God, sent from heaven to His church upon earth; and therefore they speak as plainly and as sufficiently unto us of all matters of faith, as a man can speak unto his friend by letter, so be it, we have the gift of discerning. Yet do we not bar the church of God from all judgment. For the ministerial power of giving judgment both publicly and privately is granted unto it of God; and that is to determine and give sentence of matters in question according to the Word, as the lawyer gives judgment, not according as he will, but according to the tenor of the law.

(iii) Thirdly, we learn that personal succession is no infallible mark of the true faith, and of true pastors; unless withal be joined succession in the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. For Caiaphas held his office by succession from Aaron; and yet in public assembly condemned the Messiah spoken of by Moses and the prophets. Therefore the succession of bishops of Rome from Peter is of no moment, unless they can prove that their religion is the religion of Peter, which they can never do.

(2) And thus much of Christ's first condemnation. The second was by Pontius Pilate, who sat in another court as a civil judge, and the tenor of his sentence was that the Jews should take Him and crucify Him. Here we must consider the reasons that moved Pilate to determine this:

(i) The first was the impatience of the Jews. He for his part was loath to defile his hands with innocent blood, but the Jews (Matt. 27:25) cried, *His blood be upon us, and our children*; which according to their wish came upon them within a few years after, and so remaineth still unto this day. By the which we are taught to take heed of imprecations against ourselves, our children, our servants, or any other creatures; for God heareth men's prayers

two ways: either in mercy, or in His wrath and anger. If thou curse thyself or any other, except thou turn unto the Lord by speedy repentance, He may hear thy prayer in His wrath, and verify thy curse upon thee to thy utter confusion.

(ii) The second reason that moved Pilate to condemn Christ was because he feared men more than God; for being deputy under Tiberias Caesar over the province of Judea, for fear of losing his office and of displeasing the Jews (John 19:12,13), he condemned Christ after he had absolved Him; whereby we see that it is a grievous sin to fear dust and ashes more than the living God. And therefore St John saith (Rev. 21:8) that *the fearful shall have their portion in the burning lake*; that is, such as are more afraid of man than God. And this sin in Pilate wanted not his just reward; for not long after he lost his deputyship and Caesar's favour, and fled to Vienna; where living in banishment, he killed himself. And thus God meets with them that fear the creature more than the Creator. That we may therefore avoid the heavy hand of God; let us learn to fear God above all; else we shall dishonour God and shame the religion which we profess.

The proper end of Christ's condemnation set down, though not in Pilate's will yet in God's eternal counsel, was that He might be the cause of absolution at the bar of God's justice unto all those whatsoever they are which shall come to life eternal. For we must still remember that when Christ was condemned by mortal judges He stood in our place, and in Him were all our sins condemned before God. Therefore to conclude this point, if this were the end of the counsel of God, to have His own Son condemned by Pontius Pilate, a mortal judge, that we might not be condemned but absolved before God's judgment seat; let us all labour to have this absolution sealed up in our hearts by the testimony of God's Spirit. For one day we must come to the bar of God's judgment; and if we have not an absolution by Christ's condemnation at Pilate's earthly bar, let us look for nothing else but the fearful sentence of condemnation at the celestial bar of

God's justice, to be uttered at the day of the last judgment. If a man should commit such an heinous offence as that he could no other way escape death but by the prince's pardon, he neither would, nor could, be at rest till by one means or other he had obtained the same, and had gotten it written and sealed; which done, he would carry it home, lock it up safe and sound, and many times look upon it with great joy and gladness. Well, this is the case of every one of us; by nature we are rebels and traitors against God and have by our sins deserved ten thousand deaths. Now our only stay and refuge is that Christ the Son of God was condemned for us; and therefore in Christ we must sue for pardon at God's hands, and never rest till we have the assurance thereof sealed up in our hearts and consciences; always remembering that ever after we lead a new life, and never commit the like sins against God any more. It were a blessed thing if this would enter into our hearts; but alas, we are as dead in our sins as a dead carcass in the grave. The ministers of God may teach this often to us, and we may also hear the same; but Satan doth so possess men's hearts that they seldom or never begin to believe or receive it till it be too late. Everyone can say, *God is merciful*, but that is not enough; for Christ being most righteous was condemned, that thou being a wretched sinner might be saved; and therefore thou must labour for thyself to have some testimony of thine absolution by Christ's condemnation, sealed up in thine own conscience, that thou mayest more assuredly say, God is and will be merciful unto thee.

Was crucified, dead and buried

Having spoken of the whole arraignment of Christ, and of His passion in general, now let us proceed to the parts of the passion, which are three: Christ's execution, His burial and His descending into hell. This being withal remembered that these three parts are likewise three degrees of Christ's humiliation.

I. *Crucified, dead.*

Christ's execution is that part of His passion which He bare upon the cross, expressed in the words of the Creed: *He was crucified and died*. In handling of it, we must observe five things:

1. The Person that suffered.

2. The place where He suffered.

3. The time when He suffered.

4. The manner how He suffered.

5. The excellency of His passion.

1. For the first, the person that suffered was Christ the just, As Peter saith (1 Pet. 3:18), *Christ also hath once suffered for sins; the just for the unjust*; and again (1 John 2:2), Christ Jesus the just (saith St. John) *is the reconciliation for our sins*. And in His execution, we shall have manifest declarations of His righteousness and justice, consisting in two most worthy points:

(1) First, when He was upon the cross, and the soldiers were nailing His hands and feet thereunto, and racking His body most cruelly, He prayed (Luke 23:34), *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*. These soldiers were by all likelihood the very same that apprehended Him and brought Him before Caiaphas, and from thence to Pontius Pilate, and there plaited a crown of thorns and set it upon His head and buffeted Him and spitefully entreated Him as we have heard; and yet Christ speaks no word of revenge unto them, but with all patience in the very extremity of their malice and injury, He prayeth unto His Father to forgive them. Hence we are taught that when injuries are done to us, we ought to abstain from all affections to revenge, and not so much as manifest the same either in word or deed. It is indeed a hard lesson to learn and practise; but it is our parts to endeavour to do it; and not only so, but to be ready, for evil, to do good; yea, even at that instant when other men are doing us wrong; even then (I say) we must be ready, if it be possible, to do them good. When as Christ's enemies were practising against Him all the treachery they could, even then He performeth the work of a Mediator, and prayeth for them unto His Father, and seeketh their salvation. Again, whereas Christ prayeth thus, *Father, forgive them*, we gather that the most principal thing of all that man ought to seek after in this life, is the forgiveness of his sins. Some think that happiness consisteth in honour, some in wealth, some in pleasure, some in this, some in that; but indeed the thing which we should most labour for is reconciliation with God in Christ; that we may have the free remission of all our sins. Yea, this is blessedness itself, as David saith (Psa. 32:1), *Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered*. Here then behold the madness of the men of this world that either seek for this blessing in the last place, or not at all.

(2) The second testimony of Christ's righteousness given in the midst of His passion was that He beheld His mother standing by, and commended her to the custody of John His disciple (John 19:26,27); whereby He gave an example of most holy obedience unto the fifth commandment, which

prescribeth honour unto father and mother. And this his fact sheweth that the observing of this commandment standeth not in outward shew and reverence only; but in a godly recompense in procuring unto parents all the good we can, both concerning this and a better life. It often falls out that children be as it were chains to father and mother; some rail on them, some fight with them; others see them pine away and starve and not relieve them. But all dutiful children must here learn that as their parents have done many duties unto them and brought them up; so they again must in all reverence perform obedience unto them both in word and deed; and when occasion is offered relieve them, yea in all they can, do good unto them. Again, in this we may see what a wretched state is that which the church of Rome calleth the state of perfection; namely, to live apart from the company of men, in fasting and praying all the days of a man's life; for hereby the bond of nature is broken, and a man cannot do the duty unto his parents which God's law requireth and Christ here Himself practiseth; nor the duties of a member of Christ which are to be done to the whole church, and to the rest of the members thereof.

2. The place where Christ suffered is called Calvary or Golgotha (Luke 23:33; Mark 15:22), that is, the place of dead men's skulls, without the walls of Jerusalem. Concerning the reason of this name, men be of divers opinions. Some say it was so called because Adam was buried there, and that his skull being there found, gave the name to the place. And this is the very opinion of some ancient divines, that Christ was there crucified where Adam was buried; but because it hath no certain ground, I leave it as uncertain. Others think it was called Calvary because the Jews were wont to carry out the bones of the dead men, and there to heap them together, as in times past the manner was in the vaults of sundry churches in this land. And some others think it was called Golgotha or Calvary because thieves and murderers and malefactors were there executed, stoned, burned; whereby it came to pass that many skulls and bones of dead men were found there.

3. The time when Christ was executed was at the Jews' Passover, when not only the Jews, but also many proselytes of many countries and nations were assembled; and therefore this execution was not in a private corner, but openly in the view of the world. For as He was a Saviour not to the Jews only but also to the Gentiles; so it was requisite that His death should be public before all men, both Jews and Gentiles. As for the hour of the day in which he suffered, there is some difficulty in the evangelists (John 19:14; Mark 15:25); for St John saith that He was condemned about the sixth hour of the day, and St Mark saith He was crucified the third hour. Hence it may be demanded how both these can stand together. *Answer*: Howsoever the Jews' natural day began at evening, yet the artificial day began at sun rising and ended at sun setting; and it was divided two ways: First, into twelve parts called twelve hours, whether the days were longer or shorter. Secondly, into four parts or quarters, and every part contained three hours; as from the first hour to the third, was one part called *morning*; from the third hour to the sixth, another part called *the sixth hour*; from the sixth hour to the ninth, the third part called *the ninth hour*; and from the ninth hour to the twelfth, the fourth part called *evening*. Now when St John saith Christ was condemned about the sixth hour, it must be understood of the second quarter of the day called *the sixth hour*; and whereas St Mark saith He was crucified the third hour of the day, he speaks of the lesser hours, twelve whereof made the whole day; and thus they both agree, for the third hour of the day and the beginning of the second quarter follow each other immediately. Again, it may be answered that Christ was condemned at six of the clock after the Roman account, which begins the day at midnight; and crucified at three (which is nine of the clock in the morning with us) after the Jews' account who began their artificial day, as I said, at the sun rising.

4. The fourth and last point is the order and whole proceeding of Christ's execution; which may be reduced to four heads:

(1) His going to execution.

(2) His crucifying.

(3) His death.

(4) The consequences of His death.

(1) Again, in His going to execution, we may consider many points:

(i) The first, that He is brought out of Jerusalem as a malefactor. For the old and ancient custom of the Jews was to put those whom they judged to be notorious offenders to death without their tents when they wandered in the wilderness and without the walls of Jerusalem, lest they should be defiled with their blood (Josh. 7:24; Lev. 24:14; Acts 7:58). And this fell out by the special providence of God that that might be fulfilled in Christ which was prefigured in the sacrifices of the Old Testament (Lev. 8:17), when the bodies of beasts were not eaten of the priests, but burnt without the camp; therefore saith the Holy Ghost (Heb. 13:11,12), *Even Jesus that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate*.

Hence may all Christians learn to know their own estate and condition; first, in this world they must look to be accounted *the offscouring of the earth and the filth of the world* (1 Cor. 4:13), as the apostle saith, and we must all prepare ourselves to bear this estate. They that will be God's children must not look to be better accepted of in the world than Christ was. Secondly, by this every one of us must learn to be content to use this world as strangers and pilgrims; being every day and hour ready to leave the same. For if Christ the Son of God Himself was brought out of Jerusalem as not being worthy to have His abode there, then must every Christian man look much more for the like extremity. And therefore it is not for us to have our hearts tied to the world and to seek always to be approved of the same; for that argueth that we are not like to Christ; but we must rather do as poor

pilgrims in strange countries; and that is, only look for safe conduct through the miseries in this world, having in the mean season our hearts, wills and affections set on the kingdom which is in heaven.

(ii) The second thing is that Christ was made to bear His own cross, for so it seems to the manner of the Romans was to deal with malefactors. And this must put us in mind of that notable lesson which Christ Himself taught His disciples; namely (Luke 9:23), that *if any man will be my disciple, he must deny himself, take up his own cross daily and follow him*; where by the cross we must understand that portion of affliction which God hath allotted to every one of His children; for there is no child of God to whom He hath not measured out as it were some bitter cup of misery in this life. And therefore Paul saith (Col. 1:24), *Now rejoice I in my sufferings for you, and fulfil the rest of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh*. By Christ's sufferings, he meaneth not the passion of Christ, but the sufferings of the body of Christ, that is, the church whereof Christ is the Head. Moreover, we must suffer as He did, and that daily; because as one day followeth another, so one cross comes in the neck of another. And whereas Christ bears the cross that was laid on Him by the hands of the soldiers, it must teach us not to pull crosses upon ourselves, but wait till God lay them on us; when that time comes we must willingly bend our shoulders, stoop down and take them up; whether they be in body or in soul; and that every day, if it be God's will, so long as we live; and by this shall we most notably resemble our Saviour Christ.

(iii) Thirdly, when Christ had carried His cross so long till He could carry it no longer, by reason of the faintness of His body, which came by buffets, whippings and manifold other injuries, then the soldiers meeting with one Simon of Cyrene a stranger (Luke 23;26), made him to bear the cross; where we are put in mind (Matt. 11:28) that if we faint in the way and be wearied with the burden of our afflictions, God will give good issue, and send as it were some Simon of Cyrene to help us and to be our comforter.

(iv) The fourth point is that when Christ was carrying His own cross, and was now passing on towards Golgotha, certain women met Him, and pitying His case wept for Him (Luke 23:27,28); but Christ answered them and said, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and your children* etc. By this we are first of all taught to pity the state of those that be the children of God; as the apostle exhorteth us, saying (Heb. 13:3), *Remember them that are in bonds as though you were bound with them; and them that are in affliction as though you were afflicted with them*. In this land by God's especial blessing we have enjoyed the gospel of Christ with peace a long time, whereas other countries and churches are in great distress; some wallow in palpable ignorance and superstition; others have liberty to enjoy the gospel and want teachers; and some have both the Word and teachers, and yet want peace and are in continual persecution. Now when we that have the gospel with peace do hear of these miseries in our neighbour churches, we ought to be moved with compassion towards them, as though we ourselves were in the same afflictions. Secondly, where Christ saith, *Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves*, He doth teach us to take occasion by other men's miseries to bewail our own estate; to turn our worldly griefs into godly sorrow for our sins, which causeth us rather to weep for our offences than for our friends, although even this may also be done in godly manner. When a man bleeding at the nose is brought in danger of his life, the physician lets him bleed in another place, as in the arm, and turns the course of the blood another way to save his life; and so must we turn our worldly sorrows for loss of goods or friends, to a godly sorrow for our offences against God; for so St Paul saith (2 Cor. 7:10), *Godly sorrow causeth repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of; but worldly sorrow causeth death*.

(v) The fifth point is that when Christ was brought to the place of execution, they gave Him vinegar to drink, mingled with myrrh and gall; some say it was to intoxicate His brain and to take away His senses and memory. If this be true, we may here behold in the Jews a most wicked part, that at the

point of death, when they were to take away the life of Christ, they for their parts had no care of His soul. For this is a duty to be observed of all magistrates, that when they are to execute malefactors, they must have a special regard to the good and salvation of their souls. But some think rather that this portion was to shorten and end His torments quickly. Some of us may peradventure think hardly of the Jews, for giving so bitter a potion to Christ at the time of His death; but the same doth every sinner that repenteth not. For whenever we sin, we do as much as temper a cup of gall, or the poison of asps, and as it were give it to God to drink; for so God Himself compareth the sin of the wicked Jews to poison, saying (Deut. 32:32,33), *Their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the vines of Gomorrah, their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters be bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons and the cruel gall of asps*. And for this cause we ought to think as hardly of ourselves as of the Jews, because so oft as we commit any offence against God, we do as much as mingle rank poison and bring it to Christ to drink. Now afterward, when this cup was given Him, He tasted of it; but drank not, because He was willing to suffer all things that His Father had appointed Him to suffer on the cross, without any shortening or lessening of His pain.

(2) Thus we see in what manner Christ was brought forth to the place of execution; now followeth His crucifying. Christ in the providence of God was to be crucified for two causes:

(i) One, that the figures of the Old Testament might be accomplished and verified. For the heave offering lifted up and shaken from the right hand to the left, and the brazen serpent erected upon a pole in the wilderness, prefigured the exalting of Christ upon the cross.

(ii) The second, that we might in conscience be resolved that Christ became under the law and suffered the curse thereof for us, and bare in His own body and soul the extremity of the wrath of God for our offences (Gal.

3:13). And though other kinds of punishments were notes of the curse of God, as stoning, and such like; yet was the death of the cross in special manner above the rest accursed, not by the nature of the punishment, not by the opinions of men, not by the civil laws of countries and kingdoms, but by the virtue of a particular commandment of God, foreseeing what manner of death Christ our Redeemer should die (Deut. 21:22,23). And hereupon among the Jews in all ages this kind of punishment hath been branded with special ignominy, as Paul signifieth (Phil. 2:8), when he saith, *He abased Himself to the death, even to the death of the cross*; and it hath been allotted as a most grievous punishment to most notorious malefactors (Num. 25:4; 2 Sam. 21:6). If it be said that the repentant thief upon the cross died the same death with Christ and yet was not accursed; the answer is that in regard of his offences he deserved the curse, and was actually accursed; and the sign of this was the death which he suffered, and that in his own confession; but because he repented, his sins were pardoned and the curse removed. It may further be said that crucifying was not known in Moses' days, and therefore not accursed by any special commandment of God in Deuteronomy. *Answer*: Moses indeed speaks nothing in particular of crucifying, yet nevertheless he doth include the same under the general. For if everyone which hangs upon a tree be accursed, then he also which is crucified; for crucifying is a particular kind of hanging on a tree. Lastly, it may be alleged that Christ in His death could not be accursed by the law of Moses because He was no malefactor. *Answer*: Though in regard of Himself He was no sinner, yet as He was our surety He became sin for us, and consequently the curse of the law for us, in that the curse every way due unto us by imputation and application was made His.

Furthermore, Christ was crucified not after the manner of the Jews, who used to hang malefactors upon a tree, binding them thereto with cords (Psa. 118:17), and that when they were dead; but after the usual manner of the Romans; His body being partly nailed to the cross and partly in the nailing extremely racked, otherwise I see not but that a man might remain many

days together alive upon the cross. And here we have occasion to remember that the papists who are so devout and zealous towards crucifixes, are far deceived in the making of them. For first of all, the cross was made of three pieces of wood, one fastened upright in the ground, to which the body and back leaned; the second fastened towards the top of the first overthwart, to which the hands were nailed; the third fastened towards the bottom of the first, on which the feet were set and nailed; whereas contrariwise popish carvers and painters fasten both the feet of Christ to the first. Secondly, the feet of Christ were nailed asunder with two distinct nails, and not nailed one upon another with one nail alone, as papists imagine, and that to the very body of the cross; for then the soldiers could not have broken both the legs of the thieves, but only the outmost, because one of them lay upon the other.

Let us now come to the use which may be made of the crucifying of Christ.

(i) First of all here we learn with bitterness to bewail our sins; for Christ was thus cruelly nailed on the cross, and there suffered the whole wrath of God, not for any offence that ever He committed, but being our pledge and surety unto God, He suffered all for us; and therefore just cause have we to mourn for our offences, which brought our Saviour Christ to this low estate. If a man should be so far in debt that he could not be freed unless the surety should be cast into prison for his sake; nay, which is more, be cruelly put to death for his debt, it would make him at his wits end and his very heart to bleed. And so is the case with us by reason of our sins; we are God's debtors, yea bankrupts before Him (Matt. 6:12), yet have we gotten a good surety, even the Son of God Himself, who to recover us to our former liberty, was crucified for the discharge of our debt. And therefore good cause have we to bewail our estate every day, as by the prophet it is said (Zech. 12:10), *They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, they shall lament for Him as one mourneth for his own son; they shall be sorry for Him as one is sorry for his firstborn*. Look as the blood followed the nails that were stricken through the blessed hands and feet of Christ, so

should the meditation of the cross and passion of our Redeemer be as it were nails and spears to pierce us, that our hearts might bleed for our sins; and we are not to think more hardly of the Jews for crucifying Him than of ourselves, because even by our sins we also crucify Him. These are the very nails which pierce His hands and feet, and these are the spears which pierce through His side. For the loss of a little worldly pelf, oh how are we grieved! But seeing our transgressions are the weapons whereby the Son of God was crucified, let us (I say again and again) learn to be grieved for them above all things, and with bleeding and melting hearts bow and buckle under them, as under the cross.

(ii) Secondly, Christ saith of Himself (John 3:14), *As Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up*; the comparison is excellent and worthy the marking. In the wilderness of Arabia the people of Israel rebelled against God, and thereupon He sent fiery serpents among them, which stung many of them to death. Now when they repented, Moses was commanded to make a brazen serpent and to set it upon a pole, that as many as were stung might look unto it and recover; and if they could but cast a glance of the eye on the brazen serpent when they were stung even to death, they were restored to health and life. Now every man that liveth is in the same case with the Israelites: Satan hath stung us at the heart and given us many a deadly wound, if we could feel it; and Christ who was prefigured by the brazen serpent, was likewise exalted on the cross, to confer righteousness and life eternal to everyone of us. Therefore if we will escape eternal death, we must renounce ourselves, and lift up the eyes of our faith to Christ crucified, and pray for the pardon of our sins; and then shall our hearts and consciences be healed of the wounds and gripes of the devil; and until such time as we have grace to do this, we shall never be cured, but still lie wounded with the stings of Satan, and bleeding to death at the very heart, although we feel no pain or grief at all. But some may ask how any man can see Him crucified now after His death? *Answer*: Wheresover the Word of God is preached, there Christ is

crucified, as Paul saith (Gal. 3:1), *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, to whom before Jesus Christ was described in your sight, and among you crucified*? Meaning that He was lively preached among them. We need not to go to wooden crosses, or to golden crucifixes to seek for Him; but where the gospel is preached, thither must we go, and there lift up our eyes of faith to Christ, as He is revealed unto us in the Word; resting on Him and His merits with all our hearts, and with a godly sorrow confess and bewail our sins, craving at His hands mercy and pardon for the same. For till such time as we do this, we are grievously stung by Satan, and are every moment even at death's door. And if we can thus behold Christ by faith, the benefits which come hereby shall be great; for as Paul saith (Rom. 6:6), *The old man*, that is, the corruption of our nature and the body of sin that reigneth in us, *shall be crucified with Him*; for when Christ was nailed on the cross, all our sins were laid upon Him; therefore if thou doest unfeignedly believe, all thy sins are crucified with Him and the corruption of thy nature languisheth and dieth, as He languished and died upon the cross.

(iii) Thirdly we must learn to imitate Christ as He suffered Himself to be nailed to the cross for our sins, so answerably must every one of us learn to crucify our flesh and the corruption of our nature, and the wickedness of our own hearts, as Paul saith (Gal. 5:24), *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with lusts and affections thereof*. And this we shall do, if for our sins past we wail and mourn with bitterness, and prevent the sins to come, into which we may fall by reason of the corruption of our natures, by using all good means, as prayer, fasting and the Word of God preached, and by fleeing all occasions of offence. We are not to destroy our bodies or to kill ourselves, but to kill and crucify sin that liveth in us, and to mortify the corruption of our nature that rebels against the spirit. Christianity stands not in this: to hear the Word of God and outwardly to profess the same, and in the mean season still to live in our sins and to pamper our own rebellious flesh; but it teacheth us always to have in readiness some spear or other to

wound sin, and the sword of the Spirit to cut down corruption in us, that thereby we may shew ourselves to be lively followers of Christ indeed.

(iv) Fourthly, by this we may learn that the wrath of God against sin is wonderfully great, because His own Son bearing our person, and being in our place, was not only crucified and racked most cruelly, but also bare the whole wrath of God in His soul; and therefore we must leave off to make so little account of sin as commonly we do.

(v) Fifthly, whereas the Person crucified was the Son of God, it sheweth that the love of God which He bare unto us in our redemption is endless; like a sea without a bank or bottom, it cannot be searched into, and if we shall not acknowledge it to be so, our condemnation will be the greater.

(vi) Sixthly, in this that Christ bare the curse of the law upon the cross; we learn that those that be the children of God, when they suffer any judgment, cross or calamity, either in body or in mind or both, do not bear them as the curses of God, but as the chastisements of a loving Father. For it doth not stand with the justice of God to punish the fault twice; and therefore when any man that putteth his whole confidence in God, shall either in his own person, in his good name, or in his goods feel the heavy hand of God, God doth not as a judge curse him, but as a Father correct him. Here then is condemned the opinion of the church of Rome, which hold that we by our sufferings do in some part satisfy the justice of God; but this cannot stand because Christ did make a perfect satisfaction to the justice of His Father for all punishment. And therefore satisfaction to God made by man for temporal punishment is needless, and much derogates from Christ's passion.

In the crucifying of Christ, two things specially must be considered: (i) The manner of the doing of it, and (ii) His continuance alive upon the cross.

(i) Touching the manner, the Spirit of God hath noted two things:

(a) The first, that Christ was crucified between two thieves, the one upon His left hand, the other upon His right; in which action is verified the saying of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 53:12), *He was numbered among the wicked*; and the Jews for their parts do hereby testify that they esteemed Him to be, not some common wicked man, but even the captain and ringleader of all thieves and malefactors whatsoever. Now whereas Christ standing upon the cross in our room and stead, is reputed the Head and Prince of all sinners, it serveth to teach every one of us that believe in Him, to judge ourselves most vile and miserable sinners, and to say of ourselves with Paul (1 Tim. 1:15), that we are *the chief of all sinners*.

(b) The second thing is that Christ was crucified naked; because He was stripped of His garments by the soldiers when He was to be crucified. The causes why He suffered naked are these:

i. First, Adam by his fall brought upon all mankind death both of body and soul; and also the curses of God which befall man in this life; among which this was one: that the nakedness of the body should be ignominious; and hereupon when Adam had sinned and saw himself naked, he fled from the presence of God (Gen. 3:7,8), and hid himself even for very shame. Christ therefore was stripped of His garments and suffered naked, that He might bear all the punishment and ignominy that was due unto man for sin.

ii. Secondly, this came to pass by the goodness of God, that we might have a remedy for our spiritual nakedness; which is, when a man hath his sins lying open before God's eyes; and by reason thereof he himself lieth open to all God's judgments. Hereof Christ speaketh to the angel of Laodicea (Rev. 3:17), saying, *Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not how thou art wretched, miserable, blind and naked*. So when the Israelites had committed idolatry by the golden calf (Exod. 32:25), Moses telleth them that *they were naked*; not only because they had spoiled themselves of their earrings, but especially because they

were destitute of God's favour, and lay open and naked to all His judgments for that sin. And Solomon saith (Prov. 29:18), *Where there is no vision, the people are made naked*, that is, their sins lie open before God; and by reason thereof they themselves are subject to His wrath and indignation. Now Christ was crucified naked that He might take away from us this spiritual nakedness; and also give unto us meet garments to clothe us withal in the presence of God, called *white raiment*, as Christ saith (Rev. 3:18), *I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that thy filthy nakedness do not appear*; and (Rev. 7:14) *long white robes dipped in the blood of the Lamb*, which serve to hide the nakedness of our souls. What these garments are, the apostle sheweth when he saith (Gal. 3:27), *All that are baptised into Christ, have put on Christ*; and (Eph. 4:24), *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*. Our nakedness maketh us more vile in the sight of God than the most loathsome creature that is, can be to us; until we have put on the righteousness of Christ to cover the deformity of our souls, that we may appear holy and without spot before God.

iii. Thirdly, Paul saith (2 Cor. 5:1-3), *We know if our earthly house of this tabernacle be destroyed, we have a building given of God*, etc. *For therefore we sigh, desiring to be clothed with our house which is from heaven, because if we be clothed, we shall not be found naked*. Where it is like that the apostle alludeth to the nakedness of Adam after his fall; and therefore giveth us another reason why Christ was crucified naked, namely, that after this life He might clothe all His members with eternal glory.

If this be so, that a part of our rejoicing stands in the glorious nakedness of Christ crucified, there is no reason why we should be puffed up with the vanity of our apparel. It should rather be an occasion to make us ashamed than to make us proud. The thief may as well brag of the brand in his hand, or of the fetters on his heels, as we may of our attire; because it is but the

covering of our shame, and therefore should put us in mind of our sin and shameful nakedness.

(ii) The abode of Christ upon the cross was the space of six hours. For the death of the cross was no sudden but a lingering death. And in this space of time there fell out five notable events:

(a) The first (Mark 15:24), the soldiers having stripped Christ of His garments, divided them into four parts, and cast lots for His coat because it was woven without seam. And by this appears the great love of Christ to man, who was not only content to suffer, but also to lose all that ever He had, even to the garments on His back to redeem us; teaching us answerably that if it please God to call us to any trial hereafter, we must be content to part with all for His sake, that we may win Him. Again in these soldiers we may behold a picture of this world. When they had nailed Christ to the cross, they will not lose so much as His garments, but they come and divide them, and cast lots for them. As for Christ Himself, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, they regard Him not. And thus fareth the world; it is a hard thing to find a man to accept of Christ because He is Christ His Redeemer; but when gain comes by Christ, then He is welcome. Esau, that esteemed nothing of his father's blessing, made great account of his brother's pottage. The Gadarenes made more account of their swine than of Christ, for when they heard that they were drowned, they besought Him to depart out of their coasts. Nay, so bad is this age that such as will be taken to be the special members of Christ, do not only with the soldiers strip Christ of His garments, but more than this, they bereave Him of His natures and offices. The church of Rome, by their transubstantiation, strip Him of His manhood; and by making other priests after the same order with Him, which do properly forgive sins, strip Him of His priesthood; and of His kingly office, by joining with Him a vicar on earth and head of the Catholic Church, and that in His presence; whereas all deputyships and commissions cease in the presence of the principal. And when they have done all this,

then they further load Him with a number of beggarly ceremonies; and so do nothing else but make a feigned Christ instead of the true and alone Messiah.

(b) The second event was that Christ was mocked of all sorts of men. First, they set up the cause written why He was crucified, namely (Matt. 27:37-44), *This is the King of the Jews*; then the people that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads at Him and said, *Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself*, etc. Likewise, the high priests mocking Him, with the scribes and Pharisees and the elders said, *He saved others, let Him save Himself*. The same also did one of the thieves that was crucified with Him, cast in His teeth. Behold here the wonderful strange dealings of the Jews; they see an innocent man thus pitifully and grievously racked and nailed on the cross, and His blood distilling down from hands and feet; and yet are they without all pity and compassion, and do make but a mock and a scoff at Him. And in this we may plainly see how dangerous and fearful their case is who are wholly given up to the hardness of their own hearts; and we are further admonished to take heed how we give ourselves to jesting or mocking of others. And if any think it to be a light sin, let them consider what befell the Jews for mocking Christ. The hand of God was upon them within a while after, and so remaineth to this day. Little children wickedly brought up, when they saw Elisha the man of God coming (2 Kin. 2:23,24), they mocked him, and said, *Come up thou bald pate, come up thou bald pate*; but Elisha looked back on them and cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two wild bears came out of the forest and did tear in pieces two and forty of them. Julian, once a Christian emperor, but after an apostate, did nothing else but mock Christ and His doctrine, and made jests of sundry places of Scripture; but being in fight against the Persians, was wounded with a dart (no man knowing how) and died scoffing and blaspheming. And such like are the judgments of God which befall mockers and scorners. Let us therefore in the fear of God learn to eschew and avoid this sin.

Furthermore, if we shall indifferently consider all the mocks and scorning of the Jews, we shall find that they cannot truly convince Him of the least sin; which serveth to clear Christ, and to prove that He was a most innocent man, in whose ways was no wickedness, and in whose mouth was found no guile; and therefore He was fittest to stand in our room and suffer for us which were more vile and sinful. And here by the way a question offereth itself to be scanned: St Matthew saith (Matt. 27:44), *The thieves which were crucified with Him cast the same in His teeth*, which the scribes and Pharisees did. St Luke saith (Luke 23:39) that one of the thieves mocked Him. Now it may be demanded how both of these can be true? *Answer*: Some reconcile the place thus: that the Scripture speaking generally of anything, by a figure doth attribute that to the whole, which is proper to some part only; and so here doth ascribe that to both the thieves which agreeth but to one. Others answer it thus: that at the first both of the evildoers did mock Christ, and of that time speaks Matthew; but afterward one of them was miraculously converted, then the other alone mocked Him, and of that time spake St Luke. And this I rather take to be the truth. But what was the behaviour of Christ, when He is thus laden with reproach? In wonderful patience He replies not, but puts up all in silence. Where we are taught that when as a man shall rail on us wrongfully, we must not return rebuke for rebuke, nor taunt for taunt; but we must either be silent, or else speak no more than shall serve for our just defence. This was the practice of the Israelites by the appointment of Hezekiah (2 Kin. 18:36), when Rabshakeh reviled the Jews and blasphemed the name of God; the people held their peace, and answered him not a word, for the king's commandment was, *Answer him not*. So Hannah (1 Sam. 1:14), being troubled in mind, prayed unto the Lord, and Eli marked her mouth, for she spake in her heart and her lips did move only but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she had been drunken, and said*, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy drunkenness from thee*. Such a speech would have moved many a one to very hard words; but she said, *Nay, my lord, but I am a woman troubled in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink; but*

I have poured out my soul before the Lord. This is a hard lesson for men to learn; but we must endeavour ourselves to practise it, if we will be followers of Christ, and overcome evil with good.

(c) The third thing that fell out in the time of Christ's crucifying, was the pitiful complaint in which He cried with a loud voice (Matt. 17:46), *Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani*, that is, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*? In the opening of this complaint many points must be scanned:

i. The first is, what was the cause that moved Christ to complain? *Answer*: It was not any impatience or discontentment of mind or any despair or any dissembling, as some would have it; but it was an apprehension and a feeling of the whole wrath of God which seized upon Him both in body and soul.

ii. The second, what was the thing whereof He doth complain? *Answer*: That He is forsaken of God the Father. And from this point ariseth another question: How Christ being God, can be forsaken of God, for the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are all three but one and the same God? *Answer*: By God we must understand God the Father the first Person. According to the common rule, when God is compared with the Son or the Holy Ghost, then the Father is meant by this title, God; as in this place; not that the Father is more God than the Son, for in dignity all three Persons are equal; but they are distinguished in order only, and the Father is first. And again, whereas Christ complaineth that He was forsaken, it must be understood in regard of His human nature, not of His Godhead. And Christ's manhood was forsaken, not that His Godhead and manhood were severed, for they were ever joined together from the first moment of the incarnation; but the Godhead of Christ, and so the Godhead of the Father did not shew forth His power in the manhood, but did as it were lie asleep for a time, that the manhood might suffer. When a man sleepeth, the soul is not severed from the body, but lieth as it were dead, and exerciseth not itself; even so the

Godhead lay still, and did not manifest His power in the manhood, and thus the manhood seemed to be forsaken.

iii. The third point is the manner of this complant, *My God, my God*, saith He; these words are words of faith, I say not of justifying faith whereof Christ stood not in need but He had such a faith or hope whereby He did put His confidence in God. The last word, *Why hast thou forsaken me*? seem at the first to be words of distrust. How then (will some say) can these words stand with the former, for faith and distrust are flat contraries? *Answer*: Christ did not utter any speech of distrust, but only made His moan and complaint by reason of the greatness of His punishment. And yet still He relied Himself on the assistance of His Father. Hence we learn first, that religion doth not stand in feeling but in faith, which faith we must have in Christ, though we have no feeling at all; for God oftentimes doth withdraw His grace and favour from His children that he may teach them to believe in His mercy in Christ, then, when they feel nothing less than His mercy. And faith and feeling cannot always stand together, because faith is a subsisting of things which are not seen, and the ground of things hoped for, and we must live by faith and not feeling. Though feeling of God's mercy be a good thing, yet God doth not always vouchsafe to give it to His children; and therefore in the extremity of afflictions and temptations, we must always trust and rely on God by faith in Christ; as Christ Himself doth when He is as it were plunged into the sea of the wrath of God. Secondly, here we may see how God deals with His children; for Christ in the sense and feeling of His human nature was forsaken, yet he had sure trust and confidence in God that caused Him to say, *My God, my God*. God will oftentimes cast His dear children into huge gulfs of woe and misery, where they shall see neither bank nor bottom, nor any way to get out; yet men in this case must not despair, but remember still that that which befell Christ the Head, doth also befall His members. Though Christ Himself at His death did bear the wrath of God in such measure, as that in the sense and feeling of His human nature He was forsaken; yet for all this He was the Son of God, and had the

Spirit of His Father, crying, *My God, my God*. And therefore though we be wonderfully afflicted either in body or in mind, so as we have no sense or feeling of God's mercy at all, yet must we not despair and think that we are castaways, but still labour to trust and rely on God in Christ, and build upon Him that we are His children, though we feel nothing but His wrath upon us; against mercy cleaving to His mercy. This was David's practice (Psa. 77:2,3), *In day of trouble* (saith he) *I sought the Lord; my sore ran and ceased not in the night; my soul refused comfort. I did think upon God and was troubled; my soul was full of anguish*, and so he continueth on saying (vv. 7.8), *Will the Lord absent Himself for ever, and will He shew no more favour? Hath God forgotten to be merciful*? But in the end he recovered himself out of this gulf of temptation, saying (v. 11), *Yet I remember the years of the right hand of the most High; I remember the works of the Lord, certainly I remember the wonders of old*. Wherefore this practice of Christ in His passion must then be remembered of us all when God shall humble us either in body or soul, or both.

(d) The fourth thing which fell out when Christ was on the cross was this: after Christ knew that all things were performed and that the Scriptures were fulfilled, He said (John 19:28-30), *I thirst*, and then there standing a vessel full of vinegar, one ran and filled a sponge therewith and put it about an hyssop stalk, and put it in His mouth; which when He had received, said, *It is finished*. The points here to be considered are four:

i. The first, that Christ thirsteth. And we must know that this thirst was a part of His passion; and indeed it was no small pain, as we may see by this: when Sisera was overcome by Israel, and had fled from his enemies to Jael's tent (Jud. 4:19), he called for a little water to drink, being more troubled with thirst than with the fear of death at the hands of his enemies. And indeed thirst was grievous to men in the East country, as torment anywhere else. And hereupon, Samson was more grieved with thirst than with fear of many thousand Philistines (Jud. 15:18).

Again, whereas Christ complaineth that He thirsteth, it was not for His own sake but for our offences; and therefore answerably we must thirst after Christ and His benefits, *as the dry and thirsty land* (Psa. 143:6) where no water is, doth after rain; and *as the hart brayeth after the rivers of water, so* must we say with David, *My soul panteth after thee O Lord*, and the benefits of thy death.

ii. The second, that a sponge full of vinegar tied upon an hyssop stalk was reached to Christ upon the cross. Now it may be demanded, how could this be, considering the stalk of the hyssop is not past a foot long? *Answer*: As the tree of mustard seed with the Jews is far greater and taller than with us, in so much that the birds of heaven build their nests in it (Luke 13:19); so it may be that hyssop groweth much longer in those countries than with us. Or as I take it rather, the hyssop stalk was put upon a reed, and by that means the sponge was put to the mouth of Christ.

iii. The third point is that Christ drinketh the vinegar offered; but when? Not before all things were finished that were to be done on the cross. And by this He sheweth His exceeding care for our salvation. He laid aside all things that would turn to His own ease, that He might fully work our redemption and fulfil the will of His Father who sent Him into the world for that end. The like care must every one of us have to walk dutifully, and, as it were, to go through-stitch in our particular callings, that God might be glorified in us. When Abraham's servant came to Bethuel to get a wife for Isaac, meat was set before him, but he said (Gen. 24:33), *I will not eat before I have said my message*; so likewise we must first see God's glory procured in our affairs, and in the second place, if commodity or praise redound to us, we must afterward take it.

iv. The last point is that when Christ had drunk the vinegar, He said, *It is finished*. Which words may have a double sense: one, that such things as were figured by the sacrifices of the Old Testament are accomplished; the

other, that now upon the cross He had finished the satisfaction to the justice of His Father for man's sin. And this of the twain I rather think to be His meaning. If it be said that the burial and resurrection and ascension of Christ etc., which are necessary to man's redemption, were not yet begun, the answer is that the works of Christ's priesthood which follow His death, serve not to make any satisfaction to God's justice for sin, but only to confirm or apply it, after it is made and accomplished on the cross. And if this be so, that Christ in His own Person accomplished the work of redemption, and made a full and perfect satisfaction for us, as these words import, *It is finished*, then human satisfactions to God's justice for sin are altogether superfluous.

(e) The fifth event that fell out when Christ was upon the cross was that He cried with a loud voice, and said (Luke 23:46), *Father, into thy hand I lay down my spirit*, that is, I commend my soul, as being the most precious thing which I have in this world, into thy custody, who art a most faithful keeper thereof. These words are taken by Christ out of the psalms; for when David was in danger of his life by reason of Saul, and had no friends to trust, he makes choice of God to be his keeper, and said (Psa. 31:5), *Into thy hands, O Lord, do I commit my spirit*. Now our Saviour Christ being in the like distress, both by reason of the Jews, who every way sought His final destruction and confusion, and especially because He felt the full wrath of God seizing upon Him, doth make choice of David's words and apply them to Himself in His distress. And by His example we are taught not only to read the general history of the Bible, but also to observe the things commanded and forbidden, and to apply the same unto ourselves and to our particular estates and dealings whatsoever. Thus the prophet David saith (Psa. 40:7), *In the roll of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, O my God*. How can this be? For no part of Scripture penned before the days of David sayeth thus of him. True indeed, but as I take it, David's meaning is that he read the book of the law and found general precepts and commandments given to kings and princes, that they should keep all the

ordinances and commandments of God; which he being a king applies particularly to his own person, and thereupon saith, *In the volume of the book it is written of me* etc. And this duty is well practised by the people of God at this day; for the psalms of David were penned according to the estate of the church in his time; and in these days the church of God doth sing the same with the same spirit that David did, and doth apply their several estates and conditions.

Now in that Christ commends His soul into the hands of the Father, He doth it to testify that He died not by constraint, but willingly; and by His own practice He doth teach us to do the like, namely, to give up our own souls into the hands of God; and because this duty is of some difficulty, we must observe three motives or preparatives which may induce us to the better doing of it:

i. The first is to consider that God the Father of Christ is the Creator of our souls, and therefore He is called the *Father of spirits* (Heb. 12:9). And if He be a Creator of them, then is He also a faithful preserver of them. For sure it is that God will preserve His own workmanship. Who is or can be so careful for the ornament and preservation of any work as the craftsmaster? And shall not God be more careful than man? Wherefore St Peter exhorteth us (1 Pet. 4:19), to *commit our souls unto God, as unto a faithful Creator*.

ii. The second motive is this: we must look to be resolved in our consciences that God the Father of Christ is our Father; every man for himself must labour to have the assurance of the pardon of his own sins, and that the corruption of his soul be washed away in the blood of Christ, that he may say, I am justified, sanctified and adopted by Christ. And when any man can say thus, he shall be most desirous and willing to commit his soul into the hands of God. This was the reason which moved Christ to lay down His soul into the hands of God, because He is His Father.

iii. The third motive or preparative, is a continual experience and observation of God's love and favour toward us, in keeping and preserving him; as appears by David's example (Psa. 31:5), *Into thy hands* (saith he) *I commend my soul; for thou hast redeemed me, O thou God of truth*.

The time when we are specially to commend ourselves into the hands of God, is first of all the time of any affliction or danger. This was the time when David commended his soul into the hands of God in the psalm before named. We know that in any common danger or peril, as the sacking of a city, or burning of an house, if a man have any precious jewel therein, he will first fetch that out and make choice of a faithful friend, to whose custody he will commit the same; even so, in common perils and dangers we must always remember to commit our souls as a most precious jewel into the hands of God, who is a faithful Creator. Another more special and necessary time of practising this duty, is the hour of death, as here Christ doth, and Stephen, who when the Jews stoned him to death, called on God and said (Acts 7:59), *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. And as this duty is very requisite and necessary at all times, so most especially in the hour of death; because the danger is great by reason that Satan will then chiefly assault us, and the guilt of sin will especially then wound the conscience. Lastly, at all times we must commit our souls into God's hands; for though we be not always in affliction, yet we are always in great danger; as when a man lieth down to rest, he knoweth not whether he shall rise again or no; and when he ariseth, he knoweth not whether he shall lie down again; yea, at this very hour we know not what will befall the next.

And great are the comforts which arise by the practice of this duty. When David was in great danger of his life, and his own people would have stoned him because their hearts were vexed for their sons and daughters which the Amalekites had taken, it is said (1 Sam. 30:6), He *comforted himself in the Lord his God*. And the practice of Paul in this case is most excellent (2 Tim. 1:12), *For the which cause* (saith he) *I suffer these things,*

but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. This worthy servant of God had committed his life and soul into God's hand; and therefore he saith, *In all my sufferings I am not ashamed*; where we see that if a man have grace in his lifetime to commit his soul into God's hands, it will make him bold even at the point of death. And this must be a motive to cause every man daily and hourly to lay down his soul into the hands of God, although by the course of nature he may live twenty or forty years longer. But howsoever this duty be both necessary and comfortable, yet few there be that practise the same. Men that have children are very careful and diligent to bring them up under some man's tuition; and if they have cattle, sheep or oxen, they provide keepers to tend them; but in the mean season for their own souls they have no care; they may sink or swim or do what they will. This shews the wonderful blindness or rather madness of men in the world, that have more care for their cattle than for their own souls; but as Christ hath taught us by His example, so let every one of us in the fear of God, learn to commit our souls into the hand of God.

Again, in that Christ lays down His own soul, and withal the souls of all the faithful into the hands of the Father, we further learn four things:

i. The first, that the soul of man doth not vanish away as the souls of beasts and other creatures; there is great difference between them; for when the beast dieth, his soul dieth also; but the soul of man is immortal. The consideration whereof must move every man above all things in this world to be careful for his soul; if it were to vanish away at the day of death as the souls of beasts do, the neglect thereof were no great matter; but seeing it must live for ever either in eternal joy, or else in endless pain and torments, it stands us upon every man for himself, so to provide for his soul in this life that at the day of death when it shall depart from his body, it may live in eternal joy and happiness.

ii. The second, that there is an especial and particular providence of God, because the particular soul of Christ is committed into the hands of the Father, and so answerably the souls of every one of the faithful are.

iii. The third, that every one which believes himself to be a member of Christ, must be willing to die when God shall call him thereunto. For when we die in Christ, the body is but laid asleep and the soul is received into the hands of a most loving God and merciful Father, as the soul of Christ was.

iv. Lastly, whereas Christ surrendering His soul into His Father's hands, calls it a spirit, we note that the soul of man is a spirit, that is, a spiritual, invisible, simple essence without composition, created as the angels of God are. The question whether the soul of a child come from the soul of the parents, as the body doth come from their bodies, may easily be resolved. For the soul of man being a spirit, cannot beget another spirit; as the angels being spiritual do not beget angels; for one spirit begetteth not another. Nay, which is more, one simple element begetteth not another, as the water begetteth not water, nor air begetteth air; and therefore much less can one soul beget another. Again, if the soul of the child come from the souls of the parents, then there is a propagation of the whole soul of the parent or of some part thereof. If it be said that the whole soul of the parents is propagated, then the parents should want their own souls and could not live. If it be said that a part of the parent's soul is propagated; *I answer* that the soul being a spirit or a simple substance, cannot be parted; and therefore it is the safest to conclude that the body indeed is of the body of the parents, and that the soul of man while the body is in making, is created of nothing; and for this very cause God is called the *Father of spirits* (Heb. 12:9).

(3) Thus much of the crucifying of Christ; now followeth His death. For having laid down His soul into the hands of the Father, the Holy Ghost saith (Luke 23:46), *He gave up the ghost*, to give us to understand that His death was no fantastical, but a real death, in that His body and soul were severed

as truly as when any one of us die. In treating of Christ's death we must consider many points:

(i) The first, that it was needful that He should die, and that for two causes:

(a) First, to satisfy God's justice; for sin is so odious a thing in God's sight that He will punish it with an extreme punishment; therefore Christ standing in our room must not only suffer the miseries of this life, but also die on the cross, that the very extremity of punishment which we should have born, might be laid on Him; and so we in Christ might fully satisfy God's justice; for (Rom. 6:23), *The wages of sin is death*.

(b) Secondly, Christ died that He might fulfil the truth of God's Word which had said (Gen. 2:17) that man for eating the forbidden fruit should *die the death*.

(ii) The properties of Christ's death are two: the first, that it was a voluntary and willing death; the second, that it was a cursed death.

(a) For the first, whereas I say Christ's death was voluntary, I mean that Christ died willingly and of His own free accord gave up Himself to suffer upon the cross. Howsoever the Jews did arraign and condemn and crucify Him, yet if He had not willed His own death, and of His free accord given Himself to die; not the Jews, nor all the whole world could ever have taken away His life from Him. He died not by constraint or compulsion, but most willingly; and therefore He saith (John 10:18), *No man taketh my life from me, but I* (saith He) *lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and have power to take it up again*. And our Saviour Christ gave evident tokens hereof in His death, for (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46) *then Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost*. Ordinarily, men that die on the cross, languish away little by little, and before they come to yield up their lives they lose their speech, and only rattle and make a noise in the throat; but Christ at that very instant when He was to give up the ghost, cried with a

loud voice; which sheweth plainly that he in His death was more than a conqueror over death. And therefore to give all men a token of His power, and to shew that He died voluntarily, it pleased Him to cry with a loud voice. And this made the centurion to say that He was the Son of God (Mark 15:39). Again, Christ died not as other men do; because they first give up the ghost, and then lay their heads aside; but He in token that His death was voluntary (John 19:30), first lays His head aside after the manner of a dead man; and then afterward gives up the ghost. Lastly, Christ died sooner than men are wont to do upon the cross, and this was the cause that made Pilate wonder that He was so soon dead (Mark 15:44). Now this came to pass, not because He was loath to suffer the extremity of death; but because He would make it manifest to all men that He had the power to die or not to die. And indeed this is our comfort, that Christ died not only for us by constraint, but willingly of His own accord.

(b) And as Christ's death was voluntary, so was it an accursed death, and therefore it is called the *death of the cross* (Phil. 2:8). And it containeth the first and the second death; the first is the separation of the body from the soul; the second is the separation of body and soul from God; and both were in Christ; for beside the bodily death, He did in soul apprehend the wrath of God due to man's sin; and that made Him cry (Matt. 27:46), *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*?

(iii) And here we must not omit a necessary point, namely, how far forth Christ suffered death? *Answer*: Some think that He suffered only a bodily death, and such pains as follow the dissolution of nature; but they no doubt come too short; for why should Christ have feared death so greatly, if it had been nothing but the dissolution of nature? Some again think that He died, not only the first, but also the second death; but it may be they go too far; for if to die the first death be to suffer a total separation of body and soul, then also to die the second death is wholly and every way to be severed from all favour of God, and at the least for a time to be oppressed of the

same death as the damned are. Now this never befell Christ, no not in the midst of His sufferings, considering that even then He was able to call God His God. Therefore the safest is to follow the mean, namely that Christ died the first death, in that His body and soul were really and wholly severed, yet without suffering any corruption in His body, which is the effect and fruit of the same; and that withal He further suffered the extreme horrors and pangs of the second death, not dying the same death, nor being forsaken of God more than in His own apprehension or feeling. For in the very midst of His sufferings the Father was well pleased with Him. And this which I say doth not any whit lessen the sufficiency of the merit of Christ; for whereas He suffered truly the very wrath of God, and the very torments of the damned in His soul, it is as much as if all the men in the world had died the second death and had been wholly cut off from God for ever and ever. And no doubt Christ died the first death, only suffering the pangs of the second; that the first death might be an entrance not to the second death, which is eternal damnation, but a passage to life eternal.

(iv) The benefits and comforts which arise by the death of Christ are especially four:

(a) The first is the change of our natural death, I say not the taking of it away, for we must all die; but whereas by nature death is a curse of God upon man for eating the forbidden fruit, by the death of Christ it is changed from a curse into a blessing, and is made as it were a middle way and entrance to convey men out of this world into the kingdom of glory in heaven; and therefore it is said (Heb. 2:15), *Christ by His death hath delivered them from the fear of death, which all the days of their life were subject to bondage*. A man that is to encounter with a scorpion, if he knows that it hath a sting, he may be dismayed; but being assured that the sting is taken away, he need not fear to encounter therewith. Now death in its own nature considered, is this scorpion armed with a sting; but Christ our Saviour by His death hath pulled out the sting of our death, and on the cross

triumphantly saith (1 Cor. 15:55), *O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory*? And therefore even then when men feel the pangs of death approach, we should not fear but conceive hope, considering that our death is altered and changed by the virtue of the death of Christ.

(b) Secondly, the death of Christ hath quite taken away the second death from those who are in Christ; as Paul saith (Rom. 8:1), *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, which walk not after the flesh but after the spirit*.

(c) Thirdly, the death of Christ is a means to ratify His last will and testament (Heb. 9:15-17). *For this cause was Christ the Mediator of the New Testament, that through death (which was for the redemption of the transgressions which were in the former testament) they which were called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must be the death of him that made the testament; for the testament is confirmed when men are dead; for it is yet of no force so long as he is alive that made it*. And therefore the death of Christ doth make His last will and testament, which is the Covenant of grace, authentical unto us.

(d) Fourthly, the death of Christ doth serve to abolish the original corruption of our sinful hearts. As a strong corrosive laid to a sore eats out all the rotten and dead flesh; even so, Christ's death being applied to the heart of a penitent sinner by faith, weakens and consumes the sin that cleaves so fast unto our natures and dwells within us. Some will say, how can Christ's death which now is not because it is long ago past and ended, kill sin in us now? *Answer*: Indeed if we regard the act of Christ's death, it is past, but the virtue and power thereof endureth for ever. And the power of Christ's death is nothing else but the power of His Godhead, which enabled Him in His death to overcome hell, the grave, death and condemnation, and to disburden Himself of our sins. Now when we have grace to deny ourselves and to put our trust in Christ, and by faith are joined to Him, then as Christ

Himself by the power of His Godhead overcame death, hell and damnation in Himself; so shall we by the same power of His Godhead kill and crucify sin and corruption in ourselves. Therefore seeing we reap such benefit by the death of Christ, if we will shew ourselves to be Christians, let us rejoice in the death of Christ; and if the question be, What is the chiefest thing wherein we rejoice in this world? We may answer, The very cross of Christ, yea, the very least drop of His blood.

The duties to be learned by the death of Christ are two:

(i) The first concerns all ignorant and impenitent sinners. Such men whatsoever they be, by the death of Christ upon the cross, must be moved to turn from their sins; and if the consideration hereof will not move them, nothing in the world will. By nature every man is a vassal of sin and a bondslave of Satan; the devil reigns and rules in all men by nature, and we ourselves can do nothing but serve and obey him. Nay, which is more, we live under the fearful curse of God for the least sin. Well now, see the love of the Son of God, that gave Himself willingly to death upon the cross for thee, that he might free thee from this most fearful bondage. Wherefore let all those that live in sin and ignorance reason thus with themselves: Hath Christ the Son of God done this for us, and shall we yet live in our sins? Hath He set open as it were the very gates of hell, and shall we yet lie weltering in our damnable ways and in the shadow of death? In the fear of God let the death of Christ be a means to turn us to Christ; if it cannot move us, let us be resolved that our case is dangerous. To go further in this point, every one of us is by nature a sick man, wounded at the very heart by Satan; though we feel it not, yet we are deadly sick; and behold, Christ is the good Physician of the soul and none in heaven or earth, neither saint, angel nor man, can heal this our spiritual wound, but He alone; who though He were equal with the Father, yet He came down from His bosom and became man, and lived here many years in misery and contempt; and when no herb nor plaister could cure this our deadly wound or desperate sickness, He was

content to make a plaister with His own blood; the pain He took in making it caused Him to sweat water and blood; nay the making of it cost Him His life, in that He was content by His own death to free us from death; which if it be true, as it is most true, then woeful and wretched is our case if we will still live in sin, and will not use the means to lay this plaister to our hearts. And after this plaister is applied to the soul, we should do as a man that hath been grievously sick, who when he is on the mending hand, gets strength little by little. And so should we become new creatures, going on from grace to grace, and shew the same by living godly, righteously and soberly, that the world may see that we are cured of our spiritual disease. O happy, yea thrice happy are they that have grace from God to do this.

(ii) The second duty concerns them which are repentant sinners. Hath Christ given Himself for thee, and is thy conscience settled in this? Then thou must answerably bear this in mind, that if thy life would serve for the glory of God and the good of the church, thou wouldest then give it most willingly if thou be called thereto. Secondly, if Christ for thy good hath given His life, then thou must in like manner be content to die for thy brethren in Christ if need be. *He* (saith St John (1 John 3:16)) *laid down His life for us, therefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*. Thirdly, if Christ was content to shed His own heart-blood not for Himself, but for the sins of every one of us, then we must be thus affected: that rather than by sinning we would willingly offend God, we should be content to have our own blood shed; yea, if these two things were put to our choice, either to do that which might displease God, or else to suffer death, we must rather die than do the same. Of this mind have been all the martyrs of God, who rather than they would yield to idolatry, were content to suffer most bitter torments and cruel death. Yea, every good Christian is so affected that he had rather choose to die than to live, not moved by impatience in respect of the miseries of this life; but because he would cease to offend so loving a Father. To sin is meat and drink to the world, but to a touched and repentant

heart, there is no torment so grievous as this is, to sin against God, if once he be persuaded that Christ died for him.

(4) Thus much for Christ's death. Now follow those things which befell Christ when he was newly dead; and they are two especially:

(i) The first, that His legs were not broken as the legs of the two thieves were. Of the first, Scripture renders a reason, namely, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith (John 19:36; Exod. 12:46), *Not a bone of him shall be broken*; which words were spoken by Moses of the paschal lamb, and are here applied to Christ as being typically figured thereby. And hence we observe these two things:

(a) First that Christ is the true paschal lamb, as St Paul saith (1 Cor. 5:7), *Christ our Passover is sacrificed*; and St John saith (John 1:29), *Behold the Lamb of God*, distinguishing Him thereby from the typical lamb. In this, that Christ crucified is the true paschal lamb, the child of God hath wonderful matter of comfort. The Israelites did eat the Passover in Egypt, and sprinkled the blood of the lamb on the posts of their doors that when the angel of God came to destroy the firstborn of man and beast, and saw the blood upon their houses, he might pass over them that the plague should not be upon them to destruction. So likewise if thou dost feed on the Lamb of God, and by a lively faith sprinkle the door of thine heart with His blood, the judgment of God in this life and the terrible curse of death, with the fearful sentence of condemnation at the day of judgment, and all punishments due unto thy sins, shall pass over thee and not so much as touch thee.

(b) And whereas the legs of our Saviour Christ were not broken by the soldiers, who sought by all means possible to work against Him all the mischief they could; we may note that the enemies of Christ and His church, let them intend to shew never so much malice against Him, they cannot go beyond that liberty which God giveth them, they can do no more

for their lives than that which God willeth. The Medes and Persians are called the *Lord's sanctified ones* (Isa. 13:3); Cyrus is called the *man of God's counsel* (Isa. 46:11), because whatsoever they intended against the people of God, yet in all their proceedings they did nothing but that which God had determined before to be done. And when Sennacherib came against the Jews as a wild beast out of his den (Isa. 37:29), the Lord telleth Hezekiah concerning Assyria, that *He will put His hook in his nostrils, and His bridle in his lips, and bring him back again the same way that he came*; that is, He will so rule him that he shall not do the least hurt unto the Jews, more than God will. This is a matter of great comfort to God's church oppressed with manifold enemies, papists, Jews, Turks and all infidels maliciously bent against it, for Christ's sake. For though they intend and practise mischief, yet more than God's will and counsel is, they cannot do; because He hath His ring in their nostrils and His bridle in their lips to rule them as He listeth.

(ii) The second thing which fell out immediately upon the death of Christ, is that the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and issued water and blood. The use which ariseth of this point is twofold:

(a) First it seems to prove that Christ died truly and not in shew or a feigned death; for there is about the heart a film, or skin like unto a purse, wherein is contained clear water to cool the heat of the heart; and therefore when water and blood issued out after piercing of the side, it is very likely that that very skin was pierced; for else in reason we cannot conjecture whence this water should come. St John an eyewitness of this thing, being about to prove that Jesus the son of Mary was the true Messiah, bringeth in six witnesses (1 John 5:7,8): three in heaven, *the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost*; and three in earth, *the water, the Spirit and the blood*; where no doubt he alludeth to the water and blood that issued out of the side of Christ; by *Spirit*, we may understand the efficacy and operation of God's Spirit, making men to bring forth the fruits of the same, as love, peace, joy

etc., And the second witness, namely *water*, hath relation to the water that came forth of Christ's side, which signifieth the inward washing away of sin and the purging of the heart by Christ's blood; which also is and was signified by the outward washing of the body with water and baptism. The third witness he calls *blood*, alluding to the blood that issued out of Christ's side; whereby is signified the expiation or satisfaction made to God's justice for man's sin. The same use had the ceremonial sprinkling in the Old Testament, typically signifying the sprinkling of Christ's blood. Now these three witnesses are not to be sought for in heaven, but every Christian man must search for them in his own heart and conscience, and there shall he find them in some measure.

(b) And this water and blood flowing out of the side of Christ being now dead, signifieth that He is our justification and sanctification, even after His death; and that out of His death springs our lives and therefore as Eve was made of a rib taken out of the side of Adam; so springs the church out of the blood that flows out of the side of the second Adam.

5. Having thus entreated of Christ's execution, let us now come to the last point, namely the excellency of Christ's passion, consisting in these two points: (1) a sacrifice; (2) a triumph.

(1) For the first, when Christ died He offered a propitiatory and real sacrifice to His Father; and herein His death and passion differeth from the sufferings and deaths of all men whatsoever. In this sacrifice, we must consider four things:

(i) Who was the priest.

(ii) What was the sacrifice.

(iii) What was the altar.

(iv) The time wherein this sacrifice was offered.

(i) The priest was Christ Himself, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews proves at large from the third chapter to the ninth, and of Him we are to consider these four points:

(a) The first, What is the office of Christ's priesthood? *Answer*: The office of Christ's priesthood stands in three things:

i. To teach doctrine, and therefore He is called (Heb. 3:1) *the high priest of our profession*, that is, of the gospel which we profess, because He is the author and doctor of the same.

ii. To offer up Himself unto His Father in the behalf of man, for the appeasing of His wrath for sin.

iii. To make request or intercession to God the Father that He would accept the sacrifice which He offered on the cross for us.

(b) The second point is, According to which nature He was priest; whether in His manhood or His Godhead, or both together? *Answer*: The office of His priesthood is performed by Him according to both His natures; and therefore He is a priest not as the papists would have Him, according to His manhood only, but as He is both God and man; for as He is a Mediator, so is He a priest; but Christ is a Mediator according to both natures; each nature doing that which is peculiar to it, and conferring something to the work of redemption; and therefore He is a priest as He is both God and man.

(c) The third point is, After what order is He a priest? *Answer*: The Scripture mentioneth two orders of priests: the order of Levi and the order of Melchizedek.

i. Christ was not a priest after the order of Aaron; and yet notwithstanding in that priesthood were many notable rites whereby the priesthood of our

Saviour Christ was resembled, and we may note five especially:

a. First, in the anointing of the high priest (Exod. 29:7; Psa. 133:2); as of Aaron and his sons after him, oil was poured on his head, and it came down to the very edge of his garments, whereby was signified that Christ the true high priest was anointed (Psa. 45:7) *with the oil of gladness above his fellows*; that is, that His manhood was filled with the gifts and graces of God, both in measure, number and degree above all men and angels.

b. Secondly, the sumptuous and gorgeous apparel which the high priest put on when he came into the sanctuary (Exod. 28:2) was a sign of the rich and glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, which is the purity and integrity of His human nature and of His life.

c. Thirdly, the special parts of the high priest's attire were first the ephod (Exod 28:12), the two shoulders whereof had two onyx stones, whereon were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; six names on the one stone and six on the other, as stones of remembrance of the children of Israel to Godward. Secondly, the breastplate of judgment (Exod. 28:22-25) like the work of the ephod, wherein were set twelve stones according to the names of the children of Israel, graven as signets every one after his name. Now by these two ornaments were figured two things in Christ: by the first that He carried all the elect on His shoulders, and supports them by His Spirit so long as they are in the world, against the world, the flesh and the devil. By the second, that Christ our high priest being now in His sanctuary in heaven, hath in memory all the elect, and their very names are written as it were in tables of gold before His face; and He hath an especial love unto them and care over them. Upon this ground the church in the Canticles (Song 8:6) prays on this manner: *Set me a seal on thy heart and as a sign upon thine arm*. And indeed this is a matter of comfort unto us all, that Christ hath our several names written in precious stones before His face;

though He be now in heaven and we on earth; and that the particular estate of everyone of us is both known and regarded of Him.

d. Again, God gave to Moses the Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28:30), which was put on the breastplate of the high priest when he was to ask counsel from God of things unknown, before the mercy seat, whence God gave answer. What the Urim and Thummim was, it is not known; and it is like it was not made by any art of man, but given by God; and how it was used we cannot tell; but yet the signification of the words affordeth matter of meditation. *Urim* signifieth *lights*, and *Thummim* signifieth *perfections*. And by this a further matter was prefigured in Christ, who hath the perfect Urim and Thummim in His breast; first, because in Him *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col. 2:3); secondly, because He reveals to His church out of His Word such things as none can know but the children of God; as David saith (Psa. 25:14), *The secret of the Lord is revealed to them that fear Him*. And for this cause the Spirit of Christ is called (Eph. 1:17) *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, and (1 Cor. 2:12) *the Spirit of God whereby we know the things that are given unto us of God*; as namely, our election, vocation, justification and sanctification in this life, and our eternal glorification after this life; yea to every member of Christ within His church He gives a special spirit of revelation out of the Word whereby he may know that God the Father is his Father; the Son the Redeemer, his Redeemer; and the Holy Ghost his sanctifier and comforter.

e. Lastly, the high priest had a plate on his forehead (Exod. 38:36), and thereon was engraven *the holiness of Jehovah*; this signified the holiness of Christ; for as He is God, He is holiness itself; and as He is man, He is most holy, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost for this end: that He might cover our sins and unrighteousness with His righteousness and holy obedience.

ii. The second order of priesthood is the order of Melchizedek of which order Christ was (Heb. 7), as David saith (Psa. 110:4), *Thou art a priest for*

ever after the order of Melchizedek; and that in two special respects:

a. Melchizedek was both a priest and a king; so was Christ.

b. Melchizedek had neither father nor mother, because his history is set down with mention of neither; so likewise Christ as He is God had no mother; and as He is man He had no father.

The papists avouch Christ to be a priest of this order in a new respect, in that Melchizedek offered bread and wine when Abraham came from the slaughter of the kings (Gen. 14:18); so (say they) Christ in His last supper did offer His own body and blood under the forms of bread and wine. But this is a frivolous device of theirs; for if we read Hebrews chapter 7, where this point is handled, there is no comparison at all made of their two sacrifices; but the resemblances before named are set down, in which person is compared with person. Again, it is not said in Genesis that Melchizedek offered sacrifice; but that he brought forth bread and wine, and made a feast to Abraham and his company. And if Christ should be of the order of Melchizedek in regard of the offering of bread and wine, yet would this make much against the papists. For Melchizedek brought forth true bread and true wine; but in the sacrifice of the mass there is no true bread nor true wine; but (as they say) the real body and blood of Christ under the form of bread and wine.

(d) The fourth point is, whether there be any more real priests of the New Testament beside Christ or no? *Answer*: In the Old Testament there were many priests one following another in continual succession, but of the New Testament there is only one real priest, Christ Jesus God and man, and no more; as the author of the Hebrews saith (Heb. 7:24*), because he endureth for ever, He hath an everlasting priesthood*; and the word translated *everlasting* signifieth such a priesthood which cannot pass from Him to any other, as the priesthood of Aaron did. And therefore the priesthood of Christ is so tied to His own Person that none can have the

same but He; neither man, nor angel, nor any other creature, no not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost. But the factors of the church of Rome will say that Christ may have men to be His deputies in His stead to offer sacrifice. *Answer*: We must consider Christ two ways: i. as He is God; ii. As He is Mediator.

i. As He is God with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, He hath kings and magistrates to be His deputies on earth; and therefore they are called (Psa. 82) *Elohim*, that is, *gods*.

ii. But as He is Mediator, and so consequently a priest and a king, He hath neither deputy nor vicegerent; neither king to rule in His stead over His church, nor priests to offer sacrifice for Him; nay He hath no prophet to be His deputy, as He is the Doctor of the church. And therefore He saith to His disciples (Matt. 23:10), *For one is your Doctor*. Indeed He hath His ministers to teach men His will; but a deputy to offer sacrifice in His stead He hath not. And therefore we may with good conscience abhor the massing priesthood of the church of Rome, as a thing fetched from the bottom of hell; and their massing priests as instruments of Satan; holding this for a very truth: that we have but one only priest even Christ Himself, God and man. Indeed all Christians are priests to offer up spiritual sacrifice; but it is the property of Christ alone to offer an outward and real sacrifice unto God now in the New Testament.

(ii) Thus much of the first point, who is the priest. The second followeth: What is the sacrifice? *Answer*: The sacrifice is Christ, as He is man, or the manhood of Christ crucified. As the priest is both God and man; so the sacrifice is man, not God. So it is said (Heb. 10:10), *We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*. Touching this sacrifice, sundry questions are to be scanned:

(a) The first, What kind of sacrifice it was? *Answer*: In the Old Testament there were two kinds of sacrifices, one propitiatory which served to satisfy

for sin; the other eucharistical for praise and thanksgiving. Now the sacrifice of Christ was a sacrifice propitiatory especially prefigured by the typical sacrifice called the whole burnt offering (Gen. 8:20; Job 1:5); for it was all consumed to ashes upon the altar and turned into smoke, so the fire of God's wrath did cease upon Christ upon the cross and did consume Him as it were to nothing, to make us something. When Noah offered an whole burnt offering after the flood, it is said (Gen. 8:21), *God smelled a savour of rest*; not because He was delighted with the smell of the sacrifice, but because He approved his faith in Christ. And hereby was figured that Christ upon the cross was an offering and (Eph. 5:2) *a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour unto God*; because God was well pleased therewith. Now whereas Christ was content wholly to offer up Himself to appease the wrath of His Father for us; it must teach us to give our bodies and souls as holy, living and acceptable sacrifices, wholly dedicating them to the service of God.

(b) The second question is, How oft Christ offered Himself? *Answer*: Once only and no more. This must be held as a principle of divinity (Heb. 10:14), *Which once offering hath He consecrated for ever them that are sanctified*; and again (Heb. 8:28), *Christ was once offered to take away the sins of many*. And it serveth to overthrow the abominable sacrifice of the mass, in which the true body and blood of Christ is offered under the forms of bread and wine, really and substantially (as they say) for the remission of the sins of the quick and the dead, and that continually; but if this unbloody sacrifice of Christ be good, then it is either the continuing of that which was begun on the cross by Christ Himself, or the iteration of it by the mass priest. Now let papists choose whether of these two they will, if they say it is the continuing of the sacrifice of Christ, then they speak outrageous blasphemy; for it is in effect to say that Christ's sacrifice was not perfect but only begun on the cross, and must be accompanied by the mass priest to the end of the world. If they affirm the second, that it is an iteration of Christ's sacrifice, then also they speak blasphemy; for hereby they make it also an imperfect sacrifice because it is repeated and iterated; for upon this ground

doth the author to the Hebrews prove that the sacrifices of the Old Testament were imperfect because they were daily offered. And whereas they say that there be two kinds of sacrifices, one bloody once only offered upon the cross; the other unbloody which is daily offered; I answer that this distinction hath no ground out of God's Word; neither was it known to the Holy Ghost who saith (Heb. 10:18) that without blood *there is no remission of sins*.

(c) The third question is, What is the fruit of this sacrifice? *Answer*: The whole effect thereof is contained in these four things:

i. The oblation of Christ purgeth the believer from all his sins, whether they be original or actual; so it is said (1 John 1:7), *If we walk in the light we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son purgeth us from all sin*; whether they be sins of omission in regard of our duties; or of commission in doing evil.

ii. The oblation serveth for the justifying of a sinner before God, as Paul saith (Rom. 5:9,10), we are *justified by His blood*, and are *reconciled to God by His death*. This being remembered: that in the passion of Christ we include His legal obedience, whereby He fulfilled the law for us.

iii. The oblation of Christ serves to purge men's consciences from dead works (Heb. 9:14), *How much more then shall the blood of Christ, which through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?*

iv. The oblation of Christ procures us liberty to enter into heaven (Heb. 10:19,20), *By the blood of Christ Jesus we may behold to enter into the holy place by the new and living way which He hath prepared us through the veil, that is, His flesh*. By our sins there is a partition wall made between God and us; but Christ by offering Himself upon the cross, hath beaten down this wall, opened heaven and as it were, trained the way with His own

blood, whereby we may enter into the kingdom of God, and without the which we cannot enter in at all.

(d) The last question is, How this sacrifice may be applied to us? *Answer*: The means of applying this sacrifice are two:

i. The hand of God which offereth;

ii. The hand of the believer that receiveth the sacrifice offered.

i. The hand of God whereby He offereth unto us His benefit, is the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper; and wheresoever these His holy ordinances are rightly administered and put in practice, there the Lord puts forth His hand unto us, and offereth most freely the virtue and benefit of the death of Christ.

ii. And then in the next place cometh the hand of the believer which is faith in the heart; which, when God offereth, doth apprehend and receive the thing offered, and makes it ours.

(iii) The third thing to be spoken of is, the altar whereon Christ offereth Himself. The altar was not the cross, but rather the Godhead of Christ. He was both the priest, the sacrifice and the altar. The sacrifice as He is man; the priest as He is both God and man; the altar as He is God. The property of an altar is to sanctify the sacrifice; as Christ saith (Matt. 23:17), *Ye fools and blind, whether is greater, the offering or that altar that sanctifieth the offering*? Now Christ as He is God, sanctifieth Himself as He was man; and therefore (saith He (John 17:19)), *For their sakes sanctifieth I myself*, by doing two things: (a) By setting apart the manhood to be a sacrifice unto His Father for our sins. (b) By giving to this sacrifice merit or efficacy to deserve at God's hands remission of our sins. The manhood of Christ without the Godhead hath no virtue nor efficacy in itself to be a meritorious

sacrifice; and therefore the dignity and excellency which it hath is derived thence. As for the chalky and stony altars of the church of Rome, they are nothing else but the toys of man's brain. Christ Himself is the only real altar of the New Testament. And instead of altars which were under the law, we have now the Lord's table whereon we celebrate the sacrament of His body and blood, to shew forth His death till He come.

(iv) The fourth point, is concerning the time of Christ's oblation, which He Himself calleth (Luke 4:19; Lev. 25:10) the *acceptable year of the Lord*; alluding unto another year under the law called the year of Jubilee, which was every fifty years among the Jews, in which at the sound of a trumpet all that had set or sold their possessions received them again. All that were bondmen were then set at liberty. This Jubilee was but a figure of that perfect deliverance which was to be obtained by Christ's passion, which was not temporary deliverance for every fifty years, but an eternal freedom from the bondage of sin, hell, death and condemnation. And the preaching of the Word is the trumpet sounded which proclaimeth unto us freedom from the kingdom of darkness, and invites us to come and dwell in perfect peace with Christ Himself. Well, if the year of perpetual Jubilee be now come, in what a wretched estate are all our loose and blind people that esteem nothing of that liberty which is offered to them, but choose rather to live in their sins, and in bondage under Satan and condemnation, than to be at freedom in Christ?

Now follow the uses which are to be made of the sacrifice of Christ. The prophet Haggai saith (Hag. 2:3) that the second temple built by Zerubabbel was nothing in beauty unto the first which was built by Solomon; and the reason is plain, for (as the Jews write) it wanted five things which the first temple had:

(i) The appearing of the presence of God at the mercy seat between the two cherubim.

(ii) The Urim and Thummim on the breastplate of the high priest.

(iii) The inspiration of the Holy Ghost upon extraordinary prophets.

(iv) The ark of the covenant; for that was lost in the captivity.

(v) Fire from heaven to burn the sacrifices.

Yet for all this, the prophet afterward saith (Hag. 2:9), *The glory of the last house shall be greater than the first*. Now it may be demanded how both these sayings can stand together. *Answer*: We are to know that the second temple was standing in the time when Christ was crucified for our sins; and it was the sacrifice of Christ which gave glory and dignity to the second temple, though otherwise for building and outward ornament it was far inferior to the first. And by this we are taught:

(i) Firstly, that if we would bring glory unto our own selves, unto our houses and kindred, either before God or before men, we must labour to be partakers of the sacrifice of Christ and the sprinkling of His blood to purge our hearts. This is the thing that brings renown both to place and person, how base soever we be in the eyes of the world.

(ii) Secondly, all oblations and meat offerings were sprinkled with salt, and every sacrifice of propitiation which was to be burned to ashes was first salted (Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24); and hereby two things were signified: The first, that every one of us ourselves are loathsome or vile in the sight of God (Ezek. 16:4); like unto stinking carrion or raw flesh kept long unpowdered. A dead and rotten carcass is loathsome to us; but we ourselves are a thousand times more loathsome unto God. The second, that we are as it were salted and made savoury and acceptable to God by the virtue of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Our duty then is to labour that we may feel in ourselves the biting sharpness of the oblation of Christ, to waste and consume the superfluities of sin and the corruptions of our nature. And we

must with all endeavour that the whole course of our lives and our speech itself be gracious and powdered with salt, lest God at length spue us out of His mouth. To this end hath God appointed His ministers to be the salt of the earth (Col. 4:6; Matt. 5:13), that by their ministry they might apply the death of Christ, and season the people. And it hath pleased God to besprinkle this land with more plenty of this salt than hath been heretofore. But, alas, small is the number of them that give any relish of their good seasoning. The more lamentable is their case. For as flesh that cannot be seasoned with salt, putrifies; so men that cannot be sweetened and changed by the sacrifice of Christ, do rot and perish in their sins. The waters that issued from under the threshold of the sanctuary, when they came into the Dead Sea, the waters thereof were wholesome, but miry places and marishes which could not be seasoned, were made salt pits. Now these waters are the preaching of the gospel of Christ, which flowing through all parts of this isle; if it do not season and change our nation, it shall make it as places of nettles and salt pits, and at length be an occasion of the eternal curse of God.

(iii) Thirdly, Christ's priesthood serves to make every one of us also to be priests. And being priests, we must likewise have our sacrifice and our altar; our sacrifice is the clean offering which is the lifting up of pure hands to God without wrath or doubting in our prayers (Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8); also our bodies and souls, our hearts and affections, the works of our lives, and the works of our callings; all which must be dedicated to the service of God for His glory and the good of His church. The altar whereon we must offer our sacrifice, is Christ our Redeemer, both God and man, because by virtue of His death, as with sweet odours, He perfumes all our obedience, and makes it acceptable to God (Rev. 8:3; Heb. 13:10). The ministers of the gospel are also in this manner priests, as Paul insinuateth when he calleth the Gentiles his *offering unto God* (Rom. 15:16). And the preaching of the Word is as it were a sacrificing knife, whereby the old Adam must be killed in us; and we made an holy and acceptable sweet smelling oblation unto

God, sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Therefore everyone that heareth God's Word preached and taught, must endeavour that by the profitable hearing thereof, his sins and whole nature must be subdued and killed; as the beast was slain and sacrificed upon the altar by the hand of the Levite.

(iv) Lastly, the exhortation of the Holy Ghost must here be considered (Heb. 10:21,22): Seeing (saith He) *we have an high priest, which is over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in assurance of faith, sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water*. The meaning of the words is this: that if Christ have offered such a sacrifice of such value and price, which procureth pardon of sin, justification, sanctification and redemption, then we must labour to be partakers of it; to have our bodies and souls purified and cleansed by His blood and sanctified throughout by the Holy Ghost, that thereby we may be made fit to do sacrifice acceptable to God in Christ.

This is the use which the apostle maketh of the doctrine of Christ's priesthood in that place, which also every man should apply unto Himself; for why should we live in our sins and wicked ways, every hour incurring the danger of God's judgments, seeing Christ hath offered such a sacrifice whereby we may be purged and cleansed, and at length freed from all woe and misery?

(2) Thus much of Christ's sacrifice; now followeth His triumph upon the cross. That Christ did triumph when He was upon the cross, it is plainly set down by the apostle Paul, where he saith (Col. 2:14,15) that *putting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, He even took it out of the way, and fastened it upon the cross, and hath spoiled the principalities and powers, and hath made shew of them openly, and hath triumphed over them in the same cross*. This triumph is set forth by signs and testimonies of two sorts:

(i) By signs of His glory and majesty.

(ii) By signs of His victory upon the cross.

(i) The signs of His glory and majesty are principally seven:

(a) The first is the title set over His head upon the cross (John 19:18), *Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews*. The end why titles were set over malefactors was that the beholders might know the cause of the punishment, and be admonished to take heed of like offences, and be stirred up to a dislike of the parties executed for their offences. And therefore no doubt, Pilate wrote the title of Christ for the aggravating of his cause, and that with his own hand. Yet mark the strange event that followed; for when Pilate was about to write the superscription, God did so govern and overrule both his heart and hand, that instead of noting some crime, he sets down a most glorious and worthy title, calling *Him Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews*; which words contain the very sum and pith of the whole gospel of Christ, delivered by the patriarchs and prophets from age to age. We must not think that Pilate did this of any good mind, or upon any love or favour that he bare to Christ; but only as he was guided and overruled by the power of God for the advancement of the honour and glory of Christ. The like did Caiaphas who though a sworn enemy to Christ, yet he uttered a prophecy of Him, saying (John 11:50), *that it was necessary that one should die for the people*; not that he had any intent to prophesy; but because the Lord used him as an instrument to publish His truth. And when Balaam for the wages of unrighteousness would have cursed the Lord's people, for his life he could not; nay, all his cursings were turned into blessings. By this then it appears that it is not possible for any man, do what he can, to stop the course of the gospel of Christ; nay (as we see), God can raise up the wicked sometime to spread abroad and to publish the truth, though they themselves intend the contrary. Furthermore, let us mark that when the Jews did most of all intend to bring disgrace and ignominy upon our Saviour Christ; then did they most of all extol and magnify His name; they could not for their lives have given Him a more renowned title than this: that He was King of

the Jews. And the same is the case of all the members of Christ; for let a man walk in a good conscience before God and man, he shall find this to be true: that when he is most disgraced in the world, then commonly he is most honoured with God and men.

Further, Pilate wrote this superscription in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. And no doubt the end thereof in the providence of God was that the passion of Christ, as also the publishing of His kingdom and gospel might be spread over the whole world. This shews the malice of the church of Rome, which will not suffer the Word of God to be published but in the Latin tongue, lest the people should be entangled in errors.

Again, when Pilate had thus written the superscription, the high priests and Pharisees, offended thereat, came to Pilate, willing him to change the title, saying (John 19:21,22), *Write not The King of the Jews, but that He said I am the King of the Jews*; but Pilate answered them again, *That which I have written, I have written*. Though Pilate had been overruled before to condemn Christ to death, against his own conscience, yet will he not in any wise condescend to change the superscription. How comes this to pass? Surely, as he was ruled by the hand of God in penning it, so by the same hand of God was he confirmed in not changing it. Hence we learn sundry instructions:

i. First, that no man in the world, let him endeavour himself to the utmost of his power, is able to stop the cause of the kingdom of God; it stands firm and sure, and all the world is not able to prevail against it.

ii. Secondly, whereas Pilate being but a heathen man was thus constant, that he will not have his writing changed; we may note how permanent and unchangeable the writings of the holy Word of God are. They are not the words of heathen men, but were spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles, as God gave them utterance. The book of Scripture therefore is

much more immutable, so as no creature shall be able to change the least part of it till it be fulfilled.

iii. Thirdly, by Pilate's constancy, we learn to be constant in the practice and professions of the religion of Christ. This is a necessary lesson these days, wherein men's professions do fleet like water, and go and come with the tide. Many, zealous professors today but tomorrow as cold as water. And the complaint of the Lord touching times past, agrees to our days (Hos. 6:4), *O Ephraim, What shall I say to thee? Thy righteousness is like the morning dew*.

(b) The second is the conversion of the thief; a most worthy argument of the Godhead of Christ. For by it when He was upon the cross and in the very midst of His passion He gives unto all the world a lively and notable experience of the virtue and power of His death, so as His very enemies might not only behold the passion itself, but also at the same time acknowledge the admirable efficacy thereof. And therefore with the passion of Christ, we must join the conversion of the thief; which is as it were a crystal glass wherein we may sensibly behold the endless merit and virtue of the obedience of Christ to His Father, even to the death of the cross. And therefore I will briefly touch the special instructions which are to be learned by it.

i. First, let us mark that both the thieves in every respect were equal, both wicked and lewd livers; and for their notorious faults both attached, condemned and executed both on the cross at the same time with Christ; yet for all this, the one repenting was saved, the other was not. And in their two examples we see the state of the whole world, whereof one part is chosen to life eternal, and thereupon attains to faith and repentance in this life; the rest are rejected in the eternal counsel of God, for just causes known to Himself, and such beings left to themselves never repent at all.

ii. Secondly, we are taught hereby that the whole work of our conversion and salvation must be ascribed wholly to the mere mercy of God; of these two thieves the one was as deeply plunged in wickedness as the other, and yet the one is saved, the other condemned. The like was in Jacob and Esau (Rom. 9:13), both born at one time, and of the same parents, and neither of them had done good, nor evil, when they were born; yet one was then loved, the other was hated; yea if we regard outward prerogatives (Gen. 35:12), Esau was the firstborn, and yet was refused.

Furthermore, the thief on the cross declared his conversion by manifest signs and fruits of repentance, as appears by the words which he spake to his fellow (Luke 23:40), *Fearest thou not God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation*? Though hands and feet were fast nailed on the cross, yet heart and tongue are at liberty to give some tokens of his true repentance. The people of this our land hear the Word, but for the most part are without either profit in knowledge or amendment of life; yet for all this, they persuade themselves that they have good hearts and good meanings, though they cannot bear it away and utter it so well as others. But alas, poor souls, they are deluded by Satan; for a man that is converted cannot but express his conversion and bring forth the fruits thereof. And therefore our Saviour Christ saith (John 7:38), *If a man believe in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of water of life*. The grace (as Elihu saith (Job 32:19)) of God is like *new wine* in a vessel which must have a vent, and therefore he that sheweth no tokens of God's grace in this life, is not yet converted; let him think and say of himself what he will. Can a man have life and never move, nor take breath? And can he that brings forth no fruit of conversion live unto God? Well, let us now see what were the fruits of the thief's repentance. They may be reduced to four heads:

i. First, he rebukes his fellow for mocking Christ, endeavouring thereby to bring him to the same condition with himself, if it were possible; whereby he discovers unto us the property of a true repentant sinner, which is to

labour and strive, so much as in him lieth, to bring all men to the same state as he is in. Thus David, having tried the great love and favour of God toward himself, breaketh forth and saith (Psa. 34:11*), Come children, hearken unto me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord*; shewing his desire that the same benefits which it had pleased God to bestow on him, might also in like manner be conveyed to others. Therefore it is a great shame to see men professing religion, carried away with every company, and with the vanities and fashions of the world, whereas they should rather draw even the worst men that be to the fellowship of those graces of God which they have received. That which the Lord spake to the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 15:19) must be applied to al men: *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them*. In instruments of music the string out of tune must be set up to the rest that be in tune, and not the rest to it.

Again, in that he checks his fellow, it shews that those which be touched for their own sins, are also grieved when they see other men sin and offend God. But to go further in this point, let us diligently and carefully mark the manner of his reproof, *Fearest thou not God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation*. In which words he rips up his lewdness even to the quick, and gives him a worthy item, telling him that the cause of all their former wickedness had been the want of the fear of God. And this point must every one of us mark with great diligence. For if we enter into our hearts and make a thorough search, we shall find that this is the root and foundation of all our offences. We miserable men for the most part have not grace to consider that we are always before God; and to quake and tremble at the consideration of His presence; and this makes us so often to offend God in our lives as we do. Abraham coming before Abimelech, shifting for himself said that Sara was his sister; and being demanded why he did so, answered (Gen. 20:11), *Because I thought the fear of God was not in this place*; insinuating that he which wants the fear of God, will not make conscience of any sin whatsoever. Would we then even from the bottom of our hearts turn to God and become new creatures? Then let us learn to fear God;

which is nothing else but this: when a man is persuaded in his own heart and conscience that wheresoever he be, he is in the presence and sight of God, and by reason thereof is afraid to sin. This we must have fully settled in our hearts, if we desire to learn but the first lesson of true wisdom. But what reason useth the thief to draw his fellow to the fear of God? *Thou art,* saith he*, in the same condemnation*, that is, by thy sins and manifold transgressions, thou hast deserved death, and it is now most justly inflicted upon thee, wilt thou not yet fear God? Where we art taught that temporal punishments and crosses ought to be a means to work in us the fear of God; for that is one end why they are sent of God. *It is good for me* (saith David (Psa. 119:71)) *that I have been chastened, that I may learn thy statutes*. And Paul saith (1 Cor. 11:32), *When we are chastised, we are nurtured of the Lord*. And the Jews are taught by the prophet Micah to say (Mic.7:9), *I will bear the wrath of the Lord because I have sinned against Him*.

ii. The second fruit of his conversion is that he condemneth himself and his fellow for their sins, saying, *Indeed we are righteously here, for we receive things worthy for that we have done*; that is, we have wonderfully sinned against God's majesty, and against our brethren; and therefore this grievous punishment which we bear, is most just and due unto us. This fruit of repentance springs and grows very thin among us, for few there be which do seriously condemn themselves for their own sins, the manner of men is to condemn others, and to cry out that the world was never so bad; but bring them home to themselves, and you shall find that they have many excuses and defences as plasterwork to cast over their foul and filthy sins; and if they be urged to speak against themselves, the worst will be thus: God help us, we are all sinners, even the best of us. But certain it is that he which is throughly touched in conscience for his sins, both can and will speak more against himself for his manifold offences, than all the world besides. This Paul when he was converted calls himself (1 Tim. 1:15) *the chief of all sinners*. And the prodigal child (Luke 15:18,19) confessed that he had

sinned against heaven and against his father, and was not worthy to be called his child.

iii. The third fruit of his conversion is that he excuseth our Saviour Christ, and giveth testimony of His innocency, saying, *But this man hath done nothing amiss*. Mark here: Pilate condemned Christ, Herod mocked Him, all the learned scribes and Pharisees condemned Him, and the people cry, Away with Him, let Him be crucified; and among His own disciples, Peter denied Him, and the rest ran away; there remains only this poor silly wretch upon the cross to give testimony of Christ's innocency; whereby we learn that God chooseth the simple ones of this world to overthrow the wisdom of the wise; and therefore we must take heed that we be not offended at the gospel of Christ, by reason that for the most part simple and mean men in the world embrace it. Nay mark further, this one thief being converted had a better judgment in matters concerning God's kingdom than the whole body of the Jews. And by this also students may learn that if they desire to have in themselves upright judgment in matters of religion, first of all they must become repentant sinners; and though a man have never so much learning, yet if he be carried away with his own blind affections and lusts, they will corrupt and darken his judgment. Men which work in mines and coal pits under the earth, are troubled with nothing so much as with damps, which make their candle burn dark, and sometimes put it quite out. Now every man's sins are the damps of his heart, which when they take place, do dim the light of his judgment and cast a mist over the mind, and darken the understanding and reason; and therefore a needful thing is that men in the first place should provide for their own conversion.

iv. The fourth fruit of his repentance is that he prayeth for mercy at Christ's hands, *Lord* (saith he) *remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*. In which prayer we may see what is the property of faith. This thief at this instant heard nothing of Christ but the scornings and mockings of the people, and he saw nothing but a base estate full of ignominy and shame,

and the cursed death of the cross, yet nevertheless he now believes in Christ, and therefore entreats for salvation at His hand. Hence we learn that it is one thing to believe in Christ, and another to have feeling and experience; and that even when we have no sense nor experience we must believe; for (Heb. 11:1) *Faith is the subsisting of things which are not seen*; and (Rom. 4:18), *Abraham above hope did believe under hope*; and Job saith (Job 13:15), *Though He slay me, yet will I believe in Him*. In philosophy a man begins by experience, after which comes knowledge and belief; as when a man hath put his hand to the fire, and feels it to be hot, he comes to know thereby that fire burns; but in divinity we must believe though we have no feeling; first comes faith, and after comes sense and feeling. And the ground of our religion stands in this: to believe things neither seen nor felt, to hope above all hope, and without hope; in extremity of affliction to believe that God loveth us when He seemeth to be our enemy, and to persevere in the same to the end.

The answer which Christ made to his prayer was (Luke 23:43): *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*. Whereby He testifies in the midst of His sufferings the power which He had over the souls of men; and verifies that gracious promise (Matt. 7:7): *Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you*; and withal confutes the popish purgatory. For if any man should have gone to that forged place of torment, then the thief upon the cross who, repenting at the last gasp, wanted time to make satisfaction for the temporal punishment of his sins. And by this conversion of the thief we may learn that if any of us would turn to God and repent, we must have three things:

i. The knowledge of our own sins.

ii. From the bottom of our hearts we must confess and condemn ourselves for them, and speak the worst that can be of ourselves, in regard of our sins.

iii. We must earnestly crave pardon for them, and call for mercy at God's hands in Christ, withal reforming our lives for the time to come. If we do, we give tokens of repentance; if not, we may think what we will, but we deceive ourselves and are not truly converted.

And here we must be warned to take heed lest we abuse, as many do, the example of the thief, to conclude thereby that we may repent when we will, because the thief on the cross was converted at the last gasp. For there is not a second example like to this in all the whole Bible; it was also extraordinary. Indeed sundry men are called at the eleventh hour and at the point of the twelfth. This mercy God vouchsafed this one thief that he might be a glass in which we might behold the efficacy of Christ's death, but the like is not done to many men; no, not to one of a thousand. Let us rather consider the estate of the other thief, who neither by the dealing of his fellow nor by any speech of Christ could be brought to repentance. Let us not therefore defer our repentance to the hour of death; for then we shall have sore enemies against us: the world, the flesh and the devil; and a guilty conscience; and the best way is beforehand to prevent them. And experience shews that if a man defer repentance to the last gasp, often when he would repent he cannot. Let us take Solomon's counsel (Eccl. 12:1), *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come*. If we will not hear the Lord when He calls us, He will not hear us when we call on Him.

(c) The third sign was the eclipsing or darkening of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth. And this eclipse was miraculous. For by the course of nature the sun is never eclipsed but in the new moon; whereas contrariwise this eclipse was about the time of the Passover which was always kept at the full moon. Question is made touching the largeness of it; some moved by the words of Luke (Luke 23:44), who saith that darkness was upon the face of the whole earth, have thought that the eclipse was universal over the whole world; but I rather think that St Luke's meaning is that it was over the

whole region or country of Jewry. For if such a wonder had happened over the whole world, all historiographers Greek and Latin, and astronomers, diligent observers of all eclipses, would have made special mention thereof. And though some writers say that it was over the whole earth, and that it was set down in record both by the Romans and Grecians; yet all their writings prove no more than this: that it was over Jewry and Galilee and the countries bordering near unto.

The uses of this miracle are manifold:

i. This darkening of the sun gives a check to the Jews for their crucifying of Christ. They were not ashamed to apprehend, accuse and condemn Him, yet this glorious creature the sun pulleth in his beams, being as it were ashamed to behold that which they were not ashamed to do.

ii. It serves to signify the great judgment of God to come upon the Jews. For as when Christ suffered, darkness was over all the land of Jewry, and all the world beside had the light of the sun, so shortly after *blindness of mind* (2 Cor. 3:14) was over the whole nation of the Jews and all the world besides saw the Sun of righteousness shining unto them in the preaching of the gospel (Mal. 4:1,2).

iii. It serves to advertise us that such as carry themselves towards Christ as the Jews did, have nothing else in them but darkness, and that they (Isa. 8:20; Luke 1:79) *sit in the darkness and shadow of death*; and therefore not able any whit better to see the way that leadeth unto life than he which is cast into a dark dungeon can; who, if they thus remain, shall at length be cast into utter darkness. This being the estate of all them that be forth of Christ, we must labour to be freed from this darkness, that the day star may arise in our hearts (2 Pet. 1:19), and shine upon us and put life into us.

iv. This miraculous and wonderful darkening of the sun doth convince the Jews that Christ whom they crucified was the Lord of glory, and the

Saviour of the world; and it is very like that this was the principal end of this miracle. For whereas neither His doctrine nor His former miracles could move them to acknowledge Him for the Messiah, yet this one work of God doth as it were strike the nail to the head, and stop all their mouths.

v. Besides this, whereas at the very instant when Christ was about to make satisfaction to the justice of His Father for our sins, the sun was thus darkened; it teacheth us first, to think of the passion of Christ, not as of a light matter, but as one of the greatest wonders of the world, at the sight whereof the very frame of nature was changed; secondly, to think of our own sins as the vilest things in the world, and that they deserve the intolerable wrath of God; considering that at the time when they were to be abolished, the course of nature even in the very heavens is turned upside down.

(d) The fourth thing is the rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom. The temple was divided into two parts; the more inward, into which no man might come but the high priest, and that once a year; and it was called the holy of holies; the other was that where the people came and offered sacrifices unto the Lord. Now that which parted the temple into these two parts was called the veil, and at the time of Christ's passion it was rent from the top to the very bottom. This hath divers uses:

i. The holy of holies signified the third heaven, where God sheweth Himself in glory and majesty unto His saints; and the rending of the veil figureth unto us that by the death of Christ, heaven which was otherwise shut by our sins, is now set open and a way made to enter thereto.

ii. It signifieth that by the death of Christ we have without impediment, free access to come to God the Father by earnest prayer in the name of Christ; which is a most unspeakable benefit.

iii. It signifieth that by Christ's death an end is put to all ceremonies, to ceremonial worship and the sacrifices of the Old Testament; and that therefore in the New Testament there remaineth one only real and outward sacrifice, that is, Christ crucified on the cross; and the whole service and worship of God for outward ceremonies most simple and plain.

iv. The temple was the chief and one of the most principal prerogatives that the Jews had; it was their glory that they had such a place wherein they might worship and do service to the true God; and for the temple's sake God often spared them, and therefore Daniel prays (Dan. 9:17), *O Lord, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplication, and cause thy face to shine upon the sanctuary that lies waste for the Lord's sake*. Yet for all this, when they began to crucify the Lord of life, their prerogatives help them not, nay they are deprived thereof, and God even with His own hands rends the veil of the temple in sunder, signifying unto them that if they forsake Him He will also forsake them. And so we may say of the Church of England, no doubt for the gospel's sake we have outward peace and safety, and many other blessings, and are in account with other nations; yet if we make no conscience to obey the Word of God, and if we have no love of Christ and His members, God will at length remove His candlestick from us, and utterly deprive us of this ornament of the gospel, and make our land as odious unto all the world as the land of the Jews is at this day. Let us therefore with all care and diligence shew forth our love both to Christ Himself and to His members, and adorn the gospel which we profess, by bringing forth fruits worthy of it.

(e) The fifth sign is the earthquake, whereby hard rocks were cloven asunder. And it serves very fitly to signify further unto us:

i. That the sin of the Jews in putting Christ to death was so heavy a burden that the earth could not bear it but tremble thereat, though the Jews themselves made no bones of it. And it is a thing to be wondered at, that the

earth doth not often in these days tremble and quake at the monstrous blasphemies and fearful oaths by the wounds and blood and heart of Christ, whereby His members are rent asunder, and He treacherously crucified again.

ii. Secondly, the earthquake shews unto us the exceeding and wonderful hardness of the hearts of the Jews, and ours also. They crucified Christ and were not touched with any remorse; and we can talk and hear of His death; yea, we can say He was crucified for our sins; and yet we are nothing affected therewith, our hearts will not rend, when as hard rocks cleave asunder.

iii. Thirdly, the moving of the earth and the rending of the rocks asunder, may be a sign unto us of the virtue of the doctrine of the gospel of Christ; which is nothing else but the publishing of the passion of His death; which being preached, shall shake heaven and earth, sea and land (Hag. 2:7). It shall move the earthen, hard and rocky hearts of men; and raise up of mere stones and rocks children unto Abraham.

iv. But the main use and end of this point is to prove that He that was crucified, was the true Messiah the Son of God, and therefore had the power of heaven and earth, and could move all things at His pleasure.

(f) The sixth sign of the power of Christ, is that *graves did open and many bodies of the saints which slept arose* (Matt. 27:52), and came out of their graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many. The use of this sign is this: it signifies unto us that Christ by His death upon the cross did vanquish death in the grave, and opened it, and thereby testified that He was the resurrection and the life; so that it shall not have everlasting dominion over us; but that He will raise us up from death to life, and to everlasting glory.

(g) The seventh sign is the testimony of the centurion with his soldiers which stood by to see Christ executed. St. Mark saith (Mark 15:39), when he saw that Christ thus crying gave up the ghost, he said, *Truly this was the Son of God*.

Thus we see it is an easy matter for Christ to defend His own cause. Let Judas betray Him, Peter deny Him, and all the rest forsake Him, yet He can, if it so please Him, make the centurion that standeth by to see Him executed, to testify His innocency. But what was the occasion that moved him to give so worthy a testimony? St Matthew saith (Matt. 27:54) it was fear, and that fear was caused by hearing the loud cries of Christ, and by seeing the earthquake and things which were done. And this must put us in mind not to pass by God's judgments which daily fall out in the world, but take knowledge of them, and as it were, to fix both our eyes on them. For they are notable means to strike and astonish the rebellious heart of man and to bring it in awe and subjection to God. After that the two first captains with their fifties, commanding the prophet Elijah to come down to king Ahaziah, were consumed with fire from heaven, the king sent his third captain over fifty with his fifty to fetch him down; but what doth he? It is said (2 Kin. 1:13), he *fell on his knees before Elijah and besought him saying, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life and the lives of these fifty servants be precious in thine eyes*. But what was the cause why he prayed thus? Surely he observed what judgments of God fell upon his two former fellow captains. *Behold*, saith he (v.14), *there came down fire from heaven and devoured the two former captains with their fifties; therefore let my life be precious now in thy sight*. Thus laying to his own heart and making use of God's judgments, he humbled himself and was spared with his fifty. And Habakkuk saith (Hab. 3:16), *When I heard thy voice*, namely, of God's judgments, *rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself that I might be safe in the day of the Lord*. Now what this fear of the centurion was, there is a further question, and it is very like that it was but a sudden motion, or a certain preparation to better things. For he was but an heathen

man, and had as yet no knowledge of Christ, and whether he repented or not, it is uncertain; and we must not marvel at this; for there are many sudden motions in shew very good, that upon like occasions rise in the hearts of natural men. When God plagued the land of Egypt, then Pharoah sent for Moses and confessed (Exod. 9:27) *that the Lord was righteous, but he and his people were wicked*, and desired Moses to pray to God to take away the plague, who did so. But so soon as the hand of God was stayed (v.34), he returned to his old rebellion again. And as a dog that cometh out of the water shaketh his ears, and yet returneth unto it again; so is the manner of the world; when crosses and calamities befall men, as sickness, loss of friends or goods, then with Ahab they outwardly humble themselves, and go softly; they use to frequent that place where the Word is preached and God's name called upon; but alas, common experience shews that those things are but fits arising of uncertain and flittering motions in the heart. For so soon as the cross is removed, they return to their old bias again, and become as bad and as backward as ever they were; being like to the tree that lies in the water, which for a while is green, but afterward withereth. And therefore we for our parts, when any good motions come into our hearts as the beginnings of further grace, we (I say) must not quench them, but cherish and preserve them, remembering (Matt. 13:31,32) that the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown is the least of all seeds; but afterward it groweth up into a tree, that the fouls of heaven may build their nests in it; and like to this are the first motions of God's Spirit, and therefore they must be cherished and maintained.

(ii) And thus much for the seven signs of the power of Christ's Godhead. Now follows the second part of the triumph of Christ, which containeth signs of His victory upon the cross, notably expressed by Paul when he saith (Col. 2:14,15), *And putting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, he even took it out of the way, and fastened it upon the cross, and hath spoiled the principalities and powers, and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath triumphed openly*

in the same. In which words he alludes to the manner of heathen triumphs; for it was the custom of the heathen princes, when they had gotten the victory over their enemies, first to cause a pillar of stone or some great oak to be cut down, and set up in the place of victory, upon which either the names of the chief enemies were set, or their heads were hanged, or words were written in the pillar to testify the victory. This being done, there followed an open shew, in which first the conqueror prepares for himself a chariot of victory wherein he was himself to ride, and then the chief of his enemies bound and pinioned, were led openly after him. Now on the same manner upon the cross there was a pitched field; the conqueror on the one side was Christ; His enemies on the other side were the world, the flesh, hell, death, damnation, the devil, and all his angels; all which, banding themselves against Him, were all subdued by Him upon the same cross; and He Himself gave two signs of His triumph, one was a monument of the victory, the other open shew of His conquest.

(a) Now the monument of Christ's victory was the cross itself whereon He nailed the obligation or bill which was against us; whereby Satan might have accused and condemned us before God. For we must consider that God the Father is a creditor and we all debtors unto Him; He hath a bill of our hands which is the law, in that it giveth testimony against us; first, by the legal washing, which did shew and signify that we were altogether defiled and unclean; secondly, by the sacrifices that were daily offered for the propitiation of our sins. Now Christ was our surety, and paid every jot of the debt which we should have paid, and requiring the acquittance, taketh the ceremonial law, and the curse of the moral law, and nails them to the cross.

(b) Furthermore in the shew of conquest, the chariot is the cross likewise; for it was not only a monument of victory, but also a chariot of triumph. And the captives bound and pinioned which follow Christ, are the principalities and powers, that is, the devil and his angels, hell, death and

condemnation; all which are as it were taken prisoners, their armour and weapons are taken from them, and they chained and bound each to other.

The meditation of this point serveth:

(a) To admonish us to abandon all manner of sin, and to make conscience of every good duty, if we will aright possess the gospel of Christ; for when we sin, we do as it were pull Christ out of His chariot of triumph, and untie Satan's bonds, and give him weapons, and (as much as we can) make him valiant and strong again. Now for any man to make Satan and sin valiant and strong against himself, whereas Christ hath weakened him and bruised his head, is no better than to become an enemy of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18).

(b) Again, hereby we are taught to pray unto God that our blind eyes may be opened that we may discern aright of the passion of Christ. It is a wonder to see how men are carried away with a liking of vain shews, games and interludes; how they spend even whole days in beholding them, and their money also that they may come to the places where they are. Oh then how exceedingly ought our hearts to be ravished with this most admirable shew in which the Son of God Himself rides most gloriously in His chariot of triumph, and leads His and our most cursed enemies captive, yea treads them under His foot. This triumph is set forth unto us in the preaching of the gospel, and may be seen of us all freely without money, or money's worth. What wretches then shall we be if we suffer our hearts to be filled with earthly delights, and in the mean season have little or no desire to behold with the eyes of our mind this goodly spectacle that is to be seen in the passion of Christ that serves to revive and refresh our souls to life eternal?

(c) Thirdly, if Christ when He was most weak and base in the eyes of men, did most of all triumph upon the cross; then every one of us must learn to say with the apostle Paul (Gal. 6:14*), God forbid that I should rejoice in*

anything, but in the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord. That we may say this truly, first of all we must labour to have the benefit of the cross of Christ, not only in the remission, but also in the mortification of our sins. Secondly, we must not be discomforted but rather rejoice and triumph therein. A Christian man can never have greater honour than to suffer for the gospel of Christ, when God calls him thereunto (1 Cor. 4:9); and therefore Paul setteth forth another most glorious shew which all those must make that suffer anything for God's cause. They must encounter with the world, the flesh and the devil, and are placed as it were in a theatre; and in this conflict the beholders are men and angels; yea the whole host of heaven and earth; the umpire or judge is God Himself, who will give sentence of victory on their side, and so they shall overcome. We must not hereupon thrust ourselves into danger; but when it shall please God to call us thereunto, we must think ourselves highly honoured of Him. As when God sendeth loss of friends, of substance, or good name, or any other calamity, we must not despair or be over grieved, but rather rejoice and address ourselves then with our Saviour Christ to make a triumph.

II. *And buried.*

Thus much of Christ's triumph and the passion of His cross. Now followeth the second degree of His humiliation in these words: *And buried*. Where we must consider these points:

1. Why it was needful that Christ should be buried.

2. Who was the author of His burial.

3. The manner or preparation to His burial.

4. The place and time where and when He was buried.

Of these in order:

1.

For the first, the causes are many, but especially four, why Christ was to be buried:

(i) That the truth and certainty of His death might be confirmed to us, and that no man might so much as imagine that His death was a fantastical death, or His body a fantastical body; for men use not to bury a living but a dead man; or a man in shew, but a true man.

(ii) That His burial might be unto Him a passage from the estate of humiliation to the estate of exaltation, which began in His resurrection; and He could not have risen again, if He had not been first of all buried.

(iii) That the outward humiliation in the form of a servant, which He took upon Him, might be continued upon Him to the lowest degree of all; and therefore it was not sufficient that He should be crucified even to death, but being dead, He must also be buried.

(iv) Christ was buried that He might not only vanquish death on the cross, but even after the manner of conquerors, subdue him at his own home, and as it were, pluck him out of his own cabin or den.

2.

The authors of Christ's burial were (Matt. 27:57,58; Mark 15:43; John 19:38,39) Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night. Now concerning them and this their fact, there are many things worthy to be considered in this place:

(i) First of all, they were disciples of Christ, and the difference between them and the rest is to be considered. The other disciples though in number they were but few, yet in the feast before His passion they openly followed Him; but when Christ was to be arraigned, and the persecution of the

church of the New Testament began in Him, then Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and the rest fled away; yet even at the same instant these two secret disciples of our Saviour Christ, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take courage to themselves, and in time of danger openly profess themselves to be Christ's disciples by an honourable and solemn burial; God no doubt opening their hearts and enabling them to do so. The like is to be seen in all ages since the passion of Christ in the church of God, in which men zealous for the gospel in peace have been timorous in persecution, whereas weak ones have stood out against their enemies even unto death itself. The reason is because God will humble those His servants which are oftentimes endued with great measure of graces, and contrariwise exalt and strengthen the weak and feeble; and the same no doubt will be found true amongst us, if it should please God to send any new trial in the Church of England. This serves to teach us to think charitably of those which are as yet but weak among us; and withal in our profession to carry a low sail, and to think basely of ourselves, and in the whole course of our lives creep low by the ground, running on in fear and trembling, because the Lord oftentimes humbles those that be strong, and gives courage and strength to weak ones to boldly confess His name.

(ii) Secondly, whereas these two disciples have such care of the burial of Christ, we learn that it is our duty to be careful also for the honest and solemn burial of our brethren. The Lord Himself hath commanded it (Gen. 3:19), *Thou art dust and to dust thou shalt return*. Also the bodies of men are the good creatures of God, yea the bodies of God's children are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and therefore there is good cause why they should be honestly laid in the earth. And it was a curse and judgment of God upon Jehoiakim (Jer. 22:19) that he must not be buried but *like a dead ass be drawn and cast out of the gates of Jerusalem*. And so the Lord threatens a curse upon the Moabites (Amos 2:1) because they did not bury the king of Edom, but burnt his bones into lime. And therefore it is a necessary duty, one neighbour and friend to look to the honest burial of

another. Hence it follows that the practice of Spain and Italy and all the popish countries, which is to keep parts of men's bodies and such like relics of saints unburied, that they may be seen of men and worshipped, hath no warrant; dust they are, and to dust they ought to be returned.

Furthermore, the properties and virtues of both these men are severally to be considered:

(i) And first to begin with Joseph, he was a senator, a man of great account, authority and reputation among the Jews. It may seem a strange thing, that a man of such account would abase himself so much as to take down the body of Christ from the cross. It might have been a hindrance to him, and a disgrace to his estate and calling; as we see in these days, it would be thought a base thing for a knight or lord to come to the place of execution and take down a thief from the hands of the hangman to bury him; but this noble senator Joseph for the love he bare to Christ, made no account of his estate and calling, neither did he scorn to take upon him so base an office, considering it was for the honour of Christ. Where we learn that if we truly love Christ, and our hearts be set to believe in Him, we will never refuse to perform the basest service that may be for His honour; nothing shall hinder us. It is further said ((Luke 23:50,51) that he *was a good man and a just*, and also (Matt. 27:57) *a rich man*. And the first appeareth in this: that he would neither consent to the counsel nor act of the Jews in crucifying Christ. It is rare to find the like man in these days.

From this example we learn these lessons:

(a) That a rich man, remaining a rich man, may be a servant of God, and also be saved; for riches are the good blessings of God, and in themselves do no whit hinder a man in coming to Christ. But some will say, Christ Himself saith (Matt. 19:24), *It is easier for a cable to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Answer*: It is to be understood of a rich man, so long as he swelleth with a confidence in

his wealth; but we know that if a cable be untwisted and drawn into small threads, it may be drawn through the eye of a needle; so he that is rich let him deny himself, abase himself and lay aside all confidence in himself, in his riches and honour, and be as it were, made small as a twine thread, and with this good senator Joseph become the disciple of Christ, he may enter into the kingdom of heaven. But Christ saith in the parable that riches are thorns (Matt. 13:7) which choke the grace of God. *Answer*: It is true, they are thorns in that subject or in that a man that putteth his trust in them; not in their own nature, but by reason of the corruption of man's heart, who makes of them his God.

(b) St John saith further that Joseph was a disciple of Christ (John 19:38), but yet a close disciple for fear of the Jews. And this shews that Christ is most ready to receive them that come unto Him, though they come laden with manifold wants. I say not this that any hereby should take boldness to live in their sins, but my meaning is that though men be weak in the faith, yet are they not to be dismayed, but to come to Christ, who refuseth none that come to Him. *Draw near to God* (saith St James (Jam. 4:8)) *and He will draw near to you*. Christ doth not forsake any, till they forsake Him first.

(c) Lastly, the Holy Ghost saith of him that he waited for the kingdom of God (Mark 15:43), that is, he did believe in the Messiah to come, and therefore did wait daily till the time was come, when the Messiah by His death and passion should abolish the kingdom of sin and Satan, and establish His own kingdom throughout the whole world. The same is said of Simeon (Luke 2:25), that he was *a good man, and feared God, and waited for the consolation of Israel*. This was the most principal virtue of all that Joseph had, and the very root of all his goodness and righteousness, that he waited for the kingdom of God; for it is the property of faith, whereby we have confidence in the Messiah to change our nature, and to purify the heart, and to make it bring forth works of righteousness. There be many

among us that can talk of Christ's kingdom, and of redemption by Him, and yet make no conscience of sin, and have little care to live according to the gospel which they profess; and all is because they do not soundly believe in the Messiah, and they wait not for the kingdom of heaven, and therefore there is no change in them. But we for our parts must labour to have this affiance in the Messiah with Joseph, and to wait for the second appearance, that thereby we may be made new creatures, having the kingdom of Satan battered and beaten down in us, and the kingdom of God erected in our hearts.

(ii) Touching Nicodemus, St John saith (John 19:39) that *he came to Jesus by night*. Many men build upon this example, that it is lawful to be present at the mass; so be it in the mean season we keep out hearts to God; and indeed such men are like Nicodemus in that they labour to bury Christ as much as they can, though now after His resurrection He should not be buried again. But though Nicodemus durst not openly at the first profess the name of Christ, yet after His death when there is most danger, he doth; and by this means he reformeth his former action.

3.

Thus much for the persons that buried Christ. The third thing to be observed is the manner of Christ's burial, which standeth in these four points:

(i) First, they take down His body from the cross.

(ii) Secondly, they wind it.

(iii) Thirdly, they lay it in a tomb.

(iv) Fourthly, the tomb is made sure.

Of these in order:

(i) First, Joseph taketh down the body of Christ from the cross whereon He was executed; but mark in what manner: he doth it not on his own head without leave, but he goeth to Pilate and beggeth the body of Christ and craveth liberty to take it down, because the disposing of dead bodies was in Pilate's hand, he being deputy at that time; whereby we learn that in all our dealings and actions (though they have never so good an end) our duty is to proceed as peaceably with all men as may be, as St James saith (Jam. 3:17), *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle*, etc. Again, this teacheth us that in all things which concern the authority of the magistrate, and belong to him by the rule of God's Word, we must attempt to do whatsoever we do by leave. And by this we see what unadvised courses they take, that being private men in this our church, will notwithstanding take upon them to plant churches without the leave of the magistrate being a Christian prince.

(ii) Having thus taken the body of Christ down, they go on to wind it. And Joseph for his part brought linen clothes (Mark 15:46), and Nicodemus a mixture of myrrh and aloes to the quantity of an hundred pounds for the honourable burial of Christ (John 19:39; Luke 24:1). His winding was on this manner: they wrapped His body hastily in linen cloths, sweet odours put thereto. Besides all this, in the Jews' burials there was an embalming and washing of the body, but Christ's body was not embalmed or washed, because they had no time to do it, for the preparation of the Passover drew near. And whereas these two men bury Christ at their own cost and charges, we are taught to be like affected to the living members of Christ; when they want, we must relieve and comfort them liberally and freely. It may be here demanded whether men may not be at cost in making funerals, considering even Christ Himself is with much cost buried. *Answer*: The bodies of all dead men are to be buried in seemly and honest manner, and if they be honourable, they may be buried honourably; yet now there is no cause why men's bodies should be washed, anointed and embalmed, as the use was among the Jews; for they used embalming as a pledge and sign of the

resurrection but now since Christ's coming we have a more certain pledge thereof (1 Cor. 15:19), even the resurrection of Christ Himself, and therefore it is not requisite that we should use embalming and washing as the Jews did. And the clause which is specified in St Matthew (Matt. 27:59) is not to be omitted, that Joseph wrapped Christ's body in *a clean linen cloth*; whereby we learn that howsoever the strange fashions fetched from Spain and Italy are monstrous and to be abhorred, yet, seeing the body of a man is the creature of God, therefore it must be arrayed in cleanly manner, and in *holy comeliness* (Tit. 2:3). Paul requires the ministers of the gospel in all things be seemly or comely; and herein he ought to be a pattern of sobriety unto all men (1 Tim. 3:2).

(iii) Thirdly, after they have wound the body of Christ, they lay it in a tomb (John 19:42), and,

(iv) Lastly, they make it sure, closing it up with a stone rolled over the mouth of it. Also the Jews request Pilate to seal it that none might presume to open it (Matt. 27:60,66). Besides they set a band of soldiers to watch the tomb and to keep it that His body be not stolen away. Many reasons might be alleged of this their dealing, but principally it came to pass by the providence of God that hereby He might confirm the resurrection of Christ. For whereas the Jews would neither be moved by His doctrine, nor by His works and miracles to believe, He causeth this to be done, that by the certainty of His resurrection, He might convince them of hardness of heart, and prove that He was the Son of God.

4.

Thus much of the manner of His burial. Now follows the place where Christ was buried. In the place we are to mark three things:

(i) First, that Christ was laid in Joseph's tomb, whereby we may gather the greatness of Christ's poverty in that He had not so much ground as to make

Himself a grave in; and this must be a comfort to the members of Christ that are in poverty. And it teacheth them, if they have no more but food and raiment, to be therewith content (1 Tim. 6:8), knowing that Christ their Head and King hath consecrated this very estate unto them.

(ii) Secondly, the tomb wherein Christ was laid was a new tomb wherein never man lay before. And it was the special appointment of God's providence that it should be so, because if any man had been buried there aforetime, the malicious Jews would have pleaded that it was not Christ that rose again, but some other.

(iii) Thirdly, we must observe that this tomb was in a garden, as the fall of man was in a garden and as the apprehension of Christ in a garden beyond the brook Kidron (John 19:41; Gen. 3:8; John 18:1). And here we must note the practice of a good man: this garden was the place of Joseph's delight and holy recreation, wherein he used to solace himself in beholding the good creatures of God; yet in the same place doth he make his own grave long before he died; whereby it appears that his recreation was joined with a meditation of his end; and his example must be followed of us. True it is, God hath given us His creatures not only for necessity, but also for our lawful delight; but yet our duty is to mingle therewith serious meditation and consideration of our last end. It is a brutish part to use the blessings and creatures of God, and not at all to be bettered in regard of our last end by a further use thereof.

The time when Christ was buried was the evening, wherein the Sabbath was to begin according to the manner of the Jews, which began their days at sun-setting, from evening to evening, according to that in Genesis: *The evening and the morning was the first day* (Gen. 1:5,8,13,19,23,31). Now Joseph cometh a little before evening and beggeth the body of Christ and burieth it; where note that howsoever we are not bound to keep the Sabbath so strictly as the Jews were, yet when we have any business or work to be

done of our ordinary calling, we must not take part of the Lord's Sabbath to do it in, but prevent the time, and do it either before, as Joseph did, or rather after the Sabbath. This is little practised in the world. Men think, if they go to church before and afternoon to hear God's Word, then all the day after they may do what they list, and spend the rest of the time at their own pleasure; but the whole day is the Lord's and therefore must be spent wholly in His service, both by the public hearing of the Word, and also by private reading and meditation on the same.

To conclude the doctrine of Christ's burial. Here it may be demanded how He was always after His incarnation both God and man, considering that He was dead and buried, and therefore body and soul was sundered, and a dead man seems to be no man? *Answer*: A dead man in his kind is a true man as a living man; for though body and soul be not united by the body of life, yet are they united by a relation which the one hath to the other in the counsel and good pleasure of God; and that as truly as man and woman remain coupled into one flesh by covenant of marriage, though afterward they be distant a thousand miles asunder. And by virtue of this relation, every soul in the day of judgment shall be reunited to his own body, and every body to his own soul. But there is yet a more straight bond between the body and soul of Christ in His death and burial. For as when He was living, His soul was a mean or bond to unite His Godhead and His body together; so when He was dead His very Godhead was a mean or middle bond to unite the body and soul; and to say otherwise is to dissolve the hypostatical union, by virtue whereof Christ's body and soul though severed from each other, yet both were still joined to the Godhead of the Son.

The use and profit which may be made of Christ's burial is twofold:

1. It serveth to work in us the burial of all our sins. *Know ye not* (saith Paul (Rom. 6:3,4)) *that all who have been baptised into Christ have been baptised into His death, and are buried with Him by baptism into His*

death? If any shall demand how a man is buried into the death of Christ, the answer is this: Every Christian man and woman are by faith mystically united to Christ, and made all members of one body, whereof Christ is the Head. Now therefore as Christ by the power of His Godhead when He was dead and buried, did overcome the grave and the power of death in His own Person; so by the very same power, by means of His spiritual conjunction doth He work in all His members a spiritual death and burial of sin and natural corruption. When the Israelites were in burying of a man (1 Kin. 13:1), for fear of the soldiers of the Moabites, they cast him for haste into the sepulchre of Elisha. Now the dead man, so soon as he was down and had touched the body of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet; so let a man that is dead in sin be cast into the grave of Christ, that is, let him by faith but touch Christ dead and buried, it will come to pass by the virtue of Christ's death and burial, that he shall be raised from death and bondage of sin to become a new man.

2. Secondly, the burial of Christ serves to be a sweet perfume of all our graves and burials; for the grave in itself is the house of perdition, but Christ by His burial hath as it were consecrated and perfumed all our graves; and instead of houses of perdition hath made them chambers of rest and sleep (Isa. 57:2), yea beds of down; and therefore howsoever to the eye of man the beholding of a funeral is terrible, yet if we could then remember the burial of Christ, and consider how He thereby hath changed the nature of the grave, even then it would make us to rejoice. Lastly, we must imitate Christ's burial in being continually occupied in the spiritual burial of our sins.

Thus much of the burial.

He Descended into Hell

III.

Now followeth the third and last degree of Christ's humiliation: *He descended into hell*. It seems very likely that these words were not placed in the Creed at the first, or (as some think) that they crept in by negligence, because above threescore creeds of the most ancient councils and fathers want this clause; and among the rest, the Nicene Creed. But if the ancient and learned fathers assembled in that council had been persuaded, or at least had imagined that these words had been set down at the first by the apostles, no doubt they would not in any wise have left them out. And an ancient writer saith directly that these words, *He descended into hell*, are not found in the creed of the Roman church, nor used in the churches of the East, and if they be, that then they signify the burial of Christ. And it must not seem strange to any that a word or twain in process of time should creep into the Creed, considering that the original copies of the books of the Old and New Testament have in them sundry varieties of readings and words otherwhiles, which from the margin have crept into the text. Nevertheless considering that this clause hath long continued in the Creed, and that by common consent of the catholic church of God, and it may carry a fit sense and exposition; it is not as some would have it to be put forth.

Therefore that we may come to speak of the meaning of it; we must know that it hath some usual expositions, which we will rehearse in order and then make choice of that which shall be thought the fittest.

1.

The first is that Christ's soul after the passion upon the cross, did really and locally descend into the place of the damned. But this seems not to be true.

The reasons are these:

(1) All the evangelists, and among the rest St Luke, intending to make an exact narration (Luke 1:3) of the life and death of Christ, hath set down at large His passion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension, and withal they make rehearsal of small circumstances, therefore no doubt they would not have omitted Christ's local descent into the place of the damned, if there had been any such thing. And the end why they penned this history was that we might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and believing, we might have life everlasting (John 20:31). Now there could not have been a greater matter for the confirmation of our faith than this: that Jesus the son of Mary who went down to the place of the damned, returned thence to live in happiness for ever.

(2) If Christ did go into the place of the damned, then either in soul or in body or in Godhead. But His Godhead could not descend, because it is everywhere, and His body was in the grave. And as for His soul it went not to hell, but presently after His death it went to Paradise, that is, the third heaven, a place of joy and happiness (Luke 23:43), *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*; which words of Christ must be understood of His manhood or soul, and not of His Godhead. For they are an answer to a demand; and therefore unto it they must be suitable. Now the thief seeing that Christ was first of all crucified, and therefore in all likelihood should first of all die, makes his request to this effect: *Lord, thou shalt shortly enter into thy kingdom, remember me then*; to which Christ's answer (as the very words import) is thus much: *I shall enter into Paradise this day, and there shalt thou be with me*. Now there is no entrance but in regard of His soul or manhood. For the Godhead which is at all times in all places, cannot be said properly to enter into a place. Again, when Christ saith, *Thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, He doth intimate a resemblance which is between the first and second Adam. The first Adam sinned against God, and was presently cast forth out of Paradise; Christ the second Adam, having made a

satisfaction for sin, must immediately enter into Paradise. Now to say that Christ in soul descended locally into hell, is to abolish this analogy between the first and second Adam.

(3) Ancient councils in their confessions and creeds omitting this clause, shew that they did not acknowledge any real descent, and that the true meaning of those words, *He descended*, was sufficiently included in some of the former articles, And that may appear because when they set down it, they omit some of the former; as Athanasius in his creed setting down those words, *He descended* etc., omits the burial, putting them both for one as he expounds himself elsewhere. Now let us see the reasons which may be alleged to the contrary:

Objection 1. (Matt. 12:40) *The Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the earth*, that is, hell.

Answer 1. This exposition is directly against the scope of the place; for the Pharisees desired to see a sign, that is, some sensible and manifest miracle; and hereunto Christ answers that He will give them the sign of Jonah, which cannot be the descent of His soul into the place of the damned, because it was insensible; but rather His burial, and after it His manifest and glorious resurrection.

Answer 2. The heart of the earth may as well signify the grave, as the centre of the earth. For thus Tyre bordering upon the sea is said to be in the heart of the sea (Ezek. 27:4).

Answer 3. This exposition takes it for granted that hell is seated in the midst of the earth; whereas the Scriptures reveal unto us no more but this: that hell is in the lower parts; but where these lower parts should be, no man is able to define.

Objection 2. (Acts 2:27) *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption*.

Answer. These words cannot prove any local descent of Christ's soul. For Peter's drift in alleging of them is to prove the resurrection, and he saith expressly that the words must be understood of the resurrection of Christ (v.31), *He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ*. What? Namely these words: *His soul was not left in hell* etc. Now there is no resurrection of the soul, but of the body only, as the soul cannot be said to fall, but the body. It will be replied that the word quchn cannot signify the body and the word adou the grave. *Answer*: The first word signifies not only the spiritual part of man, the soul; but also the whole person, or the man himself (Rom. 13:1; 1 Cor. 15:40). And the second is as well taken for the grave as for hell (Rev. 20:14) *Death and adou are cast into the lake of fire*, Now we cannot say that hell is cast into hell, but the grave into hell. And the very same word in this text must needs have this sense. For Peter makes an opposition between the grave into which David is shut up and the hell out of which Christ was delivered (vv. 29,31). Again, it will be said that in this text there be two distinct parts: the first of the souls coming forth of hell, in these words: *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*; the second, of the bodies rising out of the grave in the next words: *Neither wilt thou suffer my flesh to see corruption*. *Answer*: It is not so, for flesh in this place signifies not the body alone but the human nature of Christ, as appears in v.30, unless we shall say that one and the same word in the same sentence is taken two ways. And the words rather carry this sense: Thou wilt not suffer me to continue long in the grave; nay, which is more, in my time of continuance there, thou wilt not suffer me so much as to feel any corruption, because I am thy holy one.

Objection 3. (1 Pet. 3:18,19) *Christ was quickened in spirit, by the which spirit He went and preached to the spirits which are in prison*.

Answer. The place is not for this purpose. For by *spirit* is not meant the soul of Christ, but His Godhead, which in the ministry of Noah preached repentance to the old world. And I think that Peter in this place alludes to another place in Genesis 6:3, where the Lord saith, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man, because he is but flesh*. And if the spirit doth signify the soul, then Christ was quickened either by His soul, or in His soul. But neither is true. For the first, it cannot be said that Christ was quickened by His soul, because it did not join itself to the body; but the Godhead joined them both. Neither was He quickened in soul; for His soul died not. It could not die the first death, which belongs to the body; and it did not die the second death, which is a total separation from God; only it suffered the sorrows of the second death, which is the apprehension of the wrath of God; as a man may feel the pangs of the first death, and yet not die the first death, but live. Again, it is to no end that Christ's soul should go to hell to preach, considering that it was never heard of that one soul should preach to another, especially in hell, where all are condemned and in conscience convicted of their just damnation, and where there is no hope of repentance or redemption. It will be answered that this preaching is only real or experimental, because Christ shews Himself there to convince the unbelief of His enemies; but this is flat against reason. For when a man is justly condemned by God, and therefore sufficiently convicted, what needs the judge himself come to the place of execution to convict him? And it is flat against the text; for the preaching that is spoken of here is that which is performed by men in the ministry of the Word, as Peter expounds himself (1 Pet. 4:6), *To this purpose was the gospel also preached unto the dead, that they might be condemned according to men in the flesh, that they might live according to God in the Spirit*. Lastly, there is no reason why Christ should rather preach and shew Himself in hell, to them that were disobedient in the days of Noah, than to the rest of the damned.

2.

And this is the first exposition, the second follows: *He descended into hell*, that is, Christ descended into the grave, or was buried. This exposition is agreeable to the truth, yet it is not meet or convenient. For the clause next before, *He was buried*, contained this point; and therefore if the next words following yield the same sense, there must be a vain and needless repetition of one and the same thing twice, which is not in any wise to be allowed in so short a creed as this. If it be said that these words are an exposition of the former, the answer is that then they should be more plain than the former. For when one sentence expoundeth another, the latter must always be the plainer; but of these two sentences, *He was buried, He descended into hell*, the first is very plain and easy, but the latter very obscure and hard, and therefore it can be no exposition thereof; and for this cause this exposition neither is to be received.

3.

Thirdly, others there be which expound it thus: *He descended into hell*, that is, Christ Jesus, when he was dying upon the cross, felt and suffered the pangs of hell and the full wrath of God seizing upon His soul. This exposition hath his warrant in God's Word, where hell often signifies the sorrows and pains of hell, as Hannah in her song unto the Lord (1 Sam. 2:6) saith, *The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to hell and raiseth up*, that is, He makes men feel woe and misery in their souls, even the pangs of hell, and after restoreth them. And David saith (Psa. 18:5), *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the sorrows of hell laid hold on me*. This is an usual exposition received of the church, and they which expound this article thus, give this reason thereof. The former words, *was crucified, dead and buried*, do contain (say they) the outward sufferings of Christ. Now, because He suffered not only outwardly in body, but also inwardly in soul, therefore these words *He descended into hell*, do set forth unto us His inward sufferings in soul, when He felt upon the cross the full wrath of God upon Him. This exposition is good and true, and whosoever will may

receive it. Yet nevertheless it seems not so fitly to agree with the order of the former articles. For these words, *was crucified, dead and buried*, must not be understood of any ordinary death, but of a cursed death, in which Christ suffered the full wrath of God, even the pangs of hell both in soul and body. Seeing then this exposition is contained in the former words, it cannot fitly stand with the order of this short creed, unless there should be a distinct article of things repeated before.

4.

But let us come to the fourth exposition, *He descended into hell*, that is, when He was dead and buried, He was held captive in the grave, and lay in bondage under death for the space of three days. This exposition also may be gathered forth of the Scriptures. St Peter saith (Acts 2:24), *God hath raised Him up* (speaking of Christ) *and loosed the sorrows of death, because it was impossible that He should be holden of it*. Where we may see that between the death and resurrection of Christ, there is placed a third matter, which is not mentioned in any clause of the Apostles' Creed, save in this; and that is His bondage under death, which cometh inbetween His death and rising again. And the words themselves do most fitly bear this sense, as the speech of Jacob sheweth (Gen. 37:35), *I will go down into hell* (or the grave) *unto my son mourning*. And this exposition doth also best agree with the order of the Creed: first, He was crucified and died; secondly, he was buried; thirdly, laid in the grave, and was therein held in captivity and bondage under death. And these three degrees of Christ's humiliation, are most fitly correspondent to the three degrees of His exaltation: *He rose again the third day*, answering to the first degree of His humiliation, *He died*; the second degree of His exaltation, *He ascended into heaven*, answering to going down into the grave, *was buried*; and thirdly, His *sitting at the right hand of God* (which is the highest degree of His exaltation) answering to the lowest degree of humiliation, *He descended into hell*. These two last expositions are commonly received, and we may

indifferently make choice of either, but the last (as I take it) is most agreeable to the order and words of the Creed.

Thus much for the meaning of the words; now follow the uses:

1. And first of all, Christ's descending into hell teacheth that every one of us that professeth the name of Christ, that if it shall please God to afflict us, either in body or in mind or in both, though it be most grievous and tedious manner, yet must we not think it strange. For if Christ upon the cross not only suffered the pangs of hell, but after He was dead, death takes Him and as it were carries Him into his den or cabin, and there triumpheth over Him, holding Him in captivity and bondage, and yet for all this was He the son of God; and therefore when God's hand is heavy upon us any way, we are not to despair, but rather think it is the good pleasure of God to frame and fashion us that we may become like unto Christ Jesus as good children of God. David, a man after God's own heart, was by Samuel anointed king over Israel, but withal God raised up Saul to persecute him, as the fowler hunteth the partridge in the mountains, in so much as David said there was but one step between him and death. So likewise Job (Job 2:8,9), a just man and one that feared God with all his heart, yet how heavily did God lay His hand upon him? His goods and cattle were all taken away, and his children slain, and his body stricken by Satan with loathsome boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, so as he was fain to take a potsherd and scrape himself sitting among the ashes. And Jonah, the servant and prophet of the most high God, when he was called to preach to Nineveh, because he refused for fear of that great city, God met with him, and he must be cast into the sea and there be swallowed up of a whale, that so He might chastise him. And thus doth He deal with His own servants, to make them conformable to Christ. And further, when it pleaseth God to lay His hands upon our souls, and make us have a troubled and distressed conscience, so as we do as it were struggle with God's wrath as for life and death, and can find nothing but His indignation seizing upon our souls, which is the most

grievous and perplexed estate that any man can be in; in this case howsoever we cannot discern or see any hope or comfort in ourselves, we must not think it strange, nor quite despair of His mercy. For the son of God Himself descended into hell, and death carried Him captive, and triumphed over Him in the grave; and therefore though God seem to be our utter enemy, yet we must not despair of His help. In divers psalms we read how David was not only persecuted outwardly of his enemies, but even his soul and conscience were perplexed for his sins, so as (Psa. 32:3,4) his *very bones were consumed within him, and his moisture was turned into the drought in summer*. This caused Job to cry out (Job 6:3,4) that *the arrows of God were within him, and the venom thereof did drink up his spirit, the terrors of God did fight against him, and the grief of his soul was as weighty as the sand of the sea*, by reason whereof he saith that *the Lord did make him a mark and a butt to shoot at*; and therefore when God shall thus afflict us, either in body or in soul or in both, we must not always think that it is the wrathful hand of the Lord that begins to bring us to utter condemnation for our sins, but rather His fatherly work to kill sin in us and to make us grow in humility, that so we may become like unto Christ Jesus.

2. Secondly, whereas Christ for our sakes was thus abased, even unto the lowest degree of humiliation that can be, it is as an example for us to imitate, as Christ Himself prescribeth (Matt. 11:29), *Learn of me, that I am meek and lowly*. And that we may the better do this, we must learn to become nothing in ourselves, that we may be all in all forth of ourselves in Christ; we must loath and think as basely of ourselves as possibly may be in regard of our sins, Christ Jesus upon the cross was content for our sake to become *a worm and no man*, as David saith (Psa. 22:6); which did chiefly appear in this lowest degree of His humiliation, when as death did as it were tread on Him in his den; and the same mind must likewise be in us which was in Him. The liking that we have of ourselves must be mere nothing, but all our love and liking must be forth of ourselves in the death and blood of Christ.

And thus much of this clause, as also of the state of Christ's humiliation.

The Third Day He Rose Again from the Dead

Now followeth His second estate, which is His exaltation into glory, set down in these words: *The third day He rose again from the dead* etc. And of it we are first to speak in general then in particular according to the several degrees thereof.

I.

In general, the exaltation of Christ is that glorious or happy estate into which Christ entered after He had wrought the work of our redemption upon the cross. And He was exalted according to both natures, in regard of His Godhead and also of His manhood.

1. The exaltation of the Godhead of Christ was the manifestation of the Godhead in the manhood. Some will peradventure demand how Christ's Godhead can be exalted, seeing it admits no alteration at all. *Answer*: In itself it cannot be exalted, yet being considered as it is joined with the manhood into one Person, in this respect it may be said to be exalted; and therefore I say, the exaltation of Christ's Godhead is the manifestation of the glory thereof in the manhood. For though Christ from His incarnation was both God and man, and His Godhead all that time dwelt in His manhood, yet from His birth unto His death, the same Godhead did little shew itself, and in the time of His suffering did as it were lie hid under the veil of His flesh, as the soul doth in the body when a man is sleeping, that thereby in His human nature He might suffer the curse of the law and accomplish the

work of redemption for us, in the low and base estate of a servant. But after this work was finished, He began by degrees to make manifest the power of His Godhead in His manhood. And in this respect His Godhead may be said to be exalted.

2. The exaltation of Christ's humanity stood in two things:

(1) The first, that He laid down all the infirmities of man's nature, which He carried about Him so long as He was in the state of a servant, in that He ceased to be weary, hungry, thirsty etc. Here it may be demanded whether the wounds and scars remain in the body of Christ now after it is glorified. *Answer*: Some think that they remain as testimonies of that victory which Christ obtained of His and our enemies, and that they are no deformity to the glorious body of the Lord but are themselves also in Him in some unspeakable manner glorified. But indeed it rather seems to be a truth to say that they are quite abolished; because they were a part of that ignominious and base estate in which our Saviour was upon the cross; which after His entrance into glory He laid aside. And if it may be thought that the wounds in the hands and feet of Christ remain to be seen, even to the last judgment, why may we not in the same manner think that the veins of His body remain emptied of their blood, because it was shed upon the cross?

(2) The second thing required in the exaltation of Christ's manhood is that both His body and soul were beautified and adorned with all qualities of glory. His mind was enriched with as much knowledge and understanding as can possibly befall any creature, and more in measure than all men and angels have; and the same is to be said of the graces of the Spirit in His will and affections; His body also was incorruptible, and it was made a shining body, a resemblance whereof some of His disciples saw in the mount; and it was endued with agility, to move as well upward as downward; as may appear by the ascension of His body into heaven, which was not caused by

constraint or by any violent motion, but by a property agreeing to all bodies glorified. Yet in the exaltation of Christ's manhood we must remember two caveats: First, that He did never lay aside the essential properties of a true body, as length, breadth, thickness, visibility, locality, which is to be in one place at once and no more, but keeps all these still, because they serve for the being of His body. Secondly, we must remember that the gifts of glory in Christ's body are not infinite, but finite; for His human nature, being but a creature and therefore finite, could not receive infinite graces and gifts of glory. And hence it is more than manifest that the opinion of those men is false which hold that Christ's body glorified is omnipotent and infinite, every way able to do whatsoever He will; for this is to make a creature to be the Creator.

II.

Thus much of Christ's exaltation in general. Now let us come to the degrees thereof, as they are noted in the Creed, which are in number three:

He rose again the third day

He ascended into heaven

He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

In the handling of Christ's resurrection we must consider these points:

1. Why Christ ought to rise again.

2. The manner of His rising.

3. The time when He rose.

4. The proofs of His resurrection.

5. The uses thereof.

1.

For the first, it was necessary that Christ should rise again, and that for three especial causes:

(1) The hereby He might shew to all the people of God that he had truly overcome death. For also, if Christ had not risen, how should we have been persuaded in our consciences that he had made a full and perfect satisfaction for us? Nay, rather we should have reasoned thus: Christ is not risen, and therefore He hath not overcome death, but death overcame Him.

(2) Secondly, Christ which died, was the Son of God; therefore the author of life itself; and for this cause it was neither meet nor possible for Him to be holden of death, but He must needs rise from death to life.

(3) Thirdly, Christ's priesthood hath two parts: one, to make satisfaction for sin by His one only sacrifice upon the cross; the other, to apply the virtue of this sacrifice unto every believer. Now He offered the sacrifice for sin upon the cross, before the last pang of His death, and in dying satisfied the justice of God; and therefore being dead must needs rise again to perform the second part of His priesthood, namely, to apply the virtue thereof unto all that shall truly believe in Him, and to make intercession in heaven unto His Father for us here on earth. And thus much of the first point.

2.

Now to come to the manner of Christ's resurrection, five things are to be considered:

(1) The first, that Christ rose again not as every private man doth, but as a public person representing all men that are to come to life eternal. For as in His passion, so also in His resurrection, He stood in our room and place;

and therefore when He rose from death, we all, yea the whole church rose in Him and together with Him (Eph. 2:6). And this point not considered, we do not conceive aright of Christ's resurrection, neither can we reap sound comfort by it.

(2) The second is that Christ Himself, and no other for Him, did by His own power raise Himself to life. This was the thing which He meant when He said (John 2:19), *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again*; and more plainly, *I have* (saith He (John 10:18)) *power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again*. From whence we learn divers instructions:

(i) First, whereas Christ raiseth Himself from death to life, it serveth to prove that He was not only man, but also true God. For the body being dead, could not bring again the soul and join itself unto the same, and make itself alive again; neither yet the soul that is departed from the body can return and quicken the body; and therefore there was some other nature in Christ, namely, His Godhead, which did reunite soul and body together, and thereby quicken the manhood.

(ii) Secondly, if Christ gave life to Himself being dead in the grave, then much more now being alive in heaven glorified, is He able to raise up His members from death to life. We are all by nature even stark dead in sin, as the dead body rotten in the grave; and therefore our duty is to come to Christ our Lord by humble prayer, earnestly entreating Him that He would raise us up every day more and more from the grave of our sins to newness of life. He can of men dead in their sins, make us alive unto Himself, to live in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life.

(3) The third thing is that Christ rose again with an earthquake. And this serves to prove that He lost nothing of His power by death, but still remained the absolute Lord and King of heaven and earth, to whom therefore the earth under His feet trembling doth Him homage. This also

proveth unto us that Christ which lay dead in the grave, did raise Himself again by His own almighty power. Lastly, it serveth to convince the keepers of the grave, the women which came to embalm Him, and the disciples which came to the sepulchre, and would not yet believe that He was risen again. But how came this earthquake? *Answer*: St Matthew saith (Matt. 28:2) there was a great earthquake. For *the angel of the Lord descended from heaven* etc. This shews that the power of angels is great, in that they can move and stir the earth. Three angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1,13). An angel destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt in one night (Exod. 12:29). In the host of Sennacherib, one angel slew in one night an hundred fourscore and five thousand men (2 Kin. 19:35). Of like power is the devil himself to shake the earth and to destroy us all, but that God of His goodness limits and restrains him of his liberty. Well, if one angel be able to shake the earth, what then will Christ Himself do when He shall come to judgment the second time, with many thousand thousands of angels? Oh how terrible and fearful will His coming be! Not without cause, saith the Holy Ghost, that the wicked at that day shall cry out, wishing hills to fall upon them, and the mountains to cover them for fear of that great and terrible day of the Lord.

(4) The fourth thing is that an angel ministered to Christ, being to rise again, in that he came to the grave and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. Where observe:

(i) First, how the angels of God minister unto Christ, though dead and buried; whereby they acknowledge that His power, majesty and authority is not included within the bounds of the earth, but extends itself even to the heavens themselves and the hosts thereof, and that according to His humanity. Wicked men for their part laboured to close Him up in the earth, as the basest of all creatures; but the angels of heaven most readily accept Him as their sovereign Lord and King; as in like manner they did in His temptation in the wilderness and in His agony in the garden.

(ii) Secondly, that the opinion of the papists and others, which think that the body of Christ went through the gravestone when He rose again, is without warrant. For the end, no doubt, why the angel rolled away the stone was that Christ might come forth. And indeed it is against the order of nature that one body should pass through another without corruption or alteration of either, considering that every body occupies a place, and two bodies at the same instant cannot be in one proper place.

(iii) Furthermore it is said that when the angel sat on the stone (Matt. 28:3,4), *His countenance was like lightning, and His raiment as white as snow*; and this served to shew what was the glory of Christ Himself. For if the servant and minister be so glorious, then endless is the glory of the Lord and Master Himself.

(iv) Lastly it is said that for fear of the angel the watchmen were astonied, and became as dead men; which teacheth us that what God would have come to pass, all the world can never hinder. For though the Jews had closed up the grave with a stone, and set a band of soldiers to watch, lest Christ should by any means be taken away, yet all this availeth nothing; by an angel from heaven the seal is broken, the stone is removed and the watchmen are at their wits ends. And this came to pass by the providence of God; that after the watchmen had testified these things to the Jews, they might at length be convicted that Christ, whom they crucified, was the Messiah.

(5) The fifth and last point is that Christ rose not alone, but accompanied with others; as St Matthew saith (Matt. 27:52,53), that *the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves, and went into the city, and appeared unto many after Christ's resurrection*. And this came to pass, that there is a reviving and quickening virtue in the resurrection of Christ, whereby He is able, not only to raise our dead bodies unto life, but also when we are dead in sin, to raise us up to

newness of life. And in this very point stands a main difference between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of any other man. For the resurrection of Peter, nothing avails to the raising of David or Paul; but Christ's resurrection avails for all that have believed in Him. By the very same power whereby He raised Himself, He raiseth all His members; and therefore He is called a *quickening spirit*. And let us mark the order observed in rising; for Christ riseth and then the saints after Him. And this came to pass to verify the Scripture, which saith (Col. 1:18) that Christ is *the firstborn of the dead*. Now He is the firstborn of the dead, in that He hath this dignity and privilege to rise to eternal life, the first of all men. It is true indeed that Lazarus and sundry others in time rose before Christ; but yet they rose to live a mortal life and to die again. Christ, He is the first of all that rose to life everlasting and to glory; never any rose before Christ in this manner. And the persons that rose with Christ are to be noted, they were the saints of God, not wicked men; whereby we are put in mind that the elect children of God only are partakers of Christ's resurrection. Indeed both good and bad rise again, but there is great difference in their rising: for the godly rise by the virtue of Christ's resurrection, and that to eternal glory; but the ungodly rise by the virtue of Christ, not as He is a redeemer, but as he is a terrible judge, and is to execute justice on them. And they rise again for this end: that besides the first death of the body, they might suffer the second death, which is the pouring forth of God's wrath upon body and soul eternally. This difference is proved unto us by that which Paul saith (1 Cor. 15:20), Christ is *the firstfruits of them that sleep*. Among the Jews such as had cornfields gathered some little quantity thereof before they reaped the rest, and offered the same unto God; signifying thereby that they acknowledged Him to be the author and giver of all increase; and this offering was also an assurance unto the owner of the blessing of God upon the rest, and this being but one handful did sanctify the whole crop. Now Christ to the dead is as the firstfruits to the rest of the corn, because His resurrection is a pledge and an assurance of the resurrection of the faithful. When a man is cast into the sea, and all his body is under the water, there is

nothing to be looked for but present death; but if he carry his head above water, there is good hope of a recovery. Christ Himself is risen as a pledge that all the just shall rise again. He is the head unto His church, and therefore all His members must needs follow in their time. It may be demanded, what became of the saints that rose again after Christ's resurrection? *Answer*: Some think they died again; but seeing they rise for this end, to manifest the quickening virtue of Christ's resurrection; it is as like that they were also glorified with Christ, and ascended with Him to heaven.

3.

Thus much of the manner of Christ's resurrection. Now follows the time when He rose again, and that is specified in the Creed: *The third day he rose again*. Thus saith our Saviour Christ unto the Pharisees (Matt. 12:40), *As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*. And though Christ was but one day and two pieces of two days in the grave (for He was buried in the evening before the Sabbath, and rose in the morning the next day after the Sabbath), yet is this sufficient to verify the saying of Christ. For if the analogy had stood in three whole days, then Christ should have risen the fourth day. And it was the pleasure of God that he should lie thus long in the grave, that it might be known that He was thoroughly dead; and He continued no longer, that He might not in His body see corruption. Again, it is said (Matt. 26:1) that Christ rose again in the end of the Sabbath, when the first day of the week began to dawn. And this very time must be considered as the real beginning of the new spiritual world in which we are made the sons of God. And as in the first day of the first world, light was commanded to shine out of darkness upon the deeps; so in the first day of this new world, the Son of righteousness riseth and giveth light to them that sit in darkness, and dispels the darkness that was under the Old Testament. And here let us mark the reason why the Sabbath day

was changed. For the first day of the week, which was the day following the Jews' Sabbath, is our Sabbath day, which day we keep holy in memory of the glorious resurrection of Christ; and therefore it is called the Lord's day. And it may not unfitly be called Sunday, though the name came first from the heathen, because on this day the blessed Son of righteousness rose from death to life.

4.

Let us now in the next place proceed to the proofs of Christ's resurrection, which are diligently to be observed, because it is one of the most principal points of our religion. For as the apostle saith (Rom. 4:25), *He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification*; and again (1 Cor. 15:14), *If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain*.

The proofs are of two sorts: first, Christ's appearances unto men; secondly, the testimonies of men.

Christ's appearances were either on the first day, or on the days following.

The appearances of Christ the same day He rose again are five:

(1) And first of all, early in the morning He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9). In this appearance, divers things are to be considered:

(i) The first, of what note and quality the party was, to whom Christ appeared. *Answer*: Mary Magdalene was one that had been possessed with seven devils, but was delivered and became a repentant sinner, and stood by when Christ suffered; and came with sweet odours when He was dead to embalm Him. And therefore to her is granted this prerogative: that she should be the first that should testify His resurrection unto men. And hence we learn that Christ is ready and willing to receive most miserable wretched sinners, even such as have been vassals and bondslaves of the devil, if they

will come to Him. And man would think it a fearful case, to be thus possessed with devils, as Mary was; but let all those that live in ignorance, and by reason thereof live in sin without repentance, know this: that their case is a thousand times worse than Mary Magdalene was. For what is an impenitent sinner? Surely, nothing else but the castle and hold of the devil, both in body and soul. For look as a captain that hath taken some hold or sconce, doth rule and govern therein, and disposeth it at his will and pleasure; even so it is with all blind and impenitent sinners; not one devil alone; but even legions of devils possess them and rule their hearts; and therefore howsoever they may soothe themselves, and say all is well for God is merciful; yet their case is far worse than Mary's was. Now then, would any be freed from this fearful bondage? Let them learn of Mary Magdalene to follow Christ, and to seek unto Him, and then albeit the devil and all his angels possess their hearts, yet Christ being the strong man, will come and cast them all out, and dwell there Himself.

(ii) The second is, what Christ in His appearance said to Mary. *Answer*: He said (John 20:17), *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*. Mary, no doubt, was glad to see Christ, and therefore looked to have conversed as familiarly with Him as she was wont before His death; but He forbids her to touch Him, that is, not to look to enjoy His corporeal presence as before, but rather to seek for His spiritual presence by faith, considering He was shortly to ascend to His Father. For this cause, when He appeared to His disciples, He stayed not long with them at any time, but only to manifest Himself unto them, thereby to prove the certainty of His resurrection. This prohibition shews first of all, that it is but a fond thing to delight in the outward picture and portraiture of Christ, as the Jesuits do, who stand much upon His outward form and lineaments. Secondly, it overthroweth the popish crucifixes, and all the carved and molten images of Christ, wherein the papists worship Him. For corporeal presence is not now required; therefore spiritual worship only must be given unto Him. Thirdly, it overthroweth the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. Many are of

mind that they cannot receive Christ, except they eat and drink His body and blood corporeally; but it is not much material whether we touch Him with the bodily hand or not, so be it we apprehend Him spiritually by faith. Lastly, as we must not have earthly considerations of Christ; so must we on the contrary labour for the spiritual hand of faith, which may reach up itself to heaven, and there lay hold upon Him. This is the very thing which Christ insinuateth unto Mary, saying, *Touch me not*. And St Paul saith (2 Cor. 5:16,17), *Henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea though we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him no more*; that is, we know Him no more as a man living among us, and therefore he addeth, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*; and this new creation is not by the bodily presence of Christ, but by the apprehension of faith.

(2) The second appearance was to Mary Magdalene and to the other Mary (Matt. 28:9,10), as they were going from the grave to tell His disciples; at which time, Christ meets them and bids them go tell His brethren that He is risen again.

(i) And whereas Christ sendeth women to His disciples, He purposed hereby to check them for their unbelief. For these women forsook Him not at His death, but stood by and saw Him suffer, and when He was buried, they came to embalm Him; but all this while, what became of His disciples? Surely, Peter denied Him, and all the rest fled away, even James and John the sons of thunder, save that John stood aloof to behold His death. Hereupon Christ, to make them ashamed of their fault, sendeth these women unto them, to publish that unto them which they by their calling ought above another to have published.

(ii) Secondly, this teacheth that whereas Christ buildeth His kingdom and publisheth His gospel by apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers; He can if it so please Him, perform the same by other means. In this His second appearance, He used weak and silly women to publish His resurrection, and

thereby sheweth that He is not bound by the ordinary means which now He useth.

(iii) Thirdly, He sent them to His disciples to shew that howsoever they had dealt unfaithfully with Him by forsaking Him and denying Him, yet He had not quite forsaken them; but if they would repent and believe, He would receive them into His love and favour again, and therefore calleth them His brethren, saying, *Go and tell my brethren* (Mark 16:7). This teacheth us a good lesson, that howsoever our sins past are to humble us in regard of ourselves, yet must they not cut off or dismay us from seeking unto Christ; yea, even then when we are laden with the burden of them, we must come unto Him and He will ease us.

(iv) Fourthly, whereas silly women are sent to teach Christ's disciples, which were scholars brought up in His own school, we are admonished that superiority in place and calling must not hinder us sometime to hear and to be taught of our inferiors. Job saith (Job 31:13) he never refused the counsel of his servant; and Naaman the Syrian (2 Kin. 5:3,13) obeyed the counsel of a silly maid which advised him to go to the prophet of the Lord in Samaria to be cured of his leprosy, and when he had been with the prophet, he obeyed the counsel of his servants that persuaded him to do all the prophet had said, *Wash and be clean*.

Now after that the women are come to the disciples and make relation of Christ's resurrection, the text saith (Luke 24:11), *Their words seemed as feigned things unto them, neither believed they them*. Hence we learn two things:

(i) The first, that men of themselves cannot believe the doctrine of Christian religion; it is a hard matter for a man to believe sundry things in the work of creation. The temporal deliverance of the children of Israel seemed to them *as a dream* (Psa. 126:1); and the resurrection of Christ, even to Christ's own disciples, seemed a *feigned thing*.

(ii) The second, that it is a hard thing truly and unfeignedly to believe the points of religion. Disciples brought up in the school of Christ, and often catechised in this very point of Christ's resurrection, yet dull are they to believe it. This confuteth and condemneth our carnal gospellers, that make it the lightest and easiest thing that can be to believe in Christ; and therefore they say their faith is so strong that they would not for all the world doubt of God's mercy; whereas indeed they are deceived, and have no faith at all, but blind presumption.

(3) The third appearance was on this manner: As two of Christ's disciples were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus, about threescore furlongs, and talked together of all the things that were done, Jesus drew near and talked with them, but their eyes were holden that they could not know Him; and as they went He communed with them and proved out of the Scripture His resurrection, expounding unto them all things that were written of Him. Then they made Him stay with them, and their eyes were opened, and they knew Him by breaking of bread; but He was taken out of their sight. In this notable appearance we may observe these four points:

(i) The first, that Christ held their eyes that they could not know Him. They saw a man indeed, but who He was they could not tell. By this it is more than manifest that the use of our outward senses, as seeing, feeling, smelling etc., is supplied unto us continually by the power of Christ; and therefore even in these things we must acknowledge the continual goodness of God. Now if one man cannot so much as discern another but by the blessing of Christ, then shall we never be able to discern the way of life from the way of death without Him; and therefore we must pray unto God that He would give us His Holy Spirit to enlighten the eyes of our understanding, whereby we may be able to see and know the way that leadeth unto life, and also to walk in the same.

(ii) The second, that as Christ was in expounding the Scriptures unto them (v.32), their *hearts burned within them*. By this we learn that howsoever the ministers of God publish the gospel to the outward ears of men, yet it is the proper work of Christ alone to touch and enflame the heart by the fire of His Holy Spirit, and to quicken and raise men up to the life of righteousness and true holiness. It is He only that *baptiseth with the Holy Ghost and with fire* (Luke 3:16). And it further admonisheth us that we should hear the Word preached from the mouth of God's ministers with burning and melting hearts; but alas, the ordinary practice is flat contrary; men's eyes are drowsy and heavy, and their hearts dead and frozen within them; and that is the cause why after much teaching there follows but little profit.

(iii) The third thing is that Christ did eat with the two disciples, and was known of them in breaking bread (vv.30,31). It is very likely that our Saviour Christ did in some special manner bless the bread which He brake, whereby His disciples discerned Him from others. And in like manner we must by blessing our meats and drinks distinguish ourselves, though not from such as are the servants of God, yet from all ungodly and careless men. Many being silent themselves do make their children to give thanks and to bless their meats. And indeed it is a commendable thing if it be done sometimes to nurture the child; but for men to disburden themselves wholly of this duty is a fault. And it is a shame that the mouth which openeth itself to receive the good creatures of God, should never open itself to bless and praise God for the same. Therefore in this action of eating and drinking, let us shew ourselves followers of Christ, that as by blessing the same, He was known from all other; so we may also hereby distinguish ourselves from the profane and wicked of this world. Otherwise what difference shall there be between us and the very hog that eats mast on the ground, but never looks up to the tree from whence it falls? And as Christ revealed Himself unto His disciples at that time when they caused Him to eat meat with them; so let us suffer Christ to be our guest, and let us entertain Him in His members, and no doubt He will bless us and withal reveal Himself unto us.

(iv) The fourth thing is that, having eaten, He is taken out of their sight (v.31). And this came to pass not because the body of Christ became spiritual, but because either He held their eyes as before, or He departed with celerity and speed according to the properties of a body glorified.

(4) The fourth appearance of Christ was to Peter alone, mentioned only by St Paul (1 Cor. 15:5), *He was seen of Cephas*.

(5) The fifth appearance was to all the disciples together save Thomas (John 20:19). In it we must consider three things which are all effectual arguments to prove Christ's resurrection.

(i) The first, that He came and stood in the midst among them, the doors being shut. Now it may be demanded, how this could be? *Answer*: The papists say, His body was glorified and so passed through the door, but (as I have said) it is against the nature of a body that one should pass through another as heat doth through a piece of iron, both bodies remaining entire and sound. Therefore we may rather think that whereas Christ came in when the doors were shut; it was either because by His mighty power He caused the doors to give place, the disciples not knowing how; or else because He altered the very substance of the doors that His body might pass through, as He thickened the waters to carry His body when He walked upon the sea. Now if this be true, as very like it is, that these dumb creatures gave place to Christ and became pliable unto His commandment, then much more ought we to carry our hearts conformable and pliant to the will of our Lord Jesus in all His commandments.

(ii) The second point is, that when as the disciples thought Christ to have been a spirit; He, to prove the truth of His manhood, shewed unto them His hands and feet, and the wound in His side, and calls for meat and eats among them. But it may be asked, how this could be, considering that a glorified body hath no blemish and needs not to eat, but is supported by God without meat; for if this be true in our bodies when they shall be

glorified, then much more was it true in Christ. *Answer*: True it is, a glorified body hath no blemishes; but our Saviour Christ had not yet entered into the fullness of His glory. If He had been fully glorified, He could not so sensibly and plainly have made manifest the truth of His resurrection unto His disciples; and therefore for their sakes and ours, He is content, after His entrance into glory, still to retain in His body some remnants of the ignominies and blemishes which, if it had pleased Him, He might have laid aside. He is also content to eat, not for need, but to prove that His body was not a body in shew, but a true body. This teacheth us two lessons:

(a) First, if Christ for our good and comfort be content to retain these ignominious blemishes, then answerably every one of us must as good followers of Christ refer the works of our callings to the good of others, as Paul saith (1 Cor. 9:19), He was *free from all men*, yet he was *content to become all things unto all men, that by all means* he *might win the more*.

(b) Secondly, we learn that for the good of our neighbour and for the maintaining of love and charity, we must be content to yield from our own right, as in this place our Saviour yields of His own glory for the good of His church.

(iii) The third point is, that He then gave the disciples their apostolical commission, saying, *Go and teach all nations*; of which, three points are to be considered:

(a) The first, to whom it is given? *Answer*: To them all, as well to one as to another, and not to Peter only. And this overthrows the fond and forged opinions of the papists concerning Peter's supremacy. If his calling had been above the rest, then he should have had a special commission above the rest. But one and the same commission is given alike to all.

(b) The second, that with the commission He gives His Spirit; for whom He appointeth to publish His will and Word, them he furnisheth with sufficient

gifts of His Holy Spirit to discharge that great function. And therefore it is a defect that any are set apart to be ministers of the gospel of Christ, which have not received the spirit of knowledge, the spirit of wisdom, and the spirit of prophecy in some measure.

(c) The third point is that in conferring of His Spirit, He useth an outward sign, for the text saith (John 20:22), *He breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost*. The reasons hereof may be these:

i. First, when God created Adam, and put into Him a living soul, it is said (Gen. 2:7), *He breathed in his face*. And so our Saviour Christ in giving unto His disciples the Holy Ghost, doth the same, to shew unto them that the same person that giveth life, giveth grace; and also to signify unto them that being to send them over all the world to preach His gospel, He was as it were to make a second creation of man, by renewing the image of God in him which he had lost by the fall of Adam.

ii. Again, He breathed on them in giving His Spirit, to put them in mind that their preaching of the gospel could not be effectual in the hearts of their hearers, before the Lord doth breathe into them His Spirit, and thereby draw them to believe; and therefore the spouse of Christ desires the Lord (Song 4:16) to send forth His north and south wind to blow on her garden, that the spices thereof might flow out. The garden is the church of God, which desires Christ to comfort her and to pour out the graces of His Spirit on her that the people of God, which are the herbs and trees of righteousness, may bring forth sweet spices, whose fruit may be for meat, and their leaves for medicines.

Thus much for the five appearances of Christ the same day He rose again. Now follow the rest of His appearances which were in the forty days following, which are in number five:

(1) The first is mentioned in St John in these words (John 20:26): *Eight days after when the disciples were within, and Thomas with them, came Jesus when the doors were shut, and stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you*. In it we must consider two things:

(i) The occasion thereof.

(ii) The dealing of Christ.

(i) The occasion was this: After Christ had appeared unto the other disciples in Thomas' absence, they told him that they had seen the Lord; but he made answer (v.25), *Except I see in His body the print of His nails, and put mine hand into His side, I will not believe*. Now eight days after, our Saviour Christ appeared again unto all His disciples, especially for the curing of Thomas his unbelief, which was no small sin, considering it contains in it three great sins:

(a) The first is blindness of mind; for he had been an hearer of our Saviour Christ a long time, and had been instructed touching the resurrection divers times. He was also with Christ and saw Him when he raised Lazarus and had seen, or at leastwise had heard the miracle which He did; and also had heard all the disciples say that they had seen the Lord, and yet it will not sink into his head.

(b) The second is deadness of heart. When our Saviour Christ went to raise Lazarus that was dead, Thomas spake very confidently to his fellow disciples (John 11:16), *Let us go, that we may die with Him*. Yet when Christ was crucified, he fled away, and is the longest from Christ after His resurrection, and when he is currently told thereof, he will not acknowledge it or yield unto it.

(c) The third is wilfulness; for when the disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he said flatly that unless he saw in His hands the print of his

nails he would not believe, and that which is worse than all this, he continued eight days in this wilful mind.

Now in this exceeding measure of unbelief in Thomas, any man, even he that had the most grace, may see what a mass of unbelief is in himself, and what wilfulness and untowardness to any good thing, in so much that we may truly say with David (Psa.8:4), *What is man that thou so regardest him*? And if such measure of unbelief was in such men as the disciples were, then we may assure ourselves that it doth much more exceed in the common profession of religion in these days, let them protest to the contrary what they will.

Now the cause of his unbelief was this: he makes a law unto himself that he will see and feel, or else he will not believe; but this is flat against the nature of faith which consisteth neither in seeing nor feeling. Indeed in things natural a man must first have experience in seeing and feeling, and then belief; but it is contrary in divinity, a man must first have faith and belief, and then comes experience afterward. But Thomas having not learned this, doth overshoot himself; and herein also many deceive themselves, which think they have no faith because they have no feeling. For the chiefest feeling that we must have in this life, must be the feeling of our sins and the miseries of this life, and though we have no other feeling at all, yet we must not therefore cease to believe.

(ii) In Christ's dealing with Thomas we may consider three actions:

(a) The first, that He speaks to Thomas alone (v.27), and answers him accordingly to the very words which he had spoken of Him in His absence, and that word for word. And by this He laboured to overthrow his unbelief, and to convince him that being absent He knew what he spake. And by this we learn that though we want the bodily presence of Christ, He now being in heaven, yet He knows well what we say, and if needs were, could repeat all our sayings word by word; and if it were not so, how could it be true that

we must give an account of every idle word? Now this must teach us to look that our speech be gracious according to the role of God's holy Word. Secondly, this must make us willing and ready to direct our prayers to Christ, considering He knoweth what we pray for, and heareth every word we speak.

(b) The second action is that Christ condescends to Thomas and gives him liberty to feel the print of the nails and to put his finger into His side. He might have rejected Thomas for his wilfulness, yet to help his unbelief, He yieldeth unto his weakness. This sheweth that Christ is most compassionate to all those that unfeignedly repent them of their sins and cleave unto Him, although they do it laden with manifold wants. David saith that the Lord hath compassion on them that fear Him, as a father hath compassion on his children (Psa. 103:13); *for He knoweth of what we are made*. And the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 42:3), *He will not break the bruised reed, and smoking flax He will not quench*. When a child is very sick, insomuch that it casteth up all the meat which it taketh, the mother will not be offended thereat, but rather pity it. Now our Saviour Christ is ten thousand times more merciful to them that believe in Him, than any mother is or can be.

(c) The third action is that when Thomas had seen and felt the wounds, Christ revived his faith, whereupon he brake forth and said (v.28), *My Lord and my God*. In which words he doth most notably bewail his blindness and unbelief; and as a fire that hath been smothered, so doth his faith burst forth and shew itself. And in this example of Thomas we may see the estate of God's people in this life. First, God giveth them faith, yet afterward for a time He doth (as it were) hide the same in some corner of their hearts, so as they have no feeling thereof, but think themselves to be void of all grace; and this He doth for no other end but to humble them; and yet again after all this, the first grace is renewed and revived. Thus dealt the Lord with David and Solomon (for whereas he was a penman of Scripture, and therefore an holy man of God, we may not think that he was wholly forsaken) with

Peter, and in this place with Thomas. And the experience of this shall every servant of God find himself.

(2) The second appearance of Christ was to seven of His disciples as they went on fishing (John 21:1-6), in which He gives three testimonies of His Godhead, and that by death His power was nothing diminished:

(i) The first, that when the disciples had fished all night and caught nothing, afterward by His direction they catch fish in abundance and that presently. This teacheth us that Christ is a sovereign Lord over all creatures, and hath the disposing of them in His own hands; and that if good success follow not when men are painful in their callings, it is because God will prepare and make them fit for a further blessing. Christ comes in the morning and gives His disciples a great draught of fish; yet before this can be, they must labour al night in vain. Joseph must be made ruler over all Egypt, but first he must be cast into a dungeon where he can see no sun, nor light, to prepare him to that honour. And David must be king over Israel, but the Lord will first prepare him hereunto, by raising up Saul to persecute him. Therefore when God sendeth any hindrances unto us in our callings, we must not despair, nor be discouraged; for they are the means whereby God maketh us fit to receive greater blessings at His hands, either in this life or in the life to come.

(ii) The second is, that the net was unbroken, though it had in it great fishes to the number of an hundred and fifty three.

(iii) The third, that when the disciples came to land, they saw hot coals and fish laid thereon, and bread. Now some may ask, whence was this food? *Answer*: The same Lord that was able to provide a whale to swallow up Jonah, and so to save him; and He that was able to provide a fish for Peter's angle with a piece of twenty pence in his mouth; and to make a little bread and a few fishes to feed so many thousands in the wilderness, the same also doth of Himself provide bread and fishes for the disciples. This

teacheth us that not only the blessing, but also the very having of meat, drink, apparel is from Christ; and hereupon all states of men, even the kings of the earth, are taught to pray that God would give them their daily bread. Again, when we sit down to eat and drink, this must put us in mind that we are the guests of Christ Himself; our food which we have, cometh of His mere gift; and He it is that entertains us if we could see it. And for this cause we must soberly and with great reverence, in fear and trembling, use all God's creatures as in His presence. And when we eat and drink, we must always look that all our speech be such as may beseem the guests of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Usually the practice of men is far otherwise, for in feasting many take liberty to surfeit and to be drunk, to swear and to blaspheme; but if we serve the Lord let us remember whose guest we are, and who is our entertainer; and so behave ourselves as being in His presence, that all our actions and words may tend to His glory.

(3) The third appearance was to James, as St Paul recordeth (1 Cor. 15:7), although the same be not mentioned in any of the evangelists.

(4) The fourth was to all the disciples in a mountain whither He had appointed them to come (Matt. 28:16).

(5) The fifth and last appearance was in the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:3-12), when He ascended into heaven.

Of these three last appearances, because the Holy Ghost hath only mentioned them, I omit to speak, and with the repeating of them I let them pass.

Thus much of the appearances of Christ after His resurrection. The witnesses thereof are of three sorts:

(1) Angels.

(2) Women that came to the grave to embalm Him.

(3) Christ's own disciples who did publish and preach the same according as they had seen and heard of our Saviour Christ.

And of these, likewise I omit to speak, because there is not any special thing mentioned of them by the evangelists.

5.

Now follow the uses, which are twofold: some respect Christ, and some respect ourselves.

Uses which concern Christ are three:

(1) Whereas Christ Jesus being stark dead rose again to life by His own power; it serveth to prove unto us that He was the Son of God. Thus Paul speaking of Christ saith (Rom. 1:4) that *He was declared mightily to be the Son of God touching the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection from the dead*. And by the mouth of David, God said (Psa. 2:7), *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. Which place must be understood not so much of the eternal generation of Christ before all worlds, as of the manifestation thereof in time after this manner. *This day*, that is, at the time of thine own incarnation, but especially at the day of thy resurrection; *I have begotten thee*, that is, I have made manifest that thou art my Son. So is this place expounded by St Paul in the Acts (Acts 13:33).

(2) Secondly, Christ's rising from death by His own power, proves to us evidently that He is Lord over all things that are. And this use St Paul makes hereof, for he saith (Rom. 14:9), Christ therefore died, *that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the quick*. And indeed whereas He rose again on this manner, He did hereby shew Himself most plainly to be a

mighty Prince over the grave, death, hell, and condemnation, and one that had all-sufficient power to overcome them.

(3) Thirdly, it proves unto us that He was a perfect priest, and that His death and passion was a perfect satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of mankind. For whereas Christ died, He died for our sins. Now if He had not fully satisfied for them all (though there had remained but one sin, for which He had made no satisfaction), He had not risen again; but death which came into the world by sin, and is strengthened by it, would have held Him in bondage; and therefore, whereas He rose again, it is more than manifest that He hath made so full a satisfaction that the merit thereof doth and shall countervail the justice of God for all our offences. To this purpose, Paul saith (1 Cor. 15:17*), If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain and you are yet in your sins*, that is, Christ had not satisfied for your sins, or at least you could not possibly have known that He had made satisfaction for any of them, if He had not risen again.

The uses which concern ourselves are of two sorts: (1) comforts to the children of God, and (2) duties that are to be learned and practised of us all.

(1) The comforts are especially three:

(i) First, Christ's resurrection serveth for the justification of all that believe in Him, even before God the Father; as Paul saith (Rom. 4:25), Christ *was given to death for our sins, and is risen again for our justification*. Which words have this meaning: When Christ died, we must not consider Him as a private man, as we have shewed before, but as one that stood in the stead and room of all the elect. In His death He bare our sins, and suffered all that we should have suffered in our own persons forever, and the guilt of our offences was laid upon Him. And therefore Isaiah saith (Isa. 53;12), *He was numbered among the wicked*. Now, in this His rising again, He freed and disburdened Himself not from any sins of His own, because He was without sin, but from the guilt and punishment of our sins imputed unto Him. And

hence it comes to pass that all those which put their trust and affiance in the merit of Christ, at the very first instant of their believing have their own sins not imputed unto them, and His righteousness imputed.

(ii) Secondly, the resurrection of Christ serveth as a notable means to work inward sanctification, as St Peter saith (1 Pet. 1:3), *We are regenerate to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. And St Paul (Rom. 6:4,5), *We are* (saith he) *then buried with Him by baptism into His death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we be grafted with Him to the similitude of His death, we shall be also to the similitude of His resurrection*. Which words import thus much: that as Christ by the power of His own Godhead, freed His manhood from death and from the guilt of our sins; so doth He free those that are knit unto Him by the bond of one Spirit, from the corruption of their natures in which they are dead, that they may live unto God. In the natural body, the head is the fountain of all the senses and of motion; and therefore by sundry nerves dispersed through the body, the power of moving and of sense is derived even to the least parts; so as the hands and feet move by means of that power which comes from the head. And so it is in the spiritual body of Christ, namely, the church. He is the Head and the fountain of life, and therefore He conveyeth spiritual life to every one of His members; and that very power of His Godhead, whereby He raised up Himself when he was dead, He conveyeth from Himself to His members, and thereby raised them up from the death of sin to newness of life. And look as in a perfect body, when the head hath sense and motion, the hand that is of the same body hath also the sense and motion convenient for it; so likewise Christ being the resurrection and the life; as there is spiritual life in Him, so every member of His shall feel in itself spiritual sense and motion, whereby it is raised up from sin and liveth unto God.

For the better conceiving of this, we must consider two things: the outward means of this spiritual life, and the measure of it.

(a) For the means, if we will have common water, we must go to the well; and if we would have water of life, we must go unto Christ, who saith (John 7:37), *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*. Now this well of the water of life is very deep, and we have nothing to draw with, therefore we must have our pipes and conduits to convey the same to us, which are the Word of God preached, and the administration of the sacraments. Christ saith (John 5:25), *The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live*; where by *the dead* is meant, not the dead in the grave, but those that are dead in sin. And again, Christ saith (John 6:63), *The words which I speak are spirit and life*, because the Word of God is the pipe whereby He conveyeth into our dead hearts spirit and life. As Christ when He raised up dead men, did only speak the word and they were made alive; and at the day of judgment by His very voice, when the trumpet shall blow, all that are dead shall rise again; so it is in the first resurrection; they that are dead in their sins, at His voice uttered in the ministry of the Word, shall rise again. To go further, Christ raised three from the dead; Jairus' daughter newly dead, the widow's son dead and wound up and lying on the hearse, Lazarus dead and buried and stinking in the grave; and all this He did by His very voice; so also by the preaching of His Word, He raiseth all sorts of sinners, even such as have lien long in their sins as rotting and stinking carrion. The sacraments also are the pipes and conduits whereby God conveyeth grace to the heart, if they are compared to, that is, if they be received in unfeigned repentance for all our sins, and with a true lively faith in Christ for the pardon of the same sins. And so, I take it, they be rightly used, flagons of wine, which revive the church, being sick and fallen into a swoon (Song 2:3).

(b) As for the measure of life derived from Christ, it is but small in this life, and given by little and little, as Hosea saith (Hos. 6:1,2), *The Lord hath*

spoiled us, and He will heal us, He hath wounded us, and He will bind us up. After two days he will revive us, and in the third He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. The prophet Ezekiel in a vision is carried into the midst of a field full of dead bones (Ezek. 37:1-10), and he is caused to prophesy over them, and say, *O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord*. At the first there was a shaking, and the bones came together bone to bone, and their sinews and flesh grew upon them, and upon the flesh grew a skin. Then he prophesied unto the winds a second time, and they lived and stood upon their feet, for the breath came upon them, and they were an exceeding great army of men. Hereby it signifieth not only the state of the Jews after their captivity, but in them the state of the whole church of God. For their temporal deliverances signifieth further a spiritual deliverance. And we may here see most plainly that God worketh in the hearts of His children the gifts and graces of regeneration by little and little. First, He giveth no more than flesh, sinews and skin; then after He giveth them further graces of His Spirit, which quickeneth them and maketh them alive unto God. The same also we may see in the vision of the waters that ran out of the temple (Ezek. 47:1-5). First, a man must wade to the ankles, then after to the knees, and so to the loins; then after the waters grow to a river that cannot be passed over; and so the Lord conveyeth His graces by little and little, till at last men have a full measure thereof.

(iii) Thirdly, the resurrection of Christ serves as an argument to prove unto us our resurrection at the day of judgment. Paul saith (Rom. 8:11), *If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies*. Some will say that this is no benefit, for all must rise again, as well the wicked as the godly. *Answer*: True indeed; but yet the wicked rise not again by the same cause that the godly do. They rise again by the power of Christ, not as He is a Saviour, but as He is a judge to condemn them. For God had said to Adam; at what time he should eat of the forbidden fruit, he should die the death; meaning a double death, both the first and the second death. Now

then, the ungodly rise again, that God may inflict upon them the punishment of the second death, which is the reward of sin, that so God's justice may be satisfied. But the godly rise again by the power of Christ their Head and Redeemer, who raiseth them up that they may be partakers of the benefit of His death, which is to enjoy both in body and soul the kingdom of heaven, which He hath so dearly bought for them.

So much for the comforts; now follow the duties, and they are also three:

(i) First, as Christ Jesus when He was dead rose again from death to life by His own power, so we by His grace, in imitation of Christ, must endeavour ourselves to rise up from all our sins, both original and actual, unto newness of life. This is worthily set down by the apostle (Rom. 6:4) saying, *We are buried by baptism into His death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life*. And therefore we must endeavour ourselves to shew the same power to be in us every day, by rising up from our own personal sins to a reformed life. This ought to be remembered of us because howsoever many hear and know this point, yet very few do practise the same. For (to speak plainly) as dead men buried would never hear though a man should speak never so loud; so undoubtedly among us there be also many living men which are almost in the same case. The ministers of God may cry unto them daily and iterate the same thing a thousand times, and tell them that they must rise up from their sins and lead a new life, but they hear no more than the dead carcass that lieth in the grave. Indeed men hear with their outward ears, but they are so far from practising this duty that they may judge it to be a matter of reproach and ignominy. And those which make any conscience of this duty, how they are laden with nicknames and taunts, who knoweth not? I need not to rehearse them; so odious a thing nowadays is the rising from sin to newness of life. Sound a trumpet in a dead man's ears, he stirs not; and let us cry amendment of life till breath go out of our bodies, no man almost saith, *What have I done*? And for this cause undoubtedly, if it were not for

conscience of that duty which men owe unto God, we should have but few ministers in England. For it is the joy of a minister to see the unfeigned conversion of his people; whereas, alas men generally lie snorting in their corruptions, and rather go forward in them still, than come to any amendment; such is the wonderful hardness that hath possessed the hearts of most men. He which hath but half an eye may see this to be true. Oh! How exceeds atheism in all places, contempt of God's worship, profanation of the Sabbath; the whoredoms and fornications, the cruelty and oppression of this age cry to heaven for vengeance. By these and such like sins the world crucifies Christ again. For look as Pilate's soldiers with the wicked Jews took Christ and stripped Him of His garments, buffeted Him and slew Him; so ungodly men by their wicked behaviour strip Him of all honour and slay Him again. If an infidel should come among us and yield himself to be of our religion, after he had seen the behaviour of men, he would peradventure leave all religion; for he might say, surely it seems this God whom these men worship, is not the true God, but a God of licentious liberty. And that which is more, whereas at all times we ought to shew ourselves new creatures, and to walk worthy of our Saviour and Redeemer, and therefore also ought to rise out of our sins, and to live in righteousness and true holiness, yet we for the most part go on still forward in sin, and every day go deeper than other to hellward. This hath been heretofore the common practice, but let us now learn after the example of Christ, being quickened and revived by His grace, to endeavour ourselves especially to come out of the grave of sin, and learn to make conscience of every bad action. True it is, a Christian man may use the creatures of God for his delight, in a moderate and godly manner, but Christ never gave liberty to any to live licentiously; for (1 Cor. 7:22) *He that is free, is yet servant unto Christ*, as Paul saith; and therefore we must not enterprise anything but that which may be a work of some good duty unto God; to which end the apostle saith (Eph. 5:14), *Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life*. If this will not move us, yet let the judgment of God draw us thereunto. *Blessed is he* (saith the Holy Ghost

(Rev. 20:6)) *that hath part in the first resurrection; for on such the second death hath no power*; where mention is made of a double death; the first is the separation of soul and body, the second is the eternal condemnation of soul and body in hell fire. Would we now escape the second death after this life? We must then labour in this life to be partakers of the first resurrection, and that on this manner: look what sins we have lived in heretofore, we must endeavour to come out of them all and lead a better life according to all the commandments of God. But if it be so that ye will have no care of your own souls, go on hardly to your own peril, and so ye shall be sure to enter into the second death, which is eternal damnation.

(ii) Secondly, we are taught by the example of St Paul (Phil. 3:10), to labour above all things *to know Christ and the virtue of His resurrection*. And this we shall do, when we can say by experience that our hearts are not content with a drowsy profession of religion, but that we feel the same power of Christ whereby He raised up Himself from death to life, to be effectual and powerful in us, to work in our hearts a conversion from all our sins, wherein we have lien dead, to newness of life, with care to live godly in Christ Jesus. And that we may further attain to all this, we must come to hear the Word of God preached and taught, with fear and trembling; having heard the Word, we must meditate therein, and pray unto God, not only publicly but privately also, entreating Him that He would reach forth His hand and pull us out of the grave of sin wherein we have been lien dead so long. And in so doing, the Lord of His mercy, according as He hath promised, will send His Spirit of grace into our hearts, to work in us an inward sense and feeling of the virtue of Christ's resurrection. So dealt He with the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24); they were occupied in the meditation of Christ, His death and passion; and whilst they were in hearing of Christ, who conferred with them, He gave them such a measure of His Spirit as made their hearts to burn within them (v.32). And Paul (Eph. 1:18-20) prayeth for the Ephesians, that God would enlighten their eyes, that they

might see and feel in themselves the exceeding greatness of the power of God, which he wrought in Christ Jesus when He raised Him from the dead.

(iii) Thirdly, as St Paul saith (Col. 3:1), *If we be risen with Christ, then we must seek the things that are above*. But how and by what means can we rise with Christ, seeing we did not die with Him? *Answer*: We rise with Christ thus: The burgess of a town in the parliament house beareth the person of the whole town, and whatsoever he saith, that the whole town saith, and whatsoever is done to him, is also done to all the town. So Christ upon the cross stood in our place and bare our person; and what He suffered, we suffered; and when He died, all the faithful died in Him. And so likewise as He is risen again, so are all the faithful risen in Him. The consideration whereof doth teach us that we must not have our hearts wedded to this world. We may use the things of this life, but yet so as though we used them not. For all our love and care must be for things above, and specially we must seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We must therefore sue for the pardon of sin, for reconciliation to God in Christ, and for sanctification. These are the precious pearls which we must seek, and when we have found them, we must sell all that we have to buy them; and having bought them, we must lay them up in the secret corners of our hearts, valuing and esteeming of them better than all things in the world beside.

He Ascended into Heaven

Thus much of Christ's resurrection, containing the first degree of Christ's exaltation; now followeth the second in these words: *He ascended into*

heaven. In the handling whereof, we are to consider these special points:

1. The time of His ascension.

2. The place.

3. The manner.

4. The witnesses.

5. The uses thereof.

1.

For the first, the time of Christ's ascension was forty days after His resurrection, when He taught His disciples the *things which appertain to the kingdom of God* (Acts 1:3). And this shews that He is a most faithful King over His church, procuring the good thereof. And therefore Isaiah saith (Isa. 9:6), *The government is on His shoulders*; and the apostle saith (Heb. 3:5,6) He was more faithful in all the house of God than Moses was. Hence we gather that whereas the apostles changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the eighth, it was no doubt by the counsel and direction of Christ before His ascension. And likewise in that they planted churches and appointed teachers and meet overseers for the guiding and instruction hereof, we may resolve ourselves that Christ prescribed the same unto them before His ascension; and for these and such like causes did He ascend no sooner.

Now look what care Christ at His ascension had over His church, the same must all masters of families have over their households when God shall call them out of this world. They must have care not only that their families be well governed while they live; but also that after their death, peace, love and good order may be continued in their posterity. And therefore the prophet Isaiah is sent to Hezekiah, king of Judah, to bid him (Isa. 38:1), *Set his house in order, for he must die*; signifying that it is the duty of a good

master of a family to have care not only for the government of his house whilst he is alive, but also that it may be well governed when he is dead. The same also must be practised of God's ministers. A part of whole fidelity is this: that they have not only a care to feed their particular flocks while they are alive, but also that they further provide for the people after their departure, as much as they can. Example whereof we have in Peter, who saith (2 Pet. 1:15), *I will endeavour always that ye may be able also to have remembrance of these things after my departure*.

2.

The place of Christ's ascension was the Mount of Olives near Bethany (Luke 24:50, 19:29; Acts 1:12); and it was the same place from whence Christ went to Jerusalem to be crucified. One place served to be a passage both to pain and torments, and also to glory. This shews that the way to the kingdom of heaven is through afflictions. There are many which have God's hand heavy upon them in lingering sicknesses, as the dead palsy and such like; wherein they are fain to lie many years without hope of cure, whereupon their beds, which should be unto them places of rest and ease, are but places of woe and misery. Yet may these men hence have great comfort, if they can make good use of their sicknesses; for the beds whereon they suffer to much torment, shall be places from whence they shall pass to joy and happiness. Again, there be many that for the testimony of the truth, and for religion's sake, suffer imprisonment, with many afflictions; now if they can use their afflictions well, their prisons shall be Bethanies unto them; although they be places of bondage, yet God will at length make them places of entrance to liberty. Many a man for the maintaining of faith and good conscience, is banished out of his country, and is fain to live in a strange place among a people to whom he is unknown; but let him use it well; for though it be a place of grief for a time, as Bethany was to Christ when He went to suffer, yet God will make it one day to be a passage into heaven.

3.

Thus much of the place of His ascending. The third thing to be considered is the manner of Christ's ascension, and it containeth three points:

(1) The first, that Christ being now to ascend, *lift up His hands and blessed His disciples* (Luke 24:50). In the Scriptures are mentioned divers kinds of blessings:

(i) The first, when one prayeth to God for a blessing upon another; and this blessing do kings and princes bestow upon their subjects, and parents on their children. And for this cause children are well taught to ask their father's and mother's blessing, that they may pray to God to bless them.

(ii) There is another kind of blessing, when a man doth not only pray for a blessing, but also pronounceth it. This did the priests in the Old Testament; and thus Melchizedek (Gen. 14:19) when he met Abraham blessed him, saying*, Blessed art thou Abraham of God, the most high possessor of heaven and earth*. And this was the ordinary duty of the priests, prescribed by God Himself; and therefore the very form of words which they used is set down after this manner (Num. 6:24-26): *The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make His face to shine upon thee* etc.

(iii) The third kind of blessing is when a man doth not only pray to God and pronounce blessing, but by the spirit of prophecy doth foretell a particular blessing upon any. Thus Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau (Gen. 27:28,29,39,40), particularly foretelling both their estates. And Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs (Gen. 49) by the same spirit foretelling them what should befall them many hundred years after.

Now our Saviour Christ did not bless His disciples any of these three ways; and therefore there remaineth a fourth kind of blessing which He used, and that was after this manner: Christ in blessing His disciples did not only

pronounce or foretell a blessing that should come to His disciples, but did confer and give the same unto them. For He is the fountain and author of all blessings. And therefore Paul saith (Eph. 1:3) that *God the Father hath blessed us in all spiritual blessings in Christ*.

Hence we learn:

(i) First, that all those which deny themselves and flee to Christ, and put their affiance in Him, shall be freed from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God due unto them for their sins, whatsoever they are.

(ii) Secondly, that the curses of men must not discourage us from doing well. For though men curse, yet Christ blesseth; and for this cause He saith (Luke 6:26), *Woe be unto you when all men speak well of you*; as if He should say, then you want the blessing of God. And we must remember that when men shall curse us for doing our duty, even then the blessing of God shall be upon us; and the curse causeless shall not hurt. And God saith to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) He will curse them that curse him.

(iii) Thirdly, we learn that no witchcraft nor sorcery (which often are done with cursing) shall be able to hurt us. For look where Christ will bless, there all the devils in hell can never fasten a curse. This is found true by experience. For when Balaam (Num. 23:23) the wizard should have cursed the people of Israel, and had assayed to do it many ways but could not; at length he said, *There is no sorcery against Jacob, nor soothsaying against Israel*. This is a notable comfort to the people of God, that witches and sorcerers, do what they can, shall never be able to hurt them. It may be that their bad practice may annoy men's bodies and goods, yet the Lord will turn all to a blessing upon His servants, either in this life, or in the life to come.

(2) The second point is that Christ *went apart from His disciples, and ascended upward toward heaven in their sight* (Luke 24:51). For the right understanding of this, sundry special points must be observed:

(i) The first, that lifting up of His body was principally by the mighty power of His Godhead, and partly by the supernatural property of a glorified body, which is to move as well upward as downward, without constraint or violence.

(ii) The second, that Christ did go from earth to heaven really and actually, and not in appearance only.

(iii) The third, that He went visibly in the sight of His disciples.

(iv) The fourth, that He went locally, by changing His place and going from earth to heaven, so as He is no more on earth bodily as we are now on earth.

It may be objected that Christ made a promise (Matt. 28:20) that He would be with His church to the end of the world. *Answer*: That promise is to be understood of the presence of His Spirit, or Godhead, not of the presence of His manhood. Again, it may be further alleged that if the Godhead be on earth, then must the manhood be also, because they are both united together. *Answer*: It is not true, that of two things conjoined, where the one is, there must the other be also. For the sun itself and the sunbeams are both joined together, yet they are not both in all places together. For the body of the sun is only in the heavens, but the sunbeams are also upon the earth. The argument therefore follows not: Christ's manhood subsists in that Person which is everywhere; ergo His manhood is everywhere. And the reason is because the Son of God subsists not only in His divine nature, but also by it; for He subsisted before all eternity when the manhood was not. Nay rather because the manhood doth subsist by the Person of the Son, therefore the Person extends itself further than the manhood, which is assumed and sustained by it; and hath His existing thence. For that very thing whereby any other thing either essentially or accidentally is, extends itself further than the thing whereby it is. As the human nature whereby Peter is a man, extends itself further than to Peter, namely, to all other men;

and the whiteness whereby the snow is white, extends itself further than to that snow which a man holds in his hand.

(3) The third point is that in the ascension (Acts 1:9), *a cloud took Christ from the sight of the disciples*. And whereas He caused a cloud to come between their sight and Himself, it signified unto them that they must now be contented with that which they had seen, and not to seek to know further what became of Him afterward. And the same thing is taught unto us also. We must content ourselves with that which God hath revealed in His Word, and seek no further, specially in things which concern God. For the like end in the giving of the law in Sinai, God appeared in a cloud (Exod. 19:9); and when He did manifest His glory in the temple which Solomon made, a thick cloud filled the same (1 Kin. 8:10,11).

4.

The fourth point to be considered is concerning the witnesses of His ascension, which were His own disciples in the Mount of Olives at Bethany, and none but they (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:9). Now it may be demanded why He would not have all the whole nation of the Jews to see Him ascend, that so they might know that He was risen again, and believe in Him. *Answer*: The reason may be this: it was His good pleasure that the points of faith and religion, whereof this article is one, should rather be learned by hearing than by seeing. Indeed Christ's own disciples were taught the same by sight, that they might the better teach others which could not see; whereas now the ordinary means to come by faith is hearing (Rom. 10:17).

5.

The uses to be made of Christ's ascension are of two sorts; some are comforts to God's church and people, and some are duties.

The comforts are especially four:

(1) The first is this: Christ Jesus did ascend up to heaven *to lead captivity captive* (Eph. 4:8), a most worthy benefit. By *captivity* is meant *sin* and *Satan*, which did and do lead men captive into perdition; secondly, *death* and *the grave*, which held Him captive and in bondage for the space of three days. And He leads them all captive two ways:

(i) First, in Himself, in that He began His triumph upon the cross, as I have shewed, and continued the same till His very ascension.

(ii) Secondly, in all His members, because by His mighty power being now ascended, He doth subdue and weaken the power of sin and Satan; which he manifesteth every day by killing the corruption of their natures, and the rebellion of their flesh. But it may be demanded, how Christ doth lead His enemies captive, considering the devil reigns everywhere, and the world, and death and hell. *Answer*: Christ's victory over His and our enemies hath five degrees: First, it is ordained by God; secondly, it is foretold; thirdly, it is wrought; fourthly, it is applied; lastly, it is accomplished. The ordaining of it was before all worlds. The foretelling of it was in all ages of the Old Testament. The working of it was upon the cross, and afterward. The applying hath been since the beginning of the world more or less; And it is only in part in this life; that while Christ is bruising of the head of Satan, He again may bruise His heel. The accomplishing shall not be before the last judgment.

From this great benefit bestowed on God's church, there are many duties to be learned:

(i) First, here is an instruction for all ignorant persons and impenitent sinners, which abound among us in every place, whosoever they be, that live in the blindness of their minds and hardness of their hearts; they must know this: that they are captives and bondslaves of sin and Satan, of hell, death and condemnation; and let no man flatter himself of what state or degree soever he be (for it is God's truth), if he have not repented of all his

sins, he as yet is no better than a servant or a vassal, yea a very drudge of the devil. Now then, what wilt thou do in this case? The best thing is to lay to thy heart the benefit of Christ. He is ascended up to heaven to lead captive and to vanquish the devil and all his angels, under whom thou liest bound, and that not only in Himself, but in His members. Now then if thou wilt become a true member of Christ, He will free thee from this bondage. Therefore take heed how thou continuest longer in thy old sins, and in thy gross ignorance; and seeing Christ hath made a way to liberty; let us seek to come out of this spiritual bondage. He is ascended for this end and purpose to free us from it; therefore if we refuse this benefit, our state will be the more damnable. A man lies bound hand and foot in a dark dungeon, and the keeper comes and sets open the prison door and takes off his bolts, and bids him come out; if he refuse and say that he is well, may it not be thought that he is a mad man, and will any be sorry for his case? No, surely. Well, this is the state of all impenitent sinners. They lie fast fettered and bound under the power of sin and Satan, and Christ it is who is ascended into heaven to unloose them of this bondage. He hath set open the prison door, and hath unlocked our fetters; if we refuse to come out, and lie still in our sins, there remaineth nothing for us but everlasting thraldom. Let us therefore in the fear of God, if we have care of our own souls, receive and embrace this benefit which redounds unto us by Christ's ascension.

(ii) Secondly, in that Christ ascended to heaven to lead captive sin and Satan, here is a good consolation for all those that are afflicted in conscience for their sins. There is no man in this case but he hath great cause to fear, yet must he not be discouraged. For Christ by His ascension like a noble captain hath taken sin and Satan prisoners, and hath pinioned them fast, so as all the power they have is in Christ's hand; and therefore for this cause, although they are suffered to exercise and afflict us, yet by His grace they shall never be able to prevail against us. Therefore we may safely cast our care upon God, and not fear overmuch.

(iii) Hence also we may learn a third duty. There is no man that knoweth what sin meaneth, and what the blood of Christ meaneth, but in regard of the corruption of his own nature, he will say with Paul (Rom. 7:14) that he *is sold under sin*, and in regard thereof will cry out unto Him also (v.24*), O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death*? Yea, it make his heart to bleed within him. Now what shall he do in this case? Surely let him remember the end of Christ's ascension, which is to vanquish and subdue the rebellion of his nature, and labour to feel the benefit thereof; and then he shall no doubt find that Christ will (1 John 3:8) *dissolve in him the works of the devil*, and (Rom. 16:20) *tread Satan under His feet*. And thus also those that feel in themselves the law of their members rebelling against the law of their mind, must come to Christ, and He will help and free them.

(2) The second benefit of Christ's ascension is that He ascended up to heaven to bestow gifts upon His church, as it is said in the place before mentioned (Eph. 4:8). *He ascended upon high* etc., *He gave gifts unto men*, that is, the gift of the knowledge of God's Word, the gift of preaching and prophecy, and all other gifts needful for the good of His church.

(i) The consideration of this, that Christ who is the fountain of grace and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, should be mindful of us and vouchsafe such special favour to His church, must cause every one of us who hah received any gift of God (as there is no man but he hath received his portion) to be humbled in his own eyes for the same. There is no cause why we should be proud of our gifts; seeing we have nothing but that which we have received. For to this end Christ ascended, to give gifts unto men, and therefore our gifts whatsoever they be, are not our own, but we had them from Christ, and we are stewards of them a while for the good of others. The more the Lord gives to man, the more He requires at his hands; and as for such as having good gifts abuse the same, their sin is the more grievous, and their danger the greater. Men of great gifts unless

they use them aright with humbled hearts, shall want God's blessing upon them. For *He giveth grace to the humble* (Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). The high hills after much tillage are often barren, whereas the low valleys by streams of waters passing through them, are very fruitful; and the gifts of God joined with a swelling heart are fruitless, but joined with love and the grace of humility, they edify.

(ii) Secondly, if Christ ascended up to heaven to give gifts unto men, here we may see how many a man and woman in these our days are overseen, in that they plead ignorance, and say they hope God will have them excused for it, seeing that they are not learned; they have dull wits and it is not possible to teach them now, they are past learning; and hereupon they presume they may live in gross ignorance, as blind almost in religion as when they were first born. But mark, I pray you, who is it that is ascended up into heaven, namely Christ Jesus our Lord, who made thee of nothing. Now, was He able to give thee a being when thou wert not, and is He not likewise able to put knowledge into thy soul, if so be thou wilt use the means which He hath appointed? And the rather, seeing as He is ascended for that end. But if thou wilt not use the means to come to knowledge, thy case is desperate, and thou art the cause of thine own condemnation, and thou bringest confusion upon thine own head. Therefore let ignorant men labour for knowledge of God's Word. Ignorance shall excuse none; it will not stand for payment at the day of judgment. Christ is ascended to this end: to teach the ignorant, to give knowledge and wisdom unto the simple, and to give gifts of prophecy unto His ministers, that they may teach His people. Therefore I say again, let such as be ignorant use the means diligently, and God will give the blessing.

(iii) Thirdly, whereas it is thought to be a thing not possible, to furnish a whole church with preaching ministers, it seems to be otherwise. For wherefore did Christ ascend to heaven? Was it not to give gifts unto His church? What? Is Christ's hand now shortened? Undoubtedly we may

resolve ourselves that Christ bestowed gifts sufficient upon men in the church; but it is for our sins that they are not employed. The fountains of learning, the universities; though they are not dammed up, yet they stream not abroad as they might. Many there be in them endued with worthy gifts for the building of the church; but the covetousness of men hinders the comfortable entrance which otherwise might be.

(iv) Lastly, seeing Christ ascended to give gifts needful for His church, as the gift of teaching, the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, of wisdom and knowledge; the duty of every man is, especially of those who live in the schools of learning, to labour by all means to increase, cherish and preserve their gifts, and as Paul exhorteth Timothy (2 Tim. 1:6) to *stir up the gift of God*, that is, as men preserve the fire by blowing it, so by our diligence we must kindle and revive the gifts and graces of God bestowed on us. Christ hath done His part, and there is nothing required but our pains and fidelity.

(3) The third benefit that comes by Christ's ascension is that He ascended to prepare a place for all that should believe in Him (John 14:2), *In my Father's house* (saith Christ) *are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you*. For by the sin of Adam our entrance into heaven was taken away (Gen. 3:24). If Adam by his fall did exclude himself from the earthly paradise, then how much more did he exclude himself from heaven? And therefore all mankind sinning in him, was likewise deprived of heaven. The people of Israel being in woe and misery, cried out that they had sinned, and therefore (Lam. 3:44) the Lord had *covered Himself with a cloud that their prayers could not pass through*. And Isaiah saith (Isa. 59:2) that *our sins are a wall betwixt God and us*. And St John saith (Rev. 21:27) that *no unclean thing must enter into the heavenly Jerusalem*. Now seeing we have shut ourselves out of heaven by our sins, it was requisite that Christ Jesus our Saviour should go before us to prepare a place, and to make ready a way for us. For He is King over all, He hath the keys of heaven, He openeth and no man shutteth; and therefore

it is in His power to let us in, though we have shut ourselves out. But some may say, if this be the end of His ascension to prepare a place in heaven, then belike such as died before the coming of Christ were not in heaven. *Answer*: As there are two degrees of glory, one incomplete and the other complete or perfect (for the faithful departed are in glory but in part, and there remains fullness of glory for such then at the day of judgment, when soul and body shall be both glorified together), so answerably there are two degrees of preparation of places in heaven. The places of glory were in part prepared for the faithful from the beginning of the world, but the full preparation is made by Christ's ascension. And of this last preparation is the place of John to be understood.

The use of this doctrine is very profitable:

(i) First, it overthroweth the fond doctrine of the church of Rome, which teacheth that Christ by His death did merit our justification, and that we being once justified do further merit salvation, and purchase for ourselves a place in heaven. But this is as it were to make a partition between Christ and us in the work of our redemption, whereas in truth not only the beginning and continuance of our salvation, but also the accomplishment thereof in our vocation, is wholly and only to be ascribed to the mere merit of Christ; and therefore having redeemed us on earth, He also ascends to prepare a place in heaven for us.

(ii) Secondly, this serves to condemn the fearful, lamentable and desperate security of these our days. Great is the love of Christ in that He was content to suffer the pangs of hell to bring us out of hell; and withal to go to heaven to prepare a place for us there; and yet who is it that careth for the place, or maketh any account thereof? Who forsaketh this world and seeks unto Christ for it? And further, lest any man should say, Alas, I know not the way; therefore Christ before He ascended made *a new and living way* with His own blood, as the apostle speaketh (Heb. 10:19,20). And to take away

all excuses from men, He hath set marks and bounds in this way, and hath placed guides in it, namely His ministers, to shew all the passengers a straight and ready course into the kingdom of heaven. And though Christ have done all this for us, yet the blindness and security of men is such that none almost walketh in this way, nor careth to come into this mansion place; but instead of this they walk in byways according to the lusts of their own flesh. When they are commanded to go eastward to Jerusalem, they turn westward another way; when they are commanded to go on forward to heaven, they turn again backward and go straight to hell. Men run on all the days of their lives in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, and never so much as once make enquiry for a resting place in heaven; but when the hour of death cometh, then they call for the guide; whereas all their lives before they have run out of the way many thousand miles; but then alas it is too late, unless it be the unspeakable mercy of God. For they have wandered so far astray that in so short a space they cannot be able to come in the right way again. Yet generally this is the state of most among us, whose security is so much the more grievous and fearful because Christ hath done all that heart can wish. There is nothing else required but only that by His grace we should walk in the way. There was never any that knew the state of the people in these days but he will grant that this is most true which I say. Besides, as by this we are brought to a sight of the desperate security of this age; so we may further learn our own duties. Is Christ gone to heaven beforehand to prepare a place for thee? Then practise that which Paul teacheth (Phil. 3:20): *Have thy conversation in heaven*. The words which he useth are very significant, and the meaning of them is: Ye are free denizens of the city of God, and therefore as free men in God's house, let all your cares and duties, all your affairs and doings be in heaven. In the world, if a man make purchase of a house, his heart is always there. There he pulls down and builds again; there he makes him orchards and gardens; there he means to live and die. Christ Jesus hath bought the kingdom of heaven for us (the most blessed purchase that ever was) and hath paid the dearest price for it that ever was paid, even His own precious blood; and in this city He

hath prepared for us a dwelling place and made us free denizens of it; therefore all our joy and all our affairs ought to be there. It will be said, How shall a man upon earth have his conversation in heaven? *Answer*: We must converse in heaven, not in body but in heart; and therefore although our bodies be on earth, yet our hearts, joy and comfort, and all our meditation must be in heaven. Thus must we behave ourselves like good freemen in God's house. In must be far from us to have our joy and our hearts set on the things of this world.

(iii) Thirdly, the consideration of this: that Christ Jesus hath prepared a place for us in heaven and also hath trained the way with His own blood, must make every one of us to *strive to enter in at the strait gate*, as our Saviour Christ counselled us (Luke 13:24), and that as wrestlers do, which strive for life and death. Within this gate is a dwelling place of happiness ready for us. If a man were assured that there were made for him a great purchase in Spain or Turkey, so as if he would but come hither he might enjoy it; would he not adventure the dangers of the sea, and of his enemies also, if needs were, that he might come to his own? Well, behold Christ Jesus hath made a purchase for us in heaven, and there is nothing required of us but that we will come and enjoy it. Why then should men refuse any pains or fear in the way? Nay, we must strive to get in; it may be we shall be pinched in the entrance, for the gate is strait and low; and we must fain to leave our wealth behind us, and the pleasures of this life; and enter we must, though we should be constrained to leave our flesh behind us, for the purchase that is made is worth ten thousand worlds. And besides, if we lose it by fainting in the way, our purchase shall be the blackness of darkness forever with the devil and his angels; who therefore would not strive, though he lost his life at the gate? The urging of this point is needful in these days. There is striving enough for worldly preferment, but a man almost must go alone in the strait way that leadeth to heaven, he shall have none to bear him company. And where are they that strive to enter? Where is the violence offered to the kingdom of heaven? Where be the violent

which should take it to themselves, as in the days of John Baptist (Matt. 11:12)?

(iv) Fourthly, if Christ hath prepared a place for us in heaven, then we are in this world as pilgrims and strangers, and therefore must learn the counsel of St Peter (1 Pet. 2:11), *As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which fight against the soul*. He that doth esteem himself a pilgrim, is not to entangle himself with the affairs of this world, nor put in practice the behaviour thereof; but to behave himself as a freeman of heaven, as strangers use to live in foreign countries, according to the fashion of their own. And therefore in thought, word and deed, in life and conversation, he must so carry himself as thereby he may appear to all the world of what country he is. An ancient divine speaking of such as had curled and embroidered hair, bids them consider whether they must go to heaven with such hair or no; and whereas they adorned themselves with winkles made of other women's hair, he asks them whether it may not be the hair of a damned person or no. If it may be, he further demanded how it may beseem them to wear it which profess themselves to be the sons and daughters of God. The like may be said of all other sins, they that be of God's house must behave themselves as free men there. And when God hath made us free, it doth not beseem us to make ourselves bondmen of sin and Satan, and of this world.

(v) Fifthly, seeing Christ went to heaven to prepare a place for all that believe in Him, here is a good duty for parents. Any of them are very careful to prefer their children to great places and noblemen's houses, and they are not to be blamed therefore; but if they would indeed be good parents to their children, they should first endeavour themselves to get rooms for them in heaven. They that do this are good parents indeed. Some will say, How shall we get this preferment for them? *Answer*: God hath two houses: His church and the kingdom of heaven. The church is His house of grace; heaven is His house of glory. Now if thou wouldest bring thy child to

a place in the house of glory, then thou art first of all to get him a place in the house of grace; bringing him up so in the fear of God, that both in life and conversation he may shew himself to be a member of the church; and then assure thyself that after this life, he shall be removed to the second house of God, which is the house of glory, and there be a freeman forever in the kingdom of heaven. And if thou shalt thus provide for thy child, thou shalt not leave him as an orphan when thou diest, but he shall have God for his Father, and Christ for His brother, and the Holy Ghost for his comforter. And therefore first of all and above all, remember to make thy child a member of God's church. Let the example of David excite all parents hereunto (Psa. 84:10): *I had rather* (saith he) *be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tabernacle of wickedness. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere*.

(vi) Lastly, hence we may find remedy against the tediousness of sickness and fear of death. Thou which fearest death, remember that Christ is gone to heaven to prepare a place for thy body, where it must be glorified, and live forever with the blessed Trinity and all the saints and angels, though for a while it lie dead and rot in the grave. Remember this also, thou which continuest in any lingering sickness: Christ Jesus hath prepared a place for thee wherein thou shalt rest in joy and bliss without all pain or faintness.

(4) The fourth benefit is that Christ ascended up to heaven to send the Comforter unto His church. This was a special end of His ascension, as appears by Christ's own words (John 16:7): *It is* (saith He*) expedient that I go away, for if I go not, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you*. And again (John 14:16,17), *I will pray unto the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, which shall abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth*. But some will say, How can Christ send His Spirit unto His church, for the person sending and the person sent are unequal, whereas all three Persons in Trinity are equal, none greater or lesser than another, none inferior or superior to other. *Answer*: It is true

indeed; but we must know that the action of sending in the Trinity makes not the Persons unequal, but only shews a distinction and order among equals. The Father sends the Son, the Father and the Son both send the Holy Ghost; yet the Father is not above the Son, neither the Father or the Son above the Holy Ghost, but all are equal in degree, though in regard of order one is before another. And it stands with reason, for two men that are equal in degree, may upon mutual consent one send another. But it may be further demanded, how the Holy Ghost can be sent which is everywhere? *Answer*: The Holy Ghost indeed is everywhere, therefore He is sent not so much in regard of the presence of His essence or substance, as of His operation whereby He reneweth and guideth the members of Christ.

(i) Now then, this being so, here first we have occasion to consider the misery of the world. When a man is troubled in his mind (as no ungodly man but sometimes he feels the terror of conscience for his sins) then he labours to remove it by merry company and pleasant books, whereas Christ at His ascension sent His Holy Spirit to be the Comforter of His church; and therefore when we are troubled in conscience for our sins, we should not seek ease by such slender means, but rather seek for the help and comfort of the Holy Ghost, and labour to have our sins washed away and our hearts purified and cleansed by the blood of Christ. As for wine and mirth and such like means of comfort, neither at the day of death nor at the day of judgment shall they stand us in stead, or be able to comfort us. Again, when crosses and calamities fall, the counsel of the minister is not sought for, but the help of such as are called cunning men and cunning women, that is, of charmers, enchanters and figure casters; a bad practice. Christ at His ascension sent His Holy Spirit unto His church and people, to be their guide and Comforter in their calamities and miseries; and therefore when any man is in distress, he should have recourse to the right means of comfort; namely the Word and sacraments, and there he should find the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Thus the prophet Isaiah informeth the Jews (Isa. 8:19,20), *When they shall say unto you: Enquire at them which have a spirit*

of divination, and the soothsayers which whisper and murmur: Should not a people enquire at their God, from the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony. Rebecca, when the two twins strove in her womb, what did she? The text saith (Gen. 25:22), she sent *to ask the Lord*. Yet commonly the men of these days leave God and seek to the instruments of the devil. To go yet further, God useth for sundry causes most of all to afflict His dear children. *Judgement*, saith Peter (1 Pet. 4:17), *begins at God's house*. St Luke saith (Luke 13:16) that a certain woman was *bound of Satan eighteen years*, but what was she? A *daughter of Abraham*, that is, a child of God. When the like condition shall befall any of us, let us remember the end why Christ ascended up to heaven, and let us pray unto God that He will give us His Spirit that thereby we may be eased and delivered, or else enabled to persevere and continue in patience. And this is the true way and means to enlighten and ease the burden of all afflictions. And for this cause Paul prayeth (Col. 1:11) that the Colossians might *be strengthened with all might, through His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*. For to whomsoever God gives grace to believe, to them also He gives power to suffer affliction by the inward work of His Spirit.

(ii) Secondly, if Christ has sent unto His church the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter, our duty is to prepare our bodies and souls to be fit temples and houses for so worthy a guest. If a man were certified that a prince would come to his house, he would dress it up and have all good things in as good order as might be; and shall we not much more endeavour to purify and cleanse our souls and bodies from all sin, that they may be fit temples for the entertainment of the Holy Ghost, whom Christ Jesus had sent to be our Comforter? The Shunamite was careful to entertain the man of God Elisha (2 Kin. 4:10), for she said, *Let us make him a little chamber I pray thee, with walls, and let us set him there a bed and a stool, a table and a candlestick*. Now how much more careful ought we to be to entertain God Himself, who is content to come and dwell with us? And therefore we must adorn our bodies and souls with grace that He may lodge and sup and dine

with us, as He hath promised. But on the contrary, if we defile our bodies with sin, we banish the Holy Ghost out of our hearts and invite the devil to come and dwell with us. For the more a man defileth his body, the fitter and cleaner it is for him.

And to conclude this point, let us remember that saying which is used of some, that Christ when He went hence, gave us His pawn, namely, His Spirit, to assure us that He would come to us again, and also He took with Him our pawn, namely His flesh, to assure us further that we should ascend up to Him.

Thus much for the benefits of Christ's ascension. Now follow the duties whereunto we are moved, and they are two:

(1) First, we must be here admonished to renounce the ubiquity and the error of the real and essential presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as flatly oppugning this article of Christ's ascension into heaven. For it is flat against the nature of a true body to subsist in many places at once.

(2) Secondly, as the apostles then did when they saw Christ ascending up into heaven, so must we do also. While He was present with them, they gave Him honour, but when they saw Him ascending, they adored Him with far greater reverence. And so must we now for the same cause bow the knees of our hearts unto Him.

And Sitteth at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty

Thus much of the second degree of the exaltation of Christ. Now follows the third, in these words*: And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty*. In the handling whereof, we are first to shew the meaning of the words; secondly the comforts and benefits that redound to God's church; thirdly the duties that we are moved unto.

I.

For the meaning of the words; if we speak properly, God hath neither right hand nor left, neither can He be said to sit or stand; for God is not a body but a Spirit. The words therefore contain a borrowed speech from earthly kings and potentates, whose manner and custom hath been to place such persons at their right hands, whom they purpose to advance to any special office or dignity. So king Solomon (1 Kin. 2:19), when his mother came to speak with him, rose up from his throne and met her, and *caused a seat to be set at his own right hand*, and set her upon it, in token, no doubt, of honour which he gave unto her. To the same purpose, David saith (Psa. 45:9), *Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold*. And the sons of Zebedee made suit to Christ (Mark 10:37) that *one of them might sit at His right hand and the other at His left in His kingdom*. Now their request was to have the two special and principal dignities of His kingdom. Thus we see it is manifest that the sitting at the right hand of an earthly prince signifieth advancement into authority and honour; and therefore the same phrase of speech applied to Christ signifieth two things: First, His full and manifest exaltation in dignity, honour and glory; and in this sense it is said (Phil. 2:9,10) that *to Him is given a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow*. Secondly, it signifieth His full and manifest exaltation into the authority and government of His kingdom, which spreads itself over heaven and earth. So David saith (Psa. 110:1), *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*.

Which place being alleged by St Paul repeating the words, but changing the phrase, is thus set down (1 Cor. 15:25), *He shall reign till he have put all His enemies under His feet*. And to speak in brief, the scope of the words is to shew that Christ, God and man, after His ascension is advanced to such an estate in which He hath fullness of glory, power, majesty and authority in the presence of His Father and all the saints and holy angels.

Furthermore, in the words, three circumstances must be observed:

1. The first, is the place where Christ is thus advanced, noted in the former article: *He ascended into heaven, and sits* (namely in heaven) *at the right hand of God*. The place then, where Christ Jesus in both His natures, as He is God and also man, doth rule in full glory, power and majesty, is heaven itself. To which effect Paul saith (Eph. 1:20), *God raised Christ from the dead, and put Him at His right hand in the heavenly places*. And in the epistle to the Hebrews it is said (Heb. 1:3): *At the right hand of the majesty in highest places*. This point well considered, serves to discover the oversight of sundry divines which hold and teach that to sit at the right hand of God, is to be everywhere in all places and not in heaven only, that they might hereby lay a foundation for the ubiquity of Christ's manhood; which nevertheless the heavens must contain till the time that all things be restored.

2. The second circumstance is the time when Christ began to sit at the right hand of God the Father, which is to be gathered by the order of the articles. For first, Christ died and was buried, then He rose again and ascended into heaven, and after His ascension He is said to sit at the right hand of His Father. This order is also noted unto us by St Paul (Rom. 8:34), *Who shall condemn*? (saith he*) It is Christ which is dead, yea or rather risen again, who is also at the right hand of God*. And St Mark saith (Mark 16:19), when Christ was risen again He appeared to His disciples, and *after He had spoken unto them, He was received into heaven, and set at the right hand of*

God. But it may be demanded how this can stand with truth, that Christ should not begin to sit at the right hand of His Father before the ascension, considering He is one God with the Father, and therefore an absolute and sovereign King from all eternity? *Answer*: As Christ is God or the Word of the Father, He is co-equal and co-eternal with Him in the regiment of His kingdom; and hath neither beginning, middle nor ending thereof; yet as Christ is God incarnate, and in one Person God-man or man-God, He began after His ascension, and not before, to sit at the right hand of His Father, as St Peter saith (Acts 2:36), *was made Lord*; partly because as He was God, He did then manifest Himself to be that which indeed He was before, namely, God and Lord of heaven and earth; and partly because as He was man, He received dominion or lordship from the Father, which He had not before, and thereby was even in His manhood exalted to be King of heaven and earth; and in this sense Christ saith of Himself (Matt. 28:18), *All power is given to me in heaven and earth*.

3. The third circumstance is concerning the Person at whose right hand Christ sits, noted in the words of the article, *of God the Father almighty*; whereby is signified that He receives all the honour, power and glory of His kingdom from His Father; as he that is set at the right hand of a prince, receives the honour and authority which he hath, from the prince. Now if it be alleged that by this means Christ shall be inferior to the Father, because he which receiveth honour of another is inferior to him of whom he receiveth it; the answer is that in Christ we must consider His Person and His office. In respect of His Person, as He is the eternal Son of God, He is equal to the Father, and is not here said to sit at His right hand; yet in respect of the office which He bears, namely as He is Mediator, and as He is man, He is inferior to the Father, and receives His kingdom from Him. As He is God, He is our King and Head, and hath no Head more than the Father. As He is Mediator, He is also our Head, yet so as He is under the Father as being His Head (1 Cor. 11:3). And we must not think it strange

that one and the same thing should be both equal and inferior to another, divers respects considered.

Now in that Christ's placing at the right hand of His Father argues inferiority between the Father and Him, hence we learn that they are deceived which from this article gather that in the glorification of Christ there is a transfusion of the properties of the Godhead, as omnipotency, omnipresence etc. into His manhood. For this is to abolish all inferiority, and to make an equality between the creature and the Creator.

And whereas again the word *Almighty* is repeated, it is done upon special reason: because Christ sitting at the right hand of God doth presuppose omnipotence. For in vain was all power in heaven and earth given to Him, unless He was as omnipotent as the Father to execute the same. And therefore the song of the elders was on this manner (Rev. 5:22): *Worthy is the Lamb that was killed to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise*.

II.

The benefits which redound unto us by Christ's sitting at the right hand of God are two: one concerns His priesthood, the other His kingly office.

1.

The benefit rising from His priesthood is His intercession for us; for this is one of the ends why Christ is now exalted in glory, and sits at the right hand of His Father; namely, to make request in the behalf of all that come unto Him, as Paul saith (Rom. 8:34), *Christ is risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of God, and maketh request for us*.

Now that we may rightly understand what His intercession is, we are to consider these points:

(1) First, to whom it was made.

(2) Secondly, in what manner.

(3) Thirdly, whether it be made by Christ alone or no.

(4) Fourthly, what be the fruits and benefits thereof.

(5) Fifthly, the duties whereunto we are moved thereby.

(1) For the first, Intercession is to make suit, request or entreaty in someone's behalf to another; and this is done by Christ for us unto God, as Paul saith (1 Tim. 2:5), *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, which is the man Christ Jesus*. Here at the very first ariseth a difficulty; for in every intercession there be three parties: the person offended, the person offending, and the intercessor distinct from them both. Now, if Christ the Son of God makes intercession to God for man, then He maketh intercession to Himself because He is true God, which cannot be. How then shall Christ be a Mediator? *Answer*: This point hath so troubled the church of Rome, that for the resolving of it, they have devised an error, avouching that Christ is Mediator only as He is man, not as He is God, which is untrue. For as both natures do concur in the work of satisfaction, so likewise do they both concur in the work of intercession; and therefore a more meet and convenient answer is this: Christ Jesus God-man in both natures is directly our Mediator to the first Person, the Father, as St John saith (1 John 2:1), *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just*. And thus we have three persons in the work of intercession really distinguished. The party offended is God the Father, the party offending is man, and thirdly, the intercessor distinct from them both is Christ the second Person in Trinity. For howsoever in Godhead He and the Father be one, yet in Person they are really distinguished, and He as it were the middle between the Father and us: for the Father is God and not man; we that believe in Christ are men not God; Christ Himself both man

and God. It may be further replied that this answer will not stand because not only the Father is offended, but also the Son and the Holy Ghost; and therefore there must be a Mediator to them also. *Answer*: The intercession of Christ is directed to the Father the first Person immediately. Now the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost have all one indivisible essence, and by consequence one and the same will; whereupon the Father being appeased by Christ's intercession, the Son and the Holy Ghost are also appeased with Him and in Him. Thus then intercession is made to the whole Trinity, but yet immediately and directly to the first Person, and in Him to the rest.

(2) The second point to be considered is the manner of His intercession unto the Father. We must not imagine that Christ now in heaven kneels down on His knees and utters words and puts up a supplication for all the faithful to God the Father; for that is not beseeming the majesty of Him that sits at the right hand of God. But the manner of His intercession is thus to be conceived: When one is to speak to an earthly prince in the behalf of another, first of all he must come into the presence of the king, and secondly make his request; and both of these Christ performeth for us unto God.

(i) For the first, after His ascension He entered into heaven, where He did present unto His Father first of all His own Person in two natures; secondly the invaluable merits of His death and passion, in which He was well pleased. And we must further understand that as on the cross He stood in our room, so in heaven He now appears as a public person in our stead, representing all the elect that shall believe in Him, as the Holy Ghost saith (Heb. 9:24), *Christ Jesus ascended up into heaven to appear in the sight of God for us*.

(ii) And for the second, Christ makes request for us in that He willeth according to both His natures, and desireth, as He is man, that the Father would accept His satisfaction in the behalf of all that are given unto Him.

And that He makes request on this manner, I prove it thus: Look what was His request in our behalf when He was here upon earth, the same for substance it continues still in heaven. But here on earth the substance of His request was that He willed and desired that His Father would be well pleased with us for His merits, as appears by His prayer in St John (John 17:24), *Father, I will that those which thou hast given me be with me even where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*. Therefore He still continues to make request for us, by willing and desiring that His Father would accept His merits in our behalf. If it be alleged that Christ in this solemn prayer used speech and prostration of His body, the answer is that these actions were no essential part of His prayer. The prostrating of His body served only as a token of submission to God, as Christ was a creature; and the speech which he used, served only to utter and express His request. Furthermore, a difference here must be marked between Christ's passion and His intercession. The passion serves for the working and causing of a satisfaction to God's justice for us, and it is, as it were, the tempering of the plaister. The intercession goes further; for it applies the satisfaction made, and lays the salve to the very sore. And therefore Christ makes request not only for the elect generally, but for particular men, as Paul, James, John, and that particularly, as He testifieth of Himself, saying (Luke 22:32), *I have prayed for thee Peter, that thy faith fail not*. If any shall say that Christ's willing and desiring of a thing cannot be a request or intercession, the answer is that in virtue and efficacy it countervails all the prayers in the world. For whatsoever Christ willeth, the same also the Father being well pleased with Him, willeth; and therefore whatsoever Christ as Mediator willeth for us at the hands of His Father, in effect or substance is a request or prayer.

(3) The third point is that Christ alone, and none with Him, makes intercession for us. And this I prove by induction of particulars: First of all, this office appertains not to the angels. They are indeed ministering spirits

for the good of God's chosen; they rejoice when a sinner is converted; and when he dieth, they are ready to carry his soul to Abraham's bosom. And God otherwhiles uses them as messengers to reveal His will. Thus the angel Gabriel brings a message to Zechariah the priest that God had heard his prayer (Luke 1:13); but it is not once said in all the Scriptures that they make intercession to God for us. As for the saints departed, they cannot make intercession for us because they know not our particular estates here on earth, neither can they hear our requests. And therefore if we should pray to them to pray for us, we should substitute them into the room of God because we ascribe that to them which is proper to Him, namely, the searching of the heart and the knowledge of all things done upon earth; though withal we should say that they do this not by themselves but of God. As for the faithful here on earth, indeed they have warrant, yea commandment to pray for one another; yet can they not make intercession for us. For first, he that makes intercession must bring something of his own that may be of value and price with God to procure the grant of his request. Secondly, he must do it in his own name; but the faithful on earth make request to God one for another, not in their own names, nor for their own merits, but in the name and for the merits of Christ. It is a prerogative belonging to Christ alone to make a request in His own name and for His own merits. We therefore conclude that the work of intercession is the sole work of Christ, God and man, not belonging to any creature beside in heaven or in earth. And whereas the papists cannot content themselves with His intercession alone, as being most sufficient; it argues plainly that they doubt either of His power or of His will; whereupon their prayers turn to sin.

(4) The fruits and benefits of Christ's intercession are these:

(i) First, by means of it we are assured that those which are repentant sinners shall stand and appear righteous before God for ever; at what time soever Christ, being now in heaven and there presenting Himself and His

merits before His Father, shews Himself desirous and willing, and they whosoever they are being sinners, should be accepted of God for the same, even then immediately at that very instant that His will is done and they are accepted as righteous before God indeed. When a man looks upon things directly through the air, they appear in their proper forms and colours as they are, but if they be looked upon through a green glass, they all appear green; so likewise if God beholds us as we are in ourselves, we appear as vile and damnable sinners; but if He looks upon us as we are presented before His throne in heaven in the Person of our Mediator Christ Jesus, willing that we should be approved for His merits; then we appear without all spot and wrinkle before Him. And this is the use Paul makes hereof (Rom. 8:33,34), *It is God* (saith he) *that justifieth*; and the reason is rendered: *for it is Christ that is dead, yea or rather which is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and makes request for us*.

(ii) Secondly, Christ's intercession serves to preserve all repentant sinners in the estate of grace; that being once justified and sanctified, they may so continue to the end. For when any servant of God is overtaken by the corruption of his own nature and falls into any particular sin, then Christ's intercession is made as a blessed hand to apply the salve of His death to that particular sore. For He continually appeareth before God and shews Himself to be willing that God the Father should accept His one only sacrifice for the daily and particular sins of this or that particular man; and this is done that a man being justified before God, may not fall away quite from grace, but for every particular sin may be humbled, and receive pardon. If this were not so, our estate should be most miserable, considering that for every sin committed by us after our repentance, we deserve to be cast out of the favour of God.

(iii) Thirdly, Christ's intercession serveth to make our good works acceptable to God. For even in the best works that a man can do, there are two wants: First, they are good only in part; secondly, they are mingled with

sin. For as a man is partly spirit or grace and partly flesh; so are his works partly gracious and partly fleshly. And because grace is only begun in this life, therefore all the works of grace in this life are sinful and imperfect. Now by Christ's intercession, His satisfaction is applied to our persons; and by consequence, the defect of our works is covered and removed, and they are approved of God the Father. In a vision, St John saw (Rev. 8:3) an angel standing before the altar with a golden censer full of sweet odours to offer up with the prayers of the saints upon the same. And this signifies that Christ presents our works before the throne of God, and by His intercession sanctifies them that they may be acceptable to God. And therefore we must remember that when we do anything that is accepted of God, it is not for our sakes, but by reason of the value and vigour of Christ His merit.

(iv) Fourthly, the intercession of Christ made in heaven, breedeth and causeth in the hearts of men upon earth that believe, another intercession of the Spirit, as St Paul saith (Rom. 8:26,27), He giveth us His Spirit *which helpeth our infirmities and maketh request for us with sighs which cannot be expressed, but He which searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the meaning of the Spirit, for He maketh request for the saints, according to the will of God*. Now the Spirit is said to make request in that He stirs and moves every contrite heart to pray with sighs and groans unspeakable to God for things needful; and this grace is a fruit derived from the intercession of Christ in heaven by the operation of the Spirit. For as the sun through the body of it abide in the heavens, yet the beams of it descend to us that are here on the earth; so the intercession of Christ made in heaven is tied as it were to His Person alone, yet the groans and desires of the touched heart, as the beams thereof, are here on earth among the faithful. And therefore if we desire to know whether Christ make intercession for us or no, we need not to ascend up into the heavens to learn the truth; but we must descend into our own hearts and look whether Christ has given us His Spirit, which makes us cry unto God, and make request of Him with groans and sighs that cannot be expressed; and if we find this in our hearts, it is an

evident and infallible sign that Christ continually makes intercession for us in heaven. He that would know whether the sun shine in the firmament, must not climb up into the clouds to look, but search for the beams thereof upon the earth; which when he sees, he may conclude that the sun shines in the firmament. And if we would know whether Christ in heaven makes intercession for us, let us ransack our own consciences, and there make search whether we feel the Spirit of Christ crying in us, *Abba, Father*. As for those that never feel this work of God's Spirit in them, their case is miserable, whatsoever they be. For Christ as yet makes no intercession for them, considering these two always go together: His intercession in heaven, and the work of His Spirit in the hearts of men, moving them to bewail their own sins with sighs and groans that cannot be expressed, and to cry and to pray unto God for grace. And therefore all such, whether they be young or old, that never could pray, but mumble up a few words for fashion's sake, cannot assure themselves to have any part in Christ's intercession in heaven.

(5) The duties to be learned hence are these:

(i) First, whereas Christ makes intercession for us, it teacheth all men to be most careful to love and like this blessed Mediator, and to be ready and willing to become His servants and disciples, and that not for form and fashion's sake only, but in all truth and sincerity of heart. For He ascended to heaven and there sits at the right hand of His Father to make request for us, that we might be delivered from hell and come to eternal life. Wicked Haman procured letters from Ahasuerus for the destruction of all the Jews, men, women and children in his dominions; this done, Esther the queen makes request to the king that her people might be saved and the letters of Haman revoked. She obtains her request and freedom was given, and contrary letters of joyful deliverance were sent in post-haste to all provinces where the Jews were. Whereupon arose a wonderful joy and gladness among the Jews, and it is said (Esth. 8:17) *that thereupon many of the*

people of the land became Jews. Well now, behold a greater matter among us than this; for there is the handwriting of condemnation, the law; and therein the sentence of a double death, of body and soul, and Satan, as wicked Haman, accuseth us and seeks by all means our condemnation. But yet behold, not any earthly Esther, but Christ Jesus the Son of God is come down from heaven, and hath taken away this handwriting of condemnation and cancelled it upon the cross, and is now ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father, and makes request for us; and in Him His Father is well pleased and yieldeth to His request in our behalf. Now then, what must we do in this case? Surely, look as the Persians became Jews when they heard of their safety; so we in life and conversation must become Christians, turn to Christ, embrace His doctrine and practise the same unfeignedly. And we must not content ourselves with a formal profession of religion, but search our own hearts and flee unto Christ for the pardon of our sins, and that earnestly, as for life and death, as the thief doth at the bar when the judge is giving sentence against him. When we shall thus humble ourselves, then Christ Jesus that sits at the right hand of God will plead our cause and be our attorney unto His Father, and His Father again will accept of His request in our behalf. Then shall we of Persians become Jews, and of the children of this world become the sons of God.

(ii) Secondly, when we pray to God, we must not do as the blind world doeth, as it were, rush upon God in praying to Him without consideration had to the Mediator between us and Him, but we always must direct our prayers to God in the name of Christ, for He is advanced to power and glory in heaven that He might be a fit patron for us, who might prefer and present our prayers to God the Father that thereby they might be accepted and we might obtain our request. So likewise we must give thanks to God in the name of Christ; for in Him and for His sake, God doth bestow on us His blessings.

2.

Thus much of Christ's intercession. The other benefit, which concerns Christ's kingly office, is that He *sits at the right hand of His Father* for the administration of that special kingdom which is committed to Him. I say *special*, because He is our King, not only by right of creation governing all things created, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, but also more especially by the right of redemption in respect of another kingdom, not of this world but eternal and spiritual, respecting the very conscience of man. In the administration whereof, He hath absolute power to command and forbid, to condemn and absolve, and therefore hath the keys of heaven and hell to open and shut, which power no creature beside, no not the angels in heaven, can have. For the better understanding of this which I say, we are to consider, first, the dealing of Christ with His own church; secondly, His dealing in respect of His enemies.

(1) And His dealing toward His own church stands in four things:

(i) The first is the collecting or gathering of it; and this is a special end of His sitting at the right hand of His Father. Christ said to His disciples (John 15:19), *I have chosen you out of this world*; and the same may truly be said of all the elect, that Christ in His good time will gather them all to Himself that they may be a peculiar people to God. And this action of His in collecting the church, is nothing else but a translation of those whom He hath ordained to life everlasting out of the kingdom of darkness, in which they have served sin and Satan, into His own kingdom of grace, that they may be ruled and guided by Him eternally. And this He doth two ways:

(a) First, by preaching of the Word, for it is a powerful outward means whereby He singleth and sorteth His own servants from the blind and wicked world, as Paul saith (Eph. 4:11,12), *He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the gathering together of the saints*. And hence we learn two things:

i. The first, that every minister of God's Word and everyone that intendeth to take upon him that calling, must propound unto himself principally this end: to single out man from man, and gather out of this world such as belong to the church of Christ. And, as Jeremiah saith (Jer. 15:19), to *separate the precious from the vile*.

ii. The second, that all those which will be good hearers of God's Word, must shew themselves so far forth conformable unto it that it may gather them out of the world, and that it may work a change in them and make them the servants of Christ; and if the preaching of the Word do not work this good in our hearts, then the end will be a separation from the presence of God. Christ when He came near Jerusalem, and considered their rebellion whereby they refused to be gathered unto Him, wept over it, and said (Matt. 23:37), *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou which stonest the prophets and killest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not*. And by this He teacheth that if the preaching of the Word turn not us unto Christ, it turns to our destruction.

(b) The other means of gathering the church, and that most principal, is the inward operation of the Spirit whereby the mind is enlightened, the heart is mollified, and the whole man is converted to God. And this ordinarily is joined with the ministry or preaching of the Word, as appears by the example of Lydia. St Luke saith (Acts 16:14), God *opened her heart* to be attentive to the doctrine of the apostles. And by the example of Paul, when Christ saith (Acts 9:4), *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*? At this very speech he is converted, and saith (vv. 5,6), *Who art thou, Lord? What wilt thou that I do*? And this is manifest also by experience. There is nothing in the world more contrary to the nature of man than the preaching of the Word; for it is the wisdom of God, to which the flesh is enmity. Here then it may be demanded, how it can be in force to turn any man to God? *Answer*: The Word preached is the sceptre of Christ's kingdom; which against the

nature of man, by the operation of the Holy Ghost joined therewith, doth bend and bow the heart, will and affections of man to the will of Christ.

(ii) The second work of Christ is, after the church is gathered, to guide it in the way to life everlasting. He is the Shepherd of His church, which guideth His flock in and out, and therefore Paul saith (Rom. 8:14), *They that are Christ's, are guided by His Spirit*. And by Isaiah the Lord saith (Isa. 30:25), those His servants which are turned from idolatry, He will guide in the way, and *their ears shall hear a voice behind them saying, This is the way, walk in it, when thou turnest to the right hand and to the left*. Which voice is nothing else but the voice of the Holy Ghost in the mouth of the ministers, directing them in the ways of God. The children of Israel were travelling from Egypt to the land of Canaan full forty years, whereas they might have gone the journey in forty days. Their way was through the wilderness of Arabia, their guides were (Exod. 40:36-38) *a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night*. The manner of their journey was this: *when the pillar moved, they moved; when the pillar stood, they stood still*; and so long as the pillar either moved or stood still, they likewise moved or stood still. And by all this a further matter, namely, the regiment of Christ over His church, was signified. Every one of us are as passengers and travellers, not to any earthly Canaan, but to the heavenly Jerusalem; and in this journey we are to pass through the wild and desert wilderness of this world; our guide is Christ Himself, figured by the pillar of fire and the cloud (Isa. 4:5), because by His Word and Spirit He sheweth us how far we may go in every action and where we must stand, and He goes before us as our guide to life everlasting.

(iii) The third work of Christ is to exercise His church unto spiritual obedience by manifold troubles, crosses, temptations and afflictions in this world, as earthly kings use to train and exercise their subjects. When our Saviour Christ was with His disciples in a ship, there arose a great tempest upon the sea, so as the ship was almost covered with waves; but He was

asleep; and His disciples came and awoke Him (Matt. 8:25), saying, *Save us master, we perish*. Behold here a lively picture of the dealing of Christ with His servants in this life. His manner is to place them upon the sea of this world, and to raise up against them bleak storms and flays of contrary winds by their enemies, the flesh, the devil, the world. And further, in the midst of all these dangers, He for His own part maketh as though He lay asleep for a time, that He may the better make trial of their patience, faith and obedience. And the ends for which He useth this spiritual exercise are these:

(a) The first, to make all His subjects to humble themselves, and as it were to go crooked and buckle under their offences committed against His majesty in times past. Thus Job after the Lord had long afflicted him, and laid His hand sore upon him, saith (Job 40:4; 42:6), *Behold I am vile*; and again, *I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*. In the same manner we being His subjects and people, must look to be exercised with temptations and afflictions which shall make us bend and bow for our sins past, as the old man goeth crooked and doubles to the earth by reason of age.

(b) The second, is to prevent sins in the time to come. A father when he sees his child too bold and venturous about fire and water, takes it and holds it over the fire or over water, as though he would burn or drown it, whereas his purpose indeed is nothing else but to prevent danger in time to come. In like manner Christ's subjects are bold to sin by nature, and therefore to prevent a mischief He doth exercise them with afflictions, and seems for a season as though He would quite forsake His church; but His meaning is only to prevent offences in times to come.

(c) The third end is to continue His subjects in obedience unto His commandments. So the Lord saith when He would bring His church from idolatry (Hos. 2:6), *Behold, I will stop thy way with thorns, and make an hedge, that she shall not find her paths*. The Holy Ghost here borrows a

comparison from beasts, which going in the way, see green pastures and desire to enter in, and therefore go to the hedge, but feeling the sharpness of the thorns dare not adventure to go in. So God's people like unto wild beasts in respect of sin, viewing the green pastures of this world, which are the pleasures thereof, are greatly affected therewith; and if it were not for the sharpness of crosses and temptations, which are God's spiritual hedge by which He keepeth them in, they would range out of the way, and rush into sin, as the horse into the battle.

(iv) The fourth and last work of Christ in respect of His church is that He sits at the right hand of His Father to defend the same against the rage of all His enemies whatsoever they are. And this He doth two ways:

(a) First, by giving to His servants sufficient strength to bear all the assaults of their enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. For Paul saith (Phil. 1:29), those to whom the Lord hath given the gift of faith, to them also He hath given this gift: *to suffer afflictions*. And the same apostle also prayeth for the Colossians (Col. 1:11) that *they may be strengthened with all might through His glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*. The evidence hereof we may more plainly see in the most constant deaths of the martyrs of Christ, recorded both in the Word of God and in the church histories. It is wonderful to see their courage and constancy. For at such times as they have been brought to execution, they refused to be bound or chained, willingly suffering most cruel torments, without shrinking or fear; such courage and strength the Lord gave them to withstand the violent rage of all their adversaries.

(b) Secondly, He defends His church by limiting the power and rage of all enemies. And hence it is that although the power of the church of God on earth can be weak and slender in itself, and contrariwise the power of the devil exceeding great, yet can he not so much as touch the people of God. And he more prevails by inward suggestions and temptations than by

outward violence. And if it were not that the power of Christ doth bridle his rage, there could be no abode for the church of Christ in this world.

Thus we have seen what are the works of Christ in governing His church; and we for our parts that profess ourselves to be members thereof, must shew ourselves to be so indeed, by an experience of these works of His in our own hearts. And we must suffer Him to gather us under His own wing, and to guide us by His Word and Spirit; and we are to acquaint ourselves with those spiritual exercises whereby His good pleasure is to nurture us to all obedience. Lastly, we must depend on His aide and protection in all estates. And seeing we in this land have had peace and rest with the gospel of Christ among us a long time, by God's especial goodness, we must now after these days of peace look for days of tribulation. We must not imagine that our ease and liberty will continue always. For look as the day and night do follow another; so likewise in the administration of the church here upon earth, Christ suffereth a continual intercourse between peace and persecution. Thus He hath done from the beginning hitherto, and we may resolve ourselves that so it will continue till the end; and therefore it shall be good for us in these our days of peace, to prepare ourselves for troubles and afflictions; and when troubles come, we must still remember the fourth work of Christ in the government of His church, namely that in all dangers He will defend us against the rage of our enemies, as well by giving us power and strength to bear with patience and joy whatsoever shall be laid upon us, as also bridle the rage of the world, the flesh and the devil, so as they shall not be able to exercise their power and malice to the full against us.

(2) Thus much of the dealings Christ towards His own church and people. Now followeth the second point, namely, His dealing toward His enemies; and here by enemies I understand all creatures, but especially men, which as they are by nature enemies to Christ and His kingdom, so they persevere in the same enmity unto the end. Now His dealing towards them is in His

good time to work their confusion, as He Himself saith (Luke 19:27), *Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me*. And David saith (Psa. 2:9), the Lord will *bruise His enemies with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel*. And again (Psa. 110:1), *I will make thine enemies thy footstool*. As Joshua (Josh. 10:24) dealt with the five kings that were hid in the cave; he first makes a slaughter of their armies; then he brings them forth and makes the people to set their feet on their necks, and to hang them on five trees; so Christ deals with His enemies; He treads them under His feet and maketh a slaughter not so much of their bodies as of their souls. And this the church of God finds to be true by experience as well as it finds the love of Christ towards itself.

Now He confounds His enemies two ways:

(i) The first is by hardness of heart, which ariseth when God withdraweth His grace from man, and leaveth him to himself, so as he goeth on forward from sin to sin and never repenteth to the last gasp. And we must esteem of it a most fearful and terrible judgment of God; for when the heart is possessed therewith, it becomes so flinty and rebellious, that a man will never relent or turn to God. This is manifest in Pharoah, for though God sent most grievous plagues both upon him and all the land of Egypt, yet would he not submit himself, save only for a fit, while the hand of God was upon him; for after, he returned to the former obstinacy, in which he continued till he was drowned in the sea. And this judgment of God is the more fearful, because when a man is in the midst of all his misery, he feels no misery. And as in some kind of sickness a man may die languishing; so where hardness of heart reigns wholly and finally, a man may descend to the pit of hell triumphing and rejoicing. And to come near to ourselves, it is to be feared lest this judgment of all judgments be among us in our days. For where is any turning to God by repentance? Still men go forward in sin without remorse. We have had the Word preached among us a long time,

but it taketh no place in men's hearts. They are not softened with the hammer of God's Word; nay, they are like the smith's stithy or anvil, which the more it is beat with the hammer, the harder it is. But in the fear of God, let us seek to be changed and take heed; the deceitfulness of sin is wonderful. Let us not be carried away with an overweening of ourselves. A man may have good gifts of God, as the gift of knowledge, the gift of prophecy, the gift of conceiving a prayer (I say not of praying truly); and hereupon think himself in good case; and yet for all this have nothing but an impenitent and flinty heart. For this cause it standeth every man upon to look unto it, lest this judgment of God take hold on him. And that we may avoid the same, we must labour for two things:

(a) To feel the heavy burden of our sins and to be touched in conscience for them, even as we are troubled in our bodies with the aches and pains thereof. This is a token of grace.

(b) We must labour to feel in our souls the want of Christ. We say indeed that we feel it, but it is a very great matter to have an heart that doth open itself and as it were gape after Christ, as the dry and thirsty land where no water is.

Though we have knowledge and learning never so much, and many other gifts of God, yet if we have not broken hearts that feel the burden of our sins and the want of Christ, and that we stand in need of every drop of His blood for the washing away of all these our sins, our case is miserable. And the rather we must prevent this hardness of heart, because Christ Jesus in heaven sits at the right hand of His Father in full power and authority, to kill and confound all those that be His enemies, and will not submit themselves to bear His yoke.

(ii) The second way is by final desperation, I say final, because all kinds of desperation is not evil. For when a man despaireth of himself and of his own power in the matter of his salvation, it tends to his eternal comfort. But

final desperation is when a man utterly despairs of pardon of his own sins and of life everlasting. Examples hereof we have in Saul that slew himself, and in Ahithophel and Judas that hanged themselves. This sin is caused thus: So many sins as a man committeth without repentance, so many most bloody wounds he giveth to his own soul; and either in death or life God makes him feel the smart and the huge weight of them all; whereby the soul sinks down to the gulf of despair without recovery. God said to Cain (Gen. 4:7), *If thou do amiss, sin lieth at the door*. Where he useth a borrowed speech from wild beasts who, so long as they are sleeping, stir not; but being awakened they fly in a man's face and rend out his throat. In like manner the sins which thou committest lie at the door of thine heart, though thou feel them not; and if thou do not prevent the danger by speedy repentance, God will make thee to feel them once before thou die, and raise up such terrors in thy conscience that thou shalt think thyself to be in hell before thou art in hell; and therefore it is good for every man to take heed how he continues an enemy to Christ. The best course is to turn betime from our sins, and become the friends of Christ, that so we may escape these fearful judgments.

III.

And whereas Christ in this manner governs all things in heaven and earth, we are bound to perform unto Him three duties: reverence, obedience and thankfulness.

1. For the first, Paul saith (Phil. 2:9,10), *God hath exalted Him and given Him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus* (which name is His exaltation in heaven in full power and glory) *should every knee bow*. We dare not so much as speak of an earthly king irreverently; what reverence then do we owe unto Christ the king of heaven and earth? David's heart was touched in that he had cut off but the lap of Saul's garment when he might have slain him, because he was the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. 24:6). Oh then,

how much more ought our hearts to be touched if we shall in the least measure dishonour Christ Jesus our Lord and King?

2. Secondly, we are here taught to perform obedience unto Him and do Him all the homage we can. The master of his family in all his lawful commandments must be obeyed. Now the church of Christ is a family, and we are members thereof; therefore we must yield obedience to Him in all things; for all His commandments are just. When Saul was chosen king over Israel (1 Sam. 10:26,27), certain men which feared God, whose hearts God had touched, followed him to Gibeah, and brought him presents; but the wicked despised him. The same is much more to be verified in us toward Christ our Lord. We must have our hearts touched with desire to perform obedience unto Him; if not, we are men of Belial that despise Him. If this obedience were put in practice, the gospel would have better success in the hearts of the people, and the Lord's Sabbath would be better kept, and men would bear greater love both to God and to their neighbours than now they do.

3. The third duty which we owe unto Him is thankfulness for the endless care which He shews in the governing and preserving of us. When David waxed old and had made Solomon his son king in his stead, all the people shouted and cried (1 Kin. 1:39,40), God save king Solomon, God save king Solomon, so as the earth rang again. Shall the people of Israel thus rejoice at the crowning of Solomon, and shall not we much more rejoice when as Christ Jesus is placed in heaven at the right hand of His Father, and hath the everlasting sceptre of His kingdom put into His hand? And we are to shew this thankfulness unto Him by doing anything in this world that may tend to His honour and glory, though it be with the adventure of our lives. When David desired to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem (2 Sam. 23:15,16), three of his mighty men went and brake into the host of the Philistines and brought him water. Thus they ventured their lives for

David's sake; and shall not we much more willingly venture our lives to do Christ's service in token of thankfulness for His continual preserving of us?

From Thence He Shall Come to Judge the Quick and the Dead

Thus much of the highest degree of Christ's exaltation in His kingdom. Now follows the last point to be believed concerning Christ, in these words: *From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead*. And they contain a proof or a particular declaration of the former article. For as on earth those that are set at the right hand of kings do execute justice in courts or assizes for the maintenance of the state and peace of the kingdom; so Christ Jesus sitting at the right hand of His Father, that is, being made sovereign Lord of all things both in heaven and earth, is to hold a court of assize, in which He shall come to judge both the quick and the dead.

Now in handling the last judgment, we are to consider these points:

I. Whether there shall be a judgment or not?

II. The time of it.

III. The signs thereof.

IV. The manner of it.

V. The use which is to be made thereof.

Of these in order:

I.

For the first point, whether there shall be a judgment or not; the question is needful; for as St Peter saith (2 Pet. 3:3), *There shall come in the last days mockers, which shall walk after their lusts and say, Where is the promise of His coming*? Which days are now. The answer to this question is set down in this article, in which we profess that the coming of Christ to the last judgment is a point of religion specially to be held and avouched. The reasons to prove it are principally two:

1. First, the testimony of God Himself in the books of the Old and New Testament, which afford unto us plentiful proofs touching the last judgment, so as he which will but slightly read the same shall not need to doubt thereof.

2. The second reason is taken from the justice and goodness of God, the property whereof is to punish wicked and ungodly men, and to honour and reward the godly. But in this world the godly man is most of all in misery (for judgment beginneth at God's house), and the ungodly have their hearts ease. Wicked Dives had the world at will, but poor Lazarus is hunger-bitten, full of sores and miserable every way. This being so, it remaineth that after this life, there must needs be a judgment and a second coming of Christ, when the godly must receive fullness of joy and glory, and the ungodly fullness of woe and misery. This second reason may stop the mouths of all gainsayers in the world whatsoever.

But it may be objected that the whole world stands either of believers or unbelievers, and that there is no last judgment for either of these; for the believer, as Christ saith (John 5:24), hath everlasting life and *shall not come into judgment*; and the unbeliever (John 3:18) is *condemned already*, and therefore needeth no further judgment. *Answer*: Where it is said, *he that believeth shall not come into judgment*, it must be understood of the

judgment of condemnation, and not of the judgment of absolution; and he that believes not, is condemned already in effect and substance three ways:

(1) in the counsel of God, who did foresee and appoint his condemnation as it is a punishment of sin and execution of His justice.

(2) In the Word of God, where he hath his condemnation set down.

(3) He is condemned in his own conscience; for every ungodly man's conscience is a judge unto himself, which doth every hour condemn him, and is a forerunner of the last judgment. And notwithstanding all this, there may remain a second judgment, which is a manifestation and finishing of that which was begun in the world; and therefore the meaning of that place is this: he that believeth not is already judged in part, but so as the full manifestation thereof shall be at the second coming of Christ.

II.

The second circumstance is the time of His judgment; in handling whereof, first let us see what is the judgment of men; secondly, what is the truth.

1. For the first, two opinions touching this time take place:

(1) The first is that the second coming of Christ shall be about six thousand years from the beginning of the world, and for the elects' sake some of these days may be shortened; and now since the beginning of the world, are passed five thousand and almost six hundred years, so as there remains but some four hundred. The grounds of this opinion are these:

(i) First, the testimony of Elias: *Two thousand years before the law; two thousand years under the law; and two thousand years under Christ. And for the elects' sake some of these years shall be shortened. Answer*: This was not the sentence of Elias the prophet, but of another Elias which was a Jew, no prophet. And whereas he saith, *two thousand years before the law*

and two thousand years under the law; he faileth. For from the giving of the Law to the coming of Christ was about one thousand and five hundred years; and from the Law to the Creation, about two thousand. Now if Elias cannot set down a just number for the time past, which a mean man may do, what shall we think that he can do for the time to come? And if he deceives us in that which is more easy to find, how shall we trust him in things that be harder?

(ii) The second reason is this: How long God was in creating the world, so long He shall be in governing the same. But He was six days in creating the world, and in the seventh He resteth, and so proportionally He shall be six thousand years in governing the world; every day answering to a thousand years, as Peter saith (2 Pet. 3:8*), A thousand years are but as one day with God*, and then shall the end be. *Answer*: This reason likewise hath no ground in God's Word. As for that place of Peter, the meaning is that innumerable years are but as a short time with God, and we may as well say two thousand or ten thousand years are but as one day with God. For Peter meant not to speak anything distinctly of a thousand years, but of a long time (a certain number put for an uncertain).

(iii) Thirdly, it is alleged that within six thousand years from the creation of the world, shall appear in the heavens strange conjunctions and positions of the stars, which signify nothing else but the subversion of the state of the world; nay, some have noted that the end thereof should have been in the year of our Lord, a thousand five hundred eighty eight; their writings are manifest; but we find by experience that this opinion is false and frivolous, and their grounds be as frivolous. For no man can gather by the ordinary change in the heavens, the extraordinary change of the whole world.

(2) The second opinion is that the end of the world shall be three years and a half after the revealing of Antichrist. And it is gathered out of places in Daniel and the Revelation, abused. Where *a time, times and half a*

time signify not three years and a half, but a short time. And therefore to take the words properly, is far from the meaning of the Holy Ghost. For mark, if the end shall be three years and a half after the revealing of Antichrist, then may any man know aforehand the particular month wherein the end of the world should be, which is not possible.

2. Now the truth which may be avouched against all, is this: that no man can know, or set down, or conjecture the day, the week, the month, the year, or the age wherein the second coming of Christ and the last judgment shall be. For Christ Himself saith (Matt. 24:36), *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels in heaven, but God only*. Nay, Christ Himself, as He is man, knew it not. And when the disciples asked Christ at His ascension, whether He would restore the kingdom unto Israel, He answered (Acts 1:7*), It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power*. And Paul saith (1 Thess. 5:1,2*), Of the times and seasons, brethren, you have not need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall come even as a thief in the night*. Now we know that a man that keepeth his house, cannot conjecture or imagine when a thief will come; and therefore no man can set down the particular time or age when Christ shall come to judgment. This must we hold steadfastly, and if we read the contrary in the writings of men, we are not to believe their sayings, but account of them as the devices of men, which have no ground in God's Word.

III.

To come to the third point, namely, the signs of the last judgment, they are of two sorts: some go before the coming of Christ and some are joined with it.

1. The signs that go before are in number seven, recorded distinctly by the Holy Ghost:

(1) The first is the preaching of the gospel through the whole world. So our Saviour Christ saith (Matt. 24:14), *This gospel of the kingdom must be preached through the whole world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come*. Which place must thus be understood: not that the gospel must be preached to the whole world at any one time; for that (as I take it) was never yet seen neither shall be, but that it shall be published distinctly and successively at several times; and thus understanding the words of Christ, if we consider the time since the apostles' days we shall find this to be true, that the gospel hath been preached to all the world, and therefore the first signs of Christ's coming is already past and accomplished.

(2) The second sign of His coming is the revealing of Antichrist, as Paul saith (2 Thess. 2:3), *The day of Christ shall not come before there be a departure first, and that man of sin be disclosed, even the son of perdition*, which is Antichrist. Concerning this sign, in the year of our Lord 602, Gregory, the first pope of Rome, avouched this solemnly as a manifest truth, that whosoever did take to himself the name of Universal Bishop, the same was Antichrist. Now five years after, Boniface succeeding him, was by Phocas the emperor instituted the Universal Bishop, pastor of the Catholic church, in the year of our Lord 607; and of all popes he was the first known Antichrist, and since him all his successors have taken unto them the same title of Universal and Catholic Bishop, whereby it doth plainly appear that at Rome hath been and is the Antichrist. And this sign is also past.

(3) The third, is a general departing of most men from the faith. For it is said in the place before named (2 Thess. 2:3), *Let no man deceive you: for the day of Christ shall not come except there be a departing first*. General departure hath been in former ages. When Arius spread his heresy, it took such place that the whole world almost became an Arian. And during the space of nine hundred years from the time of Boniface, the popish heresy

spread itself over the whole earth, and the faithful servants of God were but as an handful of wheat in a mountain of chaff, which can scarce be discerned. This sign is in part already past, nevertheless it shall continue to the end, because men shall continually depart from the faith. And the nearer the end of the world is, the more Satan rageth and seeketh to bring men into his kingdom. Therefore it standeth us in hand to labour for the knowledge of true religion, and having learned it, most heartily to love the same.

(4) The fourth sign is a general corruption in manners. This point the apostle sets down at large, saying (2 Tim. 3:1-4), *Toward the latter days shall come perilous times, wherein men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, cursed speakers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy and without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, intemperate, fierce, despisers of them which are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God* etc. This general corruption in the manners of men is noted by our Saviour Christ, when He saith (Luke 18:8), *When He cometh, he shall scarce find faith upon the earth*. This sign hath been in former ages, and is no doubt at this day in the world. For it is hard to find a man that walketh justly, soberly and faithfully, doing the duties of his calling to God and man.

(5) The fifth sign of Christ His coming standeth in terrible and grievous calamities. For Christ's disciples asking Him a sign of His coming and of the end of the world, He saith (Matt. 24:6,7), *There shall be wars and rumours of wars, nation shall rise against nation and realm against realm; and there shall be pestilence and famine, and earthquakes in divers places*, and men shall be at their wits end. These have been in former ages. In the first three hundred years after Christ were ten more fearful persecutions; and since in Europe the church of God hath been wonderfully persecuted by the Antichrist of Rome in the hundred years last past.

(6) The sixth sign is an exceeding deadness of heart, so as neither judgment from heaven nor the preaching of the Word shall move the hearts of men. So Christ saith (Luke 17:26,29), *It shall be in the coming of the Son of man, as it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Sodom*. They knew nothing till the flood came and fire from heaven destroyed them all. This sign undoubtedly is manifest in these our days, howsoever it hath been also in former times. For where are any almost that are moved with God's judgment, or touched at the preaching of the Word? Nay, rather men harden their hearts and become secure and careless. The small fruit that the Word of God bringeth forth in the lives of men, shews this to be most true.

(7) The seventh and last sign set down by the apostle Paul (Rom. 11:25), is that there shall be a calling of the Jews before the Lord come to judgment. But of the time when this calling shall be, of the manner how, or the number of them that shall be called, there is no mention made in the Word of God. Now it is likely that this sign is yet to come.

2. These are the signs that go before the coming of Christ, all which are almost past, and therefore the end cannot be far off. Now follows the sign that is joined with the coming of Christ, called *the sign of the Son of man* (Matt. 24:30). What this sign is, we find not in the Scriptures. Some think it to be the sign of the cross, but this is frivolous. Some, the glory and majesty of Christ, which shall be made manifest in His appearance; which seems to be otherwise by the very words of Christ (Matt. 24:30), *Then* (saith He) *shall appear the sign of the Son of man* etc., *and then they shall see Him come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*; where He distinguisheth the one from the other. But I rather conjecture it to be the burning of heaven and earth with fire at the very instant of Christ's coming mentioned in Peter (2 Pet. 3:10). We must not here dispute whence this fire shall come, or how it shall be kindled, for that the Word of God hath concealed; and where God hath no mouth to speak, there we must have no ear to hear.

The uses to be made hereof are these:

Use 1. When St Peter had set down the change that shall be at the coming of Christ, and that heaven and earth must be purged with fire, he makes this use thereof (2 Pet. 3:11): *Seeing all things must be dissolved, what manner of men ought we to be in holy conversation and godliness*? And the reason is good. For if heaven and earth must be changed and purged at Christ's coming, then much more ought we to be changed, and put off the old man of sin, and to become new creatures created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. If the brute creatures must be renewed by fire, then much more are we to labour that the heat of God's Spirit may burn up sin and corruption in us, and so change us that we may be ready for Him against His coming; else heaven and earth itself shall stand in judgment against us to our condemnation.

Use 2. Secondly, the consideration of this, that the world shall be consumed with fire, teacheth us moderation and sobriety in the use of God's creatures, as in costly building, gorgeous attire and such like. What madness is this to bestow all that we have on such things as at the day of judgment shall be consumed with fire? For look whatsoever abuse shall come to God's creaturs by our folly, the same shall then be abolished.

Use 3. Thirdly, we must consider that the cause why heaven and earth must be consumed with fire, is man's sin, by means whereof they are made subject to vanity and corruption. Here then we have just occasion to acknowledge the greatness and wretchedness of our sins. If any of us had but seen the Jews' leprosy, it would have made us to wonder; for the contagion thereof did infect not only the whole man, but his garments also that were about him (Lev. 13:2,47; 14:54), and sometimes the walls of his house; but howsoever we cannot see the leprosy among us, yet we may see a worse. For the leprosy of our sins doth not only infect our garments, and the things about us with our bodies; but even the high heavens and the earth

are stained with the contagion thereof, and are made subject to vanity and corruption. Yes, by sin in us, the most glorious creatures in them, as the sun, moon and stars, are become subject to vanity. Oh then, how wretched is the heart of man, that makes no bones of sin, which is the most noisome thing in all the world, the stink whereof hath infected both heaven and earth? If we could consider this, we would not be so slack in humbling ourselves for the same as we are. We cannot abide to look on a poor lazar full of blains and sores; but if we would see our sins in their right colours, they would make us seem unto ourselves ten thousand times more ugly than any lazar-man can be; the contagion thereof is so great and noisome that the very heavens which are many thousand miles distant from us, are infected therewith. Yet here we are to know that this fire shall not consume the substance of heaven and earth, but only change the quality, and abolish the corruption which our sins have brought upon them.

IV.

The fourth point to be considered is the manner of the last judgment, in which we may observe two things:

1. The first is expressed in this article: *From thence He shall come to judge*. *He*, that is, Christ Jesus, the second Person in Trinity. *For the Father hath committed all judgment unto Him* (John 5:22). It is indeed an action common to all the three Persons in Trinity, but yet the execution thereof appertains to the Son. The Father indeed doth judge the world, but yet by the Son. But some may object that (Matt. 19:28) the apostles *shall sit on twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel*. And St Paul saith (1 Cor. 6:2), *The saints shall judge the world*. How then is this true, that Christ is the only judge of the world? *Answer*: The authority of judgment and giving sentence at the last day is proper to Christ alone, and doth not belong either to the apostles or to the saints; and they shall judge at the last day only as witness and approvers of Christ's judgment. At the great day of

assize, beside the judge, the justices on the bench are also in a manner judges, not that they give sentence, but because by their presence, they approve and witness the equity of the sentence of the judge. So the definitive sentence doth belong to Christ; and the apostles and saints do nothing but approve, and being present assent to His righteous sentence.

2. The whole proceeding of the last judgment may be reduced to seven points or heads:

(1) The first is the coming of the judge in the clouds. Here at the first, may be demanded why Christ holds the last judgment rather on earth than in heaven? *Answer*: He doth it for two causes:

(i) One, the creature to be judged hath sinned here upon earth; and He proceeds after the manner of earthly judges, who hold their session and assizes there where trespasses are commonly committed.

(ii) The second, because the devil and his angels are to be judged, and it is a part of their punishment to be cast out of heaven. For no unclean thing may come into this heavenly Jerusalem, and therefore they now remain in the lower parts of the world, and there must be judged.

Furthermore, the second coming of Christ is sudden, as the coming of a thief in the night (Luke 21:35). He will come when the world thinketh not of Him, as the snare doth on the bird. The consideration whereof must teach us the same duties which our Saviour Christ taught the men of His time:

(i) First He teacheth them what they must not do; for He knowing all things, knew also the disposition of man's heart and therefore saith (Luke 21:34), *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be oppressed with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, lest that day come on you unawares*. For these sins benumb the heart and steal away all grace. This exhortation in these our days is most needful. For men's hearts are like

the smithy's stithy; the more they are beaten with the hammer of God's Word, the harder they are.

(ii) Secondly, He teacheth them what they must do (Luke 21:36): *Watch therefore* (saith He) *and pray continually; that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and that we may stand before the Son of man*. But you will say, How may we be found worthy to stand before Christ at that day? *Answer*: Do but this one thing: for your lives past be humbled before God, and come unto Him by true, hearty and unfeigned repentance; be changed and become new creatures; pray earnestly for the pardon of your sins in Christ, and pray continually that God will turn your hearts from your old sins every day more and more; and then come the last judgment when it will, ye shall be found worthy to stand before Christ at His coming. The repentant sinner is he that shall find favour in the sight of God at that day. The consideration hereof may move us to change our lives. Those which were never yet humbled for their sins, let them now begin; and those which have already begun, let them go forward and continue. But the devil will cry in the hearts of some men that this exhortation is as yet needless; for the day of judgment is not near, because all the signs are not yet passed. *Answer*: Suppose the day of judgment be far off, yet the day of death cannot be so, for the common saying is true: today a man, tomorrow none. Now look as death leaveth thee, so shall the day of judgment find thee. Impenitent Cain died long since, and yet the day of judgment when it cometh, shall find him impenitent still. The same thing may be said of Saul, Ahithophel and Judas. They died desperately and impenitent, and the Lord shall find them so at His coming. So will it be with thee, whatsoever thou art that repenteth not. Death may come upon thee, the next day or the next hour, therefore watch and pray. Prepare thyself against the day of death, that at the day of judgment thou mayest be found worthy to obtain favour in the sight of the Lord. Security doth overwhelm the world; but let us for our parts learn to prepare ourselves daily; for if the day of death do leave thee unworthy, then the Lord Jesus at His coming shall

find thee unworthy; and the devil shall stand before thee and accuse thee, thy conscience shall condemn thee, and hell shall be ready to swallow thee up. If this admonition take no place in thy heart, then the day of judgment it shall stand against thee, and be a bill of inditement to thy further condemnation.

(2) The second point follows: that Christ after that He is come in the clouds, shall sit in a *throne of glory* (Matt. 25:31) as the sovereign judge of heaven and earth, after the manner of earthly kings, who when they will shew themselves unto their subjects in majesty, power and glory, use to ascend into the thrones of their kingdoms, and there to shew themselves and appear in state unto all the people. Now what this throne is, and how Christ sits in the same, the Scripture hath not revealed, and therefore I will not stand to search. Yet here must we further mark that this appearance of His in endless glory and majesty shall be more terrible and dreadful to the ungodly, and therefore in Daniel (Dan. 7:9), His throne is said to be like a *flame of fire*, and at the very sight thereof men shall desire the mountains to fall upon them and the hills to cover them.

(3) The third point is the citing of all men and of the angels before His majesty in that day, there to answer for themselves. This citing shall be done by the voice of Christ, as He Himself saith (John 5:28,29), In that day *all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and they shall come forth*. And here we are to consider two things: (i) The power of His voice, and (ii) the minister whereby it shall be uttered.

(i) For the first, no doubt the power of His voice shall be unspeakable, and therefore it is compared to a trumpet (Matt. 24:31), the loudest and shrillest of all musical instruments; and to the cry of the mariners (1 Thess. 4:16), whose manner hath been in the doing of any business with all their strength at one instant to make a common shout. And sensible experience shall manifest the force thereof. For it shall cause all the dead even from the

beginning of the world to rise again, though they have lien rotten in the earth many thousand years; and all unclean spirits shall be forced and compelled, will they, nil they, to come before Christ, who shall be unto them a most fearful and terrible judge, neither man nor angel shall be able to absent or hide himself; all without exception must appear, as well high as low, rich as poor; none shall be able to withdraw themselves, no not the mighty monarchs of the earth.

(ii) Furthermore, this voice shall be uttered by angels (Matt. 24:31). As in the church Christ useth men as His ministers by whom He speaks unto His people; so at the last day He shall use the ministry of angels, whom He shall send forth into the four winds to gather His elect together; and therefore it is likely that this voice shall be uttered by them. And by this which hath been said, we must be moved to make conscience of all sin. For there is no avoiding of this judgment, we cannot absent ourselves, no excuse will serve the turn; even the most rebellious of all creatures, whether man or angel, shall be forced to appear; and therefore it stands us in hand, while we have time in this life; to look unto our estates and to practise the duties of Christianity, that when we shall be cited before His glorious majesty at the last day, we may be cleared and absolved.

(4) The fourth point is the separation of the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad (Matt. 25:32); for which all the kindreds of the earth and all unclean spirits shall stand before Christ sitting in the throne of His glory; then as a good shepherd He shall separate them one from another, the righteous from the wicked, and the elect from the reprobate. He which knoweth the hearts of all men, knoweth also how to do this; and He will do it. This full and final separation is referred to Christ, and shall not be accomplished till the last day. For so it is in the parable (Matt 13:30), that the tares must grow with the wheat till harvest, and the reapers must separate them and gather the wheat into the barn, but the tares must be burnt

with unquenchable fire. By the consideration of this one point, we learn divers things:

(i) That in the church of God in this world, good and bad are mingled together, elect and reprobate; and we are not to imagine any perfection of the church of God upon earth, as many have dreamed, which when they could not find, they have therefore forsaken all assemblies. I confess indeed that the preaching of the Word is the Lord's fan whereby He cleanseth His church, in part, but yet the finishing of this work shall not be before the last judgment. For when the ministers of God have done all they can, yet shall the wicked be mingled with the godly. Therefore the church is compared to a barn floor where is both wheat and chaff; and a corn field where is both tares and good corn; and a drawnet wherein is both good fish and bad.

(ii) Secondly, whereas this separation must not be before the end of the world, hence we learn the estate of God's church in this life. It is like a flock of sheep mingled with goats, and therefore the condition of God's people in this world is to be troubled many ways by those with whom they live. For (Ezek. 34:18) goats use to strike the sheep, to annoy their pasture, and to make their water muddy that they cannot drink of it; and therefore we must prepare ourselves to bear all annoyances, crosses and calamities that shall befall us in this world by the wicked ones among whom we live.

(iii) Thirdly, we are taught that goats and the sheep be very like, and feed in one pasture, and lie both in one fold all their lifetime; yet Christ can and will sever them asunder at the last day. Therefore, considering as we are born of Adam, we have the nature of the goat, yea of the wild beast, and not of the sheep; it stands us in hand to lay aside our goatish condition, and to take unto us the properties of the sheep of Christ, which He expresseth in these words (John 10:27): *My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me*. And the properties are three: to know Him; to be known of Him; and to follow Him; namely, in obedience; and he that finds them all in

himself, wear the brand and mark of the true sheep of Christ. But contrariwise, they that make profession of Christ, and yet therewithal join not obedience; howsoever the world may account of them, they are but goats and no sheep. Let us therefore with the knowledge of Christ, join obedience to His Word, that when the day shall come that the goats must be separated from the sheep, we may be found to be in the number of the true sheep of Christ. We may deceive men both in life and death, and bear them in hand that we are sheep, but when the judgment shall come, we cannot deceive Christ; He it is that formed us; He knows our hearts, and therefore can easily discern what we are.

(5) The fifth thing is the trial of every man's particular cause; a point especially to be considered. For as at the bar of an earthly judge, the malefactor is brought out of prison and set before the judge and there examined; even so, in that great day shall every man without exception be brought before the Lord to be tried. But how shall this trial be made? *Answer*: By works, as the apostle saith (2 Cor. 5:10), *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things which are done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil*. And the reason is because works are the outward signs of inward grace and holiness. And though we be justified by faith alone without works, yet may we be judged both by faith and works. For the last judgment doth not serve to make men just that are unjust, but only to manifest them to be just indeed, which are just before, and in this life truly justified. The consideration of this very point should move us all to repent us of our sins past, and to reform ourselves throughout, and to be plentiful in all good works. And undoubtedly if we seriously think upon it, it will hold us more straitly to all good duties, than if with the papists we held justification by works.

Furthermore, in this trial two things must be scanned: (i) How all men's works shall be made manifest; (ii) By what means they shall be examined.

(i) Of the manifestation of every man's work, St John speaks (Rev. 20:12): *And I saw* (saith he) *the dead both great and small stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged of those things which were written in the book according to their works*. God is said to have books not properly, but because all things are as certain and manifest to Him as if He had His registers in heaven to keep rolls and records of them. His books are three: The book of providence; the book of judgment; the book of life.

(a) The book of His providence is the knowledge of all particular things, past, present or to come. Of this the psalmist speaks (Psa. 139:16): *Thine eyes did see me when I was without form; for in thy book were all things written, which in continuance were fashioned, when there was none of them before*.

(b) The book of judgment is that whereby He gives judgment; and it is twofold:

i. The first is God's knowledge or prescience, in which all the affairs of men, their thoughts, words and deeds, are as certainly known and set down, as if they were put in books of record. We may forget our sins, but God keeps them in a register; He knows them every one.

ii. The second book is every man's particular conscience, which also brings to remembrance and testifies what men have done and what they have not done.

(c) The book of life is nothing else but the decree of God's election, in which God hath set down who be ordained to life eternal.

Now the opening of these books is a thing wherein the endless power of God shall most notably shew itself. For when we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, He then knowing all things in His eternal counsel,

shall reveal unto every man his own particular sins, whether they were in thought, word or deed; and then also by His mighty power, He shall so touch men's consciences that they shall afresh remember what they have done. Now, indeed, the wicked man's conscience is shut up as a closed book; but then it shall be so touched, and as it were opened, that he shall plainly see and remember all the particular offences which at any time he hath committed, and his very conscience shall be as good as a thousand witnesses; whereupon he shall accuse and utterly condemn himself. The consideration of this ought to terrify all those that live in their sins; for howsoever they may hide and cover them from the world; yet at the last day, God will be sure to reveal them all.

(ii) Now after that men's works are made manifest, they must further be tried whether they be good or evil. And that shall be done on this manner: They that never heard of Christ must be tried by the law of nature, which serves to make them inexcusable before God. As for those that live in the church, they shall be tried by the law and the gospel, as Paul saith (Rom. 2:12): *As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law*. And again (v.16): *At the day of judgment God shall judge the secrets of our hearts according to His gospel*. And (Heb. 11:7): *By faith, Noah builded an ark whereby he condemned the* old *world*. Then we must in the fear of God hear His Word preached and taught with all reverence, and make conscience to profit by it. For otherwise in the day of judgment when all our works shall be tried by it, the same Word of God shall be a bill of indictment, and the fearful sentence of condemnation against us. Therefore let us be humbled by the doctrine of the law, and willingly embrace the sweet promises of the gospel; considering it is the only touchstone whereby all our words, thoughts and works must be examined.

(6) The sixth point in the proceeding of the last judgment, is the giving of sentence, which is twofold: (i) The sentence of absolution, and (ii) The

sentence of condemnation; both which are to be observed diligently, that we may receive profit thereby.

(i) And first of all, Christ shall begin His judgment with the sentence of absolution; which shews that He is ready to shew mercy and slow to wrath. In this sentence we are to consider four points:

(a) A calling of the elect to the kingdom of heaven.

(b) The reason thereof.

(c) A reply of the elect.

(d) The answer of Christ to them again.

(a) The calling of the elect is set down in these words (Matt. 25:34): *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world*. And the words are to be observed one by one:

Come ye blessed. Though Christ now sits in glory and majesty in judgment, yet He ceaseth not to shew His tender affection of love unto His chosen. And this overthroweth the opinion of the church of Rome, which would have us rather to come unto Christ by the intercession of saints than by ourselves immediately because He is now exalted in glory and majesty. But mark, when He was here on earth He said (Matt. 11:28), *Come unto me all you that are heavy laden, and I will ease you*. And when He shall be most glorious in majesty and power at the day of judgment, He will then also say, *Come ye blessed of my Father*, and therefore we may resolve ourselves that it is His will now that we should come unto Him without any intercession of saints.

Ye blessed of my Father. The elect are here called the blessed of God because their righteousness, salvation and all that they have, springs of the

mere blessing of God. Nothing therefore must be ascribed to the work of man.

Inherit. That is, receive as your inheritance; therefore the kingdom of heaven is God's mere gift. A father giveth no inheritance unto his son of merit, but of his free gift; whereupon it follows that no man can merit the kingdom of heaven by his works.

The kingdom. That is, the eternal estate of glory and happiness in heaven; therefore in this life we must so use the world as though we used it not; all that we have here is but vain and transitory; and all our study and endeavour must be to come to the kingdom of heaven.

Prepared. Here note the unspeakable care of God for the faithful. Had He such care to provide a kingdom for His children before they were? Then we may assure ourselves He will have greater care over them now, when they have a being.

For you. That is, for the elect and faithful. Hence it appears that there is no universal election whereby (as some suppose) God decrees that all and every man shall be saved. Indeed, if He had said, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for all, but received of you*, it had been something; but He saith only, *prepared for you*; and therefore all were not chosen to salvation.

(b) The reason of this calling is taken from works, as from signs, in these words (Matt. 25:35): *For I was hungry and ye gave me meat* etc.

When He saith, *For I was hungry*, He means His poor and distressed members upon earth; and thereby He signifies to us that the miseries of His servants are His own miseries. Thus the Lord saith in Zechariah (Zech. 2:8), *He which toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye*. And when Saul was going to persecute them in Damascus and elsewhere that called on

the name of Christ, He cried from heaven (Acts 9:4), *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me*? And this is a notable comfort to God's church and people, that (Heb. 4:15) they have an High Priest who is touched with the feeling of their infirmities, and if He account our miseries His own miseries, then no doubt He will pity our estate and make us able to bear the worst.

And ye gave me meat. Here we note that the principal works of men are those which are done to the poor members of Christ. We are indeed to help all, in as much as they are our very flesh and the creatures of God; but the rule of St Paul must be remembered (Gal. 6:10): *Do good to all, but especially to those that are of the household of faith*. Many are of the mind that the best works are to build churches and monasteries, but Christ tells us here that the best work of all is to relieve those that be the living members of His mystical body.

(c) The third point is the reply of the saints to Christ again, in these words (Matt. 25:37*): Lord when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee?* etc. They do not deny which Christ avouched, but do, as I take it, standing before the tribunal seat of God, humble themselves, having still an after consideration of the infirmities and offences of their lives past. Here note then that it is a satanic practice for a man to brag of works, and to stand upon them in the matter of justification before God. And we must rather do as the saints of God do: abase ourselves in regard of our sins past.

(d) The last point is the answer of Christ to them again, in these words (Matt. 25:40): *Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me*. A most notable sentence; and it serveth to teach us how we should behave ourselves in doing works of mercy, which are duties to be performed in this life. We are not to do them of any sinister respect, as for praise of men or commodity, but we must propound unto ourselves the party to whom we do any good, and in him look on

Christ, and so do it as unto Christ and for Christ's sake only; and this is a good work indeed. Christ saith (Matt. 10:42), *Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward*. It is but a small gift, but yet the manner of doing it, namely, in the name of a disciple, that is, in respect that he is a member of Christ, doth make it an excellent work of mercy. It is a special mark of a child of God to shew mercy on a Christian because he is a Christian. If any would know whether he is a Christian or no, let him search himself whether he love a man and can do good unto him because he is a child of God and a member of Christ. For this is a plain argument that he also is the child of God. Many can love because they are loved again; but to love for Christ's sake is a work of Christ in us and a special gift of God.

(ii) The sentence of condemnation followeth in the second place; and if contains four points:

(a) The rejection of the ungodly.

(b) The reason of their rejection.

(c) The defence which the wicked make for themselves.

(d) Lastly, the answer of Christ to them again.

(a)The rejection of the wicked is uttered by a terrible sentence (Matt. 25:41): *Away from me ye cursed into hell fire*. The use hereof is twofold:

i. First, it serves to awake and excite all men and women in the world, whosoever they be that shall hear it, to look unto their own estates. It is wonderful to see what great security reigneth everywhere in these our days. Men go on in sin from day to day and from year to year without repentance, nothing at all fearing the sentence of condemnation at the last day; like unto many which for the obtaining of other men's goods are neither by the fear

of arraignment or imprisonment kept in good order. The occasions of security are twofold:

a. The prosperity of the wicked, who of all men live at most ease without trouble either in body or mind.

b. God's patience and longsuffering, as Solomon saith ((Eccl. 8:11), *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil*. But to awake all those which live in their security; they must remember that howsoever the Lord God doth now defer His judgment, yet there is a day wherein He will no way shew mercy and longsuffering, when they shall hear this fearful sentence of condemnation pronounced against them: *Away from me ye cursed*.

ii. The second use is to the godly: It serves to nurture them and to keep them in awe before God; and no doubt this was a principal cause why this sentence was here penned by the Holy Ghost. A wise master of a family will check his servant, and if the cause require, correct him in his child's presence, that the child itself may learn thereby to fear and stand in awe of his father. So Christ, the most careful and wise governor of His church, hath set down this sentence of condemnation against the wicked, that the children of God in this world whensoever they shall hear or read the same, might be moved thereby to stand in fear of God, and more dutifully perform obedience unto His commandments.

Away from me. Here we may learn what a blessed thing it is for a man to have true fellowship with Christ in this world. For in the day of judgment the punishment of the wicked is to be cut off from him and driven away from his presence. Now he that would have fellowship with God after this life, and escape that punishment, must seek to have it in this life; and he that will not seek to have fellowship with Him in this life shall never have it after in the day of judgment. Again, let us mark that it is nothing to draw

near to Christ with our lips if the heart be not with Him; for such as come near with the lip and keep aloof in the heart, shall hear the sentence pronounced: *Away from me ye cursed*; and shall be severed as far from Christ as hell from heaven. Therefore let us not content ourselves with formal profession, but open the doors of our hearts that the King of glory may come in.

Ye cursed. They are cursed who are born in sin and live in their sins, and all the days of their lives so persevere to the last gasp without seeking recovery. Whosoever he be that is in this estate, the curse of God hangeth over his head, and will so do till he get reconciliation with God in Christ. This being so, above all things in this world we must labour to be at peace with God, and never cease nor be quiet with ourselves till we have the same wrought and sealed in our hearts. For before such a time as we be in God's favour, His fearful curse hangs over our heads, and if we so persevere without repentance, the day will come when we shall hear this fearful sentence pronounced against us*: Away from me ye cursed into hell fire*. What hell fire is, we must not curiously search, but rather give our whole endeavour to learn how we may avoid it; as when a man's house is on fire, his care must be not to search how it came, but rather how to quench it; yet we are to know thus much: that by hell fire is not meant any bodily flame, but it signifies the seizing of the fearful wrath of God both on body and soul for ever. For howsoever the body be subject to burning with bodily fire, yet the soul, being spiritual, cannot burn; and therefore hell fire is not a material fire but a grievous torment, fitly resembled thereby.

Prepared for the devil and his angels. There is in every man's heart by nature this corruption; whereby when he sinneth, he thinks there is no danger but all is well, having, as Isaiah saith (Isa. 28:15), *made a covenant with hell*. But here consider that although the devil was once an angel of light, yet when he had sinned, he could not escape hell; it was prepared

even for him. How then shall ungodly men, which are no half so wily, think to escape?

(b) Now followeth the reason of their rejection in these words (Matt. 25:42,43): *For I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat,* etc. Hence we learn these two points:

i. That all man's religion and serving of God is in vain, if so be he shews no compassion towards the poor members of Christ, in feeding, clothing, lodging and visiting of them. For we must think that many of those against whom this reason shall be brought, did know religion and profess the same, yea, they prophesied in the name of Christ, and called on Him saying, *Lord, Lord* (Matt. 7:21-23); and yet the sentence of condemnation goeth against them because they shew no compassion towards the members of Christ; and therefore it is a principal virtue and a special note of a Christian to shew the bowels of compassion towards his needy brethren.

ii. Here again we note that it is not sufficient for us to abstain from evil, but we must also do good. For it is not said, I was an hungred and ye took from me, but (Matt. 25:42), *When I was hungry ye gave me no meat*. They are not charged with doing evil, but for not doing good. John Baptist saith (Matt. 3:10), *The axe is laid to the root of the tree*, and the reason follows: not because the tree bare evil fruit, but because it *bare not good fruit*; therefore it must be cast into the fire. This condemns a bad opinion of all worldly men, who think that all is well and that God will be merciful unto them because they do no harm. Thus we see how the devil blinds the eyes of men; for it will not stand for payment at the day of judgment to say, I have hurt no man, unless we further do all the good we can.

(c) The third point is the defence which impenitent sinners make for themselves in these words (Matt. 25:44): *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or thirsty, or naked, or in prison, or sick, and did not minister unto thee?* Thus is their own defence: That which Christ saith, they gainsay, and

justify themselves. Here mark the nature of all impenitent sinners, which is to soothe and flatter themselves in sin, and to maintain their own righteousness, like to the proud Pharisee in his prayer (Luke 18:11), who bragged of his goodness and said, *Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners* etc., and in the very same manner ignorant persons of all sorts among us, justify themselves in their strong faith and brag of their zeal of God's glory and of their love to the brethren, and yet indeed shew no signs thereof. And truly we are not to marvel when we see such persons to justify themselves before men, whereas they shall not be ashamed to do it at the day of judgment before the Lord Jesus Himself.

(d) The last point is Christ's answer to them again, in these words (Matt. 25:45): *Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me*. This sentence being repeated again, doth teach us the lesson which we learned before, that when we are to shew compassion to any man, especially if he be a member of God's church, we must not consider his outward estate or his baseness, in that he wants food or raiment, but behold Christ in him, not respecting him as a man, but as a member of Christ. This it is that must move us to compassion and cause us to make a supply of his wants more than any respect in the world besides. And surely when Christ in his members comes to our doors and complains that he is hungry, and sick, and naked; if our bowels yearn not towards him, there is not so much as a spark of the love of God in us.

(7) The seventh point in the proceeding of the last judgment, is the retribution or reward, in these words (Matt. 25:46): *And they shall go into everlasting pain, and the righteous into life eternal*. How do the wicked enter hell, and the godly into heaven? *Answer*: By the powerful and commanding voice of Christ, which is of that force that neither the greatest rebel that ever was among men, nor all the devils in hell, shall be able to withstand it. And seeing that after the day of judgment we must remain forever either in heaven or in hell, we are to look about us and to take heed

unto our hearts. Indeed if the time were but a thousand or two thousand years, then with more reason men might take liberty to themselves; but seeing it is without end, we must be more careful through the whole course of our lives so to live and behave ourselves, that when the day of judgment shall come, we may avoid that fearful sentence of everlasting woe and condemnation which shall be pronounced against the wicked. And whereas all wicked men shall go to hell at Christ's commandment; it teacheth us willingly to obey the voice of Christ in the ministry of the Word. For if we rebel against His voice in the world, when in the day of judgment sentence shall be pronounced against us, we shall hear another voice, at the giving whereof, we must obey whether we will or no, and thereupon go to everlasting pain, whether we would or not. Let us therefore in time deny ourselves for our sins past, and only rely upon Christ Jesus for the free remission of them all; and for the time to come, lead a new reformed life.

V.

Thus much of the order of Christ His proceeding at the day of judgment. Now follow the uses thereof, which are either comforts to God's church or duties for all men.

1. The comforts to God's church:

(1) The first comfort or benefit is this: that the same Person which died for us upon the cross to work our redemption, must also be our judge. And hence we reap two special comforts:

(a) The people of God shall hereby enjoy full redemption from al miseries and calamities, which they had in this life. So Christ Himself speaking of the signs of the end of the world, saith to His disciples (Luke 21:28), *When you see these things, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near*. Then He shall wipe all tears from their eyes.

(b) Secondly, we shall hereby have a final deliverance from all sin. Now what a joyful thing it is to be freed from sin, may plainly appear by the cry of St. Paul (Rom. 7:24): *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death*? And certain it is that he which knows what sin is, and seriously repents him of the same, would with all his heart to be out of this world, that he might leave off to sin, and thereby cease to displease God.

(2) The second comfort is this: the godly in this world have many enemies; they are reviled, slandered, and oftentimes put to death. Well, Christ Jesus at the day of judgment will take every man's cause into His own hand; He will then hear the complaint of the godly, howsoever in this world they found no remedy; and then He will revenge their blood that is shed upon the earth, according to their prayer. This comfort is to be considered, especially of all those that are any way persecuted, or molested by the wicked of this world.

2. Now follow the duties to be learned of every one of us, and they are divers:

(1) First, the consideration of the last judgment serveth to teach all ignorant persons and impenitent sinners, repentance and humiliation for their sins, and to move them with speed to seek unto Christ for the pardon of the same. When Paul preached to the Athenians (Acts 18:31), he willed them to repent upon this ground and reason: *Because the Lord hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness*. To speak plainly; we can be content to hear the Word of God, and to honour Him with our lips, yet for the most part, all is done but for fashion's sake; but still we live in our old sins; our hearts are not turned; but in the fear of God let us bethink ourselves of the time when we shall come before the judge of heaven and earth, and have all our sins laid open, and we must answer for them all. This is the point which the Holy Ghost useth as a reason to move men unto

repentance; and assuredly if this will not move us, there is nothing in the world will.

(2) Secondly, to this purpose, Paul saith (1 Cor. 11:31), *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged*. Wouldest thou then escape the judgment of Christ at the last day? Then in this life judge thyself. Now a man in judging of himself must perform four things:

(a) He must examine himself of his own sins.

(b) He must confess them before the Lord.

(c) He must condemn himself, and as a judge upon the bench, give sentence against himself.

(d) Lastly, he must plead pardon and cry unto God as for life and death, for the remission of all his sins.

And he that doth this unfeignedly, shall never be judged of the Lord at the last day. But if we slack and neglect this duty in this life, then undoubtedly there remains nothing but eternal woe in the world to come.

(3) Thirdly, by this we may learn, one not to judge or condemn another, as Paul saith (1 Cor. 4:5), *Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will lighten all things that are in darkness, and make the counsels of the hearts manifest*. And Christ saith (Luke 6:37), *Judgment is mine*; and, *Judge not and ye shall be not judged*. And again, Paul saith to the Romans (Rom. 14:10*), Why doest thou judge thy brother? For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* But some will ask, How doth one judge another? *Answer*: Thus:

(a) When a man doth well, to say of him that he doth evil.

(b) When a man doth evil, then to make it worse.

(c) When a thing is doubtful, to take it in the worst part.

And by any of these three ways we are not to judge either of men's persons, or of their actions.

(4) Fourthly, we must endeavour ourselves to keep a good conscience before God and before all men. This is the practice of St Paul (Acts 24:15,16), who in consideration and *hope of a resurrection unto judgment, as well of the just as of the unjust, endeavoured himself to have always a clear conscience both towards God, and towards men*. His example is worthy our marking and imitation; for a few there be that upon this occasion make any conscience either of duty to God or to their brethren.

(5) Fifthly, the last judgment must stir us up to a reverent fear of God, and cause us to glorify Him; as the angel saith in Revelation (Rev. 14:7), *Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come*. And doubtless if anything in the world will move a man to fear the Lord, it is this: to remember the fearful and terrible day of judgment.

I Believe in the Holy Ghost

Now having spoken hitherto of the first Person the Father, and also of the Son, it followeth in the next place to speak of the third Person in these words: *I believe in the Holy Ghost*. In which we may consider two things: The title of the Person and the action of faith, repeated from the beginning.

I.

The title is *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit*. It may be here demanded how this title can be fit to express the third Person, which seems to be common to the rest; for the Father is holy and the Son is holy; again, the Father is a Spirit and the Son is a Spirit. *Answer*: Indeed the Father and the Son are as well to be termed holy in respect of their natures as the third Person; for all three subsisting in one and the same Godhead, are consequently holy by one and the same holiness; but the third Person is called *Holy* because beside the holiness of nature, His office is to sanctify the church of God. Now if it be said that sanctification is a work of the whole Trinity, the answer is that although it be so, yet the work of sanctification agrees to the Holy Ghost in special manner. The Father sanctifieth by the Son and by the Holy Ghost; the Son sanctifieth from the Father and by the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost sanctifieth from the Father and from the Son by Himself immediately; and in this respect is the third Person termed *Holy*. Again, the third Person is termed a *Spirit*, not only because His nature is spiritual (for in that respect the Father is a Spirit and the Son is a Spirit), but because He is spired or breathed from the Father and from the Son, in that He proceeds from them both. Thus we see there is a special cause why the third Person is called the *Holy Ghost*.

II.

Now the action of faith which concerns the third Person, is to *believe in Him*. Which is:

(1) To acknowledge the Holy Ghost as He hath revealed Himself in the Word.

(2) In special to believe that He is my Sanctifier and Comforter.

(3) To put all the confidence of my heart in Him, for that cause.

In these words are comprised four points of doctrine which are to be believed concerning the Holy Ghost:

1. The first, that He is very God. For we are not to put affiance or confidence in any but in God alone. And no doubt the penners of the Creed, in that they prefixed these words: *I believe in*, before the article of the third Person, meant thereby to signify that He is true God, equal with the Father and the Son, according to the tenor of the Scriptures themselves. Peter saith to Ananias (Acts 5:3,4), *Why hath Satan filled thine heart that thou shouldest lie unto the Holy Ghost*? And continuing the same speech, he changeth the term only, and saith, *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*. Whereby he insinuateth that the Holy Ghost is very God. In the vision of the prophet Isaiah, the words by him are set down thus (Isa. 6:8,9): *I heard the voice of Jehovah saying, Whom shall I send*? etc. And He said*, Go and say to this people, Ye shall hear indeed; but yet ye shall not understand*. But Paul quoting the same place, spake on this manner (Acts 28:25,26): *Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Go unto this people and say unto them* etc. Now these places being compared together make it plain that the title of Jehovah agreeth to the Holy Ghost. But yet the enemies of this truth which think that the Holy Ghost is nothing else but the action or operation of God, object out of the Scriptures to the contrary:

(1) God knoweth the Son; the Holy Ghost knoweth not the Son; for (Matt. 11:27) *none knoweth the Son but the Father*; ergo, the Holy Ghost is not God. *Answer*: That place excludeth no Person in Trinity, but only creatures and false gods, and the meaning is this: *None*, that is, no creature or idol god, *knoweth the Son of God, but the Father*. And the opposition is made to exclude creatures, not to exclude the Holy Ghost.

(2) Again, they object that the Holy Ghost maketh request for us with groans and sighs that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26); therefore (say they) the

Holy Ghost is not God, but rather a gift of God. *Answer*: Paul's meaning is thereby to signify that the Holy Ghost causeth us to make requests, and stirreth up our hearts to groan and sigh to God; for he said before (v.15), *We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*.

(3) Yet further they object the words of the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35), saying, *The virtue of the Most High hath overshadowed thee*; and hence they gather that if the Holy Ghost be the virtue of God, then He is not God indeed. *Answer*: As Christ is called the Word of God, not a word made of letters and syllables, but a substantial Word, that is, being forever of the same substance with the Father; so in this place the Holy Ghost is called the virtue of the Most Highest, not because He is a created quality, but because He is the substantial virtue of the Father and the Son; and therefore God equal with them both.

(4) Furthermore, they allege that neither the Scriptures, nor the practice of the primitive church doth warrant us to pray to the Holy Ghost. *Answer*: It is not true. For whensoever we direct our prayer to any one of the three Persons, in Him we pray to them all. Besides, we have example of prayer made to the Holy Ghost in the Word of God, for Paul saith to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 13:14), *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all*. And the words are as if St. Paul had said thus: O Father, let thy love; O Son, let thy grace; O Holy Ghost, let thy fellowship be with them all. And therefore this first doctrine is true and as well to be believed as any other, that is, the Holy Ghost is God.

2. The second point is that the Holy Ghost is a distinct person from the Father and the Son. Hereupon the articles touching the three Persons are thus distinguished: I believe in the Father, I believe in the Son, I believe in the Holy Ghost. This point also is consonant to the Scriptures which make the same distinction. In the baptism of Christ, the Father uttereth a voice

from heaven (Matt. 3:17), saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; and not the Son, or the Holy Ghost. Secondly, the Son stood in the water and was baptised by John; and not the Father, or the Holy Ghost. Thirdly, the Holy Ghost descended from heaven upon Christ in the form of a dove; and not the Father, nor the Son, but the Holy Ghost alone. Christ in His commission unto His disciples (Matt. 28:19) saith, *Go; teach all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost*. Now if the Holy Ghost had been the same Person either with the Father or with the Son, then it had been sufficient to have named the Father and the Son only. And the distinction of the third Person from the rest may be conceived by this: that the Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost, and not the Father or the Son.

3. The third point to be believed is that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son. For a further proof hereof, consider these places:

(1) Paul saith (Rom. 8:9), *Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit; for the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is not His*. And again (Gal. 4:6): *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of the Son into your hearts*. Where we may observe that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son. Now the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Father, not only because He is sent of Him, but because He proceedeth from the Father; as Christ saith to His disciples (John 15:26), *When the Comforter will come, whom I shall send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me*. And therefore likewise He is the Spirit of the Son, not only because He is sent of the Son, but also because He proceedeth from Him.

(2) Again, in the Trinity, the Person sending doth communicate His whole essence and substance to the Person sent. As the Father sending the Son, doth communicate His essence and substance to the Son. For sending doth

presuppose a communication of essence. Now the Father and the Son send the Holy Ghost; therefore both of them communicate their substance and essence unto the same Person.

(3) Thirdly, Christ saith (John 16:14), the Holy Ghost hath *received of mine which He shall shew unto you*, namely, knowledge and truth, to be revealed unto His church. Where we may reason thus: The Person receiving knowledge from another, receives essence also; the Holy Ghost receives truth and knowledge from Christ to be revealed unto the church; and therefore first of all He hath received substance and essence from the Son.

But some peradventure will say, Where is it written in all the Bible in express words, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as He proceeds from the Father? *Answer*: The Scripture saith not so much in plain terms, yet we must know that that which is gathered from thence by just consequence, is no less the truth of God than that which is expressed in words. Hereupon all churches, save those in Greece, with one consent acknowledge the truth of this point.

4. The fourth and last point is that the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son. And this we are taught to acknowledge in the Creed, in that we do as well believe in the Holy Ghost, as in the Father and the Son. And though the Holy Ghost be sent of the Father and the Son, yet (as I have said before) that argues no inequality (for one equal may send another by consent), but order only, whereby the Holy Ghost is last of all three Persons. Again, in that the Holy Ghost receiveth from the Son, it proves no inferiority; because He receives from the Son whatsoever He receives by nature, and not by grace. And He receives not a part, but all that the Son hath, saving the propriety of His Person.

Now follow the benefits which are given by the Holy Ghost, and they are of two sorts: some are common to all creatures, and some are proper to men.

1. The benefit of the Holy Ghost common to all creatures is the work of creation and preservation. For all things were created and made, and afterward preserved by the Holy Ghost, so Elihu saith (Job 33:4), *The Spirit of God hath made me*. And Moses saith (Gen. 1:1,2), *In the beginning… the Spirit moved upon the waters*. The phrase is borrowed from a bird, who in hatching of her young ones, sits upon the eggs, moves herself upon them, and heats them. And so likewise the Holy Ghost in the beginning did by His own power cherish and preserve the mass or lump whereof all things were made, and caused it to bring forth the creatures. This being evident, that the Holy Ghost hath a stroke in the work of creation and preservation; we must unfeignedly acknowledge that we were first created, and since that time continually preserved by the benefit even of the third Person.

2. The benefits proper unto men are of two sorts: (1) Some are common to all men, both good and bad and (2) some proper to the elect and faithful.

(1) The benefits common to all men are divers:

(i) The gift of *practising a particular calling*. As in the body, several members have several uses; so in every society, several men have several offices and callings, and the gifts whereby they are enabled to perform the duties thereof, are from the Holy Ghost. When Gideon became a valiant captain to deliver the Israelites, it is said (Jud. 6:34), he *was clothed with the Spirit*. Bezaleel and Aholiab (Exod. 36:1), being set apart to build the tabernacle, were *filled with the Spirit of God* (Exod. 31:2-5) in wisdom and understanding and in all workmanship, to find out curious works, to work in gold, and in silver and in brass; also in the art to set stones and to carve in timber, etc. By this it is manifest that the skill of any handicraft is not in the power of man, but comes by the Holy Ghost. And by this we are taught to use all those gifts well, whereby we are enabled to discharge our particular callings; that they may serve for the glory of God and the good of His church; and those that in their callings use fraud and deceit, or else live

inordinately, do most unthankfully abuse the gifts of God, and dishonour the Spirit of God the author of their gifts, for which thing they must give an account one day.

(ii) The second gift common to all is *illumination*, whereby a man is enabled to understand the will of God in His Word (Heb. 6:4). The Jews (2 Cor. 3:14-16) in the reading of the Old Testament had a veil over their hearts; and the like have all men by nature, to whom the Word of God is foolishness. (Acts 9:17,18) Paul at his conversion was smitten blind, and scales were upon his eyes; the like also be over the eyes of our minds, and they must fall away before we can understand the will of God. Now it is the work of the Holy Ghost to remove these scales and films from our eyes. And for this very cause He is called *the anointing* (1 John 2:27) and *eye-salve* (Rev. 3:18); for as it doth clear the eyes and take away the dimness of them; so doth the Holy Ghost take away blindness from our minds, that we may see into the truth of God's Word. This being a common gift, and received both of good and bad, it standeth us in hand not to content ourselves with the bare knowledge of the Word, but therewithal we must join obedience, and make conscience thereof, or else that will befall us which Christ foretold, that *he which knoweth his master's will and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes* (Luke 12:47).

(iii) The third gift of the Holy Ghost is the gift of *prophecy*, whereby a man is made able to interpret and expound the Scriptures. Now albeit this gift be very excellent and not given to every man, yet is it common both to good and bad. For in the day of judgment (Matt. 7:22,23), when men shall come to Christ and say, *Master, we have prophesied in thy name*, He shall answer again, *I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity*. Hereupon those that are in the calling of the ministry, and have received the gift of prophecy, must not herewithal be puffed up. For if they be not as well doers of God's will, as teachers, their gifts will turn to their further condemnation. As the carpenters that built Noah's ark when the flood came were drowned,

because they would not obey Noah's preaching; so those that have the gift of prophecy and are builders in God's house, if they build not themselves as well as others, for all their preaching, at the day of judgment they shall be condemned; and therefore it standeth in hand not to content themselves with this: that they know and teach others God's will, but they themselves must be the first doers of the same.

(iv) The fourth common gift of the Holy Ghost is *ability to bridle and restrain some affections*, so as they shall not break out into outrageous behaviour. Haman, a wicked man and an enemy to God's church (Esth. 5:9,10), when he saw Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate, and that he would not stand up to move unto him, he was full of indignation; nevertheless the text saith that *he refrained himself*. And when Abimelech (Gen. 20:6), an heathen king, had taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, God said to him, *I know that thou didst this with an upright heart*; and the text addeth further, *I have kept thee that thou shouldest not sin against me*. And thus the Lord gives to men, as yet without the Spirit of sanctification, this gift to bridle themselves, so as in outward action they shall not practise this or that sin. For why did not Abimelech commit adultery? Surely, because God kept him from it. Again, in the histories of the heathen we may read of many that were just, liberal, meek, continent, etc., and that by a general operation of the Holy Ghost that represseth the corruption of nature for the common good. Here then if any man ask how it comes to pass that some men are more modest and civil than others (for all the sons of Adam are equal in regard of nature; the child newborn in that respect is as wicked as the eldest man that ever lived), but the reason is because God gives this common gift of restraining the affections more to some than to others. This must be considered of us all. For a man may have the Spirit of God to bridle many sins, and yet never have the Spirit to mortify the same and to make him a new creature. And this being so, we must take heed that we deceive not ourselves. For it is not sufficient for a man to live in outward civility and to keep in some of his affections upon some occasion (for that a wicked man

may do), but we must further labour to feel in ourselves the Spirit of God, not only bridling sin in us, but also mortifying and killing the same. Indeed both of them are good gifts of God's Spirit, but yet the mortification of sin is the chiefest, being an effectual sign of grace, and proper to the elect.

(v) The fifth grace and gift of the Holy Ghost is to *hear and receive the Word of God with joy*. In the parable of the sower (Luke 8:13), one kind of bad ground are *they which when they have heard, receive the Word with joy*; and this is that which the author of the Hebrews calls (Heb. 6:5) the *tasting of the good Word of God, and of the power of the world to come*. We know that there is great difference between tasting of meat and eating of it. They that sit down at the table do both taste and eat, but they that dress the meat, do only see and taste thereof. So it is at the Lord's table; many there be that have this gift: truly both to taste and eat of the body and blood of Christ offered in the Word and sacraments; and some again do only taste and feel the sweetness of them and rejoice therein, but yet are not indeed partakers thereof. Now if this be so, then all those which hear the Word of God must take heed how they hear, and labour to find these two things in themselves by hearing: (a) That in heart and conscience they be thoroughly touched and humbled for their sins; (b) That they be certainly assured of the favour and love of God in Christ, and that the sweet promises of the gospel do belong to them; and in consideration hereof, they must make a conscience of all sin both in thought, word and deed, through the whole course of their lives. And this kind of hearing bringeth that joy which vanisheth not away.

(2) Thus much of the benefits of the Holy Ghost common to all men both good and bad; now follow such as are proper to the elect, all which may be reduced unto one, namely, the inhabitation of the Spirit whereby the elect are the temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 3:16); who is said to dwell in men (Rom. 8:9), not in respect of substance (for the whole nature of the Holy Ghost cannot be comprised in the body or soul of man) but in respect of a particular operation; and this dwelling stands in two things: The first, that

the Holy Ghost doth abide in them, not for a time only, but for ever; for the word *dwelling* noteth perpetuity. Secondly, that the Holy Ghost hath the full disposition of the heart, as when a man cometh to dwell in a house whereof he is lord, he hath liberty to govern it after his own will. Now this disposition of the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Ghost, standeth in five special and notable gifts; every one worthy of our observation:

(i) The first is *a certain knowledge of a man's own reconciliation to God in Christ*. As it is said in Isaiah (Isa. 53:11), *By His knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many*. And Christ saith (John 17:3), *This is life eternal, that they know thee to be the only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ*. This knowledge is not general; for then the devils might be saved; but it is particular, whereby a man knoweth God the Father to be his Father; and Christ the Redeemer to be his Redeemer; and the Holy Ghost to be his Sanctifier and Comforter. And it is a special work of the Holy Ghost, as Paul saith (Rom. 8:16), *The Spirit of God bears witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God*. And (1 Cor. 2:12), *We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given unto us of God*.

(ii) The second gift is *regeneration*, whereby a man of a limb of the devil is made a member of Christ, and of a child of Satan (whom every one of us by nature do as lively resemble as any man doth his own parent) is made the child of God. *Except a man* (saith our Saviour (John 3:5)) *be born again by water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*. John Baptist, in saying that Christ baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire (Matt. 3:11), compares the Spirit of God to fire and water:

(a) To fire for two causes:

i. As it is the nature of fire to warm the body that is benumbed and frozen with cold; so when a man is benumbed and frozen in sin, yea when he is

even stark dead in sin, it is the property of the Holy Ghost to warm and quicken his heart and to revive him.

ii. Fire doth purge and eat out the dross from the good metal. Now there is no dross or canker that hath so deeply eaten into any metal as sin into the nature of man; therefore the Holy Ghost is as a fire to purge and eat out the hidden corruptions of sin out of the rebellious heart of man.

(b) Again, the Holy Ghost is compared to clear water for two causes:

i. Man by nature is as dry wood without sap, and the property of the Holy Ghost is as water to supple and to put the sap of grace into the dead and rotten heart of man.

ii. The property of water is to cleanse and purify the filth of the body; even so the Holy Ghost doth spiritually wash away our sins, which are the filth of our nature, and this is the second benefit of the Holy Ghost.

By this we are taught that he which would enter into the kingdom of God and have the Holy Ghost to dwell in him, must labour to feel the work of regeneration by the same Spirit; and if a man would know whether he hath this work wrought in him or no, let him mark what St Paul saith (Rom. 8:5), *They that are of the Spirit, savour the things of the Spirit; but they that live after the flesh, savour the things of the flesh*. If therefore a man have his heart continually affected with that which is truly good either more or less, it is a certain token that his wicked nature is changed and he regenerate; but contrariwise, if his heart be always set on the pleasures of sin and the things of this world, he may justly suspect himself that he is not regenerated. As for example: if a man have all his mind set upon drinking and gulling in of wine and strong drink, having little delight or pleasure in anything else, it argues a carnal mind and unregenerate, because it affects the things of the flesh; and so of the rest. And on the contrary, he that hath his mind affected with a desire to do the will of God in practising the works of charity and

religion, he I say, hath a spiritual and renewed heart, and is regenerate by the Holy Ghost.

(iii) The third work of the Holy Ghost is *to govern the hearts of the elect*. This may be called *spiritual regiment*. A man that dwelleth in a house of his own, orders and governs it according to his own will; even so the Holy Ghost governs all them in whom He dwelleth, as Paul saith (Rom. 8:14), *They that are the sons of God, are led by His Spirit*; a most notable benefit; for look where the Holy Ghost dwells, there He will be Lord, governing both heart, mind, will and affections; and that two ways: (a) By repressing all bad motions unto sin, arising either from the corruption of man's nature, from the world, or from the devil. (b) By stirring up good affections and motions upon every occasion.

So it is said (Gal. 5:17): *The flesh* (that is, the corruption of man's nature) *lusteth against the spirit; and the spirit* (that is, grace in the heart) *lusteth against the flesh*; and that after a double sort: First, by labouring to overmaster and keep down the motions thereof; secondly, by stirring up good motions and inclinations to piety and religion. In Isaiah, the Holy Ghost hath most excellent titles (Isa. 11:2): *The Spirit of the Lord; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and of strength; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord*. Now He is so called because He stirs up good motions in the godly; of wisdom, of knowledge, of strength, of understanding, of counsel, and of the fear of the Lord. And St Paul saith (Gal. 5:22,23) that *the fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, love, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* etc., all which are so termed because where the Holy Ghost rules, there He gendereth these good gifts and motions of grace; but among all the inward motions of the Spirit, the most principal are these:

(a) An utter disliking of sin because it is sin. And that is when a man hath an eye not so much to another man's sins, as to his own, and seeing them, is

truly sorrowful for them and disliketh them, and himself for them, not so much because there is a place of torment or a day of judgment to come, wherein he must answer to God for them all; but, as if there were no hell or judgment, because God is displeased by them, who hath been unto him a most loving and merciful Father in redeeming him by Christ.

(b) The second is an hungering desire above all things in this world, to be at unity with God in Christ for the same sins. This is a motion of the Holy Ghost, which no man can have but he in whom the Holy Ghost doth dwell.

(c) The third, the gift of hearty prayer. For this cause the Holy Ghost is called the *Spirit of supplications* (Zech 12:10), because it stirs up the heart and makes it fit to pray; and therefore Paul saith (Rom. 8:26) that *the Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray as we ought, but the same Spirit itself maketh request for us with sighs which cannot be expressed*. This is an ordinary work of the Holy Ghost in all that believe; and he that would know whether he have the Spirit dwelling truly in his heart shall know it by this. A mother carrieth her child in her arms; if it cry for the dug, and suck the same, it is alive; being observed many days together, if it neither cry nor stir, it is dead. In like manner, it is an infallible note of a true child of God to cry out to his Father in heaven by prayer. But he that never cryeth nor feeleth himself stirred up to make his moan to God, is in a miserable case, and he may well be thought to be but a dead child, and therefore let us learn in prayer unfeignedly to pour out our souls before God, considering it is a special gift of the Holy Ghost bestowed on the children of God.

(iv) The fourth work of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the elect is *comfort in distress*, and therefore our Saviour Christ calleth Him (John 15:26) *the Comforter whom He will send*; and in the psalm (Psa. 45:7), He is called *the oil of gladness*, because He maketh glad the heart of man in trouble and distress. There be two things that fill the heart full of endless grief: the

first, *outward calamities*, as when a man is in any danger of death, when he loseth his goods, his good name, his friends, and such like. The second is a *troubled conscience*, whereof Solomon saith (Prov. 18:14), *A troubled spirit, who can bear it*? And of all other, it is the most heavy and grievous cross that can be. When as the hand of God was heavy upon Job, this was the sorest of his afflictions, and therefore he cries out (Job 6:4), *The arrows of the Almighty did stick in his soul*. Now what is the comfort in this case? *Answer*: In the midst of all our distresses the Holy Ghost is present with us, to make us rejoice, and to fill us with comforts (that no tongue can express) out of the Word of God, and specially the promises thereof. And hereupon, the ungodly man when afflictions befall him, is ready to make away himself, because he wants the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

(v) The last benefit wrought in the hearts of the elect, is *strengthening* of them to do the weightiest duties of their callings; and hence the Holy Ghost is called the *Spirit of strength* (Isa. 11:2). There be divers things to be done of a Christian man that are far beyond the reach of his power; as first, when he seeth his own sins and is truly humbled for them; then to lift up the hand of faith to heaven and thereby to catch hold on the mercy of God in Christ, is the hardest thing in the whole world; and this do all those which know what it is to believe. Secondly, it is as hard a thing in the time of temptation to resist temptation, as for dry wood to resist fire when it begins to burn. Thirdly, when a man is put to his choice, either to lose his life-goods, friends and all that he hath, or else to forsake religion; even then to forsake all and to stick unto Christ is a matter of as great a difficulty as any of the former. Fourthly, when a man wants the ordinary means of God's providence, as meat, drink and clothing, then at the very instant to acknowledge God's providence, to rejoice in it and to rely thereon, is as much as if a man should shake the whole earth. It is against our wicked nature to trust God, unless He first lay down some pawn of His love and mercy to us. How then, will some say, shall any one be able to do these things? *Answer*: The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of strength, and by Him we do

all things, as Paul saith (Phil. 4:13), *I am able to do all things through the help of Christ which strengtheneth me*.

Concerning these gifts of the Holy Ghost, two questions may be moved:

(i) First, what is the measure of grace in this life? *Answer*: Small, in respect. In this world we receive, as Paul saith (Rom. 8:23), not the tenth but *the first fruits of God's Spirit*, and (2 Cor. 1:22) *the earnest of the Spirit*. Now the first fruits properly are but as an handful or twain of corn, to a whole cornfield containing many acres and furlongs of ground. And the earnest in a bargain it may be is but a penny laid down for the paying of twenty thousand pounds.

(ii) The second question is whether the graces of the Holy Ghost may be wholly lost or not? *Answer*: The common gifts of the Spirit may be lost and extinguished. But the gifts proper to the elect cannot. Indeed they may be diminished and covered as coals under ashes, and as the sap in the root of the tree in the winter season, not appearing at all in the branches; and the feeling of them may be lost; but they cannot either finally or totally be lost. It is true that God doth forsake His children; but that is only in part, as He left Hezekiah (2 Chr. 32:31) to *prove and try what was in his heart*. A mother that loves her child most tenderly, sets it down on the floor, lets it stand and fall, and breaks the face, and all this while she hides herself, not because her purpose is to leave her child quite, or to make it hurt itself; but that when she taketh it up again, it may love her the better. So dealeth the Holy Ghost with men to make them know their weakness and frailty. He hides Himself as it were in some corner of the heart for a season, that they may the more earnestly hunger after grace, the want whereof they feel.

The use of this article whereby we confess that we believe in the Holy Ghost, is manifold:

Use 1. First, considering that all the gifts which any man hath, whether they be gifts of knowledge in the Word of God or of human learning or any gifts whereby men are enabled to practise their trades or handicrafts, do come not from ourselves but from the Holy Ghost, we are taught this duty: Look what gifts soever we for our parts have received of the Spirit of God, we must use them so as they may ever serve for the glory of God and good of our brethren, and not to the practising and setting forth of any manner of sin, and by consequence to the service of the devil. For that is as if a man receiving riches and revenues of his prince, should straightaway go to the prince's enemy and employ them for his benefit; which were a point of exceeding treachery.

Use 2. Furthermore, in every place the greater part of men are blind and ignorant persons both young and old; and aged folks, as they are ignorant themselves, so they muzzle up their youth in ignorance. Confer with them, you shall find that they can say nothing but that which may be learned by common talk, as that there is a God, and that this God must be worshipped; but ask them further of the means of their salvation, and of their duties to God and man, and they will answer you that they are not book-learned; tell them further that the ordinary means to bring men to knowledge is the preaching of the Word, which if they will not use, they shall be inexcusable; they will say, alas, we are dull of memory and cannot learn. Well, for all this, thou sayest thou believest in the Holy Ghost, and He is thy schoolmaster to teach thee; though thy capacity be dull, yet He is able to open thine understanding; for as there is outward teaching by the minister, so the work of the Holy Ghost is joined within to enlighten the conceit of the mind, that they which hear the Word with reverence, may profit thereby and get knowledge. But if for all this men will not learn, but remain ignorant still, then let them mark the example of the sons of Eli; he in some part did rebuke them for their wickedness, but yet they would not obey; and the reason is there set down (1 Sam. 2:25): *because the Lord would destroy them*. In the same manner, howsoever we may not judge of any man's

person, yet this may be said: that if men refuse to hear the Word of God when they may, or if in hearing they will not obey, it is a fearful sign that God will at length destroy them. When a trumpet is sounded in a man's ear, and he lies still, not stirring at all, he is certainly dead. And surely when the trumpet of the gospel is sounded in the ears of our hearts, if we awake not out of our sins to newness of life, we are no better than dead men before God. Wherefore the case being thus dangerous, and the punishment so great, let us labour in time for the knowledge of God's will, and prevent God's judgments before they light upon us.

Use 3. Thirdly, as the apostle saith (Gal. 5:25), *If we live in the Spirit, we must walk in the Spirit*, that is, if we be dead unto sin by the power of the Holy Ghost, and be raised up to newness of life, then we must walk in the Spirit. Now to walk in the Spirit, is to lead our lives in shewing forth the fruits of the Spirit. In Isaiah, the Holy Ghost is compared unto water (Isa. 44:3,4) *poured forth on the dry land, which maketh their seed to grow like the willows by the rivers of waters*; wherefore those that have the gifts of the Spirit must be trees of righteousness bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, which (as they are set down by Paul (Gal. 5:22,23) are principally nine:

(1) The first fruit is *love*, which respects both God and man. Love unto God is an inward and a spiritual motion of the heart, whereby God is loved absolutely for Himself. This love shews itself in two things: (i) When a man's heart is set and disposed to seek the honour and glory of God in all things. (ii) When a man by all means strives and endeavours himself to please God in everything, counting it a most miserable estate to live in the displeasure of God; and the heart that is thus affected, can have no greater torment than to fall into sin, whereby God is offended and His displeasure provoked. By these two signs a man may know whether he love God or no, and by them also must he testify his love. Now our love to man is a fruit of this love of God, for God is to be loved for Himself; man is loved for God.

This love must not be in shew only, but in deed and action. St John biddeth us *not to love in word and tongue only, but in deed and truth* (1 John 3:18). Brotherly love doth always lie hid, but when an occasion is offered, it doth break forth into action; it is like fire, which though for a time it be smothered, yet at length it breaks forth into a flame. And so much love a man sheweth to his neighbour, as he hath; and where none is shewn, none is.

(2) The second fruit is *joy*, when a man is glad at the good of his neighbour as at his own good; and this is a special work of the Holy Ghost. For the nature of man is to pine away, and to grieve at the good of another; and contrariwise it is a work of grace to rejoice thereat. Paul saith (Rom. 12:15), *Rejoice with them that rejoice*. And this was the holy practice of the friends and neighbours of Zachariah and Elizabeth when John Baptist was born (Luke 1:58): *they came and rejoiced with them*.

(3) The third fruit of the Spirit is *peace*. Of this Paul speaketh most excellently, saying (Rom. 12:18), *If it be possible, as much as in you is, have peace with all men*. It is nothing else but concord which must be kept in an holy manner with all men, both good and bad, so far forth as can be. Isaiah the prophet speaking of the fruits of the gospel, saith (Isa. 11:6), *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid*, etc. Where note that in the kingdom of Christ, when a man is called into the state of grace, howsoever by nature he be as a wolf, as a leopard, as a lion, or as a bear; yet he shall then lay away his cruel nature and become gentle, and live peaceably with all men. Now for the practising of this peace, there are three duties especially to be learned and performed:

(i) Rather than peace should be broken, a man must yield of his own right. When publicans came to our Saviour Christ for tribute, He had a lawful excuse; for howsoever He lived in low estate among men, yet He was the right heir to the kingdom, and therefore was free; nevertheless He stood not

on His privilege, but called Peter, saying (Matt. 17:26,27), *Lest we offend them, go to the sea, and cast in an angle, and take the first fish that cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of twenty pence; take it, and give it to them for thee and me*. Here we see that our Saviour Christ, rather than He would break the common peace, yields of His own right; and so we must do if we will be good followers of Him.

(ii) Secondly, when any man shall sin either in word or deed, specially if it be upon infirmity, we must avoid bitter invectives and mildly tell him of his fault, and in all meekness and love, labour for his amendment. So Paul teacheth us, saying (Gal. 6:1,2), *If any man be fallen into any fault by occasion, restore such an one with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou be also tempted. Bear ye one another's burden*.

(iii) Thirdly, every man within the compass of his calling, must be a peacemaker between them that are at variance. This is a special duty of godliness and Christianity, and therefore our Saviour Christ doth highly commend such, and pronounceth this blessing upon them (Matt. 5:9): that *they shall be called the children of God*.

(4) The fourth fruit of the Spirit is *longsuffering*; and it standeth in two points: (i) When a man deferreth his anger, and is hardly brought to it. (ii) Being angry doth yet moderate the same, and stay the hotness of that affection.

(i) For the first, to bridle anger, it is a special work of the Holy Ghost, and the means to attain unto it are these:

(a) Not to take notice of the iniquities and wrongs done unto us, if they be not of great moment; but to let them pass, as not knowing them. Solomon saith (Prov. 19:11), *It is a man's discretion to defer his anger*. Now how is that done? It is added in the next words: *It is the glory of a man to pass by infirmity*; that is, when a man shall overshoot himself, either in word or in

deed, to let it pass either wholly or till a time convenient, as though we knew not of it.

(b) The second way to defer and bridle anger is when a man hath injured us either in word or deed, to think with ourselves that we have injured other in the same manner; and for this cause Solomon saith (Eccl. 7:21,22), *Give not thine heart to all that men speak, lest thou hear thy servant cursing thee; for oftentimes thine heart also knoweth that thou hast cursed others*. A man must not listen to every man's words at all times; but he is to think that he hath spoken or done the same to other men, and that now the Lord meeteth with him by the like, as it is said (Matt. 7:2), *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*. This is a thing which few consider. Evil men desire good report, and would have all men speak well of them, whereas they can speak well of none; but indeed they must begin to speak well of others before others speak well of them.

(c) Thirdly, a man must consider how God dealeth with him. For so often as he sinneth he provoketh God to cast him away, and to confound him eternally; yet the Lord is merciful and longsuffering. Even so when men do offend and injure us, we must do as God doth; not be angry, but fight against our affections, endeavouring to become patient and longsuffering as God is with us.

(ii) The second property of longsuffering is to keep the affection of anger in moderation and compass. It is not always a sin to be angry, and therefore it is said of Christ (in whom was no blemish of sin) that He *was angry* (Mark 3:5); yet we must look that our anger be moderate, not continuing overlong, as Paul saith (Eph. 4:26), *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*.

(5) The fifth fruit of the Spirit is *gentleness*, whereby a man behaveth and shews himself friendly and courteous to every man, as Paul saith to Titus (Tit. 3:2), *Put them in remembrance that they speak evil of no man, that they be no fighters, but soft, shewing all meekness unto all men, whether*

they be good or bad. This gentleness standeth in these points: (i) To speak to every man friendly and lovingly. (ii) To salute friendly and courteously. (iii) To be ready upon every occasion to give reverence and honour to every man in his place. It is made a question of some, whether a man is to salute and speak unto them that are known to be lewd and wicked men; but here we see what our duty is, in that we are taught to be courteous to all men both good and bad, yet so as we approve not of their sins. As for that which St John saith of false prophets (2 John 10), *Receive them not, neither bid them God speed*; it is to be understood of giving an outward approbation to false teachers.

(6) The sixth fruit is *goodness*, which is when a man is ready to do good and become serviceable in his calling to all men, at all times, upon all occasions. This was to be seen in that holy man Job; he saith (Job 29:15,16) that he *was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father unto the poor, and when he knew not the cause he sought it out*. And St Paul shewed this fruit most notably after his conversion, for he saith (1 Cor. 9:22) that he was *made all things to all men that he might save some*. He was content to undergo anything for the good of any man. And as we have heard, the godly are trees of righteousness bearing fruit, not for themselves but for others; and therefore Paul in the epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 5:13) gives this rule: *Do service one to another in love*. In these days it is hard to find these duties performed in any place. For both practice and proverb is commonly this: *Every man for himself, and God for us all*; but it is a graceless saying; and the contrary must be practised of all that desire to be guided by the Spirit.

(7) The seventh fruit is *faith*. Faith or fidelity stands in these two duties:

(i) One, to make conscience of a lie and to speak everything whereof we speak, as we think it is, and not to speak one thing and think another. A rare thing it is to find this virtue in the world nowadays. Who is he that makes

conscience of a lie? And is not truth banished out of our coasts; considering that for gains or outward commodities men make no bones of glozing and dissembling? But alas, the practice is damnable, and the contrary is the fruit of the Holy Ghost, namely, to speak the truth from the heart; and he that can do this, by the testimony of God Himself (Psa. 15:1,2) shall rest in the mountain of His holiness, even in the kingdom of heaven.

(ii) The second point wherein fidelity consisteth, is when a man hath made a promise that is lawful and good, to keep and perform the same. Some think it is a small matter to break promise, but indeed it is a fruit of the flesh; and contrariwise a fruit of the Spirit to perform a lawful promise; and a man's word should be as sure as an obligation; and in conscience a man is bound to keep promise so far forth as he will to whom the promise is made. Indeed if a man be released of his promise, he is then free; otherwise if we promise and do not perform, we do not only track our credit before men, but also sin before God.

(8) The eighth fruit of the Spirit is *meekness*, which is a notable grace of God, when a man provoked by injuries, doth neither intend, nor enterprise the requital of the same. And it stands in three duties:

(i) The first is to interpret the sayings and doings of other men in better part as much as possibly may be.

(ii) The second, when men mistake and misconstrue our sayings and doings, if the matter be of smaller moment, to be silent and patient as Christ was when He was accused before the High Priests and Pharisees; this being withal remembered: that if the matter be of weight and moment, we may defend ourselves by soft and mild answers.

(iii) The third is not to contend in word or deed with any man, but when we are to deal with others, to speak our mind, and so an end.

(9) The last fruit of the Spirit is *temperance*, whereby a man bridleth his appetite or lust in meat, drink, and apparel. In bridling the lust, these rules must be observed:

(i) Eating and drinking must be joined with continual fasting, after this manner: We must not glut ourselves, but rather abstain from that which nature desireth, and as some used to speak, leave our stomachs craving.

(ii) A man must so eat and drink as afterward he may the better be enabled for God's worship. Creatures are abused when they make us unfit to serve God. The common fault is, on the Sabbath day men so pamper themselves as that they are made unfit both to hear and learn God's Word, and fit for nothing but to slumber and sleep; but following this rule of temperance, these faults shall be amended.

(iii) This must be a caveat in our apparel, that we be attired according to our callings in holy comeliness. The Lord hath threatened (Zeph. 1:8) to *visit all those that are clothed in strange apparel*. And holy comeliness is this: when the apparel is both for fashion and matter so made and worn that it may express and shew forth the graces of God in the heart, as sobriety, temperance, gravity, etc., and the beholder may take occasion by the apparel to acknowledge and commend these virtues. But lamentable is the time; look on men and women in these days and you may see and read their sins written in great letters on their apparel, as intemperance, pride and wantonness. Every day new fashions please the world; but indeed that holy comeliness which the Holy Ghost doth commend to us, is the right fashion when all is done.

And these are the nine fruits of the Spirit which we must put in practice in our lives and conversations.

Use 4. Fourthly, if we believe in the Holy Ghost, and thereupon do persuade ourselves that He will dwell in us; we must daily labour as we are

commanded (1 Thess. 4:4), to *keep our vessels in holiness and honour unto the Lord*; and the reason is good. If a man be to entertain but an earthly prince or some man of state, he would be sure to have his house in a readiness, and all matters in order against his coming, so as everything might be pleasing unto so worthy a guest. Well now, behold, we put our confidence and affiance in the Holy Ghost, and do believe that He will come unto us, and sanctify us, and lodge in our hearts. He is higher than all states in the world whatsoever; and therefore we must look that our bodies and souls be kept in an honourable and holy manner, so as they may be fit temples for Him to dwell in. St Paul biddeth us (Eph. 4:30) *not to grieve the Holy Spirit*; where the Holy Ghost is compared to a guest, and our bodies and souls unto inns; and as men use their guests friendly and courteously, shewing unto them all service and duties; so must we do to God's Spirit which is come to dwell and abide in us, doing nothing in any case which may disquiet or molest Him. Now there is nothing so grievous unto Him as our sins, and therefore we must make conscience of all manner of sin, lest by abusing of ourselves, we do cause the Holy Ghost (as it were) with grief to depart from us. When the ark of the covenant, which was a sign of the presence of God, was in the house of Obed Edom, the text saith (2 Sam. 6:11) that *the Lord blessed him and all his house*; but when the Holy Ghost dwells in a man's heart, there is more than the ark of the Lord present, even God Himself; and therefore may we look for a greater blessing. Now then shall we grieve the Holy Ghost by sinning, seeing we reap such benefit by His abode? It is said that our Saviour Christ (John 2:15) was angry when He came into the temple at Jerusalem and saw the abuses therein. Now shall He be angry for the abuses that are done in a temple of stone, and seeing the temples of our bodies, which are not made of stone but are spiritual, figured by that earthly temple, seeing them (I say) abused by sin, will He not be much more angry? Yea, we may assure ourselves He cannot abide that. And therefore if we believe in the Holy Ghost, we must hereupon be moved to keep our bodies and souls pure and clean. And further to persuade us hereunto, we must remember this: that when we pollute our souls and

bodies with any manner of sin, we make them even stables and sties for our wretched enemy the devil to harbour in. For when Satan is once cast out, if afterward we fall again to our old sins and looseness of life, and so defile our bodies, they are then most clean and neat for him to dwell in; whereupon he will come and bring seven other devils worse than his beginning. Now what a fearful thing is this: that the body, which should be a temple for the Holy Ghost, by our sins should be made a stable for the devil? Furthermore, St Paul biddeth us (1 Thess. 5:19) *not to quench the Spirit*. The graces of the Holy Spirit in this life, are like sparks of fire, which may soon be quenched with a little water. Now so oft as we sin, we cast water upon the grace of God, and as much as we can put out the same; therefore it stands us in hand to make conscience of everything wherein we may offend and displease God. And we may assure ourselves that so long as we live and lie in our corruptions and sins, the Holy Ghost will never come and dwell with us. He is a Spirit most pure and chaste, and therefore must have an undefiled temple to dwell in.

Thus we have heard what is to be believed concerning the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now, look as we believe in God distinguished into three Persons; so we must remember that when we perform divine worship to Him, we may distinguish the Persons, but we are not to sever them. When we pray to the Father, we must not omit the Son or the Holy Ghost, but make our prayers to them all; for as in nature they are one, and in Person not divided but distinguished; so in all worship we must never confound or sever the Persons, but distinguish them, and worship the Trinity in unity, and unity in Trinity; one God in three Persons, and three Persons in one God.

I Believe in an Holy Catholic Church

Hitherto we have entreated of the first part of the Creed concerning God; now follows the second part thereof concerning the church; and it was added to the former upon special consideration. For the right order of a confession did require that after the Trinity, the church should be mentioned, as the house after the owner, the temple after God, and the city after the builder. Again, the Creed is concluded with points of doctrine concerning the church, because whosoever is out of it, is also forth of the number of God's children; and he cannot have God for His Father, which hath not the church for his mother.

Question is made what the words are which are to be supplied in this article, *the holy catholic church*, whether *I believe* or *I believe in*; and ancient expositors have sufficiently determined the matter. One saith, "In these words, in which is set forth our faith of the Godhead, it is said, *In God the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Ghost*; but in the rest where the speech is not of the Godhead but of creatures and mysteries, the preposition *in* is not added that it should be *in the holy church*, but that we should believe there is an holy church, not as God, but as a company gathered to God. And men should believe that there is remission of sins, not *in the remission of sins*; and they should believe the resurrection of the body, not *in the resurrection of the body*; therefore by this preposition the Creator is distinguished from the creatures, and things pertaining to God from things pertaining to men." Another upon these words, *This is the work of God that ye believe in Him* (John 6:29), saith, "*If ye believe in Him, ye believe Him*; not *if ye believe Him, ye believe in Him*; for the devil believed God, but did not believe in Him. Again, of the apostles, we may say we believe Paul, but we do not believe in Paul; we believe Peter but we believe not in Peter. For his faith that believeth in Him which justifieth the ungodly,

is imputed to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:5). What is it therefore to believe in Him? By believing to love and like, and as it were to pass into Him, and to be incorporated into His members." Now the reason why some papists bring to the contrary, to prove that we may believe in the creatures and in the church, are of no moment:

1. First, they allege the phrase of Scripture: (Exod. 14:31), *They believed in God, and in Moses*; (1 Sam. 27:12), *And Achish believed in David*; (2 Chr. 20:20), *Believe in the prophets and prosper*. *Answer*: The Hebrew phrase in which the servile letter Beth is used, must not be translated with a preposition that ruleth an accusative or ablative case, but with a dative on this manner: *Believe Moses, David , the Prophets*; and it doth not import any affiance in the creature but only a giving of credence one man to another.

2. Secondly, they allege that ancient fathers read the article on this manner: *I believe in the holy catholic church*. *Answer*: Indeed some have done so; but by this kind of speech they signified no more but thus much: that they believed that there was a catholic church.

Thus having found what words are to be supplied, let us come to the meaning of the article. And that we may proceed in order, let us first of all see what the church is: *The church is a peculiar company of men predestinated to life everlasting, and made one in Christ*. First, I say, it is a peculiar company of men; for St Peter saith (1 Pet. 2:9), *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people*. He speaks indeed of the church of God on earth, but his saying may be also extended to the whole church of God, as well in heaven as in earth. Now because there can be no company unless it have a beginning and cause whereby it is gathered; therefore I add further in the definition, *predestinated to life everlasting*. Noting thereby the ground and cause of the catholic church, namely, God's eternal predestination to life

everlasting; and to this purpose, Christ saith (Luke 12:32), *Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's will to give you the kingdom*; signifying thereby that the first and principal cause of the church is the good pleasure of God whereby He hath before all worlds purposed to advance His elect to eternal salvation. Therefore one saith well, *Only the elect are the church of God*. And further, because no company can continue and abide for ever unless the members thereof be joined and coupled together by some bond, therefore I add in the last place, *made one with Christ*. This union maketh the church to be the church; and by it the members thereof, whether they be in heaven or in earth, are distinguished from all other companies whatsoever. Now this conjunction between Christ and the church is avouched by St Paul when he saith (Col. 1:18), *Christ is the head to the body, which is His church*; and when he ascribes the name of Christ not only to the Person of the Son, but to the church itself, as in the epistle to the Galatians Gal. 3:16), *To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made; he saith not and to his seeds, as speaking of many, but and unto his seed, as speaking of one, which is Christ*; that is, not the Redeemer alone, but also the church redeemed. For Christ as He is man, is not the only seed of Abraham. And this definition of the church is also in so many words set down in the Scriptures, in that it is called the *family of God* (Eph. 3:15), partly in heaven and partly in earth, named of Christ; and also it is called *the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all* (Gal. 4:26); and *the celestial Jerusalem*; and *the congregation of the firstborn* (Heb. 12:22,23). Now for the better understanding of the nature, estate and parts of the church, two points among the rest must be considered: I. the efficient cause thereof, *God's predestination*; and II. the form, the *mystical union*.

I.

In handling the doctrine of predestination, my meaning is only to stand on such points as are revealed in the Word and necessary, tending to

edification. And first I will shew what is the truth, and secondly the contrary falsehood.

A.

In the truth, I consider four things:

1. What predestination is.

2. What is the order of it.

3. What be the parts of it.

4. What is the use.

1.

Predestination may be thus defined: *It is a part of the counsel of God whereby He hath before all times purposed in Himself to shew mercy on some men and to pass by others, shewing His justice on them for the manifestation of the glory of His own name*. First, I say, it is part of His counsel because the counsel or decree of God universally extends itself to all things that are; and predestination is God's decree so far forth as it concerns the reasonable creatures, especially men. Now in every purpose or decree of God, three things must be considered: the beginning, the matter, the end:

(1) The beginning is the will of God whereby He willeth and appointeth the estate of His creatures; and it is the most absolute, supreme and sovereign cause of all things that are, so far forth as they have being; having nothing, either above itself or out of itself, to be an impulsive cause to move or incline it; and to say otherwise is to make the will of God to be no will. Indeed men's wills are moved and disposed by external causes out of themselves, borrowed from the things whereof deliberation is made,

because they are to be ruled by equity and reason; and a man's bare will without reason is nothing. Now God's will is not ruled by another rule of reason or justice, but itself is an absolute rule both of justice and reason. A thing is not first of all reasonable and just, and then afterward willed by God; but it is first of all willed by God, and thereupon becomes reasonable and just.

(2) The matter of His purpose is a decreed manifestation of two of the most principal attributes of the Godhead, mercy and justice; and that with a limitation or restraint of mercy to some of the creatures, and justice to some others, because it was His good will and pleasure. And we are not to imagine that this is a point of cruelty in God; for His very essence or nature is not justice alone, or mercy alone, but justice and mercy both together; and therefore to purpose the declaration of them both upon His creatures over whom He is a sovereign Lord, and that without other respects, upon His very will and pleasure, is no point of injustice.

(3) The supreme end of the counsel of God, is the manifestation of His own glory, partly in His mercy and partly in His justice. For in common equity, the end which He propounds unto Himself of all His doing must be answerable to His nature; which is majesty and glory, and (as I have said) justice and mercy itself.

And because Paul's disputation in the ninth to the Romans gives light and sufficient confirmation to this which I now teach, I will stand a little to open and resolve the same:

From the first verse to the sixth, he sets down his grief conceived for his brethren the Jews, and therewithal that it might not be thought that he spake of malice, he doth only in close and obscure manner insinuate the rejection of that nation. This done, in the sixth verse he answers a secret objection which might be made, on this manner: If the Jews be rejected, then *the Word of God is of none effect*; that is, then the covenant made with the

forefathers is void; but the covenant cannot be void; therefore the Jews are not rejected. The assumption he takes for granted, and denies the consequence of the proposition. And the ground of his denial is because there is a distinction between man and man, even among the Jews, whereby some are indeed in the covenant, some not. And this distinction is proved by three examples:

(i) The first in this verse, that of the children of Jacob the common parent of all the Jews, some are Israel, that is, truly in the covenant as Jacob was; and some are not Israel.

(ii) Now it might be further objected that the Jews are not only the posterity of Jacob, but the seed of Abraham in whom all nations of the earth are blessed; and therefore not to be rejected. And to this, Paul answers, verse 7, alleging a second example of the distinction between man and man out of the family of Abraham, in which some were indeed sons, some were not. For the proof of this, first, he sets down the words of the text in Moses: *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*; and secondly, makes an exposition of them with a collection on this manner: All they which are the sons of the promise are the seed of Abraham, or the sons of God; but Isaac is a son of promise and not Ishmael, therefore Isaac is the seed of Abraham and heir of the blessing, and not Ishmael. The proposition is in the eighth verse, the assumption in the ninth verse, the conclusion in the seventh verse. Here mark: (a) how he makes a double seed, one according to the flesh, the other spiritual; and two kinds of sons, one of the flesh, the other the son of the promise, or the son of God; for he puts one for the other. (b) That the distinction between Isaac and Ishmael, whereby one is in the covenant of grace, the other not; stands not in their foreseen faith and unbelief, and the fruits of them; but in the purpose and will of God itself. For Isaac is called *the child of promise*, because by virtue of it he was born, and believed, and was adopted the child of God, and made heir of the covenant given to Abraham; and therefore consequently the right of adoption befell

him by the mere good pleasure of God, which is the first cause of our salvation without respect of anything in the person of Isaac. For what God by His promise brings to pass in time, that He most freely decreed before all times.

(iii) Now considering the Jews might say that Ishmael was rejected because he was born of the handmaid Hagar, whereas they for their part descend of Abraham and Sarah by Isaac the lawful son, Paul adds a third example of the distinction between man and man out of the family of Isaac, in which Jacob was a true son and heir of the promise, and Esau was not. Now the distinction of these two persons is propounded in the tenth verse, and confirmed in vv. 11-13, in which are set down three things:

(a) The time of this distinction, *ere the children were born*, and therefore *when they had neither done good nor evil*. And this circumstance is noted to shew that God was not moved by any prevision or preconsideration of Jacob's godliness and Esau's profaneness, to prefer the one before the other.

(b) The end why this distinction was made at this time, and not afterward when they were born, is that the purpose of God which is according to His election might remain sure, not of works but by Him that calleth; that is, that by this means it might appear that when God receives any man into the covenant of eternal life, it proceeds not of any dignity in the man whom God calleth, but from His mercy and alone good pleasure, that His decree of saving the elect might remain firm and sure for ever. Hence it is manifest that there is an unchangeable decree of election of some men (for he that takes all and excepts none, cannot be said to choose) to salvation, depending upon the alone will of God; and therefore necessarily by the law of contraries, there is an opposite decree of reprobation; for in that God ordaineth some to eternal salvation, He testifies thereby that His purpose is to pass by some without shewing of mercy.

(c) The author of this distinction is God Himself by His purpose before all times, which purpose He made manifest by testimony given to Rebecca (Gen. 25:23), saying, *the elder shall serve the younger*; that is, the firstborn and more excellent according to the flesh, shall lose his birthright and the blessing of his father, and in respect of title to the covenant, be subject to the younger. And because this testimony concerning the freedom and servitude of Jacob and Esau might seem insufficient to prove the election of the first and the rejection of the second, therefore Paul adds a second testimony out of Malachi (Mal. 1:2,3), *I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau*; that is, I have purposed to love Jacob and to hate Esau. And these words no doubt are alleged to expound the former place out of Moses, and shew that the bondage of Esau was joined with the hatred of God, and the freedom of Jacob with the love of God as tokens thereof.

Against this received exposition of the former words which I have now propounded, sundry expositions are made:

(1) First, that the prerogative of Isaac above Ishmael, and Jacob above Esau, was only in temporal blessings, in that God vouchsafed unto them the right of the land of Canaan. *Answer*: If these places are to be understood of temporal blessings and not spiritual, then the apostle hath not fitly alleged the former examples to prove the rejection of the Jews from the covenant. For though it be granted there be a difference between man and man in respect of earthly blessings, yet doth it not follow that there shall be the same difference in things concerning the kingdom of heaven. If a father for some cause disinherit one or two of his children, it were absurd thereupon to conclude that he might therefore kill any of the rest. Again, the land of Canaan was not only an earthly inheritance, but also a pledge and figure unto our forefathers of a better inheritance in heaven; and therefore the excluding of Ishmael and Esau from the land of Canaan, was a sign that they were excluded from the covenant of grace and the right of eternal life.

(2) Some others say that by Jacob and Esau are not meant two persons, but two nations of the Idumeans and the Israelites. *Answer*: It is a manifest untruth. For it was not possible for two nations to strive in the womb of Rebecca, unless we considered them as they were comprehended under the two heads, to wit, the very persons of Jacob and Esau. And whereas they say that Esau in person never served Jacob but only in his posterity, the answer is that Jacob's freedom and prerogatives were spiritual and not temporal, which by faith he saw afar off but enjoyed not; and therefore proportionally Esau was debased to the condition of a servant in respect of his younger brother, not so much in respect of his outward estate and condition, as in regard of the covenant made with his ancestors from which he was barred. And though it be granted that by Jacob and Esau two nations, and not two persons, are to be understood, yet all comes to one head; for the receiving of the nation of the Israelites into the covenant, and the excluding of the nation of the Edomites, both descending of Jacob and Esau, serve as well to prove God's eternal election and reprobation, as the receiving and rejecting of one man.

(3) Others say that these words, *I have hated Esau*, are thus to be understood: *I have less loved Esau than Jacob*. But how then shall we say that Paul hath fitly alleged this text to prove the rejection of the Jews from the favour of God and the covenant of grace, considering that of men whereof one is loved more of God, the other less; both may still remain in the covenant?

(4) Lastly, it is alleged that the former exposition makes Ishmael and Esau damned persons. *Answer*: We must leave unto God all secret judgment of particular persons, and yet nevertheless, Paul doth very fitly in their two persons, both descending of Abraham, and both circumcised; set forth examples of such as for all their outward prerogatives, are indeed barred from the covenant of life everlasting before God. And again, the opposition made by Paul, requires that the contrary to that which is spoken of Isaac and

Jacob, should be said of Ishmael and Esau. And there is nothing spoken of either of them in the Scriptures which argues the disposition of men ordained to eternal life. Ishmael is noted with the brand of a mocker, and Esau of a profane man.

To proceed in the text, because the doctrine of Paul delivered in the former verses might seem strange unto the Romans, therefore in the fourteenth verse, he lays down an objection and answers the same. The objection is this: If God put distinction between man and man, without respect had to their persons, upon His own will and pleasure, then is He unjust; but He is not unjust, therefore He makes no such distinction. *Answer*: The answer is *God forbid*. Whereby he denies the consequence of the proposition on this manner: Though God should elect some to salvation, and reject some others, and that upon His will, yet were there no injustice with God. The reason of this answer follows in the eighteenth verse. God hath *absolute power or freedom of will*, whereby without being bound to any creature, He may and can first of all have mercy on whom He will, and secondly, harden whom He will. For the proof of the first, that God hath mercy on whom He will, he lays down the testimony of Moses (v.15). *I will have mercy on whom I will shew mercy, and I will have compassion on him, on whom I have compassion*. And in verse sixteen, makes his collection thence, *that it* (namely, the purpose of God according to election, v.11) *is not in him that willeth, or in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy*. Whereby he teacheth that the free election of God in order goes before all things that may in time befall man; and that therefore neither the intentions and endeavours of the mind, nor the works of our life, which are the effects of election, can be the impulsive causes to move God to choose us to salvation. The second, that God hardens whom He will, is confirmed and made plain by the testimony of Scripture concerning Pharaoh (v.17).

In the nineteenth verse there follows another objection arising out of the answer to the former, on this manner: If God will have some to be hardened

and rejected, and His will cannot be refuted; then with no justice can He punish them that are necessarily subject to His decree; but God will have some to be hardened and rejected, and His will cannot be resisted; therefore (saith the adversary) with no justice can He punish man that is necessarily subject to His decree. Here, mark that if there had been an universal election of all men, and if men had been elected or rejected according as God did foresee that they would believe or not believe, the occasion of this objection had been cut off. But let us come to Paul's answer. In the twentieth verse he takes the assumption for granted, that some are rejected because God will; and that the will, that is, the decree of God cannot be resisted; and only denies the coherence of the proposition, checking the malapert pride of the adversary, and shewing that the making of this wicked and blasphemous collection against the will of God, is as if a man should sue God at the law, and bring Him as it were to the bar, and plead against Him as His equal, whereas indeed the creature is nothing to the Creator, and is absolutely to submit itself to His will in all things. In verse twenty-one, he proceeds to a second answer, shewing that God's will is not to be blamed, because by His absolute sovereignty and the right of creation, He hath power to choose men, or to reject and harden them. And where there is right and power to do a thing, the will of the doer is not to be blamed. Now that God hath His right and power over His creature, it is proved by a comparison from the less to the greater, on this manner: The potter hath power over the clay to make of the same lump, one vessel to honour and another to dishonour; therefore may God much more *make some vessels of mercy and some vessels of wrath prepared to destruction*. The first part of the comparison is v.21, the second part, vv. 22,23. And lest any man should think that God makes vessels of honour and dishonour without sufficient and just cause in Himself, as the potter may do; therefore he sets down ends of the will of God: He makes vessels of dishonour to *shew His wrath* and to *manifest His power*; and again He condemns no man till He have *suffered him with long patience*. And He makes vessels of honour that He might *declare the riches of His glory* upon them. Hence it is manifest,

partly in His justice, and partly in His mercy; secondly, that men are not elected or refused of God, for their foreseen corruptions or virtues; for then Paul would not have said that God made vessels of dishonour, but that being so already, He left them to their dishonour.

Thus from the sixth verse of this chapter to the twenty-fourth, Paul hath described unto us the doctrine of God's eternal predestination, and that by the judgment of divines in all ages.

2.

The order of God's predestination is this: It is the property of the reasonable creatures to conceive one thing before another, whereas God conceives all things at once with one act of understanding, and all things both past and to come are present with Him; and therefore in His eternal counsel He decrees not one thing after another, but all things at once. Nevertheless, for our understanding sake, we may distinguish the counsel of God concerning man in two acts or degrees: The first is *the purpose of God Himself*, in which He determines what He will do, and the end of all His doings; and that is to create all things, specially man, for Hs own glory; partly by shewing on some men His mercy, and upon others His justice. The second is another purpose, whereby *He decrees the execution of the former*, and lays down means of accomplishing the end thereof. These two acts of the counsel of God, are not to be severed in any wise, nor confounded, but distinctly considered with some difference:

(1) For in the first, God decrees some men to honour by shewing His mercy and love on them, and again some to dishonour by shewing His justice on them; and this man more than that, upon His will and pleasure, and there is no other cause hereof known to us.

(2) In the second, known and manifest causes are set down of the execution of the former degree. For no man is actually condemned; yea, God decrees

to condemn no man but for his sins; and no man is actually saved but for the merit of Christ.

Furthermore, this latter act of the counsel of God, must be conceived of us in the second place and not in the first. For evermore the first thing to be intended is the end itself, and then afterward the subordinate means and causes whereby the end is accomplished. Again, the second act of God's counsel contains two others; one which setteth down the preparation of the means whereby God's predestination begins to come in execution; and they are two: the creation of man, righteous after the image of God, the voluntary fall of Adam and withal the shutting up of all men under damnation; the other appoints the applying of the several means to the persons of men; that God's decree, which was set down before all times, may in time be fully accomplished; as shall afterward in particular appear.

3.

Predestination hath two parts, the *decree of election*, the *decree of reprobation* or *no election*. This division is plain by that which hath been said out of the ninth chapter to the Romans, and it may be further confirmed by other testimonies. Of some it is said that *the Lord knows who are His* (2 Tim. 2:19); and of some others, Christ shall say in the day of judgment, *I never knew you* (Matt. 7:23). In the Acts (Acts 13:48) it is said that as many of the Gentiles as were *ordained to life everlasting, believed*. And Jude (Jude 4) saith of false prophets that they were *ordained to condemnation*.

(1)

In the handling of the decree of election, I will consider three things:

(i) What election is.

(ii) The execution thereof.

(iii) The knowledge of particular election.

(i) For the first; *God's election is a decree in which according to the good pleasure of His will, He hath certainly chosen some men to life eternal in Christ for the praise of the glory of His grace*. This is the same which Paul saith to the Ephesians (Eph. 1:4,5): *God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; who hath predestinated us to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will*. Now that we may the better conceive this doctrine, let us come to a consideration of the several points thereof.

First of all I say, election is God's decree. For there is nothing in the world that comes to pass, either universally or particularly, without the eternal and unchangeable decree of God. And therefore whereas men are actually chosen and brought to life everlasting, it is because God did purpose with Himself and decree the same before all worlds. Now touching the decree itself, six things are to be observed:

(a) The first, what was the motive or impulsive cause that moved God to decree the salvation of any man? *Answer*: The good pleasure of God. For Paul saith (Rom. 9:18), *He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy*; and (Eph. 1:5), *He hath predestinated us according to the good pleasure of God*. As for the opinion of them that say that foreseen faith and good works are the cause that moved God to choose men to salvation, it is frivolous. For faith and good works are the fruits and effect of God's election. Paul saith (Eph. 1:4), *He hath chosen us*, not because He did foresee that we would become holy, but *that we might be holy*. And (John 1:12), He hath predestinated us to adoption. Which is all one as if He had said, He hath predestinated us to believe, because adoption comes before believing. Now if men are elected that they might believe, then are they not elected because

they would believe. For it cannot be that one thing should be both the cause and the effect of another.

(b) The second point is that God's election is unchangeable; so as they which are indeed chosen to salvation cannot perish, but shall without fail attain to life everlasting. Paul takes it for a conclusion that (Rom. 9:11) *the purpose of God according to election must remain firm and sure*; and again (Rom. 11:29) that *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*. And Samuel saith (1 Sam. 15:29), *The strength of Israel will not lie or repent; for He is not a man that He should repent*. Such as God's nature is, such is His will and counsel; but His nature is unchangeable, *I am Jehovah*, saith He (Mal. 3:6), *and I change not*; therefore His will likewise and His counsels be unchangeable. And therefore whensoever the Spirit of God shall testify unto our spirit that we are justified in Christ and chosen to salvation; it must be a means to comfort us and to establish our hearts in the love of God. As for the opinion of them that say, the elect may fall from grace and be damned, it is full of hellish discomfort, and no doubt from the devil. And the reasons commonly alleged for this purpose are of no moment, as may appear by the scanning of them:

i. First, they object that the churches of the Ephesians, Thessalonians and the dispersed Jews are called the elect by the apostles themselves, yet sundry of them afterward fell away. *Answer*: (a) There are two kinds of judgment to be given of men, the judgment of certainty and the judgment of charity. By the first indeed, is given an infallible determination of any man's election; but it belongs unto God principally and properly; and to men but in part, namely, so far forth as God shall reveal the estate of one man unto another. Now the judgment of charity belongs unto all men; and by it leaving all secret judgments unto God, we are charitably to think that all those that live in the church of God, professing themselves to be members of Christ, are indeed elect to salvation, till God makes manifest otherwise. And on this manner, and not otherwise, do the apostles call the

whole churches elect. (b) They are called elect of the principal part, and not because every member thereof was indeed elect; as it is called an heap of corn though the bigger part be chaff.

ii. Secondly it is alleged that David prays that his enemies *may be blotted out of the book of life* (Psa. 69:28), which is the election of God, and that Moses (Exod. 32:32) and Paul (Rom. 9:3) did the like against themselves. *Answer*: David's enemies had not their names written in the book of life, but only in the judgment of men. Thus Judas, so long as he was one of the disciples of Christ, was accounted as one having his name written in heaven. Now hence it follows that men's names are blotted out of God's book, when it is made clear and manifest unto the world that they were never indeed written there. And where Moses saith, *Forgive them this sin; if not, blot me out of thy book*; and Paul, *I could wish to be accursed*, etc., their meaning was not to signify that men elected to salvation might become reprobates; only they testify their zealous affections that they could be content to be deprived of their own salvation, rather than the whole body of the people should perish and God lose His glory. As for that which Christ saith (John 6:70), *Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil*? It is to be understood, not of election to salvation, but of election to the office of an apostle; which is temporary and changeable.

(c) The third point is that there is an actual election made in time, being indeed a fruit of God's decree, and answerable unto it, and therefore I added in the description of these words, *whereby He hath chosen some men*. All men by nature are sinners and children of wrath, shut up under one and the same estate of condemnation. And actual election is when it pleaseth God to sever and single out some men above the rest, out of this wretched estate of the wicked world, and to bring them to the kingdom of His own Son. Thus Christ saith of His own disciples (John 15:19), *I have chosen you out of the world*.

(d) The fourth point is the actual or real foundation of God's election, and that is Christ, and therefore we are said to be chosen to salvation *in Christ*. He must be considered two ways (Eph. 1:4,5): as He is God, we are predestinated *of Him*, even as we are predestinated of the Father and the Holy Ghost. As He is our Mediator, we are predestinated *in Him*. For when God with Himself had decreed to manifest His glory in saving some by His mercy, He ordained further the creation of man in His own image, yet so as by his own fall he should enfold himself and all his posterity under damnation. This done, He also decreed that the Word should be incarnate actually, to redeem these out of the former misery, whom He had ordained to salvation. Christ therefore Himself was first of all predestinated as He was to be our Head, and as Peter saith (1 Pet. 1:20), *ordained before all worlds*, and we secondly predestinated in Him, because God ordained that the execution of man's election should be in Him. Here, if any demand how we may be assured that Christ in His passion stood in our room and stead, the resolution will be easy, if we consider that He was ordained in the eternal counsel of God to be our surety and pledge, and to be a public person to represent all the elect in His obedience and sufferings; and therefore it is that Peter saith (Acts 2:23) that *He was delivered by the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God*. And Paul (2 Tim. 1:9), that *grace was given unto us through Christ Jesus before the world was*.

(e) The fifth point is concerning the number of the elect. And that I expressed in these words: *hath chosen some men to salvation*. If God should decree to communicate His glory and His mercy to all and every man, there could be no election. For he that takes all, cannot be said to choose. Therefore Christ saith (Matt. 20:16), *Many are called but few are chosen*. Some make this question, how great the number of the elect is; and the answer may be this: that the elect considered in themselves be innumerable, but considered in comparison to the whole world, they are but few. Hence it follows necessarily that saving grace is not universal but *indefinite* or *particular*, unless we will against common reason make the

streams more large and plentiful than the very fountain itself. And this must excite us above all things in the world to labour to have fellowship with Christ and to be partakers of the special mercy of God in Him, yea to have the same sealed up in our hearts. Benefits common to all, as the light of the sun etc., are not regarded of any. Things common to few, though they be but temporal blessings, are sought for of all. God gives not riches to all men, but to some more, to some less, to some none. And hereupon how do men like drudges toil in the world from day to day and from year to year to enrich themselves? Therefore much more ought men to seek for grace in Christ, considering it is not common to all. We must not content ourselves to say, God is merciful; but we must go further and labour for a certificate in the conscience that we may be able to say that God is indeed merciful to us. When the disciples would have known how many should be saved, He omitting the question, answers thus (Luke 13:24): *Strive to enter in at the strait gate*.

(f) The last point is the end of God's election, and that is *the manifestation of the praise and excellency of the glorious grace of God* (Eph. 1:6).

(ii) Thus having seen what election is, let us come to the execution thereof. Of which remember this rule: *Men predestinated to the end, that is, glory, or eternal life, are also predestinated to the subordinate means whereby they come to eternal life; and these are vocation, justification, sanctification and obedience*. For the first, he that is predestinated to salvation is also predestinated to be called, as Paul saith (Rom. 8:30), *Whom he hath predestinated, them also He calleth*. Secondly, whom God calleth, they also were predestinated to believe; therefore saving faith is called (Tit. 1:1) *the faith of the elect*. And (Acts 13:48), *As many as were ordained to life everlasting, believed*. Thirdly, whom God hath predestinated to life, them He justifieth, as Paul saith (Rom. 8:30), *Whom He hath predestinated, them He calleth, and whom He calleth, them He justifieth*. Fourthly, whom He hath predestinated unto life, them He hath predestinated to sanctification

and holiness of life, as Peter saith (1 Pet. 1:2), that the Jews were *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father unto the sanctification of the Spirit*. Lastly, they that are predestinated unto life are also predestinated to obedience, as Paul saith to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:10), *We are the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them*.

This rule, being the truth of God, must be observed; for it hath special use:

(a) First of all it serves to stop the mouths of ungodly and profane men. They use to bolster up themselves in their sins by reasoning on this manner: If I be predestinated to eternal life, I shall be saved whatsoever come of it, how wickedly and lewdly soever I live; I will therefore live as I list and follow the swing of mine own will. But alas, like blind bayards they think they are in the way, when as they rush their heads against the wall and far deceive themselves. For the case stands thus: all men that are ordained to salvation are likewise ordained in the counsel of God to use all the good means whereby they may come to salvation; and therefore all the elect that live in this world shall be called, justified, sanctified and lead their lives in all good conscience before God and men; and they that live and continue in their own wicked ways disputing on this manner: If I be ordained to salvation, I shall not be damned; overshoot themselves, and as much as they can, plunge themselves headlong into the very pit of hell. And for a man to live and die in his sins, let the world dispute as they will, it is an infallible sign of one ordained to damnation.

(b) Secondly, there be others that think that the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, admonitions, exhortations, laws, good orders, and all such good means are needless, because God's counsels be unchangeable; if a man shall be condemned, nothing shall help; if a man shall be saved, nothing shall hinder. But we must still for our part remember that God doth not only ordain the end, but also the means whereby the end

is compassed; and therefore the very use of all prescribed means is necessary. And for this cause we must be admonished with diligence to labour and use all good means, that we may be called by the ministry of the gospel, and justified, and sanctified, and at length glorified. If a king should give unto one of his subjects a princely palace, upon condition that he shall go unto it in the way which he shall prescribe; oh, what pains would that man take to know the way, and afterward to keep and continue in it! But behold, the kingdom of heaven is the most glorious and royal palace that ever was; and God hath bestowed the same on His elect; and He requires nothing at their hands, but that they would turn their faces from this world, and walk unto it in the way which he hath chalked forth unto them in His Word. Therefore if we would have life everlasting, we must come forth of the broad way which leads to destruction, and enter into the strait way that leads to eternal life. We must acquaint ourselves with the guides, which are the ministers of the Word, that will cry to us (Isa. 30:21), *Here is the way, walk ye in it, when ye go to the right hand or to the left*. Vocation, justification, sanctification, repentance, new obedience, are the marks of the way, and we must pass by them all; and thus out weary souls weltering a while in this wretched world, shall at length be received into eternal joy and happiness.

(iii) Touching the knowledge of particular election, two special points are to be scanned: (a) whether a man may know his election; (b) how it may be known.

(a) For the first, papists are of the mind that no man can certainly know his own election unless he be certified thereof by some special revelation from God; but the thing is false and erroneous which they say. When the disciples of our Saviour Christ returned from preaching and shewed what wonders they had done and how devils were subject unto them, the text saith they rejoiced greatly. But Christ answered them again, saying (Luke 10:20), *In this rejoice not, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*.

Whereby He signifies that men may attain to a certain knowledge of their own election. For we cannot, neither do we rejoice in things either unknown or uncertain. St Peter saith (2 Pet. 1:10), *Give all diligence to make your election sure*. Now in vain were it to use diligence, if the assurance of election could not be any ways compassed without an extraordinary revelation. And Paul saith to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 13:5), *Prove yourselves whether ye be in the faith or not*. Where he takes it for granted that he which hath faith, may know he hath faith, and therefore may also know his election; because saving faith is an infallible mark of election.

(b) The second point is how any man may come to know his own election. And there be two ways of knowing it: The one, is by ascending up as it were into heaven, there to search the counsel of God, and afterward to come down to ourselves. The second, by descending into our own hearts to go up from ourselves, as it were by Jacob's ladder, to God's eternal counsel. The first way is dangerous, and not to be attempted. For the ways of God are unsearchable and past finding out. The second way alone is to be followed, which teacheth us by signs and testimonies in ourselves, to gather what was the eternal counsel of God concerning our salvation. And these testimonies are two: the testimony of God's Spirit and the testimony of our spirit; as Paul saith (Rom. 8:16), *The Spirit of God beareth witness together with our spirit that we are the sons of God*.

i Touching the testimony of God's Spirit, two questions may be demanded:

a. The first is, by what means the Spirit of God gives a particular testimony in a man's conscience of his adoption? *Answer*: It is not done by any extraordinary revelation or enthusiasm, that is, an ordinary revelation without the Word; but by an application of the promises of the gospel in the form of a practical syllogism on this manner: *Whosoever believeth in Christ is chosen to life everlasting*. This proposition is set down in the Word of God, and it is further propounded, opened and applied to all that be in the

church of God, by the ministers of the gospel set apart for this end. Now while the hearers of God's Word give themselves to meditate and consider the same promise, comes the Spirit of God and enlightens the eyes, and opens the heart, and gives them the power both to will to believe and to believe indeed; so as a man shall with freedom of spirit, make an assumption and say, *but I believe in Christ, I renounce myself, all my joy and comfort is in Him*; flesh and blood cannot say this, it is the operation of the Holy Ghost. And hence ariseth the blessed conclusion which is the testimony of the Spirit: *therefore I am the child of God*.

b. The second question is, how a man may discern between the illusion of the devil and the testimony of the Spirit. For as there is a certain persuasion of God's favour from God's Spirit; so there be sleights and frauds of the devil whereby he flatters and soothes men in their sins; and there is in all men natural presumption in shew like faith, indeed no faith. And this counterfeit mock-faith is far more common in the world than true faith is. Take a view hereof in our ignorant and careless people; ask any one of them whether he be certain of his salvation or no; he will without bones-making, protest that he is fully persuaded and assured of his salvation in Christ; that if there be but one man in a country to be saved it is he; that he hath served God always; and done no man hurt; that he hath evermore believed, and that he would not for all the world so much as doubt of his salvation. These and such like presumptuous conceits in blind and ignorant persons run for a current faith in the world. Now the true testimony of the Spirit is discerned from natural presumption, and all illusions of the devil, by two effects and fruits thereof, noted by Paul in that he saith (Rom. 8:15,26) that the Spirit makes us cry *Abba*, that is, *Father*:

The first is to pray so earnestly with groans and sighs, as though a man would even fill heaven and earth with the cry not of his lips, but of his heart, touched with sense and feeling of his manifold sins and offences. And this indeed is a special and principal note of the Spirit of adoption. Now

look upon the loose and careless man that thinks himself so filled with the persuasion of the love and favour of God, ye shall find that he very seldom or never prays; and when he doth, it is nothing else but a mumbling over the Lord's prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments for fashion's sake. Which argues plainly that the persuasion which he hath of God's mercy, is of the flesh, and not of the Spirit.

The second fruit is the affection of a dutiful child to God, a most loving Father; and this affection makes a man stand in fear of the majesty of God, wheresoever he is, and to make conscience of every evil way. Now those that are carried away with presumption, so soon as any occasion is given, they fall straight into sin without mislike or stay, as fire burns with speed when dry wood is laid unto it. In a word, where the testimony of the Spirit is truly wrought; there be many other graces of the Spirit joined therewith, as when one branch in a tree buddeth, the rest bud also.

ii. The testimony of our spirit is the testimony of the heart and conscience, purified and sanctified in the blood of Christ. And it testifieth two ways: a. by inward tokens in itself, b. by outward fruits.

a. Inward tokens are certain special graces of God imprinted in the spirit, whereby a man may certainly be assured of his adoption. These tokens are of two sorts, they either [i] respect our sins, or [ii] God's mercy in Christ.

[i] The first are in respect of sins past, present or to come:

[a] The sign in the spirit which concerneth sins past is (2 Cor. 7:10) *godly sorrow*, which I may term a beginning and mother-grace of many other gifts and graces of God. It is a kind of grief conceived in the heart in respect of God. And the nature of it may the better be conceived, if we compare it with the contrary. Worldly sorrow springs of sin, and it is nothing else but the horror of conscience and the apprehension of the wrath of God for the same. Now godly sorrow, it may indeed be occasioned by our sins, but it

springs properly from the apprehension of the grace and goodness of God. Worldly sorrow is a grief for sin only in respect of the punishment; godly sorrow is a lively touch and grief of heart for sin because it is sin, though there were no punishment for it. Now that no man may deceive himself in judging of this sorrow, the Holy Ghost hath set down seven fruits or signs thereof whereby it may be discerned (2 Cor. 7:11). The first is *care* to leave all our sins; the second is *apology* whereby a man is moved and carried to accuse and condemn himself for his sins past, both before God and man. The third is *indignation*, whereby a man is exceedingly angry with himself for his offences. The fourth is *fear*, lest he fall into his former sins again. The fifth is *desire*, whereby he craveth strength and assistance that his sins take no hold on him as before. The sixth is *zeal*, in the performance of all good duties contrary to his special sins. The seventh is *revenge*, whereby he subdues his body, lest it should hereafter be an instrument of sin as it hath been in former time. Now when any man shall feel these fruits in himself, he hath no doubt the godly sorrow, which here we speak of.

[b] The token which is in regard of sins present, is *the combat between the flesh and the spirit* (Gal. 5:17), proper to them that are regenerate, who are partly flesh and partly spirit. It is not the check of conscience which all men find in themselves both good and bad, so oft as they offend God; but it is a fighting and striving of the mind, will and affections with themselves, whereby so far forth as they are renewed, they carry the man one way, and as they still remain corrupt, they carry him flat contrary. Men having the disease ephialtes [*nightmares*], when they are half asleep feel as it were some weighty thing lying upon their breasts and holding them down; now lying in this case, they strive with their hands and feet, and with all the might they have to raise up themselves and to remove the weight, and cannot. Behold here a lively resemblance of this combat. The flesh which is the inborn corruption of man's nature, lies upon the hearts of the children of God and presseth them down, as if it were the very weight of a mountain; now they according to the measure of grace received, strive to raise up

themselves from under this burden, and to do such things as are acceptable to God; but cannot as they would.

[c] The token that respects sin to come, is *care to prevent it*. That this is the mark of God's children appeareth by the saying of John (1 John 5:18): *He that is born of God sinneth not, but keepeth himself, that the wicked one touch him not*. And this care shews itself not only in ordering the outward actions, but even in the very thoughts of the heart. For where the gospel is of force, it brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and the apostle's rule is followed (Phil. 4:8): *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest*, etc., *think on these things*.

[ii] The tokens which concern God's mercy, are specially two:

[a] The first is when a man feels himself distressed with the burden of his sins, or when he apprehends the heavy displeasure of God in his conscience for them; then further to feel how he stands in need of Christ, and withal heartily desire, yea to hunger and thirst after reconciliation with God in the mercy of Christ, and that above all other things in the world. To all such, Christ hath made most sweet and comfortable promises, which can appertain to none but the elect. *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink*, as saith the Scripture (John 7:37,38), *out of his belly shall flow rivers of water of life*. And (Rev. 21:6), *I will give unto him which is athirst, of the well of the water of life freely*. Now if he that thirsteth, drink of these waters, mark what followeth (John 4:14): *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never be more athirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life*.

[b] The second is a strange affection wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God, whereby a man doth so esteem and value, and as it were, set so high a price on Christ and His righteousness, that he accounts even the most precious things that are, to be but as dung in regard thereof. This affection was in Paul (Phil. 3:8), and it is expressed in the parable (Matt. 13:44), in

which after a man hath found a treasure, he first hides it; and then sells all he hath and makes a purchase of the field where it is. Now every man will say of himself, that he is thus affected to Christ, and that he more highly esteems the least drop of his blood, than all things in the world besides; whereas indeed most men are of Esau's mind, rather desiring the red broth than Isaac's blessing; and of the same affection with the Israelites, which liked better the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt than the blessings of God in the land of promise. Therefore that no man may deceive himself, this affection may be discerned by two signs:

a. The first, is to love and like a Christian man because he is a Christian. For he that doth aright esteem of Christ, doth in like manner esteem of the members of Christ. And of this very point our Saviour Christ saith (Matt. 10:41), *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive the reward of a righteous man*. And St John saith (1 John 3:14), *Hereby we know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren*; that is, such as are members even because they are so.

b. The second sign of this affection is a love and desire to the coming of Christ, whether it be by death unto any man particularly, or by the last judgment universally, and that for this end: that there may be a full participation of fellowship with Christ. And that this very love is a note of adoption, it appears by that which St. Paul saith (2 Tim. 4:8), that *the crown of righteousness is laid up for all them that love the appearing of Christ*.

b. The outward token of adoption is *new obedience*, whereby a man endeavours to obey God's commandments in his life and conversation; as St John saith (1 John 2:3), *Hereby we are sure that we know Him, if we keep His commandments*. Now this obedience must not be judged by the rigour of the moral law, for then it should be no token of grace, but rather a means

of damnation; but it must be esteemed and considered as it is in the acceptation of God (Mal. 3:17), who *spares them that fear Him, as a father spares an obedient son*, esteeming things done not by the effect and absolute doing of them, but by the affection of the doer. And yet lest any man should here be deceived, we must know that the obedience, which is an infallible mark of the child of God, must be thus qualified:

[i] First of all, it must not be done unto some few of God's commandments, but unto them all without exception. Herod (Mark 6:20) heard John Baptist willingly, and did many things; and Judas had excellent things in him, as appears by this: that he was content to leave all and follow Christ, and he preached the gospel of God's kingdom in Jewry as well as the rest; yet, alas, all this was nothing; for the one could not abide to become obedient to the seventh commandment in leaving his brother Philip's wife; and the other would not leave his covetousness, to die for it. Upright and sincere obedience doth enlarge itself to all the commandments, as David saith (Psa. 119:6), *I shall not be confounded, when I have respect to all thy commandments*. And St James saith (Jam. 2:10), *He which faileth in one is guilty of all*; that is, the obedience to many commandments is indeed before God no obedience, but a flat sin, if a man wittingly and willingly carry a purpose to omit any one duty of the law. He that repents of one sin truly, doth repent of all; and he that lives but in one known sin without repentance, though he pretend never so much reformation of life, indeed repents of no sin.

[ii] Secondly, this obedience must extend itself to the whole course of a man's life after his conversion and repentance. We must not judge of a man by an action or two, but by the tenor of his life. Such as the course of a man's life is, such is the man; though he, through the corruption of his nature, fail in this or that particular action, yet doth it not prejudice his estate before God, so be it he renew his repentance for his several slips and falls not lying in any sin; and withal from year to year walk unblameably

before God and men. St Paul saith (2 Tim. 2:19), *The foundation of God remaineth sure; the Lord knoweth who are His*. Now some might hereupon say, it is true indeed, God knows who are His; but how may I be assured in myself that I am His? To this demand, as I take it, Paul answers in the next words: *Let everyone that calleth on the name of the Lord depart from iniquity*; that is, let men invocate the name of God, praying seriously for things whereof they stand in need, withal giving thanks and departing from all their former sins, and this shall be unto them an infallible token that they are in the election of God.

[iii] Thirdly, in outward obedience it is required that it proceed from the whole man (1 Thess. 5:23), as the regeneration which is the cause of it, is through the whole man in body, soul and spirit. Again, obedience is the fruit of love, and (1 Tim. 1:5) *love is from a pure heart, the good conscience and faith unfeigned*.

Thus we have heard the testimonies and tokens whereby a man may be certified in his conscience that he was chosen to salvation before all worlds. If any desire further resolution at this point, let them meditate upon the fifteenth psalm and the first epistle of St John, being parcels of Scripture penned by the Holy Ghost for this end.

Here some will demand, how a man may be assured of his adoption, if he want the testimony of the Spirit to certify him thereof. *Answer*: Fire is known to be no painted but a true fire, by two notes: by heat and by the flame. Now if the case fall out that the fire want a flame, it is still known to be fire by the heat. In like manner, as I have said, there be two witnesses of our adoption: God's Spirit and our spirit. Now if it fall out that a man feel not the principal, which is the Spirit of adoption, he must then have recourse to the second witness, and search out in himself the signs and tokens of the sanctification of his own spirit, by which he may certainly

assure himself of his adoption, as we know fire to be fire by the heat, though it want a flame.

Again it may be demanded on this manner: How if it come to pass that after enquiry, we find but few signs of sanctification in ourselves? *Answer*: In this case we are to have recourse to the least measure of grace, less than which there is no saving grace. And it stands in two things: an hearty disliking of our sins because they are sins, and a desire of reconciliation with God in Christ for them all; and these are tokens of adoption, if they be soundly wrought in the heart, though all other tokens for the present seem to be wanting. If any shall say that a wicked man hath this desire, as Balaam, who desired to die the death of the righteous; the answer is that Balaam indeed desired to die as the righteous man doth, but he could not abide to live as the righteous; he desired the end but not the proper subordinate means which tend unto the end; as vocation, justification, sanctification, repentance etc. The first is the work of nature, the second is the work of grace. Now I speak not this to make men secure and to content themselves with these small beginnings of grace, but only to shew how any man assure themselves that they are at the least babes in Christ; adding this withal: that they which have no more but these small beginnings must be careful to increase them, because he which goes not forward goes backward.

Lastly, it may be demanded what a man should do if he want both the testimony of God's Spirit and his own spirit, and have no means in the world of assurance? *Answer*: He must not utterly despair, but be resolved of this: that though he want assurance now, yet he may attain the same hereafter. And such must be advertised to hear the Word of God preached; and being outwardly of the church to receive the sacraments. When we have care to come into the Lord's vineyard and to converse about the winepress, we shall find the sweet juice of heavenly grace pressed forth unto us plentifully by the Word and sacraments, to the comfort of our consciences,

concerning God's election. This one mercy, that God by these means in some part reveals His mercy, is unspeakable. When sickness or the day of death comes, the dearest servants of God, it may be, must encounter with the temptations of the devil, and wrestle in conscience with the wrath and displeasure of God, as for life and death; and no man knoweth how terrible these things are, but those which have felt them. Now when men walk thus through the valley of the shadow of death, unless God should as it were open heaven and stream down unto us in this world some lightsome beams of His love in Christ by the operation of His Spirit, miserable were the case even of the righteous.

(2)

Thus much of election, now follows reprobation; in handling whereof we are to observe three things:

(i) What it is.

(ii) How God doth execute this decree.

(iii) How a man may judge of the same.

(i) For the first, *Reprobation is God's decree in which, because it so pleased Him, He hath purposed to refuse some men by means of Adam's fall and their own corruptions, for the manifestation of His justice*. First, I say, it is a decree, and that is evident thus: If there had been an eternal decree of God whereby He chooseth some men, then there must needs be another whereby He doth pass by others and refuse them. For election always implies a refusal. Again, what God doth in time, that He decreed to do before time; as the case falls out even with men of mean wisdom, who first of all intend with themselves the things to be done, and after do them. But God in time refuseth some men as the Scripture testifieth, and it appeareth to be true by

the event. Therefore God before all worlds decreed the rejecting of some men.

Now in this decree, four points are to be considered:

(a) The first is the matter or object thereof, which is the thing decreed, namely, the rejection of some men in respect of mercy, or the manifestation of His justice upon them. This may seem strange to man's reason, but here we must with all submission strike our topsails, for the Word of God saith as much in plain terms. The apostle Jude, speaking of false prophets (Jude 4), saith that *they were of old ordained to this damnation*. And Paul saith in emphatical terms (Rom. 9:22) that God makes *vessels of wrath prepared to destruction*, and some are rejected, whom he opposeth to them which are elected to salvation.

(b) The second point is the impulsive cause that moved God to set down this decree concerning His creature, and that was nothing out of Himself but His very will and pleasure. He hardened Pharaoh with final hardness of heart because He would; and therefore He decreed to do so because He would. And our Saviour Christ saith (Matt. 11:25), *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and men of understanding, and hast opened them unto babes*. But upon what cause did God so? It follows in the next words (v.26): *It is so, Father, because thy good pleasure is such*. And if it be in the power and liberty of a man to kill an ox or a sheep for his use, to hunt and kill the hare and partridge for his pleasure; then much more without injustice may it be in the will and liberty of the Creator to refuse and forsake His creature for His glory. Nay, it stands more with equity a thousand fold that all the creatures in heaven and earth should jointly serve to set forth the glory and majesty of God the Creator in their eternal destruction, than the striking of a fly or the killing of a flea should serve for the dignity of all men in the world. For all this, it is thought by very many to be very hard to ascribe unto God who is

full of bounty and mercy, such a decree, and that upon His very will; but let us see their reasons:

i. First of all they say, it is a point of cruelty with God to purpose to create a great part of the world to damnation in hell fire; the answer is that by the virtue of this decree God cannot be said to create any to damnation, but to the manifestation of His justice and glory in his due and deserved damnation; and the doing of this is absolute justice.

ii. Secondly, it is alleged that by this means God shall hate His own creature, and that before it is; but it is an untruth. We must distinguish between God's purpose to hate and actual hating. Now indeed God before all worlds did purpose to hate some creatures; and that justly so far forth as His hating of them will serve for the manifestation of His justice; but He neither hates them indeed, nor loves them before they are; and therefore actual hatred comes not in till after the creation. Whom God hath decreed to love, them, when they are once created, He begins to love in Christ with actual love; and whom He hath decreed to hate, them being once created, He hates in Adam with actual hatred.

iii. Thirdly, it is objected that by this doctrine God shall be the author of sin; for He which ordains to the end, ordains to the means of the end; but God ordains men to the end, that is damnation; therefore He ordains them to the means thereof, that is sin. *Answer*: The proposition being thus understood, He which ordains a man to an end, in the same order and manner ordains him to the means; it is false. For one may be ordained to the end simply, the end being simply good; and yet not be simply ordained to the means, because they may be evil in themselves and only good in part, namely, so far forth as they have respect of goodness in the mind of the ordainer. Secondly, the assumption is false; for the supreme end of God's counsel is not damnation, but the declaration of His justice in the just destruction of the creature; neither doth God decree man's damnation as it is damnation,

that is, the ruin of man and the putting of him forth to punishment, but as it is a real exercise of justice. Thirdly, we must make distinction between sin itself and the permission thereof; and between the decree of rejection and actual damnation. Now the permission of sin, and not sin itself properly is the subordinate means of the decree of rejection. For when God had decreed to pass by some men, He withal decreed the permission of sin, to which permission men were ordained; and sin itself is no effect, but only the consequent of the decree; yet so, as it is not only the antecedent, but also the efficient and meritorious cause of actual damnation.

(c) The third point is the real foundation of the execution of this decree, in just condemnation, and that is the voluntary fall of Adam and of all his posterity in him, with the fruit thereof, the general corruption of man's nature. For howsoever God hath purposed to refuse men because it so pleased Him, yet when His purpose comes to execution, He condemneth no man but for his sins; and sin though it were not in the counsel of God an impulsive cause that moved Him to purpose a declaration of justice and judgment, yet was it a subordinate means of damnation; God in wonderful wisdom ordering and disposing the execution of this decree, so as the whole blame and fault of man's destruction should be in himself. And therefore the Lord in the prophet Hosea saith (Hos. 13:9), *One hath destroyed thee, but I will help thee*; that is, salvation is of God, and the condemnation of men is from themselves. Now whereas many depraving our doctrine say that we ascribe unto God an absolute decree in which he doth absolutely ordain men to damnation, they may be here answered. If by absolute, they understand that which is opposed to conditional, then we hold and avouch that all the eternal decrees of God are simple and absolute, and not limited or restrained to this or that condition or respect. If by absolute, they understand a bare and naked decree without reason or cause, then we deny God's decree to be absolute. For though the causes thereof be not known to us, yet causes there be, known to Him, and just they are; yea the very will of God itself is cause sufficient, it being the absolute rule of justice. And

though men in reason cannot discern the equity and justice of God's will in this point, yet may we not thereupon conclude that therefore it is unjust. The sun may shine clearly, though the blind man see it not. And it is a flat mistaking to imagine that a thing must first of all be just in itself, and then afterward be willed of God. Whereas contrariwise, God must first will a thing before it can be just. The will of God doth not depend upon the quality and nature of the thing, but the qualities of things in order of causes follow the will of God. For everything is as God wills it. Lastly, if it be called an absolute decree because it is done without all respect to man's sin, then we still deny it to be absolute. For as God condemns man for sin; so He decreed to condemn him for, and by his sin; yet so as if the question be made, what is the cause why He decrees rather in His justice to condemn this man and that man, no other reason can be rendered but His will.

(d) The last point is the end of God's decree, namely the manifestation of His justice, as Solomon saith (Prov. 16:4), *The Lord hath made all things for His own sake, and the wicked for the day of evil*. And Paul saith (Rom. 9:22) that God made vessels of wrath, *to shew His wrath, and to make His power known*.

(ii) Thus we have seen what reprobation is; now follows the execution thereof; for that which God decrees before time, in time He executes. And here a special rule to be remembered is this: *Those which are ordained to just damnation, are likewise ordained to be left to themselves in this world, in blindness of mind and hardness of heart, so as they neither shall, nor will repent of their sins*.

The truth of this we may see in God's Word. For St Peter, speaking of the priests and doctors and chief of the people among the Jews, saith plainly (1 Pet. 2:8), *They stumbled at the Word, and were disobedient*. Why so? The reason is there set down: *because they were ordained to it of old*. And so Paul saith to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 4:2) that he *handled not the Word of*

God deceitfully, but in the declaration of the truth he appointed himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Now hereupon it may be said: how then comes it to pass that all receive not the gospel in Corinth; and to this he answers with a terrible sentence, *If* (saith he (2 Cor. 4:3)) *our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that perish*; giving us to understand that God leaves them to themselves in this world, whom He purposed to refuse. And the Lord by the prophet Isaiah saith of the Jews (Isa. 6:9,10), *By hearing they shall hear and not understand, and by seeing they shall see and not perceive, lest they should hear with their ears, and see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and so turn and be saved*.

The use of this is manifold:

Use 1. First, it serves to overthrow the opinion of carnal men, which reason thus: If I be ordained to damnation, let me live never so godly and well, I am sure to be damned, therefore I will live as I list; for it is not possible for me to alter God's decree. Blasphemous mouths of men make nothing of this and like speeches, and yet they speak flat contraries. For whom God hath purposed in His eternal counsel to refuse, them also He hath purposed for their sins, to leave to the blindness of their minds and hardness of their hearts, so as they neither will, nor can live a godly life.

Use 2. Secondly, this rule doth as it were, lead us by the hand to the consideration of the fearful estate of many people among us. We have had for the space of thirty years and more the preaching of the gospel of Christ, and the more plentifully by reason of the schools of learning. But what hath been the issue of it? I doubt not but in many it hath been the means of their conversion and salvation; but to speak generally of the greater part, there is little or no fruit to be seen. The most after this long preaching remain as blind, as impenitent, as hard-hearted, and as unreformed in their lives as ever they were, though they have heard the Lord calling them to repentance from day to day, and from year to year. Well, if this rule be the truth of God,

as no doubt it is, then I say plainly that there is a most fearful judgment of God among us. My meaning is not to determine or give sentence of any man's person, of any town, or people; nevertheless this may be avouched: that it is a terrible and dangerous sign of the wrath of God, that after this long and daily preaching, there is still remaining a general hardness of heart, impenitence and want of reformation in the lives of men. The smith's stithy, the more it is beaten, the harder it is made; and commonly the hearts of men, the more they are beaten with the hammer of God's Word, the more dull, secure and senseless they are. This being so, it stands every man in hand to look to his own estate. We are careful to flee the infection of the bodily plague; oh then, how careful should we be to flee the common blindness and hardness of heart which is the very plague of all plagues, a thousand-fold worse than all the plagues of Egypt? And it is so much the more fearful, because the more it takes place, the less it is perceived. When a malefactor on the day of assize is brought forth of the jail, with great bolts and fetters, to come before the judge, as he is going all men pity him and speak comfortably unto him; but why so? Because he is now to be arraigned at the bar of an earthly judge. Now the case of all impenitent sinners is far more miserable than the case of this man; for they lie fettered in bondage under sin and Satan; and this short life is the way in which they are going every hour to the bar of God's justice, who is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, there to be arraigned and to have sentence of condemnation given against them. Now canst thou pity a man that is before an earthly judge, and wilt thou not be touched with the misery of thine own estate, who goest every day to the bar of God's justice; whether thou be sleeping or waking, sitting or standing, as a man on the sea in a ship goes continually toward the haven, though he stir not his foot? Begin now at length to lay this point to your hearts, that, so long as ye run on in your blind ways without repentance, as much as ye can, ye make post-haste to hell-ward; and so long as you continue in this miserable condition, as St Peter saith (2 Pet. 2:3), *Your judgment is not far off, and your damnation sleepeth not*.

Use 3. Thirdly, seeing those whom God hath purposed to refuse, shall be left unto themselves, and never come to repentance, we are to love and embrace the Word of God preached and taught unto us by the ministers of the gospel; and withal submitting ourselves unto it, and suffering the Lord to humble us thereby, that we may come at length out of the broad way of blindness of mind and hardness of heart leading to destruction, into the strait way of true repentance and reformation of life which leadeth to salvation. For so long as a man lives in this world after the lusts of his own heart, he goes on walking in the very same broad way to hell, in which all that are ordained to condemnation walk; and what a fearful thing is it, but for a little while to be a companion in the way of destruction with them that perish; and therefore I say once again, let us all in the fear of God, lay His Word unto our hearts, and hear it with reverence, so as it may be in us the sword of the Spirit to cut down the sins and corruptions of our natures, and work in us a reformation of life and true repentance.

(iii) The third point concerning the decree of reprobation, is the judgment to be given of it. This judgment belongeth to God principally and properly, because He knoweth best what He hath determined concerning the estate of every man, and none but He knows who they be which are ordained to due and deserved damnation. And again, He only knoweth the hearts and wills of men, and what grace He hath given them, what they are, and what all their sins be, and so doth no angel nor creature in the world beside. As for men, it belongs not to them to give judgment of reprobation in themselves, or in others, unless God reveals His will unto them and give them gift of discerning. The gift was bestowed on sundry of the prophets in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament on the apostles. David in many psalms (Psa. 69, 109) maketh request for the confusion of his enemies, not praying only against their sins (which we may do), but even against their persons which we may not do. No doubt he was guided by God's Spirit and received thence an extraordinary gift to judge of the obstinate malice of his adversaries. And Paul prays against the person of Alexander the

coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14), saying, *The Lord reward him according to his doings*. And such kind of prayers were lawful in them, because they were carried with pure and upright zeal, and had no doubt a special gift whereby they were able to discern of the final estate of their enemies. Again, God sometimes gives this gift of discerning of some men's final impenitence to the church upon earth, I say not to this or that private person, but to the body of the church or greater part thereof. St John writing unto the churches saith (1 John 5:16), *There is a sin unto death* (that is, against the Holy Ghost), *I say not that thou shouldest pray for it*; in which words he takes for granted that this sin might be discerned by the church in those days. And Paul saith (1 Cor. 16:22), *If any man believe not the Lord Jesus, let him be had in execration, Maranatha*, that is, pronounced accursed to everlasting destruction. Whence it appears that the church hath power to pronounce men rejected to everlasting damnation, upon some special occasions, though I dare not say ordinarily and usually. The primitive church with one consent prayed against Julian the apostate, and the prayers made were not in vain, as appeareth by the event of his fearful end. As for private and ordinary men, for the tempering and rectifying of their judgment, in this case they must follow two rules:

(a) The one is that every member of the church is bound to believe his own election. It is the commandment of God binding the very conscience (1 John 3:23), *that we should believe in Christ*. Now to believe in Christ, is not only to put our affiance in him, and to be resolved that we are justified and sanctified, and shall be glorified by Him, but also that we are elect to salvation in Him before the beginning of the world, which is the foundation of the rest. Again, if of things that have necessary dependence one upon another, we are to believe the one, then we are to believe the other. Now election and adoption are things conjoined, and the one necessarily depends upon the other. For all the elect (as St Paul saith (Eph. 1:5)) are predestinated to adoption; and we are to believe our own adoption, and therefore also our election.

(b) The second rule is that concerning the persons of those that be of the church, we must put in practice the judgment of charity, and that is to esteem of them as the elect of God, till God make manifest otherwise. By virtue of this rule the ministers of God's Word are to publish and preach the gospel to all without exception. It is true indeed there is both wheat and darnel in God's field, chaff and corn in God's barn, fish and dross in God's net, sheep and goats in Christ's fold; but secret judgments belong unto God, and the rule of love, which is to think and wish the best of others, is to be followed of us that profess faith working by love.

It may be demanded, what we are to judge of them that as yet are enemies to God? *Answer*: Our duty is to suspend our judgment concerning their final estate; for we know not whether God will call them or no; and therefore we must rather pray for their conversion, than for their confusion.

Again, it may be demanded, what is to be thought of all our ancestors and forefathers that lived and died in the times when popery took place? *Answer*: We may well hope the best and think that they were saved; for though the papacy be not the church of God, and though the doctrine of popery raze the foundation, yet nevertheless in the very midst of the Roman papacy, God hath always had a remnant which have in some measure truly served Him. In the Old Testament, when open idolatry took place in all Israel, God said to Elijah (1 Kin. 19:18), *I have reserved seven thousand to myself, that never bowed the knee to Baal*; and the like is and hath been in the general apostasy under antichrist. St John saith (Rev. 12:17) that when the woman fled into the wilderness for a time, even then there was a remnant of her seed which *kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ*. And again, when ordinary means of salvation fail, then God can and doth make a supply by means extraordinary, and therefore there is no cause why we should say that they were condemned.

Thirdly, it may be demanded, whether the common judgment given of Francis Spira, that he is a reprobate, be good or no? *Answer*: We may with better warrant say no, than any man say, yea. For what gifts of discerning had they which came to visit him in his extremity; and what reason induced them to give this peremptory judgment? He said himself that he was a reprobate; that is nothing, a sick man's judgment of himself is not to be regarded. Yea, but he despaired; a senseless reason, for so doth many a man year by year, and that very often as deeply as ever Spira did; and yet by the good help of the ministry of the Word, both are and may be recovered. And they which will avouch Spira to be a reprobate, must go further and prove two things: that he despaired both wholly and finally; which if they cannot prove, we for our parts must suspend our judgments, and they were much to blame that first published the book.

Lastly, it may be demanded, what is to be thought of them that make very fearful ends in raving and blaspheming? *Answer*: Such strange behaviours are oftentimes the fruits of violent diseases which torment the body and bereave the mind of sense and reason; and therefore if the person lived well, we must think the best; for we are not by outward things to judge the estate of any man. Solomon saith (Eccl. 9:2) that *all things come alike to all, and the same condition to the just and to the wicked*.

4.

Thus much of the parts of predestination; now follows the use thereof; and it concerns partly our judgments, partly our affections, and partly our lives.

(1) The uses which concern judgment are three:

(i) And first by the doctrine of predestination, we learn that there cannot be any justification of a sinner before God by his works. For God's election is the cause of justification, because whom God electeth to salvation after this life, them He electeth to be justified in this life. Now election itself is of

grace, and of grace alone, as Paul saith (Rom. 11:5,6), *Election is by grace, and if it be by grace, it is no more of works; or else were grace no grace*; therefore justification is of grace and grace alone; and I reason thus: The cause of a cause is the cause of all things caused; but grace alone is the cause of predestination, which is the cause of our vocation, justification, sanctification etc. Grace therefore is also the alone cause of all these. Therefore the Scriptures ascribe not only the beginning, but also the continuance and accomplishment of all our happiness to grace. For first, as election, so vocation is of grace. Paul saith (2 Tim. 1:9), *God hath called us not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace*. Again, faith in Christ is of grace. So it is said (Phil. 1:29): *To you it is given to believe in Christ*. Also the justification of a sinner is of grace. So Paul saith plainly to the Romans (Rom. 3:24): You are *justified freely by His grace*. Again, sanctification and the doing of good works is of grace. So it is said (Eph. 2:10): *We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them*. Also perseverance in good works and godliness is of grace. So the Lord saith (Jer. 32:40): *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will never turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me*. Lastly, life everlasting is of grace. So Paul saith (Rom. 6:23): *Life everlasting is the gift of God through Jesus Christ*. Now they of the church of Rome teach the flat contrary; they make two justifications; the first, whereby a man of an evil man is made a good man; the second, whereby of a good man he is made better. The first they ascribe to grace, but so, as the second is by works.

(ii) Secondly, hence we learn that the art of judicial astrology is vain and frivolous. They that practise it, do profess themselves to tell of things to come almost whatsoever, and this they do by casting of figures; and the special point of their art is to judge of men's nativities. For if they may know but the time of a man's birth, they take upon them to tell the whole course of his life from year to year, from week to week, and from day to

day, from the day of his birth to the hour of his death; yea, that which is more, they profess themselves to tell all things that shall befall men, either in body, goods or good name, and what kind of death they shall die. But that this their practice is not of God, but indeed unlawful, it may appear by this: because it stands not with the doctrine of God's predestination. Two twins begotten of the same parents and born both at one and the same time, by the judgments of astrologians must have both the same life and the same death, and be every way alike both in goods and good name; yet we see the contrary to be true in Jacob and Esau, who were born both of the same parents at one time. For Jacob took Esau by the heel, so as there could not be much difference between them in time; yet for all this, Esau was a fierce man and wild, given to hunting; but Jacob was mild of nature and lived at home; the one had favour at God's hand and was in the covenant, but God kept back that mercy from the other. Again, in a pitched field are slain a thousand men at one and the same time; now if we consider the time of their births, it may be they were born at a thousand sundry times, and therefore under so many divers positions of the heavens, and so by the judgment of all astrologers should have all divers and sundry lives and ends; but we see according to the determination of the counsel of God, they have all one and the same end; and therefore this must admonish all those that are brought up in schools of learning, to have care to spend their time in better studies; and it teacheth those that are fallen into any manner of distress, not to have recourse unto these fond figure-casters. For their astrological judgments are false and foolish, as we may see by the two former examples.

(iii) Thirdly, the knowledge of God is one of the most special points in Christian religion; and therefore the Lord saith (Jer. 9:24), *Let him that rejoiceth rejoice in this: that he understandeth and knoweth me. For I am the Lord which shew mercy and judgment in the earth*. And our Saviour Christ saith (John 17:3*), This is life eternal: to know thee, the only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ*. Now God's predestination is a

glass wherein we may behold His majesty. For first, by it we see the wonderful wisdom of God, who in His eternal counsel did foresee and most wisely set down the estate of every man. Secondly, His omnipotence, in that He hath power to save, and power to refuse whom He will. Thirdly, His justice and mercy both joined together in the execution of election: His mercy, in that He saveth those that were utterly lost; His justice in that He ordained Christ to be a Mediator to suffer the curse of the law and to satisfy His justice for the elect. Fourthly, His justice in the execution of the decree of reprobation; for though He decreed to hold back His mercy from some men because it so pleased Him, yet He condemneth no man but for his sins. Now the consideration of these and like points, bring us to the knowledge of the true God.

(2) The uses which concern our affections are these:

(i) First, the doctrine of predestination ministers to all the people of God matter of endless consolation. For considering God's election is unchangeable, therefore they which are predestinated to salvation cannot perish; though the gates of hell prevail against them so as they be hardly saved, yet shall they certainly be saved; therefore our Saviour Christ saith (Matt. 24:24) that in the latter days shall arise false Christ's and false prophets which shall shew great signs and wonders, so that *if it were possible they should deceive the very elect*. In which words He takes for granted that the elect of God can never finally fall away. And hereupon He saith to His disciples when they rejoiced that the devils were subject to them (Luke 10:20), *Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*. And St Paul speaking of Hymenaeus and Philetus, which had fallen away from the faith, lest the church should be discouraged by their fall because they were thought to be worthy men and pillars of the church; he doth comfort them from the very ground of election, saying (2 Tim. 2:19), *The foundation of God remaineth sure, and hath this seal: The Lord knoweth who are His*. Where God's election is compared to the foundation of an

house, the building whereof may be shaken, but the groundwork standeth fast; and therefore Paul saith further (Rom. 8:33): *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect*? Now then that we may have comfort in distress, and something to stay upon in all our troubles; we in this world are as strangers in a far country; our passage homeward is over the sea of this world; the ship wherein we sail is the church; and Satan stirs up many blasts of troubles and temptations, and his purpose is to sink the ship, or to drive it on the rock; but we must take the anchor of hope, and fasten it in heaven upon the foundation of God's election; which being done, we shall pass in safety and rejoice in the midst of all storms and tempests.

(ii) Secondly, whereas God refuseth some men, and leaves them to themselves, it serves to strike a fear into every one of us whatsoever we be, as St Paul saith in the like case (Rom. 11:20), the Jews being the natural branches, *are broken off through unbelief, and thou standest by faith: be not high-minded but fear*. This indeed was spoken to the Romans, but we must also lay it unto our hearts. For what is the best of us, but a lump of clay? And howsoever in God's counsel we are chosen to salvation, yet in ourselves we are all shut up under unbelief, and are fit to make vessels of wrath. Our Saviour Christ calleth Judas a devil, and we know his lewd life and fearful end; now what are we better than Judas by nature? If we had been in his stead, without the special blessing of God, we should have done as he did; he betrayed Christ; but if God leave us to ourselves, we shall not only betray Him, but by our sins then crucify Him a thousand ways. Furthermore, let us bethink ourselves of this: whether there be not some already condemned in hell, who in their lives were not more grievous offenders than we. Isaiah (Isa. 1:10) called the people of his time a people of Sodom and Gomorrah; giving the Jews then living to understand that they were as bad as the Sodomites, and as the people of Gomorrah, on whom the Lord had shewed His judgments long before. If this be true, then let us with fear and trembling be thankful to His majesty that He hath preserved us hitherto from deserved damnation.

(3) The uses which respect our lives and conversations are manifold:

(i) First, seeing God hath elected some to salvation, and hath also laid down the means in His holy Word whereby we may come to the knowledge of our particular election, we must therefore as St Peter counselleth us (2 Pet. 1:10), *give all diligence to make our election sure*. In the world men are careful and painful enough to make assurance of lands and goods to themselves and to their posterity; what a shame it is then for us, that we should be slack in making sure to ourselves the election of God, which is more worth than all the world beside; and if we shall continue to be slack herein, the leases of our lands and houses and all other temporal assurances shall be bills of accusation against us at the day of judgment to condemn us.

(ii) Secondly, by this doctrine we are taught to live godly and righteously in this present world; because all those whom God hath chosen to salvation, He hath also appointed to live in newness of life, as St Paul saith (Eph. 1:4), *God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him*. And again (Eph. 2:10), *We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them*. And (2 Thess. 2:13), *God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and faith of the truth*. The elect are *vessels of honour* (Rom. 9:23; 2 Tim. 2:21); and therefore all those that will be of the number of the elect, must carry themselves as vessels of honour. For so long as they live in their sins, they be like vessels of dishonour, employing themselves to the most base service that can be, even to the service of the devil. The sun was ordained to shine in the day, and the moon in the night, and that order they keep; yea every creature in his kind observeth the course appointed unto it by creation, as the grass to grow, and trees to bring forth fruit. Now the elect were ordained to this end: to lead a godly life; and therefore if we should either persuade ourselves or the world that we are indeed chosen to salvation, we must be plentiful in all good works, and make conscience of every evil way; and to

do otherwise, is as much as to change the order of nature, and as if the sun should cease to shine by day and the moon by night.

(iii) Thirdly, when God shall send upon any of us in this world crosses and afflictions, either in body or in mind, or any way else (as this life is the vale of misery and tears, and judgment must begin at God's house), we must learn to bear them with all submission and contentment of mind. For whom God knew before, them He hath *predestinated to be made like unto His Son* (Rom. 8:29). But wherein is this likeness? Paul saith (Phil. 3:10): In *the fellowship of His afflictions, and in a conformity to His death*. And the consideration of this, that afflictions were ordained for us in the eternal predestination of God, must comfort our hearts and restrain our impatience so oft as we shall go under the burden of them. Hence again we learn that they which persuade themselves that they are in the favour of God because they live at ease in wealth and prosperity, are far deceived. For St Paul saith (Rom. 9:22), *God suffereth with long patience the vessels of wrath prepared to destruction, to make known His power, and to shew forth His wrath on them*. This being so, no man then by outward blessings ought to plead that he hath the love of God. Sheep that go in fat pastures come sooner to the slaughter house than those which are kept upon the bare commons; and they which are pampered with wealth of this world, sooner forsake God, and therefore are sooner forsaken of God, than others. Solomon saith (Eccl. 9:1), *No man knoweth love or hatred*, that is, by outward things; for all things come alike to all; the same condition is to the just and to the unjust, to the wicked and good, to the pure and polluted.

(iv) Lastly, it may be an offence unto us, when we consider that the doctrine of the gospel is either not known, or else despised and persecuted of the whole world; but we must stay ourselves with this consideration: that nothing comes to pass by chance, and that God knows who are His; and there must be some in the world, on whom God hath in His eternal counsel purposed to manifest His power and justice. Again, ministers of the gospel

may be discouraged, when after long preaching they see little or no fruit of their labours; the people whom they teach remaining as blind, impenitent and unreformed as ever they were. But they must also consider that it is the purpose of God to choose some to salvation and to refuse others; and that of the first, some are called sooner, some later, and that the second being left to themselves never come to repentance. To this, Paul had regard when he said (2 Cor. 4:3), *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that perish*. And again (2 Cor. 2:15), *We are unto God the sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish*.

B.

Hitherto I have delivered the truth of this weighty point of religion, which also is the doctrine of the Church of England. Now it followeth that we should consider the falsehood. Sundry divines have denied, and in their writings published a new frame or platform of the doctrine of predestination; the effect whereof is this: The nature of God (say they) is infinite love, goodness and mercy itself; and therefore He propounds unto Himself an end answerable thereunto, and that is the communication of His love and goodness unto all His creatures. Now for the accomplishing of this supreme and absolute end, He did four things: First, He decreed to create man righteous in His own image; secondly, He foresaw the fall of man after his creation, yet so as He neither willed it nor decreed it; thirdly, He decreed the universal redemption of all and every man actually by Christ, so be it they will believe in Him; fourthly, He decreed to call all and every man effectually, so as if they will, they may be saved. This being done, He in His eternal counsel foreseeing who would believe in Christ, did thereupon elect them to eternal salvation; and again foreseeing who would not believe but contemn grace offered, did thereupon also decree to reject them to eternal damnation.

This platform howsoever it may seem plausible to reason, yet indeed it is nothing else but a device of man's brain; as will appear by sundry defects and errors that be in it:

1. For first, whereas it is avouched that Adam's fall came by the pure prescience of God, without any decree or will of His, it is a flat untruth. The putting of Christ to death was a great a sin as the fall of Adam; nay in some respects a greater. Now that came to pass not only by the foreknowledge of God, but also (Acts 2:23) *by His determinate counsel*. And therefore as the church of Jerusalem saith (Acts 4:27,28), *Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, gathered themselves together, to do whatsoever thine hand and thy counsel had determined before to be done*; so may we say that *Adam in his fall did nothing but that which the hand of God and His counsel had determined before to be done*. And considering the will of God extends itself to the least things that are, even (Matt. 10:29) to *sparrows*, whereof none do light upon the ground without our heavenly Father, how can a man in reason imagine that the fall of one of the most principal creatures that are, shall fall out altogether without the will and decree of God? And there can be nothing more absurd than to sever the foreknowledge of God from His counsel or decree. For by this means, things shall come to pass God nilling it, then that is done which God would not have done, and to say so, is to bereave Him of His omnipotency. And if we shall say that things fall out, God not knowing of them; we make Him to be imprudent, and deny His omniscience. Lastly, if we shall say that a thing is done, God not regarding it, we bring in an idol of our own brains, and stablish the idol-god of the Epicureans.

Again, it is alleged that if God willed Adam's fall, then His will is flat contrary to itself, because He wills that which He had by express commandment forbidden. *Answer*: Indeed if God should both will and

forbid one and the same thing in one and the same respect, there should be a contradiction in God's will; but that God doth not. He forbad Adam's fall as it was sin, for so in every commandment sin, as it is sin, is condemned and punished; and yet because it was in a new respect, a means of manifesting His glory, who is able to bring light out of darkness; therefore he willingly decreed the permission of it. Incest as it is sin, it is condemned in the seventh commandment and punished with death; yet as incest was a punishment of David's adultery, God is said to take his wives and *to give them* to his son Absalom (2 Sam. 12:11).

Some again, as it appears by their writings, fear to ascribe unto God so much as a permission of Adam's fall; but no doubt they are deceived. For if these rules be true: that God is omnipotent; that He works all things that are by the counsel of His will and governs them; that He hath care and regard over men; that nothing is hidden from Him; that He is unchangeable; there must needs be permission of evil. If the devil (Mark 5:12) could not so much as enter into a herd of swine without permission, shall we think that he could compass the fall and overthrow of man, without a permission? Indeed to permit, is not to hinder evil when one may; and with men it is a fault, but not with God, because He is not bound to hinder the evil which He permits.

2. The second fault is that they make the prescience of man's faith and unbelief to be the impulsive cause of God's decree. For they say that God eternally decrees to save or refuse men, because He did foresee that they would believe or not believe. But indeed it is a manifest untruth:

(1) Among the causes of all things that are, there is an order set down by God Himself, in which order some causes are highest, some lowest, some in the middle. Now the highest cause of all is that which overrules all and is overruled of none; and that is God's will, beyond which there can be no higher cause; for God is placed above all and subject to none, and this very

will of His is the cause of all things that have being; for we must not imagine that a thing first of all existeth, and then afterward is willed of God, but first of all God wills a thing, and then afterward it comes to have a being. Now to say that foreseen faith or unbelief are the moving causes whereby God was induced to ordain men either to salvation or just damnation, is to undo this divine order of causes and to displace the links; in that God's will is made a secondary or middle cause subordinate to other causes placed above it; yea this is to make the will of God to depend upon the quality and condition of the creature, whereas contrariwise all things depend upon God's will.

(2) Again, Paul saith (Eph. 1:9) that God had *opened the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He had purposed to Himself*; whereby he makes a distinction between the creature and the Creator. Men when they purpose the doing of anything, borrow reasons of their purpose and wills out of themselves from the things to be done; because man's bare will is no sufficient cause to warrant the doing of this or that, in this or that manner, unless there be just reason. But God's will is a simple and absolute rule of righteousness, and a thing is good so far forth as God wills it. Therefore there is no cause why He should go forth of Himself for external inducements and reasons of His eternal counsel; His very will in Himself is a sufficient reason of all His purposes and decrees. And hereupon Paul saith that God's *purpose was in Himself*, to shew that there is no dependence of His will upon the creature, and that in ordering and disposing of His decrees, He had no reference or respective consideration of the qualities and works of them.

(3) Thirdly, by this doctrine, there is fastened upon God want of wisdom, who is wisdom itself; and that is very absurd. A simple man that hath in him but a spark of the wisdom of God, first of all, intends with himself the end and event of the business to be done, and then afterward the means whereby the end is accomplished; but in this platform God is brought in, in the first

place to foresee and consider with Himself the means which tend to the end, namely faith and unbelief of men, and then afterward to determine with Himself what shall be the end and final condition of every man either in life or death; as if a man should purpose with himself to build an house without any consideration of the end why; and afterward conceive with himself the particular uses to which he will apply it.

(4) Fourthly, hence it followeth that faith shall not only be an instrument, but also an efficient cause in the act of justification of a sinner before God. For the cause of a cause is also the cause of a thing caused; but foreseen faith is an impulsive cause whereby God was moved to choose some men to salvation (as it is said); and therefore it is not only an instrument to apprehend Christ's righteousness, but also a cause or means to move God to justify a sinner; because justification proceeds of election which comes of foreseen faith; now this is erroneous by the doctrine of all churches, unless they be popish.

(5) Fifthly, this doctrine takes it for granted that all both young and old, even infants that die in their infancy, have knowledge of the gospel, because both faith and unbelief in Christ presuppose knowledge of our salvation by Him; considering that neither ordinarily nor extraordinarily, men believe or condemn the thing unknown. But how false this is, even common experience doth shew.

(6) Lastly, this platform quite overthrows itself. For whereas all men equally corrupt in Adam, are effectually both redeemed and called, the difference between man and man, stands not in believing or not believing, for all have power to believe; but in this properly: that some are confirmed in faith, some are not. Now when all without exception are indued with grace sufficient to salvation, I demand why some men are confirmed in grace and others not confirmed; as also of angels, some were confirmed and stand, and some, not confirmed, fell? *Answer*: No other reason can be

rendered but the will of God. And to this must all come, strive as long as they will, that of men being in one and the same estate, some are saved, some justly forsaken, because God would. Again, as the foreseeing of faith doth presuppose God's giving of faith, unless men will say it is natural; so the foreseeing of faith in some men alone, doth presuppose the giving of faith to some men alone. But why doth not God confer the grace of constant faith to all? *Answer*: No other reason can be rendered, but because He will not. Thus then those men whose faith was foreseen, are saved, not because their faith was foreseen, but because God would.

3. The third fault is that they ascribe unto God a conditional purpose or counsel, whereby He decrees that all men shall be saved, so be if they will believe:

(1) For it is every way as much against common sense, as if it had been said that God decreed nothing at all concerning man. A conditional sentence determines nothing simply but conditionally, and therefore uncertainly; and when we speak of God, to determine uncertainly, it is as much as if He had determined nothing at all, especially when the thing determined is in the power of man's will, and in respect of God, the decree may come to pass or not come to pass. Men, if they might always have their choice, desire to determine of all their affairs simply without condition; and when they do otherwise, it is either because they know not the event of things, or because things to be done are not in their power. No reason therefore that we should burden God with that whereof we would disburden ourselves.

(2) Again, the majesty of God is disgraced in this kind of decree. God for His part would have all men to be saved; why then are they not? Men will not keep the condition and believe. This is flat to hang God's will upon man's will, to make every man an emperor, and God his underling, and to change the order of nature by subordinating God's will, which is the first

cause, to the will of man, which is the second cause; whereas by the very law of nature, the first cause should order and dispose the second cause.

(3) But for the justifying of a conditional decree, it is alleged that there is no eternal hidden decree of God beside the gospel, which is God's predestination revealed. *Answer*: It is an untruth. There be two wills in God: (i) one, whereby He determineth what He will do unto us or in us; (ii) the other, whereby He determineth what we shall do to Him. Now predestination is the first; whereupon it is commonly defined to be the preparation of the blessing of God, whereby they are delivered which are delivered; and the gospel is the second.

(4) Again, predestination determines who they are, and how many which are to be saved, and hereupon Christ saith (John 13:18), *I know whom I have chosen*; but the gospel rather determines what kind of ones and how they must be qualified which are to be saved.

(5) Lastly, predestination is God's decree itself; and the gospel is an outward means of the execution of it; and therefore although the gospel be propounded with a condition, yet the decree of God itself may be simple and absolute.

4. The fourth defect is the opinion of *universal saving grace*; appertaining to all and every man; which may fitly be termed *the school of universal atheism*. For it puts down the pale of the church, and lays it waste at every common field; it breeds a carelessness in the use of the means of grace, the Word and sacraments; when as men shall be persuaded that grace shall be offered to everyone effectually, whether he be of the church or not, at one time or other; wheresoever or howsoever he live; as in the like case, if men should be told that whether they live in the market town or no, there shall be sufficient provision brought them, if they will but receive it and accept it, who would then come to market?

Universal grace hath three parts: Universal election; universal redemption; universal vocation:

(1) Universal election of all and every man, is a witless conceit; for if men universally be appointed to grace without exception, then there is no election or choosing of some out of mankind to grace; and if some alone be appointed to grace, as it must needs be in election, then is not grace universal. And it is flat against the Word of God. For Christ avoucheth plainly (Matt. 22:14) that fewer be chosen than called, and (afterward as we shall see) all are not called. And He further saith (John 17:2,11,24) that all which are given Him shall be one with Him, and have life everlasting; but all men shall not be one with Him and have life everlasting; and therefore all men are not given to Christ of the Father, that is, ordained to salvation. And the Scripture saith (Rev. 17:14; 20:15) that all men's names are not written in the book of life; and that the kingdom of heaven was not prepared for all. And whereas men build this universal election upon the largeness of the promise of the gospel; upon the like ground they might as well make a universal decree of reprobation, whereby God decrees all men to be damned indefinitely upon this condition: if they do not believe. Now if universal reprobation be absurd, as it is indeed; then universal election of all and every man must take part therewith.

(2) As for the universal redemption of all and every man, it is no better than a forgery of man's brain. There shall be many in the day of judgment of whom Christ shall say (Matt. 7:23) that He *never knew them*. Again, He saith (John 3:36), *He which believeth not, is already judged, and the wrath of God abides upon him*. But if all were effectually redeemed, and only condemned for not believing in Christ, it should have been said that they are already judged, and that the wrath of God not abides, but returns upon them. Christ makes no intercession for the world (John 17:9), and therefore His redemption is not effectual to all men. For the intercession is the means of applying the satisfaction. If it be said that by the world is meant only

condemners of grace, it appears to be otherwise, in that Christ opposeth *the world* to them which are *the Father's*, and are *given to Christ* by Him; thereby signifying that by *the world*, He means all such as are not *the Father's*, and were never *given to Christ*. And (John 10:15), He *lays down His life for the sheep*. Now the sheep have all these brands or marks (vv.27,28): they *hear His voice*, they *know Him*, they *follow Him*, they *shall not perish*, *none shall pluck them out of Christ's hands*; and these are only such of whom Paul saith (Rom. 8:33), *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn*? And if this should be true, that Christ was crucified and died no less to make satisfaction for the sins of the damned, than for the sins of Peter and Paul and the rest of the saints, it follows necessarily that all their sins are forgiven, considering that remission of sin depends inseparably upon satisfaction made to God's justice for sin; and satisfaction doth necessarily abolish all fault. We grant that Christ's death is sufficient to save many thousand worlds; we grant again it is every way most effectual in itself; but that it is effectual in or unto the person of every man, that we deny. For if it were thus effectual, then it should be applied to the person of every man, as to Cain, Judas, Nero, Heligoabalus, etc., even as the plaister is laid to the sore; being applied, Christ's righteousness should be imputed for the justification and sanctification of all and every man; and thus some justified before God, and sanctified, should after go to hell and be damned, whereas David, never so much as dreaming of this divinity, saith (Psa. 32:1) that they are blessed which have the pardon of their sins; and Paul (Rom. 5:1), that they which are justified have peace with God.

But let us hear what reasons may be alleged for the universality of redemption:

(i) (Ezek. 33:11) *As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked return from his wicked way*. *Answer*: The place is to be understood not simply but in respect; of the twain God rather wills the

repentance of the sinner than his death. Again, He wills not death as it is the destruction of His creature; and so this place may be understood; yet nevertheless He wills the same as it is a means of the manifestation of His justice; and therefore the prophet Isaiah saith (Isa. 45:6), *God createth evil*.

(ii) (1 Tim. 2:4) *God would have all men to be saved; and come to the acknowledgement of the truth. Answer*: The place is meant not of the persons of all particular men, but of the orders and kinds of men. For in the first verse Paul exhorted Timothy that prayer should be made for all men; and in the second verse, opening his own meaning, he addeth these words: *for kings and all that be in authority*; as though he should say, we must pray not only for private men and for the common people, but also for public persons, though they persecute the gospel. But why? Because in that very order God hath His elect which shall be saved. And on this manner, Paul expounds himself elsewhere (Gal. 3:28), *There is neither Jew nor Grecian; there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ*.

(iii) (Rom. 11:32) *God hath shut up all in unbelief that He might have mercy on all. Answer*: The word *all*, must be understood of all that are to be saved, both of Jews and Gentiles, as the article added to *all* importeth, and the meaning is that God will save all whom He purposeth to save, of His mercy and not of their merit, because all are sinners as well Jews as Gentiles. Thus Paul expounds himself (Gal. 3:22), *The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ should be given unto them that believe*. And if we should expound the word *all*, for every particular man, as some would have it, Paul must contradict himself, who said before that God would have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom He will he hardeneth, and in this very chapter his drift is to prove the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles.

(iv) (John 3:16) *God so loved the world that He hath given His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life*; and (John 6:51), *I will give my flesh for the life of the world. Answer*: By *world*, we must not understand every particular man in the world, but the elect among the Jews and Gentiles; for in both these places Christ doth overthwart the conceit of the Jews which thought that they alone were loved of God and not the Gentiles. And how this *world* is to be understood in the New Testament, Paul doth fully declare (Rom. 11:12), *If* (saith he) *the fall of them*, that is the Jews, *be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles*, etc., and (v.15), *If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving be but life from the dead*? Where, by *the world*, he understands the body of the Gentiles in the last age of the world. And thus he fully declares his own meaning, when he saith to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:19), *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself*.

(v) (Rom. 14:15) *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died*. (2 Pet. 2:1), *Denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift damnation*. Therefore Christ died for them also which are condemned. *Answer*: The reason is not good. For in these and such like places, the Scripture speaks of men, not as they are indeed before God, but as they are in appearance and profession, and as they are in acceptation with men. For so long as a man builds and embraces the Christian faith, so long in the judgment of charity we must esteem him to be one that is redeemed by Christ, though indeed he be not. And this is the meaning of Peter when he saith that false prophets deny the Lord that bought them.

(vi) In the preaching of the gospel, grace is freely offered not only to the elect, but to all men indifferently; and God in offering grace deludes no man; therefore Christ's death appertains and belongs to all men indiscriminately. *Answer*: The preaching of the gospel is an ordinance of God appointed for the gathering together and the accomplishment of the

number of the elect; and therefore in the ministry of the Word, grace and salvation is offered principally and directly to the elect, and only by consequent to them which are ordained to just damnation; because they are mingled with the elect in the same societies, and because the ministers of God, not knowing His secret counsel, in charity think all to be elect. And though God in offering grace does not confer it to all, yet there is no delusion. For the offering of grace doth not only serve for the conversion of a sinner, but also to be an occasion by men's fault, of blinding the mind and hardening the heart, and taking away excuse on the day of judgment.

To conclude this point, universal redemption of all men we grant; the Scripture saith so; and there is an universality among the elect and believers; but universal redemption of all and every man, as well the damned as the elect, and that effectually, we renounce as having neither footing in Scripture nor in the writing of any ancient and orthodox divine for many hundreds of years after Christ, His words not depraved and mistaken.

(3) As for the universal vocation, it is of the same kind with the former; because it is flat against the Word of God in which is set down a distinction of the world from the creation to the days of Christ, into two parts: one, *the people of God*, being received into the covenant; the other (being the greatest part of the world), *No people*, and forth of the covenant. From the beginning of the world to the giving of the law, the church was shut up in the families of the patriarchs; and the covenant in the very family of Abraham was restrained to Isaac; and the members of these families, for this cause, were called the sons of God (Gen. 6:2); and the rest of the world beside being termed as they were indeed, the sons of men. From the giving of the law till Christ, the nation of the Jews was the church of God and the rest of the world beside, no people of God. And therefore Isaiah (Isa. 49:9) calls them prisoners and them that are in darkness; and Hosea (Hos. 2:23), such as are *without mercy* and *no people*; and Zechariah (Zech. 2:11), such

as are not *joined to the Lord*; and Paul (Acts 14:16), such as are *set to walk in their own ways*, being (Eph. 2:12) *without God* and *without Christ* in the world. And this distinction between Jew and Gentile stood till the very ascension of Christ. And hereupon when He was to send His disciples to preach, He charged them (Matt. 10:5,6) *not to go into the way of the Gentiles*; and *not to enter into the cities of the Samaritans*, but *rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; and when the woman of Canaan made request for her daughter, He gave a denial at the first upon this distinction, saying (Matt. 15:24,26), *It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it unto dogs*, and again, *I am sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel*. It will be said that this distinction arose of this: that the Gentiles at the first fell away from the covenant, and contemned the Messiah. It is true indeed of the first heads of the Gentiles the sons of Noah; but of their posterity it is false, which in times following did not so much as hear of the covenant and the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah saith of Christ (Isa. 55:5), *A nation that knew not thee, shall run unto thee*. And Paul, speaking to the Athenians (Acts 17:30) saith that *the times of this their ignorance God regarded not; but now admonisheth all men everywhere to repent*; and to the Romans he saith (Rom. 16:25,26) that the ministry touching Christ and His benefits was *kept secret since the world began, and now opened and published among all nations* (1 Tim. 3:16). And if the Gentiles had but known of the Messiah, why did not their poets and philosophers, who in their writings notoriously abuse the Jews with sundry nicknames, at the least to signify the contempt of the Redeemer? Wherefore to hold, and much more to avouch by writing, that all and every one of the heathen were called, it is most absurd; and if it were so, the cannibals and the savage nations of America should have known Christ without preaching, which by the histories of those countries, is known to be false.

Again, if the vocation of every man be effectual, then faith must be common to all men either by nature or by grace, or both. Now to say the first, namely, that the power of believing is common to all by nature, is the

heresy of the Pelagians, and to say it is common to all by grace is false. *All men have not faith*, saith Paul (2 Thess. 3:2), nay, many to whom the gospel is preached, do not so much as understand it and give assent unto it; Satan *blinding their minds that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should not shine unto them* (2 Cor. 4:4). And to say that faith is partly by nature and partly by grace, is the condemned heresy of the Semi-Pelagian; for we cannot so much as think a good thought of ourselves (2 Cor. 3:5).

5.

The last defect in the platform, is that they ascribe to God a wrong end of His counsels; namely, the communication of mercy or goodness in eternal happiness. For the absolute and sovereign end of all God's doings must be answerable to His nature, which is not mercy and love alone, but also justice itself; and therefore the right end is the manifestation of His glory both in justice and mercy by the express testimony of Scripture. Again, if the communication of His goodness were the highest end of all His counsels, all men without exception should be saved, because God cannot be frustrated of His end and purpose; and if but one man be damned, he is damned either because God will not save him or because He cannot. If they say He will not, then is He changeable; if He cannot, then is He not omnipotent, considering His purpose was to convey happiness to all creatures.

II.

Thus much of the efficient cause of the church, namely, God's predestination; which doctrine could not here be omitted, considering no man can believe himself to be a member of the church, unless withal he believe that he is predestinated to life everlasting. Now we come to the second point, namely, the *mystical union*, which is the very form of the church, wherein all that believe are made *one with Christ* (Gal. 3:16). To the causing of this union, two things are required: a donation or giving of Christ

unto man, which is to be made one with Him, and a conjunction between them both.

1.

Of the first, the prophet Isaiah saith (Isa. 9:6), *Unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given*, and Paul (Rom. 8:32), *Who spared not His own Son, but gave Him for us all; how shall He not with Him give us all things also*? And touching it, sundry points must be considered:

(1) The first is, what is meant by this giving? *Answer*: It is an action or work of God the Father by the Holy Ghost, whereby Christ as Redeemer in the appointed time is really communicated to all ordained to salvation, in such manner that they may truly say that Christ Himself with all His benefits is theirs, both in respect of right thereto, and in respect of all fruits redounding thence, and that as truly as any man may say, that house and land given him of his ancestors is his own both to possess and to use.

(2) The second point is, what is the very thing given? *Answer*: *Whole Christ*, God and man is given, because His humanity without His Godhead, or the Godhead without the humanity doth not reconcile us to God. Yet in this giving, there must be a divers consideration had of the two natures of Christ; for the communication of the Godhead is merely energetical, that is, only in respect of operation; in that it doth make the manhood personally united unto it to be propitiatory for our sins and meritorious of life eternal. And to avouch any communication of the Godhead in respect of essence, were to bring in the heresy of the Manichees, and to maintain a composition and a co-mixture of our natures with the nature of God. Again, in the manhood of Christ we must distinguish between the subject itself, the substance of body and soul, and the blessings in the subject which tend to our salvation. And the communication of the aforesaid manhood is in respect of both, without separation; for no man can receive saving virtue from Christ, unless first of all he receive Christ Himself, as (Matt. 13:44) no

man can have the treasure hid in a field, unless he first of all have the field; and (John 6:53,54) no man can be nourished by meat and drink, unless first of all he receive the substance of both. And this is the cause why, not only in the preaching of the Word, but also in the institution of the Lord's supper, express mention is made, not only of Christ's merit, but also of His very body and blood, whereby the whole humanity is signified, as appears by that place where it is said (John 1:14) that *the Word was made flesh*. And though the flesh of itself *profit nothing*, as St John saith (John 6:63), yet as it is joined to the Godhead of the Son, and doth subsist in His Person, it receiveth thence quickening virtue, to revive and renew all those to whom it shall be given. Lastly, among the blessings that are stored up in the manhood of Christ for our salvation, some are given unto us by imputation as when we are justified by the righteousness, indeed inherent in His manhood, but imputed unto us; some by infusion, as when holiness is wrought in our hearts by the Spirit, as a fruit of that holiness which is in the manhood of Christ, and derived from it, as the light of one candle from another.

(3) The third point is, in what manner Christ is given unto us? *Answer*: God the Father giveth Christ unto His church not in an earthly or bodily manner, as when a king bestows a gift with his own hand and putteth it in the hand of his subject; but the manner is altogether celestial and spiritual; partly because it is brought to pass by the mere divine operation of the Holy Ghost, and partly because, in respect of us, this gift is received by an instrument which is supernatural, namely faith, whereby we lay hold on, and apply unto ourselves the evangelical promises. And this manner of giving may be conceived thus: A man that never stirred foot out of England holds and enjoys land in Turkey; but how comes it to be his? Thus: the emperor was willing and content to bestow it; and the man for his part as willing to accept and receive it; and by this means that which at the first was the emperor's, by mutual consent becomes the man's. In the same manner, God the Father hath made an evangelical covenant with His

church; in which of His mercy He hath made a grant of His own Son unto us, with righteousness and life everlasting in Him; and we again by His grace accept of this grant, and receive the same by faith; and thus by mutual consent according to the tenor of the covenant, any repentant sinner may say, though I now have my abode upon earth, and Christ in respect of His manhood be locally in heaven; yet is He truly mine to have and to enjoy, His body is mine, His blood is mine. As for the giving and receiving of the body and blood of Christ in bodily manner (which the papists maintain in avouching the real transubstantiation of bread and wine in the sacrament, into the body and blood of Christ, and the Lutherans also in teaching that His body and blood is substantially either in, or with, or under the bread and wine) is an erroneous conceit, flat opposite to sundry points of the Christian faith. For Christ to this very hour retaineth still the essence and essential properties of a true body, and we believe that really and visibly He ascended into heaven, and there abides till His second coming to the last judgment; who then having but common reason would imagine a communication of the body of Christ pent up in the element of bread, and conveyed into our bodies by the mouth and stomach?

(4) The fourth point is, whether we are not lords of Christ, He being thus given unto us? *Answer*: No; for this donation is not single but mutual. As Christ is given unto us, so we again are given to Christ, as He Himself saith (John 17:12), *Those whom thou hast given me, Father, I have kept*. And we are given unto Him, that our bodies and souls are made His, not only as He is God, but also as He is our Redeemer; and our sins with the guilt thereof are made His by imputation, and the punishment thereof is wholly laid upon Him. This is all the dowry which the church, being the spouse of Christ, hath brought unto Him.

(5) The fifth point is, how any man in particular may know that Christ is given unto him of the Father? *Answer*: When God gives Christ to man, He withal gives man grace and power to receive Christ, and to apprehend Him

with all His benefits; and this we do when we utterly renounce ourselves, this world and all things therein, bewail our sins past, resting on the death of Christ for the pardon of them all, and as it were both the arms of faith catching hold upon Him in all estates, both in life and death. When the heart of any man is truly disposed and inclined to do these and the like things, we may truly say that God hath given him grace to receive Christ.

2.

The second thing required to make us one with Christ, is the mystical union, which is a conjunction whereby Christ and His church are actually coupled into one mystical body. Now that we may the better conceive the nature of it, sundry questions are to be moved:

(1) The first, what kind of conjunction is this? *Answer*: In the Scripture we meet with three kinds of conjunctions:

(i) The first, is conjunction in nature, when sundry things are coupled by one and the same nature. As the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, being three distinct substances are all one, and therefore joined in one Godhead or divine nature. Now Christ and the believer are not joined in nature; for then they twain should have one body and soul.

(ii) The second conjunction is in person, when things in nature different, so concur together that they make but one person; as the body and soul make one man; and the Godhead of the Son with His manhood make but one Christ; in whom there is an union of distinct natures with unity of Person. Now Christ and a Christian are not joined in person; for Christ is one Person, Peter a second person, and Paul a third distinct from them both; and so many men as there be, so many several persons.

(iii) The third conjunction is in spirit; and this is the conjunction meant in this place; whereby Christ and His church are joined together; for the very

same Spirit of God that dwells in the manhood of Christ and filleth it with all graces above measure, is derived thence and dwells in all the true members of the church and filleth them with the like graces in measure, and therefore St John saith (1 John 4:13), *Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit*. Hence it follows that the bond of this conjunction is one and the same Spirit descending from Christ the Head to all His members, creating also in them the instrument of faith, whereby they apprehend Christ and make Him their own.

(2) The second is, what are the things united? *Answer*: Not the body of the believer to the body of Christ, or the soul to His soul, but the whole person of the man to the whole Person of Christ; yet in this order: we are first of all and immediately joined to the manhood of Christ, and by the manhood to the Godhead.

(3) The third question is, what is the manner of this conjunction? *Answer*: We must not think that Christ and His church are joined by imagination, as the mind of man and the thing whereof he thinks; or by consent of heart, as one friend is joined with another, and as the Jews converted were all of one heart and soul; or by any abode in one place, or by touching, as sea and land are both joined together and make one globe; or by any composition or co-mixing of substances, as when many ingredients are put together to make one medicine. But this conjunction is altogether spiritual as the former giving was; and incomprehensible to man's reason; and therefore we must rather labour to feel it by experience in our heart than to conceive it in the brain. Yet nevertheless it shall not be amiss to consider a resemblance of it in this comparison: Suppose a man having the parts of his body disjoined far asunder, his head lying in Italy, one arm in Germany, the other in Spain, and his legs with us in England; suppose further, all these parts or quarters have all one soul, extending itself unto them all and quickening each of them severally, as though they were nearly joined together; and though the parts be severed many hundred miles asunder, yet the distance of place doth

not hinder the conjunction, considering one and the same soul doth enlarge itself and give life unto them all. In the same manner, the Head of the mystical body Christ our Saviour is now in heaven, and some of His members in heaven with Him, and some in earth; and of these, some in England, some in Germany, some in Italy, some in Spain, distant many thousand miles asunder; and the Spirit of God as it were the soul of this body which gives spiritual life to all the members; distance of place doth not hinder this conjunction, because the Holy Ghost which linketh all the parts together is infinite.

The benefits which we receive by this mystical union are manifold; for it is the ground of the conveyance of all grace:

(1) The first is that by means hereof, every Christian as he is a Christian or a man regenerate, hath his beginning and being in Christ, howsoever as he is a man he hath his being and subsisting in himself, as Paul saith (1 Cor. 1:30), *Ye are of God in Christ*; and (Eph. 5:30), *Ye are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones*. How (will some say) can this be? After this manner: The comparison is taken from our first parents. Eve was made of a rib taken out of Adam's side, he being cast into a slumber; this being done, Adam waked and said (Gen. 2:23), *This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*. Christ was nailed on the cross, and His most precious blood was shed, and out of it arise and spring all true Christians; that is, out of the merit of Christ's death and passion, whereby they become new creatures.

(2) Secondly, everyone that believeth in Christ by reason of this union hath an unspeakable prerogative; for hereby he is first united to Christ, and by reason thereof is also joined to the whole Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and shall have eternal fellowship with them.

(3) Thirdly, sundry men, specially papists, deride the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness; thinking it is absurd that a man should be just by that righteousness which is inherent in the Person of

Christ; as if we would say that one man may live by the soul of another; or be learned by the learning of another. But here we may see that it hath sufficient foundation. For there is a most near and straight union between Christ and all that believe in Him; and in this union, Christ with all His benefits according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, is made ours really; and therefore we may stand just before God by His righteousness; it being indeed His, because it is in Him as in a subject; yet so as it is also ours, because it is given unto us of God. Now there is no such union between man and man, and for that cause one man cannot live by the soul of another, or be learned by the learning of another.

(4) Fourthly, from this fountain springs our sanctification, whereby we die to sin and are renewed in righteousness and holiness. Worms and flies that have lien dead all winter, if they be laid in the sun in the springtime, begin to revive by virtue thereof; even so, when we are united to Christ, and are (as it were) laid in the beams of this blessed Son of righteousness, virtue is derived thence, which warmeth our benumbed hearts dead in sin, and reviveth us to newness of life; whereby we begin to affect and like good things, and put in practice all the duties of religion.

(5) Fifthly, hence we have the protection of God's angels; for they always wait and attend on Christ, and because we are made one with Him, they attend upon us also.

(6) Lastly, by reason of this union with Christ, every believer comes to have interest and to recover his title in the creatures of God, and to have the holy and lawful use of them all. For we must consider that although Adam created in the image of God, was made lord over all things in heaven and earth; he, and in him all mankind, lost the title and use of them all. Now therefore that a man may recover his interest, he must first of all be united and made one with Christ; and then by Christ, who is Lord and King over all, shall he recover that title in the creatures of God, which he had by

creation; and be made Lord over them again. But some will say, if this be so, then a Christian man may have and enjoy all creatures at his pleasure; and therefore the goods of other men? *Answer*: The reason is not good, for in this life we have no more but right unto the creature; and right in it, that is, actual possession is reserved for the life to come. Therefore we must content ourselves with our allowed portions given unto us by God, by His grace using them in holy manner, expecting by hope the full fruition of all things till after this life. Again, if all titles to the creatures be recovered by Christ, it may be demanded whether infidels have any interest to their goods or no? *Answer*: Infidels before men are right lords of all their lands and possessions which they have obtained by lawful means; and in the courts of men they are not to be deprived of them; but before God they are but usurpers; because they hold them not *in capite*, that is, in Christ; neither have they any holy and right use of them, for (Tit. 1:15) *to the unclean, all things are unclean*. And they must first of all become members of Christ, before they can hold and enjoy them aright, and use them with good conscience.

The duties which are to be learned of the doctrine of this union, are manifold:

(1) And first of all, we are taught to purge our hands and hearts of all our sins, and especially to avoid all those sins whereby men's bodies are defiled, as drunkenness, uncleanness, fornication; for they drive away the Spirit of God from His own house and dissolve the bond of the conjunction between Christ and us.

(2) Secondly, we must every one of us which profess ourselves to be members of Christ, labour to become conformable unto Him in holiness of life, and to become new creatures; for this union requireth thus much. Let a man take the grafts of a crabtree and set them into good stocks; yet will they not change their sap, but bring forth fruit according to their own nature,

even sour crabs; but it must not be so with us; we are indeed wild olives, and the branches of wild vines; yet seeing we are persuaded that we are grafted into Christ, and made one with Him, we must lay aside our wild and sour nature, and take upon us the nature of the true vine, bear good fruit, have good juice in us, and render sweet wine.

(3) Thirdly, we are taught hence to be plentiful in all good works, considering we are joined to Him that is the fountain of grace. And therefore Christ saith (John 15:1,2), *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch that beareth not fruit in me, He taketh away; and every one that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bear more fruit*. And the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 5:7) compares the church of God to a vineyard with a tower and winepress in it. And God Himself comes often down unto it (Song 6:11) *to see the fruits of the valley, to see if the vine bud and the pomegranates flourish*. And further, we must *bring forth fruit with patience* (Luke 8:15); for the Lord of this vineyard comes with crosses and afflictions, as with a pruning knife in His hand, to pare and to dress us that we may be fit to bring forth fruit, plentiful in duties of piety to God, and in duties of love to all men, yea to our enemies. Christian men are (Ezek.47:12) trees of righteousness growing by the waters of the sanctuary. But what trees? Not like ours; for they are rooted upward in heaven in Christ, and their grain and branches grow downward that they may bear fruit among men.

III.

Hitherto we have heard what the church is; now *to believe the church* is nothing else but to believe that there is a company of the predestinated made one in Christ, and that withal we are in the number of them.

Before we proceed any further, three rules must be observed touching the church in general:

1. The first, that Christ alone is the Head of the catholic church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 2:19), and that He neither hath nor can have any creature in heaven or earth to be fellow herein. For the church is His body, and none but He can perform the duty of an Head unto it; which duty stands in two things:

(1) The first is to govern the church by such power and authority whereby He can and doth prescribe laws properly binding the conscience of all members.

(2) The second is by grace to quicken and to put spiritual life into them, so as they shall be able to say that they live not, but Christ in them.

As for the supremacy of the see of Rome, whereby the pope will needs stand ministerial head to the catholic church, it is a fantastical forgery. For the Headship (as I may term it) of Christ is of that nature or quality, that it can admit no deputy, whether we respect the commanding or the quickening power of Christ before named. Nay, Christ needs no vicar or deputy; for He is all-sufficient in Himself and always present with His church, as He Himself testifieth, saying (Matt. 18:20), *Where two or three be gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst among them*. And whereas all commissions cease in the presence of Him that gives the commission; it is as much pride and arrogance for the pope to take unto himself the title of the head and universal bishop of the church, as it is for a subject to keep himself in commission in the presence of his king.

2. The second rule is that there is no salvation out of the church, and that therefore everyone which is to be saved must become a member and a citizen of the catholic and apostolic church; and such as remains forever out of the same perish eternally. Therefore St John saith (1 John 2:19), *They went out from us, they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but this cometh to pass that it might appear that they are not all of us*. And again, that such as be holy are in the city of God; but *without* (Rev. 22:15) *are dogs, enchanters, whoremongers, adulterers*,

etc. And the ark out of which all perished, figured the church, out of which all are condemned. And for this cause, St Luke saith (Acts 2:47) that *the Lord added to the church from day to day such as should be saved*. And the reason hereof is plain: for without Christ there is no salvation; but out of the militant church there is no Christ, nor faith in Christ; and therefore no salvation. Again, forth of the militant church there are no means of salvation, no preaching of the Word, no invocation of God's name, no sacraments, and therefore no salvation. For this cause every man must be admonished evermore to join himself to some particular church being a sound member of the catholic church.

3. The third rule, that the church which here we believe is only one. As Christ Himself speaketh (Song 6:9), *My dove is alone, and my undefiled is the only daughter of her mother*. And as there is only one God, and one Redeemer, one faith, one baptism, and one way of salvation by Christ only, so there is but one church alone.

The catholic church hath two parts: the church triumphant in heaven, and the church militant on earth:

1. The triumphant church may thus be described: *It is a company of the spirits of just men, triumphing over the flesh, the devil and the world, praising God*. First, I say, it is a company of the spirits of men, as the Holy Ghost expressly termeth it, because the souls only of the godly departed, as of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc., are as yet ascended into heaven, and not their bodies. Furthermore the properties of this company are two:

(1) The first, is to make triumph over their spiritual enemies, the flesh, the devil, the world; for the righteous man, so long as he lives in this world, is in continual combat without truce with all the enemies of his salvation; and by continual faith obtaining victory in the end of his life, he is translated in glorious and triumphant manner into the kingdom of glory. This was signified to John in a vision, in which he saw (Rev. 7:9) *an innumerable*

company of all sorts of nations, kindreds, people and tongues stand before the Lamb, clothed in long white robes, with palms in their hands, in token that they had been warriors, but now in Christ had gotten the victory and are made conquerors.

(2) Their second property, is to praise and magnify the name of God, as it followeth in the former place (Rev. 7:12), *saying, Amen, praise and glory, and wisdom, and thanks, honour, power and might be unto our God for evermore*. Hence it may be demanded, whether angels be of this triumphant church or no? *Answer*: The blessed angels be in heaven in the presence of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, but they are not of the mystical body of Christ, because they are not under Him as He is their Redeemer, considering they cannot be redeemed which never fell; and it cannot be proved that they now stand by the virtue of Christ's redemption; but they are under Him as He is their Lord and King; and by the power of Christ as He is God and their God, are they confirmed. And therefore as I take it, we cannot say that angels are members of the mystical body of Christ, or of the triumphant church; though indeed they be of the company of the blessed.

2. The church militant may be thus described: *It is the company of the elect or faithful living under the cross, desiring to be removed, and to be with Christ*. I say not that the militant church is the whole body of the elect, but only that part thereof which liveth upon earth; and the infallible mark thereof is that faith in Christ which is taught and delivered in the writings of the prophets and apostles; and this faith again may be discerned by two marks:

(1) The first, is that the members of this company live under the cross, and profit by it in all spiritual grace. And therefore it is said (Acts 14:22) that we must through many afflictions enter into the kingdom of heaven. And our Saviour Christ saith (Luke 9:23), *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross every day and follow me*.

(2) The second mark, is a desire to depart hence and to be with Christ, as Paul saith (2 Cor. 5:8), *We love rather to be removed out of this body and to be with Christ*. And again (Phil. 1:23), *I desire to be loosed and to be with Christ, which is best of all*. Where yet we must remember that the members of Christ do not desire death simply and absolutely, but in two respects:

(i) That they might leave off to sin, and by sinning to displease God;

(ii) That they might come to enjoy happiness in heaven, and to be with Christ.

Touching the general estate of the militant church, two questions are to be considered:

(1) The first, how far forth God is present with it, assisting it by His grace? *Answer*: God gives His Spirit unto it in such a measure that although the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, yet nevertheless it remains still subject to error both in doctrine and manners. For that which is true in every member of the church, is also true in the whole; but every member of the militant church is subject to error both in doctrine and manners, because men in this life are but in part enlightened and sanctified; and therefore still remain subject to blindness of mind and ignorance, and to the rebellion of their wills and affections; whereby it comes to pass that they may easily fail either in judgment or in practice. Again, that which may befall one or two particular churches, may likewise befall all the particular churches upon earth, all being in one and the same condition; but this may befall one or two particular churches: to fail in either doctrine or manners. The church of Ephesus failed (Rev. 2:4) in *leaving her first love*, whereupon Christ threateneth to remove from her the candlestick. And the church of Galatia (Gal. 1:6) *was removed to another gospel from Him that had called them in the grace of Christ*. Now, why may not the same things befall twenty, yea a hundred churches, which befell these twain? Lastly, experience sheweth this to be true, in that general councils have erred. The

council of Nicea being to reform sundry behaviours among the bishops and elders, would with common consent have forbidden marriage unto them, thinking it profitable to be so; unless Paphnutius had better informed them out of the Scriptures. In the third council of Carthage, certain books Apocrypha, as the book of Sirach, Tobit and the Maccabees, are numbered in the canon, and yet were excluded by the council of Laodicea. And the saying of a divine is received, that former councils are to be reformed and amended by the latter. But papists maintaining that the church cannot err, allege the promise of Christ (John 16:13), *Howbeit when He is come which is the Spirit of truth, He will lead you into all truth*. *Answer*: The promise is directed to the apostles, who with their apostolic authority had this privilege granted them: that in the teaching and penning of the gospel they should not err; and therefore in the council at Jerusalem they concluded thus (Acts 15:28): *It seemed good unto us, and to the Holy Ghost*. And if the promise be further extended to all the church, it must be understood with a limitation: that God will give His Spirit unto the members thereof to lead them into all truth, *so far forth as shall be needful for their salvation*.

(2) The second question is, wherein stands the dignity and excellence of the church? *Answer*: It stands in subjection and obedience unto the will and Word of her Spouse and Head, Christ Jesus. And hence it follows that the church is not to challenge unto herself authority over the Scriptures, but only a ministry or ministerial service, whereby she is appointed of God to preserve and keep, to publish and preach them, and to give testimony of them. And for this cause it is called (1 Tim. 3:15) *the pillar and ground of truth*. The church of Rome, not content with this, saith further that the authority of the church in respect of us, is above the authority of the Scripture, because (say they) we cannot know Scripture to be Scripture, but by the testimony of the church. But indeed they speak an untruth. For the testimony of men that are subject to error cannot be greater and of more force with us than the testimony of God who cannot err. Again, the church hath her beginning from the Word (for there cannot be a church without

faith, and there is no faith without the Word, and there is no Word out of the Scriptures); and therefore the church in respect of us, depends on the Scripture, and not the Scripture on the church. And as the lawyer which hath no further power but to expound the law, is under the law; so the church which hath authority only to publish and expound the Scriptures, cannot authorise them unto us, but must submit herself unto them. And whereas it is alleged (Rom. 10:17) that *faith cometh by hearing*, and this hearing is in respect of the voice of the church, and that therefore faith comes by the voice of the church; the answer is that the place must be understood, not of that general faith whereby we are resolved the Scripture is Scripture, but of justifying faith whereby we attain to salvation. And faith comes by hearing the voice of the church; not, as it is the church's voice, but as it is a ministry or means to publish the Word of God, which is both the cause and object of our believing. Now on the contrary, we must hold that as the carpenter knows his rule to be straight, not by any other rule applied unto it, but by itself; for casting his eye upon it, he presently discerns whether it be straight or no; so we know and are resolved that Scripture is Scripture, even by the Scripture itself, though the church say nothing, so be it we have the spirit of discerning when we read, hear and consider the Scripture. And yet the testimony of the church is not to be despised; for though it breed not a persuasion in us of the certainty of the Scripture, yet it is a very good inducement thereto.

The militant church hath many parts. For as the ocean sea which is but one, is divided into parts according to the regions and countries against which it lieth, as into the English, Spanish, Italian sea, etc., so the church dispersed over the face of the whole earth, is divided into other particular churches according as the countries are several in which it is seated, as into the Church of England and Ireland, the Church of France, the Church of Germany etc.

Again, particular churches are in a twofold estate: sometimes they lie hid in persecution, wanting the public preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments; and sometimes again they are visible, carrying before the eyes of the world an open profession of the name of Christ; as the moon is sometimes eclipsed and sometimes shineth in the full.

1. In the first estate was the Church of Israel in the days of Elijah, when he wished to die because (1 Kin. 19:14) *the people had forsaken the covenant of the Lord, broken down His altars, slain His prophets with the sword, and he was left alone, and they sought to take his life also*. Behold a lamentable estate when so worthy a prophet could not find another beside himself that feared God; yet mark what the Lord saith to him (v.18): *I have left seven thousand in Israel, even all the knees that have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that hath not kissed him*. Again, it is said (2 Chr. 15:3) that *Israel had been a long season without the true God, without priests to teach, and without the law*. Neither must it trouble any that God should so far forth forsake His church; for when ordinary means of salvation fail, He then gathereth His elect by extraordinary means, as when the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness wanting both circumcision and the Passover, He made a supply by manna, and by the pillar of a cloud. Hence we have direction to answer the papists, who demanded of us where our church was three score years ago before the days of Luther; we say that then for the space of many hundred years, an universal apostasy overspread the whole face of the earth; and that our church then was not visible to the world, but lay hid under the chaff of popery. And the truth of this, the records of all ages manifest.

2. The second estate of the church, is when it flourisheth and is visible, not that the faith and secret election of men can be seen (for no man can discern these things but by outward signs), but because it is apparent in respect of the outward assemblies gathered to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, for the praise and glory of God and their

mutual edification. And the visible church may be thus described: *It is a mixed company of men professing the faith, assembled together by the preaching of the Word*. First of all, I call it *a mixed company*, because in it there be true believers and hypocrites, elect and reprobate, good and bad. The church is the Lord's field (Matt. 13:25) in which the enemy sows his tares, it is the corn floor in which lieth wheat and chaff; it is a band of men, in which beside those that be of valour and courage there be white-livered soldiers. And it is called a church of the better part, namely, the elect whereof it consisteth, though they be in number few. As for the ungodly, though they be in the church, yet are they no more parts of it indeed, than the superfluous humours in the veins and parts of the body.

But to proceed: How are the members of the visible church qualified and discerned? The answer followeth in the definition: *professing the faith*. Whereby I mean the profession of that religion which hath been taught from the beginning and is now recorded in the writings of the prophets and apostles. And this profession is a sign and mark whereby a man is declared and made manifest to be a member of the church.

Again, because the profession of the faith is otherwhiles true and sincere, and otherwhiles only in shew, therefore there be also two sorts of members in the visible church, members before God and members before men. A member of the church before God, is he that beside the outward profession of the faith, hath inwardly a pure heart, good conscience and faith unfeigned, whereby he is indeed a true member of the church. Members before men, whom we may call reputed members, are such as have nothing else but the outward profession, wanting the good conscience and the faith unfeigned. The reason why they are to be esteemed members of us, is because we are bound by the rule of charity to think of men as they appear unto us; leaving secret judgment unto God.

I added in the last place that *the church is gathered by the Word preached*, to shew that the cause whereby it is begun and continued, is the Word; which for that cause is called (1 Pet. 1:23) the *immortal seed*; whereby we are born anew, and (Heb. 5:23) *milk*, whereby we are fed and cherished to life everlasting. And hence it followeth necessarily that the preaching of the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, joined with any measure of faith and obedience, is an infallible mark of the true church. Indeed it is true, there be three things required of the good estate of the church: the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments and the due execution of discipline according to the Word; yet if the two latter be wanting, so be it there be preaching of the Word with obedience in the people, there is for substance a true church of God. For it is the banner of Christ displayed, under which all that war against the flesh, the devil, the world, must range themselves. As the Lord saith by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 49:22), *I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard unto the people, and they shall bring their sons in their arms, and their daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders*. Hence it followeth that men which want the preaching of the gospel, must either procure the same unto themselves; or if that cannot be, because they live in the midst of idolatrous nations, as in Spain and Italy, it is requisite that they should join themselves to those places where with liberty of conscience they may enjoy this happy blessing. Men are not to have their hearts glued to the honours and riches of this world, but they should be of David's mind (Psa. 84:10), and rather desire to be doorkeepers in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. In the Canticles (Song 1:7), the spouse of Christ saith, *Shew me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou liest at noon; for why should I be as she that turneth aside to the flocks of thy companions*? To whom He answereth thus (v.8): *If thou know me, O thou the fairest among women, get thee forth by the steps of the flock, and feed thy kids by the tents of the shepherds*; that is, in those places where the doctrine of righteousness and life everlasting by the Messiah is published. When the Shunamite's child was dead, she told her husband that she would go to the man of God,

to whom he answered thus (2 Kin. 4:23): *Why wilt thou go to him today, it is neither new moon nor Sabbath day*; whereby it is signified that when teaching was scarce in Israel, the people did resort to the prophets for instruction and consolation. And David saith (Psa. 84:7) that the people wheresoever their abode was, *went from strength to strength till they appeared before God in Zion*. And oftentimes they being proselytes, their abode must needs be out of the precincts of Jewry.

IV.

Thus we see what the visible church is; now further concerning it, three questions are to be scanned:

1. The first is, how we may discern whether particular men and particular churches holding errors, be found members of the catholic church or no. For the answering of this, we must make a double distinction, one of errors, the other of persons that err:

(1) Of errors, some are destroyers of the faith, some only weakeners of it:

(i) A destroyer is that which overturneth any fundamental point of religion; which is of that nature that if it be denied, religion itself is overturned, as the denial of the death of Christ, and the immortality of the soul, justification by works, and such like; and the sum of these fundamental points is comprised in the Creed of the apostles and the Decalogue.

(ii) A weakening error is that, the holding whereof doth not overturn any point in the foundation of salvation; as the error of free-will, and sundry such like. This distinction is made by the Holy Ghost (Gal. 5:1-5; Heb. 6:1-2), who saith expressly that the doctrines of repentance, and faith, and baptism, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection, and the last judgment, are *the foundation*, namely, of religion; and again that Christ is

the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), and that other doctrines consonant to the Word, are as gold and silver laid thereupon.

(2) Secondly, persons erring, are of two sorts: some err of weakness, being carried away by others; or of simple ignorance, not yet being convicted and informed concerning the truth. Some again err of obstinacy, or affected ignorance, which having been admonished and convicted, still persevere in their forged opinions.

This being said, we now come to the point. If any man or church shall hold an error of the lighter kind, he still remains a member of the church of God, and so must be reputed of us. As when a Lutheran shall hold that images are still to be retained in the church, that there is an universal election of all men etc.; for these and such like opinions may be maintained, the foundation of salvation unraised. This which I say is flatly avouched by Paul (1 Cor. 3:11-13). *If any man* (saith he) *build on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, timber, hay, stubble, his work shall be made manifest by the fire*, etc., and (v.15) *if any man's work burn, he shall lose, but yet he shall be safe himself*. And therefore the hay and stubble of men's errors that are beside the foundation on which they are laid, does not debar them from being Christian or members of the church. A man breaks down the windows of his house, the house stands; he breaks down the roof or the walls, the house stands though deformed; he pulls up the foundation, the house itself falls and ceaseth to be an house. Now religion which we profess is like an house or building; and some points thereof are like windows, doors, walls, roofs, and some are the very foundation; and the former may be battered, the foundation standing. Again, if the error be directly or by necessary consequence, even in common sense against the foundation, consideration must be had whether the church or party erreth of weakness or malice. If of weakness, the party is to be esteemed as a member of the catholic church. And thus Paul writes unto the church of Galatia, as to a church of God, though by false teachers it had been turned away to another gospel,

embracing the fundamental error of justification by works. But when any man or church shall hold fundamental errors in obstinacy or affected ignorance, we are not then bound to repute them any longer as churches or Christians, but as such to whom condemnation belongs, as Paul sheweth by the example of Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. 3:8). *And as Jannes and Jambres* (saith he) *withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*. Yet withal, this caveat must ever be remembered: that we rather condemn the error than the person that erreth, because God's mercy is like to a bottomless sea, whereby He worketh what He will and when He will in the hearts of miserable sinners.

2. The second question is, where at this day may we find such visible churches as are indeed sound members of the catholic church? And for the resolving of it, we are to go through all countries and religions in the world:

(1) And first to begin with Turks and Jews, we are not in any wise to acknowledge their assemblies for churches, because they worship not God in Christ who is the Head of the church.

(2) As for the assemblies of papists which have been a great part of the world, if thereby we understand companies of men holding the pope for their head and believing the doctrine established in the council of Trent; in name they are called churches, but indeed they are no true or sound members of the catholic church. For both in their doctrine and in the worship of God, they raze the very foundation of religion, which will appear by these three points:

(i) First of all, they hold justification by works of grace; avouching that they are not only justified before God by the merit of Christ, but also by their own doings. Which opinion flatly overturneth justification by Christ. For as Paul saith to the Galatians (Gal. 5:2), *If ye be circumcised, Christ profiteth you nothing*, that is, if ye look to be justified by the works of the ceremonial law, ye are fallen from Christ; join circumcision and Christ

together in the matter of justification, and ye do quite overthrow justification by Christ. Now if this be true, which is the Word of God that cannot lie, then we say to the papists, If ye will needs be justified by works of grace, ye are fallen from grace.

(ii) The second point is that they maintain a daily real sacrifice of the body of Christ in the mass for the sins of the quick and dead. And this is also fundamental heresy. For Christ's sacrifice on the cross must either be a perfect sacrifice or no sacrifice, and if it be oft iterated and repeated by the mass-priest, it is not perfect but imperfect.

(iii) The third point is that they worship the images of the Trinity and saints departed, and their breaden-god, which is as vile an abomination as ever was among the Gentiles; all being directly against the true meaning of the second commandment, and defacing the worship of God is the very substance thereof.

Thus then it appears that the old church of Rome is changed, and is now at this day, of a spouse of Christ become an harlot; and therefore no more a church of Christ indeed, than the carcass of a dead man that weareth a living man's garment is a living man, though he look never so like him.

(i) And whereas they plead for themselves that they have succession from the apostles, the answer is that succession of person is nothing without succession of doctrine, which they want; and we see that heretics have succeeded lawful ministers.

(ii) Secondly, whereas it is alleged that in the popish assemblies the sacrament of baptism is rightly for substance administered; and that also is a note of a church, three things may be answered:

(a) First, that baptism severed from the preaching of the gospel, is no more a sign of a church than the seal severed from the indenture is of force; and

that is nothing. Circumcision was used in Colchis, yet no church, and among the Samaritans, and yet no people.

(b) Secondly, baptism in the assemblies of the church of Rome, is as the purse of a true man in the hand of a thief; and indeed doth no more argue them to be churches than the true man's purse argues the thief to be a true man. For baptism though it be in their assemblies, yet doth it not appertain unto them, but unto another hidden church of God, which He hath in all ages gathered forth of the midst of them.

(c) Thirdly, though they have the outward baptism, yet they by necessary consequence of doctrine, overturn the inward baptism that stands in justification and sanctification.

(iii) Moreover, whereas it is alleged that they maintain the books of the Old and New Testament penned by the prophets and apostles; that answer is that they do it with adding to the canon, and by corrupting the native sense of the Scriptures in the very foundation; and therefore they are but as a lantern that shews light to others, and none to itself.

(iv) Fourthly, it is further said that they hold the Creed of the apostles, and make the same confession of faith that we do. I answer that in shew of words they do so indeed; but by necessary consequence in the rest of their doctrine they overturn one of the natures and all of the offices of Christ, and therewithal most of the articles of the Creed. And herein they deal as a father, that in outward shew tenders the body of his child, and will not abide the least blemish upon it; and yet by secret conveyances inwardly annoys the heart, or the liver, and so in truth destroys the same.

(v) Fifthly, it is alleged that Antichrist must sit in the temple of God, that is, the church; therefore say some that desire an union between us and the papists, popish assemblies are true churches; but the argument is not good. For it is one thing to be in the church, and another thing to be of it. And

Antichrist is said to sit in the church, not as a member thereof, but as an usurper, or as a pirate in the ship of the merchant; and hence it cannot be proved that the assemblies of papists are churches, but that in them and with them there is mingled another hidden church, in the midst whereof Antichrist the pope ruleth, though himself hath no part therein.

(vi) Lastly, whereas some being no papists, think their churches to be like a body, diseased and full of sores and wounds from the head to the foot, and the throat also cut, yet so as life is still remaining; we may better think (their soul errors considered and their worship of God, which is nothing else but a mixture of Judaism and paganism) that it is a rotten and dead corpse void of spiritual life.

And therefore we have severed ourselves from the church of Rome upon just cause; neither are we schismatics in so doing, but they rather, because the ground and the proper cause of the schism is in them.

(3) As for the assemblies of Anabaptists, Libertines, Antinomians, Tritheists, Arians, Samosatenians, they are no churches of God, but conspiracies of monstrous heretics judicially condemned in the primitive church, and again by the malice of Satan renewed and revived in this age. The same we are to think and say of the Family of Love.

(4) As for the churches of Germany commonly called the churches of the Lutherans, they are reputed of us as the true churches of God. Though their Augsburg Confession has not satisfied the expectation of other Reformed churches, yet have they all the same enemies in matter of religion, and do alike confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and of the office of the Mediator, of faith and good works, of the Word, the church, and the magistrate, are all of one judgment. They differ indeed from us in the question of the sacrament, but it is no sufficient cause to induce us to hold them as no church; for that there is a true or real receiving of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, we all agree; and we jointly confess

that Christ is there present, so far forth that He doth truly feed us with His very body and blood to eternal life; and all the controversy lies in the manner of receiving; we contenting ourselves with that spiritual receiving which is by the hand of faith, they adding thereto the corporal, whereby they imagine themselves to receive Christ with the hand and mouth of the body. And though to maintain their opinion, they be constrained to turn the ascension of Christ into a disparition, whereby His body being visible becomes invisible, yet in the main points we agree: that He entered into His kingdom in our name and for us; that we are governed and preserved by His power and might; and that whatsoever good thing we have or do, proceeds wholly from the grace of His Spirit. Indeed the opinion of the ubiquity of the body of Christ, reviveth the condemned heresies of Eutychus and Nestorius, and it overturneth by necessary consequence most of the articles of faith; but that was private to some men, as Brentius and others, and was not received of the whole churches; and whereas the men were godly and learned, and we are uncertain with what affection, and how long they held this error, we rest ourselves in condemning it, leaving the persons to God. Again, popish transubstantiation and Lutheran consubstantiation, are both against the truth of the manhood of Christ, yet with great difference. Transubstantiation is flat against an article of faith; for if Christ's body be made of bread and His blood of wine (which must needs be, if there be a conversion of the one into the other), then was not He conceived and born of the virgin Mary, for it cannot both be made of baker's bread and of the substance of the virgin. Again, it abolisheth the outward sign in the Lord's supper, as also the analogy between the sign and the thing signified, and so overturns the sacrament; but consubstantiation doth not so, neither doth it overturn the substance of any particle of religion, but only a main point of philosophy, which is that a body doth occupy one only place at once.

(5) Furthermore, the churches of Helvetica and Savoy, and the free cities of France, and the Low Countries, and Scotland are to be reverenced as true churches of God, as their confessions make manifest. And no less must we

think of our own churches in England and Ireland. For we hold, believe and maintain and preach the true faith, that is, the ancient doctrine of salvation by Christ, taught and published by the prophets and apostles, as the book of the articles of faith agreed upon in open parliament doth fully shew; and withal now we are, and have been ready to testify this our faith, by venturing our lives even in the cause of religion against foreign power, and especially the Spaniard; and hereupon all the churches in Europe give unto us the hand of fellowship. And whereas sundry among us that separate and indeed excommunicate themselves, give out that there is no church in England, no ministers, no sacraments; their peremptory asseverations wanting sufficient ground, are but as paper shot. They allege that our assemblies are full of grievous blots and enormities. *Answer*: The defects and corruptions of churches must be distinguished: some of them are errors indeed, but beside the foundation; and some errors directly against the foundation; and these overturn all religion, whereas the former do not. Now it cannot be shewed that in our churches is taught any one error that raiseth the foundation, and consequently annihilates the truth of God's church. Indeed there is controversy among us touching the point of ecclesiastical regiment, confessing freely that there must be preaching of the Word, administration of the sacraments according to the institution, and the use of the power of the keys in admonitions, suspensions, excommunications; the difference between us is only touching the persons and the manner of putting this government in execution; and therefore men on both parts, though both hold not the truth in this point, yet because both hold Christ the foundation, they still remain brethren and true members of Christ. As for corruptions in manners, they make not a church to be no church, but a bad church. When as the wicked Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23:2,3) sitting in Moses' chair, taught the things which he had written, the people are commanded to hear them, and to do the things which they say, not doing the things which they do. And whereas it is said that we hold Christ in word and deny Him in deed, that is answered thus: denial of Christ is double, either in judgment or in fact; denial in judgment joined with obstinacy,

makes a Christian to be no Christian; denial in fact, the judgment still remaining sound, makes not a man to be no Christian, but a bad Christian. When the Jews had crucified the Lord of life, they still remained a church (if any upon earth); and notwithstanding this their fact, the apostles acknowledged (Rom. 9:4; Acts 2:39) that the covenant and the promises still belonged unto them; and they never made any separation from their synagogues, till such time as they had been sufficiently convicted by the apostolic ministry that Christ was the true Messiah.

3. Thus we see where at this day we may find the true church of God. Now I come to the third question, and that is, at what time a man may with good conscience make separation from a church? *Answer*: So long as a church makes no separation from Christ, we must make no separation from it; and when it separates from Christ, we may also separate from it; and therefore in two cases there is warrant of separation:

(1) The one is when the worship of God is corrupt in substance. And for this we have a commandment (2 Cor. 6:14-17), *Be not* (saith Paul) *unequally yoked with infidels, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, or what communion hath light with darkness, or what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath the believer with the infidel, or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and separate yourselves, saith the Lord*. And we have a practice of this in the Old Testament. When Jeroboam had set up idols in Israel (2 Chr. 11:14), then the priests and Levites came to Judah and Jerusalem to serve the Lord.

(2) The second is when the doctrine of religion is corrupt in substance; as Paul saith (1 Tim. 6:3-5), *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is puffed up; from which separate yourselves*. A practice of this we have in the apostle Paul (Acts 19:9; 28:29), who being in

Ephesus in a synagogue of the Jews, spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and exhorting to the things which concern the kingdom of God; *but when certain men were hardened and disobeyed, speaking evil of the way of God, he departed from them and separated the disciples of Ephesus*, and the like he did at Rome also. As for the corruptions that be in the manners of men that be of the church, they are no sufficient warrant of separation, unless it be from private company, as we are admonished by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 5:11), and by David's (Psa. 17:4) and Lot's (2 Pet. 2:8) examples.

By this which hath been said, it appears that the practice of such as make a separation from us, is very bad and schismatical, considering our churches fail not either in substance of doctrine, or in the substance of the true worship of God.

V.

Now to proceed in the Creed. The church is further set forth by certain properties and prerogatives. The properties or qualities are two: holiness and largeness:

1. That the church is holy, it appears by Peter, which calls it (1 Pet. 2:9) *an holy nation*, and *a chosen people*; and by St John (Rev. 11:2; 22:19), who calls it *an holy city*. And it is so called that it may be distinguished from the false church, which is termed in Scripture (Rev. 2:9; 3:9), a *synagogue of Satan*, and (Psa. 26:5) the *malignant church*.

Now this holiness of the church is nothing else but a a created quality in every true member thereof, whereby the image of God, which was lost by the fall of Adam, is again renewed and restored. The author of it is God by His Word and Spirit, by little and little abolishing the corruption of sin and sanctifying us throughout, as Christ saith (John 17:17), *Father, sanctify them in thy truth, thy Word is truth*. And holiness must be conceived to be in

the church on this manner: it is perfect in the church triumphant, and it is only begun in the church militant in this life, and that for special cause, that we might give all glory to God (1 Tim. 1:17); that we might not be high-minded (Rom. 11:20); that we might work our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12); that we might deny ourselves and wholly depend upon God (Mark 9:24).

Hence we learn three things:

(1) First, that the church of Rome erreth in teaching that a wicked man, yea such an one as shall never be saved, may be a true member of the catholic church; for in reason, every man should be answerable to the quality and condition of the church whereof he is a member; if it be holy, as it is, he must be holy also.

(2) Secondly, we are every one of us, as Paul saith to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:7), to *exercise ourselves unto godliness*, making conscience of all our former unholy ways, endeavouring ourselves to please God in the obedience of all His commandments. It is a disgrace to the holy church of God, that men professing themselves to be members of it, should be unholy.

(3) Thirdly, our duty is to eschew the society of atheists, drunkards, fornicators, blasphemers, and all wicked and ungodly persons, as Paul saith (Eph. 5:7,11), *Be no companions of them, and have no fellowship with unprofitable works of darkness*. And he chargeth the Thessalonians that if any man among them walk inordinately, they have no company with him, that he may be ashamed (2 Thess. 3:14).

2. The largeness of the church is noted in the word *catholic*, that is, general or universal. And it is so called for three causes:

(1) For first of all, it is general in respect of time, because the church hath had a being in all times and ages, ever since the giving of the promise to our

first parents in Paradise.

(2) Secondly, it is general in respect of the persons of men, for it stands of all sorts and degrees of men, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, etc.

(3) Thirdly, it is catholic, or universal, in respect of place, because it hath been gathered from all parts of the earth, specially now in the time of the New Testament, when our Saviour Christ said (Matt. 26:13) that *the gospel shall be preached in all the world*. To this purpose, St John saith (Rev. 7:9), *I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with long white robes and palms in their hands*.

And the church which we here profess to believe, is called catholic, that we may distinguish it from particular churches, which are not believed, but seen with eye, whereof mention is made often in the Scriptures: (Rom. 16:5) *The church in their house*; (1 Cor. 16:19) *The churches of Asia*; (Col. 4:15) *Salute Nymphas and the church in his house*; (Acts 11:22) *The church in Jerusalem*; (Acts 13:1) *The church at Antioch*, etc.

That the church is catholic in respect of time, place, person, it ministers matter of endless comfort to us. For hereby we see that no order, degree, or estate of men are excluded from grace in Christ, unless they will exclude themselves. St John saith (1 John 2:1), *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*. Now it might be answered: It is true indeed, Christ is an advocate to some men, but He is no advocate to me. St John therefore saith further (v.2), *and He is the reconciliation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the whole world*, that is, for all believers of what condition or degree soever.

But it is objected to the contrary, that if God any way decreed and willed the fall of Adam, then He was the author of sin; which once to say is blasphemy. *Answer*: The argument follows not. There be three actions in the will of God, one whereby He doth absolutely will anything and delight in it; and of all such things God Himself is the author. The second is, wholly or absolutely to nil a thing; and all things thus nilled, cannot possibly come to pass or have the least being in nature. There is also a third action which comes as a mean between the two former, which is remissly or in part both to will and nil a thing; whereby though God approve not evil, as it is evil, and therefore doth it not; yet He willeth the permitting of it to be done by others, or the being of it; because in respect of God that decreeth the permitting of evil, it is good that there should be evil. And on this manner and no otherwise God willed the fall of Adam; and therefore in the reason of any indifferent man, though He decreed the fall, yet shall He be free from the blame thereof, which lies wholly upon the doer; these two caveats always remembered: First, that God by His will did not constrain or force the will of Adam to sin, or infuse into it any corruption, and that therefore he sinned willingly and freely, only by the necessity of co-action; secondly, that God willed the fall for a most worthy end, which was to lay down a way tending to the manifestation both of justice and mercy.

The Communion of Saints

Thus much of the properties of the church; now follow the prerogatives or benefits which God bestoweth on it, which are in number four.

The first is expressed in these words: *the communion of saints*. Where *communion* signifieth that fellowship or society that one hath with

another; and by *saints*, we understand not dead men enrolled in the pope's calendar, but all that are sanctified by the blood of Christ, whether they be living or dead; as Paul saith (1 Cor. 1:2), *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Jesus Christ, saints by calling*; and (1 Cor. 14:33), *God is the God of peace in all the churches of the saints*. Now if we add the clause *I believe* unto these words, the meaning is this: I confess and acknowledge that there is a spiritual fellowship and society among all the members of Christ, being the faithful servants and children of God; and withal I believe that I am partaker of the same with the rest.

This communion hath two parts: fellowship of the members with the Head, and of the members with themselves:

1.

The communion of the members with their Head is not outward, but altogether spiritual in the conscience; and for the opening of it, we must consider what the church receiveth of Christ, and what He receives of it:

(1) The church receives of Christ four most worthy benefits:

(i) The first, that Christ our Mediator, God and man, hath truly given Himself unto us, and is become our lot and portion, and withal God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, in Him; as David saith (Psa. 16:5,6), *Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou shalt maintain my lot; the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a fair heritage*; and (Psa. 73:26), *My flesh faileth, and my heart also; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*.

(ii) The second is the right of adoption, whereby all the faithful whether in heaven or earth are actually made the true children of God. The benefit is wonderful, howsoever carnal men esteem not of it. If a man should either by election or birth, or any way else be made the son and heir of an earthly

prince, he would think himself highly advanced; how highly then are they extolled which are made the sons of God Himself.

(iii) The third benefit is a title and right to the righteousness of Christ in His sufferings and His fulfilling of the law. The excellence of it is unspeakable, because it serves to award the greatest temptations of the devil. When the devil replieth thus: Thou art a transgressor of the law of God, therefore thou shalt be damned; by means of that communion which we have with Christ, we answer again that Christ suffered the curse of the law to free us from due and deserved damnation; and when he further replies that seeing we never fulfilled the law, we cannot therefore enter into heaven; we answer again that Christ's obedience is a fulfilling of the law for us, and His whole righteousness is ours to make us stand righteous before God.

(iv) The fourth benefit is a right to the kingdom of heaven, as Christ comforting His disciples saith (Luke 12:32), *Fear not little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom*; and hence it is sundry times called *the inheritance, and the lot of the saints* (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12; Eph. 1:18).

Furthermore, for the conveyance of these benefits unto us, God hath ordained the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, specially the Lord's supper; and hath commanded the solemn and ordinary use of them in the church. And hereupon the Lord's supper is called the communion. *The cup of blessing* (saith Paul (1 Cor. 10:16)) *which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ*? That is, a sign and seal of the communion.

(2) Again, the things which Christ receives of us are two: our sins with the punishment thereof made His by application or imputation; and our afflictions with all the miseries of this life which he accounts His own, and therefore doth as it were put under His shoulders to bear the burden of

them. And this communion between Christ and us is expressed in the Scriptures by that blessed and heavenly bargain in which there is mutual exchange between Christ and us. He imparts to us (Isa. 55:1) *milk and wine without silver or money*, to refresh us, and (Rev. 3:18) *gold tried by the fire, that we may become rich, and white raiment that we may be clothed, and eye-salve to anoint our eyes that we may see*; and we for our parts return unto Him nothing but blindness, and nakedness, and poverty, and the loathsome burden of all our filthy sins.

2.

The second part of the communion is that which the saints have one with another. And it is either of the living with the living, or of the living with the dead:

(1) Now the communion of the living stands in three things:

(i) In the like affection.

(ii) In the gifts of the Spirit.

(iii) In the use of temporal riches.

(i) For the first, communion in affection is whereby all the servants of God are like affected to God, to Christ, to their own sins, and to each other. They are all of one nature and heart alike disposed, though they be not acquainted, nor have any external fellowship in the flesh. As in a family, children are for the most part one like another and brought up alike; even so it is in God's family which is His church; the numbers thereof are all alike in heart and affection; and the reason is because they have one Spirit to guide them all; and therefore St Peter saith (Acts 4:32), *The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul, neither any of them said anything which he possessed was his own, but they had all things*

common. And the prophet Isaiah, foretelling the unity which should be in the kingdom of Christ, said (Isa. 11:6,7), *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall live with the kid, and the calf, and the lion, and the fat beast together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones shall lie together; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock. The sucking child shall play upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand into the cockatrice hole*. By these beasts are signified men that be of a wicked and brutish nature, which, when they shall be brought into the kingdom of Christ, shall lay aside the same, and become loving, gentle, courteous, and all of one mind. And St Peter (2 Pet. 1:7) requires of the church the practice of brotherly love, and that is to carry a tender affection to men, not because they are of the same flesh, but because they are joined in the bond of one spirit with us. Furthermore, by reason of this: that all the children of God are of one heart, there follows another duty of this communion, whereby they bear one the burdens of another, and when one member is grieved, all are grieved; when one rejoiceth, all rejoice, as in the body when one member suffereth, all suffer.

(ii) The second branch of their communion, is in the gifts of God's Spirit, as love, hope, fear, etc. And this is shewed when one man doth employ the graces of God bestowed on him, for the good and salvation of another. As a candle spendeth itself to give light to others; so must God's people spend those gifts which God hath given them for the benefit of their brethren. A Christian man howsoever he be the freest man upon earth, yet is he servant to all men, especially to the church of God, to do service unto the members of it by love for the good of all. And this good is procured when we convey the graces of God bestowed on us to our brethren; and this is done five ways:

(a) By example.

(b) By admonition.

(c) By exhortation.

(d) By consolation.

(e) By prayer.

(a) The first, which is *good example*, we are enjoined by Christ, saying (Matt. 5:16), *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*. And that our hearts might be touched with special care of this duty, the Lord sets before us His own blessed example, saying (Lev. 11:44), *Be ye holy as I am holy*; and (Matt. 11:29), *Learn of me that I am meek and lowly*. And Paul saith (1 Cor. 11:1), *Be ye followers of me, as I follow Christ*; and the higher men are exalted, the more careful ought they to be in giving good example. For let a man of note or estimation do evil, and he shall presently have many followers. Evil example runs from one to another like a leprosy or infection; and this Christ signified when He said (Luke 13:7) that the fig tree planted in the vineyard, *If it bears no fruit, makes all the ground barren*.

(b) The second means of communication of the gifts of God unto others, is *admonition*, which is an ordinance of God whereby Christian men are to recover their brethren from their sins. A man by occasion fallen into the water, is in danger of his life; and the reaching of the hand by another is the means to save him. Now every man when he sinneth, doth as much as in him lieth, cast his soul into the very pit of hell; and wholesome admonitions are as the reaching out of the hand to recover him again. But it will peradventure be said, how shall we proceed in admonishing of others? *Answer*: We are to observe three things:

i. The first is to search out whether we that are to reprove be faulty ourselves in the same thing or no. First, we must take out the beam that is in our own eye, and so shall we see clearly to pull out the mote in our brother's eye (Matt. 7:5).

ii. Secondly, before we reprove, we must be sure that the fault is committed; we must not go upon hearsay or likelihood; and therefore the Holy Ghost saith (Heb. 10:24), *Let us consider* or observe *one another to provoke unto love and good works*.

iii. Thirdly, before we reprove, we must in Christian wisdom make choice of time and place; for all times and places serve not to this purpose. And therefore Solomon saith (Prov. 19:11), *It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence*.

Furthermore, in the action of admonishing, two things are to be observed:

i. A man must deliver the words of his admonition (so far forth as he can) out of the Word of God, so as the party which is admonished, may in the person of man see God Himself to reprove him.

ii. His response must be made with as much compassion and fellow-feeling of other men's wants as may be. As Paul saith (Gal. 6:1), *If any man be fallen by occasion into any fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one with the spirit of meekness*.

(c) The third way of communicating good things to others, is *exhortation*; and it is a means to excite and stir them on forward, which do already walk in the way of godliness. Therefore the holy God saith (Heb. 3:13), *Exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*. But alas, the practice of this duty, as also of the former, is hard to be found among men; for it is usual in families, that masters and fathers instead of admonishing their servants and children, teach them the practice of sin in swearing, blaspheming, slandering, etc., and as for exhortation, it is not used. Let a man that hath the fear of God offend never so little, instead of brotherly exhortation, he shall hear his profession cast in his teeth, and his hearing of sermons; this practice is so general that many

beginning newly to tread in the steps of godliness are hereby daunted, and quite driven back.

(d) The fourth way is *consolation*, which is a means appointed by God, whereby one man should with words of heavenly comfort refresh the souls of others afflicted with sickness or any other way feeling the hand of God either in body or in mind. And this duty is as little regarded as any of the former. In times of men's sickness neighbours come in, but what say they? I am sorry to see you in this case, I hope to see you well again, I would be sorry else etc. Not one of an hundred can speak a word of comfort to the weary; but we are faulty herein. For with what affection do we believe the communion of saints, when we ourselves are as dry fountains that do scarce convey a drop of refreshing to others?

(e) The last means is *prayer*, whereby God's church procures blessings for the several members thereof, and they again for the whole. And herein lies a principal point of the communion of saints, which ministereth notable comfort to every Christian heart. For hence we may reason thus: I am indeed a member of the catholic church of God, and therefore though my own prayers be weak, yet my comfort is this: I know that I am partaker of all the good prayers of all the people of God dispersed over the face of the whole earth, my fellow members, and of all the blessings which God bestows on them. This will make us in all our troubles to say with Elisha (2 Kin. 6:16), *Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them*. When the people of Israel had sinned in worshipping the golden calf, the wrath of the Lord was kindled, and made a breach into them, as cannon shot against a wall; but (Psa. 106:23) Moses the servant of God stood in the breach before the Lord to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them. And the prayer of Moses was so effectual that the Lord said (Exod. 32:10), *Let me alone*, as though Moses by prayer had held the hand of God that He could not punish the people. And some think that Stephen's prayer for his enemies when he was stoned (Acts 7:60), was a means of Paul's

conversion. And surely though there were no other reason, yet this were sufficient to move a man to embrace Christian religion, considering that being a member of the church, he hath part in all the prayers of the saints throughout the world, and of the blessings of God that come thereby.

(iii) The third part of this communion is in temporal things, as goods and riches; whereby I mean no anabaptistical communion, but that which was used in the primitive church, when they had all things common in respect of use; and some sold their goods and possessions and parted them to all men, as everyone had need. And by their example, we are taught to be content to employ those goods which God hath bestowed on us, for the good of our fellow members within the compass of our callings, and to our ability, and beyond our ability, if need require. Paul saith (Gal. 6:10), *Do good to all, but especially to them which are of the household of faith*.

(2) The communion of the living with the dead, stands in two things:

(i) The one is that the saints departed in the church triumphant do in general pray for the church militant upon earth, desiring the final deliverance of all their fellow members from all their miseries. And therefore in the Apocalypse (Rev. 6:10), they cry on this manner: *How long Lord, holy and true, dost not thou judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth*? I say *in general*, because they pray not for the particular conditions and persons of men upon earth, considering they neither know, nor see, nor hear us; neither can they tell what things are done upon earth.

(ii) The second is that the godly on earth do in heart and affection converse with them in heaven, desiring continually to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Now whereas the papists do further enlarge this communion, avouching that the saints in heaven do make intercession to Christ for us, and impart their merits unto us; and that we again for that cause are to invocate them, and to do unto them religious worship; we dissent from

them, being resolved that these things are but inventions of man's brain, wanting warrant of the Word.

Lastly, to conclude, a question may be demanded, how any one of us may particularly know and be assured in ourselves that we have part in this communion of saints? *Answer*: St John opens this point to the full when he saith (1 John 1:6,7), *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and yet walk in darkness, we lie; but if we walk in the light, as He is light, then we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ purgeth us from all our sins*. In which words he makes knowledge of God's will joined with obedience, to be an infallible mark of one that is in the communion; as on the contrary, ignorance of God's will, or disobedience, or both, to be tokens of one that hath neither fellowship with Christ, or with the true members of Christ. And therefore to end this point, if we would have fellowship with Christ, let us learn to know what sin is, and to flee from the same as from the bane of our souls, and to make conscience of every evil way.

The duties to be learned by the communion of saints, are manifold:

Duty 1. And first of all, if we do believe the fellowship which all the faithful have with Christ and with themselves; and be resolved that we have part therein, then must we separate and withdraw ourselves from all ungodly and unlawful societies of men in the world whatsoever they be. Unlawful societies are manifold, but I will only touch one, which everywhere annoyeth religion, and hindereth greatly this communion of saints, and that is when men join themselves in company to pass away the time in drinking, gaming etc. Behold a large fellowship which beareth sway in all places; there is almost no town but there is at the least one knot of such companions; and he that will not be combined with such loose mates, he is thought to be a man of no good nature; he is foisted forth of every company; he is nobody; and if a man will yield to run riot with them in the misspending of his time and goods, he is thought to be the best fellow in the

world. But what is done in this society? And how do these cup-companions spend their time? Surely the greatest part of day and night is usually spent in swearing, gaming, drinking, surfeiting, revelling and railing on the ministers of the Word and such as profess religion, to omit the enormities which they procure to themselves hereby; and this behaviour spreads itself like a canker over every place, and it defiles both town and country. But we that look for comfort by the communion of saints, must not cast in our lot with such a wicked generation, but separate ourselves from them. For undoubtedly their society is not of God, but of the devil; and they that are of this society, cannot be of the holy communion of saints; and surely except the magistrate by the sword, or church by the power of the keys, do pull down such fellowship, the holy society of God's church and people must decay. Excommunication is a censure ordained of God for this end, to banish them from this heavenly communion of the members of Christ, that live inordinately and have communion with men in the works of darkness.

Duty 2. Secondly, by this we are taught that men professing the same religion must be linked in society and converse together in Christian love, meekness, gentleness and patience; as St Paul taught in the Philippians (Phil. 2:1,2), *If there be any fellowship of the Spirit, if there be any compassion and mercy, fulfil my joy, that we may be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of like judgment*. And again (Eph. 4:3), *Keep* (saith he) *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. Why? Mark how his reason is fetched from this communion (vv. 4-6): *Because there is one body, one Spirit, even as you are called into the hope of your vocation, one Lord, one faith, one hope, one baptism, one God and Father of all, which is above all, and in you all*. And no doubt the same reason made David say (Psa. 16:3), *All my delight is in the saints which be upon earth*.

Duty 3. Thirdly, every Christian man that acknowledgeth this communion, must carry about with him a fellow-feeling, that is, an heart touched with compassion in regard of all the miseries that befall either the whole church

or any member thereof, as Christ our Head, teacheth us by His own example (Acts 9:4), when He called to Saul, and said, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*? giving him to understand that He is touched with the abuses to His church, as if they had directly been done to His own Person. The prophet Amos reproveth the people (Amos 6:6), because they drank wine in bowls, and anointed themselves with the chief ointment; but why? Was it not lawful for them to do so? Yes; but the cause for which they are reproved follows: *No man* (saith he) *is sorry for the afflictions of Joseph*. In the midst of their delights and pleasures they had no regard of the miseries of the poor church and servants of God elsewhere in affliction, which every man ought to shew forth in the practice of all duties of love; and therefore Paul saith (Eph. 6:18), *Pray always, with all manner of prayers and supplications in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplications for the saints*. And he highly commendeth the Philippians (Phil. 4:14) for *communicating to his afflictions*. And further he bids Philemon (Philem. 20) to comfort Onesimus *his bowels in the Lord*. And St John saith (1 John 3:16), if a man's life would save his neighbour's soul, *he must lay it down*, if need require. We have all of us daily occasion to practise this duty towards the afflicted members of God's church in other countries. For howsoever we enjoy the gospel with peace, yet they are under persecution for the same; and so oft as we hear report of this, we should suffer our hearts to be grieved with them, and pray to God for them.

We must here be admonished not to seek out own things, but to refer the labours of our callings to the common good, especially of the church whereof we are members. As for them that seek for nothing but to maintain their own estate and wealth, and therefore in their trades use false weights and measures, the engrossing, corrupting, mingling of wares, glozing, lying, smoothing, swearing, forbearing, dissembling, griping, oppressing of the poor, etc., they may plead for themselves what they will; but in truth they never knew yet what the communion of saints meant.

Duty 4. Lastly, considering we are all knit into one mystical body, and have mutual fellowship in the same, our duty is to redress the faults of our brethren, and to cover them, as the hand in the body lays a plaister upon the sore in the foot or in the leg, and withal covers it. *Love covers the multitude of sins* (1 Pet. 4:8). And when men disgrace their brethren for their wants, and blaze them to the world, they do not the duty of fellow-members.

The Forgiveness of Sins

Thus much for the first benefit bestowed on the church; the second is *forgiveness of sins*, which may be thus described: *Forgiveness of sins is a blessing of God upon His church procured by the death and passion of Christ, whereby God esteems of sin, as no sin, or, as not committed*. In this description I have couched four points, which we are severally to consider:

1. The first: Who is the author of forgiveness of sins? *Answer*: God, whose blessing it is; for sin is only committed against God, and the violating of His laws and commandments are properly sins. And the offence done to any man or creature is no more in itself, but an offence or injury; yea the breach of man's commandment is no sin, unless it do imply withal the breach of God's commandment. Therefore it is a prerogative belonging to God alone to pardon sin; and when we are taught to say (Luke 11:4), *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, the meaning is not that we forgive sins as they are sins, but only as trespasses, that is, losses, hurts, and damages done unto us by men. It may be further said, God hath given this power and commandment to His ministers to forgive sins, saying (John 20:23), *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted*. *Answer*: God's ministers do not properly forgive sins, but only in the name of God

according to His Word pronounced to a penitent sinner that his sins are pardoned and forgiven of God; and therefore it is a most certain truth that *none can forgive sins but God only* (Mark 2:7); it was avouched by the Pharisees and not denied by Christ. Hence it follows that remission of sin, being once granted, remains for ever, because God's love unto the elect is unchangeable, and His decree concerning their salvation cannot be altered.

2. The second point is, to whom remission of sins is given? *Answer*: To the catholic church, that is, to the whole company of men predestinated to salvation; as Isaiah saith (Isa. 33:24), The people that dwell therein (that is, the church) shall have their sins forgiven. And (Isa. 62:12), *They shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be named, A city sought out, and not forsaken*. And if there had been an universal remission of sins to all men, as some do dream, it should not here have been made a peculiar prerogative of the church.

3. The third point is, what is the means whereby pardon of sin is procured at God's hand? *Answer*: The death and passion of Christ; so Paul saith (1 Cor. 15:3), *Christ died for our sins*; that is, Christ died to be a payment and satisfaction to God's justice for our sins. And St John saith (1 John 1:7), The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. And Peter saith (1 Pet. 1:18,19), *Knowing that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation* etc., *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb undefiled and without spot*.

4. The fourth point is, after what manner sin is forgiven? *Answer*: By an action of God, whereby for the merit of Christ, He esteems and accounts sin as no sin, or, as if it had never been committed. Therefore David saith (Psa. 32:2), *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin*. And (Isa. 44:22) the Lord saith, *I have put away thy transgressions like a cloud, and thy sins as a mist*. Now we know that clouds and mist which appear for a time, are afterward by the sun utterly dispersed. And King Hezekiah, when

he would shew that the Lord hath forgiven him his sins, saith ((Isa. 38:17), *God hath cast them behind His back*, alluding to the manner of men, who when they will not remember or regard a thing, do turn their backs upon it. And Micah saith (Mic. 7:19) that *God doth cast all the sins of His people into the bottom of the sea*, alluding to Pharaoh, whom the Lord drowned in the bottom of the Red Sea. And Christ hath taught us to pray thus (Matt. 6:12): *Forgive us out debts, as we forgive our debtors*; in which words is an allusion to our creditors, who then forgive debts when they account that which is debt as no debt, and cross the book. Hence it appears that damnable and vile is the opinion of the church of Rome, which holdeth that there is a remission of the *fault* without a remission of the *punishment*; and herewithal falls to the ground the doctrine of human satisfactions, and indulgences, and purgatory, and prayer for the dead, built upon this foundation, which are of the same kind.

Moreover, we must remember to add to this clause, *I believe*, and then the meaning is this: I do not only believe that God doth give pardon of sin to His church and people (for that the very devils believe), but withal I believe the forgiveness of mine own particular sins. Hence it appears that it was the judgment of the primitive church, that men should believe the forgiveness of their own sins.

By this prerogative we reap endless comfort; for the pardon of sin is a most wonderful blessing, and without it every man is more miserable and wretched than the most vile creature that ever was. We loathe the serpent or the toad; but if a man have mot the pardon of his sins, procured by the death and passion of Christ, he is a thousand-fold worse than they. For when they die, there is the end of their woe and misery; but when man dieth without this benefit, there is the beginning of his. For first in soul till the day of judgment, and then both in body and soul for evermore, he shall enter into the endless pains and torments of hell; in which if one should continue so many thousand years as there are drops in the ocean sea, and then be

delivered, it were some case; but having continued so long (which is an unspeakable length of time) he must remain there as long again, and after that for ever and ever without release; and therefore among all the benefits that ever were or can be thought of, this is the greatest and most precious. Among all the burdens that can befall a man, what is the greatest? Some will say, sickness, some ignominy, some poverty, some contempt; but indeed among all, the heaviest and greatest, is the burden of a man's own sins, lying upon the conscience and pressing it down, without any assurance of pardon. David being a king had, no doubt, all that heart could wish; and yet he laying aside all the royalties and pleasures of his kingdom, saith this one thing above all (Psa. 32:2): that he is a blessed man that is eased of the burden of his sins. A lazar man full of sores is ugly to sight, and we cannot abide to look upon him; but no lazar is so loathsome to us as all sinners are in the sight of God; and therefore David counted him blessed, *whose sins are covered*. It may be, some will say, there is no cause why a man should thus magnify the pardon of sin, considering it is but a common benefit. Thus indeed men may imagine, which never knew what sin meant; but let a man only, as it were, but with the tip of his finger have a little feeling of the smart of his sins, he shall find his estate so fearful, that if the whole world were set before him on the one side, and the pardon of his sin on the other side, he would choose the pardon of his sins before ten thousand worlds. Though many drowsy Protestants esteem nothing of it, yet to the touched conscience it is a treasure, which when a man finds he hides it, and goes home, and sells all that he hath, and buys it. Therefore this benefit is most excellent, and for it the members of God's church have great cause to give God thanks without ceasing.

The duties to be learned hence are these:

Duty 1. And first of all here comes a common fault of men to be rebuked. Everyone will say that he believeth the remission of sins, yet no man almost laboureth for a true and certain persuasion hereof in his own conscience;

and for proof hereof, propound this question to the common Christian: Doest thou persuade thyself that God gives remission of sins unto His church? The answer will be, I know and believe it. But ask him further: Doest thou believe the pardon of thine own sins? And then comes a blind answer: I have a good hope to Godward, but I cannot tell, I think no man can say so much; for God saith to no man, *Thy sins are pardoned*. But this is to speak flat contraries, to say they believe, and they cannot tell; and it betrays exceeding negligence in matters of salvation. But let them that fear God, or love their own soul's health, give all diligence to make sure the remission of their own sins; withal avoiding hardness of heart and drowsiness of spirit, the most fearful judgments of God, which everywhere take place. The foolish virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom with lamps in their hands as well as the wise, but they never so much as dreamed of the horn of oil, till the coming of the bridegroom. So many men live in the church of God as members thereof, holding up the lamp of glorious profession; but in the mean season they seek only for the things of this life; never casting how they might assure themselves in conscience touching their reconciliation with God, till the day of death come.

Duty 2. Secondly, if we be here bound to believe the pardon of all our sins, then we must every day humble ourselves before God and seek pardon for our daily offences; for He gives grace to the humble or contrite (1 Pet. 5:5); He fills the hungry with good things (Luke 1:53), when the rich are sent empty away. When Benhadad the king of Syria was discomforted and overcome by the king of Israel (1 Kin. 20:31), by the counsel of his servants, who told him that the kings of Israel were merciful men, he sent them clothed in sackcloth with ropes about their necks to entreat for peace and favour. Now when the king saw their submission, he made a covenant of peace with him. We by our sins most justly deserve hell, death and condemnation every day, and therefore it standeth us in hand to come into the presence of God, and to humble ourselves before Him in sackcloth and ashes, craving and entreating for nothing in the world so much as for the

pardon of our sins, and that day by day without ceasing till the Lord give this blessed answer to our conscience, that all our sins are put out of His remembrance. We must not think that God putteth grace into men's hearts when they lie snorting upon their elbows, and either not use, or despise the means; but we must first use the means, partly by making confession of our sins to God, and partly by crying to heaven for pardon; and then when by His grace we begin to desire grace, He gives further grace.

Duty 3. Lastly, if we believe the pardon of our sins, then we must change the tenor and course of our lives, and take heed of breaking God's commandments by doing any of those things whereof our conscience may accuse us, and tell us that by them we have displeased God heretofore. A man that for some misdemeanour hath been cast into prison and lien there many years winter and summer in cold irons; when he obtains liberty, he will often bethink himself of his old misery, and take heed for ever lest he fall into the same offence again; and he which hath seen his own sins and felt the smart of them, and withal by God's goodness obtained assurance touching the pardon of them, will never wittingly and willingly commit the like sins any more, but in all things change the course of his life. As for such as say that they have the pardon of their sins, and yet live in them still, they deceive themselves, and have no faith at all.

The Resurrection of the Body

Thus much for the second benefit which God bestoweth on His church, namely, remission of sins; now followeth the third in these words: *The resurrection of the body*. In the handling whereof, sundry points must be considered:

1. The first, whether there be a resurrection or no? This question must needs be handled, because Epicureans and atheists in all ages, and at this day, some do call this article into question. Now that there is a resurrection of the body after death, it may be proved by many arguments, whereof I will touch only the principal:

(1) The first is taken from the work of redemption. St John writeth (1 John 3:8) that *Christ came to dissolve the works of the devil*; which are sin, and by sin, death; and hence I reason thus: If sin and death are to be dissolved utterly, then the bodies of the faithful which are dead in the grave, must needs be made alive, otherwise death is not abolished; but sin and death must be utterly abolished; therefore there shall be a resurrection.

(2) Secondly, God had made a covenant with His church, the tenor whereof is this (Jer. 31:33): *I will be thy God, and thou shalt be my people*. This covenant is not for a day or an age, or for a thousand years or ages, but is everlasting and without end, so as God's people may say of God for ever, *God is our God*; and likewise, God will say of His church for evermore, *This people is my people*. Now if God's covenant be everlasting, then all the faithful departed from the beginning of the world must be raised again to life. And if God should leave His people in the grave under death for ever, how could they be called the people of God? For He is a God of mercy and of life itself; and therefore though they abide long in the earth; yet they must at length be revived again. This argument Christ useth against the Saducees, which denied the resurrection (Matt. 22:32): *God is not the God of the dead but of the living*; but *God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, which are dead, and therefore must rise again.

(3) The third argument must be taken from the tenor of God's justice. It is a special part of God's glory, to shew forth His mercy on the godly, and His justice upon the wicked in rewarding them according to their works, as the apostle saith (Rom. 2:6-8), *God will reward every man according to his*

works; to them that by continuance in well-doing seek glory, and honour, and immortality, life eternal; but unto them that disobey the truth, that be contentious, and obey unrighteousness, shall be indignation and wrath. But in this life God rewardeth not men according to their doings; and therefore Solomon speaking of the estate of all men in this world, saith (Eccl. 9:2), *All things come alike to all, and the same condition to the just and unjust, to the good and bad, to the pure and polluted, to him that offereth sacrifice and to him that offereth none*. Nay, which is more, here the wicked flourish, and the godly are afflicted. The ungodly have hearts-ease and all things at will; whereas the godly are oppressed and overwhelmed with all kinds of miseries, and are as sheep appointed for the slaughter. It remains therefore that there must needs be a general resurrection of all men after this life, that the righteous may obtain a reward of God's free mercy, and the wicked utter shame and confusion. But some will say, it is sufficient that God do this to the soul of every man, the body needeth not to rise again. I answer, that the ungodly man doth not work wickedness only in his soul, but his body also is an instrument thereof; and the godly do not only practise righteousness in their souls but in their bodies also. The bodies of the wicked are instruments of sin, the bodies of the righteous are the weapons of righteousness, and therefore their bodies must rise again, that both in body and soul they may receive a reward according to that which they have wrought in them.

(4) The fourth argument, which is also used by Paul (1 Cor. 15;12-20) is this: *Christ Himself is risen*, and therefore all the faithful shall rise again; for He rose not for Himself as a private man, but in our room and stead, and for us. If the Head be risen, then the members also shall rise again; for by the same power whereby Christ raised Himself, He both can and will raise all those that be of His mystical body, He being *the first-fruits of them that sleep*.

(5) The fifth argument is taken from express testimony of Scripture. Job hath an excellent place for this purpose (Job 19:25-27): *I am sure* (saith he) *that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand the last on the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet I shall see God in my flesh, whom I myself shall see, and mine eyes shall behold, and none other for me*. And St Paul to the Corinthians avoucheth and proveth this point at large (1 Cor. 15), by sundry arguments which I will not stand to repeat; this one remembered (vv. 14,18): *If* (saith he) *the dead rise not again, then your faith is vain, our preaching is in vain, and the godly departed are perished*.

(6) The sixth argument may be taken from the order of nature, which ministereth certain resemblances of the resurrection; which though they be no sufficient proofs, yet may they be inducements to the truth. Both philosophers and also divines have written of the phoenix, that first she is consumed to ashes by the heat of the sun, and that afterward of her ashes ariseth a young one; and on this manner is her kind preserved. Again, swallows, worms and flies, which have lien dead in the winter season, in the spring, by the virtue of the sun's heat, revive again; so likewise men fall in swoons and trances, being for a time without breath or shew of life, and yet afterward come again. And (to use Paul's example) before the corn can grow and bear fruit, it must first be cast into the ground, and there rot. And if this were not seen by experience, men would not believe it. Again, every present day is as it were dead and buried in the night following, and yet afterward it returns again the next morning. Lastly, we read how the old prophets raised some from death; and our Saviour Christ raised Lazarus among the rest, that had lien four days in the grave and stank; and why then should any think it impossible for God to raise all men to life?

But let us see what reasons may be alleged to the contrary:

(1) First it is alleged that the resurrection of bodies resolved to dust and ashes, is against common sense and reason. *Answer*: It is above reason, but

not against reason. For impotent and miserable man, as experience sheweth, can by art even of ashes make the curious workmanship of glass; why then may we not in reason think that the omnipotent and everlasting God is able to raise men's bodies out of the dust?

(2) Secondly, it is said that men's bodies being dead are turned into dust, and so are mingled with the bodies of beasts and other creatures, and one man's body with another, and by reason of this confusion, men cannot possibly rise with their own bodies. *Answer*: Howsoever this is impossible with men, yet it is possible with God. For He that in the beginning was able to create all things of nothing, is much more able to make every man's body at the resurrection, of his own matter, and to distinguish the dust of men's bodies from the dust of beasts; and the dust of one man's body from another. The goldsmith by his art can sunder divers metals one from another; and some men out of one metal can draw another; why then should we think it impossible for the almighty God to do the like?

(3) It may be further objected thus: A man is eaten by a wolf, the wolf is eaten of a lion, the lion by the fowls of the air, and the fowls of the air eaten again by men; again one man is eaten of another, as it is usual among the cannibals. Now the body of that man which is turned into so many substances, especially into the body of another man, cannot rise again; and if the one doth, the other doth not. *Answer*: This reason is but a cavil of man's brain; for we must not think that whatsoever entereth into the body, and is turned into the substance thereof must rise again and become a part of the body at the day of judgment; but every man shall then have so much substance of his own, as shall make his body to be entire and perfect; though another man's flesh once eaten be no part thereof.

(4) Again, it is urged that because flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God; therefore the bodies of men shall not rise again. *Answer*: By *flesh and blood*, is not meant the bodies of men simply, but the bodies of

men as they are in weakness, without glory, subject to corruption. For *flesh and blood* in Scripture, signifies sometime the original sin and corruption of nature, and sometimes man's nature subject to miseries and infirmities, or the body in corruption before it be glorified, and so it must be understood in this place.

(5) Lastly, it is objected that Solomon saith (Eccl. 3:19), *The condition of the children of men, and the condition of the beasts are even as one condition*. Now beasts rise not again after this life, and therefore there is no resurrection of men. *Answer*: In that place, Solomon expoundeth himself: They are like in dying; for so he saith, *as the one dieth, so dieth the other*; he speaketh not of their estate after death.

2. The second point to be considered is the cause of resurrection. In mankind we must consider two parts: the elect and the reprobate; and they both shall rise again at the day of judgment, but by divers causes: the godly have one cause of their resurrection, and the ungodly another:

(1) The cause why the godly rise again is the resurrection of Christ, yea it is the proper cause which procureth and effecteth their resurrection. In the Scripture, Adam and Christ are compared together, and Christ is called the second Adam; these were two roots. The first Adam was the root of all mankind, and he conveyeth sin, and by sin death to all that sprang of him, Christ only excepted. The second Adam, which is the root of all the elect, conveyeth life both in body and soul to all that are united to Him; and by the virtue of His resurrection they shall rise again after this life. For look as the power of the Godhead of Christ when He was dead in the grave, raised His body on the third day; so shall the same power of Christ His Godhead convey itself unto all the faithful, which even in death remain united unto Him, and raise them up at the last day. And for that cause, Christ is called *a quickening spirit* (1 Cor. 15:45).

(2) Now the cause why the wicked rise again, is not the virtue of Christ's resurrection, but the virtue of God's curse set down in His Word (Gen. 2:17): *In the day that thou shalt eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt die the death*, that is, a double death, both of body and soul. And therefore they arise only by the power of Christ as He is a judge, that this sentence may be verified on them; and that they may suffer both in body and soul eternal punishment in hell fire.

Furthermore, St John (John 5:28) setteth down the outward means whereby the dead shall be raised, namely, the voice of Christ: *The hour shall come* (saith he) *in which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and they shall come forth*. For as He created all things by His Word, so at the day of judgment by the same voice all shall be raised again. This may be a good reason to move us to hear the ministers of God reverently; for that which they teach, is the very Word of God; and therefore we are to pray that it may be as effectual in raising us up from the grave of sin in this life, and it shall be after this life, in raising us from the grave of death unto judgment.

3. Thirdly, we are to consider what manner of bodies shall rise at the last day. *Answer*: The same bodies for substance. This Job (Job 19:26,27) knew well when he said, *I shall see Him at the last day in my flesh, whom I myself shall see, and none other for me, with the same eyes*. Nevertheless the bodies of the elect shall be altered in quality, being made incorruptible and filled with glory.

4. The last point to be considered is the end why these bodies shall rise again. The principal end which God intendeth, is His own glory, in the manifestation of His justice and mercy. Now at the last day, when all men shall be raised to judgment by the voice of Christ, the godly to life, and the wicked to condemnation; there shall be a full manifestation both of His

mercy and justice; and therefore by consequence a full manifestation of His glory.

Thus much for the doctrines touching the resurrection; now follow the uses:

Use 1. First, it serveth wonderfully for the comfort of all Christian hearts. David speaking not only of Christ, but also of himself, saith most notably (Psa. 16:9,10), *Mine heart is glad, my tongue rejoiceth, and my flesh also doth rest in hope*. Who so? *For* (saith he) *thou shalt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption*. Though the days of this life be days of woe and misery, yet the day of the resurrection shall be unto all the children of God a time of rejoicing and felicity, and as Peter saith (Acts 3:19), It is the *time of refreshing*. Whosoever is now an hungred, shall then eat and be filled with the fruit of the tree of life; and whosoever is now naked, shall then be clothed with the white garment dipped in the blood of the Lamb; and whosoever is now lame, shall have all his members restored perfectly. And as this day is joyful to the godly, so on the contrary it is a day of woe and misery to the ungodly; as St John saith (John 5:29), *They that have done evil, shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation*. If they might cease to live after this life, and die as the beast doth, O, then it would be well with them; for then they might have an end of their misery; but the wicked must after this life rise again to condemnation, which is the accomplishment of their eternal woe and wretchedness; a rueful and doleful case to consider, and yet it is the state of all unbelieving and unrepentant sinners. If a man were bidden to go to bed, that after he had slept and was risen again, he might go to execution, it would make his heart to ache within him; yet this, yea a thousand-fold worse is the estate of all impenitent sinners; they must sleep in the grave for a while, and then rise again, that a second death may be inflicted upon them in body and soul, which is the suffering of the full wrath of God, both in body and soul, eternally. This being so, let us embrace the good counsel of St Peter, who saith (Acts 3:19), *Amend your lives and turn, that your sins*

may be done away when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. If a man die repentant for his sins, it is a day of refreshing; but if he die in his sins, impenitent and hard-hearted, it is a day of eternal horror, desperation and confusion.

Use 2. Again, if we believe that our bodies shall rise again after this life, and stand before God at the last day of judgment, we must daily enter into a serious consideration of this time, and have in mind, that one day we must meet the Lord face to face. A traveller comes into an inn having but a penny in his purse, he sits down and calls for all store of provision and dainties; now what is to be thought of him? Surely in the judgment of all men, his behaviour betokens folly, or rather madness. But why? Because he spends freely, and hath no regard to the reckoning which must follow. How foolish then and mad is the practice of every man that liveth in his sins, bathing himself in his pleasures in this world, never bethinking how he shall meet God at the last day of judgment, and there make reckoning of all his doings? An ancient divine writes of himself that this saying ran in his mind, and sounded always in his ears: *Arise ye dead and come unto judgment*. And this ought always to be sounding in our ears, that while we have time we should prepare ourselves to meet God at the last day.

Use 3. Thirdly, if we believe the resurrection of the body, we are not to weep and mourn immoderately for our friends deceased. Our Saviour Christ did weep for Lazarus, and when Steven was stoned to death, certain men that feared God buried him, and made great lamentation for him; and therefore mourning is not condemned; and we must not be as stocks, that are bereft of all compassion; yet remember we must, what St Paul saith to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:13): *I would not, brethren, have you ignorant concerning those which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, as others which have no hope*. For the godly man properly dieth not, but lays himself down to take a sleep after his manifold labours in this life; which being ended, he

must rise again to joys everlasting; and therefore we must needs moderate and mingle our mourning for the deceased, with this and such like comforts.

Use 4. Fourthly, we are taught hence to labour and strive against the natural fear of death; for if there be a resurrection of our bodies after this life, then death is but a passage or middle way from this life to eternal life. If a beggar should be commanded to put off his old rags, that he might be clothed with rich and costly garments, would he be sorry because he should stand naked a while till he were wholly bestripped of his rags? No surely; well, thus doth God when He calls a man to death; He bids him put off his old rags of sin and corruption, and be clothed with the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness; and our abode in the grave is but for a space, while corruption be put off. This is Paul's argument, saying (2 Cor. 5:1), *We know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building given of God, which is an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens*.

Use 5. Fifthly, whereas the godly are subject to manifold afflictions and miseries, both in body and mind in this life, here they shall find a sufficient stay to quiet and calm their minds, if they consider that after this short life is ended, there will endue a joyful resurrection. Job (Job 19:26), in the extremity of all his temptations, made this the comfort to his soul, that one day he should rise again, in which he should enjoy the glorious presence of his Creator. And the Holy Ghost saith (Heb. 11:35) that the servants of God in the days of Antiochus were racked and tormented, and would not be delivered. Why so? *Because they looked for a better resurrection*.

Use 6. Lastly, the consideration of this point serveth to be a bridle to restrain a man from sin, and a spur to make him go forward in all godliness of life and conversation. St Paul (Acts 24:15) *had hope toward God that the resurrection of the dead should be both of the just and unjust*. Now what did this move him unto? Mark (v.16): *Herein* (saith he that is, in this respect) *I*

endeavour myself to have a clear conscience towards God and towards men. And let us for our parts likewise remember the last judgment, that it may be a means to move us so to behave ourselves in all our actions, that we may keep a good conscience before God and before men; and let it also be a bridle unto us to keep us back from all manner of sin. For what is the cause why men daily defile their bodies and souls with so many damnable practices, without any remorse of conscience? Surely they never seriously remember the day of the resurrection after this life, wherein they must stand before Christ to give an account of that which they have done in this life, whether it be good or bad.

Thus much of the duties; now mark it is further said, *The resurrection of the body*. If the body rise, it must first fall. Here then this point is wrapped up as a confessed truth, that all men must die the first death. And yet considering that the members of the church have the pardon of their sins which are the cause of death, it may be demanded, why they must die? *Answer*: We are to know that when they die, death doth not seize upon them, as it is in his own nature, a curse; for in that respect it was born of Christ upon the cross, and that for us; but for two other causes, which we must think upon, as being special means to make a man willing to die:

(1) They must die that original corruption may be utterly abolished; for no man living on earth is perfectly sanctified; and original sin is remaining for special causes to the last moment of this life, then it is abolished and not before.

(2) The godly die that by death as by a straight gate they may pass from this vale of misery to eternal life. And thus Christ by His death makes death to be no death, and turns a curse into a blessing.

And to proceed: It is not here said, the resurrection of the soul, but of the body only; what then (will some say) becometh of the soul? Divers have thought that the souls then, though they do not die, yet are still kept within

the body (being as it were asleep) till the last day. But God's Word saith to the contrary. For the souls of the godly lie under the altar (Rev. 6:9,10), and cry, *How long, Lord Jesus*? Dives (Luke 16:23) in soul did suffer the woe and torments of hell; and Lazarus had joy in Abraham's bosom.

Again, some others think that men's souls after this life do pass from one man's body to another; and Herod may seem to have been of this opinion (Matt. 14:2); for when news was brought him of Christ, he said that John Baptist being beheaded was risen again, thinking that the soul of John Baptist was put into the body of some other man. And for proof hereof, some allege the example of Nebuchadnezzar, who forsaking the society of men (Dan. 4), lived as beasts; and did eat grass like a beast; and they imagine that his own soul went out of him, and that the soul of a beast entered into the room thereof. But this indeed is a fond conceit; for even then he had the soul of a man when he lived as a beast, being only stricken by the hand of God with an exceeding madness, whereby he was bereft of common reason; as doth appear by that clause in the text (v.34) where it is said that *his understanding*, or knowledge, *returned to him again*.

Again, some other think that the soul neither dieth nor sleepeth, nor passeth out of the body into another, but wandereth here on earth among men, and oftentimes appeareth to this or that man; and this is the opinion of some heretics, and of the common people, which think that dead men walk. And for proof hereof some allege the practice of the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28), who is said to make Samuel to appear before Saul, but the truth is, it was not Samuel indeed, but only a counterfeit of him. For not all the witches in the world, nor all the devils in hell, are able to disquiet the souls of the faithful departed, which are in the keeping of the Lord without wandering from place to place. For when men die in the faith, their souls are immediately translated into heaven, and there abide till the last judgment; and contrariwise if men die in their sins, their souls go straight to the place of eternal condemnation, and there abide as in a *prison*, as Peter saith (1

Pet. 3:19). In a word, when the breath goeth out of the body, the soul of every man goeth straight either to heaven or hell; and there is no third place of abode mentioned in Scripture.

To conclude, the resurrection of the body is expressly mentioned in the Creed, to shew that there is no resurrection of the soul, which neither dieth, nor sleepeth, but is a spiritual and invisible substance, living and abiding for ever as well forth of the body as in the same.

And the Life Everlasting

Thus much of the third prerogative or benefit; now followeth the fourth and last, in these words: *And life everlasting*. To handle this point to the full and to open the nature of it as it deserveth, is not in the power of man. For both the prophet Isaiah and St Paul say (Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9) that *the eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, neither came it into man's heart to think of those things which God hath prepared for those that love Him*. Again Paul, when he was rapt into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:4) saith that he *saw things not to be uttered*. Nevertheless, we may in some part describe the same, so far forth as God in this case hath revealed His will unto us. Wherefore in this last prerogative, I consider two things: the first, is life itself; the second, is the continuance of life noted in the word *everlasting*.

1. Life itself, is that whereby anything acteth, liveth and moveth in itself; and it is twofold: uncreated or created:

(1) Uncreated life is the very Godhead itself, whereby God liveth absolutely in Himself, from Himself and by Himself, giving life and being to all things

that live and have being; and this life is not meant here; because it is not communicable to any creature.

(2) Created life is a quality in the creature; and it is again twofold: natural and spiritual:

(i) Natural life is that whereby men in this world live by meat and drink, and all such means as are ministered by God's providence.

(ii) Spiritual life is that most happy and blessed estate, in which all the elect shall reign with Christ their Head in the heavens after this life, and after the day of judgment for ever and ever. And this alone is the life which in the Creed we confess and believe; and it consisteth in an immediate conjunction and communion or fellowship with God Himself; as Christ in His solemn prayer to His Father a little before His death signifieth (John 17:20,21): *I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, O Father, art in me and I in thee, even that they may be one also in us*. And when St John in the Revelation saith (Rev. 21:3), *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be their God with them*; he sheweth that the very foundation of that happiness which God hath prepared for His servants, stands in a society between God and them, whereby God shall dwell with them in heaven, and they again shall there enjoy His glorious presence.

Touching this communion, three points must be considered:

(1) The first is, in what order men shall have fellowship with God? *Answer*: This communion shall be first of all with Christ as He is man; and by reason that the manhood of Christ is personally united to the Godhead of the Son, it shall also be with Christ as He is God; and consequently with the Father and the Holy Ghost. The reason of this order is because Christ, though He be the author and fountain of eternal life as He is God, yet He conveys the

same unto us only in and by His flesh or manhood. Yet must we not here think that life proceedeth from the manhood itself, as from a cause efficient; for the flesh quickeneth not by any virtue from itself, but by the Word to which it is personally united, it being as it were a pipe eternally to convey life from the Godhead to us.

(2) The second point is, in what things this communion consisteth? *Answer*: St Paul openeth this point to the very full when he saith (1 Cor. 15:28) that after Christ hath subdued all things unto Him, then *God shall be all in all*, that is, God Himself immediately shall be all good things that heart can wish to all the elect. But some may say, What? Is not God all in all unto us even in this life? For whatsoever good things we have, they are all from Him. *Answer*: It is true indeed, God is all in all even in this life; but how? Not immediately, but by outward means; and that also in final measure. For He conveys His goodness and mercy unto us so long as we live on earth, partly by His creatures, and partly by His Word and sacraments; but after this life is ended, all helps and outward means shall cease; Christ shall give up His kingdom, and as He is Mediator shall cease to put in execution the office of a priest, a prophet or a King; all authority and power shall be abolished; and therefore all callings in the three main estates of the church, the commonwealth, the family, shall have an end; there shall be no more magistrate and subject, pastor and people, master and servant, father and son, husband and wife; there shall be no more use of meat, drink, clothing, respiration, physick, sleep; and yet for all this, the condition of men shall be many thousand-fold more blessed than ever it was. For the Godhead in the Trinity immediately without all means shall be all things to all the chosen people of God in the kingdom of heaven, world without end. This may seem strange to man's reason, but it is the very flat truth of God's Word. St John in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, saith (Rev. 21:22) that there shall be no temple in it. Why? How then shall God be worshipped? Mark what follows: *The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*. Whereby it is signified that although now we use the preaching of the

Word and the administration of the sacraments, as means of our fellowship with God; yet when this life is ended, they must all cease, God and Christ being instead of all these means unto us. And he adds further (v.23), *The city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it*. What then, will some say, must there be nothing but darkness? Not so. *For the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light of it*. Again he saith (Rev. 22:2) that in the Paradise of God, there is *the river of the water of life*, and *tree of life bearing fruit every month*, and that is Christ. And therefore we shall have no need of meat, drink, apparel, sleep, etc. But Christ Himself our Head and Redeemer shall be instead of them all unto us; on whom all the elect shall feed, and by whom both in body and soul they shall be preserved evermore. If a man would have glory, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost shall be His glory. If a man desire wealth and pleasure, God Himself shall be wealth and pleasure unto him, and whatsoever else the heart of man can wish. Hence it appears that this communion is admirable; and that no tongue can tell, nor heart conceive the least part of it.

(3) The third point is touching the benefits or prerogatives that proceed of this communion, and they are in number six:

(a) The first is an absolute freedom from all wants. In the mind there shall be no ignorance, no unbelief, no distrust in God, no ambition, no envy, nor anger, nor carnal lusts, nor terror in conscience, or corrupt affection. In the body there shall be no sore, no sickness nor pain; for (Rev. 21:4) *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*, nay then all defects or wants in body, or soul, or in both, shall be supplied, and the whole man made perfect every way.

(b) The second is perfect knowledge of God. In this life the church and all the servants of God know Him but in part. Moses would have seen God's face (Exod. 33:18-23), but he was permitted to see only hinder parts; and as Paul saith (1 Cor. 13:12), now we know in part, and darkly, as through a

glass. In this life we can no otherwise discern but as an old man through spectacles; and the creatures, but specially the Word of God and the sacraments, are the spectacles of our mind, wherein we behold His justice, mercy, love etc., and without them we can discern little or nothing; yet after this life, when that which is perfect is come, and that which is imperfect is abolished, we shall see God as He is to be seen, not as through a glass, but face to face; and we shall know Him as we are known of His majesty, so far forth as possibly a creature may. God indeed is infinite, and therefore the full knowledge of His majesty can no more be comprehended by the understanding of a creature, which is finite, than the sea by a spoon; yet nevertheless God shall be known every way of man, so far forth as a creature may know the Creator.

Now upon this, that the elect have such fullness of knowledge, it may be demanded, whether men shall know one another after this life or no? *Answer*: This question is oftener moved by such as are ignorant than by them that have knowledge; and oftentimes it is tossed in the mouths of them that have little religion in their hearts; and therefore I answer first, men should rather have care to seek how they may come to heaven, than to dispute what they shall do when they are there; the common proverb is true, it is no good counting of chickens before they be hatched. Secondly, I say that men in heaven shall know each other; yea they shall know them which were never known or seen of them before in this life; which may be gathered by proportion, out of God's Word. Adam in his innocence knew Eve (Gen. 2:23), whom he had never seen before, and gave her a fit name so soon as she was created. And when our Saviour Christ was transfigured in the mount (Matt. 17:4), Peter knew Moses and Elijah, whom before he had never seen, and therefore it is like that the elect shall know each other in heaven, where their knowledge and their whole estate shall be fully perfected. But whether they shall know one another after an earthly manner, as to say, this man was my father, this mine uncle, this my teacher, etc., the

Word of God saith nothing; and therefore I will be silent, and we must be content a while to be ignorant in this point.

(c) The third prerogative of everlasting blessedness is that the elect shall love God with as perfect love as a creature possibly can. The manner of loving God, is to love Him for Himself; and the measure, is to love Him without measure; and both shall be found in heaven. For the saints of God shall have an actual fruition of God Himself, and be as it were swallowed up with a sea of His love, and wholly ravished therewith; for which cause, as far as creatures can, they shall love Him again. Again, the love of a thing is according to the knowledge thereof, but in this life God is known of man only in part, and therefore is loved only but in part; but after this life, when the elect shall know God fully, they shall love Him without measure; and in this respect love hath a prerogative above faith or hope, howsoever in some respects again they go beyond love.

(d) The fourth prerogative is that the saints of God keep a perpetual Sabbath in heaven. In this life, it is kept but every seventh day, and when it is best of all sanctified, it is done but in part; but in heaven every day is a Sabbath; as the Lord saith by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9), *From month to month, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come before me*; and therefore the life to come shall be spent in the perpetual service of God.

(e) Fifthly, the bodies of the elect after this life in the kingdom of heaven shall be like the glorious body of Christ; so Paul saith (Phil. 3:21), *Christ Jesus our Lord shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like His glorious body*. Now the resemblance between Christ's body and ours, standeth in these things: As Christ's body is immortal, so ours in the kingdom of heaven shall never die; as Christ's body is spiritual, so shall ours be made spiritual, as the apostle saith (1 Cor. 15:44), *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*; not because the body shall be changed into a spirit, for it shall remain the same in substance, and that for

ever; but because it shall be preserved by a spiritual and divine manner. For in this life, it is preserved by meat, drink, clothing, sleep, physick, rest and diet, but after without all these means the life of the body shall be continued, and body and soul kept together by the immediate power of God's Spirit for ever and ever. Thus the body of Christ is now preserved in heaven, and so shall the bodies of all the elect be after the day of judgment. Furthermore, as Christ's body is now a shining body, as doth appear by His transfiguration in the mount, so in all likelihood after the resurrection the bodies of the elect shall be shining and bright, always remaining the same for substance. Lastly, as Christ's body after it rose again from the grave, had this property of agility beside swiftness, to pass from the earth to the third heaven, being in distance many thousand miles from us, and that without violence; so shall the bodies of the saints. For being glorified, they shall be able as well to ascend upward as to go downward, and to move without violence, and that very swiftly.

(f) The sixth and last prerogative, is an unspeakable and eternal joy, as David saith (Psa. 16:11), *In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*. It is said that when Solomon was crowned king, the people rejoiced exceedingly (1 Kin. 1:40). If there were such great joy at his coronation which was but an earthly prince, what joy then shall there be when the elect shall see the true Solomon crowned with glory in the kingdom of heaven? It is said that the wise men (Matt. 2:10) which came from the east to worship Christ; when they saw the star standing over the place where the babe was, were exceedingly glad; how much more shall the elect rejoice, when they shall see Christ not lying in a manger, but crowned with immortal glory in the kingdom of heaven? Wherefore this joy of the elect after this life is most wonderful, and cannot be uttered.

The property of life eternal is to be an *inheritance* (Matt. 25:33; Rom. 8:17) which God bestows on them which are made His sons in Christ, who is the only begotten Son of the Father. Hence it follows necessarily that in the

Scripture it is called a *reward*, not because it is deserved by our works, as the church of Rome erroneously teacheth; but for two other causes:

(1) First, because life eternal is due to all that believe, by virtue of Christ's merit. For His righteousness is made ours by imputation, so consequently the merit thereof is also ours; and by it (all personal merits in ourselves utterly excluded) we deserve or merit eternal happiness as a reward; which nevertheless in respect of ourselves is the free and mere gift of God.

(2) The second is, because there is a resemblance between eternal life and a reward. For as a reward is given to a workman after his work is done; so everlasting life is given unto men after the travails and miseries of this life are ended.

The degrees of life are three:

(1) The first, is in this life, when men being justified and sanctified have peace with God. Many imagine that there is no eternal life till after death; but they are deceived, for it begins in this world; as our Saviour Christ testifieth, saying (John 5:24), *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears my words and believes Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life*. This being so, we are hence to learn a good lesson. Considering we look for life everlasting after this life, we must not deceive ourselves, lingering and deferring the time till the last gasp; but we must lay the foundation of life eternal in ourselves in this world, and have the earnest thereof laid up in our hearts against the day of death. But how is that done? We must repent us heartily of all our sins, and seek to be assured in conscience that God the Father of Christ is our Father, God the Son our Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost our Comforter. For as Christ saith (John 17:3), *That is life eternal, to know thee the only God, and whom thou hast sent Jesus Christ*. And we must go further, endeavouring to say with Paul (Gal. 2:20), that *we*

live not, but that Christ liveth in us; which when we can say, we have in us the very seed of eternal life.

(2) The second degree is in the end of this life, when the body freed from all diseases, pains and miseries is laid to rest in the earth, and the soul is received into heaven.

(3) The third, is after the day of judgment, when body and soul reunited shall be both advanced to eternal glory.

Again, in this third degree of life, there be in all likelihood sundry degrees of glory. Daniel speaking of the estate of the elect after this life, saith (Dan. 12:3), *They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for evermore*. Now we know there is a difference between the brightness of the firmament and the brightness of the stars. Again, there be degrees of torment in hell, as appears by the saying of Christ (Matt. 11:22), *It shall be easier for Tyrus and Sidon in that day, than for this generation*; and therefore there be proportional degrees of glory. And Paul saith (1 Cor. 15:41,42), *There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another in glory; so is the resurrection of the dead*. In which words he applies the differences of excellence that be in the creatures, to set forth the differences of glory that shall be in men's bodies after the resurrection. Furthermore (if we may conjecture) it may be, the degrees of glory shall be answerable to the divers measures of gifts and graces bestowed on men in this life, and according to the employment of them to the glory of God and edification of the church. And therefore the twelve apostles, who were exceedingly enriched with the gift of the Spirit, and were master builders of the church of the New Testament, shall sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. But it may be objected that if there be degrees of glory in heaven, some shall want glory. *Answer*: Not so; though some have more and some less, yet all shall have sufficient.

Take sundry vessels whereof some are bigger and some less; and cast them all into the sea; some will receive more water and some less, and yet all shall be full and no want in any; and so likewise among the saints of God in heaven, some shall have more glory, some less, and yet all without exception full of glory. And whereas it is alleged (Matt. 20:9,10) that *all the labourers in the vineyard receive each of them a penny* equally for their hire; that answer is that our Saviour Christ in the parable intends not to set forth the equality of celestial glory, and what shall be the estate of the godly after this life; but the very drift of the parable is to shew that they which are called first, have not cause to brag or insult over others which are as yet uncalled, considering they may be made equal or be preferred before them.

2. Thus much of the life itself; now follows the continuance thereof, which the Scriptures have noted in calling it *eternal* or *everlasting*. And to this end Paul saith (2 Tim. 1:10) that *Christ hath abolished death*, and brought not only *life*, but also *immortality to light by the gospel*. And this very circumstance serves greatly to commend the happiness of the godly; in that, after they have made an entrance into it, they shall never see term of time or end. Suppose the whole world were a sea, and that after every thousand years expired, a bird must carry away, or drink up only one drop of it; in process of time it will come to pass that this sea, though very huge, shall be dried up, but yet many millions of years must be passed before this can be done. Now if a man should enjoy happiness in heaven only for the space of time in which this sea is drying up, he would think his case most happy and blessed; but behold the elect shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven not only for that time, but when it is ended, they shall enjoy it as long again, and when all is done, they shall be as far from ending of this their joy, as they were at the beginning.

Having thus seen what life everlasting is, let us now come down to the uses of this article:

Use 1. And first of all, if we believe that there is an eternal happiness, and that the same belongs unto us, then we must use this present world and all things therein as though we used them not; and whatsoever we do in this world, yet the eyes of our minds must always be cast toward the blessed estate prepared for us in heaven. As a pilgrim in a strange land hath always his eyes toward his journey's end, and is then grieved when by any means he is out of the way; so must we always have our minds and hearts set on everlasting life, and be grieved when we are by any means hindered in the strait way that leadeth thereunto. We have a notable pattern of this duty set out unto us in the patriarch Abraham, who being called of God, obeyed to go out into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing whither he went; and by faith abode in the land of Canaan (Heb. 11:9) *as a strange country, and as one that dwelt in tents*. Now the cause that moved him was life everlasting; for the text saith (v.10), *He looked for a city having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God*. And we ought every one of us to be little affected to the things of this life, never setting our hearts upon them, but using them as a pilgrim doth use his staff in the way; so long as it is an help and stay for him in his journey, he is content to carry it in his hand; but so soon as it begins to trouble him, he casts it away.

Use 2. Secondly, all that profess the gospel of Christ, may hence learn to bear with patience the crosses and afflictions which God shall lay on them in this world. It is God's usual manner to begin corrections in His own family upon His own children; and as Peter saith (1 Pet. 4:17), *Judgment begins at God's house*. Look as a mother that weans her child, lays wormwood or some other bitter thing upon her breast to make the child loathe the milk; so likewise God makes us often feel the miseries and crosses of this life, that our love and liking might be turned from this world and fixed in heaven. As raw flesh is loathsome to the stomach; so is every sinner and unmortified man loathsome unto God; till the Lord by afflictions mortifies in him the corruptions of his nature, and specially the love of this

world. But when a man is afflicted, how shall he be able to endure the cross? Surely by resolving him that the Lord hath prepared life everlasting for him. Thus we read that (Heb. 11:24-26) *Moses by faith when he was come to age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather to suffer adversity with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*. But I pray you: What moved Moses to be of this mind? The reason is added: *Because he had respect to the recompence of reward*, that is, he had always a special regard of life everlasting, and that was it that made him content and willing to suffer affliction with the people of God. Here then behold a notable precedent for us to follow; in which we are taught that the best way to endure afflictions with patience, is to have an eye to the recompence of reward; this is it that makes the yoke of Christ easy and lightsome. When it shall please God to bring unto us a cup of afflictions and bid us drink a draught thereof to the bottom, the meditation of life eternal must be as sugar in our pockets to sweeten the cup withal.

Use 3. Lastly, if this be true, that God, of His goodness and endless mercy toward mankind, hath prepared life everlasting, yet not for all men but for the elect whose names are written in the book of life; we must above all things in this world seek to be partakers of the same. Let us receive this as from the Lord, and lay it to our hearts, whatsoever we do evening and morning, day or night, whether we be young or old, rich or poor, first we must seek for the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness. If this benefit were common to all and not proper to the church, less care might be had; but seeing as it is proper to some alone, for this very cause let all out studies be to obtain the beginnings of life everlasting given in this life. For if we have it not, whosoever we be, it had been better for us that we had never been born, or that we had been born dogs and toads than men; for when they die, there is an end of their misery; but man, if he lose everlasting happiness, hath ten thousand millions of years to live in misery and in the torments of hell; and when that time is ended, he is as far from the end of

his misery, as he was at the beginning. Wherefore I pray you, let not the devil steal this meditation out of your hearts, but be careful to repent of all your sins, and to believe in Christ for the pardon of them all; that by this means ye may come to have the pawn and earnest of the Spirit concerning life everlasting, even in this world. What a miserable thing it is that men should live long in this world, and not so much as dream of another, till at the last gasp? Let us not suffer Satan thus to abuse and bewitch us; for if we have not eternal life in this world, we shall never have it.

AMEN.

Hitherto by God's goodness I have shewed the meaning of the Creed; now to draw to a conclusion, the general uses which are to be made of it follow:

Use 1. And first of all we learn by it that the church of Rome hath no cause to condemn us for heretics; for we do truly hold and believe the whole apostolical Symbol or Creed, which is an epitome of the Scriptures, and the very key of faith. It will be said that we deny the pope's supremacy, justification by works, purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass for the sins of the quick and dead, the invocation and intercession of saints, etc., which are the greatest points of religion. It is true indeed, we deny and renounce them as doctrines of devils; persuading ourselves that if they indeed had been apostolical, and the very grounds and pillars of religion, as they are avouched to be, they should in no wise have been left forth of the Creed. For it is an oversight in making a confession of faith, to omit the principal points and rules of faith. It will be further said that in the Creed, we believe the church, and so consequently are to believe all these former points which are taught and avouched by the church. But this defence is foolish; for it

takes this for granted: that the church of Rome is the church here meant, which we deny, unless they can prove a particular church to be universal or catholic. Nay, I add further that the principal grounds of popish faith, for which they contend with us as for life and death, are not mentioned in any other creeds which were made by the churches and councils for many hundred years after Christ.

Use 2. Secondly, the Creed serves as a store-house of remedies against all troubles and temptations whatsoever:

(1) If a man be grieved for the loss of earthly riches, let him consider that he believes God to be *his Creator*, who will therefore guide and preserve His own workmanship, and by His providence minister all things needful unto it. And that he hath not lost the principal blessing of all, in that he hath God to be his *Father*, *Christ* to be his Redeemer, and the *Holy Ghost* to be his Comforter; and that considering he looks for *life eternal*, he is not to be overmuch careful for this life; and that Christ being *our Lord*, will not forsake us being the servants in His own house, but will provide things needful for us.

(2) If any man be grieved in respect of outward disgrace and contempt, let him remember that he believes in *Christ crucified*, and that therefore he is to rejoice in contempt for righteousness sake.

(3) They which are troubled for the decease of friends, are to comfort themselves in *the communion of saints*, and that they have *God the Father*, and *Christ*, and the *Holy Ghost* for their friends.

(4) Against bodily captivity, let men consider that they believe in Christ *their Lord*, whose service is perfect liberty.

(5) Against the fear of bodily diseases, we must remember *the resurrection of the body*, in which all diseases and infirmities shall be abolished.

(6) If a man fear death of the body, let him consider that he believes in Christ which *died upon the cross*, who by death hath vanquished death.

(7) The fear of persecution is restrained, if we call to remembrance that God is a *Father Almighty*, not only able, but also willing to repress the power of the adversary, so far forth as shall be for the good of His children.

(8) Terrors arising of the consideration of the last judgment are allayed by remembrance of this: that Christ shall be our *judge* who is our Redeemer.

(9) Fear of damnation is remedied by consideration that Christ *died* to make satisfaction for us, and now *sits at the right hand of His Father* to make intercession for us; and by the *resurrection of the body* to *life everlasting*.

(10) Terrors of conscience for sins are repressed, if we consider that God is a *Father*, and therefore much in sparing, and that it is a prerogative of the church to have *remission of sins*.

Deo Gloria

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